

A National Home for the Jewish People

The Concept in British Political
Thinking and Policy Making
1917 – 1923



Dvora Barzilay-Yegar

A NATIONAL HOME FOR
THE JEWISH PEOPLE

In memory of
Professor J.L. Talmon

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Abbreviations

B.A.A.	Beit Aaronsohn Archives
B.L.	Beaverbrook Library
B.M.	British Museum
CAB	Cabinet (British Cabinet papers)
C.A.H.J.P.	The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People
C.O.	Colonial Office (Colonial Office documents)
C.Z.A.	Central Zionist Archives
D.U.	Durham University
F.	File (as abbreviated in documents)
F.O.	Foreign Office (Foreign Office documents)
I.S.A.	Israel State Archives
J.N.U.L.	Jewish National and University Library
L.M.	Lothian Muniments
Lv.U.	Louisville University
No.	Number (as abbreviated in documents)
O.E.T.A.	Occupied Enemy Territory Administration
P.R.O.	Public Record Office
S.R.O.	Scottish Record Office, now: National Records of Scotland
U.C.L.	University College Library
W.A.	Weizmann Archives
WL	Weizmann Letters
W.O.	War Office (War Office documents)
Y.U.	Yale University

Introduction

My motivation for examining the meaning of the concept of a 'National Home for the Jewish People' arose long ago, when I was writing my PhD thesis dealing with attempts made to solve the question of Palestine in the years 1945–7; that led, in the end, to the establishment of the State of Israel. While reading the testimonies presented to the various inquiry committees and the discussions between the interested parties, I realised that there were numerous interpretations of the concept of a 'National Home for the Jewish People' and that these interpretations reflected the diverse attitudes of the participants towards the problem. The participants all anchored themselves to the Balfour Declaration as the source of their analyses of the British policy towards Palestine, while ascribing its intentions and contents according to their own desires or political expectations. Consequently, it seems important to reconsider the roots of the question and follow the first stages of the process in order to disentangle the diverse interpretations which arose in relation to the intentions contained in the declaration.

In the process of my research I have been assisted by many people. The professional clerks of the archives and libraries in the United Kingdom and Israel are worthy of great admiration for their efforts. In the United Kingdom, I am grateful to the staff of the Public Record Office at the time I was working there and the National Archives now, as well as to the staff of the Scottish Record Office then and the National Records of Scotland now. Additionally, I am grateful to the Sudan Archives at Durham University School of Oriental Studies; the British Museum, Beaverbrook Library and Mocatta Library at University College Library, London. Thanks also to Samuel Clayton, London, who enabled me to use Gilbert Clayton's papers, which are kept by him. Many thanks also to Mrs Bridget Levitt, my linguistic editor, Mrs. Heidi Houlihan, whose editing was of great importance; the designer Ofer Getz who prepared the cover; Mrs. Lisa Hyde the Vallentine Mitchell editor, and Mr. Tony Harris of Vallentine Mitchell who was of great help all along.

Preface

The concept of 'A National Home for the Jewish People' first came about with the radical changes that accompanied the First World War. It was the essence of an attempt to find, within eventual peace agreements, some expression of the recognition of the right of the Jewish people to define themselves as a Nation and, as such, to build a framework for a permanent Jewish presence in the Land of Israel, i.e. Palestine. The concept was coined in the course of a process which ended with the British Government decision, with the consent of its Allies, to issue the Balfour Declaration in November 1917. When this Declaration was included in the peace agreement with Turkey, it received international endorsement as one of the foundation stones of the Mandate on Palestine, given to Britain in 1922 and ratified in 1923.

These years, 1917–23, are the ones covered in this study which examines the coining of the concept and how it came to be used in the Declaration. It follows the various definitions of the term given by British statesmen and policy-makers, and analyses the various interpretations of it in the period between the Balfour Declaration and the ratification of the Mandate on Palestine.

The Balfour Declaration was an expression of the British vision of the future of the Middle East which was shaped in the years of the First World War. There was an awareness in Britain, which grew in strength during the War years, of the need to achieve British control or influence over the area north-east of the Suez Canal. This was not only in order to secure the shipping in the Canal against any possible threat from the north but also in order to create a British-controlled bridge between the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean that would include Palestine and Eastern Syria. As early as 1915, in the lengthy discussions of an interdepartmental committee headed by Sir Morris de Bunsen, the need to include Palestine in a sphere under British control or influence was considered. The committee believed that France, which was claiming Palestine, had no chance of taking control of it,

and concluded that, for the same reason, 'it would be idle for His Majesty's Government to claim the retention of Palestine in their sphere', and that the future of Palestine should be dealt with separately in special negotiations.¹ In 1917, the Committee on Terms of Peace, headed by Lord Curzon, went one step further and asserted that it was of great importance that both Palestine and Mesopotamia should be under British control and that, to ensure this, the British Government should secure a modification of the agreement with France of May 1916 (known as the Sykes-Picot agreement, which divided Palestine into French and international zones with a small British protectorate), so as to give Great Britain full control over Palestine and take the frontier of the British sphere to the river Leontes and north of the Horan.² Even those who did not believe that British control over Palestine was a strategic necessity did not wish to face a power in Palestine which might threaten the Suez Canal.

At the same time, the British were afraid of over-involvement because of their sensitive relations with France, which considered it had a 'pre-emptive' right to a protectorate over an Integral Independent Syria. Additionally, Britain was concerned about the potential burden on the British tax-payer, who would have to cover the expenses relating to military forces and the administration. The belief was that this control, desired by Britain for imperial reasons, could not be achieved by conquest alone but had to be based on the wishes of the inhabitants living within the British Protectorate. This conclusion was reached not only because of the expected opposition of France, and probably Italy and the Vatican, but mainly owing to demands that peace agreements be based on the right of nations to self-determination and not on annexation and compensation. This demand was made both by Russia and the United States, especially after the February 1917 Revolution and the United States entry into the War. This policy was laid out in the Hussein-McMahon correspondence,³ which established the foundations of an obligation to the Hashemites, who were considered, by the British Arab Bureau in Cairo, to be the spokesmen of the Arabs. It was further determined in the Balfour Declaration, in its commitment to the Zionist Organisation which was recognised as representing the Jewish people.

The statesmen who directed British policy assumed that, once the peace agreements were signed, both the Hashemites and the Zionists would ask to be allowed to implement their rights to self-determination under British guidance and control. The British anticipated that such a request would counter French intentions to have authority over Integral Independent Syria, intentions which were opposed by Syrian Nationalists who demanded self-determination in a greater Syria which included Palestine. It was also anticipated that the Zionist Organisation would take an active part in the

development of Palestine and would thus alleviate the burden on the British tax-payer.

The policy-makers in the years between the Balfour Declaration and its inclusion in the Mandate were aware that the Declaration had not been properly thought out within the framework of obligations Britain had taken on in the course of the War. They noticed the discrepancies between the commitments to the Arabs in the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, which did not specify the limits of the commitment, and those to the Jews in the Balfour Declaration which did not refer to any boundaries at all. In practice, they took steps to avoid any difficulties that might arise: they explained to Hussein the nature of the Declaration and, later on, even made an effort to bring about an understanding between the Zionist Movement and the Hashemites in meetings between Weizmann and Faisal, which were concluded with an agreement signed in early 1919.⁴ Furthermore, the British-French declaration made towards the end of 1918⁵ made it clear that it did not refer to Palestine. At the same time, policy-makers tried to pacify the Arabs of Palestine, pledging that the Balfour Declaration policy would not infringe on their rights.

When attempts to pacify the Arabs did not succeed and the Arabs of Palestine increased their pressure through the Arab Delegation,⁶ which claimed that the Balfour Declaration ought to be abrogated, basing their claim on the Hussein-McMahon correspondence and the British-French Declaration (see Chapter Five), the problem was discussed at the highest levels. In 1923, the year in which the Mandate was ratified, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Devonshire, asked members of the recently-constituted Cabinet, to determine if there was anything in British Government pledges to the Arabs that precluded implementing the Balfour Declaration and, if not, whether the Government was to continue the policy of the previous Government in implementing the Declaration along the lines of the White Paper of June 1922. The memorandum that was prepared at the Colonial Office to persuade the Cabinet that the answer to the first question should be in the negative based its argument on McMahon's correspondence with Sharif Hussein in March 1922, according to which Palestine was excluded from the districts of independent Arabia. The memorandum further stated that even the areas assigned to independent Arabia were given to the Sharif of Mecca and not to the Arabs of Palestine.⁷

The same line of thinking influenced the decision on the scope of the Mandate. In September 1922, following the collapse of Faisal's kingdom and once his brother Abd'Allah was nominated ruler of the area east of the River Jordan, a memorandum was added to the Palestine Mandate according to which the provisions establishing the Jewish National Home were not

applicable to the territories lying between the Jordan and the eastern boundary of Palestine. In other words: the British always dealt with their commitment to Zionism – even after Faisal's expulsion from Damascus – vis-à-vis their pledge to the Hashemites, and British statesmen viewed the Arabs as one people and denied any previous commitment to the Palestinian Arabs.

Britain realised that there was considerable discrepancy between the principle of self-determination and the various arrangements that had actually been made. In a comprehensive memorandum, in which this question was investigated, Balfour pointed out that, although the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the Anglo-French Declaration, the Covenant of the League of Nations and the directions given to the King Crane Commission⁸ were still valid, and that those interested could quote any one of them to suit their objectives, these documents were not consistent with each other, did not represent a clear-cut policy and, in any case, were not really in line with Allied policy. The modern notions of nationality, which were enshrined in the Covenant of the League of Nations and proclaimed in the Anglo-French Declaration, assumed that if Britain were to supply 'an aggregate of human beings, more or less homogeneous in language and religion, with a little assistance and a good deal of advice, ... protect them from external aggression and discourage internal violence, they will speedily and spontaneously organise themselves into a democratic state on modern lines.' On the other hand, the authors of the Sykes-Picot Agreement aimed to create two clearly-defined areas under the patronage of either France or Britain, but did not suppose themselves to be dealing with nations in the modern and Western sense of the term. They were ready for 'provisional recognition' and all they were looking for was to support Britain as mandatory until nations were able to 'stand alone', as the Covenant put it. Furthermore, according to the Covenant of the League of Nations 'The wishes of these communities [i.e. independent nations] must be a principal consideration in the selection of a mandatory.' However, according to Balfour, this unimpeachable sentiment was not implemented: in Syria the wishes of the inhabitants were not considered at all. England refused to be selected as the mandatory, America then also refused and the inhabitants were left with France without being asked. In Palestine, although the King Crane Commission had been going through the motions of asking what the inhabitants' wishes were, there was no intention of taking their wishes into account since the four Great Powers were committed to Zionism. In Balfour's opinion, this was right since Zionism, in his own words, 'is rooted in age-long traditions, in present needs, in future hopes, of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that

ancient land'. However, he admitted that this policy could not be harmonised with the Anglo-French Declaration, the Covenant of the League of Nations and the guidelines of the King Crane Commission of Enquiry. 'In short', Balfour concluded, 'so far as Palestine is concerned, the Powers have made no statement of fact which is not admittedly wrong, and no declaration of policy which, at least in the letter, they have not always intended to violate.'⁹

The lack of clarity about the exact areas which British pledges were to cover and the contradiction between the colonial conceptions which were put into effect and the principle that nations had a right to self-determination, were undoubtedly the outcome of the need to reach decisions while a war was going on and the situation was unclear.

Considering the competing British and French interests in the Middle East, it was generally accepted by British policy-makers that any arrangement should be reached within the context of an understanding with France, and that Britain should do its utmost to secure its interests in Palestine by negotiation. The Sykes-Picot Agreement was an expression of what could be achieved within the framework of the understanding reached with France in 1916. After it was signed, when it was understood that both Arabs and Zionists were to request British patronage, there was a move to change the agreement; however, even then it was generally accepted that this should be done by reaching an understanding and cooperation between the two powers while seeing to it that British and French interests in Mesopotamia and Africa remained intact. To both states it was clear that they had to respect the principle of the right of self-determination of nations and operate as powers that had received a mandate in order to prepare the nations for self-rule whilst, at the same time, looking after their imperial interests. Furthermore, the British were careful not to bring about a split, even when confronting the French over harsh questions concerning the boundary between the mandatory areas of Syria and Palestine, and they preferred to retract some of their demands, although they were in a better position than the French.

While, in general, the French demands – excluding slight changes during the negotiations – were known in principle and anticipated by British statesmen that was not the case with other Allies. The flag-bearers of the 1917 revolution in Russia – which was one of the signatories to the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 – demanded on principle that peace agreements be based on the right of nations to self-determination and not on annexation and compensation and, rejecting the validity of all secret agreements signed during the War, publicised the Sykes-Picot Agreement. However, Russia was at the height of a revolution and British statesmen found it difficult to anticipate its intentions or its ability to stand by its proclaimed principles. The steps the United States might take were also unclear for a long time.

Once Wilson's fourteen points, including the principle of the right to self-determination, were publicised, it was impossible not to take them into consideration when planning peace agreements. However, it was uncertain to what degree the United States was ready to be involved in future arrangements in the Middle East. Britain, indeed, secured the support of the President of the United States for the Balfour Declaration in 1917 – at that time the United States was not at war with Turkey which ruled Palestine and, therefore, the President of the United States, although supporting the Balfour Declaration, asked for it not to be published – but all Balfour's attempts to include the United States in a British-American protectorate of Palestine failed. While the mandates of the Middle East were being distributed, the United States' intentions with regard to taking on some of the responsibility for the area were queried but this question was left unanswered until the end of 1919. At the same time, the United States used its influence at the Peace Conference to participate in shaping the map of the Middle East in general and formulating the Mandate on Palestine in particular.

The greatest lack of clarity, as far as British statesmen were concerned, arose because of the diversity of assessments about the active forces in the Middle East itself. These discrepancies were undoubtedly caused by tendentious reports, prepared either knowingly or innocently by Britain's representatives in the Middle East before the conquest of Palestine and afterwards. This piece of land, with no fixed boundaries and with a heterogeneous population, presented Britain with many issues concerning the right ways of strengthening its hold there, of receiving the Mandate and of keeping it. They asked themselves specifically about the strength of pan-Arab national awareness and the movement run by the Hashemites and nurtured by the Arab Bureau in Cairo. To what extent could one depend on it as a lasting phenomenon? To what extent should they be concerned lest Britain get too deeply involved or be exposed to unwanted pressures? What was the strength of the movement for an Integral Independent Syria? What were the prospects of the Hashemites' movement being successful in view of trends in Syria and French interests there? How great was the upheaval in Palestine? Would pan-Arab arrangements and Hashemite acceptance of the pro-Zionist policy mean the end of its rejection by the Palestinian Arabs once a regular administration had been set up in Palestine and economic calm established?

The strength of the Zionist element was unclear as well: to what degree did it represent the Jewish people? Could it be relied on to achieve the political support and necessary investments in funds and skilled manpower for the development of Palestine, considering the opposition of some Jews to the concept of the Jewish people as a nation? Could it assist in neutralising

the interests of France and Italy by leading them to support the idea of a Jewish nationality? Would it be possible to make use of this support in order to convince the doubtful Military Authorities in Palestine and through them to make it clear to the Arabs that Britain was operating with international support and that the pro-Zionist policy should be accepted as a *fait accompli*?

The necessity of navigating the various factions among the Arabs of Palestine and the Middle East and of convincing them to accept Britain's hold on the area and prevent opposition from endangering its policy – either pro-Zionist or pro-Hashemite – demanded an understanding of the political aspirations of the population. All this had to be done while taking into account the interests of Britain's allies, seeing to it that options to change the policy remained open and preventing Britain from getting involved in commitments which might become an unwanted burden. And all of this had to be achieved by Britain using a map without boundaries, while peace had not been stabilised, while negotiations with France concerning the northern boundary were ongoing and the process of formulating the Mandate had lengthened beyond expectation. At the same time, Britain was prevented from committing itself as if the Mandate had already come into force.

The pledges that Britain gave to the Arabs and the Jews did not make this navigation easy for British statesmen. These pledges had been given while the War was going on and the future of the region was in doubt. Therefore, they were worded in such a way as to be open to interpretation, and did not refer to precise boundaries or make clear what kind of independence was promised to the Arabs or the nature of the National Home promised to the Jews. Because of this lack of clarity during the process of allocating and formulating the mandates, all interested parties, Jews and Arabs alike, felt that the situation was fluid and assumed that whoever applied more pressure could advance his objectives. The demands of the Arab Delegation accompanied by a refusal to cooperate with the Administration and by acts of violence by Palestinian Arabs, on the one hand, and the demands of the Zionist leadership in London, on the other, put constant pressure on British statesmen. They were compelled to clarify amongst themselves, to their allies and the parties to whom the pledges had been given what their plans were. Thus, these pledges became another complicating factor which needs to be examined thoroughly, as does the Balfour Declaration and the concept of a 'National Home for the Jewish people' that was not defined in the Declaration.

Concepts which are coined in a period when things are flexible and amorphous, when expectations are enormous and the uncertainty regarding the prospects of their realisation is discouraging can hardly be crystallised and clearly defined. This was the fate of the concept of a Jewish National

Home, which was an expression of a desire, the realisation of which was exceptionally obscure. Despite the tremendous efforts made to define it in the period following the Balfour Declaration, the promise it contained could be interpreted in different ways, according to one's desires. Eventually, the attempts to define the meaning of the concept became an expression of the inclinations and aspirations of British politicians and policy-makers.

Clarification of the interpretations of the concept of the National Home, both as a term in the process of formulating the Balfour Declaration and in the years preceding the Declaration's insertion in the Mandate on Palestine, is lacking in the vast literature published on the Declaration. The question of the commitment arising from the policy of the Jewish National Home in Palestine, that Britain took upon itself in formulating the Declaration and in the following years, has been discussed frequently, both in published research on the Middle East and in the tendentious publications of interested parties. However, in general, the problem has been discussed not as such but in the context of explaining the labyrinth of contradictions in the agreements and commitments that Britain entered into during and after the First World War.

Many pages have been dedicated to comparative studies of texts, in proving or refuting the existence of contradictions between the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence, as well as between the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence and the Balfour Declaration. Likewise, many have pointed out the conflict between the three commitments contained in these documents, whatever their interpretation, and the principle of the right of self-determination of nations, a principle which found expression in the Anglo-French Declaration and especially in the League of Nations Convention, which was supposed to lay the foundation for all the peace arrangements.

Whether the authors believed that the British statesmen intentionally led their counterparts astray, assuming that the difficulties would be smoothed over eventually, or whether they attributed to Britain a policy of genuine commitment and sincere intentions which were not properly expressed because of defective wording, these writers were mainly engaged in analysing the contradictions. In any case, the concept of a National Home was not the object of their research but their point of departure as one of the conflicting factors in the Middle East. However, having read the rich literature, the reader is left wondering what those who formulated the Declaration had in mind when promising to support the establishment of a National Home for

the Jewish people, and how they and their policy-makers expected to implement the Declaration.

The British First World War sources, both official and private, for the period following the Balfour Declaration, contain much information on attempts to clarify the meaning and aims of the Declaration. The fact that the Balfour Declaration remained a kind of *tabula rasa* for whoever needed to understand it led to differing interpretations. These were offered by statesmen who, once the Declaration had been made, had to explain to themselves, the Zionists and the Arabs their own or their colleagues' intentions when formulating the Declaration. Intentions needed to be clarified for policy-makers in Palestine – which was occupied a short time after the Declaration – and those in charge who were required to issue guidelines for the formulators of the Mandate – who started their work on the eve of the Peace Conference in Paris – and for the Civil Administration in Palestine, which had to direct its activities in the light of the various interpretations given to the commitment made in the Declaration and the Mandate in which it was included. Last but not least, the British Government needed clarification whilst it attempted to decide whether or not to continue the policy of the previous Government which had made the Declaration. It had to examine the causes which had motivated the formulation of the Declaration and its inclusion in the Mandate and reach conclusions concerning the commitments contained within it. In other words: the sources for this period provide very rich material concerning the political thinking, both in the context of formulating the Mandate and that of policy-making in Palestine.

Whilst studying this area, it became apparent to me that the usual methods of historical enquiry which deal with matters of foreign affairs and international relations were inadequate in explaining the concepts involved. In this case, questions posed by researchers were primarily focused on building a comprehensive picture of the process of British political thinking and policy-making. They examined the considerations of British statesmen and their perspectives on national and imperial interests and international relations. They were trying to untangle the main events of the period which led to decisions on policy or repudiation of certain courses of action and the reasons they came about. And last but not least, they were attempting to picture the process which preceded the period and the developments which followed.

As such, writers on the subject of the Balfour Declaration have not shown an awareness of the sensitivity of political thinking which led to the attempts to explain the concept of a National Home or to avoid doing so – an avoidance which was also significant. There has been such an eagerness to

try and understand why the Balfour Declaration was made, to explain why the British were interested in Jewish support and in control over Palestine, within the framework of their global interests, to clarify how this policy was regarded as compatible with the one relying on the Arabs etc., that the meanings of the terms which were carefully chosen and used have not been analysed and the intentions and future expectations embodied in the terms decided upon have not been considered. In short: nobody has bothered to understand what this National Home was – a new term which had no parallel in previous national movements. British statesmen either did not bother to define it or evaded defining on purpose.

This has led me to suggest a different approach. That is: to isolate references to the concept 'National Home' whenever it appears in documents and to analyse to what degree these references give expression to the political thinking of interested parties or reflect their wishful thinking with regard to the future of Palestine.

I have tried to analyse how the features of a National Home were defined and the apparent role of the Government in fostering them, throughout the period. I have examined the answers to questions such as: Did the promise of supporting the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine mean that Jews would be allowed to immigrate into Palestine and settle there as citizens with equal rights, becoming an integral part of the local population, or was it likely to result in granting privileges that would enable the Jewish population to have special cultural, economic and administrative-political frameworks, and if so, to what degree? In the economic sphere, was the Government only to remove the discriminatory limits of the past and enable the Zionists to operate freely? Was it to purposely leave open options for Zionist initiative? Was it to create opportunities and give economic preference to Zionist investors? In the administrative-political sphere, to what degree was an autonomous administration of the *Yishuv* (Hebrew for the organised Jewish population in Palestine) to be allowed: were there to be elected councils in towns and villages, public services, educational, health and legal institutions? Were options or preferences to be given to the central bodies representing the *Yishuv* and the Zionist movement, i.e. the Zionist Commission, the National Committee and, especially, the Jewish Council (later Agency) dealt with in the Mandate? Might supporting autonomous frameworks lead to the formation of a separate organisational structure and the creation of a state-within-a-state that would institutionalise the ethnic differentiation between the communities and become a burden on the British Administration? And, if so, how far should such a policy be taken? To what degree were Jews to be incorporated in the general Administration? Was granting Zionists requests by giving them concessions for public works and services permissible?

In addition, I have examined how the limitations of the commitment to establish a Jewish National Home were defined. Was it believed that the Balfour Declaration made just one commitment – a National Home for the Jewish people – that was limited by the need to prevent any infringement of the rights of Arabs in Palestine and the political status of Jews in any other country, or was it composed of two commitments: one to recognise the right of the Jewish people to have a National Home in Palestine and the other to safeguard the rights of the Arabs? Would safeguarding the rights of the Arabs be incorporated in the general constitution, or should they have representative institutions like those of the Jews? Who was to decide if the rights of the Arabs had, indeed, been infringed? Who was to decide the limit of economic absorption capacity of the country? Or, in other words, did the Arabs have the right to prevent Jewish immigration? Would allowing representation of the population mean that the commitment to establish a Jewish National Home was to depend on Arab agreement or was it a definite commitment, which would be implemented even if the majority of the population objected? To what degree were non-instituted pressure groups to be considered as expressing public opinion? In short, in order to implement the Jewish National Home policy, was Palestine to be considered a country which was separate from other Arab countries, which would accommodate a British administration for an unlimited time and prevent the inhabitants from having self-rule or was Palestine to be recognised as a predominantly Arab country and the Jewish National Home defined in a way that would be accepted by the Arabs?

The need to keep on redefining the National Home, in a way which would take into consideration Arab public opinion that might impede or prevent its establishment, caused policy-makers to ask questions about the degree to which Britain's commitment to establishing a Jewish National Home should be limited. To what degree could they go on limiting the conditions for the establishment of the Jewish National Home without damaging the motivation of the Jewish people to raise funds and work for its development and, eventually, the development of the country in general? What were the conditions beyond which the Jewish people would not agree to cooperate and Britain would be forced to give up the Mandate or require the British tax payer to subsidise the country? What was the golden mean between ensuring that Britain's rule would be accepted by most of the population and implementing the Articles of the Mandate promising the establishment of a Jewish National Home, without emptying the concept of all meaning and endangering the prospects of obtaining the Mandate or keeping it?

I have dealt with the attempts of British statesmen to define the concept and interpret it at two levels: firstly in terms of drafting the policy and the

Mandate and, secondly, in terms of policy-making in Palestine. Additionally, I have examined what influence these two processes had on each other. I have tried to differentiate, as far as possible, between definitions which were given intentionally, in the process of planning the policy, and those which were given after the event, as a consequence of policy-making in Palestine and the difficulties which arose there. Here too I have examined how these definitions influenced each other. The difficulties of differentiating between the various policies have arisen mainly because of the fact that this was a period when the political map of the Middle East was being shaped and the scope of British involvement was being determined. People changed their positions over time. Secretaries of state formulated political statements based on background papers prepared by officials who had frequently relied on tendentious reports. It was not easy to decide if the statesmen formed their positions because of the information they had been provided with or whether the authors of background papers were trying to adapt to what they believed the Secretary of State wanted when preparing the drafts for his approval. I have done my best to faithfully describe the process of defining the concept so as to enable the reader to follow it and understand the ways in which the parties involved influenced each other.

In the first chapter, I have described the process of coining the term 'National Home for the Jewish People' in the period preceding the Balfour Declaration and how its lack of clarity made possible a variety of interpretations. In the period following the Declaration, I have examined how the term was dealt with in the political thinking which accompanied the formulation of the Mandate and the process of outlining its boundaries (Chapter Five) as well as policy-making in Palestine (Chapters Three, Four, Six and Seven).

Since the years I was dealing with included two different periods: the period of the Military Administration (December 1917 – June 1920) which maintained the *Status Quo* policy, and the period of the Civil Administration (July 1920 – July 1923) when political initiatives were called for, the book has been divided accordingly.

In the period of the Military Administration, Chapter Three has been allocated to a survey of the interpretations given to the Balfour Declaration in response to pressures put on British statesmen by the conflicting expectations of Arabs and Jews; while Chapter Four has been dedicated to examining the attempts to lay the foundations for the Jewish National Home, and the economic and administrative problems which needed solving. In these two chapters I have tried to show how, while confronting daily problems and demands to clarify policy, the politicians had to clarify to

themselves how they viewed the Jewish National Home and what kind of entity they intended it to be.

On the period under Civil Administration, there are also two chapters – Six and Seven. The first covers the period when Winston Churchill was Secretary of State for the Colonies and describes attempts to clarify the concept of the Jewish National Home up until its definition in the White Paper. The second deals with the period when Lord Devonshire was Secretary of State for the Colonies and the attempts made by the Conservative Government to decide whether or not to continue the policy of their predecessors and create the conditions necessary for implementing the National Home policy as defined in the Mandate and the White Paper. In the summary I have focused on the main issues and pointed out how the various factors discussed influenced each other.

This study is based mainly on archival sources: papers of the Cabinet and its Committees, papers of the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office and the War Office, files of the Chief Secretariat of the Government of Palestine and Herbert Samuel's archive. Many private archives of statesmen, officials and military officers who were involved in the process have also been used as have papers of the Zionist Organisation in the files of the London Bureau, the Palestine Office in Jaffa, the Zionist Commission and the Jewish Agency, as well as the private archives of Zionist leaders which contain information on British political thinking and policy-making.

Among the many sources, it is especially worth noting the remarks and notes added by secretaries of state and officials in the minutes attached to the documents. These were written for internal consideration and provide important information on the process by which the various definitions and explanations were formulated, arguments for and against proposals and suggestions submitted to government offices both within the system and by interested parties outside.

In addition to these sources, I was assisted in my research by studies dealing with similar subject matters which enriched my understanding of the process of interpreting the concept of a Jewish National Home and of the background and the framework in which the formulators and interpreters were operating. For reasons I gave at the beginning of the preface, I did not approach the subject with reference to the arguments raised in the many books dealing with the question of the roots of the conflict in Palestine.

The influence of other political considerations both in discussions on the future of the Middle East and worldwide interests, on attempts to define the Jewish National Home, were taken into consideration when questions came up within the scope of the research. However, I have not made the

relationship between them explicit at every stage, unless they were clearly and categorically connected to the subject matter.

Additionally, I have not compared the meanings given to the concept by statesmen and policy-makers with those of other interested parties: Zionist and anti-Zionist Jews; Arabs in Palestine and other countries; Allied statesmen involved in shaping the political future of Palestine; and interested parties in Britain who expressed their opinions but had no effect on the process of defining the concept. I have mentioned them only when the definitions suggested by politicians were in response to those suggestions.

It seemed to me that examining the question in this way would enrich the understanding of British policy towards the Middle East and of the Arab-Jewish conflict concerning the political future of Palestine. It might also contribute to the theoretical understanding of how the interpretations of concepts vary and change over time and are used as a political tool and an expression of diverse opinions on which policy-making is based.

I am hopeful that this study will add a piece to the mosaic of research on British policy and the Middle East, and will contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between the various factors which constitute this mosaic.

Notes

1. British Desiderata in Turkey in Asia: – Report of the Committee on Asiatic Turkey, 30 June, 1915, P.R.O., CAB 27/1.
2. Imperial War Cabinet: Report of the Committee on Terms of Peace (Territorial Desiderata), 28 April, 1917, P.R.O., CAB 21/77.
3. I. Friedman, *Palestine – a Twice Promised Land? Vol. 1: The British, The Arabs & Zionism 1915--1920*, (London: New Brunswick, London, 2000).
4. J. Reinharz, *Chaim Weizmann – The Making of a Statesman*, (New York: Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 252-258. See also pp.60-7, 73, 74 and notes *ibid*.
5. See pp.66-7 and notes 34-36 *ibid*.
6. Y. Porat, *The Emergence of the Arab-Palestinian National Movement, 1918-1929* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1971) [Hebrew], pp. 111-17, 128-135. See also Chapter 6, pp. 272-75, pp. 40-98; Chapter 7, pp. 287-92, pp. 301-3, 306-7, 310-11.
7. J.E. Shuckburgh, 'Palestine – The Zionist Policy' (memorandum), 21 December 1922, P.R.O., C.O.733/35 F.384; Duke of Devonshire, 'Policy in Palestine' (memorandum. C.P.106/(23)), Policy in Palestine, 16 February 1923, P.R.O., C.O.733/58 F.10720, and attached letter 17 February 1923 *ibid*. See also pp.200-17.
8. See below p.79 and note 76 *ibid*.
9. Memorandum by Mr. Balfour, 'Respecting Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia' (memorandum), 11 August 1919, P.R.O., F.O.371/4183 F.2117 No.132187.

1

The Crystallisation of a Concept: ‘National Home for the Jewish People’ and the Balfour Declaration

On 31 October 1917 the British War Cabinet passed the following resolution:

His Majesty’s Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use its 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 of rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.¹

The resolution, known later as ‘The Balfour Declaration’, was included in a letter written, on 2 November 1917, by the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Arthur J. Balfour, to Lord Rothschild,² in reply to the latter’s request of 18 July 1917 that the British Government should approve of the following suggested declaration:

1. His Majesty’s Government accepts the principle that Palestine should be reconstituted as the National Home of the Jewish people.
2. His Majesty’s Government will use its best endeavours to secure the achievement of this object and will discuss the necessary methods and means with the Zionist Organisation.³

Both versions supported the idea of a ‘National Home’ for the Jewish people. However, between the first and the last version one can detect erosion in the terms expressing recognition of the bond between the Jewish people and Palestine, as well as those defining the eventual involvement of Great Britain in the process of establishing the National Home. The term ‘National Home’ itself remained as it was at the beginning: undefined and with no clarification elaborating on the intentions of its formulators.

The term 'National Home' was used for the first time in the autumn of 1916, while Zionist activists in London were preparing to attempt to convince the British Government that it was in their interest to support the realisation of the Zionist idea at the end of the War.

Since the outbreak of the First World War, leading Zionists had been actively discussing the need for, and the prospects of finding, a solution to the Jewish Question (i.e. the abnormal existence of the Jews in their diasporas), within the framework of future peace settlements: a solution which should be based on the concept of the Jewish people as a nation. As early as 8 September 1914, Chaim Weizmann – then a member of the Greater Actions Committee of the Zionist Organisation – wrote to Judah L. Magnes, executive member of the American Jewish Committee and one of the founders of the Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs, established in the United States following the outbreak of the First World War: '... we should prepare ourselves for the future peace conference, to appear at least with our *demands*. We would have an opportunity to tell the world that we are a *nation*'⁴. The outline of future action which had already been drawn up at the beginning of the War, and which became better defined afterwards, was based on the assumption that future territorial arrangements at the end of the War would be considered in accordance with the principles of nationhood and the right of national self-determination. Therefore, leading English Zionists resolved that their mission was to see to it that the voice of the Jewish people was not silenced at a time when the rights of other nations were secured. They also believed that they should pressure Britain, which had always been considered the guardian of small nations and which – in view of its strategic needs – might have a special interest in strengthening the Jewish community in Palestine.⁵ Following this line of thinking, English Zionist activists had started, as early as the end of 1914, to draft a memorandum with the intention of laying their Zionist ideas and aspirations before the British Government, as well as their suggestions concerning a future solution in Palestine to the Jewish Question.⁶

On 18 August 1915, Chaim Weizmann had an interview with Lord Robert Cecil, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. According to Cecil's report, Weizmann brought up the idea of the 'restoration' of Palestine to the Jews and suggested, as a solution to the problem of the abnormal existence of the Jews, that they should be given a place to dwell in and a 'full national existence'.⁷

At the beginning of 1916, Nahum Sokolow, a member of the Smaller Actions Committee of the Zionist Organisation and its representative in London, submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs two memoranda. According to these, the Jews of Palestine who had emigrated to that country

in order to live 'a free unfettered national Jewish life' there, were looking forward to 'a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine, protected by England' and were hoping that England would secure the rights of a Jewish entity in Palestine.⁸ In October–November 1916, a Zionist formulating committee, which was set up for this purpose in London, headed by Nahum Sokolow, produced two documents for eventual presentation to the British Government. Both documents elaborated on the Zionist movement's objectives in Palestine and the Zionists' aspirations for the realisation of these objectives under British auspices. The first document: 'Outline of a Programme for New Administration of Palestine and for Jewish Resettlement of Palestine in Accordance with the Aspirations of the Zionist Movement', included a detailed programme which was summarised in a shorter version: 'Heads of Scheme for a Jewish Resettlement of Palestine in Accordance with the Zionist Aspirations', which specified the Zionist demands concerning Palestine (and was referred to in Zionist correspondence as 'the Demands'). The second document was a memorandum, attached to the Demands, which explained extensively the Zionist claim to Palestine, its background and the prospects of its implementation (its final version, presumably formulated at the beginning of 1917, was addressed to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Arthur J. Balfour, but there is no evidence that it was presented). 'Zionism, according to the programme first adopted in 1897 at the first Zionist congress in Basle, is a movement to acquire for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law', it was explained in the memorandum. And the reasoning for that was as follows:

What the Jewish people needs is an opportunity to create a solid basis for its national life. It needs a home-land in which it can work out its own problems and become the architect of its own future ... The establishment of a Jewish commonwealth – though it be [sic.] but a small one – is the first step towards the solution of the Jewish Problem in all its aspects. It is in Palestine and only in Palestine, that this step can be taken.

The Demands brought up, for the first time, the Zionists' expectations of achieving a 'Recognition of Palestine as the Jewish National Home', as an eventual realisation of the Zionist solution to the Jewish Question, on which Zionist ideas about the resettlement in Palestine by Jews were based. The rest of the Demands included the granting of full political and civil rights to the Jewish population, which would officially be recognised as having national status; free immigration to Palestine; the granting of a charter to a

Jewish land and development company in Palestine with the preemptive right to carry out public works and acquire Crown and unoccupied lands; legislative authority within the framework of the local administration and the authority for law enforcement among the Jewish population; full autonomy in the areas of education, religion and welfare and recognition of Hebrew as the official language of the Jewish population.

In the letter to Balfour, which was attached to the memorandum, the Demands about the scope of the 'Jewish National Home' were contracted into one sentence: the establishment of British control over Palestine and the creation, under British auspices, of a large Jewish community in the country, which would have a 'national status' and a considerable amount of 'Jewish internal Autonomy'. The expressions 'national status' and 'Jewish internal Autonomy' were defined in the memorandum itself:

The Jewish settlers, being bound together by a community of race, religion, language, economic and intellectual interests, common institutions and a distinct and characteristic mode of life will naturally have a national status. They will be Hebrews in Language and will thus have the primary distinguishing mark of a nationality. They have in fact always been recognised as a nationality in Turkey. Thus, in the *firman* granted by the Sultan Abdul Medjid to the Jews in his empire in 1840, the phrase used is – 'the Jewish Nation will be protected and defended etc.'

According to the memorandum 'Jewish internal Autonomy' meant the entrusting to the Jewish population in Palestine of the administration of such business as concerned themselves alone, such as educational, communal, as well as local financial matters. The task of the Chartered Company would be to afford every encouragement and facility to an increasing Jewish population and to extending colonisation. Such a company should be founded under English jurisdiction, framed according to English law and naturally under the protection of England. Its principal centre should be in London and its executive in Palestine.⁹

In spite of the definitions given in 'the Demands', the Zionist aspirations expressed by various leading Zionists and their supporters, at their first meeting with Sir Mark Sykes on 7 February 1917 (mentioned below), were rather confused. However, although their expected fulfilment, as outlined by the majority of participants, was basically the same, Haham Moses Gaster, Chief Rabbi of the Sephardic congregation in England and former President of the English Zionist Federation, stated that the Jews in Palestine must be recognised as a nation, i.e. *millet* (an Arabic term used in the Ottoman

Empire meaning a religious community), since the East was based upon a system in which national rights were recognised, including the right to control religious and cultural affairs. Lord Rothschild said that he sympathised fully with the development of a 'Jewish State' in Palestine under the British Crown, and that 'a Jewish Palestine' should be developed by means of a Chartered Company. However, in conclusion he affirmed his total agreement with the development of 'a Jewish autonomous colony in Palestine'. Herbert Samuel believed, like Gaster, that there might, in time, come to be a Jewish nation in Palestine, so long as it was plain that by 'nation' was meant an organised community and not that Jews in Great Britain, for instance, would constitute a separate nation in the sense that the British are a nation. Nahum Sokolow spoke about 'the establishment of a Jewish society' in Palestine. Chaim Weizmann, who pointed out that the Jews who went to Palestine would go to constitute a Jewish nation and become 100 per cent Jews, not Arabs or Druzes or Englishmen, demanded that the Suzerain authority should not put any restrictions on Jewish immigration into Palestine and that the regulation of immigration should be in the hands of the Chartered Company. Harry Sacher (in the context of the debate with anti-nationalist Jews) distinguished between nation and state. The state, according to him, was a political entity involving political obligations by the Palestine Jews, while the term nation referred to a spiritual entity and Jews outside Palestine would be members of the Jewish nation and owe Palestine such respect or reverence as they thought fit, but would owe it no political obligation.¹⁰

The expectations of achieving nothing but autonomy by the 'recognition of Palestine as a Jewish National Home' were backed in a report sent by Sokolow to Louis D. Brandeis, the chairman of the Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs that was established in the USA following the outbreak of War, which described the process of formulating the Demands.¹¹

Weizmann also stated in a speech, delivered at a conference of the English Zionist Federation on 29 May 1917, that:

... the conditions are not yet ripe for the setting up of a state *ad hoc*. States must be built up slowly, gradually, systematically and patiently. We therefore say that while the creation of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine is our final ideal ... the way to achieve it lies through a series of intermediary stages, and one of those intermediary stages, which I hope is going to come about, as a result of this war, is that the fair country of Palestine will be protected by such a mighty and just power as Great Britain. Under the wing of this power Jews will be able

to develop, and they will get a measure of self-government which they deserve.¹²

‘The Demands’, including the ‘Recognition of Palestine as the Jewish National Home’, were presented for the first time to a British policy maker at the beginning of February 1917: they were sent to Sir Mark Sykes before his preliminary meeting with Zionist leaders and supporters on 7 February 1917 (mentioned above).¹³

Sir Mark Sykes, a reputed expert on Middle East issues, who had represented the British Government in the discussions leading to the Sykes-Picot Agreement signed in the spring of 1916, became acquainted with Zionist ideas and plans following his return from Russia in April 1916.¹⁴ Indeed, in February 1916, on the eve of his mission, he had already read a memorandum presented by Herbert Samuel to the British Cabinet in March 1915,¹⁵ in which Samuel put forward the idea of a Zionist solution in Palestine under British auspices. However, as pointed out in his response to the memorandum, Sykes interpreted the Zionist objective as realising an ideal of having a centre of nationhood not measured in terms of boundaries and territory. As to Samuel’s proposal regarding a Zionist-British solution in Palestine, to that Sykes did not respond at all.¹⁶ In March 1916, when the proposal of Edward Grey, then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, regarding a declaration that should attract Jewish public opinion to support the Entente cause¹⁷ had reached Sykes in Russia, he rejected it. He feared that the French and the Arabs would oppose the idea which might cause damage to the agreement which was being formulated at the time. As to the Zionists, Sykes proposed that they should be satisfied by having a chartered company within the constitution of the state to be established in Palestine, headed by one of Sharif Hussein’s sons as its Sultan; this company would be granted privileges to buy and develop lands, the inhabitants of which would be granted citizenship and enjoy British protection and mediation in case of any clashes between the company and the Arab Sultan. In the meantime – he suggested – ‘the Zionists be carefully sounded and kept in hope of sympathetic [decision?]’¹⁸ On his return from Russia, Sykes repeated that proposal to Samuel and the latter brought it to the Zionists’ attention.¹⁹ Following the exchange of government on December 1916, Sykes was appointed Assistant-Secretary to David Lloyd George’s War Cabinet and developed the idea that British policy towards the Middle East should rely on three national movements – the Arab, the Armenian and the Jewish – in order to facilitate British infiltration into the region (an idea which was

implemented at the end of 1917, with the establishment of a joint Arab-Armenian-Zionist Committee). He requested permission to open discussions with authorised Zionist leaders.²⁰

At the meeting, which took place on 7 February, the Zionist spokesmen explained their ideas and tried to find out whether the British Government had any intentions or even commitments concerning the political future of Palestine which might affect the prospects of implementing the Demands. One of the questions discussed at that meeting dealt with the authority with which the suggested charter company should be invested. The Zionists regarded the company as an economic instrument which might turn into a political one that would further the realisation of their objectives in Palestine. However, Mark Sykes found himself in an awkward situation: his hands were tied since he was unable to reveal the obligations involved in the Sykes-Picot Agreement which had been signed a few months earlier, and he was in no position to build up any hopes regarding any future settlement. The same applied to Herbert Samuel, to whom Sykes referred the Zionist query regarding possible previous commitments. He too refused to reveal what had been known to him since his days in government. Sykes, therefore, suggested a solution which echoed his response to Grey's proposal of 1916. He suggested that 'all the desired could be embodied in the constitution of the Chartered Company which would be British. As the Chartered Company bought land it would come under British protection' (a statement which seemed to be 'very vague' according to the protocol of the meeting).²¹ In a further meeting with Weizmann and Sokolow, on 10 February, Sykes tried to limit the spheres in which a charter company might eventually operate to the zone under international control (the brown sphere) in the Sykes-Pico Agreement; however, he was confronted with a negative response by other participants in the discussion.²²

Thus, prospects of a positive response to the Zionist demands being dependent on Britain's prospects of winning the War and securing a protectorate over Palestine, the Zionists had to change tactics. Assuming that once British protection became a *fait accompli* their demands would be fulfilled, Sykes and the Zionist leaders decided to launch a series of activities to promote that objective. The Zionists received permission to use official communication channels for the purpose of contacting the Zionist Organisation in Russia and the United States of America in order to convince Yechiel Tschlenow, a member of the Central Committee of Russian Zionists and the Zionist Smaller Actions Committee, and Louis D. Brandeis, honorary president of the Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs, to sign the Demands.²³ It was assumed that their support would not only add greater weight to the Zionist Demands once they were presented but would

also serve as proof that the Zionists were capable of mustering force behind the demand for a British Palestine, a force which would have to be taken account of when presented as a pressure group at an eventual peace conference. Nahum Sokolow, the senior Zionist leader in England and member of the Smaller Actions Committee, was sent, in April 1917, to France and Italy in order to persuade their governments and the Vatican to support Zionist claims in principle and thus pave the way for a future Zionist request to be under British auspices.²⁴ Chaim Weizmann was assigned to accompany Mark Sykes, who had been sent to Egypt on a political mission to the British-Egyptian Expeditionary Force leading the Palestine offensive, and to assist the occupying forces as liaison to the local population of Palestine.²⁵

In the meantime, Weizmann approached the Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Arthur J. Balfour, and tried to secure their support.²⁶ Furthermore, after Sykes' departure for Egypt in April 1917, the Zionist issue was at last institutionalised: it was added to the responsibilities of the Foreign Office, where it was dealt with mainly by Sir Ronald Graham, Assistant Under-Secretary of State, in charge of both War and Eastern Departments.

However, at that time, the gap between planning and implementation widened. As mentioned above, the Demands were sent to Tschlenow and Brandeis in order to enlist their support. These two hesitated. The Russian Zionists, who were concerned for the safety of the Jewish population in Palestine and identified with the Zionist Organisation's official policy of neutrality in war, were afraid to declare that they were supporting a British Protectorate, a plan that depended on the Entente winning the War, which was still uncertain at the time. The United States' Zionists had to take into account the policy of their Government, which was not in a state of war with Turkey; if the US Government supported a British Protectorate, it could be considered an act of hostility towards Turkey. Therefore, although the Zionist activities in London were unofficially supported by Russian and American Zionists, they were in no position to officially sign or even publicly support the Demands. This caused a continuing delay in the official presentation of the document to the British Government. Thus, while the Zionist demand for a British Protectorate found a favourable ear in high political circles and even official assistance towards its implementation, the Zionist Demands, including the proposal to recognise Palestine as the Jewish National Home, were not put on the agenda and no questions were raised about how to implement them.

The discussions which took place between Weizmann, Balfour and Lloyd George dealt with the assumption that both Britain and the Zionists had common interests regarding the question of a desirable solution in Palestine

and that the Zionist request for a British Protectorate was not only the preferable solution to 'the Jewish Question' but could also meet British strategic requirements in the Middle East.

These discussions were not the first to be held by their participants. Weizmann had already been introduced to Balfour in 1905 and again in 1906. In the early days of the War, and later in 1915 and 1916, the two had several meetings in which they discussed the Jewish Question, Zionism and Palestine. Balfour had not only been made aware of the Zionist idea and the suggested solution to the Jewish Question in a Palestine settled by Jews under British auspices, he had also expressed his sympathy and identification with the Zionist point of view.²⁷

Lloyd George, too, had already met Weizmann. As early as 1915, Weizmann had been introduced to him by C.P. Scott, the editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, and after being nominated Minister of Munitions in May 1915, Weizmann was employed as a chemist in the service of Lloyd George's Ministry and, again, with C. P. Scott's intervention, met him personally whenever difficulties emerged. Unlike Balfour, Lloyd George was interested, from the beginning, in the utilitarian aspect of having relations with the Zionists. On the eve of his first meeting with Weizmann, Scott informed the latter that Lloyd George was interested in the idea that a Jewish population of Palestine could serve as a liaison between East and West, and that he would like to hear about Palestinian Jewry and the prospects of its development, about the relations between the Jewish and Arab populations and about the potential significance of Palestine as a future buffer state. Furthermore, Scott told Weizmann that Lloyd George was afraid of expanding Britain's military responsibilities and worried about Catholic and Orthodox sensibilities regarding the question of the Holy Places. In a meeting attended by Lloyd George, Herbert Samuel, Scott and Weizmann, on 16 November 1915, the discussion dealt with the significance of Palestine in securing British interests in Egypt and the prospects of having Palestine under British auspices, considering French interests in the Middle East, as well as the existing opposition within England to any expansion of British responsibilities in that region.²⁸

However, in March 1917, Weizmann met both Balfour and Lloyd George for the first time after the Demands had been formulated and after Lloyd George had been nominated Prime Minister and Balfour became Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The two of them were now policy-makers and, at a time just before the British offensive in southern Palestine when there was a need to formulate plans for the region, the political future of Palestine evidently appeared on the British agenda. Considering all this background, it is surprising that records which remain from those meetings do not

contain any reference either to the Zionist Programme and its implementation or to expectations regarding the political future of Palestine. The few mentions that have been found are partly in a secondary source (Scott's diaries) and are very brief; one would assume that, had there been any deliberations regarding the Zionist Programme, they would have been referred to at least, if not reported in detail.

According to Weizmann's report of his meeting with Balfour on 22 March,²⁹ they discussed realistic solutions for the first time: Weizmann dwelt on the importance of Palestine from a British point of view, while Balfour informed him that Lloyd George had expressed similar ideas at a Cabinet meeting the day before and told him that he himself believed that they should work towards an Anglo-American Protectorate in Palestine, in case England and France could not reach an agreement.

At the meetings of Weizmann and Lloyd George, the details of the Zionist Programme were not put on the agenda either. As a matter of fact, at the meeting on 13 March, Lloyd George said that it was about time to prepare explicit plans and that, once the protectorate was a *fait accompli*, they would establish a large development company and move ahead.³⁰ However, at the following meeting, on 3 April, having discounted the possibility of an Anglo-French condominium, Lloyd George asked Weizmann about his position regarding internationalisation or an Anglo-American protectorate, but did not take any stand on the matter.³¹

The reason why the Zionist Programme was only mentioned in connection with the development company and not in greater detail was probably because the question on the British agenda was, first and foremost, about the prospects of achieving a British protectorate, a basic condition for any plan. The Programme itself was presumably regarded as an option which might be implemented, or even one which was worth preparing for. However, the conditions for discussing it were not yet ripe. This assumption is supported by the wording of the instructions given to Mark Sykes by Lloyd George and Lord Curzon on the eve of Sykes' departure to Egypt (3 April, the same day as the Lloyd George–Weizmann meeting). According to the minutes of that meeting:

The Prime Minister and Lord Curzon both laid great stress on the importance of not committing the British Government to any agreement with the tribes which could be prejudicial to British interests. They impressed on Mark Sykes the difficulty of our relations with the French in this region and the importance of not prejudicing the Zionist movement and the possibility of its development under British auspices.³²

This tendency to ignore the Zionist Demands *per se* was not only characteristics of leading statesmen and policy-makers. Throughout the period from April 1917, when handling of the Zionist issue was transferred to the Foreign Office, until June 1917, when a decision to formalise a declaration was reached, no reference was made in the internal minutes of the Foreign Office files either to the concept of a 'Jewish National Home' (or 'National Home for the Jewish people') or to the contents of the Zionist Demands. A partial explanation for this may be related to the fact that the Demands had never been submitted to the Foreign Office, whose minutes were usually reflections on or responses to documents brought to its attention. However, this is not a satisfactory explanation, since one can assume that Weizmann and other leaders who met Graham elaborated on the Zionist Programme, and if Graham had any thoughts about its context, including 'recognition of Palestine as a Jewish National Home', he would, presumably, have put them in writing; he had, after all, done so for his ideas on a British protectorate and the furtherance of the proposed declaration.³³

The problem which faced Balfour and Foreign Office officials, as they were considering whether they were justified in supporting Zionist aspirations, was not how those could be satisfied by future political and administrative settlements in Palestine but whether the Foreign Office could support demands based on the solution of a British Protectorate in Palestine while the British Government was committed to the Sykes-Picot Agreement. Even if they could assume that a British protectorate was the best solution as far as British interests were concerned and that it was, indeed, worthwhile to rely on the Zionist demand that Palestine should be put under British protectorate and thus replace the settlement reached in the Sykes-Picot Agreement, Foreign Office officials were wondering how it was possible to support a plan they could not commit themselves to implementing as long as agreement with Britain's allies had not been reached and as long as there was possible doubt regarding the prospects of its implementation. Foreign Office officials were also undecided about whether they were justified in encouraging the Zionists without telling them of the Sykes-Picot Agreement. Therefore, most documents dealing with the Palestine issue (such as Sykes' reports about the prospects of any commitment to a policy built on meetings in France and Italy, on his way eastwards) led to comments in minutes about achieving a British protectorate.³⁴

The shift in emphasis from the essence of the Demands to the prospects of achieving a British protectorate was given an unexpected stimulus when, in April 1917, the main principles of the Sykes-Picot Agreement were leaked to the Zionists.³⁵ Weizmann, who was preparing at the time for his mission to Egypt, was alarmed. On 25 April, in an interview with Lord Robert Cecil,

acting Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs during Balfour's absence in the United States, he vehemently protested, arguing that the agreement, according to which Palestine would be divided purely on the basis of strategic considerations, contradicted the policy of anti-annexationist principles and the settlement of the map of the world on national principles and historic claims, proclaimed by both Russia and the United States. Furthermore, Weizmann threatened that the large Jewish communities in those two countries would raise 'an outcry which will ring through from one end of the world to the other', as it was contrary to 'the principle of justice to small nationalities'.³⁶ Weizmann demanded an assurance that he was not being sent to Egypt to work towards implementation of the Sykes-Picot Agreement but 'for a Jewish Palestine under a British protectorate.' Cecil's response was to inform Sykes that Weizmann 'is going out with full permission to work for a British Palestine'.³⁷

This assurance was in accordance with the conclusions reached by the Committee on Terms of Peace, headed by Curzon. The Committee took into account, *inter alia*, that 'the Zionists in particular would be very much opposed to Palestine being under any other flag or under a condominium' and suggested, in its concluding report, that:

It is of great importance that both Palestine and Mesopotamia should be under British control. To ensure this it is desirable that His Majesty's Government should secure a modification of the agreement with France of May 1916 as would give Great Britain definite and exclusive control over Palestine, and would take the frontier of the British sphere to the river Leontes and north of the Hauran ...³⁸

However, Foreign Office officials who were dealing with the Palestine question were not content with the 'national' political aspect of the Demands in a different context. It was obvious to the Foreign Office that the political objectives of the Zionist movement would be opposed by the anti-national Jews. These were represented by the Conjoint Foreign Committee of the Anglo-Jewish Association and the Board of Deputies which had been established in order to assist persecuted Jewish communities and defend their human and civil rights. At the beginning of the War, a special branch was added to the Committee in order to deal with problems arising from the War. It was headed by Lucien Wolf, who endeavoured to establish himself, in many of his appeals to the Foreign Office, as the spokesman of the English-Jewish community in matters affecting Jewish communities around the world.

When the Zionists tried, at the beginning of the war, to coordinate activities with the Conjoint Foreign Committee and formulate a common platform which would secure the interests of the Jewish people in eventual peace settlements, it became quite obvious that no compromise between the stands of the parties could be reached. The Conjoint Committee representatives spoke of Jewish communities bound to each other by the Jewish religion but inseparable from the states of which they were and to which they owed their political identities. The term 'nationality', from their point of view, had one single meaning – that of citizenship. The double meaning of the term 'nationality', signifying both ethnicity and citizenship, made the term unpalatable to them and the use made by the Zionists of the term 'Jewish nationality' implied a threat both to their self-perception as loyal and equal British subjects as well as to their efforts to effect the total emancipation and integration of other Jews.

At the meetings mentioned above, the Conjoint Committee insisted that the solution to the Jewish Question could be reached only when Jews were emancipated in the countries where they lived. Moreover, they warned against the 'national postulate' of the Zionists, as well as their plan for the Jewish community in Palestine to be granted privileges. The Conjoint Committee thought that not only could the Zionists not solve the problem but that they would encourage anti-Semitism and undermine the process of emancipation.

The Zionists, for their part, insisted on sticking to the idea of nationhood as a basic principle and claimed that only a Jewish national centre in Palestine, which would become a home to Jews and Judaism, could strengthen the Jews in the Diaspora, and that it was Jewish assimilation that brought about anti-Semitic reactions.

As to the Zionist demand that Palestine should be under British auspices or a protectorate, the Conjoint Committee evaded responding, arguing that, considering Britain's relations with its allies, such a delicate subject should not be discussed. Furthermore, they declared that, being British, they had no intention of discussing a matter of imperial policy with the Zionists, who were mostly foreigners and some even citizens of enemy countries.

When discussions between the Zionists and the anti-Zionists had reached a dead end by the spring of 1915, Wolf presented the Foreign Office with a report on the confrontation.³⁹ From that point onwards, he made use of doors which were open to him at the Foreign Office to overtake the Zionists in the race and proposed solutions to the Jewish Question which were in keeping with his Committee.

Between December 1915 and March 1916, Robert Cecil, the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and Foreign Office officials discussed

the question with Lucien Wolf of how the Allies' cause could be made to attract Jewish opinion in the United States, which tended to express sympathy with Germany and hostility towards Russia.⁴⁰ Following these discussions, the Conjoint Committee proposed, in February–March 1916, to the Foreign Office, *inter alia*, that, considering the power of the organised Jewish community in the United States, the British Government should declare that:

In the event of Palestine coming within the spheres of influence of Great Britain or France at the close of the War, the Governments of those Powers will not fail to take account of the historic interest that country possesses for the Jewish community. The Jewish population will be secured in enjoyment of civil and religious liberty, equal political rights with the rest of the population, reasonable facilities for immigration and colonization, and such municipal privileges in the towns and the colonies inhabited by them as may be found to be necessary.⁴¹

However, the Foreign Office was aware of the Zionist position⁴² and, when the Conjoint Committee's proposed formula was included in the proposal that was sent to the Allies for their comments (known as Grey's Proposal), a reservation was added:

We consider, however, that the scheme might be made more attractive to the majority of Jews if it held out to them the prospect that, when in course of time the Jewish colonists in Palestine grow strong enough to cope with the Arab population, they may be allowed to take the management of the internal affairs of Palestine (with the exception of Jerusalem and the Holy Places) into their own hands.⁴³

Robert Cecil, too, was doubtful whether there was any chance of the Conjoint Committee's formula being accepted by the Zionists.⁴⁴

In the event, Grey's Proposal was not implemented for reasons of British foreign and imperial policies which had no relevance either to the positions of the Zionists or their opponents. French opposition and Sykes' reservations brought about its total rejection.

Contacts between the Conjoint Committee and the Zionists were resumed in August 1916, but with no essential change of position on either side, and without the Zionists being aware that, in the meantime, the Committee had acted independently and presented its formula to the Foreign Office. Again, as in 1915, Lucien Wolf reported to the Foreign Office the

contents of these contacts. On 1 December 1916, the eve of the establishment of Lloyd George's coalition government, Wolf sent documents to the Foreign Office, relating – according to him – to 'the Zionist controversy' and referring to 'Lloyd George's alleged promise' to the Zionists. Wolf summed up the attitude of the Conjoint Committee *vis-à-vis* the Zionists by saying that the leaders of Anglo-Jewry had no objection to the plans of the Zionists in Palestine, so long as they did not prejudice the cause of Jewish emancipation in other countries. However, in their view, the Zionist scheme was not, and could not be, a solution to the so-called Jewish Question. All the Conjoint Committee asked, according to him, was 'that the Zionists shall not postulate a Jewish nationality outside Palestine, which does not exist, and which, if it did exist, would prove an obstacle to their being true nationals of the countries in which they live'. According to Wolf, the Conjoint Committee asked also that the Zionists should not seek to promote their schemes in Palestine by asking for rights and privileges not shared by other races and creeds, in order to hasten their numerical preponderance in the country, because, by doing so, they would obviously compromise the activities then being carried on for equal rights for the Jews of Russia and Romania.⁴⁵ Furthermore, at the end of January 1917, Wolf had an interview with Balfour, in which he outlined the Conjoint Committee's policy.⁴⁶

Thus, in the winter of 1917, with the acceleration of contacts between the Zionists and the Foreign Office, the latter had already been informed about the controversy between national and anti-national attitudes. When Ronald Graham passed on to the War Office Vladimir Jabotinsky's proposal to dispatch a Jewish Regiment to the Palestine front, he expressed the reservations of his colleagues at the Foreign Office when he wrote:

From a political point of view it will be important for His Majesty's Government not to identify themselves too closely with the political objectives of a Zionist nature which clearly underlie this proposal, since by so doing they would be committing themselves to a definite course in a matter upon which the most representative Jews of the world are utterly divided.⁴⁷

When Wolf found out that the Foreign Office had been negotiating with the Zionists, he protested against the negotiations not being held with the 'true' leaders of English Jewry, requested that the controversial opinions be published and imposed constant pressure on the Foreign Office in order to prevent an eventual agreement with the Zionists. Cecil, indeed, promised Wolf that nothing would be done without consulting Jewish public opinion first but, at the same time, tried to deter him from publishing the differences

of opinion.⁴⁸ As mentioned above, at the same time, leading Zionists in England were using official channels in order to enlist the support of American and Russian Jews for their Demands and thus prove that they were backed by massive Jewish public opinion. Publishing the controversy and the opposition within English Jewry could harm the Zionist effort which was already supported by the Foreign Office. However, despite this, the Conjoint Committee published a manifesto in *the Times*,⁴⁹ in which it analysed its attitude towards the Jewish Question, a publication which led not only to a furious response from the Zionists but also a vote of no-confidence from within the Conjoint Committee, followed by its disbanding.

The road seemed to be smooth for the Zionists to move forwards, but there were obstacles. The anti-Zionist propaganda since the outbreak of the War had left its mark when the time came for formulations and the opposition, which seemed to have disappeared after the Conjoint Committee was disbanded, would eventually emerge again in response to the proposal for a Jewish regiment. Moreover, the powerful spokesman Edwin Montagu was now present at Cabinet discussions about pro-Zionist declaration.

In those days, the deliberation on Britain's long-range imperial interests was accompanied by considerations of the instant benefit that could arise from a pro-Zionist declaration. In view of tendencies in Russia to withdraw from the War and the great influence attributed to the Jews in encouraging this trend, it occurred to policy-makers that a pro-Zionist declaration could motivate Russian Jews not to abandon the Allies. It was, as a matter of fact, the same consideration on which Grey's Proposal had been based, but with a different objective. Now that the Zionists were believed to be able to enlist Jewish public opinion in support of their Demands, it was thought that they might also be of service to the Allies' propaganda campaign. The Zionists, who were aware of those considerations (and who were afraid of the delay in presenting the Demands), made use of that argument in order to push the British Government to publicly declare their intentions regarding Zionist aspirations.

Another argument raised by the Zionists in order to gain support referred to the threat arising from pro-Zionist activities which were being conducted in Germany at that time. In a minute, written on 13 June 1917, Graham reported on a meeting with Weizmann, who had come to see him a day earlier bringing information on activities being carried out in Germany with the aim of creating a split within the Zionist movement which might undermine efforts in England to promote a British Palestine. Weizmann

pointed out the achievements of Jewish communities – in Russia, the United States, Italy, South Africa and France – in securing support for the Zionist demand to be under British auspices in Palestine. He urged the British Government, in view of the damage that could be caused by these activities in Germany, to support his efforts on behalf of the protectorate idea. ‘His Majesty’s Government’, he suggested, ‘should give an open expression of their sympathy with, and support of, Zionist aims, and should publicly recognise the justice of Jewish claims on Palestine.’⁵⁰

Graham added his recommendation to the report but Balfour asked: ‘How can H.M.G. announce their intention of “protecting” Palestine without consulting our Allies? And how can we [publicly?] discuss dismembering the Turkish Empire before the Turks are beaten?’⁵¹

A few days later, Sokolow returned from his mission to France and Italy and presented the Foreign Office with a letter from 4 June 1917, written by Jules Cambon, Secretary-General of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which announced that the French Government – which had joined the War in order to protect a nation that had been unjustly attacked – would support the Zionist cause once the Allies had won the War.⁵²

The next day Graham responded to Balfour’s reservations as follows:

I never meant to suggest that the question of ‘protection’ should be raised at all. This would be most inopportune in view of French susceptibilities, and the Zionists here, who are well aware of the delicate nature of the question, although desiring a British protectorate, do not ask for any pronouncement on this line. All they ask is a formal repetition, if possible in writing, of the general assurances of sympathy which they have already received from members of H. M. Government verbally. I can only suggest that we should give something in the lines of the French assurance – which would satisfy them – and it is essential we should do so if we are to secure Zionist political support which is so important to us in Russia at the present moment.⁵³

On the very same day, 19 June, Lord Rothschild and Weizmann met with Lord Balfour. They urged him not to lose time and to issue a public statement of Britain’s support. Balfour, in turn, asked them to submit a draft.⁵⁴

The circumstances which led to the decision to make a declaration, imposed two conditions on the drafting team: the formula had to be

promising enough to attract Jewish public opinion to support the Allies' cause; and secondly, it should give a general outline, refrain from referring to the Zionist demands regarding a British protectorate in order to avoid French opposition and avoid even hinting at any commitment as far as privileges to Jews were concerned, in order to prevent the anti-Zionist Jews opposing it. In other words: not only was the request to draft a formula not accompanied by instructions as to its contents, but it also specified that it should be as general and vague as possible in order not to draw the British Government into commitments they were not sure they could fulfill.

It seems, from internal correspondence between the Zionist leaders who took part in the drafting, that it was made clear to them that the formula should be short, in general terms and with no specified conditions.⁵⁵ Sokolow, who coordinated the drafting efforts, explained to his colleagues that the suggested declaration had no bearing on the Demands which would stay as they were⁵⁶ and that it was not supposed to be an agreement or a full programme. 'Such an agreement or programme', he explained, 'we may get from H. M. Government after having presented our demands, but before having handed it over we cannot claim anything in the form of an agreement or of a programme. It has, therefore, been suggested that for the time being we should get a *general* approval of Zionist aims – very short and as pregnant as possible'.⁵⁷

On 12 July, a series of drafts having been proposed and eliminated, the drafting team agreed on the following formula:

His Majesty's Government, after considering the aims of the Zionist Organisation, accepts the principle of recognising Palestine as the National Home of the Jewish people and the right of the Jewish people to build up its national life in Palestine under a protection to be established at the conclusion of peace following upon the successful issue of the War.

His Majesty's Government regards as essential for the realisation of this principle the grant of internal autonomy to the Jewish nationality in Palestine, freedom of immigration for Jews, and the establishment of a Jewish National Colonising Corporation for the re-settlement and economic development of the country.

The conditions and forms of the internal autonomy and a charter for the Jewish National Colonising Corporation should in the view of His Majesty's Government, be elaborated in detail and determined with the representatives of the Zionist Organisation.⁵⁸

It seems that, in spite of the instructions given to the drafting team, they could not refrain from citing extracts from the Demands, such as promoting Jewish immigration and close settlements, in their draft declaration.

The following day, Sokolow handed the suggested formula to Lord Rothschild and requested him to show it to Mark Sykes and Ronald Graham.⁵⁹ However, there is no evidence, either in Foreign Office files or in Sykes papers, that the draft had indeed reached them.

On 18 July, Sokolow sent Lord Rothschild a new draft, explaining that the previous one had been too long and detailed and that the draft should include two elements: recognition of Palestine as a National Home of the Jewish people and recognition of the Zionist movement.⁶⁰ The 18 July draft – cited at the beginning of this chapter – was sent by Lord Rothschild to Balfour the same day and, a day later, Sokolow handed it to the Foreign Office.⁶¹ However, since it had been explained to the Zionists that there was room only for a general expression of sympathy without elaborating on the implementation of the Programme, no background material was added, nor any clarification attached to Rothschild's letter. The hard work the Zionist leaders had put into formulating the Programme and summing it up in the Demands, with the intention of presenting it eventually to the Cabinet, seemed to have been in vain.

In August 1917, the Foreign Office passed on Rothschild's letter of 18 July 1917 to the War Cabinet secretariat, together with an alternative draft suggested by Balfour.⁶² This time too, as in the previous presentation of the Zionist draft to the Foreign Office, there was no background material attached regarding contacts with the Zionists or their demands which would clarify the characteristics of the 'National Home' they were expecting to achieve in Palestine.

Indeed, there had been opposition to the use of the term National Home even before the suggested drafts were discussed at a War Cabinet meeting. Edwin Montagu, who had just recently been appointed Secretary of State for India, and who, for reasons of principle on the one hand and personal career considerations on the other, was annoyed by the idea of recognition being granted to a Jewish nation, saw to it that the anti-Zionist position, with which the Foreign Office had already been acquainted, would be presented to the War Cabinet.

On 23 August 1917, Montagu published a memorandum, entitled 'The Anti-Semitism of the Present Government' which was circulated as a Cabinet Paper even before discussing the draft declaration and which was presented, together with Rothschild's and Weizmann's letters, to the members of the War Cabinet at their meeting on 3 September 1917.⁶³ On 14 October Montagu wrote a letter in response to Robert Cecil's comments at that

meeting⁶⁴ and, after the meeting on 4 October, he sent a personal letter to Lloyd George.⁶⁵ On 9 October, Montagu issued a statement entitled 'Zionism'⁶⁶ and, on 10 October, Lord Swaythling, Montagu's brother, requested that a series of pamphlets explaining the anti-Zionist position should be circulated to all members of the War Cabinet, as well as to the secretaries of state for Foreign Affairs, War and Colonies.⁶⁷

This whole offensive was intended to make it clear that the use of the term 'National Home' constituted a threat to the status of Jews who had achieved equal civil rights in their countries of domicile and that it was hindering the assimilation process of those Jews who wished to integrate as citizens of their countries.

This position was vehemently defended by Montagu at the War Cabinet meetings of 3 September and 4 October, to which he had been invited because of his deep involvement in the issue.⁶⁸

At the meeting of 3 September, he was opposed by Lord Milner and Lord Robert Cecil (Lloyd George and Balfour were absent), who argued that 'a Jewish State or an autonomous community in Palestine' would only strengthen the status of Jews in countries in which they did not have equal rights and that, in countries such as England, where they enjoyed civil rights and were identified with the nation of which they had become citizens, their status would not be affected because of the existence of 'a national Jewish community' somewhere else.

At the meeting of 4 October, Balfour claimed that, if eventually 'a Jewish citizenship' was established in Palestine, Jews would continue to be English, American and also Palestinian, just as English immigrants became 'American nationals' in the United States. Balfour also explained that the Zionist movement was based on a strong national awareness, that its members regarded themselves as an historic race whose original home was Palestine and that they were motivated by a deep yearning to regain this ancient national home. Balfour did not detect any contradiction between that aspiration and the fact that other Jews had been assimilated in nations among which they had been dwelling for generations.

One can only wonder why, even at this stage of formulating drafts, neither Balfour nor Milner and Cecil were careful in their use of terms such as: 'a Jewish State', 'an autonomous community in Palestine', 'a national Jewish community', 'an original home' and 'an ancient national home'. This applies not only to the controversy with Montagu. Even when they were defending the suggested declaration, in the meetings mentioned above, they did not elaborate either on the meaning of 'National Home' or on its eventual implementation. Instead, they justified the declaration in terms of its desirability and usefulness.

On 3 September, Cecil said that pressure had been put on the Foreign Office and that there was a strong organisation, mainly in the United States, which was enthusiastically Zionist. He added that, if these people's dedication and enthusiasm could be activated in favour of the Allies, it would be of vital assistance.

On 4 October, Balfour expanded on this by explaining that the Zionist Organisation was supported by most Jews in Russia and America and perhaps also in other countries. He reported that Germany was trying to attract the Zionist movement's sympathy, read out the French declaration of support for the Zionists and testified that President Wilson was very sympathetic towards their movement. Balfour concluded this argument at the Cabinet meeting which took place on 31 October, stating that, for purely political reasons, it was desirable to make a declaration of sympathy for Jewish 'nationalists'. Such a declaration by Britain would be effective propaganda both in Russia and the United States.⁶⁹

At the time, the only attempt to reopen deliberations on Zionist objectives and the desired solution in Palestine was by Mark Sykes. In a memorandum written in the second half of September, Sykes explained that the Zionists did not want to have a special political hold on the old city of Jerusalem itself or any control over the Christian and Muslim Holy Places; that they did not want either to set up a Jewish republic or any other form of State in Palestine or any part of Palestine or to enjoy any special rights not enjoyed by other inhabitants of Palestine. All they wanted was – he wrote – 'recognition of the Jewish inhabitants of Palestine as a national unit, federated with national units in Palestine' and 'the recognition of the right of bona-fide Jewish settlers to be included in the Jewish national unit in Palestine'. According to Sykes, the future government of Palestine would have to ensure order in the Christian Holy Places; to hand over the Mosque of Omar to a Muslim body to recognise the special status of existing Jewish Holy Places as well as those shared by other bodies; to devise a system of equitable land purchase, acting as mediator between a willing buyer and a willing seller; and create a constitutional government recognising the various religious and racial nationalities in the country, *viz.* the Roman Catholics, the Orthodox Christians, Jews and Muslims, and according equal privileges to all such nationalities.⁷⁰

It is not clear for whom Sykes' note was intended. No copy was found in Foreign Office files neither was it included in War Cabinet Papers. There is no reference to it in internal minutes and it was not mentioned in Cabinet discussions. However, it might have been read by Curzon, for some passages are reflected in Curzon's memorandum of 26 October 1917 quoted below.

Montagu's objection to the use of the term 'Jewish National Home', on the one hand, and the policy of using it for strategic and utilitarian reasons, on the other, affected the nature of amendments to the suggested declaration. According to Balfour's draft of August 1917:

... His Majesty's Government accepts the principle that Palestine should be reconstituted as the national home of the Jewish people. His Majesty's Government will use their best endeavours to secure the achievement of this object and will be ready to consider any suggestions on the subject which the Zionist Organisation may desire to lay before them.⁷¹

In other words, in comparison to the Zionist draft which was delivered by Lord Rothschild (cited at the beginning of this chapter), there was a change in the second part of the proposal: the Zionist Organisation was no longer an obvious partner for discussing 'methods and means'; instead, the amended draft announced a readiness to consider its suggestions.

On 18 August 1917, after the draft had reached the War Cabinet Secretariat, it was suggested by William Ormsby Gore, Milner's Parliamentary Secretary, in an internal minute addressed to the War Cabinet Secretary, Sir Maurice Hankey, that the second half should contain the following sentence: 'His Majesty's Government will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object by the Jewish people and will be ready, etc.'⁷² In other words, he suggested that the British Government should not promise to achieve the objective but just facilitate its achievement by the Jewish people. He added an explanation:

The great thing to guard against is the appearance of a Christian power 'forcing' the realisation of Zionist aims. Such forcing would arouse a conflict with the Arab population of Palestine at once, and would upset a certain powerful section of non-Zionist Jews. The work of 'practical Zionism' must be carried out by the Jews themselves and not by Great Britain.

This note was not taken into consideration and did not leave the War Cabinet Secretariat. As mentioned above, in those days no attention was given to questions about 'the work of practical Zionism'.

On 23 August, Ormsby Gore presented an amendment suggested by Milner himself: 'His Majesty's Government accepts the principle that every opportunity should be afforded for the establishment of a home for the Jewish people in Palestine, and will use its best endeavours to facilitate the

achievement of this object, and will be ready to consider any suggestions on the subject which the Zionist organisations may desire to lay before them.' In Milner's opinion – Ormsby Gore explained – the expression 'should be reconstituted' is too strong, and so is the word 'secure'.⁷³

Indeed, the term 'reconstitute' signifies recognition of the principle that Palestine was, and should be again, the National Home of the Jewish people. Milner not only eliminated the component of the historical right of the Jewish people, by speaking of 'establishment' instead of 'reconstitution', but also diminished the chances of the Jewish people eventually taking control of the country by suggesting a home for the Jewish people 'in' Palestine instead of supporting the principle that Palestine should be reconstituted 'as' the national home of the Jewish people. He also took a significant step in favour of the anti-Zionists, who vehemently opposed the term 'national', by proposing that the term 'national home' should be replaced by 'home' for the Jewish People. 'Home' could be interpreted as a shelter to those in need, an interpretation which would not antagonise assimilated Jews who were concerned about their identification as British nationals. Furthermore, by suggesting, like Ormsby Gore earlier, the phrase 'to facilitate' instead of 'to secure', and by promising that 'every opportunity should be afforded' to an establishment of that home, instead of accepting the principle that Palestine 'should be' reconstituted etc., Milner watered down the declaration by diminishing Britain's obligation with regard to the establishment of that home. The promise to support implementation of the principle was just hinted at, so as to avoid any British obligation or responsibility.

Milner's suggested amendment of 23 August was circulated to War Cabinet members and laid before the War Cabinet on 3 September, together with Rothschild's letter of 18 July and Balfour's draft of August.⁷⁴ Following the meeting, and presumably because Montagu strongly protested, Milner's version was redrafted once more. Assisted by Leopold Amery, then Assistant Secretary to the War Cabinet,⁷⁵ Milner presented the following formula to the War Cabinet, on the eve of its meeting on 4 October:

His Majesty's Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish race, 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 in any other country by such Jews who are fully contented with their existing nationality (and citizenship).⁷⁶

In other words: in contrast to Milner's draft of 23 August, the term 'National Home' was restored; however, an amendment was added and, instead of 'Jewish people', the term 'Jewish race' was used, 'race' meaning an ethnic group. Furthermore, the paragraph referring to the readiness to consider any suggestions on the subject proposed by Zionist organisations (or 'Organisation', in Milner's previous draft) was eliminated and a new paragraph was added which was supposed to calm down the anti-Zionists. Not only did it clarify that their political status would not be harmed but it also assured them that nothing would be done to prejudice the rights of non-Jewish communities in Palestine, which – they were afraid – could hinder the achievement of equal rights in countries in which Jews had not been granted emancipation.

In accordance with the War Cabinet's decision at its meeting on 4 October, Milner's new draft was circulated for consultation to nine Jewish leaders of both pro-Zionist and anti-Zionist camps. Their responses were published in the form of a War Cabinet Paper, entitled: 'The Zionist Movement'.

As might be expected, the anti-Zionists – Member of Parliament Sir Philip Magnus, Joint President of the Anglo-Jewish Association Claude Montefiore and Chairman of the Board of Guardians Leonard Cohen – protested against the use of the term 'National Home', claiming that the Jews did not constitute a nationality but a religion and that they were not homeless. Philip Magnus suggested that a centre of 'Jewish Culture' should be established and Montefiore recommended immigration, the establishment of settlements and local autonomy, if possible. Cohen too suggested a formula similar to the one proposed by the Conjoint Committee to the Foreign Office, dealing with immigration, settlements, civil and religious rights and municipal privileges.

The pro-Zionists presented their standpoint against these proposals. Herbert Samuel wrote about the significance of the draft declaration in terms of Britain's imperial and strategic interests, while Lord Rothschild dwelt on the promise in the draft declaration, namely that the British Government was benevolently disposed towards and would lend its support to the aspirations of the Jews to have a home of their own, where they could speak their own language, have their own education and have their own civil and religious institutions under the protection of the Allied governments. He also emphasised the historical and inviolable right the Jews had, according to the Zionists, to a national home in Palestine, the land of their forefathers.

The Zionists – Weizmann on behalf of the English Zionist Federation, Sokolow on behalf of the Zionist Organisation and Joseph Herman Hertz,

Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom and the British Empire – concurred with the reservations added to the second half of Milner-Amery’s draft, but suggested shortening it by omitting the distinction between Jews who are content with their existing nationality and others. Furthermore, they suggested that ‘establishment’ should be replaced with ‘re-establishment’, thus emphasising the historical connection between the Jewish people and Palestine. In other words, they proposed returning to the principle expressed in the Zionist draft which used the term ‘reconstitute’. They also requested writing ‘the Jewish people’ again and not the ‘Jewish race’.

Of all the amendments suggested by the Zionists, only two were mentioned in an appendix which was added to the Cabinet Paper and which summed up the alternative formulae and the suggested amendments to Milner-Amery’s draft: shortening the reservation and re-installing the term ‘Jewish people’. Those amendments were accepted and incorporated in the final formula of the declaration. The suggested amendment as regards ‘re-establishment’ was not only not incorporated in the final formula but also not referred to in the appendix.

Another appendix to the Cabinet Paper contained a selection of extracts that were presented to the War Cabinet secretariat by leaders of the Zionist Organisation: an article by Lord Cromer, which appeared in the *Spectator* on 12 August 1916, on the occasion of the publication of the anthology of articles *Zionism and the Jewish Future*, and which dealt with the various definitions of Zionism given there; extracts from an article by Alfred Mond, published in *Weekly Dispatch* on 8 April 1917, in which he wrote that, even if the foundation of a Jewish State did not come within the domain of practical policy, he saw no reason why guarantees, if they were desired, should not be given to the Jews of the fullest liberty to manage their own local affairs and for the protection of the results of their labour.

However, he doubted whether such a solution would satisfy the aspirations of the Zionists who desired the foundation of an autonomous Jewish State. This was evidenced by various writings of the time, for example, an extract from a speech by Jacob Schiff, published in *American Jewish Chronicle* on 24 April 1917, which stated that the author was a believer in the Jewish mission, and that, in Palestine, the Jewish homeland should be a great reservoir from which Jewish culture should spread its beautiful ideals to all parts of the world. Equally, two reviews of the time promoted Zionism, one on the Jewish national idea and the Zionist movement after the February Revolution in Russia, and the second on the growth of Zionism in America during the War.⁷⁷

It is interesting that this collection of extracts, the whole purpose of which was to supply Cabinet Ministers with background information on the

aspirations of the Zionist Organisation and its potential strength, contains no mention of the 'Demands' or the memorandum that the Zionists had prepared. Moreover, those who prepared the file passed on second-hand information on Zionism which was inconsistent and unclear.

The vagueness and discrepancies of the material gathered in the Cabinet paper and its appendices drew Curzon's attention. In a memorandum entitled 'The Future of Palestine', prepared by Curzon to be deliberated at the War Cabinet meeting of 31 October, as well as in arguments he raised at all War Cabinet meetings, Curzon expressed his reservations about the prospect of establishing any form of Jewish National Home in Palestine, a country of limited economic opportunities, and he warned against the use of terms hinting at a possible undertaking to support a programme which, he felt, could not be implemented and which raised misleading hopes. Furthermore, in his memorandum, Curzon analysed the various interpretations given to the term 'National Home' in the Cabinet Paper and dealt with the question of the responsibility involved in accepting the term as a guide-line for British policy, as follows:

If I seek guidance from the latest collection of circulated papers (the Zionist Movement, G-164) I find a fundamental disagreement among the authorities quoted there as to the scope and nature of their aim. 'A National Home for the Jewish race or people' would seem, if the words are to bear their ordinary meaning, to imply a place where the Jews can be reassembled as a nation, and where they will enjoy the privileges of an independent national existence. Such is clearly the conception of those who, like Sir Mond, speak of creating in Palestine 'an autonomous Jewish State', words which appear to contemplate a State, i.e., a political identity, composed of Jews, and administered mainly in the interest of Jews. Such a State might naturally be expected to have a capital, a form of government, and institutions of its own. It would possess the soil or the greater part of the soil of the country. It would take its place among the smaller nations of the earth.

The conception appears to underlie several other of the phrases employed in these papers, e.g., when we are told that Palestine is to become 'a home for the Jewish nation', 'a home for the Jewish race', 'a Jewish Palestine', and when we read of 'the settlement of Palestine as a national centre', and 'the restoration of Palestine to the Jewish people', all these phrases are variants of the same idea, viz., the recreation of Palestine as it was before the days of the dispersion.

On the other hand, Lord Rothschild, when he speaks of Palestine as 'home where the Jews could speak their own language, have their

own education, their own civilisation, and religious institutions under the protection of the Allied Governments', seems to postulate a much less definite form of political existence, one, indeed, which is quite compatible with the existence of an alien (so long as it is not a Turkish) Government.

At the other extreme the late Lord Cromer, who favoured the Zionist cause explains that the resuscitated Palestine is only to be 'the spiritual centre of the Jews' and a reservoir of Jewish culture – aspirations which are wholly different from those which I have just recorded, and which appear to be compatible with the evolution of a comparatively small and for the most part agricultural or pastoral community.⁷⁸

At the decisive meeting of the War Cabinet on 31 October, it was Balfour who stood up to protect the proposed publication of a declaration and, for the first time, also defined the term 'National Home for the Jewish people' which he had visualised. In Palestine, he said, will be:

... some form of British, American, or other protectorate, under which full facilities would be given to the Jews to work out their own salvation and to build up, by means of education, agriculture, and industry, a real centre of national culture and focus of national life. It did not necessarily involve the early establishment of an independent Jewish State, which was a matter of gradual development in accordance with the ordinary laws of political evolution.⁷⁹

A year later, in a private letter to Sir Alfred Zimmern, Professor of International Relations, who served at the Foreign Office's Political Intelligence Department, Balfour disclosed that, personally, he would have liked to see the establishment of a Jewish State, but a premature discussion was likely to decrease the prospects of its implementation.⁸⁰ In June 1919, Balfour had a discussion with Brandeis, in which he admitted that his position stemmed from his belief in the power of the Zionist solution of the Jewish Question to attract intellectual and idealistic Jews, who were working in the service of revolutionary movements, and direct them instead into constructive channels.⁸¹ However, Balfour's desires remained concealed, while his name was attributed to a declaration by the War Cabinet on 31 October 1917 in which the term 'National Home for the Jewish people' was included with no signification attached.

That was, so it seems, the foregone conclusion of the process, in which the term 'Jewish National home' or 'National Home for' – or 'of' – 'the

Jewish people' made its way separately from the detailed programme where it was moulded and defined in the autumn of 1916. Indeed, the opposition to the term 'national' did not succeed in bringing about its total elimination but managed to minimise it. Its inclusion in the final version did not signify – as did the first draft – the historical connection between the Jewish people and Palestine. It did not elaborate at all on the image of the Jewish National Home, expected by those who moulded it at the beginning of the drafting process, nor did it reflect the intentions of the British supporters of the declaration. Furthermore, the boundaries of the sphere within which the 'National Home' was supposed to be implemented were not delineated, which left much room for interpretation. Last but not least, the reservations, which had been added to the declaration to pacify the opponents of the term, limited its prospects, as it could hinder the granting of privileges to the Jewish population, which were supposed – according to Zionist aspirations – to enable it to gradually develop till it was ready for self-rule.

As for Britain, the declaration was supposed to enlist the support of Jewish public opinion and to further the prospects of having Palestine under British auspices. However, it did not commit Britain to any move in that direction nor even to deliberation on how to plan its future policy of establishing 'a National Home for the Jewish People'.

Notes

1. Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, 261, 31 October 1917, P.R.O., CAB 23/4.
2. A.J. Balfour to Lord Rothschild, 2 November 1917, B.M., Assl. Ms. 42278, folios 1&3.
3. Lord Rothschild to A.J. Balfour, 18 July 1917, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3038, F. 143082.
4. C. Weizmann to J.L. Magnes, 8 September 1914, Magnes Archive, C.A.H.J.P. P3/SP 217 (WL, VII, No. 5).
5. C. Weizmann to I. Zangwill, 19 October 1914, C.Z.A. A120/60; C. Weizmann to C.P. Scott, 12 November 1914, W.A. (WL, VII, Nos 22, 33).
6. Correspondence between C. Weizmann and H. Sacher and L. Simon, November–December 1914, W.A.
7. Minutes by R. Cecil, 18 August 1915, Grey Archive, P.R.O., F.O. 800/95.
8. Memorandum by N. Sokolow, 'England as the Protective Power for Palestine', 12 April 1916; Sokolow's undated Memorandum (transmitted to the F.O. between 6–13 April 1916), P.R.O., F.O.371/2817, F. 42608, No. 63314.
9. 'Outline of a Programme for a New Administration of Palestine and for Jewish Resettlement of Palestine in Accordance with the Aspirations of the Zionists Aspirations', W.A.; 'Heads of a Scheme for a Jewish Resettlement of Palestine in accordance with Zionist Aspirations', *ibid.* See also WL, VII, Appendix, pp. 543–4.
10. Memorandum of a conference held on 7 February 1917, W.A.; see also M. Sykes to Foreign Office, 30 April 1917, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3053, F. 84173, No. 88954; see also below p.5.
11. N. Sokolow to L.D. Brandeis, 7 April 1917, W.A.

12. Transmitted by Weizmann to the F.O., 23 May 1917, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3053, F. 84173, No. 106464.
13. M. Gaster to M. Sykes, 31 January 1917 (and enclosed 'Outline of a Programme for Jewish Resettlement of Palestine'), Sykes Archive, Sledmere; J. Malcolm to M. Sykes, 3 February 1917, *ibid*.
14. Correspondence between M. Sykes and M. Gaster, April–November 1916, M. Gaster Archive, U.C.L., Mocatta Library and Sykes Archive, Sledmere.
15. Memorandum by H. Samuel, March 1915, P.R.O., CAB 37/126.
16. M. Sykes to H. Samuel, 26 December 1916, Samuel Archive, I.S.A.
17. See below p.6.
18. G. Buchanam (transmitting a message by Sykes) to F.O., 14 March 1916 and 16 March 1916, P.R.O., F.O. 371/2767, F. 938, Nos 49669, 51288.
19. M. Gaster, Diary, 11 April 1916, M. Gaster Archive, U.C.L., Mocatta Library.
20. J.A. Malcolm to M. Sykes, 3 February 1917, Sykes Archive, Sledmere; C. Weizmann to I. Sieff, 3 February 1917, W.A. (WL, VII, No. 303).
21. Memorandum of a conference held on 7 February 1917, W.A.; see also M. Sykes to F.O., 30 April 1917, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3053, F. 84173, No. 88954; see also p.7.
22. Minutes of a meeting on 10 February 1917, W.A.
23. *Ibid*.
24. M. Sykes to A.J. Balfour, 9 April 1917, Balfour Archive, P.R.O., F.O. 800/210; correspondence between C. Weizmann and N. Sokolow, April–May 1917, W.A. and C.Z.A. A18.
25. M. Sykes to R. Graham, 8 May 1917, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3053, F. 84173, No. 93349.
26. C.P. Scott, Diary, 16 November 1915, B.M., Scott Archive, Vol. 50903; C. Weizmann to C.P. Scott, 23 March 1917, W.A. (WL, VII, No. 323).
27. C. Weizmann to M. Ussishkin, 29 January 1905, W.A. ; C. Weizmann to V. Khatzman, 9 January 1906, *ibid*; C. Weizmann to Ahad Ha'am, 14 December 1914, J.N.U.L., Ahad Ha'am Archive, 1235; C. Weizmann to H. Samuel, 21 March 1915, W.A. (WL, IV, Nos 15, 195; VII, Nos 68, 143); *The New-Judea*, March–April 1930, p. 110.
28. C.P. Scott, Diary, 16 November 1915, B.M., Scott Archive, Vol. 50903.
29. C. Weizmann to C.P. Scott, 23 March 1917, W.A. (WL, VII, No. 323).
30. C.P. Scott, Diary, 16 November 1915, B.M., Scott Archive, Vol. 50903.
31. C.P. Scott, Diary, 3 April 1917, *ibid*.
32. War Cabinet, 'Notes on conference held on 3.4.1917 to consider the instructions to M. Sykes, the head of the political mission to G.O.C. in C., Egyptian Expeditionary Force', P.R.O., CAB 24/9.
33. See p.40.
34. Minutes by R. Graham, C. Hardinge, R. Cecil, 13 – 21 April 1917, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3045, F. 2087, No. 73658; F.O. 371/3052, F. 78324, Nos 78324, 82982; R. Graham to Lord Bertie, 16 April 1917, Bertie Archive, P.R.O., F.O. 800/176.
35. C.P. Scott to C. Weizmann, 16 April 1917, W.A.; H. Sacher to C. Weizmann, 14 April 1917, *ibid*.
36. C. Weizmann, 'Notes on interview with Sir Robert Cecil', 26 April 1917, *ibid*. (WL, VII, No. 356); R. Cecil, minutes of a meeting with Weizmann, 25 April 1917, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3053, F. 84173, No. 87062.
37. F.O. to M. Sykes, 28 April 1917, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3052, F. 78324, No. 88128.
38. Imperial War Cabinet, 'Report of Committee on Terms of Peace' (Territorial Desiderata), 9 April 1917, 28 April 1917, P.R.O., CAB 21/77. See also Preface p. 1.

39. L. Wolf, m 'The Palestine Question – Report on a Conference of the Hon. Officers with Delegates of the Zionist Organisation' (memorandum), 27 April 1915, P.R.O., F.O. 371/2448, F. 51705, No. 51705.
40. Correspondence between F.O. and L. Wolf, December 1915 – March 1916, P.R.O., F.O. 371/2579, F. 18779, No.193902; F.O.371/ 2835, F. 18095.
41. L. Wolf, to L. Oliphant (and enclosed version), 3 March 1916, P.R.O., F.O. 371/2817, F. 42608, No. 42608; see also report by L. Oliphant on a meeting with L. Wolf, 2 March 1916, *ibid.*
42. D. Barzilai, 'On the History of the Balfour Declaration,' [Hebrew] "*Zion*" *Quarterly for Research in Jewish History*, XXXIII year, Number 3–4, Jerusalem, 1968; Palestine: Report on meeting with E. Suares, Alexandria, 27 January 1916, and minutes by H. O'beirne, 28 February 1916, P.R.O., F.O. 371/2671, F. 35433, No. 35433.
43. F.O. to Lord Bertie and G. Buchanan, 11 March 1916, P.R.O., F.O. 371/2817, F. 42608, No. 43776.
44. Minutes by R. Cecil, 29 June 1916, P.R.O., F.O. 371/2817, F. 42608, No. 130062.
45. L. Wolf to L. Oliphant, 1 December 1916, P.R.O., F.O. 371/2817, F. 42608, No. 243496.
46. Memorandum by L. Wolf on his meeting with A.J. Balfour, Balfour Archive, P.R.O., F.O. 800/210.
47. R. Graham to War Office, 7 April 1917 and minutes by A.J. Clark-Kerr and C. Hardinge, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3101, F. 65760, No. 65760.
48. Correspondence between F.O. and L. Wolf, April–May 1917, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3092, F4637, Nos 83962, 88484, 88943, 94113.
49. *The Times*, 24 May 1917.
50. Minutes by R. Graham to C. Hardinge, 13 June 1917, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3058, F. 123458, No.123458; see also C. Weizmann to R. Graham, 13 June 1917, W.A. (WL, VII, No. 432).
51. *Ibid.*
52. *Ibid.*
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*; C. Weizmann to H. Sacher, 20 June 1917, W.A. (WL, VII, No. 435).
55. Ahad Ha'am to N. Sokolow, 11 July 1917, Ahad Ha'am , Igrot (letters), Tel Aviv, 1953–60, Vol. 5, pp. 303–4 [Hebrew].
56. N. Sokolow to J. Cowen, 9 July 1917, C.Z.A., A18.
57. N. Sokolow to H. Sacher, 10 July 1917, *ibid.*
58. N. Sokolow to L. Simon, 13 July 1917, W.A.
59. N. Sokolow to Lord Rothschild, 13 July 1917, C.Z.A., A18.
60. N. Sokolow to Lord Rothschild, 18 July 1917, *ibid.*
61. Draft declaration, transmitted by N. Sokolow, 19 July 1917, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3055, F. 87895, No. 143276.
62. Lord Rothschild to A.J. Balfour, 18 July 1917; draft reply by Balfour, August 1917, and enclosed minutes, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3083, F.143082, No. 143082.
63. E.S. Montagu, 'The Antisemitism of the Present Government,' (G.T. – 1868), 23.8.1917, P.R.O. CAB 21/58; Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting (227), 3.9.1917, P.R.O. CAB 23/4.
64. E.S. Montagu to R. Cecil, 14 September 1917, P.R.O., CAB 21/58, (G.T. – 2197).
65. L. Stein, *The Balfour Declaration* (London, 1961), p. 500.
66. E.S. Montagu, 'Zionism' (G.T. – 2263), 9 October 1917, P.R.O., CAB 21/58.
67. *Ibid.*
68. Minutes of War Cabinet meetings (227, 245), 3 September 1917, 4 October 1917, P.R.O., CAB 24/4.

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69. Minutes of War Cabinet meeting (261), 31 October 1917, *ibid.*
 70. 'Note on Palestine and Zionism', undated, Sykes Archive, Sledmere. See also C. Weizmann to M. Sykes (and enclosed memorandum), 22 September 1917, W.A. (WL, VII, No. 511).
 71. Lord Rothschild to A.J. Balfour, 18 July 1917; draft reply by Balfour, August 1917, and enclosed minutes, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3083, F.143082, No. 143082.
 72. Minute by W. Ormsby Gore, 18 August 1917, P.R.O., CAB 21/58.
 73. A. Milner, draft declaration, transmitted by W. Ormsby Gore, 23 August 1917, *ibid.*
 74. E.S. Montagu, 'The Antisemitism of the Present Government' (G.T. – 1868), 23 August 1917, P.R.O., CAB 21/58; minutes of War Cabinet meeting (227), 3 September 1917, P.R.O., CAB 23/4.
 75. L.S. Amery, *My political Life* (London, 1953), II, p. 116.
 76. Minutes of War Cabinet meeting (245), 4 October 1917, P.R.O., CAB 23/4.
 77. War Cabinet, 'The Zionist Movement' (G – 164), 17 October 1917, P.R.O., CAB 24/4 (drafts in CAB 21/58).
 78. G.N. Curzon, 'The Future of Palestine' (G.T. – 2406), 26 October 1917, P.R.O., CAB 24/30, CAB 21/58.
 79. Minutes of War Cabinet meeting (261), 31 October 1917, P.R.O., CAB 24/4.
 80. A.J. Balfour to A. Zimmern, 19 September 1917, Balfour Archive P.R.O., F.O. 800/210.
 81. 'Memorandum of Interview in Mr. Balfour's apartment', 24 June 1917, W.A.

Post-Declaration Definitions

The need to provide an explanation of the meaning and significance of the Declaration arose soon after its publication. On 10 November 1917, a Reuter's telegram citing the Balfour Declaration was published in Egypt. The following day, a mass meeting was held in Alexandria under the auspices of the Zionist Organisation. This meeting, which was accompanied by ecstatic scenes welcoming the expected era of redemption, unanimously passed a resolution supporting the 'reconstitution of Palestine as National Home of Jewish People'. Zionist leaders in Egypt did not hide the hopes they were pinning on the Declaration. Jacques Mosseri, President of the Zionist Organisation of Egypt, explained in an interview reported by William Yale, special representative of the State Department at the Intelligence Department of the American Diplomatic Agency in Cairo, that he was anticipating Palestine becoming 'a purely Jewish State', where Hebrew would be the official language of the government and of the country; that it would be perhaps necessary, at first, to reach a compromise with the Arabs on certain points, which would not be essentially important to the growth of 'a Jewish nationality and Nation'; and that gradually the Arab population would be absorbed by the Jews.¹

The Syrian Arabs resident in Cairo, were terrified. They reacted by organising public meetings in protest against the Balfour Declaration; they sent messengers, carrying copies of the Declaration, to Palestine and to the Hejaz in order to enlist support for their protest; and handed the British authorities a letter, addressed to Balfour, in which they protested against the intention to separate Palestine from Syria.² Syrian leaders in Egypt were also trying to persuade the British that the Declaration concealed an intention to establish in Palestine a Jewish State – or, at least, a Jewish administration – at the end of the War. They understood that the Jews would be allowed extensive purchases of lands occupied by Arabs and thus expropriate the local population; that Hebrew would be established as the official language of the country; and that a Jewish temple would be built, raising sectarian and religious strife. Just before the Zionist Commission's arrival, a rumour spread that the Jews wished to pull down the Mosque of Omar and re-erect the Jewish Temple on its site.³

The British authorities were urgently required to calm the atmosphere and provide a reliable official explanation. However, the publication of the Declaration had found them unprepared. Reginald Wingate, the High Commissioner in Egypt, Gilbert Clayton, Chief Political Officer to the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, D. G. Hogarth and K. Cornwallis, heads of the Arab Bureau, as well as the British officials around them found themselves in an awkward position. During the War period they had nourished the idea of Britain relying on a large pan-Arab State to be led by Sharif Hussein and his successors, closely connected to Britain and acting as a substitute for the Ottoman Empire. They whole-heartedly believed in the prospects of the realisation of this idea. The Sykes-Picot Agreement, which had been forced on them by London, annoyed them, since it was likely to hinder their planned British patronage over the whole Middle East.⁴ Furthermore, as if that was not enough, while they were wavering on how the Sykes-Picot Agreement could be coordinated with a policy based on encouraging Sharif Hussein's aspirations, a new element was added to the picture by London: a declaration furthering Zionist aspirations in Palestine. This was an additional spanner in the works or so it seemed. The significance attributed to the Balfour Declaration by its supporters in London did not play any role in the Egyptian British authorities' deliberations on how to further their Middle Eastern policy. They were unaware of the importance of the Zionists' in the arena of international relations and did not take it into consideration. As far as they were concerned, the Declaration was an incomprehensible nuisance.⁵

Already, in August 1917, Clayton had informed Sykes of the difficulties caused by lack of any knowledge of the policy decided upon with regard to Jewish aspirations. He even suggested refraining, for the time being, from any definite pronouncement in order to avoid Arab opposition.⁶ Wingate, as well, was wondering how to deal with the Zionists in Egypt. However, information regarding the Government's policy towards Zionist aspirations, which had reached Egypt before the publication of the Balfour Declaration, spoke of 'general sympathy without commitments,'⁷ while the official message of its publication was not accompanied by any information about how the Government was intending to implement its post-War policy regarding Palestine's political future.

According to Lieutenant Fielding of the Arab Bureau, neither Clayton nor he could understand what the British Foreign Office meant by establishing a National Home for the Jews in Palestine. The Arab Bureau was in the dark as to whether the establishment of a Jewish State was intended or whether the Declaration only meant that the Jews would have the right to immigrate to Palestine and to settle there and thus establish a

Home for the Jewish People under whatever government was subsequently established.⁸

Colonel G. S. Symes, Wingate's private secretary, explained to the protesting Arabs that this was Great Britain's first step in its policy of providing justice for small nationalities. Furthermore, he said that the aspirations of the Zionists found ample justification historically to be considered and recognised under the principles of the declarations of the Allies with regard to small nationalities.⁹

A few weeks later, Hogarth was sent to the Hejaz in order to explain to Hussein the main guidelines of British policy towards the Middle East. However, on the eve of Hogarth's mission, Wingate was still suggesting to the Foreign Office that, regarding the question of Palestine, it should be made clear to the Sharif that 'Jews must be accepted by Arabs in reservations (or colonies) in parts of Palestine to be settled at the Peace Conference. [The] rest of Syria to be Arab but precise status to be left to Peace Conference.'¹⁰

The first official explanation which reached Egypt was provided by Mark Sykes, in his letters of 16 November 1917, to Arab leaders, members of the Syrian Welfare Committee in Cairo and to Clayton. Sykes requested that Clayton impress upon the Committee members the vital necessity of authorising Arab representatives to take part in the Zionist-Armenian-Arab Committee, which was being established at the time in London on his initiative and under his chairmanship, in order to co-ordinate the political activities of the three national movements. Sykes explained that the Arab national movement was in need of international recognition in order to secure its desired future, a recognition which could be gained by joining forces with Zionism, 'the greatest motive force in Jewry', which was scattered through the world. Sykes assured the Arabs that the Zionists were ready to co-operate with the Arabs in freeing Syria and the remaining parts of the Ottoman Empire and that 'all the Zionists desire is, to have a right of colonisation in Palestine and in their colonies to live their own national life.'¹¹

Clayton, who had witnessed the Arab protests in Egypt and who had his doubts about the prospect of Arab-Jewish-Armenian co-operation,¹² refrained from handing Sykes' letter to the Arab leaders.¹³ He reported to Sykes that the 'superior intelligence and commercial abilities' of the Jews were feared by both Muslims and Christians, and urged him not to inflame those fears by further concessions to Jews in the spirit of the Declaration, and especially not 'to permit any general union of Jewish repatriation or colonisation' for the time being.¹⁴

Sykes, in response, repeated his proposal about the implementation of the policy of Arab-Armenian-Zionist cooperation and stressed that 'Arabs should note [that] Zionism is a constant inevitable factor, as an ally equals

guarantee of ultimate Arab independence, as a hostile force equals Arab and Syrian stagnation'. Furthermore, he argued that the Zionists were liable to be used as an instrument to further the Turkish-German policy of smashing any prospects of Arab independence.¹⁵

Only then did Clayton show the members of the Syrian Welfare Committee Sykes' letter of 16 November and advise them, in the spirit of Sykes' instructions, that they had better work in harmony with the Jews and the Armenians since the Zionists were very powerful, that throughout the world the Jews controlled capital and that, in their determination to obtain Palestine as a Home for the Jews, they would undoubtedly succeed. It would be preferable, he suggested, for them to be under the auspices of the British than of the Turks.¹⁶

According to Yale, even before those explanations were given to the Arabs, the British authorities in Egypt had refused to deliver the Syrians' telegram of protest to Balfour and, furthermore, had applied economic pressure to Syrian businessmen in Egypt in order to make them understand that any opposition to Zionism would be in vain.¹⁷

To emphasise their explanations, Sykes and the Foreign Office referred the British authorities in Egypt to speeches delivered at mass meetings, held by the Zionists in London and Manchester, to celebrate the Balfour Declaration.¹⁸ At both meetings, Sykes appealed to the Zionists to build their future on Jewish, Armenian and Arab co-operation. The British Authorities in Egypt were asked to publicise the speeches and to act in their spirit in order to create an atmosphere of mutual toleration and cooperation, which they did in their dealings with both Zionists and Arabs.¹⁹

Following these persuasive efforts, the members of the Syrian Welfare Committee replied to Sykes that they had deduced from his letter 'that all that the Zionists demand is liberty for the Jews to settle in our country and enjoy full civil rights sharing with the native inhabitants their rights as well as their obligations'²⁰ According to Yale, the Syrians had agreed to cooperate not only because they felt that they had no alternative but also because they understood that, if indeed the British did not promise the Zionists any privileges, they should try and defeat the ambitions of the Zionists to reinforce their hold in Palestine, and that it would be better for them to join the race by establishing a *fait accompli* in the country in their favour.²¹

Sykes did not disguise his satisfaction. In response, he elaborated on his previous explanation to the Arabs, saying that 'a restless unhappy world Jewry hungering for a spiritual centre and a national home, ever yearning yet ever unsatisfied, a force that is constructive, energetic and determined, rendered by disappointment and shattered hopes', could become 'a

destructive force yet still equally energetic and determined, this if Zionism is thwarted or fails'. The future of Palestine, Sykes promised, would be determined according to three principles: any arrangement made by the Peace Conference regarding the question of Palestine must 'guarantee the inviolability of the Holy Places', 'offer honest opportunity to Zionist colonisation' and 'guarantee the existing population against expropriation, exploitation or subjection'.²²

Two weeks later, when Sykes sent Clayton guidelines about Palestine's Administration pending the Peace Conference, he based his instructions on the need to prepare for the Peace Conference and increase the chances of Britain being accepted by world opinion as the most suitable Trustee for Palestine. To achieve this, Sykes suggested that the Administration of Palestine should have three separate departments to deal with the country's three main problems: the question of the Holy Places, the local population and the Zionist enterprise. He believed that, this way, 'the Peace Conference would be in a position to deal separately with each definite question' and, 'If we deal with the three problems in a satisfactory way during our provisional administration, we shall not only facilitate the work of the Peace Conference but we shall increase the chances of being nominated Trustees for the last two if not for the first'. With regard to the Zionists, Sykes explained, 'The Zionists do not desire to break out into a fully fledged republic. Their immediate want, is opportunity to colonise and develop the waste lands of Palestine and their most sanguine members regard this as an event which will take at least three generations to accomplish'.²³

In a letter to Wingate the same day, Sykes also argued that, by collaborating with the Zionists, Britain was enlisting the support of an influential power worldwide – which was expected to get stronger at the time of the Peace Conference – and that it would be preferable for Britain to be assisted by the Zionist influence at the Peace Conference if it wanted to find itself in a good position in the Middle East after the War.²⁴

In the instructions about the suggested policy of the Provisional Administration, Sykes also explained how the Zionist enterprise should be encouraged before the Peace Conference:

With regard to Zionism, our policy is to keep Zionism, on the right lines, that is, to avoid the danger of its being construed as either dangerous to the existing population or likely to prejudice the safety of Christian and Muslim Holy Places, yet at the same time to give it full facilities in way of reconstruction of existing colonies and institutions.²⁵

Along with this, the British saw to it that the trust they had managed to gain in the Hejaz not be undermined. On 4 December, Wingate sent instructions to Jeddah regarding the main points of British propaganda to be used to reassure local Arab politicians about the meaning of the Balfour Declaration, a sort of combination of Sykes' and the Arab Bureau's explanations: the consideration shown to the sentimental aspirations of Jewry in Palestine was evidence of the Entente's efforts on behalf of oppressed peoples; worldwide Jewish influence had been mobilised by the Declaration in support of Entente policy, which would lead to the realisation of Arab Nationalist aims; a lasting agreement between Arabs, Jews and Armenians, in which each nationality would support the reasonable aims of the others, which would also prevent future friction and dissension between neighbours who desired to develop their own culture on national and independent lines; the Balfour Declaration had forestalled a Turkish-German pro-Zionist Declaration conceived to promote conflict between Zionists and Arabs and thus promote Turkey's secret aim of destroying Arab Nationalism.²⁶

A month later, the Foreign Office sent Wingate an amended draft to be presented to Hussein by Hogarth. Having promised to guarantee the safety of Holy Places, the document clarified that the essence of the Declaration's policy was:

that since world Jewish opinion is in favour of a return of Jews to Palestine and, in as much as this opinion must remain a constant factor and H.M.G. view with favour the realisation of this aspiration, H.M.G. are determined that, in so far as is compatible with the freedom of the existing population, both economical and political, no obstacle should be put in the way of the realisation of this ideal.

Hogarth was asked to explain to the King, that 'leaders of [the Zionist] Movement are determined to bring about success of Zionism by friendship and cooperation with Arabs, and that such an offer is not one to be lightly thrown aside' since 'friendship of world Jewry towards the Arab cause is equivalent to support in all cases where Jews have political influence.'²⁷

Two months later, Sykes expanded his interpretation of the Zionist claim to Palestine in a long sentimental letter to Faisal, Sharif Hussein's son. The Jews, he wrote:

do not seek to conquer you, do not seek to drive out the Arabs of Palestine, all they ask for is to be able to do what they have not done elsewhere, to return to the land of their forefathers, to cultivate it, to work with their hands to become peasants once more ... they do not

desire to go there in millions, what they desire is to be able to feel that in Palestine a Jew may live his life and speak his tongue as he did in ancient times.

And again, Sykes repeated his argumentation about the advantages of the policy: 'If you welcome it, then there will be happiness and prosperity, and hope for your cause. If you spurn this impulse, then you will have against you a force which cannot be seen, but which is felt everywhere.'²⁸

Sykes left the Zionists to continue the task of persuading the Arabs of the feasibility of both national movements coexisting, a prospect which the British Authorities in Egypt – especially Clayton – were doubtful about.²⁹ At the time, a Zionist commission was being organised in London, to leave for Palestine in order to form a link between the British Authorities and the Jewish population in Palestine, as well as to help in establishing friendly relations between the Jews and the Palestinian Arabs.³⁰ Sykes assumed that meeting representative Zionists should prove, to both the Military Authorities and the Arabs, that there was room for a dialogue between the two movements.³¹

In other words: because London's explanations of the intentions of the Balfour Declaration were meant to pacify the Arabs of Syria and the Hejaz and to ease the burden on the Egyptian Authorities, they spent less time explaining what was meant by the term National Home for the Jewish people than elaborating on what it did not include. The caveats included understandings that no Jewish State would be established and the country would not be under control of a Jewish administration; that the Muslim and Christian Holy Places would not fall into Jewish hands and would remain in the custody of the religious heads of the various denominations; and that the local Arab population would be guaranteed against expropriation, exploitation or subjection. As to the essential content of the expression 'National Home', nothing definite was said. The term remained as vague as before.

Furthermore, according to London's explanations, since all the Jews desired was 'to have a right of colonisation in Palestine and in their colonies to live their own national life', then the Jews were likely to be granted any elements of independence only within a framework of some sort of autonomy within their colonies but would have no influence with the central authorities. As to what was meant by to live '... their own national life', no explanation was given. However, from the explanations given to the various correspondents, it seems to have referred to: rights to preserve their religion and culture, to speak their language and cultivate their lands. The meaning of 'a right of colonisation in Palestine' remained vague as well. Since the

Palestinian Arabs might fear being evicted if the right of Jews to settle in the country and cultivate their land was acknowledged, things were left vague and even contradictory. Sykes was aware of the possibility that, even if indeed the Zionists 'do not desire to break out into a fully fledged republic' immediately, their plan to farm uncultivated land might conceal an intention to go from strength to strength and achieve independence in the long run. Nevertheless, since he assumed that the process would be long and slow, Sykes did not reject that plan. One of the principles which was supposed to guide the Provisional Administration of Palestine, according to Sykes in his letter to the Syrian Welfare Committee, mentioned above, was to 'offer honest opportunity to Zionist colonisation' (with no elaboration on the meaning of the word 'honest'). On the other hand, in his guidelines to the Provisional Administration, which one would expect was more detailed than the information he gave to the Arabs, he mentioned only giving the Zionists 'full facilities in way of reconstruction of existing colonies and institutions', with no indication given about the scope or even the possibility of further colonisation.

It is worth noticing that it was Sykes, whose vision it was that the three national movements – Arab, Armenian and Jewish – should and could work side by side in harmony and thus support British interests in the Middle East, did not base his arguments either on the right of the Jews to self-determination (like the Arabs) or on their right to a national existence in Palestine, which could be justified historically and recognised under the principles of the Allied declarations in regard to small nationalities. Instead, he argued that the policy was advantageous: it was worthwhile for the Arabs to cooperate with the Zionist movement since the latter, being influential in countries in which Jews were dwelling, could assist in achieving the objectives of the Arab national movement. Sykes did not even hesitate to make use of the threat of the Jews' demonic power, 'which cannot be seen, but which is felt everywhere', and warned of the possibility that lack of cooperation might lead to destructive forces being successfully brought to play against the national Arab movement.

In his messages to British policy-makers in the Middle East, Sykes never mentioned the recognition of the right to self-determination as a basic principle nor did he argue that one could not recognise one national movement and ignore the other. The argument that recognition of the national Jewish movement would be just one step taken by Great Britain in carrying out its policy of recognising the right of the national movements of the Middle East to exist, and should be regarded as evidence of a genuine intention to implement that policy towards the Arabs, had been suggested, interestingly enough, in Egypt, before instructions had been received from

London. This suggestion was also raised by Robert Cecil at a public meeting which took place in London on 2 December.³² Sykes, on the other hand, based his instructions to the British Authorities in Egypt on tactical-advantageous considerations: since Jewish public opinion would, presumably, have influence at the Peace Conference, it would be a factor – maybe even the primary one – in increasing the chances of Britain being accepted as the most suitable Trustee for Palestine. In other words, British Authorities in Egypt, who were assuming that Britain's prospects in the Middle East depended on the national Arab movement which had originated in the Hejaz and were afraid of any action which might annoy the Arabs and damage British interests, should understand that the Jewish national movement was no less important than the Arab one in terms of Britain's prospects of controlling Palestine and having a foothold in the Middle East.

Mark Sykes' arguments, which were actually a continuation of the line of thinking which had served as a catalyst and brought about the decision to publish the Balfour Declaration at the time, might explain, perhaps, why no effort was made to apply substance to the promises hinted at in the Declaration and the recognition of the right of the Jewish people to a National Home in Palestine. At that stage, London's main concern was to get a foothold in Palestine and it didn't want to be bothered with the question of what shape that country would take.

The conclusion that the concept of a National Home should be substantiated before the Peace Conference was convened had been reached by the Zionists in London, as mentioned above, long before the Balfour Declaration was announced, probably for the very same reason that deterred the British from going into practical details which might involve a commitment. Once the Declaration had been announced, the Zionists were aware of its faults from their point of view and urged the British to clarify their intentions and put them into practice. Thus, soon after the Declaration had been made, it was once more suggested that Weizmann should be sent to the Palestine front to assist the Egyptian Expeditionary Force in their relations with the Jewish population.

That suggestion had already been raised, in the course of Weizmann-C.P. Scott-Sykes' deliberations in March–April 1917, but could not be implemented at the time because of the let-up in the Palestine offensive as well as the developments which had led to the Balfour Declaration.³³ However, once the Declaration was published and the British offensive renewed, the Zionists thought that, following the British offensive, they

should penetrate Palestine in order to advance their interests and lay foundations for the National Home, which would be considered at the upcoming Peace Conference.³⁴ Accordingly, a memorandum was prepared by a committee of the Zionist Office in London, according to which a Commission would be sent out to Palestine which 'should represent the Zionist Organisation' and 'act as an advisory body to the British Authorities in Palestine in all matters relating to Jews or which may affect the establishment of a National Home for the Jewish people in accordance with the Declaration of His Majesty's Government'. This memorandum was submitted to the British Foreign Office by Weizmann on 17 December and again on 16 January, attached to a letter to Sykes, in which he reported on his meeting with Balfour the same day.³⁵ Both documents were discussed and amended at the Foreign Office and submitted to the War Cabinet's Middle East Committee; they led to the Committee's decision, at its meeting on 19 January 1918, to despatch 'a Zionist Commission to Palestine'.³⁶

The War Cabinet's Middle East Committee was informed earlier that the need for such a commission appeared urgent because of the important political results that had arisen from the Balfour Declaration and the need to put the assurance given in this Declaration into practice; the inadequacy of existing Zionist representation in Egypt and Palestine; and the necessity of bringing both the British Authorities in Egypt and Palestine and the Arabs into contact with the responsible leaders of the Zionist Organisation in Entente countries.

According to the War Cabinet's Middle East Committee, the objectives of the Commission were: to help establish friendly relations between the Jews and the Arabs and other non-Jewish communities; to form a link between the British Authorities and the Jewish population in Palestine; to take a hand in the relief work which was being carried out in Palestine and in the repatriation of evacuated persons and refugees, so far as the military situation would allow; to assist in restoring and developing the Jewish colonies and in re-organising the Jewish population in general; to collect information and report upon the possibilities of future Jewish developments in Palestine in the light of the Balfour Declaration.

In other words, the formulation of the objectives of the Zionist Commission answered 'the need for putting the assurance given in this declaration into practice' by assisting the Jewish population in Palestine, repatriating evacuated Jews and refugees, restoring and developing the Jewish colonies and examining the possibilities of future development.

This wording was similar to Sykes' on 18 January 1918 when he suggested restricting assistance to the Jewish enterprise to the reconstruction of existing colonies and institutions.³⁷ It seems that Sykes attached

significance to the word 'existing': one of the amendments inserted by Sykes into Weizmann's letter to him of 16 January 1918, prior to its circulation among the members of the Middle East Committee, was to add the word 'existing' in the paragraph dealing with 'the Reconstitution of the Jewish colonies' and other institutions.³⁸

The Zionists, represented by their capable spokesman Chaim Weizmann, were not satisfied with this general outline of the Zionist Commission's objectives and requested that all relief work be concentrated in one committee; that the Commission be allowed to lay the foundations of a Jewish University; that speculation in land should be prevented by the Military Authorities; and that the Jewish Unit should be sent off to the Palestine front. All four issues seemed to Weizmann significant for the realisation of a National Home.³⁹

Concentrating restoration and relief efforts was supposed to enable the Commission to take sole charge of all dealings of the *Yishuv* (Hebrew for the organised Jewish population in Palestine), either with the British Authorities in Palestine or with various organisations worldwide which had assisted the Jewish population in time of need. That way, Weizmann believed, the Commission would gain the freedom and the power to direct the policy of establishing facts on the ground in Palestine which would affect the decisions of the Peace Conference with regard to the scope of the Jewish National Home, without interference from other circles within the Jewish population.

In the foundation of a Jewish University, Weizmann saw a symbolic act which would demonstrate the spirit in which the Zionists desired to enter Palestine and would focus the eyes of the world on the country as the spiritual centre of the Jewish people.⁴⁰ He, therefore, attached the greatest possible significance to the laying of the foundation stone of the university as a step in the process of founding a National Home and strengthening the Jewish claim on Palestine.

The second fundamental issue on the Zionist agenda – the purchase of lands in Palestine – was a test case, in the opinion of both Zionists and Arabs. The Arabs were afraid lest the impoverishment of the Arab population during the War might speed up the purchase of land by Jews and that, in the framework of the National Home policy, the British might enable the Zionists to purchase a wide range of land, leading to the Arab population being dispossessed and placing practically the whole country in Jewish hands. Zionist leaders in London also believed that the impoverishment of the Arab population might lead to land in Palestine changing hands; however, they were mainly afraid of speculation in land before the Zionist movement's financial institutions were ready, which might seriously impede Jewish colonising activity in the future. Weizmann, therefore, requested that The

British Military Authorities should pass a measure forbidding land changing hands while the country was still under military occupation.⁴¹

The last issue mentioned by Weizmann was that of the Jewish Regiment. The idea that a battalion of Jewish soldiers, with an emblem characterising it as a Jewish unit, should be fighting on the Palestine front and thus strengthening the Jewish claim on Palestine was not a new idea. Vladimir (Hebrew: *Ze'ev*) Jabotinsky strived to see it realised throughout the War. At the end of 1917, the first Jewish unit, the 38th Battalion of Royal Fusiliers, was awaiting embarkation at its training camp in Plymouth. Energetic campaigning was in progress in the United States to mobilise a large number of volunteers for despatch to England and enrollment in future battalions, and the 39th and 40th Battalions of Royal Fusiliers were already under consideration. Weizmann, who had supported Jabotinsky all along, attached importance to the participation of the battalions on the Palestine front as one of the facts on the ground to be established before the Peace Conference. He now urged Balfour to expedite the despatch of the 38th Battalion of Royal Fusiliers to that front. Weizmann justified his requests for land acquisitions and the Jewish Battalion by saying that those issues 'were of importance in connection with the policy as laid down in the Declaration of H. M. Government on the establishment of a National Home for the Jews in Palestine'.⁴²

When Weizmann's letter was laid before the War Cabinet's Middle East Committee, after being amended in accordance with Sykes' and Balfour's reservations, that sentence was omitted from the text. This was not because of any opposition to the request itself – since forbidding land changing hands as long as the country was under military occupation corresponded with the status quo policy dictated by the Hague Convention.⁴³ The Jewish Battalion was indeed despatched to the Palestine front shortly afterwards and Weizmann's comment presumably seemed to be redundant.

A further question, which was referred separately by the Zionists to various Government departments, dealt with the reactivation of the Anglo-Palestine Company, to operate its banking branches in Palestine. Sterling transfers outside the British Empire were controlled by War regulations. Since Palestine was considered an occupied enemy territory, special permission was needed to open bank branches, as well as a special authorisation of the Treasury for sterling transfers to those branches or a declaration that the occupied territory was 'under friendly occupation'. In view of the fact that Bank Ottoman had already been given permission to begin operations in its Jaffa and Jerusalem branches and there were rumours that the Treasury intended to use that bank for sending money to Palestine, Weizmann requested that the Anglo-Palestine Company's banks should be

opened and given permission both to transfer money to its Jaffa and Jerusalem branches and also to increase the capital of the bank.⁴⁴ Furthermore, the Zionists prepared proposals for reactivation of their banks. In December 1917, Weizmann presented the Foreign Office with a memorandum, including various proposals on the use of the Anglo-Palestine Company's bank services by the Military Authorities in Palestine.⁴⁵ It was agreed then to deal with the issue when the question of the Zionist Commission was considered and, in January 1918, the matter was raised again by Weizmann in his discussions and correspondence with Graham.⁴⁶ 'It would be in the interest of Great Britain and also in conformity with the policy of His Majesty's Government as expressed in the declaration of Nov. 2nd, 1917, that our Banks should be encouraged in every way and made use of by the Military Authorities in the occupied territory of Palestine,' Weizmann explained.⁴⁷

As has already been mentioned, the specific issues suggested by the Zionists were not referred to in the War Cabinet's Middle East Committee's decision. However, they were included in the instructions given to William G. A. Ormsby Gore, who was to accompany the Commission as its British Political Officer. Those instructions, which defined the scope of activities of the Commission agreed upon by the Middle East Committee, also dealt with: examining the possibility of preventing land speculation during the war; laying, under British auspices, the foundation stone of a Hebrew University near Jerusalem; and reopening the Zionist banks in Jaffa and Jerusalem, subject to the approval of the Military Authorities.⁴⁸ In other words, although the formulators of the Zionist Commission's tasks refrained from explaining how 'the assurance given in the declaration' be put into practice and were careful not to accept the Zionist interpretation that answering their requests gave substance to the National Home policy, they, in fact, granted most of the requests in their instructions.

The Foreign Office took care to explain all this to the Military Authorities in Egypt. On 11 December 1917, even before the Middle East Committee's decision, the Foreign Office informed Clayton of the expected despatch of a Zionist Commission;⁴⁹ this they did by way of a message which the Zionists requested should be published in the Egyptian press in response to the criticism of Zionists leaders for not being active enough in regard to Palestine. According to that message, as soon as the military situation permitted, a commission composed of delegates of Zionist organisations would proceed to Palestine to assist the Military Authorities in dealing with problems connected with the Jewish settlements in Palestine; additionally, the commission would attend to the question of relief for the whole population in the area.

Despite its moderate wording, the message met with a harsh response from Clayton, who opposed publication of the proposed press notice, since the military situation demanded that no one be allowed to proceed to Palestine. In his opinion, the longer that prohibition was maintained, the simpler the political situation would be, since to let in representatives of one community would open the door to others.⁵⁰

An official announcement about the arrival of the Zionist Commission, defining its tasks in relation to the National Home policy, was sent by the Foreign Office to Wingate on 13 February 1918, about two weeks before the Commission's departure.⁵¹ According to this, the commission had Zionist funds at its disposal for work relief, repatriation and expansion, should that become practicable. Furthermore, it was explained that the object of the Commission was to carry out, subject to General E.H. Allenby's authority, any steps required to give effect to the Government's Declaration in favour of the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people. In addition, it was emphasised that the Government favoured the project of laying a foundation stone for a Jewish University – a medical school, to which the Jewish world attached great importance and for which large sums were coming in. Among the most important functions of the Commission, it was to establish good relations with Arabs and other non-Jewish communities in Palestine and serve as a link between the Military Authorities and the Jewish population and Jewish interests in Palestine. It was most important – the letter stressed – ‘that everything should be done to obtain authority for the Commission in the eyes of the Jewish world and at the same time to allay Arab suspicions regarding the true aims of Zionism’.

The scope of the Zionist Committee's functions was also elaborated on in two letters of introduction – written by Lloyd George, on 1 March 1918, and Balfour, on 2 March 1918 – which were given to Weizmann on his departure to be delivered to General E.H. Allenby, Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force.⁵² Lloyd George requested that Allenby, or his representatives, discuss with Weizmann ‘his proposals in regard to the foundation of a Jewish university, the development of Jewish colonies and so forth’. Balfour explained that he was personally much interested in the success of the Commission, which was sent out to assist Allenby in giving ‘concrete form’ to the Government's Declaration in favour of the establishment of a National Home for the Jewish people in Palestine, since ‘the attitude of the whole of Jewry towards the fate of Palestine at the war’ would greatly depend upon the Commission's achievements and might well play an important part at the Peace Conference. Therefore, Balfour requested that, in addition to the instructions given to Ormsby Gore, Allenby allow the Commission considerable latitude and authority to investigate questions

relating to the future economic possibilities of Palestine as a whole, especially in such matters as Crown land, waste and unoccupied lands, as well as the existing Jewish colonies. Balfour was aware of the fact that very little could be done during the War, but believed that it was desirable that the matter should be explored so that the Government would be ready for the work of the reconstruction period.

Thus, Balfour added another aspect to 'the assurance given in the declaration'. One of the Zionist Commission's functions, according to the War Cabinet's Middle East Committee decision, was 'to collect information and report upon the possibilities of future Jewish developments in Palestine in the light of the declaration of His Majesty's Government'. The Zionists refrained from referring to their plan to develop the country and requested only that speculation in land should be prevented, as it might hinder their development plans. The letter, sent to Wingate, mentioned how 'extension, as such shall become practicable'. Balfour, on the other hand, made it very clear that, although the Commission had not been authorised to bring about any change or extension, investigating future economic possibilities of lands unoccupied by Arabs should be considered as preparation of the field for future Jewish land development and expansion.

The picture one can draw from this outline of the authority and scope of the Zionist Commission shows that they were far from intentionally laying foundations for a National Home for the Jewish people. However, the scope of the Commission's functions allowed the Jewish population in Palestine to organise and strengthen itself. It was granted a representative body which, being a link between the British Authorities and the Jewish population in Palestine, was supposed to open the doors of the Administration. Last but not least, the Palestinian Jews were allowed to prepare future development plans. Thus, as a matter of fact, the conditions for the Zionist Commission's activities were created and the way was paved for establishing facts on the ground which could lay the foundations for the National Home.

The Zionist Commission set off at the beginning of March 1918. Its first mission was to verify and flesh out – in meetings with the British Authorities and Arab committees in Cairo – London's account of its pro-Zionist policy and the future of Palestine. In its preliminary discussion, held by the Commission on 14 March 1918, on board the S. S. *Canberra*, Ormsby Gore pointed out that the Arabs and British officials in Egypt seemed have a complete misconception of Zionists aims and aspirations, and Reginald Wingate had only the vaguest idea of the practical meaning of Zionism. In

their opinion, he explained, the establishment of a Jewish National Home meant the establishment of some form of Jewish government in Palestine at the end of the War. In order to avoid confusion, Ormsby Gore demanded that the Zionist Commission should outline its plans, especially as far as Crown, waste and unoccupied lands were concerned, and define the authority to be invested in the proposed Chartered Development Company.⁵³

That preliminary discussion dealt with the most important issues. At the time, Clayton, then staying in Palestine, was sending urgent messages about the tension which was being stoked by Arab fears, on the one hand, and inciting interpretations given by the Jews, on the other. He wrote that he was looking forward to the Zionist Commission allaying the atmosphere.⁵⁴ Indeed, Wingate, who received the Commission at the Residency on arrival in Egypt, and welcomed it by expressing his great sympathy with the Zionist ideal and the deep impression made on him by the Jewish colonies in Palestine, spoke mainly about the need to allay Arab suspicions. Wingate explained that the Arabs feared that the British Government intended to establish a Jewish State or Government in Palestine at the end of the War, thus replacing Turkish rule with Jewish political domination over the Arabs. Secondly, they feared that the Jews meant to expropriate the land of the Arab inhabitants of Palestine and drive them out. He believed that the situation was complicated by the fact that various agencies were busily at work trying to persuade the Arabs that they would make a mistake if they put their trust in Great Britain, which had sold them out to the Jews and was not to be trusted to protect Arab interests. Wingate was afraid that the collapse of Russia and consequent possibility of the recovery of Turkey as a formidable power might shatter the pro-British orientation of the Arabs. With this in mind, Wingate appealed to the Commission to use 'Co-operation, Co-ordination and Efficiency' in all their dealings with the Arabs. In particular, he warned them to be very careful in their discussions on land acquisition, which was a complicated problem in the light of traditional rights to uncultivated land.⁵⁵

In other words, all that interested Wingate was the negative connotation the Zionist Commission's despatch to Palestine might have and the possible damage to the Arab pro-British orientation that he and his people had encouraged during the War. He did not delve too deeply into the Zionist Commission's plans nor into the substance the Commission was intending to give to the promise embodied in the Balfour Declaration and probably took no interest in those issues beyond his desire to prevent the Arabs from becoming alienated.

The question of a possible conflict with the Arabs was also the central topic at Ormsby Gore and Weizmann's meeting with Clayton. According to

the Zionist Commission's report, both Ormsby Gore and Weizmann were under the impression that Clayton believed that the Zionist programme included the immediate establishment of a Jewish State after the War. They reported to the Commission that Clayton had stated that the Arabs would not be an obstacle west of the Jordan and that 'the Arabs were merely a war measure, whilst he saw in the development of Jewish colonisation a permanent asset to Palestine'. It is not clear whether or not this was wishful thinking on the part of Weizmann. Clayton, however, dissociated himself from this interpretation and argued that, in view of the pledges given to the Arabs by the British, the Arab problem would certainly remain after the War and continue to be one of considerable importance.⁵⁶

The Zionist Commission was trying to do its duty as a moderating factor to the best of its ability. Weizmann stated, in his meetings with Clayton and with Wingate, that there was complete accord between Jewish interests and British strategic and political interests in Palestine; that the Zionists had no intention whatever of expropriating or displacing the Arab population of Palestine nor of seeking to set up a Jewish State or Government in the near future; and that the Jews wanted Palestine to be a British colony or protectorate at the end of the War, under whose administration absolute equality of treatment would be meted out to Jews and Arabs.⁵⁷

Weizmann clarified this statement in meetings which took place on 27 March, 29 March and 1 April, between the Zionist Commission and members of a 'Palestine Committee' composed of Muslim and Christian Arabs from Syria and Palestine, which had recently been formed in Cairo, and with some members of the Syrian Welfare Committee. In those meetings, Weizmann stated that one of the main tasks of the Zionist Commission was to prevent land speculation in Palestine, that the Commission had no intention of monopolising the whole of the administration of Palestine, that the Zionists did not wish to establish a Jewish State but were looking forward to a British Palestine, that the Jews had not put forward any claim to control the non-Jewish Holy Places and that the Jewish university and schools would be open to Arabs and Jews alike.⁵⁸

Once the discussions had come to an end, on the eve of the Zionist Commission's departure for Palestine, the Palestine Committee presented the Zionist Commission with a memorandum on 'the fundamental lines on which should repose the desired policy of mutual understanding, co-operation and alliance between Palestinians and Zionists'. These 'fundamental lines' stipulated that the rights of the respective owners of the various Holy Places would not be violated, that the system of government would be based on evenhanded justice and equality of rights between the

different elements of the population irrespective of their comparative numbers and that the laws of the country would apply equally to all elements of the population without distinction. Additionally, all persons coming into the country as colonists, whatever might be their nationality, would be subject alike to the laws of the country, the official language would be Arabic, any transaction of purchase or sale of property would be suspended during the War in order to prevent expropriation and honest opportunities should be offered to Zionist settlers by facilitating their purchase of State lands, especially in the first rush of immigration, leaving a reasonable share of those lands to others.⁵⁹

At that point, the Zionist Commission decided to suspend further discussions until they could meet directly with Arab leaders who represented the Arabs living in Palestine.

Ormsby Gore summed up the discussions with the Arab Committees in a rather optimistic report he communicated to Balfour.⁶⁰ K. Cornwallis, Director of the Arab Bureau, concluded that, following Weizmann's frank avowal of Zionist aims, the Arabs were convinced that Zionism had come to stay, that it was far more moderate in its aims than they had anticipated and that meeting it in a conciliatory spirit was likely to bring them substantial benefits in the future.⁶¹ Even Clayton, after a while, was hopeful that the interchange of views which had taken place between the Zionists and both Arabs and Syrians paved the way for a future agreement, when the general situation permitted settlement of the various problems which would confront the future government of Palestine.⁶²

The Zionist Commission's stay in Egypt was welcomed by the British Authorities there because it started a dialogue between an authorised representative Zionist body and leading Arabs, where the good atmosphere raised hopes for conciliation and coexistence, despite the significant disparity between their positions. In addition, the British Authorities were also relieved because the Zionist Commission made them realise that – like them – it would do its best to prevent the Arabs from opposing the British pro-Zionist policy, an opposition which might damage Britain's prospects of getting the Mandate.

Furthermore, the Zionist Commission relieved the British Authorities in Egypt of some of the burden of pacifying the Arabs by arguing that the British had not misled the Zionists by offering them independence and did not give them any promises which were contradictory to Arab interests. According to the British Political Intelligence summary, the

national home is conceived by the Zionists as a place where the Jews can lead their own life in their own way, using their own language

(Hebrew), building up their own institutions, and developing the country on a basis of equality of treatment with the other inhabitants of Palestine ... Dr. Weizmann and the other Zionist leaders, have declared that it is no part of their policy to seek to establish a Jewish State, or Jewish Administration in Palestine at the end of the war.⁶³

Moreover, the Zionist Commission openly stated what the British could not even indirectly hint at, that its policy was directed towards bringing Palestine under British control after the War. Because of sensitive relations with France, which were reflected in Britain's relations with Picot, who was trying to induce the Palestinian Arabs to favour the idea of a French patronage,⁶⁴ British officials in Egypt did not disclose what they were thinking. Clayton was horrified when he saw the Zionist Commission's report on his meeting with the Commission. He asserted that, though he was gratified to learn that the Zionist Commission was anxious to see a British Palestine after the War, any expression of this gratification to which he may have given vent was purely personal and off the record and that he was not prepared to make any such statement in his official capacity.⁶⁵ Ormsby Gore, who paved the way for the Zionist Commission by coordinating the meetings with leading Arabs, was very careful to avoid any suggestion that the British Government was in any way hostile to their French allies or that they were anxious to acquire the responsibility of administering Palestine after the War and explained that the policy of a 'British Palestine' was the policy of the Zionist movement.⁶⁶

However, it was undoubtedly convenient for the British Authorities in Egypt – who had been, as mentioned above, against the Sykes-Picot Agreement since the beginning – to find out that the Zionists were intending to fight against the implementation of that agreement, to bring about the removal of the French and to argue at the Peace Conference that the best possible solution from their point of view was a Palestine under British auspices. By declaring all this to the Arabs, the Zionists did a great service to the Military Authorities, since it probably persuaded the Arabs that the British indeed meant to achieve control over Palestine and that their pro-Zionist policy was not aimed at handing over Palestine to the Zionists but was a means of ensuring a British Palestine.

Notes

1. W. Yale, Report No. 3, 12 November 1917; Report No. 5, 26 November 1917, Y.U. Yale Archive.
2. W. Yale, Report No. 3, 12 November 1917; Report No. 5, 26 November 1917; Report No.9, 24 December 1917, Y.U. Yale Archive; a representative group of Syrians to A.J.

- Balfour, 20 November 1917, P.R.O., F.O. 141/654; C.A.G. Mackintosh to G. Clayton, 22 November 1917, *ibid*; A.S. Saab to W.H. Deedes, 20 November 1917, *ibid*. See also WL, VIII, No. 130 and note 6 *ibid*, No.141 and note 1 *ibid*.
3. W. Ormsby Gore to M. Sykes, 31 March 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3383, F. 747, No. 81519; W. Ormsby Gore to A.J. Balfour (Report No. 1), 7 April 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3394, F. 11053, No.83691.
 4. Elie Kedourie, 'Cairo and Khartum on the Arab Question 1915–18', *The Historical Journal* VII, 2 (1964), pp. 280–97.
 5. G. Clayton to M. Sykes, 15 December 1917, D.U. Wingate Archive.
 6. G. Clayton to M. Sykes, 20 August 1917, Sykes Archive, P.R.O., F.O. 800/221.
 7. R. Graham to R. Wingate, 21 September 1917, D.U. Wingate Archive.
 8. W. Yale, Report No.9, 24 December 1917, Y.U. Yale Archive.
 9. W. Yale, Report No.3, 12 November 1917, Y.U. Yale Archive.
 10. R. Wingate to M. Sykes, 31 December 1917, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3054, F. 86526, No. 245810.
 11. M. Sykes to the Syrian Welfare Committee in Cairo, 16 November 1917, Sykes Archive, Sledmere; M. Sykes to G. Clayton, 14 November 1917, *ibid*.
 12. G. Clayton to M. Sykes, 12 December 1917, *ibid*. and P.R.O., F.O. 371/3054, F. 86526, No. 235780.
 13. W. Yale, Report No. 8, 17 December 1917; Report No. 9, 24 December 1917; Report No. 19, 18 March 1918, YU, Yale Archive.
 14. G. Clayton to M. Sykes, 28 November 1917, Sykes Archive, Sledmere and P.R.O., F.O. 371/3054, F. 86526, No. 227658.
 15. M. Sykes to G. Clayton, 1 December 1917, D.U. Wingate Archive and P.R.O., F.O. 371/3054, F. 86526, No. 234304.
 16. W. Yale, Report No. 8, 17 December 1917; Report No. 9, 24 December 1917; Report No. 19, 18 March 1918, YU, Yale Archive.
 17. W. Yale, Report No. 7, 10 December 1917; Report No. 8, 17 December 1917, *ibid*.
 18. *The Jewish Chronicle*, 7 December 1917; *The Manchester Guardian*, 10 December 1917; R. Graham to [Wingate], 1 December 1917, DU Wingate Archive; F.O. to [Wingate], 6 December 1917, *ibid*.; M. Sykes to F.G. Picot, 12 December 1917, *ibid*.
 19. R. Wingate to J. Mosseri, 8 December 1917, *ibid*.; G. Clayton to Foreign Office, 12 December 1917 *ibid*. and P.R.O., F.O. 371/3054, F. 86526, No. 235780.
 20. S. Nassif to M. Sykes, 17 January 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3398, F. 27647, No. 27647; S. Nassif (for the Syrian Welfare Committee) to G. Clayton, 28 December 1917, P.R.O., F.O. 882/17; C.A.G. Mackintosh to G. Clayton, 27 December 1917, *ibid*.
 21. W. Yale, Report No. 9, 24 December 1917, YU, Yale Archive.
 22. M. Sykes to the Syrian Welfare Committee, 15 February 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3398, F. 27647, No. 27647.
 23. M. Sykes to G. Clayton, 3 March 1918, Sykes Archive P.R.O., F.O. 800/221.
 24. M. Sykes to R. Wingate, 3 March 1918, *ibid*.
 25. M. Sykes, 'Suggested Policy of Provisional Administration' (memorandum), 18 January 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3395, F. 11612, No. 11612; see also F.O. to G. Clayton, 24 January 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3388, F. 2070, No. 14557.
 26. 'Arbur' (Cairo) to 'Basset' (Jeddah), 4 December 1917, D.U., Wingate Archive.
 27. F.O. to R. Wingate, 4 January 1918, *ibid*. and P.R.O., F.O. 371/3054, F. 86526, No. 245810.
 28. M. Sykes to Faisal, 3 March 1918, Sykes Archive, P.R.O., F.O. 800/221.
 29. G. Clayton to R. Wingate, December 1917, D.U., Wingate Archive.
 30. See p.38 and note 36 *ibid*.

31. M. Sykes to the Syrian Welfare Committee, 15 February 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3398, F. 27647, No. 27647.
32. *The Jewish Chronicle*, 7 December 1917.
33. C. Weizmann to C.P. Scott, 20 March 1917, W.A.; C. Weizmann to N. Sokolow, 4 April 1917, C.Z.A. Z4/728; C. Weizmann to C.P. Scott, 7 April 1917, W.A. (WL, VII, Nos 321, 329, 334); C.P. Scott, *Diary*, 4(?) April 1917, B.M. Scott Archive, Vol. 50903.
34. C. Weizmann to L.D. Brandeis, 14 January 1918, Lv.U, Brandeis Archive (WL, VIII, No. 63).
35. C. Weizmann to R. Graham, 17 December 1917 and enclosed memorandum: 'Status of the Commission', P.R.O., F.O. 371/3054, F. 84173, No.239129; C. Weizmann to M. Sykes, 16 January 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3394, F. 11053, Nos 11053, 14214 (WL, VIII, Nos. 34, 69).
36. Draft minutes of a meeting of the Middle East Committee, 19 January 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3394, F. 7664, No. 19932.
37. M. Sykes, 'Suggested Policy of Provisional Administration' (memorandum), 18 January 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3395, F. 11612, No. 11612; see also F.O. to G. Clayton, 24 January 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3388, F. 2070, No. 14557.
38. C. Weizmann to M. Sykes, 16 January 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3394, F.11053, No. 11053 (WL, VIII, No. 69. See also note 4 *ibid.*)
39. *Ibid.*
40. C. Weizmann to L.D. Brandeis, 14 January 1918, Lv.U, Brandeis Archive (WL, VIII, No. 63).
41. C. Weizmann to M. Sykes, 16 January 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3394, F.11053, No. 11053 (WL, VIII, No. 69. See also note 4 *ibid.*)
42. *Ibid.*
43. See pp. 83–6 .
44. C. Weizmann to M. Sykes, 17 January 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3380, F. 68, No. 11994 (WL, VIII, No. 71).
45. C. Weizmann to R. Graham, 17 December 1917, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3054, F. 84173, No. 239129 (WL, VIII, No. 34).
46. *Ibid.*; C. Weizmann to M. Sykes, 17 January 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3380, F. 68, No. 11994; C. Weizmann to R. Graham, 23 January 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3380, F. 68, No. 15237; C. Weizmann to R. Graham, 27 January 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3380, F. 68, No. 18029 (WL, VIII, Nos 71, 78, 82); minutes by R. Graham, 16 January 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3394, F. 10341, No. 10341.
47. C. Weizmann to R. Graham, 23 January 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3380, F. 68, No. 15237 (WL, VIII, No. 78).
48. 'Instructions to Captain Hon. W. Ormsby Gore on proceedings to Egypt with the Commission of Zionist Leaders', P.R.O., F.O. 371/3394, F. 11053, No. 32926.
49. F.O. to G. Clayton, 11 December 1917, D.U., Wingate Archive; F.O. to [R. Wingate] 22 December 1917, *ibid.*
50. G. Clayton to F.O., 14 December 1917, *ibid.*
51. F.O. to [R. Wingate], 13 February 1918, *ibid.*
52. D. Lloyd George to E. Allenby, 1 March 1918, W.A.; A.J. Balfour to E. Allenby, 2 March 1918, *ibid.*
53. Zionist Commission for Palestine, Report No. 1, 18 April 1918, Appendix No. 2 (minutes of meeting on 14 March 1918) CZA Z4/483.

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54. G. Clayton to F.O., 5 March 1918, 9 March 1918, 14 March 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3391, F. 4079, Nos 41979, 44236, 48034; G. Clayton to R. Wingate, 15 March 1918, D.U. Wingate Archive.
 55. Zionist Commission for Palestine, Report No. 1, 18 April 1918, Appendix No. 27 (minutes of meetings on 22 March 1918) C.Z.A. Z4/483; R. Wingate to C. Hardinge, 23 March 1918, D.U., Wingate Archive.
 56. Zionist Commission for Palestine, Report No. 1, 18 April 1918, Appendix No. 4 (minutes of meeting on 25 March 1918) C.Z.A. Z4/483; G. Clayton to W. Ormsby Gore, 20 April 1918, *ibid.*
 57. C. Weizmann to V. Weizmann, 24 March 1918, W.A. (WL, VIII, No. 138).
 58. W. Ormsby Gore to A.J. Balfour, 7 April 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3394, F. 11053, No. 83691; Zionist Commission for Palestine, Report No. 1, 18 April 1918, Appendix No. 10 (minutes of meeting on 27 March 1918) C.Z.A. Z4/483; minutes of meeting on 1 April 1918, C.Z.A., Z4/538.
 59. W. Ormsby Gore to A.J. Balfour, 7 April 1918, Appendix A, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3394, F. 11053, No. 83691.
 60. *Ibid.*
 61. K. Cornwallis to G.S. Symes, 20 April 18, D.U., Wingate Archive.
 62. G. Clayton to A.J. Balfour, 16 June 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3395, F. 11053, No. 130342.
 63. 'Attachment to Political Intelligence Summary', No. 4, 26 April 1918, D.U., Wingate Archive.
 64. G. Clayton to M. Sykes, 15 December 1917, Sykes Archive, Sledmere; G. Clayton to R. Cecil, 31 December 1917, Clayton Archive, London; G. Clayton to F.O., 14 January 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3391, F. 4079, No. 9332; G. Clayton to F.O., 26 January 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3395, F. 28547, No. 28547; G. Clayton to F.O., 9 March 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3391, F.4097, No. 44236. See note 1 *ibid.*
 65. G. Clayton to W. Ormsby Gore, 20 April 1918, C.Z.A. Z4/483. See also above p.48. and note 56 *ibid.*
 66. W. Ormsby Gore to A.J. Balfour, 7 April 1918. P.R.O., F.O. 371/3394, F. 11053, No. 83691.

3

Clarifications: The Military Administration Period

The explanations given by the Zionists in Egypt did indeed improve the atmosphere there but could not allay the tensions in Palestine. Once the British had conquered southern Palestine at the end of 1917 and established the Occupied Enemy Territory Administration (OETA), the Military Authorities in Palestine were embroiled in a situation of tension between opposite expectations: on the one hand, a comparatively large Arab population that was not willing to digest a pro-Zionist policy and was afraid of the Zionist Commission's arrival and the domination of a Jewish population and, on the other hand, a small but organised Jewish population, which was publicly giving a far-reaching interpretation of the Balfour Declaration and the political privileges deriving from it. The growing tension between the two seemed to be unavoidable.

The Military Authorities were also aware of the activities of Francois Georges-Picot. Picot entered Jerusalem with the British Egyptian Expeditionary Force, under the title 'High Commissioner of the French Republic in the Occupied Areas of Palestine and Syria', carrying instructions given by French Prime Minister Alexandre Ribot, about how to safeguard France's interests in the Middle East. In fact, Picot was prevented from giving effect to his official title, since Allenby refused to set up a civilian administration in the occupied areas before completing his military objectives and the British Foreign Office limited Picot to the function of Adviser to the Military Administration in its dealings with the institutions, interests and concessions requested by French nationals in Palestine. However, Picot did his utmost, while manipulating existing sentiments within the Arab population, to obtain political benefits for France.¹

The urgent need to face out these tensions was undoubtedly made more acute due to the fact that the Military Authorities and the military-political administration, which were used to relying on the Arab movement originating in the Hejaz as their sole policy, objected to any deviation from it. Indeed, all efforts were directed at consolidating the occupation, building

administrative frameworks and avoiding instability pending a permanent solution.

The Zionist Commission did not arrive in Palestine until 3 April 1918, since the Military Authorities there, who were aware of the negative sentiments among Palestinian Arabs, saw to it that the Commission was held back in Egypt till after the Holy Days of Easter, Passover and Nebi Musa, in order to prevent inflammatory speeches at Holy Days gatherings.² In a meeting with Weizmann on his arrival, held at Allenby's headquarters, Allenby made it clear that he was responsible to the British Government for the fate of Palestine, that he intended to make sure that justice was done to all and friction avoided wherever possible in order to be able 'to hand over Palestine at the end of the War in a good condition'. Weizmann replied that the fate of Palestine would eventually be determined on the principle of self-determination, which meant not only the desires of the Jews of Palestine but also the Jews all over the world, whose opinions would have a decisive influence at the Peace Conference, and that the Jews' support of a British Palestine was a permanent asset to Great Britain, whilst the Arabs might possibly be an asset now but a liability tomorrow. To this, Allenby gave no response.³ '... across every explanation was the Arab problem which is far more acute here than in Egypt or in London', Weizmann wrote to his wife, following the meeting;

... it is clear to me that the local military authorities don't understand the spirit of the Declaration and have not taken it sufficiently into consideration. The upshot is that all Jewish requests, even the most modest, are fulfilled with the greatest difficulty – whilst the demands of the Arabs, sometimes quite brazen – are not even questioned ... We shall have to work long, carefully and persistently to establish the correct balance.⁴

It did not take four days after the Allenby-Weizmann meeting before the Zionist Commission took its first step towards establishing 'the correct balance' between Jewish and Arab conflicting interests. The Commission found out that, in the middle of March, Colonel Pearson, the Military Governor of Jaffa, had appointed a Town Council comprising seven Arabs and two Jews, a ratio that ignored the thousands of Jews who had been expelled by the Turks and were still unable to return. All submissions and protests of Jewish leaders in Tel Aviv-Jaffa against this infringement of Jewish

rights were rejected.⁵ One of the first acts of the newly-nominated Council was to pass a regulation that all signboards be in Arabic and that Arabic should be the only official language.⁶ The Zionist Commission viewed the composition and resolutions of the Town Council as symptoms of a policy which was quite inconsistent with a National Home for the Jewish people and expressed their protest in a memorandum. It stated that:

H. M. Government has recognised in effect that arrangements for the future administration of Palestine cannot be based on the present position, but must take into account as a decisive factor, the desire and intention of the Jewish people to colonise and develop the country under conditions which will give the largest possible amount of opportunity for growth ... The only policy which is consistent with Jewish interests and with the clearly expressed attitude of H. M. Government is that of maintaining the administrative status quo as far as possible. It is undesirable from the British as well as from the Jewish point of view that occasion should be given for trials of strength between Jews and Arabs, which must arise if at the present time one nationality is allowed – and indeed invited – to attempt to impose its will on the other where it happens to be a majority.⁷

A week later, the Zionist Commission complained about the way in which the hostile attitude of the Arabs was received by the Military Authorities. The cause for the complaint was a performance which took place in the Arab school Tatbikat in Jerusalem, in which nationalistic speeches were delivered, calling on the Arab nation to rise up in defence of its land, its liberty and its sacred places against those who were coming to rob it of everything, and using expressions such as ‘*Vive La Nation Arabe, Vive la Palestine Arabe*’. The fact that those speeches were delivered in the presence of the Military Governor of Jerusalem, Ronald Storrs, who uttered no word to suggest that there was any discrepancy between those sentiments and the Government’s policy, led Weizmann to respond. In a letter to Ormsby Gore, in which he complained about this phenomenon, he elaborated on the argument he had already brought up in his meeting with Allenby about the way in which the Arab-Jewish conflict should be dealt with. Weizmann wrote:

We are of course fully aware that at the present time the Jewish population of Palestine is numerically much inferior to the Arab and Syrian population, and we appreciate the immediate significance which this fact must have from the point of view of the Military Authorities but from a political point of view the Jewish population

of Palestine has an importance which is out of all proportion to its numerical strength. It represents the organised national will of millions of Jews throughout the world; it is the advanced guard of the Jewish people. Its views and its demands find an echo in Jewries of England, of Russia and of America, and considerations of its interests and welfare will have considerable weight in determining their attitude. This exceptional qualitative value of Palestine Jewry has been implicitly recognized by H. M. Government in Mr. Balfour's declaration, and must be recognised equally by the Authorities here and by the non-Jewish populations of Palestine if that declaration is to be carried into effect.

Therefore, Weizmann demanded from the Military Authorities 'that the exact meaning and scope of Mr. Balfour's declaration should be authoritatively explained to them [i.e. to the Palestinian Arabs] and that it should be made perfectly clear to them that this declaration represents the considered policy of H. M. Government, and that it is their duty to conform to it.'⁸

Storrs, in a sharply-worded response to Weizmann's letter, contested the facts provided by Weizmann and dismissed the complaint as an unjustified display of petulance. He treated the apprehensions of the Zionists as groundless and mentioned, as a counterweight, quite a few nationalistic expressions by Jewish speakers with which he had not interfered so long as they retained a private character. He did not agree with Weizmann's suggestion that it was the business of the Military Authorities to bring home to the Arabs that the British Government had presented a definite policy with regard to the Jews in Palestine, arguing that this had already been done by Balfour in London and by the press throughout the world. He claimed that Allenby should not be asked to explain to the Arabs the details of a policy which almost certainly would not be welcomed by them, especially as such details had never been disclosed to the general public nor, to the best of his best knowledge, to any living soul. In his opinion, what was needed was for the Zionists themselves to explain to the Arabs and Syrians, as accurately and conciliatorily as possible, their real aims and policy.⁹

For this purpose, Storrs brought together, at a dinner at the Governorate on 27 April, Weizmann, three Commission members and some Arab dignitaries and religious community representatives. Weizmann and the *Mufti* of Jerusalem delivered speeches, the contents of which had been coordinated in advance by Clayton and Storrs and, according to the latter's reports, that meeting contributed to easing the tensions.¹⁰ As for Weizmann, he sounded less optimistic afterwards. He stuck to his opinion that it was up

to the Military Authorities to provide explanations and that soothing speeches would not suffice but it should be made clear that the pro-Zionist policy was here to stay.¹¹

The question of their readiness to carry out the pro-Zionist policy undoubtedly bothered the Military Authorities. Clayton's assessment of the situation, as is evident from his various letters, discloses not only his wavering between different points of view but also his search for a way to bridge the gap and 'to bring together two part[ies] and policies whose aims hitherto have been almost diametrically opposed'.¹² Unlike Storrs, Clayton stated, in an official letter to Balfour of 18 April 1918, that the British officials of the Military Administration had been fully informed of the Zionist programme and of the intentions of the British Government regarding it. However, he believed that it was inevitable that they should experience some difficulties in consequence of the fact that British policy in previous years had been directed towards securing Arab sympathy by making pledges to the Arabs. It was not easy therefore, he explained, to switch over to Zionism all at once in the face of the considerable degree of Arab distrust and suspicion. Clayton estimated that this distrust and suspicion would quickly disappear but, in the interests of Zionism itself, it was necessary to proceed with caution. Therefore, he warned against any precipitate action which would only injure the prospects of the Zionist project when careful handling would bring greater results. 'Arab opinion both in Palestine and elsewhere is in no condition to support an overdose of Zionism just now,' he believed. He went on:

Events on the Western Front have produced a very marked effect here to our disadvantage, and great care is essential in developing a policy, which is, to say the least, somewhat startling to those elements whom we have been at such pains to cultivate during the past three years, and to whom we are morally pledged. Moreover, Arab Military cooperation is of vital importance to us at the present juncture, a fact fully realised by our enemies who are using any possible means to seduce the Arabs from their alliance to us.

Having said that, Clayton urged Balfour to trust the local Military Authorities to develop the situation on the lines already laid out by the British Government so that they were not forced into precipitate action which might well wreck the whole British policy towards both Arabs and Zionists.¹³

Apparently, according to Clayton's other letters and reports dealing with the confrontation between pro-Arab and pro-Zionist policies, and the existing tensions between opposed expectations in Palestine, he was convinced in the first weeks of the Zionist Commission's activity that London should not enforce a policy of hastily implementing the National Home pledge and should leave the carrying out of the policy to the local authorities. In this way, the process of allaying apprehensions, already started by the Zionist Commission, and the prospects of finding a common denominator and even of implementing a pro-Zionist policy could continue without causing any harm to the pledges given to the Arabs.

Thus, for instance, in a personal letter to Wingate, in which Clayton expressed his opinions more freely, he repeated his wish 'that they should leave the execution of the policy to us here – in so far as regards Palestine itself, and not rush us'. As far as he personally was concerned – Clayton stated – he would rather resign his duty if being rushed, since 'I cannot conscientiously carry out any line of policy which will go against our pledges to the Arabs.'¹⁴ To Sykes, however, Clayton expressed himself using rather different language. To Sykes he wrote that, apart from the fact that support of Zionism was the declared policy of the British Government, he was personally in favour of it and was convinced that it was 'one of our strongest cards'. However, he argued, it was necessary to use caution if they were to bring that policy to a successful conclusion.¹⁵

Two months later, Clayton explained in a personal letter to Gertrude Bell, a former colleague at the Arab Bureau in Cairo who was serving as Secretary for Middle Eastern Affairs in Baghdad at the time, that:

There is little doubt that the Zionist policy has been of very considerable assistance to us already and may help us a great deal more not only during the war, but afterwards. A Palestine in which Jewish interest is established and which is under the aegis of Great Britain will be a strong outpost to Egypt, the invasion of which would raise even more bitter feelings all over the world than that of Belgium. You may not perhaps be aware that the Zionist Policy is not that of the establishment of a Jewish State, at any rate at present, but aims at the institution of a Jewish home or centre of Hebrew culture in Palestine under the protection of Great Britain. This aspect, which was not apparent to us until the Zionist Commission arrived, has put a very different complexion on the whole idea in the eyes of our Arab friends who feel that the dangers of Jewish expansion will be greatly minimized if Great Britain is in supreme control.¹⁶

Clayton even suggested a way to coordinate the pro-Zionist policy declared by the British Government, with the pro-Arab policy that he and his colleagues had been pursuing throughout the War. He suggested distinguishing between the Arabs of Palestine and the [Hejazi] Sharifian Movement. In the above-mentioned letter to Gertrude Bell, Clayton stated that Palestine was outside the real Arab policy, except in so far as discontent and disturbance there might spread across the Dead Sea to Jordan and also to Syria. On the other hand, he believed that 'the so-called Arabs of Palestine are not to be compared with the real Arab of the Desert or even civilized districts in Syria and Mesopotamia' since they were mainly concerned with their local interests, indifferent to the [Hejazi] Sharifian Movement and it would be difficult to induce them to look upon the question from a broader point of view. Furthermore, according to Clayton:

the more or less educated class is composed chiefly of small traders, land-owners and would-be or ex-Government employees. This class is of course against anything which spells progress or development as they are shiftless and corrupt by inclination and are not anxious for a state of affairs in which it will be necessary for them to compete with more energetic and enterprising elements.

Therefore, Clayton thought that 'Jewish expansion in Palestine for which there is ample room within reasonable limits, will greatly improve the condition of the local peasantry, provided it is on moderate and liberal lines sketched by Dr. Weizmann'. In a similar letter he wrote on the same day to R.P. Wigram, who was then at the Foreign Office, Clayton wrote that, since the arrival of the Zionist Commission 'the task before us now is to endeavour to coordinate the Zionist Policy announced by H.M.G. with the Arab Policy which we have been pursuing throughout the war'. In his opinion, he wrote, it would be possible to overcome and counteract the hostility of Palestinian Arabs by 'taking every opportunity in the normal course of administration of showing that it is our policy to introduce progress and prosperity without allowing the interests of any particular community to suffer'.¹⁷

Clayton anticipated that a basis for future cooperation between the Zionists and the Hejazi Sharifian Movement could be achieved. His assumption was that, if the situation was handled skillfully, it would lead to coordination between the pro-Zionist British policy and the pro-Arab policy which was based on the Hejaz: 'If Zionism can be brought into close sympathy with the Arabs it will tend to make Arab ambitions, which we are pledged to support as far as possible, more probable of realisation, and the Jews will introduce the financial and commercial elements by which alone

an Arab state can maintain itself'.¹⁸ Clayton had already started to advance this idea before the Zionist Commission's arrival in Palestine. He suggested it to Faisal, the son of the King of Hejaz, Sharif Housein, who responded positively and, once the Zionist Commission had reached Palestine, he started to instigate and coordinate a meeting between Weizmann and Faisal.¹⁹ About two months later, on 4 June 1918, the meeting took place at Faisal's camp, near Ma'an. In this meeting, as well as in meetings between Weizmann and Wingate, Clayton, Symes and Lawrence, which took place at the British headquarters in Egypt, Weizmann suggested that, in return for recognition by the King of Hejaz of Zionist aspirations regarding Palestine, the Zionist movement would assist – both by financial support and activities in the international arena – Faisal's advance towards Damascus and the establishment of the Arab Kingdom.²⁰ Faisal refrained from committing himself or even discussing the political future of Palestine. However, Clayton was under the impression that Faisal would welcome Jewish cooperation and was quite prepared to leave Palestine alone provided he could secure his ambitions in Syria. In Clayton's opinion, Faisal was wise 'in endeavouring to enlist Jewish sympathy on his side', since the Zionist movement could become a powerful ally of his.²¹ 'In the case of the greater Arab leaders such as the King of Hejaz and Sherif Faisal I do not anticipate very much difficulty, provided the situation is handled skillfully', Clayton wrote. 'Their interests do not lie in Palestine and Faisal's recent satisfactory interview with Dr. Weizmann shows that he is inclining to cooperation with the Zionists in order to enlist their help and influence in prosecution of his own particular aims which lie in the direction of Damascus and Aleppo.'²²

Following the Weizmann-Faisal meeting, Clayton sent Balfour two reports, of 16 June and 1 July, in which he submitted his observations 'in especial connection with the problem of coordinating the Arab and Zionist policies'.²³

In the first report, which opened by praising the Zionist Commission for its work in Palestine, Clayton referred to Weizmann's meetings with prominent Arabs and Syrians in Egypt and with Faisal, in which the interchange of views, in his opinion, held out hope of future agreement. Clayton then analysed the reasons for Arab distrust of and apprehension about Zionists in Palestine and explained that it existed among small land-owners and traders who were afraid of competition from modern cultivation and business methods which would presumably be introduced by the Zionists, and 'small *Effendis*' whose ambitions had always been to secure governmental appointments and who were afraid of the competition of the more intelligent Jews. 'It is not a question of national feeling, for I have detected but a few signs of real patriotism amongst the population of

Palestine', he wrote. 'Provided the Zionist programme is carried out on the lines laid by Dr. Weizmann', he went on, 'I believe that within a comparatively short time local opposition will disappear in the case of the large bulk of the agricultural population, who will find themselves benefiting from the progress which the Jewish enterprise has produced'.

Clayton was also worried about the danger of discontent among those Palestinian Arabs who were actively assisting British military operations and might be exposed to Turkish influence. This was even though they were not interested in events outside their own country and regarded the Sharifian Movement with comparative indifference but because of close contacts between the Bedouins in the south-eastern districts of Palestine and those who were fighting with Faisal. The recent interview between Weizmann and Faisal had done much, Clayton believed, to discount enemy propaganda among active Sharifian adherents.²⁴

In his second report, which mainly concentrated on the Weizmann-Faisal interview, Clayton analysed the foundations of a future understanding between both parties. According to him, since Faisal himself was unable to defeat the Turks and drive them out of Syria in order to realise his ambition of ruling an autonomous Arab Syria without receiving military and economic support, and since Faisal could rely on Britain only for military support but could not depend entirely for political and economic support on any single Great Power if he wanted to keep his independence, he wanted to receive this support from the Zionists. Housein, in Clayton's opinion, would support any policy that could help Faisal in Syria. Weizmann, on the other hand, realised that the implementation of Zionist ideals depended upon 'the establishment in Palestine of a centre of Jewish culture and sentiment, based on the soil itself, to which all Jewry will turn and which will justify its political existence by providing a bridge between East and West'. In order to realise this ideal, it was essential that a future Jewish Palestine should be surrounded by friendly countries, i.e. it was essential that Zionism should work hand-in-hand with the neighbouring Arab movement. Therefore – Clayton concluded – the two policies were interdependent, and it was difficult to see how the pledges given by Britain to both parties could be fulfilled in the spirit in which they had been given, unless the aims of the Zionists and Arabs could be coordinated along the lines indicated above. The interests of the population of both Syria and Palestine, he suggested, should be safeguarded as far as possible, trusting that future developments would result in increased prosperity affecting all classes alike, thereby proving Arab fears groundless.²⁵

Clayton's reports of April–March 1918 on Weizmann's meetings with Palestinian Arabs and the peaceful atmosphere those meetings produced,²⁶ confirm that he continued to believe that the Arabs would accept the

situation. Accordingly, he also suggested to Balfour that some regulations of the *status quo* policy should be altered.²⁷

Undoubtedly, there must have been a mutual influence between that conception of Clayton and Weizmann's assessment of the situation, as expressed in his letters, or rather, reports to Balfour although it is difficult to determine who was the more influential. 'The problem of our relations with the Palestinian Arabs is an economic problem, not a political one', Weizmann wrote to Balfour on 30 May. He went on:

From the political point of view the Arab centre of gravity is not Palestine, but the Hedjaz, really the triangle formed by Mecca, Damascus and Baghdad ... I am just setting out on a visit to the son of the King of Hedjaz. I propose to tell him that if he wants to build up a strong and prosperous Arab kingdom, it is we Jews who will be able to help him, and we only ... We are the natural intermediaries between Great Britain and the Hedjaz ... With him I hope to be able to establish a real political entente. But with the Arabs of Palestine – in whom, so far as I can gather the Shereef is little interested – only proper economic relations are necessary; and these will develop in the natural course of things, because they will be essential in our interests as well as in those of the Palestinian Arabs.²⁸

In his 17 July report to Balfour, in which he referred to his meeting with Faisal, Weizmann repeated the same idea and based the prospects of a solution in Palestine on future relations with the Sharif. 'We shall serve as a bridge between you and him ...' Weizmann wrote. He continued: 'The so-called Arab question in Palestine would therefore assume only a purely local character, and in fact is not considered as a serious factor by all those who know the local position fully'.²⁹

On 25 June, Wingate, too, reported – while dealing with the prospects of the Hejazi movement – on Weizmann's plans for an agreement with Faisal in return for financial and political assistance. Wingate pointed out the need to consider the contradiction between these ideas and voices in Syria against the separation of Palestine from Syria. However, he noted ironically, that some arrangement on the suggested lines could, nevertheless, be taken into serious consideration if Britain's formal obligations to France respecting Syria were regarded as no longer binding, and if the idea of preserving the privileges of the Palestinian Arabs was abandoned. 'The latter may, I suppose, be taken as implied in His Majesty's Government's original declarations in favour of Zionism', he added and 'the Anglo-French Agreement, if still existent, is certainly out of date'.³⁰

Sykes noted that Wingate's despatch and Weizmann's evaluation 'show a decided anti-French policy'. He believed that Weizmann's ideas were based on a Zionist and not on a British hypothesis. According to him, Weizmann would naturally prefer an all-encompassing British policy because, if Great Britain were behind Zionism and, at the same time, ran Damascus, Mecca and Baghdad, there would be a fine opportunity for the Zionists to have a dominant influence in all the countries surrounding Palestine. As Zionist policy – Sykes wrote – this had much to be said for it. However, the British policy towards Zionism should aim at obtaining for the Zionists a fair run in Palestine itself without ulterior ambitions. Britain should bear in mind – he argued – that French interest in Syria was no imaginary thing and that the Entente point of view should be reckoned with.³¹

In reality, the Weizmann-Clayton unanimity was not based on any evidence. At the end of 1918, having completed their conquest of Palestine, the British had no hope that Palestinian Arabs would not be a nuisance that might damage the prospects of British control and influence in the Middle East. Not only was the assumption that the problem was 'economic' not put to the test but, once the occupation was completed, it was made clear to the British Authorities that what had seemed to be friendlier relations, represented nothing but a superficial gesture, while the political awareness of the Arab population was much more solid than previously assumed. The contacts, which had been renewed following the occupation, between the populations of Southern and Northern Palestine, Jews as well as Arabs; the process of the reorganisation of the Military Administration in the whole country; the awareness that it would not be long before the Peace Conference convened – all these factors produced a tense atmosphere.

In the meantime, the Jewish population did not hide its growing expectations for the realisation of the Balfour Declaration. On 18 December 1918, the third Constituent Assembly, also known as 'the Palestinian Council', (Hebrew: *Ha'Aseifa Ha'Mehonenet*, also known as '*Ha'Moetsa Ha'Erets Israelit*') took place in Palestine. It included, for the first time, representatives of all settlements and institutions from all over the country. Leading up to the Assembly, two committees – political and economic – had formulated the 'Outline of a programme for a temporary rule in *Erets Israel* [Hebrew: the land of Israel]'. According to this programme, the expectations of the *Yishuv* (Hebrew for the organised Jewish population in Palestine) were:

a) that People of Israel's demand that *Erets Israel* would be its National Home should be internationally recognised at the Peace Conference. i. e., that the governments should recognise that in all matters regarding the rule of *Erets Israel* the whole People of Israel in all the countries of the world has the right of an outweighing view; b) that the governments should choose England as their representative, or Trustee to whom the rule of *Erets Israel* and a mission to assist the People of Israel in building its National Home in the country be handed over.

The programme then elaborated on that by clarifying that the official name of the country should be '*Erets Israel*' and the Zionist flag be recognised as the official flag of the country, together with the Trustee's flag. The proposed governing system was: a commissioner nominated by the Trustee assisted by a 'Governing Committee' (which would, under the commissioner's supervision, 'legislate and be in charge of all governmental matters in *Erets Israel*' with the exception of military and foreign affairs, which would be fully entrusted to the Trustee), Holy Places matters which would be entrusted to an international authority as well as religious, education and community organisation matters which would be entrusted to the respective national communities. The Zionist Organisation would be recognised by the governments as the representative of the people of Israel in its relation to the Land of Israel. The representative of the Zionist Organisation in the government of the Trustee would hold the title of 'Deputy *Vazir*' [i. e. Under Secretary of State] for *Erets Israel* Affairs and would propose to the Trustee the list of all members of the 'Governing Committee', with the exception of the 'Special *Vazir* for Arab Affairs'. The Zionist Organisation would establish, after being authorised by the governments, a national company for *Erets Israel*'s land settlement, which would have rights: to organise the immigration of Jews from the Diaspora and prepare the country for their absorption and settling on the land; to take over the Sultan's and Turkish government's lands – any unsettled and uncultivated land and all the rights of the Turkish government, in particular by granting concessions; to make use of all natural resources, to build railroads and irrigation institutes; to administer the Land-Bank of the Ottoman government and to have the exclusive right to establish agricultural credit institutions. In dealing with all these matters, the national company would have preemptive right. Furthermore, the programme guaranteed to each 'national community' full autonomy in all matters regarding religion, education, law (within the respective community) and welfare. Hebrew and Arabic would both be recognised as

official languages in governmental institutions and documents; only Hebrew should be used in all negotiations between governmental organisations and Jews or Jewish institutes and Hebrew should also be recognised as the only official language in Jewish institutions.³²

Among the Arab population, tension was building up. What had previously seemed to be latent and under the control of the Authorities, was now being expressed in the political arena. On 2 November 1918, the first anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, the Arabs were incensed at a procession and celebrations organised by the Jews in commemoration of the event. A delegation of leading Muslims and Christians presented the Military Governor of Jerusalem, Ronald Storrs, with a protest at the recognition of Palestine as the National Home of the Jewish people. On 8 November, Clayton passed on to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs both Storrs' report on the event and the Arab protest and concluded that it was clear that the non-Jewish elements of the population still had considerable apprehensions about the scope of the Balfour Declaration which had been interpreted by many local Jews more liberally than was ever intended by its creators. 'If the Zionist programme is to be carried through without serious friction with other communities', he suggested, 'great tact and discretion must be employed and the more impatient elements of Zionism must be retained.'³³

On the very same day on which Clayton passed on the Arab protest, 8 November 1918, England and France jointly announced their War objectives in the Middle East. It was the conclusion of a few months of long deliberation regarding the need to clarify to the people of the Middle East the aims of both Great Britain and France as far as the Middle East was concerned, a need that became evident in the light of the Sykes-Picot Agreement publicised by Russia and the Entente's occupation of Northern Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia.³⁴ Both Powers, the joint declaration stated, were working towards:

freeing of the peoples so long oppressed by the Turks and the establishment of national governments and administrations deriving their authority from the initiative and free choice of the indigenous populations. In order to give effect to these intentions, France and Great Britain have agreed to encourage and assist the establishment of indigenous Governments and administrations in Syria and Mesopotamia now freed by the Allies, and in the territories whose liberation they seek, and to recognise them as soon as they are effectively established ... their only care is to assure by their support ... the normal working of the governments and administrations which

they shall have freely given themselves. To assure impartial and equal justice for all, to facilitate the economic development of the country by promoting and encouraging local initiative, to foster the spread of education ...³⁵

Although Palestine was not included within the areas referred to in the Anglo-French declaration, it was communicated to the Military Authorities in Palestine, with no additional information about whether it applied to the area under their control. Clayton and the military governors repeatedly asked the Foreign Office whether the declaration was meant to include Palestine or not. Clayton also reported that, in his explanations to the inhabitants, he had asserted that he knew of no other interpretation than that of the text, and asked the Foreign Office if Palestine had been purposely omitted. In reply, the Foreign Office advised him privately that the declaration was expressly worded so as to exclude Palestine.³⁶ However, this message was only sent on 4 December, about four weeks after the publication of the declaration and, in the meantime, Storrs, following orders received from General Headquarters, had circulated eighteen copies of the declaration with no interpretation attached.³⁷

It did not take long for interpretations to appear. On returning to his office the following day, Storrs was confronted by a delegation of Muslims and Christians who, after offering the Allies their thanks for the declaration, asked him formally whether Palestine formed a part of Syria, whether its inhabitants came under the category of inhabitants of liberated countries who were invited to choose their own future and, if not, why the notices about the declaration had been sent to them at all. A day later, the Arabs held a meeting in which they resolved to apply to be governed by the Sharif of Mecca and started to enlist support for that application in churches and mosques.³⁸ In addition, a decision was taken that a signed petition should be sent to the French Commissariat requesting that Palestine be formally included in Syria.³⁹

Furthermore, on 16 November 1918, the anniversary of Jaffa's occupation by the British Army, the Moslem-Christian Committee of Jaffa District presented to Lt Colonel John E. Hubbard, Military Governor of Jaffa District, a letter of praise and gratitude to Great Britain the 'redeemer' of the Arabs and to him, on his participation in the celebrations to mark the event. The letter was mainly devoted to a protest against the Zionist claim that Palestine be considered a national home for the Jews. The Arabs referred to the declarations of Lloyd George about British intentions to give self-government to the Arabs and those of President Wilson (in his speech of 4 July 1918 as well as in Article 12 of his conditions of peace, which dealt with granting

liberty and prompt progress to those people who were subjected by the Turks), and were based on the declarations of Great Britain and France, which had been published in the Arab paper *Mokattam*. They argued that Palestine was an Arab country according to any criterion – continuity, size of population, land ownership or language.⁴⁰

On 20 November 1918, Hubbard passed on the letter of protest to the Headquarters of the Occupied Enemy Territory Administration in Jerusalem, suggesting that some form of declaration from the Foreign Office to the Arabs, saying that the British Government would not allow them to be dispossessed of their lands or be governed by the Jews, would have a most beneficial effect on the Arab population. ‘What the Arabs fear’, he added, ‘is not the Jews in Palestine but the Jews who are coming to Palestine’.⁴¹

On that same day, 20 November, Major General A. W. Money, the Chief Administrator, forwarded to General Headquarters a copy of Storrs’ report of 19 November, on the protest commission which had come to see him the day after the publicising of the Anglo-French declaration. In Storrs’ opinion, the Arab protest was sparked by the suspicion which official encouragement to the Zionist propaganda had ‘instilled into the minds of the Arabs that they were about to be handed over to a state-aided Jewish majority culminating in a Hebrew Government’. Money added his view that there was, no doubt, a genuine and widespread apprehension on the part of the Muslims and Christians that Palestine was going to be handed over to the Jews and he reported that the majority of the population stated openly that they would prefer either Ottoman or Arab [Hashemite?] rule. According to the Military Governors’ reports, Money stated, there were 435,674 Muslims, 59,627 Christians and 66, 102 Jews, of whom 29,000 were in or near Jerusalem itself and were inferior morally and intellectually to the bulk of Muslims and Christians. ‘I am convinced’, he argued, ‘that any such policy as giving the Jews a preferential share of the government of Palestine in the near future would be disastrous as regards the peaceful settlement and regeneration of the country; would react powerfully and most unfavourably on the Arabs all over Eastern Turkey in Asia; and eventually on Moslems all over the British Empire’. The minds of the Arabs, he suggested, ‘should be relieved by a definite statement from His Majesty’s Government that the Balfour declaration does not bear the interpretation which is apparently attributed to it by extreme Zionists, and which is apprehended by the other inhabitants of the country’.⁴²

Hogarth’s attitude was no less pessimistic. He reported to Clayton in December that anti-Zionist feeling was getting stronger amongst all classes of the Arab population and that, ‘if we openly and immediately promote a

Zionist political state in Palestine, we shall be no more popular than the French in the rest of Syria.⁴³

At the time (November 1918 – January 1919), Mark Sykes was on a mission to Palestine and Syria in order to secure British interests and solve political and administrative problems which had arisen following the occupation of Northern Palestine and Syria, as well as to gather information for the Peace Conference.⁴⁴ His general impression, following his meetings with Arab and Jewish leaders in Jaffa and Jerusalem, was that there was a great deal of tension and that perhaps both parties thought the moment would be propitious to start a riot in order to draw the attention of the world to their varying claims. In his report of 15 November 1918, he explained that the Zionists were complaining that the Military Authorities did not give sufficient prominence to the Zionist position; that they were allowing the Arabs to propagandise and agitate against the Zionists; that they were biased in favour of the Arabs, especially the Muslims; and that the Arabs were growing aggressive and were taking advantage of the weakness of the Authorities. On the other hand, the Arabs complained that the Zionists were aggressive and provocative and threatened them with a Jewish government and that the 'British Home Government' was acting as if Palestinian Arabs would, sooner or later, become subject to Jewish rule. Sykes, too, was under the impression that the Arabs believed that the declaration did not amount to much and that they had only to agitate in order to get it shelved or rendered null and void. He suggested, therefore, that it should be made quite clear to the Arabs that, while the British Government was determined to watch over their interests so long as it was responsible for the government of the country, the Balfour Declaration was a settled part of Britain's policy which was agreed to by the Entente as a whole.⁴⁵

On 17 November, following a meeting with the Zionist Commission, Sykes cabled Ormsby Gore – who had returned to London at the end of August to join the Foreign Office preparations for the Peace Conference – relaying his impressions and his fears that the situation, which in his opinion derived from a misunderstanding of Zionist objectives, might gradually get worse. As an example, Sykes cited two articles published in the paper *Palestine*, which described the boundaries of Palestine as extending northward to the vicinity of Beirut and eastwards beyond the arable lands east of the Jordan. He spoke of an independent 'Jewish State'. He therefore requested that both Weizmann – who had returned to London in September – and Sokolow should make it clear to the Jews what the suggested boundaries were and, to the Arabs, whether the Zionist objective was an independent Jewish State when a Jewish majority was reached or whether

the tutelage was to continue until Jewish and non-Jewish elements jointly demanded independence.⁴⁶

On 20 November, following a further meeting with the Zionist Commission, Sykes cabled Ormsby Gore again and reported that it had been agreed that it was desirable for two declarations to be made as soon as possible: the first, a declaration that the tutelage of Palestine would remain until both Jewish and non-Jewish elements elected otherwise by decisive majorities; the second, a definition of policy regarding the functions of the Tutelary Administration regarding emigration, language, maintenance of civic equality and control of land transactions with a view to giving freedom of action to the Zionist movement while safeguarding the economic and political interests of the non-Jewish population. In Sykes' opinion, the first declaration should be made by the Zionists and he believed that both declarations would eliminate the existing uncertainty and weaken the movement for joining the Sharif's dominions which had been provoked by the Joint Anglo-French declaration. According to him:

If above two declarations are satisfactory it is most important that Balfour declaration should be amplified so that people should know where they stand. Non-Jews vacillate between (natural?) [*sic*] fear that they may be handed over to Jewish rule and belief that Balfour declaration may as result of agitation be rendered nugatory. Jews without definite rule vacillate between fear that declaration may (be?) [*sic*] (abandon?)ed [*sic*] and most extravagant ideas stimulated by various resolutions and unauthorised statements of Zionist policy of Jewish republic etc.⁴⁷

The Military Authorities in Palestine hesitated over Sykes' suggestions. In response to the Foreign Office request for their opinion of the proposal in the cable of 17 November, Clayton replied that Allenby was doubtful if the suggestion was expedient, as a Zionist declaration would be likely to initiate an era of bitter political rivalry. He did not think that any amplification or modification of Balfour's declaration would produce the positive result anticipated by Sykes. In any case, Allenby believed that any declaration must be made by the Entente Powers, not by the Zionists or the Arabs.⁴⁸

The next day, following a meeting with the Zionist Commission, Clayton cabled a version of a declaration agreed upon by the Zionist leaders, which said that it was desirable to issue a declaration at an early date to the effect that tutelage of Palestine should continue until both Jews and Arabs in Palestine agreed mutually that it should cease; in other words, the agreement would necessitate a majority of both Jews and Arabs in favour of complete

autonomy. Clayton asked for his previous cable to be disregarded as Allenby had agreed that the above declaration would be effective provided it came from the Entente Powers.⁴⁹ However, four days later, in response to a Foreign Office request for Allenby's opinion about a flying visit by Weizmann to Palestine, in order to guide the leadership of the Jewish population there or whether a declaration of Zionist policy made by him in England would suffice, Clayton replied again in the negative since Allenby considered that any further declaration of Zionist policy should be deferred until the future of Palestine had been definitely settled.⁵⁰ G. J. Kidston, head of the Eastern Department at the Foreign Office, pointed out the reason which, in his view, was behind Allenby's attitude. On 4 December, he noted in minutes attached to Clayton's letter of 8 November to which he attached Storrs' report: 'But I fancy these Moslem-Christian demonstrations against the Jews are the very reason which has induced Gen. Allenby to urge that any further Zionist declaration should be postponed until some settlement has been reached with regard to the future of Palestine.'⁵¹

At the time, the Zionists were in the midst of intensive deliberations on the proposals relating to the political and economic future of Palestine, which they were going to present to the Peace Conference. On 19 November, Weizmann presented, for the first time, for the informal attention of the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, a draft of proposals formulated by an Advisory Committee on Palestine, headed by Herbert Samuel.⁵² A few reservations were raised at the Foreign Office with regard to some of the proposals. Those were supposed to appear on the agenda of a meeting between Balfour and Weizmann on 4 December, side by side with the issue of the need to declare a policy.⁵³ Any declaration regarding Palestine was dependent on the formula of the proposals to be agreed upon, and Weizmann thought it necessary to bring the London Zionists' proposals to the attention of the leaders of the *Yishuv* as well as to the Military Authorities in Palestine.

When a report by David Eder – the acting head of the Zionist Commission since Weizmann's return to London in September 1918 – on Sykes' meetings with the Zionist Commission reached London, Weizmann sent the following cable:

... We agree to necessity of public statement and are submitting to the Government definition of meaning of National Home. Public declaration our policy would follow after acceptance of definition by

Government. Please explain Sykes and authorities that according latest information Jewries of the world especially America whole heartily supporting British Trusteeship greatly disappointed moderation and timidity our demands. They rightly think: Arab national ambitions fully realised in Arabosyrian state. Palestine within its historic boundaries placed under British trusteeship must form separate political administrative organism where all opportunities should be afforded for ultimate development of Jewish Commonwealth. Legitimate interests of Palestinian peasantry always safeguarded by suzerain power and Jewish population. Pan-Arab threats and appeals to violence fomented by Effendis will not intimidate Jews determined to press their just national demands.⁵⁴

Following this telegram, Weizmann also sent Eder and Clayton the draft proposals he had presented to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.⁵⁵

Weizmann's cable and the proposals reached Palestine at a time when a document, entitled 'Outline of a program of a temporary government of Palestine' was being drafted there. In contrast to the Proposals suggested by Samuel's committee, this document raised far-reaching demands regarding the inclusion of the Zionist Organisation in the political and economic control of Palestine. Thereupon, attention was drawn from the tactical question of the expediency of making a political declaration, as suggested by Sykes, to the question of the contents the Zionist might include in it.

Once Weizmann's cable was received by Clayton, it produced one of the sharpest analyses of the situation in Palestine from the Military Authorities. Clayton, having requested that the statements contained in Weizmann's cable be treated as confidential and that any further declaration of Zionist policy be submitted to British Authorities in Palestine for discussion before being publicised, launched an attack on the extreme demands of the Zionists, as already expressed in public speeches and press articles. In his opinion, world Jewry's assumption, according to Weizmann, that Arab national ambitions would be fully realised in the new Arabo-Syrian State, was groundless. The existing trend of political events was not inspiring confidence in Arabs that their national aspirations in Syria would be fulfilled – he wrote – apart from the fact that Arab national ambitions counted for little in Palestine, where the Arab population was concerned not with national aspirations but with maintaining the situation in Palestine itself, which they considered was threatened by the advance of Zionism. The Balfour Declaration, according to Clayton, was extremely unpalatable to both Christians and Muslims and, during the previous year, Zionist propaganda had not diminished their fears,

although the presence of the British Military Administration and ongoing military operations had caused them to lie dormant. However, the signing of the various armistices, the upcoming Peace Conference and, especially, the publication of the Anglo-French declaration of 8 November had brought the question to the forefront. Both Arabs and Zionists, as well as other communities throughout the world, considered that the moment had come to make their wishes widely known, before a definite settlement was reached – Clayton warned – and anti-Jewish actions might be initiated by the Arabs in order to show their opposition to Zionism, which they could not express by any other means. Clayton also argued that, in view of the Military Governors' reports that the population of Palestine comprised 512,000 Muslims, 61,000 Christians and 66,000 Jews, it was essential that the Zionists avoid further exacerbating tensions by exaggerated demands and declarations of policy. Such a course could only militate against the success of Zionism by arousing permanent hostility to it and would lay the Zionists open to the charge of endeavouring to secure their aims by force. Clayton, however, believed that the legitimate aspirations of the Zionists could be realised, provided their programme was carried out wisely and with sympathy for the Arabs, who comprised a very large majority of the population of Palestine. On the other hand – Clayton stated – if the Zionists failed to exercise patience and endeavoured to attain at once aims which had to take many years to achieve, the result could only be a structure based on insecure foundations.⁵⁶ To support his case, Clayton attached copies of Money's, Storrs' and Hubbard's reports mentioned above.

On 10 December, Weizmann advised the Foreign Office that the idea of immediately publicising the declaration had been abandoned.⁵⁷ However, that was not the end of the story. Shortly afterwards, Weizmann sent Eder an abstract of a new draft of proposals which had been presented to the Foreign Office on 9 December and named the stipulations on which Palestine might become 'a Jewish commonwealth under British Trusteeship'. That is to say: that Jews should participate in the administration of the country; that the Jewish population should be allowed the widest practicable measure of local self-government; that Hebrew should be the official language of the Jewish population; that the Jews should have extensive rights with regard to taking over land and preemption of public works; that a Jewish Council would deal with land settlement and land purchase, promote and organise immigration, supervise and control wherever practicable concessions for public works; that the Jewish population should have educational and cultural autonomy and that Sabbath and Jewish holidays should be legal days of rest. According to Weizmann, Faisal, who 'found himself in complete agreement' with these proposals, was sure that he would

be able to explain to the Arabs the advantages of 'a Jewish Palestine' and had assured Weizmann that he would not spare any effort to support Jewish demands at the Peace Conference, where he would declare that Zionism and the Arab movement were fellow-movements.⁵⁸

Clayton, who just a few months earlier had held out great hopes of an eventual agreement between Faisal and Weizmann, ignored the note which had been written following the renewal of discussions between the two leaders in December 1918. Once more, he called attention to the fact that 90 per cent of the population of Palestine was not Jewish and protested against the intention to enforce a foreign element – unless gradually – on the local population.⁵⁹

Clayton's response to the proposals expressed the views of the heads of the Military Administration. They did not take into account the reasons for the pro-Zionist policy in the international context and did not try to understand what motivated it. They regarded Palestine as an Arab country, by numbers, and viewed the National Home policy as an addition one could do without or as a necessary evil forced upon them which had to be limited so as not to offend the Arab consensus. However, in their assessments of the situation in Palestine, they never expressed any objection in principle to the National Home policy. They even seemed to agree with the idea that, in the long run, Palestine would become a Jewish country. However, being in charge of the country's administration, they tried to ensure that the pro-Zionist policy would be implemented in the longest possible time, so as to avoid any Arab uprising which might shake the foundations of British rule.

This attitude to the policy based on an understanding between the Zionists and Faisal, was not only demonstrated by Clayton. A fortnight after the Weizmann-Faisal agreement of 3 January 1919 had been signed, Arnold Toynbee, then a member of the British Peace Conference Delegation, expressed his reservations about Weizmann's assumption that Faisal had agreed to 'a Jewish Palestine'.⁶⁰ And in August 1919, Major J. N. Camp, Assistant Political Officer, noted that, in his opinion, that agreement was not worth the paper it was written on nor the energy wasted in the conversation needed to make it.⁶¹

The position of the Military Authorities was supported in London by Curzon who, in January 1919, served as acting Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, with Balfour having left for Paris, heading the Delegation to the Peace Conference.⁶² Curzon joined Clayton by expressing his reservations about the Zionist proposals in a very emotional way and requested that, in the papers to Paris, it should be stated that he agreed with Clayton and that he viewed the proposals of the Zionist Commission, which so far he knew had not been sanctioned in any way by the British Government, with no small

alarm. In another minute, Curzon referred to the request that Weizmann should issue a declaration with an announcement that it was approved by the British Government. Curzon stated that he could not by himself give any such approval since he believed that it would only lead to disaster.⁶³

The British Peace Conference Delegation was too busy at the time with preparations for the Conference to deal with the initiative of a declaration about Palestine. If and when it turned to discuss matters of Zionist policy, it would be in the context of formulating the Zionist proposals which would be put on the agenda of the Council of Ten.⁶⁴ The deliberations regarding the proposals and eventual decisions of the Peace Conference were supposed to solve the problem of the need for publicly-declared policy. Therefore, the Delegation's discussions dealt mainly with matters of principle which were to be considered at the Peace Conference. According to Sir Louis Mallet, then a member of the British Delegation, those in Paris were hoping 'that the Conference will make quite clear the conditions in which Palestine becomes the national home & nothing else'.⁶⁵ In this matter, as in other questions dealing with Palestine, the British were careful that no move be made which could arouse agitation among either Arabs or Zionists, harden the French and Italian Governments' opposition or hinder the prospects of Britain being nominated the Trustee of Palestine at the Peace Conference. As a rule, Balfour tried to avoid any public statement about Palestine, until – in his words – 'the whole Eastern and Mediterranean situation, including Syria, has cooled down and we have reached a point in the Conference proceedings at which we can see our way to a rapid decision of the critical problems which for various reasons are now hanging fire'.⁶⁶

Among the many minutes registered, only one dealt with the contents of the declaration which Sykes had suggested while in Palestine – a minute by Toynbee which stated: '... surely our foundation should be a Palestinian State with Palestinian Citizenship for all inhabitants, whether Jewish or non-Jewish. This alone seems consistent with Mr. Balfour's letter. Hebrew might be made an official language, but the Jewish element should not be allowed to form a state-within-a-state, enjoying greater privileges than the rest of the population'.⁶⁷ Apart from this minute, no significant deliberation of Sykes' suggestion took place and no initiative was taken beyond consultations with the Military Authorities about tactics and the usefulness of publicising the policy.

Having said that, demands to clarify the Palestine policy which called attention to the practical obstacles of a pro-Zionist policy as well as the need

to avoid a public declaration, certainly contributed to focusing political thinking on planning Palestine's political future. Thus, at the beginning of February 1919 – when Lloyd George received a letter of protest from Cardinal Bourne, who reported from Jerusalem that the Zionists there claimed that the Jews were to govern the Holy Land under a British Protectorate – and demanded a clear and definitive declaration on Zionism,⁶⁸ Lloyd George passed on an extract from the letter to Balfour. 'If the Zionists claim that the Jews are to have domination of the Holy Land under a British Protectorate, then they are certainly putting their claims too high', he wrote to Phillip Kerr, Balfour's Personal Secretary. He went on:

I have heard from other sources that the Arabs are very disturbed about the Zionists' claims and that they are under the impression that they are to be expropriated from their little holdings in order to make room for the Jews. We certainly must not have a combination of Catholics and Mohammedans against us. It would be a bad start to our government of Palestine.⁶⁹

Balfour was forced to admit that keeping silent would not be possible and that a public declaration of Britain's position would be the lesser of two evils. Furthermore, he analysed the problem which would arise in principle from a declaration. In a letter to the Prime Minister he wrote:

The weak point of our position of course is that in the case of Palestine we deliberately and rightly decline to accept the principle of self-determination. If the present inhabitants were consulted they would unquestionably give an anti-Jewish verdict. Our justification for our policy is that we regard Palestine as being absolutely exceptional; that we consider the question of the Jews outside Palestine as one of world importance, and that we conceive the Jews to have a historic claim to a home in their ancient land; provided that home can be given them without either dispossessing or oppressing the present inhabitants.⁷⁰

Phillip Kerr, who had delivered Lloyd George's letter to Balfour, wrote to Lloyd George:

We have promised that Palestine should be treated as a national home of the Jews and that if the Jews migrate there in sufficient numbers they will eventually become the predominant power in the country. The opposition, Arab, Roman Catholic etc., claim that the

administration of the country should be based on the principle of self determination which means that as the Jews are now only one tenth of the population they will never get a look in at all. Weizmann does not claim to do anything which interferes with the rights of the Arab or Christian population, but he does say that if the British Declaration means anything at all it means that the Jews of the rest of the world through some kind of Zionist Council ⁷¹ shall not only have the right to foster immigration and undertake the public work necessary to enable the Jews to immigrate but that they should have some recognised position in the governmental machinery e. g. that they should have a strong representation on any advisory administrative council which may eventually be set up. Otherwise local influences will be able to stop Jewish immigration and the development of Palestine as a Jewish home. To my mind he is right provided the British Government holds the scale evenly between the local people and the organisation of Overseas Jews who are preparing for the return of oppressed Hebrews of Russia, Poland, etc., to Palestine.⁷²

When, on 19 February, the Foreign Office delivered to the Peace Conference Delegation a petition from the inhabitants of Nablus against handing over Palestine to the Jews and separation of the country from Syria, Ormsby Gore, a member of the Delegation at that time, noted in a minute:

This fear of Jewish political domination is genuine and widespread. Any phrases like 'Jewish State', 'Jewish Commonwealth', 'Jewish Palestine' add fuel to the fire. If Great Britain becomes the mandatory of Palestine it must be made clear that there is no intention of establishing Jewish rule in Palestine or of giving political privileges to the Jews. If any Jewish body is formed to take over concessions or land for development of the national home such a body [should be granted?] no political functions but must be a purely business concern. I presume that as soon as the Peace Conference have decided the fate of Palestine, instructions will be given to the C.P.O. telling him confidentially what the decision has been and what is the policy of H.M.G. in order the C.P.O. may be able to calm the fears of the non-Jews and explain to the Jewish Jingoists that both have been wrong.⁷³

At the time, the drafting process of the proposals of the Zionist Organisation to the Peace Conference was concluded and the last version, of 3 February

1919, which received the approval of the British Delegation to the Conference, was to be presented to the Council of Ten on 27 February. Ormsby Gore's minute reflected the debate which accompanied the drafting and the stand he had taken in that debate.⁷⁴ Balfour, who had read the minute, did not respond to its content or context and just hinted at the position he had already taken. In the margins of Ormsby Gore's minute, as well as in the minutes of Mallet and Hardinge who supported him, Balfour wrote: 'See my letter to the P. M.'

At the beginning of April, the Zionist Commission suggested that the proposals which had been submitted to the Peace Conference be publicised in Palestine in order to dispel exaggerated interpretations of Zionist intentions and relieve the tense situation in Palestine. Clayton, who delivered the message to London, supported the suggestion, explaining that such publicisation might reduce the effects of anti-Zionist propaganda which was inflaming public opinion by quoting the extravagant declarations of irresponsible Zionists. However, the following day, having consulted his colleagues at the Palestine Administration, Clayton retracted his support. At the British Delegation to the Peace Conference, which had tended to favour the idea that some statement be made by the Zionist Organisation through the Zionist Commission, people concluded that the British authorities in Palestine preferred not to challenge public opinion in Palestine at that moment and thus the initiative taken to publicise the Zionists' proposals came to an end.⁷⁵

In the spring of 1919, while awaiting the visit of the King-Crane Commission, which was supposed to investigate the Middle East populations' aspirations for their political future, the Military Authorities were rattled again. As on other occasions, they were worried about the effect the tension between Zionist and Arab aspirations might have on running a proper administration and the prospects of British rule in Palestine.

The idea of having a joint inter-Allies commission to examine the conditions in Palestine and Syria was suggested by President Wilson in May 1919, and the guidelines about the aims and scope of its mission were prepared and approved by the Allied heads of state, probably without the Foreign Office being consulted. In the end, Britain, France and Italy did not have any representatives on the commission, and only President Wilson nominated two representatives – Henri King and Charles Crane. The two visited the Middle East in June 1919 and submitted their findings to the President. Their conclusions were negative about the prospects of the Zionist

programme for Palestine being implemented, if the right to self-determination of local populations was to be respected.⁷⁶

The Military Authorities, as mentioned above, had been warning for months of the consequences of a policy which was not accepted by 90 per cent of the population. However, they assumed that the policy of establishing a Jewish national home would be carried out and that, in the long run, the Jews would reach a powerful position in the country. Therefore, their only request was that the requirements and sentiments of the silent majority should be considered and that the policy should be carried out quietly and slowly so as not to estrange and provoke the Arabs, since any attempt to have them under minority rule might threaten British control in the area. Leading up to the arrival of the inquiry commission, the problem became more acute. The Military Authorities were now convinced that the Palestinian Arabs, who were aware of the principle of self-determination and, as mentioned above, protested in its name following the publicising of the Anglo-French declaration, might find another patron instead of a Great Britain committed to establishing a national home for the Jews. They came to the unavoidable conclusion that Britain should completely give up the National Home policy.

On 2 May 1919, this conclusion was voiced by Palestine's Chief Administrator, Major General Money. Money reported that the Palestinian Arabs were opposed to the Zionist programme, not only as interpreted by certain extreme Zionists but also to the comparatively moderate programme presented to the Peace Conference. 'The Palestinians desire their country for themselves, and will resist any general immigration of Jews however gradual, by every means in their power including active hostilities', he stated. Money assumed that, if the Zionist programme was 'a necessary adjunct to a mandatory', the Palestinian Arabs would select, in preference, the United States or France as the mandatory power or as the protective power of an Arab administration since the British were more systematically committed to the Zionist programme. 'If a clear and unbiased expression of wishes is required and if a mandate for Great Britain is desired by His Majesty's Government', Money proposed, 'it will be necessary to make an authoritative announcement that the Zionist programme will not be enforced in opposition to the wishes of the majority'.⁷⁷

Clayton, who cabled Money's report to London, joined the latter's assessment of the situation, adding a warning of the possible dangers of serious disturbances in which Arabs from east of the Jordan might take part and open threats of active hostility there that were temporarily postponed due to the news of the impending Commission. 'A British mandate for Palestine on the lines of the Zionist programme', he warned, 'will mean the

indefinite retention in the country of a military force considerably greater than that now in Palestine'.⁷⁸

On 8 June, following news of difficulties in organising the Inquiry Commission, Clayton delivered an additional report by Money. This time, Money wrote that any delay might lead Arabs, including those east of the Jordan, to make use of arms and ammunitions left behind by the Turks. In his opinion, any trouble in Palestine would affect the demobilisation of the army and might put back the progress already gained under British occupation. Clayton added to this his assertion that the feeling in Syria was equally strong and warned that, if any idea got abroad that the Commission had no real authority, that the decision had already been reached in principle and that the arrival of the Commission was merely a matter of form since its recommendations would not be considered seriously by the Peace Conference, there was little doubt that a grave situation would arise. Public opinion throughout Syria and Palestine was united in opposition to any arbitrary division of what they held to be Arab territories – Clayton emphasised – and, if a course of action was decided upon before they had an opportunity to state their case they would regard it as a complete negation of the principles of the League of Nations, the principle of self-determination of peoples and the Anglo-French declaration of November 1918. Clayton warned that disappointment and disillusionment would render the inhabitants of the various areas open to enemy propaganda and violent local disturbances might combine into a general anti-Christian and anti-foreign movement.⁷⁹ Clayton also asked the Foreign Office not to reach any decision pending the report of the Inquiry Commission.

Allenby, as well, pinned his hopes on the Commission's conclusions. He wrote:

... Zionism is more and more unpopular and I am sure that any attempt to force it on Palestine would result in riots and massacres. The only chance for a peaceful settlement of the Syrian and Palestine questions lies in the speedy arrival of the promised Commission from the Peace Conference ... Lord Curzon, I know, is trying to stop it. If it is stopped, the Arabs will have been deceived, and their anti-French sentiment will become anti-European. The Zionists and the French dislike the Commission, and so do our politicians in Mesopotamia, but it is the only solution for Syria and Palestine.⁸⁰

The idea of giving up the Jewish National Home policy could not be accepted by the Foreign Office officials who had been involved in the making of the Balfour Declaration. Ormsby Gore, for instance, assumed that it went

without saying that ‘we obviously cannot go back on the declaration made to the Zionist in 1917’.⁸¹ While Roland Graham raised echoes of pre-declaration deliberations, in responding to Balfour’s comments on Cardinal’s Bourne protest, mentioned above: ‘But the fact remains that we are ever so committed to the Zionist idea that it would be practically impossible to retract without drawing upon ourselves a Jewish resentment even more dangerous than ... the problems to be faced in carrying that idea into effect.’⁸² As regards Money-Clayton’s proposal of 2 May, Graham responded shortly: ‘We are practically committed to the mandate for Palestine & will have to make the most of it.’⁸³ Only Curzon, as usual, had his doubts: ‘But what if the Commission report is against it?’⁸⁴

The awareness of the need to keep its commitment by adhering to a policy of a British Mandate for Palestine which would enable the development of a Jewish National Home, was a significant component in the political thinking of the British Delegation to the Peace Conference. The Arab protest, often reported upon by the Military Authorities, was taken into account whenever the essential conditions for the establishment of the National Home and implementation of the Balfour Declaration were being considered. It was also reflected in the various interpretations of the British commitment, during the negotiations regarding the Proposals submitted by the Zionists pending the Peace Conference and throughout the process of the Mandate’s formulation. However, never did it shatter the conception that the National Home was a vital element in achieving the Mandate.

Fears that the Arab population would oppose the British Mandate did not change this basic premise. Balfour, as pointed out above, had already made it clear in February, in his letter to Lloyd George, that the principle of self-determination could not apply to Palestine. Now the Inquiry Commission had been nominated, he considered it necessary not only to reiterate his stand but also to sum it up in a memorandum and put on record his objections to the inclusion of Palestine within the area of investigation.

The memorandum was written on 23 March 1919, a day after Balfour’s meeting with President Wilson and Lloyd George, in which he made some observations with regard to the inclusion of Palestine and Cilicia in the sphere of operations to be covered by the proposed Allies’ Commission. If anybody read the documents quoted in the instructions to the Commissioners – he wrote – they would see that the Commissioners were directed:

to frame their advice upon the wishes of the existing inhabitants of the countries they were going to visit. They are to advise, for example,

on the establishment of 'national Governments and Administrations, deriving their authority from the initiative and free choice of the native population', and the Conference declares that it is obliged to make itself acquainted 'as intimately as possible with the sentiments of the people in these regions with regard to the future administration of their affairs.'

Balfour assumed that, if the Commissioners were to carry out these instructions, their report would contain a statement to the effect that the present inhabitants of Palestine, of whom a large majority were Arabs, would object to an administration which encouraged the increase of the Jewish population and its influence. In that case, countries which, like England and America, might become the mandatory for that part of Turkey, would find that the difficulties of carrying out a Zionist policy had been greatly increased. However, he noted that publicly they had declared their adhesion to the Zionist policy and, though the task of carrying it out would, in any case, be hard to accomplish, it could not be abandoned without giving a shock to Jewish opinion throughout the world 'which cannot but have most unhappy results.'⁸⁵

When the British Delegation to the Peace Conference received Money-Clayton's cable of 2 May, in which Money proposed that the British Government should make an authoritative announcement that the Zionist programme would not be enforced against the wishes of the majority, Balfour and his assistants had no option but to respond. Major General William Thwaites, who was, at the time, the Director of Military Intelligence attached to the Delegation's Military Section, disassociated himself from the cable which, according to him, was unduly pessimistic and argued that it might still be possible to avert the danger of an anti-British vote by careful organisation of propaganda and by pledges that the Zionist programme would be a moderate one. He warned, however, that matters ought not to be allowed to drift further or Britain might find itself obliged to disown Zionism or find itself in the position of receiving a mandate for a country of which the inhabitants were definitely hostile. On the other hand, Thwaites pointed out that the refusal to accept Zionism in Palestine would involve world-wide consequences since European Jewry had been given to understand that they would 'find a home in Palestine', sponsored mainly by Great Britain. Thwaites argued that General Allenby, speaking in his capacity as a military commander, was advocating a policy which was in contradiction to moderate Zionist policy which was supported by the British Government. Therefore, he demanded, it was an urgent necessity to come to a decision on Britain's future policy, so that General Allenby might receive clear and definite

instructions. Furthermore, Thwaites believed that if these instructions were to the effect that a moderate Zionist policy was to be supported, it would be worthwhile to bring new blood into General Allenby's political administration by sending out an officer, such as Colonel Meinertzhagen – who was, at the time, a member of the British Peace Conference's Delegation and was, therefore, aware of the situation in Europe – to help Allenby overcome the difficulties.⁸⁶

A few days later, Balfour himself was compelled to react to the Military Authorities' deviation from the policy decided upon by the Government. On 19 May Balfour responded to Money-Clayton's proposal in a letter (signed by Louis Mallet for Balfour), advising Curzon, who replaced him at the Foreign Office during the Peace Conference, that 'there can of course be no question of making any such announcement'. Balfour suggested that Clayton should be sent the statements of support the Zionists had received from the French, the United States and Italian governments, which had approved of the policy set forth in the Balfour Declaration, for him to use when explaining to 'responsible quarters in Palestine' that there was a unity of opinion among the Allies on this matter. In this connection, Balfour also supported Major General Thwaites' suggestion that Colonel Meinertzhagen, D. S. O., who understood the different currents of opinion in Paris, be sent out to Palestine to assist Clayton as an advisor on Zionist matters. In conclusion, Balfour suggested that Ormsby Gore and Herbert Samuel, who was, at the time, the chairman of the Advisory Committee on Economic Development in Palestine, should be consulted on how the hostility to Zionism in Palestine could best be allayed by the Military Administration.⁸⁷

The Foreign Office acted accordingly: on 27 May, a telegram containing an abstract of Balfour's letter was sent to Clayton⁸⁸ and, on 31 May, Samuel was consulted about his opinion.⁸⁹

Samuel agreed with those who thought that the Military Authorities were not following the Government's declared policy. In his reply of 5 June, he pointed out that, since the Balfour Declaration had been made, no public pronouncement on the subject of Palestine had been issued and that the Military Authorities did not conduct their relations with the Arabs on the basis that the Declaration embodied British policy. In consequence, he believed, the Arabs doubted whether the establishment of the Jewish National Home was really a decided issue and believed that, if they agitated and threatened, the British Government might well be ready to abandon its announced intentions. Samuel added that distorted views of the nature of the Zionist programme, which were disseminated among the population by interested elements, had contributed to the creation of this atmosphere and that it was only natural for this to give rise to alarm. Therefore, Samuel

suggested that the Government should send clear instructions to the local administration to the effect that their policy was aimed at Great Britain receiving the Mandate for Palestine and that the terms of the Mandate would certainly embody the substance of the Balfour Declaration. At the same time, the Arabs should be assured that in no circumstances would the Arabs be despoiled of their land or required to leave the country; that there could be no question of the majority being subjected to the rule of the minority and that the Zionist programme did not include any such ideas; that complete religious liberty would be granted to all denominations and that Christian and Mohammedan Holy Places would remain in the custody of the adherents of those religions. Furthermore, Samuel suggested reiterating that the American and French Governments were also pledged to favour the establishment in Palestine of a Jewish National Home and that the local administration be instructed to bring these facts to the attention of the Arab leaders and impress upon them that the matter was *chose jugée* and that continued agitation would certainly be in vain. Samuel thought that it would be valuable if, at every suitable occasion, it was explained that it was expected that, under the new government of Palestine, very large sums of money would be brought into Palestine for its development and that all classes and races would benefit from this. Such instructions, he wrote, should be executed not only by the heads of the administration but also by their local representatives. In addition, Samuel concurred with the idea that an officer who was acquainted with British policy-making in Paris and London should be sent to Palestine to convey to the local administration in detail the views of the Government.⁹⁰

Samuel's suggestions were fully accepted by the British Delegation to the Peace Conference and the Foreign Office was asked to send them on to Allenby. Curzon, on the other hand, was against both the fact that policy was being dictated by Samuel, who was not a member of the Government, and the pronouncement of this policy.⁹¹ However, in the meantime, Clayton came to London and, early in July, in a meeting with Zionist leaders and members of the Advisory Committee on Economic Development in Palestine, gave his consent to the issuing of instructions. The Military Authorities, Clayton explained, were not placed in Palestine in order to carry out any particular policy but to maintain security in the country. They were in the position of a trustee awaiting a decision regarding the fate of the country. In his opinion, in the absence of definite instructions from the Home Government, the Administration was not justified in doing anything which could be construed as forestalling the Mandate being given to Britain. If indeed such a decision had really been reached in principle and the matter was a *fait accompli*, as was certainly indicated in the draft treaty between the Allies and Turkey

shown to him by Weizmann and if indeed months would elapse before the decision about the Mandate and its terms were announced, definite instructions should be given to the Military Authorities in Palestine along the lines of the draft treaty. Additionally, certain lines of action should be given to the Administration in Palestine, along which they could proceed in preparing to carry the decision into effect. Clayton was convinced that a clear statement of policy and a pronouncement of what seemed to be a *fait accompli* would be accepted peaceably by at least 75 per cent of the Arab population; this, he felt, would remove any hopes they may have of reversing the policy by violence.⁹²

Thus, and in spite of Curzon's resentment, Samuel's suggestions were sent on 4 August 1919 to Palestine as instructions, almost to the letter, as follows:

Following is for your information and guidance and that of all heads of administration and their local representatives:

His Majesty's Government's policy contemplates to Great Britain of Mandate for Palestine. Terms of Mandate will embody substance of declaration of November 2nd, 1917. Arabs will not be despoiled of their land nor required to leave the country. There is no question of majority being subjected to the rule of minority, nor does Zionist programme contemplate this.

All denominations will enjoy religious liberty and Holy Places of Christians and Mohammedans will remain in custody of adherents of those religions. American and French Governments are equally pledged to support establishment in Palestine of Jewish national home. This should be emphasized to Arab leaders at every opportunity and it should be impressed on them that the matter is a 'chose jugée' and continued agitation would be useless and detrimental. Development of Palestine under new regime may be expected to involve large influx of money and all classes and races will benefit by its expenditure.⁹³

The instructions given to the Military Authorities, although it is significant that they were given at all, did not contribute to clarifying the intention to establish a National Home for the Jewish people and did not add anything to the meaning of the concept itself. The various messages of both Military Administrators and Mark Sykes when visiting Palestine, as to the necessity of a more detailed explanation of the meaning of the Declaration thus removing the uncertainty which was causing fear and inflaming sentiments, brought no response. In addition to the repeatedly-given general assurance that the Arabs would not be affected, the Military Authorities in Palestine were told that annulment of the National Home policy was out of the

question, that the Arabs should accept it as a *fait accompli* and that there was no point in turning their back on Britain since the other Allies were supporting the National Home policy. However, the instructions did not include any guidelines for the administrators, which could enable them to deal with questions regarding the objectives of the National Home policy.⁹⁴

Anyway, despite the instructions being superficial and not containing any new information, when Weizmann requested permission to publish them, it was explained that the instructions had been intended for the guidance of British representatives rather than for publication since publicising might cause antagonism and obstruct British prospects of receiving the Mandate.⁹⁵

The same fate that had befallen the Balfour Declaration, which had never been published in Palestine, and the Zionist Proposals – even though those were supposed to be published by the Zionists with no British involvement – also befell the instructions explaining that the policy of a Jewish National Home was still valid. The decision to prevent their publication also diminished the prospects of achieving their limited objective of convincing the Arabs that the National Home policy was going to be implemented. It allowed for the assumption that the fear of sparking hostility which had prevented the publicising of the instructions might eventually cause the total annulment of that policy.

The process which had brought about the confrontation between the political thinking of the Military Authorities and that of Balfour and his assistants was undoubtedly accelerated by the continuous pressure put on the Military Authorities by various Zionist spokesmen, who kept on complaining about the lack of knowledge, understanding and sympathy of various ranks of the Administration. Already in the days of his mission as head of the Zionist Commission, Weizmann reported directly to Balfour his impressions of the Military Authorities' attitude and their methods of carrying out Government policy. As mentioned above, he had ascribed their faults to their Sudanese-Egyptian background and to the lack of information and guidance about the National Home policy and its objectives.

In April 1919, when Balfour directed Weizmann's attention to Clayton's complaints about the radical pronouncements of leading Zionists which were antagonising the Arabs and requested him to restrain them,⁹⁶ Weizmann sent the Foreign Office a file containing documents which supported his argument regarding the Military Authorities' attitude towards both Zionist objectives and Arab agitation. A week later, Weizmann suggested a practical solution:

in view of Colonel Wyndham Deedes' transferral to Constantinople and General Clayton being mainly occupied in Egypt, he suggested that it would be desirable for an additional political officer to be sent out to Palestine.⁹⁷

Weizmann's complaints were supported by Herbert Samuel. In response to Balfour's letter of 31 March, Samuel suggested that Zionist complaints that the Military Authorities were not carrying out the Declaration policy should be considered.⁹⁸ As pointed out above, Samuel dealt also with that aspect and its consequences in his proposal of 5 June 1919.

At the beginning of July, both Weizmann and Samuel intensified their pressure, appearing one after the other at the Foreign Office. Samuel demanded that in the permanent Administration of Palestine new officers should be appointed who would possess a better understanding of the intentions of the British Government. Weizmann protested, quite vehemently, against the policy of the Military Authorities, who were showing a marked hostility to the Jews and spreading the idea that the British Government had no intention of fulfilling its obligations towards the Jews. Weizmann also warned of a possible hostile outburst of feeling against Britain in Jewish circles world-wide when the true facts of the situation in Palestine came to be generally known. Curzon, having read this, noted: 'To a large extent the Zionists are now reaping the harvest which they themselves sowed'.⁹⁹

The file of documents which Weizmann had presented in April did not achieve its purpose. The documents provided the Military Authorities with evidence supporting their reports on the explosive atmosphere in Palestine and led to the conclusion that it was not desirable to publish any pro-Zionist declaration in case of a possible Arab uprising, a conclusion which was quite the opposite of the one expected by the Zionists. However, at the same time, the repeated complaints were becoming a nuisance, which could only be dealt with by turning around the existing relations between the Military Authorities and the leadership of the Jewish population as well as attending to the causes of the complaints. Thus, in effect, the complaints were taken into account in the considerations which resulted in the decision to provide the Military Authorities with clear instructions, as well as in the decision to send an additional political officer out to Palestine. This last proposal was eventually implemented when the Peace Conference Delegation proposed that Meinertzhagen be sent out to assist Allenby and Clayton.¹⁰⁰

In the meantime, quite a few changes had taken place in Palestine: both General Money and General Clayton, who held the posts of Chief Military

Administrator and Chief Political Officer, had announced their resignations. The Zionists took that opportunity to use their influence to fill these two important offices with men who were in favour of the policy outlined in the Balfour Declaration as a first step towards replacing all officers who were hostile to the Jewish population. To accomplish that, Weizmann met Balfour. The candidate for the position of Chief Political Officer, who had been suggested by the Foreign Office staff in London and approved by Allenby, Balfour and Curzon, was none other than the officer who had been suggested in May to assist Clayton: Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen.¹⁰¹

Meinertzhagen had heard about Zionism and the Zionist movement when it was in its cradle, in the days of Chamberlain's Uganda Proposal to settle Jews in East Africa. Already then, he had written in his diary that: 'the Jews' home is in Palestine, not in Africa' where they would not assimilate, having their own religion, customs and habits. Instead, he suggested that the Turks should be persuaded to give them Palestine, since the Arabs were doing nothing with it and the Jews, with their brains and dynamic force, would be a tremendous asset to Turkey.¹⁰²

Meinertzhagen had become acquainted with Middle East issues since his appointment, in May 1917 as Field Intelligence Officer at Allenby's Headquarters and, later on – since February 1918 – in the course of his service in the War Office and the British Delegation to the Peace Conference. In his memoranda, written while in Paris, he elaborated on the importance of Palestine for imperial reasons, arguing that Britain should rely on the Zionists and that the Arabs were not to be trusted. While warning against alienating Jewish public opinion, he urged that an official statement be made by the British Government that the Balfour Declaration was still valid, that a clear definition of policy in Palestine be formulated and that the Military Authorities in Palestine should be given instructions to execute a firm policy against Arab hostility in order to avoid chaos.¹⁰³

When Meinertzhagen arrived in Egypt, early in September 1919, to begin his work as Political Officer of the Expeditionary Force and the Occupied Enemy Territorial Administration (OETA, south), it was clear that he would find himself in a minority. Colonel French, who had served as deputy Political Officer since Clayton's departure, and his assistant Major J.N. Camp, as well as Major General H.D. Watson, who had temporarily replaced Money as Chief Administrator early in August, and Chief of Staff Colonel B.H. Waters-Taylor reported in August, prior to Meinertzhagen's arrival, that the Arab political opposition was more organised and they were ready for violent hostilities. Therefore, they kept on warning, if the Zionists did not establish themselves in Palestine by peaceful penetration over a long period of time with no expectations of getting special privileges – at the expense of the

rightful inhabitants and owners of the land – Britain would have to keep a large force of troops in the country for many years in order to establish the National Home.¹⁰⁴

Weizmann, who wanted to avoid confrontation between Watson and Meinertzhagen, tried to reinforce the latter. Already in early September 1919, he requested both the War Office and the Foreign Office to send Meinertzhagen a telegram to the effect that Jewish public opinion was greatly perturbed by news of the unfriendly attitude of the Administration towards Zionism and by disturbing comments appearing in the American and European press at the same time of the publication of the American Inquiry Commission report on Syria. Furthermore, he suggested that some definite sign of sympathy and friendship on the part of the Administration towards Zionist policy would improve the situation considerably.¹⁰⁵

Meinertzhagen's response as to the necessity of explaining British policy soon followed. In a letter to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, of 26 September, in which he elaborated on his own attitude towards Zionism and analysed the reasons for Arab antagonism, Meinertzhagen discussed the background of the decision not to publicise Balfour's guiding instructions of 4 August 1919, by arguing that the population of Palestine was not yet ready to accept a public pronouncement that Britain, France and America were committed to a policy of establishing Zionism in Palestine. Meinertzhagen proposed a campaign of gradually introducing Zionism to the Arab population, which would bring about a better understanding of the objectives of Zionism and the eventual benefits to Palestine of their implementation. In addition, this would allay Arab concerns about religious intolerance, economic competition and the flooding of the country with eastern European immigrants. In this spirit, he suggested that he draw up with Weizmann – who was expected in Palestine at the time – and the Chief Administrator a statement to the population, explaining in the most moderate language what Zionism meant.¹⁰⁶

A few days later, following a protest submitted by the Christian-Muslim Society, following news that Weizmann was sending Sir Patrick Geddes to prepare a building plan for Jerusalem, Meinertzhagen suggested that, as soon as Weizmann arrived, he should go with him to Jerusalem where they would draw up a document defining, in a moderate manner, the Zionist objectives. At the time, these were as follow: that town planning should be under the authority of the Government; that the Government would carry out its promise to establish a Jewish National Home; however, as stated in the Balfour Declaration, that nothing would be done which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of the Arabs; that the Jewish National Home would contribute to the welfare of the rest of the population; that no mass

immigration was planned for the near future and that it could be assumed that the Mandatory power would nominate a governor for the country, assisted by a representative council.¹⁰⁷

On 10 October, Meinertzhagen forwarded a 'Draft Declaration on Zionism', on which Weizmann's influence had left its mark. This was noticed by Curzon, who wrote in a minute: 'The voice may be the voice of Jacob (Colonel M.), but the hand is the hand of Esau (Dr W.)'¹⁰⁸ The suggested declaration was prefaced by a statement that the policy declared by Balfour of establishing a National Home for the Jews in Palestine, which the American and the French Governments were pledged to support, was a *fait accompli* and could not be challenged. However, because of the hostility towards Zionism in Palestine which had been caused by the deliberate fomenting of trouble between races and religions, an ignorance of the meaning of Zionism and an erroneous idea that the British Government might be induced to abandon its policy, as well as a genuine and sincere desire to crush at its birth the establishment of Zionism in Palestine, the following declaration should be made in order to illuminate the meaning of Zionism:

Holy Places: Zionism is essentially tolerant and there is no intention whatsoever to remove the custody or status of the Holy Places of all religions in Palestine. All religions in Palestine will enjoy full religious liberty. In return, Zionism hopes for tolerance from other religions towards the Jewish faith.

Jewish Immigration: Zionism does not entail the flooding of the country with poor Jewish immigrants. Its chief aim is the progressive development of Palestine on scientific lines which is a necessary foundation of a National Home for the Jews. Immigration in its initial stages only means the introduction of the necessary capital for development of skilled labour, and preparatory scientific brain power, in order to prepare a Home ready to those Jews who wish to settle in Palestine. An unlimited and uncontrolled influx of Jews at any stage is unthinkable and impossible.

Dispossession or Eviction of Present Landowners: Zionism has no intention of acquiring land with the ultimate result of the eviction of present landowners. Certain land will have to be taken up by the Zionists, but it is guaranteed that no unfairness will be permitted, and the present landowners will not be despoiled of their land. Zionism is as tolerant towards the sanctity of ownership of property as it is towards religious questions. Zionism also realises its impotence to fulfil its ideal should it adopt an intolerant attitude towards the inhabitants of Palestine, whose assistance is essential to a healthy

development of industry and agriculture. It does not aim at stifling competitive effort, but welcomes it. However, it does require a certain degree of preferential treatment in its initial growth. In order to fulfil its obligation towards Zionism, and prevent the establishment of a National Home of the Jews becoming a mere empty phrase, it is contemplated that certain concessions preferential to Zionism must be given and no apprehension need to exist that any such concessions will entail hardship or unfairness to any member of the Palestinian community. All such concessions will be made to public utility, and not to individuals, and will therefore not fail to benefit the whole community.

Government: The Zionist programme does not contemplate that the majority shall be subjected to the rule of the minority. Such a principle is entirely opposed to Zionist doctrines of Justice and Freedom, and to the terms of any mandate under which Palestine will be governed. Zionism aims at all parties having equal opportunities to participate in the administration of Palestine.

The material benefits which will fall to the lot of the people of Palestine, by the realization of Zionist ideals, have never been sufficiently appreciated. The scientific progress and development that will put an end to stagnant and obsolete methods of agriculture and industry, will not entail the swamping and absorption of Palestine by Jewish culture, but will bring about an uplifting of all classes from poverty. Zionist money and Zionist brains will apply themselves and not only Zionists, but all classes of society will benefit by increased prosperity. All opposition to the accepted Zionist programme can only be to the detriment to all classes and impede development.

Finally, a reminder was added: Palestine – it was stated – would be administered under the guidance of a Mandatory Power and, whatever the ultimate aims of Zionism, they would always be subjected to the restraining influence of non-Zionist control whose main consideration would be to assure that no injustice was done to the people of Palestine and that the country was not given over to the immoral exploitation of capitalists and speculators.¹⁰⁹

Major General Thwaites, of the Military Section of the Peace Conference Delegation, gave Meinertzhagen's proposed declaration his unequivocal support. In a message sent to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, he stated that he heartily endorsed Meinertzhagen's proposal which would go a long way to stabilise the difficult situation in Palestine.¹¹⁰

Meinertzhagen's proposed declaration was written while negotiations about the wording of the chapter dealing with the Mandate on Palestine in the Peace Agreement with Turkey were taking place between the British and the Zionist Delegations to the Peace Conference. As might be expected, Meinertzhagen's proposal reflected the articles of the draft Mandate which were supposed to secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home.¹¹¹ Indeed, in comparison with the guiding instructions of 4 August, Meinertzhagen's declaration included significant comments about the intentions of the National Home policy. Furthermore, it was an attempt to persuade the Palestinian Arabs that the privileges given to the Zionists in acquiring lands, receiving concessions etc would not prejudice their rights. However, while trying to do that, Meinertzhagen also hinted at Zionist intentions to be in control eventually, even if this control were painless, as had been promised. The seemingly reassuring final comment about the supervision of the whole process by the Mandatory Power unintentionally included an assumption that the long term objectives of Zionism went far beyond what was stated in the proposed declaration.

During this time, before the granting of the Mandate, Curzon was most particular not to take any step or publish any announcement which might be interpreted as Britain taking the Mandate for granted.¹¹² In October, when the Foreign Office was requested to take a stand regarding participation of British representatives in gatherings to commemorate the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration that the Zionists were planning in various countries, the Foreign Office was most careful to instruct its British representatives abroad not to take the Mandate for granted.

An example of this was when the British Ambassador to Santiago asked whether he should participate in a celebration on 2 November 1919 and requested guidance on the future status of Palestine. The Ambassador reported that the Jews maintained that the Mandate for Palestine had been entrusted to Great Britain and that similar celebrations were contemplated in many other countries. Although he was disinclined to participate, he was afraid that non-acceptance of the invitation would be interpreted as casting doubt on Balfour's Declaration, particularly since the French had attended a banquet of Lebanon Syrians to commemorate taking over Syria.

In response, several proposed guidelines were drafted by Foreign Office officials. O. A. Scott suggested that it should be made clear that Britain had not been granted the Mandate yet but that they were expecting to get it; when they did, the Government set up to administer Palestine would give ample opportunities for the Jews 'to develop their administrative ability and to acquire experience which will enable them before very long to take into their hands the government of what would become their country'. However,

having said that, Scott suggested that the Jews be warned that, in the meantime, they must realise that this objective was not likely to be obtained without opposition and that a policy of hasty and unprepared-for immigration would give the impression that they intended to swamp the natives of the country by force of numbers; this would be likely to produce active and serious resistance. The Jews would achieve their object only if they refrained from talking or boasting of their intention and devoted their energy to sending out and providing for the best qualified immigrants, he wrote. G. J. Kidston and Sir John A. C. Tilley took exception to the interpretation built on the assumption that Britain would be granted the Mandate and suggested that it would be enough to say that the British Government followed the policy of the Balfour Declaration, which had been adhered to by the United States, French and Italian governments.

Curzon made his decision, as expected: the Ambassador was forbidden to attend the celebration, since his participation would presuppose the acceptance by Great Britain of a mandate which had not yet been granted or even discussed by the Peace Conference. 'Mr. Balfour's Declaration is in course of being carried into effect', the Ambassador was told, 'but it would be undesirable for a representative of the Power that made it to take part in rejoicings over its own conduct'.¹¹³

When Meinertzhagen's proposed declaration arrived at the Foreign Office, it seemed to the Eastern Department officials that it committed them to far more than they had intended or been able to promise before receiving the Mandate.¹¹⁴ In a telegram sent to Allenby on 7 November, it was explained that Meinertzhagen's draft could not be approved since it appeared to prejudge the decision of the Peace Conference regarding the Mandate and because it committed the Government further than was desirable in endorsing Zionist aspirations and guaranteeing their future implementation. Therefore, an amended version of Meinertzhagen's suggested declaration was drafted by the Foreign Office, as follows:

The attention of His Majesty's Government has been called to the growth in Palestine of an attitude of hostility towards Zionism which is partly to be ascribed to the deliberate fomenting of trouble between races and religions by irresponsible persons and to a belief that the settled policy of His Majesty's Government and their Allies with regard to the establishment of a National Home for the Jews in Palestine can be influenced by agitation; but partly also to a genuine misconception of the nature of the policy of the Allies in this respect and the consequences to be anticipated from its introduction.

In these circumstances and as the Power at present responsible for the Administration of Palestine, His Majesty's Government think it well to state clearly that the Balfour Declaration of November 2nd 1917 which has been endorsed by the Allies and Associated Governments and to which they adhere does not contemplate either:

- (a) any interference with religious customs or the custody of the Holy Places of Christians and Mohamedans by adherents of any religions or, more generally, any curtailment whatsoever of religious liberty, subject always to the maintenance of public order and security; or
- (b) the flooding of Palestine with Jewish immigrants. As is recognized by the Zionists themselves, the foundation of a National Home for the Jews must necessarily be a gradual process and it is not anticipated that Jewish immigration will do more than keep pace with the general improvement in the prosperity of the country, which is to be expected from the introduction of the capital and technical skill at the disposal of the Zionists; or
- (c) spoliation or eviction of the present landowners in Palestine or the grant of profitable concessions to individuals; or
- (d) the Government of a majority by a minority.

Those who profess to apprehend this consequence overlook the fact that the Administration of Palestine will be controlled by a great Power or combination of Powers under a mandate.

None can deny the present backward state of industry and agriculture in Palestine. It is in the cooperation of the Zionists with the future Mandatory Power that a remedy for this unhappy condition of affairs must be sought.¹¹⁵

The whole document, wrote G. Kidston, who took part in the drafting of the amended version, was an apology for Zionism coined by the Power in Occupation for reasons of internal order rather than a pledge given by the future Mandatory.¹¹⁶

While Meinertzhagen's document was supposed, as he himself put it, to define in a moderate manner the Zionist objectives, the document produced by the Eastern Department of the Foreign Office was ready to specify what the Balfour Declaration did not contemplate. Indeed, any attempt by Meinertzhagen to positively define what was to be granted to the Zionists in order to make possible the establishment of the National Home, was eliminated. Thus the paragraph dealing with immigration was watered down

and only stated that it was not anticipated that Jewish immigration would do more than keep pace with the general improvement in the prosperity of the country which was to be expected from the introduction of the capital and technical skill at the disposal of the Zionists. In addition, the Foreign Office version crossed out the paragraph enabling the Zionists to acquire lands and giving certain preferential concessions to Zionism in order to 'prevent the establishment of a National Home of the Jews becoming a mere empty phrase'. It was only stated that such concessions would not entail hardship or unfairness to any member of the Palestinian community. All such concessions would be made to the public utility and not to individuals and would, therefore, not fail to benefit the whole community. The assurance that the majority should not be subjected to the rule of the minority was strengthened by the guaranteed control of the great Power or combination of Powers that would administer the country under a mandate. The same applies to the reference to the expected benefit that development of industry and agriculture by the Zionists would produce. The issue was casually mentioned in the context of the eventual cooperation of the Zionists with the future Mandatory Power.

The Military Authorities, which had endeavoured to keep the peace and secure an orderly administration in Palestine and were afraid that interpreting the intentions of the draft Mandate might hinder them from fulfilling their duty, opposed the publicising of the declaration. However, at the same time, uncertainty about British policy turned out to be a burden in the Military Governors' dealings with the Arab population and required clarification. Thus, when the acting Military Governor of Haifa asked the Chief Administrator for permission to make an announcement to notables of the Nablus District, he was requested to wait until the issue was decided in a conference of Military Governors to be held shortly by the Chief Administrator. However, and only if he considered it essential, he was allowed to say, in discussing the question with Muslims and Christians, that 'there is no possibility of the formation of a Jewish Government of Palestine though the Zionists hope that the country may eventually become a self-governing commonwealth'.¹¹⁷

On 17 November 1919, the Chief Administrator, Major General Watson, held the meeting with Military Governors at which it was unanimously agreed that 'this declaration is merely a declaration of Zionist Policy' and 'that it will be wise to make no declaration until the Mandate is declared – unless such declaration really defines that 1) There will be no Zionist Government in Palestine; 2) no immediate large immigration of Jews; 3) no possible ex-appropriation of land'.¹¹⁸ The Military Governors were authorised by Watson to make those three statements in the course of

conversation but were warned not to make any form of declaration or summon people for the purpose of making pronouncements. However, he added that 'There appears to be no doubt that, if the Mandate of Palestine comes to Great Britain, the Policy of Palestine becoming a National Home for the Jews will be adopted'.¹¹⁹

Meinertzhagen, to whom Watson explained the following day the stand taken at the meeting, had no choice but to cable, probably in view of what he referred to later on as 'the consensus of opinion in the Palestine Administration', that the situation in Palestine had improved and that it might be undesirable to publish the Declaration.¹²⁰ This conclusion, of course, was in line with Curzon's position.

About three months later, Watson was replaced as Chief Administrator by Sir Louis G. Bols, who had served as Allenby's Chief of Staff in 1917–18. On the same day, Meinertzhagen wrote again to the Chief Administrator and requested him to reconsider the decision taken not to publish a declaration regarding the Government's policy towards Zionism. Meinertzhagen explained that such a declaration was needed in view of the erroneous interpretations of that policy not only by inhabitants of Syria and Palestine but also by a great many Englishmen, both officials and non-officials.¹²¹

Bols' position was no different from that of his predecessor. He believed that publication was likely to create antagonism rather than reduce friction. He also argued that, since it seemed probable that the terms of Peace would soon be made public, it would be unwise to publish a declaration regarding the policy of the British Government which would result in two periods of unrest instead of the one expected following the publicising of the terms of Peace. Bols rejected Meinertzhagen's accusations about the misunderstanding of the British Government policy regarding Zionism which he had come across in British official circles. However, in spite of saying that, he held a conference of Military Governors to whom he circulated the Foreign Office's proposed declaration of 7 November 1919, while making clear that it was forwarded for their information but was not for publicising.¹²²

Thus, the fate of the 7 November declaration was similar to that of the guiding instructions of 7 August.

The Balfour Declaration was eventually publicised and explained in Palestine only after the decision taken at the San Remo Conference of 1918, at the end of the First World War. On 28 April 1920, on receipt of a telegram

from the General Headquarters dated 26 April 1920, announcing the decisions reached at San Remo, Bols gathered the leaders of all communities in Jerusalem at his headquarters and informed them that the Supreme Council had decided that the Balfour Declaration should be included in the Turkish Peace Treaty, read to them the Balfour Declaration and explained that the inclusion of the Balfour Declaration in the Turkish Peace Treaty meant that:

- (a) There would be no interference with Religious customs or Holy Places or any curtailment whatever of religious liberty, subject only to the maintenance of public order and security.
- (b) Immigrants would be allowed to enter the country only as they were required for the development of the country, and this immigration would be controlled by the British Government of the country.
- (c) Present land owners would not be evicted or spoliated and profitable concessions would not be granted to individuals or groups of individuals to the detriment of others.
- (d) The British Government would govern, and in no sense would a minority be allowed to control a majority of the population when the time arrived for any form of Representative Government.¹²³

In a newspaper interview Bols gave, he supplied a slightly different version: a) the Balfour Declaration was endorsed by the Allies on condition that all rights of the native population were safeguarded; b) Jewish immigration would be strictly limited to numbers which the country could economically support and the Zionist Commission had given assurances that only useful and self-supporting members of society would be admitted; c) the interests of native land-holders would be safeguarded; d) a strong mandatory power would be responsible for just administration and impartiality. There was no intention of setting up Jewish Government; e) the country's government would be proportionally representative of the entire population and officials of the mandatory power would train the population for self-government.¹²⁴ As to the terms of the Mandate that dealt in detail with how the undertaking to establish a National Home for the Jews should be implemented – those were not referred to by Bols.

Bols' public explanation was given following the traumatic experience of the disturbances which accompanied the Nebi Musa celebrations. The investigation committee, nominated in April 1920 following the disturbances, not only supported Bols' step but also clearly criticised those who withheld the Foreign Office pronouncement on Zionism and the

publicisation of the Balfour Declaration. The committee stated in its report that, in spite of the fact that nothing had been said about Palestine being included in the Hejaz Empire and the fact that the Balfour Declaration had been publicised, the early impression left upon most Arabs was that the British were going to set up an independent Arab State which would include Palestine. The declaration of policy of the Allies in favour of the self-determination of all nations [i.e. the Anglo-French Declaration] and the fact that no effort had been made to reconcile the apparent contradiction between this declared policy and the Balfour Declaration only strengthened the Palestinian belief. The committee pointed out that the vagueness of the phrase 'National Home' in the Balfour Declaration had been the cause of trouble from the beginning, since different statesmen had given the concept their own interpretation. In March 1919, President Wilson supported the idea that in Palestine should be laid the foundation of 'a Jewish Commonwealth'; Roosevelt and Churchill had spoken of 'a Jewish State'; Bonar Law had talked in Parliament of 'restoring Palestine to the Jews', while the radical Zionists claimed that the Declaration recognised Palestine as a Jewish State just as England was English.¹²⁵ These interpretations, as well as the activities of the Zionist Commission, drove the Arabs to adopt a hostile attitude. Therefore, the committee concluded, although one could understand General Money's and General Watson's military considerations, as well as General Bols' fear of awakening antagonism when they were refusing to publicise an announcement clarifying Government policy, in the light of subsequent events, it would probably have been better to have publicised the declaration and risked the consequences.¹²⁶

At the Foreign Office, as well, voices were heard in favour of a declaration. Once Bols' explanations to the leaders of the communities reached London and were published in the *Times* on 1 May 1920,¹²⁷ it was understood at the Foreign Office that Zionist concerns about Bols' interpretation of the inclusion of the Balfour Declaration in the Mandate, and especially of the paragraph in his explanation which dealt with granting concessions, were not groundless. Furthermore, it was suggested that it was about time for a definite pronouncement by the British Government on the lines of the declaration of 7 November, which would be drafted in consultation with Herbert Samuel, the future civil administrator of Palestine, who would soon be concerned with carrying out that policy.

Lord Hardinge, the Permanent Under-Secretary, and Lord Curzon, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, thought differently. Hardinge, who felt that Bols' public interpretation was unwise, stated that he had always been opposed to the Government making declarations, since 'they nearly always

prove unworkable and their defects always come home to rest'. Lord Curzon concluded: 'The time for a further declaration – if any – will be when a civil administrator takes up his task.'¹²⁸

Notes

1. C. Weizmann to L.D. Brandeis, 14 January 1918, Brandeis Archive (copy in C.Z.A.). See WL, VIII, No. 63 and notes 7, 8 *ibid*.
2. W. Ormsby Gore to M. Sykes, 22 March 1918, D.U. Wingate Archive; R. Wingate to C. Hardinge, 23 March 1918, *ibid*.
3. Allenby met Weizmann on 3 April 1918 in his Headquarters in Bir Salem near Ramleh. See 'Report on Weizmann's visit to General Headquarters on Wednesday, 3rd April 1918', 3 April 1918, C.Z.A., Z4/16051; see also Leon Simon's Diary, 7 April 1918, J.N.U.L., Ahad Ha'am Archive, 1890; W. Ormsby Gore to A.J. Balfour, 7 April 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3394, F. 11053, No. 83691.
4. C. Weizmann to V. Weizmann, 6–9 April 1918, W.A. (WL, VIII, No. 151).
5. G. Clayton to F.O., 28 March 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3391, F. 4074, No. 56762; Mordecai Ben-Hillel Ha'Cohen, *War of Nations* [Hebrew], Jerusalem, 1929–30, Vol. IV, pp. 143, 176, 195, 203; W. Ormsby Gore to A.J. Balfour, 19 April 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3395, F. 11053, No. 86912 (*Zionism*, Vol. I, p. 403); minutes of a meeting of the Zionist Commission for Palestine, 5 April 1918, C.Z.A., Z4/483; Leon Simon, Diary, 5 April 1918, J.N.U.L., Ahad Ha'am Archive, 1890.
6. *Ibid*.
7. Memorandum enclosed with C. Weizmann to W. Ormsby Gore, 7 April 1918, C.Z.A., L3/285 (WL, VIII, No. 152).
8. C. Weizmann to W. Ormsby Gore, 16 April 1918, C.Z.A., Z4/483 and P.R.O., F.O. 371/3398, F. 27647, No. 92392 (WL, VIII, No. 161); see also minutes of a meeting of the Zionist Commission for Palestine, 13 April 1918, C.Z.A., Z4/483.
9. R. Storrs to G. Clayton, 22 April 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3398, F. 27647, No. 92392.
10. W. Ormsby Gore to M. Sykes, 14 April 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3394, F. 11053, No. 66634; R. Storrs to G. Clayton, 22 April 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3398, F. 27647, No. 92392; minutes of a meeting of the Zionist Commission for Palestine, 23 April 1918, C.Z.A., Z4/483; G. Clayton to F.O., 7 May 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3391, F. 4079, No. 82075; R. Storrs to G. Clayton, 30 April 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3398, F. 27647, No. 92393 or P.R.O., F.O. 371/3395, F. 11053, No. 98470.
11. C. Weizmann to V. Weizmann, 30 April 1918, W.A. (WL, VIII, No. 181).
12. G. Clayton to R. Wingate, 21 April 1918, D.U., Wingate Archive, 148/8.
13. G. Clayton to A.J. Balfour, 18 April 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3394, F. 11053, No. 85908.
14. G. Clayton to R. Wingate, 21 April 1918, D.U., Wingate Archive, 148/8.
15. G. Clayton to M. Sykes, 18 April 1918, Sykes Archive, Sledmere.
16. G. Clayton to Gertrud Bell, 17 June 1918, Clayton Archive, London; see also Clayton's letter to R. P. Wigram, 17 June 1918, *ibid*.
17. G. Clayton to R. P. Wigram, 17 June 1918, *ibid*.
18. *Ibid*.
19. G. Clayton to M. Sykes, 4 February 1918, *ibid*.; G. Clayton To R. Wingate, 21 April 1918, D.U., Wingate Archive, 148/8; G. Clayton to M. Sykes, *ibid*.; See also J. Reinharz, *Chaim Weizmann – The Making of a Statesman*, Vol. II, p.255.

20. Report by Col. Joyce, 14 June 1918, W.A.; G. Clayton to F.O., 12 June 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3398, F. 27647, No. 105824; minutes of a meeting of the Zionist Commission for Palestine, 16 June 1918, C.Z.A., Z4/483; see also WL, VIII, No. 209 and notes 1, 2 *ibid.*
21. G. Clayton to Gertrud Bell, 17 June 1918, Clayton Archive, London.
22. G. Clayton to R. P. Wigram, 17 June 1918, *ibid.*
23. G. Clayton to A.J. Balfour, 1 July 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3398, F. 27467, No. 123904.
24. G. Clayton to A.J. Balfour, 16 June 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3395, F. 11053, No. 130342.
25. G. Clayton to A.J. Balfour, 1 July 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3398, F. 27467, No. 123904.
26. See, for instance, G. Clayton to F.O., 19 April 1918 (following the meeting between the Zionist Commission for Palestine and Arab dignitaries in Jerusalem), P.R.O., F.O. 371/3394, F. 11053, No.66634; G. Clayton to F.O., 16 May 1918 (following the meeting between the Zionist Commission for Palestine and Arab dignitaries in Jaffa), P.R.O., F.O. 371/3391, F. 4079, No. 87998. However, see a change of opinion in his letter to Balfour, 27 May 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3383, F. 747, No. 110425; see also his letters to Balfour, 3 May 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3395, F. 11053, No. 98469; 16 June 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3395, F. 11053, No. 130342; 29 June 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3388, F. 1495, No. 115336; 12 June 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3398, F. 27647, No. 105824.
27. See below pp.63-4.
28. C. Weizmann to A.J. Balfour, 30 May 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3395, F. 11053, No. 123475 (WL, VIII, No. 208).
29. C. Weizmann to A.J. Balfour, 17 July 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3398, F. 27647, No. 138908 (WL, VIII, No. 232).
30. R. Wingate to A.J. Balfour, 25 June 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3381, F. 146, No. 123868.
31. Minutes by M. Sykes, undated, *ibid.*
32. M. Atias (ed.), *Sefer HaTeudot shel Ha Va'ad Ha Leumi Le Kneset Israel Be Eretz Israel, 1918 - 1948* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem,1963), pp. 8–11.
33. G. Clayton to A.J. Balfour, 8 November 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3385, F. 747, No. 194575.
34. B.C. Busch, *Britain, India and the Arabs, 1914 - 1921* (Berkeley - Los Angeles - London: 1971), pp. 188–99.
35. C.Z.A., Z4/16135.
36. G. Clayton to Foreign Office, 2 December 1918, and the Office reply, 4 December 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3385, F.747, No. 199755.
37. R. Storrs to O.E.T.A., 19 November 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3386, F. 747, No. 213403.
38. *Ibid.*
39. R. Storrs to O.E.T.A., 24 November 1918, *ibid.*
40. Members of the Moslem and Christian Committee of Jaffa District to the Military Governor of Jaffa, 16 November 1918, *ibid.*
41. J.E. Hubbard to O.E.T.A., 20 November 1918, *ibid.*
42. A.W. Money to O.E.T.A., 20 November 1918, *ibid.* On 26 November 1918 Money wrote that according to full reports he received from the military governors the population was: 512,000 Moslems, 60, 883 Christians, 66,102 Jews and 153 Samaritans, *ibid.* These numbers were transmitted approximately by Clayton in his letter to Balfour of 6 December 1918, *ibid.*
43. D. G. Hogarth to G. Clayton, 18 December 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 882/17.
44. R. Adelson, *Mark Sykes - Portrait of an Amateur* (London, 1975), p. 277.
45. Extract from report rendered by M. Sykes, 15 November 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3386, F.747, No. 123403.

46. G. Clayton to F.O. (sending a message from Sykes to Ormsby Gore), 17 November 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3398, F. 27647, No. 190447.
47. G. Clayton to F.O. (sending a message from Sykes to Ormsby Gore), 20 November 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3385, F. 747, No. 192446.
48. G. Clayton to F.O., 20 November 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3385, F. 747, No. 192763.
49. G. Clayton to F.O., 21 November 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3385, F. 747, No. 193411.
50. C. Weizmann to W. Ormsby Gore, 19 November 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3398, F. 3790, No. 190447 (WL, IX, No. 22); G. Clayton to F.O., 25 November 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3385, F. 747, No. 195250.
51. Minutes by G.J. Kidston, 4 February 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3385, F. 747, No. 198575.
52. See below pp.71-2.
53. Report on a meeting with Balfour on 4 December 1918, enclosed with Weizmann to E.A. Crowe, 9 December 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3385, F. 747, No. 203091 and Balfour's reply, 18 December 1918, *ibid*.
54. C. Weizmann to D. Eder, 25 November 1918 (transmitted by the Military Authorities, 28 November 1918), P.R.O., F.O. 371/3385, F. 747, Nos 194777, 201968 (WL, IX, No. 31).
55. C. Weizmann to D. Eder, 26 November 1918, C.Z.A. S30/2463b; C. Weizmann to G. Clayton, 27 November 1918, W.A. (WL, IX, Nos 37, 38).
56. G. Clayton to F.O. (telegram), 5 December 1918; G. Clayton to A.J. Balfour (letter), 5 December 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3385, F. 747, No. 201968; G. Clayton to A.J. Balfour, 6 December 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3386, F. 747, No. 213403.
57. Minutes by E.A. Crowe, 10 December 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3385, F. 747, No. 201968.
58. C. Weizmann to D. Eder, 17 December 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4170, F. 1051, No. 1051 (WL, IX, No. 71). See also below p.74.
59. G. Clayton to F.O., 31 December 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4170, F. 1051, No. 1051; see also below p.74.
60. Minutes by A.J. Toynbee, 16 January 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/98, No. 227. See below p.189 and note 9 *ibid*.
61. Report by J.N. Camp 'The Arab Movement and Zionism', 12 August 1919 (enclosed with C. French to G. Curzon, 26 August 1919), P.R.O., F.O. 608/99, No. 17239.
62. See below pp.189-90.
63. Minutes by G. Curzon, 10 January 1919 and [10 or 11 January 1919], P.R.O., F.O. 371/4170, F. 1051, No. 1051; see also note 7 *ibid*.
64. See below pp.190-1.
65. Minutes by L. Mallet, undated [after 20 February 1919], P.R.O., F.O. 608/99, No. 2401.
66. A.J. Balfour to D. Lloyd George, 19 February 1919 (paragraph), P.R.O., F.O. 371/4179, F. 2117, No. 47756.
67. Minutes by A.J. Toynbee, 2. December 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3398, F. 27647, No. 190447.
68. Cardinal Bourne to Talbot, 25 January 1919, B.L. Lloyd George Archive, F/92/16/1; P.R.O., F.O. 371/4179, F. 2117, No. 47756.
69. D. Lloyd George to P. Kerr, 15 February 1919, B.L. Lloyd George Archive, F/89/2/15.
70. A.J. Balfour to D. Lloyd George (paragraph), 19 February 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4179, F. 2117, No. 47756.
71. See below pp.77-82.
72. P. Kerr to D. Lloyd George, undated, B.L. Lloyd George Archive, F/89/2/22.

73. Minutes by W. Ormsby Gore, undated, P.R.O., F.O. 608/99, No. 2401.
74. See below pp.78-9.
75. G. Clayton to Foreign Office, 3 April 1919 (transmitted on 3 April 1919) and 3 April 1919 (transmitted on 4 April 1919), P.R.O., F.O. 608/99, No. 6940; also Minutes by Forbs Adam and L. Mallet, *ibid.*
76. C. French to G. Curzon, 19 July 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4182, F. 2117, No. 112576.
77. Clayton to F.O., 2 May 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4180, F. 2117, No. 68848; P.R.O., F.O. 08/99, No.9567.
78. *Ibid.*
79. G. Clayton to G. Curzon, 8 June 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4181, F. 2117, No. 91480; G. Clayton to F.O., 24 June 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4181, F. 2117, No. 96249.
80. E. Allenby to H. Wilson, 17 May 1919, S.R.O. Lothian Muniments.
81. Minutes by W. Ormsby Gore, 22 February 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/99, No. 2548.
82. Minutes by R. Graham, 20 March 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4179, F. 2117, No.47756.
83. Minutes by R. Graham, 6 May 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4180, F. 2117, No.68848.
84. Minutes by G. Curzon, undated, *ibid.*
85. Memorandum by A.J. Balfour, 23 March 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4171, F. 1051, No. 51811.
86. W. Thwaites to C. Hardinge, 13 May 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/99, No. 9567.
87. L. Mallet to G. Curzon, 19 May 1919, *ibid.* and P.R.O., F.O. 371/4180, F. 2117, No. 76242.
88. F.O. to G. Clayton, 27 May 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/99, No. 11181; P.R.O., F.O. 371/4180, F. 2117, No. 76242.
89. W. Tyrrell to H. Samuel, 31 May 1919, I.S.A., H. Samuel Archive, F. 100/5.
90. H. Samuel to W. Tyrrell, 5 June 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4181, F. 2117, Nos 86424, 91247.
91. Howard (for A.J. Balfour) to G. Curzon 1 July 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/99, No. 13393; Minutes by G. Curzon, 27 July 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4181, F. 2117, No. 96834.
92. Draft of minutes of the meeting with General Clayton, held at the Zionist Organisation office, London, 8 July 1919 (and a revised version by G. Clayton), C.Z.A. Z4/619; G. Clayton to C. Weizmann, 19 July 1919, *ibid.*; a version sent by G. Clayton to G.J. Kidston, 23 July 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4225, F. 73497, No. 107282; G. Clayton to A.J. Balfour, 22 August 1919, B.M. Balfour Archive, Cat. Add. 49745; minutes by G. Clayton regarding the meeting, 8 July 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4181, F. 2117, No. 98082; minutes by G. Clayton, 25 July 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4181, F. 2117, No. 96834.
93. F.O. to C. French, 4 August 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4181, F. 2117, No. 96834.
94. See below pp.86-7.
95. C. Weizmann to R. Graham, 13 August 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4226, F. 73497, No. 117034 (WL, IX, no. 196); minutes by A.J. Clark-Kerr, 20 August 1919, (for Curzon) to A.J. Balfour, 21 August 1919, *ibid.* , and P.R.O., F.O. 608, No. 18352; C. Tufton (for A.J. Balfour) to G. Curzon, 11 September 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4226, F. 73497, No. 128728 and P.R.O., F.O. 608/99, No. 18352; J.A.C. Tilley to C. Weizmann, 16 September 1919, W.A. and P.R.O., F.O. 371/4226, F. 73497, No.128728.
96. A.J. Balfour to C. Weizmann, 2 April 1919, W.A.
97. C. Weizmann to A.J. Balfour, 9 April 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/99, No. 6950 (WL, IX, No. 135); see also letter communicated by Weizmann to W. Tyrrell, 9 June 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/99, No.12093.
98. H. Samuel to A.J. Balfour, 7 April 1919, B.M. Balfour Archive, Cat. Add. 49.745.
99. Minutes by R. Graham to G. Curzon, report of conversation with H. Samuel, 2 July 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4181, F. 2117, No. 98082; C. Weizmann to N. Sokolow, 11 July 1919 (two letters), C.Z.A., L8/205 (WL, IX, Nos 178,179).

100. See above pp.87-8. and Nos. 86-87 *ibid*.
101. C. Weizmann to A.J. Balfour, 23 July 1919, P.R.O., F.O.608/99, No. 16465 (WL, IX, No. 189); see also correspondence regarding the appointment, 7 August 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4233, F. 112061, No. 112379.
102. R. Meinertzhagen, *Kenya Diary 1902 – 1906* (Edinburgh – London, 1957), p. 117.
103. R. Meinertzhagen, *Middle East Diary 1917 – 1956* (London, 1959), pp. 5 – 33.
104. C. French to G. Curzon, 30 August 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4182, F. 2117, No. 130392; H.D. Watson to G. Curzon, 26 August 1919, and report by J.N. Camp enclosed, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4182, F. 2117, No. 125609; B.H. Waters-Taylor to C. French, 12 August 1919 and to J.R. Murray, 13 August 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4226, F. 73497, No. 132353 and P.R.O., F.O. 608/100, No. 19252; H. D. Watson to C. French, 16 August 1919, and B.H. Waters-Taylor to J.R. Murray, 30 August 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4171, F. 1051, No. 124482.
105. W.H. Gribbon (for C. Weizmann) to R. Meinertzhagen, 4 September 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4236, F.126303, No. 126303; W.H. Gribbon to A.J. Clark-Kerr, 5 September 1919, and minutes by Clark-Kerr to R. Graham, 5 September 1919, *ibid*. See above pp.89-90. and note 76 *ibid*.
106. R. Meinertzhagen to G. Curzon, 26 September 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/99, No. 19861 and P.R.O., F.O. 371/4184, F.2117, No. 141037.
107. R. Meinertzhagen to Chief Administrator L.G. Bols, 1 October 1919, I.S.A. Chief Secretary's Archive, F. 2/40.
108. Minutes by G. Curzon, 30 October 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4184, F. 2117, No. 146382.
109. R. Meinertzhagen to G. Curzon, 14 October 1919, *ibid*.
110. W. Thwaites to C. Hardinge, 24 October 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4184, F. 2117, No. 145768.
111. See below pp.92-8.
112. Compare below pp.92, 104.
113. Vaughan (Santiago) to F.O., 11 October 1919, minutes by O.A. Scott, 13 October 1919, by G.J. Kidston, 14 October 1919, by J.A.C. Tilley, 14 October 1919, and G. Curzon, undated; F.O. to Vaughan, 16 October 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4183, F. 2117, No. 140196.
114. Compare below pp.93-9.
115. F.O. to E. Allenby, 7 November 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4184, F. 2117, No. 146382.
116. Minutes by G.J. Kidston. 29 October 1919, *ibid*.
117. Acting Military Governor to Chief Administrator L.G. Bols, 11 November 1919, and reply of Asst. Administrator, 13 November 1919, I.S.A. Chief Secretary's Archive, F. 2/130.
118. Report by H.D. Watson, 17 November 1919, *ibid*.
119. Asst. Administrator to Military Governors, 17 November 1919, *ibid*.
120. R. Meinertzhagen to F.O., 9 December 1919, and minutes by A.S. Tilley, 17 December 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4186, F. 2117, No. 161583; R. Meinertzhagen to G. Curzon, 13 January 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4186, F. 2117, No. 174490.
121. R. Meinertzhagen to Chief Administrator L.G. Bols, 31 December 1919, I.S.A. Chief Secretary's Archive, F. 2/130. See also R. Meinertzhagen to G.H.Q. Cairo, *ibid*.; R. Meinertzhagen to G. Curzon, 13 January 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4186, F. 2117, No. 174490.
122. Assistant Administrator to Military Governors, 21 January 20 (in accordance with Chief Administrator's orders) and 'Foreign Office Declaration on Zionism, Dated November 7th, 1919' enclosed, I.S.A. Chief Secretary's Archive, F. 2/130.
123. L.G. Bols to G. Curzon, 7 June 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5114, F. 61, No. E6914; *The Times*, 1 May 1920.

124. G.H.Q. Egypt to War Office, 2 May 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5118, F. 85, No. E4114 and P.R.O., F.O. 371/5119, F. 85, No. E4117.
125. See also below pp.98-9.
126. Report of the investigation committee, nominated on 12 April 1920 following the Nebi Musa disturbances of 4-7 April 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5121, F. 85, No. E9379.
127. Bols' report on his meeting with leaders of the communities was sent to the Foreign Office only on 7 June 1920 and was received about two weeks later.
128. Minutes by H.W. Young, 3 May 1920, C. Hardinge, undated, and G. Curzon, 4 May 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5118, F. 85, No. E4077.

4

Status Quo: Laying the Foundations

The Zionist Commission arrived in Palestine at the beginning of April 1918, carrying a guideline of tasks according to which the Commission was supposed to, *inter alia*, 'help with relief work in Palestine, and to assist in the repatriation of evacuated persons and refugees, so far as the military situation will allow'; 'to assist in restoring and developing the Jewish colonies, and in re-organising the Jewish population in general' and 'to collect information and report upon the possibilities of future Jewish developments in Palestine in the light of the Balfour declaration'.¹ In addition, the instructions given to Ormsby Gore, the Political Officer who accompanied the Commission, mentioned: the study of the possibility of preventing land speculation during the continuance of war; laying, under British auspices, the foundation stone of a Hebrew University near Jerusalem and reopening Zionist banks in Jaffa and Jerusalem, subject to the approval of the Military Authorities.² To that was added Balfour's request that the Zionist Commission be allowed considerable latitude and authority to investigate questions relating to the future economic possibilities of Palestine as a whole, especially in such matters as Crown, Waste, and unoccupied Lands as well as the existing Jewish colonies, so that the Government might be ready for the work of the reconstruction period.³

However, the Military Authorities in Palestine were not ready, at the time, to listen to the subtleties of the various interpretations given by the Zionist Commission regarding its tasks. Southern Palestine and Jerusalem had just been conquered, the War was still going on and the conquerors had to face problems raised by an impoverished country and a weakened, even poverty-stricken, population. The various ranks of the military and the political-military officials were not free or ready to deal with the question of the meaning or significance of the Balfour Declaration nor did they think that they would be required to implement it.

As had happened in London following the announcement of the Balfour Declaration, once again, it was the Zionists who put the subject on the agenda. The Zionist Commission took action immediately on arriving in Palestine. It was not satisfied simply with dealing with problems of

restoration and relief for the Jewish population but also started to fulfil the tasks entrusted to it and continue the mission already started in London: giving content to the Declaration and establishing facts on the ground which would eventually determine the scope of the Jewish National Home. Thus, the Military Authorities found themselves in a position in which they had to face attempts to implement the objectives of the Zionist Commission, to deal with the Zionist Commission and its demands and to examine those demands within the framework of the *status quo* policy dictated by The Hague Convention, while being reminded all that time of the responsibility derived from the Declaration.

Nearly seven weeks after the Zionist Commission reached Palestine, it became evident to its members that their energetic activity was doomed to failure. They reached the conclusion that the Military Administration was not inclined to agree to any initiative which could bring about change or to take any step to improve the conditions of the *Yishuv* (Hebrew for the organised Jewish population in Palestine). They discovered that, in its lower ranks, the Administration continued to employ the previous regime's Arab-Ottoman officials, who kept their traditional attitude to the *Yishuv*. Many of the other officials were British and had served previously in the Sudan and Egypt; they brought with them from these countries the concept of rule they had been used to and were almost totally ignorant about the National Home policy. In particular, it became clear that the Military Authorities were determined to stick to the Laws and Usages of War and maintain the *status quo* derived from them and The Hague Convention until the signing of the Peace Agreement. Even the tasks given to the Zionist Commission by the War Cabinet's Middle East Committee could not be implemented unless definite instructions were received from London. Allenby, to whom Weizmann elaborated on the problem, replied, according to Weizmann's account:

You have my full sympathy. I will give you all the assistance which it is in my power to give, within the limits of the Manual of Military Law. But, if you desire anything beyond that, you must approach Mr. Balfour, who should give the necessary instructions to my chief. The principles of policy are not laid down by military authorities.⁴

Weizmann decided to take this literally. From now on, he brought his impressions and views of the way the Administration dealt with the population and its problems directly to Balfour, as well as his requests concerning issues which were within the scope the Zionist Commission's tasks by definition but could not be carried out because of the

Administration's position. These dealt, mainly, with questions of land acquisition policy and re-opening the banks of the Anglo-Palestine Company (APC).

As mentioned above, prevention of land speculation was within the scope of the *status quo* policy. Indeed, the Military Authorities did their utmost to prevent land transactions. Already in April 1918 they had made it clear that they were against such transactions and, on 18 November 1918, a standing order was issued forbidding any land transaction retroactively as of 1 December 1917.⁵ Another aspect of that problem – finding a way to cultivate and purchase lands which were not under private ownership – had been postponed, as mentioned above, pending the Zionist Commission's arrival in Palestine. This issue, indeed, was not included in the instructions given to Ormsby Gore but was referred to in Balfour's request, in his letter to Allenby of 2 March 1918, which dealt with the future economic possibilities of Palestine, especially in such matters as Crown, Waste, and unoccupied Lands.

In April 1918, shortly after the Zionist Commission arrived in Palestine, it discussed a land cultivation scheme. The proposal put forward was that the scheme should be carried out by the Military Authorities, with a view to increasing food production during the War period. Unoccupied and waste lands would present no difficulties. Crown lands rented by tenants or lands in the possession of owners who were unable to cultivate them would be taken over with liberal compensation for the period of the scheme without prejudice to the validity of existing titles or rights of tenure. The whole area would be placed under intensive cultivation for the purpose of food production under the control of the Military Authorities. The Zionist Commission, for its part, was supposed to supply the capital, to procure the necessary agricultural planning and supply experts skilled in dry farming methods.

The Military Authorities agreed to consider the proposal and a delegation of British officers and Palestinian Jewish agronomists surveyed the coastal plain of southern Palestine at the beginning of May 1918 and presented a detailed scheme of cultivation to the Authorities.⁶ 'It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of this scheme for a successful carrying out of the policy enunciated in your Declaration', Weizmann wrote to Balfour on 30 May 1918, in a letter in which he outlined the scheme:

It is on lands which are not in *definite* private ownership that the Jewish National Home, so far as its essential agricultural basis is concerned will have to be built up. Crown, waste and unoccupied lands must be brought under cultivation of Jewish labour. The present

scheme affords us an opportunity of beginning this work, and at the same time of rendering an important service to the British administration. If we are allowed to carry this scheme through, we shall know, and the whole Jewry will know, that the foundation of the National Home is being led in earnest.⁷

This scheme, according to Weizmann, would prove to the Arabs that the Zionists had no desire and no need to exploit or displace them, since there were acres enough for them to develop without any encroachment on the real rights of the Arab inhabitants.

The Military Authorities, which cooperated in appointing the survey commission, viewed the intentions of the proposal with favour. Clayton understood that, by carrying out the programme, the Zionist Commission proposed to prove that it was honestly endeavouring to improve agricultural conditions in the country. He understood that the Commission believed that, once the experiment was successfully accomplished, the local population, which would have gained considerably under the scheme, would be disposed to welcome Zionist colonisation and approve of land purchases by Zionists. Furthermore, Clayton knew that the Commission was expecting that unoccupied or waste lands over which no private rights of ownership or tenancy existed and which were included in the area comprised in the scheme, would be handed over to the Zionists on favourable terms when the period of the scheme had expired and that they would form the nucleus of further Jewish agricultural development in Palestine. At the same time, however, Clayton was afraid that the programme, in which Jews were taking a leading part, might cause concern among the Arab population about a reinforcement of the Jewish population. As a practical solution, Clayton suggested that the scheme should take the shape of a military project and that Arab contractors be involved in carrying it out. Clayton refrained from adding his recommendation so long as the scheme was not being considered by the Military Authorities and was not yet proven to be a sound business proposition.⁸

However, Allenby – according to Weizmann who discussed the proposed scheme with him – kept to a formal definition of his duties, which limited his power to acting only within the bounds of the Laws and Usages of War, and referred Weizmann to Balfour. ‘As regards the land question,’ Balfour replied, when Weizmann referred the question to him, ‘while fully appreciating the reasons which prompt you to recommend the initiation of some scheme before the conclusion of peace, I am at first sight inclined to feel that it would be premature to embark on so complicated and delicate a matter at the present stage.’⁹

The question of the *status quo* policy regarding land purchases was bound up with two other questions: the laying of the foundation stone of a Jewish university and acquiring and improving the site bordering the Wailing Wall. The foundation of the Hebrew University was decided upon, as mentioned above, before the Zionist Commission set off on its journey. The acquisition of Gray-Hills estate on Mount Scopus, the destined university site, was also accomplished at the beginning of 1918.¹⁰ However, following the Zionist Commission's arrival in Palestine, the Military Authorities set administrative obstacles: Clayton advised Weizmann that, at the reception to be given by the Jewish community of Jerusalem for the Zionist Commission on the site of Gray-Hill's estate on Mount Scopus, it would be wise not to allude publicly to the fact that the intention was to erect a university on the spot. The reason given was that no official communications had been received on the matter and the Military Authorities did not sanction any purchases or transfers of land.¹¹

When the question of laying the foundation stone for the university arose, Allenby stipulated that the ceremony could only take place when definite instructions came from the War Office and he demanded that the Zionist Commission present the title deeds and the contract in order to prove that the Gray-Hill estate had indeed been purchased by the Zionist Organisation.¹² Once Weizmann approached Balfour directly and Sokolow appeared at the Foreign Office, the obstacle was removed: in mid-June 1918, Allenby received instructions from London approving the laying of the foundation stone on the site purchased from Gray-Hill.¹³ Balfour was aware of the symbolic importance of this move. 'We have already arranged for the Jewish University on Mount Scopus,' he wrote to Weizmann, 'and this by itself should constitute a visible sign to the world that a new era in Palestine has been initiated.'¹⁴

The site bordering the Wailing Wall belonged to the *Waqf* (Muslim religious endowment) and was named after its founder Abu-Medin El-Maghrebi. The Zionist Commission requested to purchase it and improve the miserable condition of the ill-kept site. 'We feel that the present time, when Jewry is looking forward to a revival of its national life, would be of all times the most fitting for the carrying out of this project',¹⁵ Weizmann wrote to Ormsby Gore. To Balfour, whose authority he sought in dealing with this question and seeking an amicable arrangement with the Muslim owners, he explained: '... the satisfactory settling of this point would mean an enormous success of prestige to us. It would make the Jewish world fully realise what the British regime in Palestine means; it would help to rally all the Jews ... round the platform which we have created, namely a Jewish Palestine under British Auspices.'¹⁶

It was a delicate question. Being *Waqf* property, the site next to the Wailing Wall could not legally be transferred. Clayton understood not only its sentimental significance to world Jewry but also that, by purchasing the site, the Zionist Commission intended to prove it was capable of promoting Zionist objectives in Palestine. He raised the matter with the leaders of the Muslim community. The Military Governor of Jerusalem, Ronald Storrs, stepped in as well and tried to mediate and convince the *Mufti* of Jerusalem that the site be sold to the Zionists but with no success.¹⁸ 'The question of the Wailing Wall should be approached gradually and dealt with by preference directly between the Commission and the Moslem Authorities concerned. I cannot but feel that Government intervention in the matter would tend to intensify rather than diminish the difficulties in your way', Balfour wrote to Weizmann.¹⁹

Another question directed by Weizmann to London was the status of the Anglo-Palestine Company (APC), the financial instrument of the Zionist Organisation which carried on banking business in Palestine. The problem of re-operating APC branches had already been solved before the Zionist Commission had embarked on its journey. In January 1918, Graham passed Weizmann's request on to the Treasury. The Treasury replied that, if the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs declared that Jerusalem and Jaffa were under 'Friendly Occupation', according to the Trading with Occupied Enemy Territory Proclamation, 1915, the Treasury's approval would not be necessary.²⁰ And, indeed, that was what happened. As of February, funds were transferred to APC branches in Jerusalem and Jaffa without the Treasury's special approval and the renewed operations of the bank became standard routine.

Another request, for the Military Authorities to make use of the APC banks, had also been submitted by Weizmann to the Foreign Office between December 1917 and January 1918.²¹ As mentioned above, instructions to open the banks had been given to Ormsby Gore on the eve of the Zionist Commission's departure for Palestine and the Military Authorities started utilising the banks' services. However, when Eliezer Hoofien, the acting Bank Director, asked, in February 1918, for permission from the War Office to enable the Army Paymaster to bank with APC, he was rejected. Weizmann's and the APC's requests were also in vain. In March, an application made by the APC was transmitted by the War Office to the General Headquarters in Egypt, requesting their opinion but the latter replied that they were satisfied with banking with the Anglo-Egyptian Bank. Furthermore, the Jerusalem Branch of APC was informed by the Governor of Jerusalem that he had been instructed by the General Headquarters to keep all his accounts with the Anglo-Egyptian Bank only.²² The management of the APC pointed out the

political aspect of entrusting the quite newly-established branches of the Anglo-Egyptian Bank the status of official bank of the government but with no result.²³

The replies given to questions about the operation of the banks and the Military Authorities using the APC indicated the attitude of the Authorities. However, the main issue, which became a test case in terms of the meaning of the concept National Home, was the question of Palestine's legal tender. On 27 November 1917, the Turkish currency system in Palestine was abolished and replaced by the Egyptian currency which became legal tender in the Occupied Territories.²⁴ On 25 February 1918, the APC submitted a proposal to the War Office that the British Government grant it an exclusive right to issue Palestinian banknotes as legal tender in Palestine. The War Office withheld its reply until the management of the APC had consulted the Military Authorities in Palestine. The Treasury opposed the proposal, claiming that, if any banknotes were issued beyond Egyptian currency, this should be by the Government as in the Crown Colonies, not by a private company. The Treasury's opinion was transmitted by Sykes to Ormsby Gore in Palestine. The Military Authorities, on receiving the proposal, rejected it as well.²⁵

At the Foreign Office, on the other hand, attention was paid to the political aspect of the proposal, in spite of the fact that the Zionists had submitted it as a solution to the practical problem of the necessity of issuing currency and not in the context of the National Home. Graham was of the opinion that, from a purely political point of view, the proposal should be accepted since, although the APC was a private institution, it was eventually supposed to become 'a little less than a "State" bank'. Therefore, Graham suggested that the proposal should be adapted to existing financial policy and not be totally rejected. Mark Sykes, unlike Graham, responded in the negative, also for political reasons: he was afraid that the proposed issuing of banknotes might be interpreted as an intention to establish 'a Jewish state as such' pending the peace agreements. Consequently, he suggested waiting for Ormsby Gore's reply about the stance of the Military Authorities.²⁶ The latter, as we have seen, rejected the proposal.

On 15 April 1918, the matter was raised once more, when Ormsby Gore transmitted to the Military Authorities a further application made by APC, this time to be permitted to issue low denominational bank notes in order to solve the problem of lack of piaster notes following the transition from Turkish to Egyptian currency. This request was also rejected and it was made clear to the APC that there was no intention of issuing notes beside those which had been declared as Palestine's legal tender. As regards a further Zionist request, that the currency should carry Hebrew inscriptions, Clayton

noted that it did not seem to him that a new currency would be issued before the end of the occupation.²⁷ Egyptian currency remained Palestine's legal tender until October 1927.

At the same time, the Zionist Commission was busy supporting the Jewish population and consolidating its leadership institutions. With the assistance of various relief funds which it operated and made use of as a source of power, the Zionist Commission enforced its authority on the Jewish population. In Jerusalem, the Commission intervened in the conflict over the city's Jewish representation between the City Council of Jerusalem Jews (Hebrew: *Va'ad Ha'Eer Liyehudei Yerushalaim*) and The Ashkenazi City Council (Hebrew: *Va'ad Ha'Eer Ha'Ashkenazi*). In addition, it held discussions with the heads of various Jewish Orthodox communities and centres of learning (Hebrew: *Colelim* and *Yeshivoth*). In the *Yishuv* in general, the Commission worked to coordinate activities and define the authority, both of the Provisional Committee for Palestinian Jews in the Occupied Territories (which was established at the beginning of 1918 and included representatives of the Permanent Political Committee, the Colonies Association and other organisations) and the Palestine Bureau which, before the Zionist Commission's arrival, had been the sole representative of the World Zionist Organisation.²⁸ All this contributed to the formation of an image of an organised population with proper representation in their dealings with the British Authorities. It also paved the way for the demands, submitted for the authority information about the investments of the Jewish leadership, as well as its scope of activities that were submitted at the end of 1918.²⁹ Additionally, it gave the Zionist Commission an authoritative status in its dealings with the Military Authorities.

Furthermore, in addition to consolidating the *Yishuv* and organising its leadership institutions, efforts were made to strengthen elements of autonomy which had been granted under the Turks to various Jewish authorities. On 19 May 1918, in a meeting with Allenby, Weizmann succeeded in ensuring that '*Osher*' tithes, payable by the Jewish settlers, be channeled through the Colony Councils.³⁰ Encouraged by this achievement, Weizmann tried to widen the scope of the authority of the committees. He met with General Money, the Chief Administrator, and submitted, at his request, a memorandum which proposed that recognition be given to the existing judicial authority of the Rabbinical Courts and the courts of arbitration (Hebrew: *Mishpat Ha'Shalom*), which should be allowed to exercise jurisdiction over as wide a field as possible. Furthermore, the

memorandum proposed that the Colony Councils should be empowered to collect fines and should be responsible for Jewish settlers appearing when required by the Military Authorities and, finally, that the Jerusalem Jewish Community should be vested with the power to deal with prostitution and the illegal traffic in alcohol which had spread throughout the city.

Weizmann argued that it would be unfair to act according to the numerical balance of power in allowing the inhabitants to join the Administration. He believed that a more democratic system should be adopted and it should be taken into consideration that the population was heterogeneous and one could not regard it as a single unit when devolving authority and responsibility. Therefore, he suggested that representative Jewish bodies should, subject to the control of the Military Administration, be entrusted with certain administrative functions in relation to the Jewish section of the population, while the same principle be adopted in dealing with the Arab population.³¹

Money's reply is a typical example of the reasoning of the Military Authorities' *status quo* policy. He argued that the Administration of the Occupied Enemy Territorial Administration (OETA) was a military one and, therefore, a bureaucracy, although this did not mean that it paid no regard to the wishes of the population (as suggested in the memorandum submitted by Weizmann) or was necessarily unsympathetic. The Administration was provisional only, Money explained, and was required by the Laws and Usages of War to interfere as little as possible with the existing form of government, civil, penal and domestic laws and the existing rights of the inhabitants. Any material alteration in the status and privileges of one section of the population could only be justified by real necessity and carried out at an opportune time. He stated that as to the specific suggestions, under Ottoman rule, the Rabbinical Courts had certain rights in deciding cases of personal status and these rights had been carefully preserved in the proclamation re-establishing the courts in OETA. On the other hand, the Jewish *Mishpat Ha'Shalom* arbitration court, while never officially recognised under Ottoman rule, was permitted to function as an unofficial Court of Arbitration. There was no objection to this and it would be convenient for the Administration if members of the Jewish community continued to settle their disputes amicably by arbitration but permission could not be given to set up a concurrent judicial system which was not subject to control and did not apply the principles laid down by the administration of justice in the occupied territory. It might be possible, later, to adopt a system whereby the decisions of all arbitration tribunals could, subject to certain rules and procedure by the official Courts, be given binding force; however, for the time being, there was no intention to put forward such a proposal. As to the

questions of payment of fines or appearance in court, Money explained that this was a question of the fined or summoned individual's responsibility towards the authorities and that he could not understand how a Colony Council could advantageously intervene in these cases. He was ready to welcome the Councils' offered services of collecting fines, only in cases when proceedings were taken to obtain payment of a fine by forcible execution. Money also welcomed the cooperation of the Jewish community in the suppression of prostitution and the illicit drink trade. He suggested that they should do their utmost by social and religious pressure to combat these and, when suspects were brought before the Court, the magistrate might call in a representative of the community to assist the court with useful information and finding a solution.³²

In other words, the Military Authorities did not accept the principle or the practical proposals for enlarging the scope of self-rule of the Jewish population. On the issue of the scope of the *Yishuv's* autonomy, as in other confrontations with the Zionist Commission when trying to define in practice the 'National Home for the Jewish People', the Military Authorities were very careful not to deviate from their strict interpretation of the *status quo* policy and to prevent any encroachment on the Military Administration's authority.

Gilbert Clayton, the Chief Political Officer, took notice of the contradiction between this policy and that of the Balfour Declaration and the resulting dilemma. In a Memorandum of 19 May 1918 and in a letter to Balfour of 16 June, Clayton reasoned that strict observance by the Military Administration of Occupied Enemy Territory of the principles laid down in the Laws and Usages of War was incompatible with any development of the Zionist Policy announced by Balfour. He believed that Britain was faced with two alternatives: the first, to defer all development of the Zionist Policy until the Military Administration had been replaced by a permanent civil government; and the second, to observe the principles laid down in the Laws and Usages of War only so far as they did not preclude gradual and reasonable development of the ideas behind the Balfour Declaration. Clayton argued that, if all development were postponed, keen disappointment would be caused among Zionists worldwide who would consider it a break of promise and the whole Zionist movement would suffer a serious set-back. Such a course would involve the withdrawal of Weizmann from his position as leader of pro-British Zionism and the departure of the Zionist Commission from Palestine. This would constitute a blow to British prestige and afford the Central Powers an opportunity for extricating themselves from their awkward position with regard to the Jews. It would also be a death-blow to any hope of securing Zionist influence at the Peace Conference

in favour of a British Palestine.

Clayton believed that giving a liberal interpretation to the principles laid down in the Laws and Usages of War – using them as a general guide rather than a binding regulation – would not present any serious problem, especially in view of the many departures from the principles enunciated in The Hague Convention, which had been made by all sides during the War. (In Clayton's Memorandum, the wording is: 'a series of formulae, laid down at a time when the experience of the present war was not available, and founded on the provisions of The Hague Convention, an instrument which had been violated at one time or another since 4th August 1914 by practically every belligerent Power'.) In his opinion, there was no reason why minor changes and innovations could not be introduced which would do much to conciliate Zionist opinion while avoiding offence to the susceptibilities of other communities. A small favour granted to one community could easily be counterbalanced by similar privileges afforded to the others and thus gradual progress could be made without causing friction and discontent.

However, at the same time, Clayton was aware of the danger involved in such a policy. He believed that the Zionists considered that the Balfour Declaration meant nothing if not that the Jews in Palestine were to receive more privileges from the Military Administration. He wrote:

The general conclusion to be drawn from the experience gained since the arrival of the Zionist Commission in this country is that any real development of the ideas which Zionists hold to be at the root of the declaration made by His Majesty's Government must entail extending a measure of preferential treatment to the Jews in Palestine. This is bound to lead to some feeling on the part of other interested communities, especially the local Arabs, and may give rise to a measure of discontent and unrest of which advantages cannot fail to be taken by enemy propagandists. Wise discrimination and careful adjustment of the interests of all communities alike will do much to minimize this danger but the fact of its existence cannot be denied.

In conclusion, Clayton called attention to Weizmann's letter to Balfour of 30 May 1918, which set forth the point of view of the Zionist Commission and requested that the British Government decide to what extent the Zionist Policy was to be developed in Palestine at that time. He asked the Government to issue general instructions which would lay down the broad lines which the Military Administration should follow.³³

Weizmann, too, had reached similar conclusions. He understood that his role in Palestine was over, that, except for laying the foundation stone of the

Hebrew University, all his efforts to bring about accomplished facts before the Peace Conference had been blocked off by the strict policy of keeping the *status quo* and had reached a dead end. He assumed that his chances of bringing about any change in Palestine were non-existent and that he should rather return to London and, from there, see to it, through the Foreign Office, that the policy of the Military Authorities become more flexible.³⁴

In October 1918, Weizmann returned to London and met Balfour and Robert Cecil.³⁵

Following these interviews he submitted to Balfour a document summarising the Zionist Organisation's proposals 'regarding matters affecting the Jewish population of Palestine during the military occupation of this country':

1. That the Zionist Commission ... be continued for the period for the period of the occupation of Palestine ... and that such commission be appointed the advisory body to the Military Authorities in all matters affecting the welfare of the Jewish population.
2. That the Zionist Commission be allowed to continue its work of the developing the organisation of the Jewish population in Palestine, and that instructions be given to the Military and other Authorities to assist the Commission in carrying out this work as far as is consistent with the local administration of the country by such Authorities.
3. That all available steps be taken by the Authorities to encourage and extend the participation of Jews in the present administration of the country, and that the Zionist Commission be allowed ... to submit proposals and suggestions to the Military Authorities as to the most effective means to be adopted to attain this end.
4. That the Hebrew language be recognised as the language of the Jewish people in Palestine.
5. That a Land Commission be at once appointed (of which certain selected representatives of the Zionist Commission shall be members) for the purpose of enquiring into and dealing with all questions relating to tenure of land in Palestine. Its tasks will include: a preliminary survey, and eventually ... a cadastral survey of the land; an examination of the Land Registers which are still to be found and a verification of all title deeds to the land; a

- classification of crown lands, waste, uncultivated and partly cultivated lands; an examination of the present Laws affecting land and mortgages on the land in Palestine, as well as preparation of proposals for such modifications or alterations in such Laws of the Country into a form more consistent with modern requirements;
6. That full permission and authority be given to the Zionist Commission to send out to Palestine a group of engineering experts, to make a survey of the country for the purpose of ascertaining the resources of the country and the best means of developing the same, and that in the meantime, the Zionist Commission be authorised to proceed with such public works as may be found necessary and practicable at the present time, e.g. the draining of certain town districts, the sinking of wells, the making of roads, and other like urgent matters.
 7. That the Zionist Commission be empowered to investigate the possibilities of, and to submit proposals for, the settling on Palestine soil of such Jewish soldiers participating in the Palestine campaign, as may desire to remain in the country, and are found to be suitable for colonising purposes.
 8. That in order to establish a permanent contact with the Arab people and with a view to establishing permanent friendly relations between Jews and Arabs, a representative of the Zionist Commission is sent to the centre of the Arab government.
 9. That the Zionist Commission be allowed to proceed with the occupation of the site of the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus, and the carrying out of that site and elsewhere, if necessary, of the preliminary work relating to the University such as making of terraces, planting of trees, cutting of stones and preliminary building operations.
 10. As regards all matters referred to in the above nine proposals it is clearly understood that the Zionist Commission and its representatives shall in all things act in complete agreement with, and under the supreme control of the British Authorities in Palestine.³⁶

On 9 November, the Foreign Office passed on these proposals to Clayton, requesting him to lay the matter before Allenby and telegraph the latter's views.

The response, transmitted by Clayton back to London, was unequivocal:

1. No objection provided that it is understood that the Commission has no executive function in regard to administration of Palestine.

2. No objection provided that this clause does not imply anything more than a continuance of the system at present in force.
3. The Zionist Commission cannot participate in the present administration of the country. The decision as to how far employment of Jewish personnel in the Military Administration can be extended must rest with the Military Authorities but any proposals of the Commission in this connection will always receive sympathetic consideration ...
4. No objection to this clause and the principle is already being acted upon but it must be clearly understood that the official language of the present government is English only ...
5. Land Commission, land Cadastral survey are amongst early requirements of the country but are properly the duty of whatever civil Government may be set up hereafter rather than of military administration which is bound by the Law and Usages of War to maintain as far as possible the status quo in occupied enemy territory in matters relating to law and taxation. The Cadastral survey would entail expense which present revenue of O.E.T. is unable to support. There must be no question of Zionist Commission participating in any land commission or contributing to its expense as this would entail their taking part in the administration. In the meantime the Military Administration is carrying out the preliminary work and investigations which are possible in existing circumstances.
6. No objection to experts for special purposes being attached to the Zionist Commission after concurrence of authorities but any investigations they make must be confined within limits which military authorities may find it necessary to impose and the carrying out of public works by the Zionist Commission must be limited to Jewish Colonies and Jewish quarters and cities. Observations in paragraph 5 in this telegram illustrate objections to any group or commission of experts being permitted to come to Palestine at present.
7. No objection provided it is decided to disband Jewish regiment.
8. No objection but it is suggested that Faisal be consulted while in Europe.
9. No objection.
10. This is of course essential.

In conclusion, Clayton added the following clarification:

Christian and Moslem antipathy to Zionism has been displayed much more openly since armistice [and] the recent Anglo-French declaration has encouraged all parties to make known their wishes by every available means in view of approaching Peace Conference. Present time is therefore particularly unsuitable for special Zionist activity in Palestine, which should be delayed until [the] status of [the] country and form of its administration has finally been decided upon.³⁷

At the Foreign Office, the message was clearly understood: '... this means that the status quo must be continued until the armistice is over and a civil administration is established and that Zionist activities must meanwhile be limited to suggestions to the military authorities and relief and educational work connected with existing Jewish establishments etc.'³⁸

The Foreign office made no attempt to consider the proposals on the status of the Zionist Commission. These proposals were submitted on the eve of the Peace Conference, when the British Delegation, headed by Balfour, was being organised and sent to Paris, while the regular policy-making at the Foreign Office was left to the supervision of Lord Curzon, who had been appointed acting Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in January 1919. Curzon's position was, as mentioned above, that no policy should be decided upon pending the Mandate being entrusted to Britain. In practice, Curzon responded negatively to Zionist aspirations and, a few days after the proposals regarding the Zionist Commission's status were submitted, he vehemently expressed his reservations about the 'Proposals Relating to the Establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine' that were to be presented by the Zionists to the Peace Conference and were included in Weizmann's telegram to the Zionist Commission in Palestine.³⁹ One can only assume that, in such a negative atmosphere, there was no inclination in the Foreign Office to deal with the question of the status of the Zionist Commission and it was considered preferable to wait for the general settlement to be summed up in the terms of the Mandate.

The Zionists, however, interpreted Clayton's response, of which they were informed by Ormsby Gore, as a positive reply by the Foreign Office to their proposals. Thus, on 8 February 1919, they presented Sykes, in Paris, with a statement to which they attached, *inter alia*, both their proposals regarding the status of the Zionist Commission in Palestine and Clayton's response. The statement pointed out that a large number of British officials had no knowledge of the Balfour Declaration or, if they were aware of it, failed to appreciate its significance for the future development of Palestine. Moreover, it intimated that the maintenance of the *status quo* policy by the British Administration meant the continued use of lower grade officials – mostly

the same Arab officials who had served under the Turkish regime and who, in advising the British officials, often misinterpreted the wishes of the Jewish population. Thus, the Jewish population was constantly being presented with acts and utterances by British officials entirely at variance with the spirit of the Balfour Declaration. Therefore, according to the statement, the Arabs felt that the British Authorities had no policy *vis-à-vis* the Jews and this lack of clarity, wrongly interpreted by the Arabs as weakness, encouraged them to persist with openly anti-Jewish propaganda. The proposals regarding the status of the Zionist Commission – it was stated – were in order to regulate the relations between the Jewish population and the British Authorities and to contribute towards clearing up a great many misunderstandings and misconceptions which existed, in spite of the fact that, according to the reply received from the Foreign Office (Clayton's response), the proposals had been accepted in essence. Therefore, the Zionists requested that the British Government formally sanction the proposals and it was suggested that these proposals, which the Military Authorities in Palestine had already approved, also be approved by the Foreign Office and sent as instructions to the British Administration in Palestine.⁴⁰

Sykes passed the statement and its attachments to Curzon at the Foreign Office, adding his assessment of the situation. In his opinion, the failure to understand the purpose, intention and scope of the Balfour Declaration, on the part of the British political officers, was due to the fact that, when in Palestine, it was very difficult to appreciate the importance of Zionism, which then appeared a very small thing in comparison to the practical administrative work which, in most cases, had nothing to do either with Zionism or Jews. He believed that the attention of the political staff might usefully be drawn to the wider issues. He explained that they should understand that, if the problem was to be dealt with, they would have to carry out two difficult tasks: the first, to support the just requirements of the Zionists and make it clear that, so long as the British were in charge, they meant to see that Zionism had freedom of action; the second, to support the local population against any attempt to squeeze them out or deny them a fair price for their lands.⁴¹

Sykes' suggestion, however, was not commented on. A few days later, Sykes caught Spanish Influenza, from which he died, and the only response of the Foreign Office on the matter of the Zionist statement was a short letter, on behalf of Curzon, notifying Weizmann that Clayton's response to the statement must not be regarded as the British Government's attitude towards the Zionist proposals.⁴²

In 1919, the year in which the Peace Conference convened in Paris, the range of activities concerning the political future of Palestine was widened and intensified, as was the scope of questions relating to the *status quo* policy. Once the political section of the British Delegation to the Peace Conference had been established in Paris, the problems confronting the authorities in Palestine, which were referred to the Foreign Office, had to be dealt with by two headquarters. Current events continued to be dealt with by the staff of the Foreign Office in London, under Curzon, while the problems relating to the political future of Palestine or to the policy which was taking shape in Paris pending the Mandate being entrusted to Britain were passed on from London to the British Delegation to the Peace Conference to be dealt with by Balfour and his staff. Clayton, the Chief Political Officer of OETA, Weizmann, who represented the Zionist Organisation, and Faisal, whom the British regarded as the Arab representative, had to find their way between interested parties in Palestine and these two centres.

In Palestine, the occupation of which had been accomplished in the autumn of 1918, the Administration was adjusting to its standard routine. Following the first stage of organisation, satisfying the urgent requirements of the local population and shaping definite procedures of operation, the Administration found itself facing problems. These were mainly economic and could not wait until the expected abolition of the *status quo* policy to be solved. The Administration consistently passed on to London all problems which required a detour from the harsh *status quo* policy or a more flexible interpretation which was not within the authority of the Military Administration. From London, those issues were often passed on to Paris, to be considered or decided upon by the Peace Conference Delegation. The same applied to the Zionist Commission which continued to look after the interests of the National Home, although its authority weakened after Weizmann's departure from Palestine in August 1918. They saw to it that all relevant questions were delivered to the Zionist Office in London or to the Zionist Delegation to the Peace Conference in Paris.

The problems raised in Palestine became, therefore, a subject for correspondence between the Military Authorities, the Foreign Office and the British Peace Treaty Delegation and, if necessary, even the War Office and other bodies. Once in a while, questions were asked about who was in authority. Because of their relevance to the Peace Conference's deliberations, the problems were considered in London and in Paris, both in the light of the *status quo* policy, which was carefully implemented by Curzon at the Foreign Office in order not to impede the Mandate from being entrusted to Britain, and in the light of the responsibilities arising from the Jewish National Home policy, which were being formulated in those days to be

included in the terms of the Mandate. These considerations also revealed the stances and ideas of those who drafted and finalised the letters, memoranda and, especially, the minutes dealing with the meaning of the National Home and the policy derived from it.

The main problems, which accumulated in London and Paris, concerned immigration to Palestine, the settling of immigrants and others on the land and land transactions in general (the last two being bound up with the question of re-opening land registers), as well as making use of German property and various concessions requested for development plans. Some problems were raised by the Zionists, whose aims were mainly economic and political and who regarded the solutions as steps towards the implementation of the idea of a Jewish National Home. However, they were not the only ones. Interested parties, whose objects were solely economic, foreign investors or people who wished to settle in Palestine following its occupation, forced the issue of deciding upon a policy. All this was considered within the framework of the deliberations about the political future of Palestine, taking into account the effects that policy would have as regards the prospects of establishing and fostering a National Home for the Jewish people.

The question of immigration to Palestine and establishing new settlements there was not dealt with under the Military Administration which kept to the *status quo* up until the signing of the peace treaty with Turkey. As for the Zionists, they also understood that, as long as the country was under military occupation, there was no prospect for an influx of Jewish immigrants and they assumed that the matter of immigration would be settled once the Mandate was entrusted to Britain and implemented. The applications submitted by them on behalf of individuals or groups who asked to be allowed to enter the country were based on grounds of usefulness (people of means or those working for potential investors: engineers, technologists and other professional workers, who would eventually contribute to the country's development, as well as soldiers who might form the nucleus of a future militia). However, such applications were not submitted on the principle of applicants' right to immigrate to their National Home and settle there. At the Foreign Office as well as at the Peace Conference Delegation, officials were careful that no regulation be prematurely made on matters of immigration. They justified their refusals by arguing that there was no room for any decisions regarding immigration before the Mandate was entrusted to Britain. Obligations arising out of the National Home policy were not considered at all.⁴³

However, British policy makers were motivated to consider questions of the right to immigrate to Palestine and settle there by initiatives taken by non-Zionist applicants and this impacted on the question of to what degree

privileges should be given to the Zionists in accordance with the Jewish National Home policy.

The question of the right of immigration and settlement in Palestine arose in January 1919 when the Governor of Malta announced in a speech, which found its way into the press, the existence of a Maltese scheme of emigration in order to start Maltese colonies in Palestine.⁴⁴ The scheme led to Zionist protests. Samuel Landman, Solicitor and Secretary at the Zionist Organisation's London Bureau, wrote to the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs: 'Such a project appears quite in variance with the Declaration made by His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in his letter of November 2nd 1917, stating that His Majesty's Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish People.'⁴⁵

This protest elicited varied responses at the Foreign Office. One of the Oriental Department's officials, O. A. Scott, proposed a reply stating that, although the future of Palestine had yet to be settled by the Peace Conference, the policy of the British Government, in so far as it was defined, was to favour the immigration of Jews in preference to any other persons. However, G. J. Kidston, the head of the Oriental Department, was outraged:

Both the tone and the substance of this letter seem to me quite intolerable ... The fact that we view with favour the establishment of a national home for the Jews in Palestine does not in any way imply that we intend to keep it a strict preserve for the Israelites to the exclusion of others, more especially of our own people. Surely the Jews of all people ought to be chary of establishing a 'pale' system. If the future Jewish home may not be shared by Maltese then there would seem to be no reason why the British home be shared by Jews ...

In that spirit Curzon, too, stated that he was not aware that there was anything in the Balfour Declaration that would 'absolutely close the door to immigration into Palestine to persons not of Jewish race.'⁴⁶

A few weeks later, the same question was raised again. In March 1919, Lieutenant G. H. Nutting, an officer who had served on the Palestinian front, submitted, in his and his fellow soldiers' names, a detailed scheme for their settlement in Palestine and an application for the purchase of land for that purpose by a British Syndicate.⁴⁷ The various responses given in connection with the National Home policy were, this time, more detailed. The first suggestion was to respond by saying that it was not, at present, possible to give a definite reply. However, in the event of Britain being

entrusted with the administration of Palestine and, so far as might be compatible with the engagements into which the British Government had entered to assist the Jewish people to make a national home for themselves in that country, the British Government would be prepared to view any proposals for the development of Palestine by *bona fide* British enterprises with sympathy.⁴⁸ That reply, however, was never sent. Only a few weeks had passed since a Zionist storm of protest had been raised by the proposal that Maltese be allowed to immigrate to Palestine and Foreign Office officials were afraid of Zionist opposition to any settlement scheme by others. They preferred to delay their answers until a definite policy had been decided upon. Therefore, the Foreign Office replied to Nutting that, until the Peace Conference had given its decision on the future of Palestine, it was impossible to say whether any encouragement could be given to schemes such as his. Meanwhile, the Foreign Office in London passed on a copy of the correspondence with Nutting to Balfour and the British Delegation in Paris and suggested that, if the British Government were to accept a mandate for Palestine, it would be very desirable to secure beforehand some authoritative ruling as to the attitude to be adopted towards non-Jewish immigration. It was further suggested that, in order to avoid subsequent friction with the Zionists, such a ruling should form part of the terms of the Mandate itself.⁴⁹

The political section of the British Delegation to the Peace Conference in Paris was engaged, in those days, in preparing the first drafts of the terms of the Mandate. *Inter alia*, they were considering the question of the scope of action, authorities, privileges and economic options to be given to the 'Jewish Council' which was supposed to implement the idea of a National Home.⁵⁰ In this context, attention was also paid in Paris to questions from Palestine. Thus, on 2 April, Sir Louis Mallet of the British Delegation replied on behalf of Balfour to Curzon that two clauses were proposed for inclusion in the Chapter of the Draft Treaty of Peace with Turkey dealing with Palestine: one would grant, in vague and general terms, preferential immigration rights to the Jews; the other would prevent the exploitation of land in Palestine by foreign capitalists and, for this purpose, restrict the amount of land which could be held by foreigners in Palestine without permission from the governor of 'the future Palestine State'. As to the particular question, Balfour explained that it was also probable that, in granting concessions such as those suggested by Nutting, preference would be given to Zionist organisations.⁵¹

At the Foreign Office this message was clearly understood. Nutting's repeated demands that the reply he had received should be re-considered and that a convincing explanation should be given to him were rejected with

no further explanation. However, in the internal minutes, it was noted that they could not make it explicit that they were implementing a policy of giving preferential treatment to the Zionists, which was the answer Nutting wished to receive in order to start anti-Semitic agitation in the House of Commons.⁵² Meanwhile, Curzon wrote again to the British Delegation to the Peace Conference that, at the Foreign Office, they were under pressure. He stressed once more the desirability of including in the terms of the Mandate for Palestine any preferential rights which were to be given to the Zionists. The delegation confirmed its intention of doing this.⁵³

Other applications, similar to that of Nutting, were answered in the same manner. In an internal minute concerning an application submitted by a Maltese serving in the Labour Corps, it was noted that, until a decision was made about the Mandate for Palestine, the British Government was not in a position to grant any concession for land in that country and, in any case, the Zionists were to have preference.

On the other hand, there was an application submitted by Argentine Jews who were serving with the British Army in Palestine who requested to remain in the country as settlers. The Foreign Office responded by stating that the case deserved every consideration. Furthermore, it was suggested that a copy of the application be sent to the War Office to enquire whether it was feasible for Jewish soldiers with a good military record, who wished to remain in Palestine to become settlers, to be given temporary employment by the Administration until such time as Palestine was opened for settlers and the transfer of land was authorised.⁵⁵

Another issue, which required policy formulation and illustrated the differences between the conceptions of the British Delegation to the Peace Conference and those of the Foreign Office under Curzon, was the issue of Wagner's engineering works at Jaffa. Wagner's engineering works had been supplying engines and equipment required to put the wells of the citrus orchards into motion. The workshops were under German ownership and, as such, were considered enemy property. The question of re-operating Wagner's workshops became acute when a British engineering company working in Egypt complained that it had been in the process of purchasing the workshops in February 1919 but the Zionist Commission had intervened and applied pressure on the Military Authorities in order to prevent the deal from being carried through. Their complaint was sent to the Department of Overseas Trade, which supported the complainants and passed the correspondence on to the Foreign Office's Eastern Department, asking for

instructions. In April 1919, the issue was raised in Parliament.⁵⁶ The Foreign Office, aware of the sensitivity of the question in the light of the prohibition of any change in the *status quo* of enemy properties required by The Hague Convention, asked Clayton to submit a report on the policy of the Occupied Enemy Territory Administration in the matter, while the whole correspondence was transmitted to the British Delegation to the Peace Conference for Balfour's attention.⁵⁷

According to Clayton's report, the complaint was without foundation: Wagner's engineering works had been utilised by the Military Authorities till December 1918, when it was no longer needed by them. However, they then found out that it was essential to keep the workshops operating to enable the irrigation of the orange groves. The Zionist Commission, through the Anglo-Palestine Company, made the highest offer but was found to be unsuitable to carry out the work satisfactorily. Therefore, the workshops were given, on lease for twelve months, to the Anglo-Egyptian engineering company (East Company). They could not be sold to the company because no definite sales or transfer of enemy property in Occupied Enemy Territory was allowed before the signing of a Peace Agreement and the complaint that the workshops had been put on the open market was baseless.⁵⁸

It so happened that Clayton's reply reached the Foreign Office two months after he had been requested to send a report. In the meantime, the issue had been referred to Balfour and the Peace Conference Delegation, as mentioned above, and the latter, unaware of the facts supplied by Clayton later on, started to deliberate on possible preferences that could be given to the Zionist Organisation and to what degree the latter's attitudes should be taken into consideration in view of the commitment made in the Balfour Declaration.

A few days after the Foreign Office's request arrived, the problem was analysed in a minute written by Forbes Adam, of the Eastern Department and the Peace Conference Delegation:

It is easy to sympathise with the Zionist Commission. They know that our intention is to press eventually for a British Mandate in Palestine to carry out the policy of the National Home ... They know more or less also that we shall have to maintain in our mandate equal civil and religious rights for the other inhabitants of Palestine in order to secure the adoption of our policy by the other Allied and Associated Governments and in view of the feelings of the majority of the present population of Palestine. It has therefore become fairly obvious to them as to us that the only preference which we can give the Jews in order

to effectively to carry out the policy of the National Home will be economic (e. g. land development and works of public utility) and connected with immigration. They hope that by gradual immigration and development of the land their numbers will come to exceed those of the rest of the inhabitants and that they will thus gradually secure political power and control corresponding to their actual position in the country – in fact making Palestine eventually a Jewish Commonwealth. They believe that these tactics, if adopted, will arouse less opposition from the rest of the native inhabitants who chiefly fear the Jews from a political and religious point of view, because the inhabitants will become impressed by the advantages coming from the Jewish development of the country and the influx of Jewish money generally.

In these circumstances the Zionist Commission in Palestine would naturally dislike such concerns as Jaffa Engineering Works being purchased outright by a British firm now, when, had our policy been ratified by the Conference at once, they would probably by now have received a preference to secure these works themselves. Their resentment is probably increased by the knowledge that their attempts in the direction of land development and generally to anticipate to some extent by practical application the future privileges which they expect to receive under a British mandate after the peace settlement have been systematically restrained by the Foreign Office and Military Authorities, though doubtless quite rightly and inevitably.

The position is complicated because naturally no preference can be given to the Zionists until the peace settlement, and as long as Palestine remains enemy territory in British occupation. Such preference, if granted now, would only make the idea of the British mandate and Zionism more unpopular locally and prejudice the future chance of a favourable settlement ...⁵⁹

Another member of the delegation, assistant legal adviser H. W. Malkin, noted:

We must make up our minds to the fact that we are going to carry out the policy of the Jewish National Home, there will be a certain number of cases where we shall have deliberately to give preference to Zionist organisations over perfectly reputable British competitors in matters such as the present. Such preferences will no doubt involve us in a certain amount of odium and it may lead to difficulties in Parliament`

but I do not see how it is to be avoided if the proposed policy is to be carried out ...⁶⁰

The deliberations were summed up on 7 May 1919 in a statement of policy, in a letter from Balfour to Curzon. Balfour explained that, although the difficulties of the British Company were understood, it was nevertheless important to bear in mind the wider aspects of the issue. He wrote:

His Majesty's Government, if and when they obtain a mandate from the Conference for Palestine, are pledged to carry out the policy of a National Home for the Jews.

In the adoption of this policy there can be no question of religious privileges for the Jews and in the face of the present hostility of the majority of the population (both Moslem and Christian) in Palestine, His Majesty's Government can hardly fulfil their pledges of any form of political preference. An increase in the numbers and economic influence of the Jews and a steady colonisation must precede political favours. By this means the non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine who fear the Jew primarily as a political and religious force may gradually come to welcome his presence, as they see the full advantages from the influx of Jewish money and Jewish methods of developing the country.

However, Balfour continued:

Palestine is a rich and undeveloped country and a particularly good field, therefore, for the foreign concession-hunter who may expect to obtain high profits quickly. Every care must therefore be taken to watch the commercial interests which establish themselves in the country and ensure that the development of its natural resources does not take place at the expense of the inhabitants or primarily for the benefit of foreign capitalists. It is here that His Majesty's Government's adoption of the Zionist policy may be found to offer the best method of insurance [since] it is the intention of the Zionists ... to institute some form of public utility company under the control of the Zionist Organisation who could perhaps be given preferential consideration for immigration and land development generally. The company would take, say, 5% of its profits. The remainder would go to relieve the taxpayer (Jew and non-Jew) in Palestine.

In the meantime, Balfour concluded, 'no policy should be adopted or step taken which would enable commercial interests ... whether British or foreign

to establish themselves in Palestine ... until the decision of the Conference enables His Majesty's Government to work out the full implication of their acceptance of a mandate for Palestine and of the policy of the National Home for the Jews'.⁶¹

The Foreign Office responded promptly. M. D. Peterson of the Eastern Department noted: 'This is a significant expression of policy, which will be very disappointing to the Zionists if it is to be interpreted as meaning that they are not to have a large share of its administrative posts and seats on the advisory council – or whatever the adjunct to the Chief Administrator may be'.

G. J. Kidston, the head of the Eastern Department, concluded otherwise:

This is all rather obscure, but I take it to mean that, in order to placate the Jews for our inability to give them religious and political privileges in Palestine, the intention is to give them monopoly of immigration and of all big commercial enterprises.

The Jews may accept this readily enough, knowing full well that control of immigration and trade will carry with it political predominance and that political predominance may easily force into the sphere of religion. But I am not at all convinced by the argument that the Moslem and Christian inhabitants may be expected to welcome this state of things on account of the material advantages which it will bring them. I am not sure that it need necessarily bring them any such advantages at all and it seems much more likely to reduce them to a state of vassalage.

Public opinion in this country will also have to be reckoned with. There have been indications of a regular movement, intending to the Dominions, against handing over to exclusive exploitation by the Jews a country for which British, Canadian, Australian and Indian soldiers have fought and died. Threats to ask questions in the H[ouse] of C[ommons] have already been made and such questions will not be easy to answer.

Curzon responded forcefully: 'The "national home" is now a secret means of monopoly of Jews'.⁶²

Following the receipt of Clayton's report by the Foreign Office, there was a sense of regret. 'If any discrimination has been made', Peterson noted, 'it has been against the Zionists rather than in their favour. Though we have had no complaint from them on this question, it may have seemed to them to substantiate their charges of anti-Zionism on the part of the Military Administration'. Balfour's response was clear-cut. In a short letter to Curzon

of 26 June, he suggested that the substance of his despatch of 7 May be communicated to Clayton.⁶³

Balfour's statement, which was unnecessary given the context in which it was made, was naturally followed by repercussions beyond the narrow scope of the Wagner's Engineering Works' affair. It supplied a written and clear cut interpretation of the National Home policy. Furthermore, had such issues –like those raised by Lieutenant Nutting or the British motor company which wanted to purchase Wagner's works – been passed on to the Peace Conference Delegation for consideration, once Balfour's statement was made, it became obvious that any problem would be confronted with two opposing policies: on the one hand, the inflexible policy of the *status quo*, led and implemented by Curzon, which prevented any laying of foundations by the Zionists; on the other hand, the policy which tended to grant preferences to the Zionists, in view of the obligation to support the establishment of a National Home for the Jewish people, as defined and interpreted by Balfour.

One striking example of the repercussions that followed Balfour's statement and the polarisation between those two policies was British policy regarding land transactions. As has already been noted, the Military Authorities in Palestine, guided by the principles of The Hague Convention, were careful to prevent any land transaction pending the signing of a peace agreement. That policy seemed, indeed, desirable to the Zionists who were afraid of speculation in land before they were ready to act. On the other hand, however, it also hindered the Zionist Commission from carrying out its plans to develop lands not under private ownership and all their requests relating to this issue were rejected. In 1919, stagnation became an obstacle to the Administration as well since it hindered the economic system from returning to normal. The Military Authorities, therefore, decided to open those land registers and records which had been recovered, for the most part, by the end of the occupation, for ordinary land transaction under the Administration's official control.

On 30 May, the Zionist Commission sent this news to the Foreign Office in London and to Weizmann who was in Paris at the time. Weizmann sent a letter of protest to Robert G. Vansittart, a prominent member of the Peace Conference Delegation, in which he warned against the drastic departure from the policy laid down a year earlier which, so he claimed, would pave the way for speculations in land to the prejudice of all reforms which the Government might desire to introduce later. He further requested that steps should be taken at least to postpone this change of policy until the political situation was clear.⁶⁴ On 1 July 1919, having received a cable from Clayton which confirmed the information, the Foreign Office referred the issue to the Peace Conference Delegation. According to Clayton's despatch, a draft

Ordinance, which was then under consideration, provided for the reopening of land registries for land transactions on a limited scale under official control. Clayton explained that the removal or destruction of land records had prevented any land transactions till then, which had had a serious effect on economic conditions in Palestine. He gave his assurance that no change was proposed to the Ottoman law, that the Ordinance would only affect privately-owned land and that Zionists' interests would be fully safeguarded and the land registry controlled by a judicial officer who was himself a Zionist. Having received this clarification, officials at the Foreign Office were wondering whether the course of action proposed by Clayton was consistent with the policy indicated in Balfour's statement of 7 May 1919.⁶⁵ Balfour did not have any objection providing the suggested reopening of registries was done on a limited scale and no large blocks of private land were transferred, and providing that, so far as possible, preferential consideration was given to Zionist interests. He also suggested that, since his statement of 7 May had been despatched to Cairo, General Clayton and Colonel French – who was temporarily replacing Clayton as Chief Political Officer in Palestine while the latter was in London – should be consulted about the effect the proposed reopening of the land registries would have in the light of Balfour's policy indicated in his letter of 7 May.⁶⁶ Forbes Adam summed up the issue and added his interpretation of Balfour's suggestion in a minute: the intention was to understand how the proposed reopening of land registries would relate to the general policy of economic preference regarding immigration, settlement on the land and concessions for public utilities, which it would probably be necessary to adopt if and when Britain received the Mandate and had to carry out, under that Mandate 'the policy of making Palestine a National Home for the Jews'.⁶⁷

While this issue was still being considered, Weizmann submitted a further protest. This time he objected to a scheme for Government loans to cultivators promulgated on 29 April 1919 by the Chief Administrator of Palestine. That particular scheme – Weizmann argued – was regarded by the Zionists as the most serious menace to the realisation of the Jewish National Home in Palestine which had developed throughout the course of the British military occupation. This project of Government loans for the improvement of agriculture, he stated, opened up the whole land question in Palestine as it was based on mortgages which were to be registered and, therefore, involved the reopening of land registries. It was a departure both from the *status quo* policy the Military Authorities were very careful to carry out, which prevented transactions in land, and the Balfour Declaration policy, since only non-Jewish cultivators would benefit from the loans. To support his arguments, Weizmann cited a letter of 1 July 1919, which he had received

from Louis Mallet following consultation with Balfour, in which he had been assured that no steps would be taken enabling commercial interests, whether British or foreign, to establish themselves in Palestine or obtain control over land or industries until the decision of the Peace Conference enabled the British Government to work out the full implications of their acceptance of a Mandate for Palestine and of the policy of a National Home for the Jews.⁶⁸ Some aspects of that policy, as has been discussed, had already been brought to Lord Curzon's attention in reference to the Wagner works.⁶⁹

In this case, the Zionist protest had Foreign Office support. Having received the proposed Transfer of Land Ordinance from Colonel French, O.A. Scott, who was also supported by Peterson, thought that the Zionists had cause for alarm for, although the transactions were limited to small estates, the Arabs could easily combine to buy large areas which 'might be the source of much future trouble in the Jewish State [*sic!*]'. The remedy, he believed, was to suspend transactions until the number of potential Jewish buyers had increased by immigration.⁷⁰ Curzon agreed that the Zionist protest was in line with the Government's policy of safeguarding land and industries in Palestine pending the decision of the Peace Conference and he felt that such an action would make it impossible for the British Government to argue that the military administration was charged only with the maintenance of public security. Colonel French was asked, accordingly, to suspend the inauguration of the scheme and to submit a full report on the subject for Curzon's consideration.⁷¹

Field-Marshal Allenby was enraged by Curzon's despatch. He cabled the War Office in response, stating that final arrangements to implement the scheme, which had been sent to the War Office for approval, had already come into provisional operation; that all cultivators including 'Jewish colonists' would benefit from it; that no question had arisen concerning land titles or transfer; that it was strictly under Military Administration control and did not contravene the policy of the Government. Therefore, Allenby stated, he was not taking any action to suspend the scheme unless he received instructions from the War Office as, on a matter concerning his military administration, he could not accept orders from the Foreign Office.⁷² To this Paterson responded in the negative by writing a minute: '... If questions of this kind are to be regarded as military matters, the last sentence of Sir E. Allenby's telegram 2606 can only be taken to place our Zionist policy in the hands of the War Office – a responsibility which they are very unlikely to be willing to accept'. However, the Army Council was in agreement with Curzon and the decision to suspend the scheme remained.⁷³

Towards the end of 1919, following his visit to Palestine, Weizmann modified his views and retracted his opposition to reopening the land

registries. Colonel Meinertzhagen, who had been nominated in August 1919 as Chief Political Officer in Palestine, also supported the demand for a change. In a report addressed to Curzon, he dealt with the problem of the stagnation which was impeding any industrial or agricultural progress, a stagnation that was caused by the delay in signing the peace treaty with Turkey, which unnecessarily lengthened the period in which Palestine was under the Laws and Usages of War. Meinertzhagen believed that the Zionists – who, according to him, were the only organisation in Palestine which was capable of instituting any progress and, in accordance with British Government policy, had every right to demand a modification – were the right and proper body to undertake preparatory measures for building up their national home and for easing the general economic situation. Furthermore, Meinertzhagen brought up a few suggestions which, in his opinion, could be implemented even under the strict letter of the Laws and Usages of War. One of these was the reopening of the land registries on a limited and controlled scale.⁷⁴ The General Headquarters in Egypt, as well as the War Office, on the assumption that the change in Weizmann's attitude and Meinertzhagen's report had paved the road for modifications in policy, also renewed their pressure to reopen the land registries.⁷⁵

However, at the Foreign Office, the issue was considered in the light of the *status quo* policy: 'The moment we reopen the land registries and allow land transfers even on a small scale our present policy viz. holding the country as temporary administration pending the allocation of a Mandate, breaks down completely and we shall be forced to go ahead with some form of constructive and developing policy just as if we had got the Mandate,' Scott wrote in a minute. He continued:

We should have to decide, on our own responsibility and at our own risk, to what extent preferential treatment is to be given to Jews as regards immigration, concessions, etc. This is probably what the Zionists want. The scheme has points in its favour, but it means a complete break with all the principles we have maintained hitherto, and I do not think we could justify our action.⁷⁶

Thus, the Army Council was advised that Lord Curzon considered the proposal to reopen the land registries could not be accepted, as it would lead to a rush of speculators or, alternatively, to complaints of preferential treatment of the Zionists. It was also impressed on the Director of Military Intelligence that, in view of the probability of negotiations for peace with Turkey being opened at an early date, Lord Curzon considered that no

change in existing policy, under which the land registries in Palestine were closed, need or should be considered at that time.⁷⁷

Furthermore, because of the insistence on the principle of keeping the land registries closed, the rest of Meinertzhagen's development suggestions were rejected, although they were favourably considered at first. All of Meinertzhagen's suggestions were, in his opinion, interlinked and dependent on the reopening of the registries and there was no way of accepting some of them and rejecting the others. 'As the other proposals are all interdependent and all contingent upon the reopening of the land registers, which Lord Curzon is unable to sanction pending the final settlement, the whole scheme had better be dropped for the time being', it was concluded at the Foreign Office.⁷⁸

In February 1920, in view of the delay caused by the continuation of peace negotiations with Turkey, new voices were heard at the Foreign Office in favour of modifications in policy, voices which reflected an interpretation of Britain's responsibilities towards the Zionists once the Mandate on Palestine was conferred. Since the future civil administration would not be able to tackle, within a short period, all the problems which would confront it and, as a result, the *status quo* would unnecessarily be maintained – it was said in the minutes – it would be far better for the existing Administration, which had a grasp of the situation, to take the first step. In practice, this meant reopening the land registries and allowing limited land transactions. Then, when the new Administration took over, it would be able, at first, to follow the existing policy of construction until it felt ready to take its own line. The officials of the Foreign Office's Eastern Department, O. A. Scott and D. G. Osborne, who made the suggestion, claimed that such a move would help the local population by giving it an opportunity to satisfy its own requirements and settle down before the Zionist immigration began, as it evidently must do as soon as a civil administration was formed. Curzon also agreed that there might be a case for a change of policy, if indeed it was evident that months were to elapse before a treaty was signed and the Mandate given to Britain.⁷⁹

This opinion was supported by the War Office. The Army Council advised the Foreign Office in February 1920 that, in view of the negotiations having again been postponed for an unknown period, they had reviewed their previous objection to reopening land registries and allowing purchase of lands by the Zionists and were now strongly of the opinion that the reopening of smaller land transactions be sanctioned without delay. The Army Council explained that the military, if not the political, interests of the British Empire and British military War effort were sufficient justification to press for an immediate settlement of the Palestine question, particularly in

view of the fact that such settlement could not effect the legitimate interests of any other Power.⁸⁰ Curzon, despite his objection to any move based on the assumption that the Mandate was within reach, concurred and agreed that a land ordinance should be enacted, allowing limited land transactions to permanent inhabitants who were born in Palestine and had committed themselves to cultivating the land, without delay. He even suggested showing the land ordinance to Weizmann before it was published and implemented.⁸¹

Balfour's decisions about whether any preference should be given to the Zionists, decisions prompted by the Wagner affair and the land transactions and land settlement issues, brought about a chain reaction. It was now impossible for the Foreign Office to authorise or refuse demands without considering them in the light of those decisions.

Such, for instance, was the fate of the deliberations about the need to develop the port of Haifa. Early in 1919, Allenby forwarded a proposal to the War Office by Lieutenant Colonel E. A. Stanton, the Military Governor of Haifa, who asked for Government permission to expropriate land for the development of Haifa town and harbour in view of the anticipated rise in the value of land which was likely to occur once the Mandate was granted.⁸² A few months later, another proposal was forwarded to London. This time it was an application by a private engineering company to carry out a project to the improve and develop Haifa's port.⁸³ Both proposals were refused and the Foreign Office, directed by Curzon, made it clear that, until the future status of Palestine was determined by the Peace Conference, there was no intention to undertake any permanent work at the port.⁸⁴

Nevertheless, the Military Authorities tried to advance the matter. In August 1919, the War Office delivered to the Foreign Office requests, submitted by Allenby and Major General Money, to be permitted to make a preliminary study of the question of port construction in Haifa in preparation for its future development in the event of the British Government accepting the Mandate for Palestine. Money, who described the development plans submitted by various engineering companies, argued that it was feared by local commercial elements that, if the future development of the port was not sanctioned without delay on the open market, these and other projects of vital importance to the country might, for political reasons, fall without competition into the hands of Zionist syndicates which would exploit them to the disadvantage of indigenous interests.⁸⁵

Views at the Foreign Office were contradictory. Scott was inclined to grant the request and argued that, as Zionist experts had been allowed to engage in research to prepare the country for immigration, the details of the suggested scheme might as well be worked out either independently or in conjunction with them. The readiness of Haifa's port to cope with greatly-

increased traffic in the near future, he believed, was essential to the Zionist scheme. Peterson and Clark-Kerr, although believing that the proposed project was one in which the government was bound to give preference to the Zionists, suggested that the issue should be considered in the light of Balfour's statements of 2 April and 21 May 1919 – which expressed the policy of the British Peace Conference Delegation regarding previous questions – and based on the article of the draft Mandate which provided, in principle, that preference should be given to the Zionist Council.⁸⁶

To remove any doubt, the question about whether that article was indeed a statement of policy to be carried out regarding issues like the development of Haifa's port was directed again to Paris. The Peace Conference Delegation's reply was in the affirmative. It confirmed that, indeed, that was the policy that should be followed.⁸⁷ Accordingly, a draft reply was prepared at the Foreign Office which referred the Army Council to Balfour's statements and explained that, in view of the policy laid out in those statements, Curzon did not consider it possible to take any action at the time. However, it was added that, at the same time, Lord Curzon did not consider that any undertaking given to the Zionists would debar the future Mandatory Government of Palestine from entrusting undertakings of this nature to non-Jewish firms.⁸⁸

This last reservation reflected Curzon's protest at the rejection of British companies' proposals for development projects in Palestine and the policy of preferential treatment for the Zionists, expressed, as noted above, in his minutes. The specific issue of the development of the port at Haifa was, in Curzon's opinion, within the functions of the Mandatory and the British Government was not bound to give preference, in this instance, to the Zionists as part of their obligation to support a National Home for the Jewish people.⁸⁹

Curzon was not satisfied with merely mentioning his reservations, as suggested in the Delegation's draft reply. He saw to it that the policy of granting preferences to the Zionists did not come into effect in the form of instructions to the Military Authorities. Instead of the suggested reply to the Army Council, mentioned above, a new reply was prepared. This did not bring the clear-cut political views of the Peace Conference Delegation to the attention of the relevant Authorities but was summed up in a short despatch informing the Army Council that, on political grounds, Curzon considered that the suggested preliminary study of port construction in Haifa should not be carried out until the final settlement of the future of Palestine was announced.⁹⁰

Both versions – Balfour's and Curzon's – were brought to the attention of the Zionists. Curzon's version had been given to them already in February 1919. In reply to a letter by Weizmann concerning the granting of

concessions for public works in Palestine it was explained that it was the general policy of the British Government, quite apart from the proposals laid out by Weizmann, that no concessions in occupied enemy territory should be granted until such time as the Peace Conference had decided on the ultimate disposal of such territory and that, consequently, the concessions mentioned by Weizmann would not be granted for the time being.⁹¹ Balfour's version was included in Mallet's letter to Weizmann of 1 July 1919, in which he assured the latter that precautions had been adopted so that no steps would be taken which would enable commercial interests, whether British or foreign, to establish themselves in Palestine or obtain control over land or industries until the decision of the Peace Conference enabled the British Government to work out the full implications of their acceptance of a mandate for Palestine and of the policy of a National Home for the Jews.⁹²

This was the version on which the Zionists based their claims in the following days. Thus, for instance, they cited it in their protest against reopening the land registries and when they were informed that an Egyptian company was to take over all Government stores of the Customs House Service and practically run the whole storage and transport of the Custom Service.⁹³ This version also gave the Zionists an excuse for submitting proposals which, if accepted, would implement the principle of preferential treatment for Jews even under the Military Administration and so pave the way for the Mandate period.

In the year 1918, most of the Zionist Commission's efforts to further its objectives in Palestine had been restrained by the Military Authorities, which had concluded that only once the Mandate was formulated would they be given instructions about the policy to be carried out. In spite of that, and although most of the energy of the Zionists was directed, in 1919, towards matters of principle, to political activities concerning the Peace Conference and to re-formulating the Zionist proposals which they hoped would be incorporated in the terms of Mandate,⁹⁴ the Zionists were still trying to achieve their economic and political objectives in Palestine, in order to establish the foundations of the National Home.

On 18 June 1919, Weizmann had meetings in Paris with Louis Mallet, Lord Eustace Percy and Robert Vansittart, all members of the British Delegation to the Peace Conference, in which the desirability of starting practical work in Palestine pending the Mandate was discussed. Following these meetings, Weizmann sent Mallet a letter in which he summed up the Zionists' requests which could, in his opinion, be accepted even under

Military Administration without necessitating any detour from the *status quo* policy. The requests were that the Zionist Commission should be allowed to acquire:

1. The acquisition of the Jaffa-Jerusalem Railway;
2. The acquisition of the German colonies and town settlements in Palestine;
3. The acquisition of and the Augusta Victoria Hospice on the Mount of Olives for the temporary housing of the Hebrew University;
4. Permission to enter and settle in the country for Jews who would be guaranteed by the Zionist Organisation as economically sound and willing and capable of assisting the development of the country. There was a call for:
5. The transfer to the Zionist Organisation of waste or unoccupied lands that could be put under plough, particularly in order to settle the demobilised Jewish soldiers in Palestine;
6. The establishment of a shipping line principally for the transport of necessary building material to Palestine and
7. The acquisition of certain small concessions required for public utilities – for example, telephone, radio-telegraph and water power of the Audja in order to generate electric power.

Weizmann claimed that, if those requests were granted, it would improve the economic conditions of the whole population of the country and thus contribute more than anything else towards the establishment of good relations between Jews and Arabs and stop any artificial agitation against Zionism that might be still prevalent.⁹⁵

In this letter and in a meeting with Balfour, Weizmann expressed his readiness to proceed to Palestine in order to further these requests. Moreover, he received a letter of recommendation from Balfour to the Military Authorities in Palestine, suggesting that any assistance be given towards solving immediate questions which could be quietly carried out by the Military Authorities on the spot.⁹⁶ A few days later, Weizmann received a reply from Louis Mallet which included an interpretation of the required preparations for the Mandate and the laying of foundations for the Jewish National Home in the eyes of those who took into consideration the obligation involved its establishment and accepted the principle of economic preference for the Zionists.

Mallet responded in the affirmative to the request for Jews to enter and settle in Palestine, only if that permission were granted to a few 'of the best sort' of Jewish immigrants who were ready to purchase land at good prices

from Arabs who were willing to sell. He also agreed that if there were any waste lands available, on which settlement of demobilised soldiers could begin unostentatiously, it would be very desirable. However, he wrote that Balfour doubted whether the acquisition of the Jaffa-Jerusalem railway, which was French property, was possible in view of the sensitivity of Anglo-French relations pending the Mandate; German properties, also, could not be expropriated as long as the country was under military occupation. Nevertheless, as regards the Augusta Victoria Hospice, he thought that an arrangement might possibly be made for its provisional use by the Zionists as a temporary university building. Mallet made it clear that the Military Authorities did not have legal power to grant permanent concessions to the Zionist Organisation but reported to the Zionists, as mentioned above, that precautions had been adopted to stop commercial interests, whether British or foreign, from establishing in Palestine until the British Government could work out the full implications of their acceptance of the Mandate for Palestine and the policy of a National Home for the Jews. As a matter of fact, Mallet concluded his letter to Weizmann:

When I enquired of you the other day whether some small practical work could be begun, it was with a view to make your own position easier with your fellow Zionists, and I was really thinking more of the necessary preparation in the way of providing houses or at any rate provisional shelter for the first arrivals, of settling beforehand in what regions the early immigrants would be placed, and of the necessary organisation for the distribution of food than of concessions, but it is useful that these questions should all be discussed and I much hope that there will be some good result.⁹⁷

Major General H.D. Watson, who had just assumed office as Chief Administrator, Colonel Waters Taylor, Chief of Staff, and Colonel French, the acting Chief Political Officer, opposed, in principle, any attempt to expedite the process of realising the National Home in view of the resistance of the Arab population. In their opinion, it was not an 'artificial agitation that may still be prevalent', as Weizmann had characterised it, but feelings derived from national sentiments, and they argued that any acceleration of the process would necessitate the use of force and would not achieve its purpose. As to Weizmann's requests, the three of them were against Zionists taking control of the railways and other means of communication from the hands of the Administration, as well as the granting of concessions for public services to the Zionists. Watson and French demanded that, for military, administrative and economic reasons, all means of communication be kept in the hands of

the Administration while Waters Taylor opposed the idea in principle claiming that 'it is contrary to modern socialistic legislation ... to hand over the railways to a community, all the trend being towards nationalisation and state control'. All three were against Zionist acquisition of German properties in Palestine which were being used by the Administration, especially the most impressive of them, the Augusta Victoria Hospice. They also warned against giving special treatment to demobilised Jewish soldiers while British and Australian soldiers who had conquered the country were denied. As to Jewish immigration, Waters Taylor was aware that a National Home presupposed and entailed immigrants but, in view of the attitude of the Arab population, he suggested that its implementation be carried out slowly and that statistics of the present population in proportion to acreage, which had been compiled by the Administration, be produced. Regarding Jewish settlement, Watson argued that, even if the prohibition of land transactions was lifted, the Zionists should not receive preferential treatment since any development carried out by them was not for the benefit of the whole population but only for the foreign Jews. Furthermore, he pointed out that the Syrian-Arabs, a most active community in the field of economics, claimed that they were able to invest capital in the development of the country and that no preference should be given to foreign capitalists. He suggested, therefore, that any transfer of uninhabited Crown lands surrounding Jewish settlements should be minimal.⁹⁸

When a report by Watson concerning Arab opposition being organised in Jerusalem arrived at the Foreign Office, Peterson concluded that this dispatch was a warning that, to accord official privileges of any kind – political, economic or concerning immigration – to the Zionists would lead to serious troubles in Palestine. In his opinion, the British Government could not, at this stage, refuse to give the Zionists privileges of the second and third kind but they must surely be careful to prevent them from having any direct share in the administration.⁹⁹

However, when Weizmann went to Palestine in October 1919, he found there an ally in Colonel Meinertzhagen, the new Chief Political Officer. Meinertzhagen believed, like Weizmann, that Arab antagonism towards Zionism was largely artificial and was not derived from sincere nationalist sentiment. He also sent an official report to Curzon detailing Zionist requests to lease or acquire German properties, construct factories and hotels and open a large store. He requested permission to introduce skilled workmen to Palestine for the above schemes and, in particular, the opening of land registries on a limited scale. He stated:

Industrial and agricultural progress is impossible under the laws and usages of war, the influx of capital is checked owing to uncertainty in

the future, and general stagnation is writ large on the face Palestine and the Zionist cause. We cannot stand by indefinitely and see Palestine rotting, more especially when the obstruction is the Allies' delay in settling peace with Turkey.¹⁰⁰

As mentioned above, Meinertzhagen believed that the Zionists represented the only organisation which could institute progress and undertake preparatory measures for building up a national home and for easing the general economic situation. However, as mentioned above, his request was refused, since all his recommendations were tied up with the issue of opening the land registries to which the Foreign Office was determinedly opposed.

Nevertheless, some change of policy did take place. In the meantime, Weizmann had found his way to the Military Authorities and the problem of taking over the leases of German properties was temporarily solved; he also managed to receive Allenby's support for other development schemes he proposed. When the decision regarding a partial opening of land registers was made, the Foreign Office also dropped its disapproval of the rest of Meinertzhagen's recommendations, while asking that it be made clear to the Zionists that all leasing arrangements were temporary and that the future of the German properties was to be determined in the peace agreement with Turkey. The Foreign Office also promised to consider Weizmann's other development proposals.¹⁰¹

Having accomplished his mission in Palestine, Weizmann submitted a report to Curzon regarding the Zionist Committee's work as well as his proposals for immigration and settlement, land acquisitions and public works.¹⁰² The proposals were supported by Meinertzhagen but rejected by Allenby.

Meinertzhagen, once more, endorsed Weizmann's assessment that the causes of Arab hostility towards Zionism and Jews in general was based on vested interests rather than on deep national feeling and that the only factors which could raise Palestine from stagnation to activity were 'labour, energy and science'. He stated that there were vast areas of waste and uncultivated lands in the country and that problems caused by claimants for tenancy of the land – who appeared whenever a scheme to settle uncultivated lands was suggested – could be solved by speeding up the cadastral survey, opening the land registries and implementing a policy of preferential treatment towards the Zionist Commission when permitting settlement in state lands. Furthermore, he urged that the existing immigration regulations should be changed in order to enable immigration of more skilled Jewish manpower which was needed for the country's development.¹⁰³

Allenby, although having supplied Weizmann with a letter of appreciation addressed to the Prime Minister,¹⁰⁴ disagreed with Weizmann's and Meinertzhagen's assessments. He argued that, however artificial the origin of Arab opposition might be, the antagonism of the Arabs towards the Zionists and their fears of expropriation following an influx of Jewish immigration were strong and it would be difficult to overcome their opposition. It was true, he admitted, that there were vast areas of waste and uncultivated state lands but experience had shown that an owner or tenant invariably appeared when any question of tenancy of land arose and, until a survey had been completed, it was difficult to express any opinion on the possibility of transferring these lands to the Zionists. As to the planning of public works, Allenby stated that the Military Authorities were already engaged in preparing a programme of works to be undertaken after the signing of peace. As to Weizmann's immediate proposals, Allenby considered that the best course was to await the arrival in Palestine of Sir Herbert L. Samuel – of whose appointment he was notified by the Foreign Office on 29 April 1920 – who would doubtless be furnished with full instructions on giving effect to the policy to which the British Government was committed, and the Military Authorities were consulted. Having said this, however, Allenby expressed his opinion that some time must elapse before it would be possible to relax the restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine or to embark on any comprehensive programme of taxation and reform of the administration and other measures regarded as essential by the Zionists. Progress, he argued, must be very gradual even after the conclusion of peace with Turkey, and great caution would have to be exercised if a repetition of the events when Arab-Muslims attacked and killed Christian and Jewish inhabitants occurring in Jerusalem at the beginning of April 1920 were to be avoided.¹⁰⁵

'Lord Allenby would obviously like to drop the whole Zionist Policy', O. A. Scott commented in a minute, 'but we cannot and should not do so and we must follow it through now'. And Hardinge added: 'The Military Authorities in Palestine are anti-Zionists in sentiment, though they may try to conform to British policy'. Curzon concluded: 'Lord Allenby is ending very sore'.¹⁰⁶

As to Weizmann's specific proposals, there was a tendency at the Foreign Office to grant some of the requests but with one exception. D. G. Osborne thought that, at a stage when the British were apparently 'de-Zionising the mandate' (i. e. trying to decrease the Zionist features of the Mandate), there seemed to be little reason to allow the Zionists to embark on the proposed large undertakings.¹⁰⁷

Zionist efforts in other fields were no more successful. There was, for instance, the question of the mission of the Jewish battalions, which was repeatedly raised in 1919. This involved the idea of having a Jewish battalion to pave the way for a Jewish National Home which had already been fought for by Jabotinsky before the Balfour Declaration. The concept was realised in 1918 by three battalions which were enlisted in England, America and Palestine and which became one of the most obvious features of the yearned-for Jewish statehood. For that same reason, they were regarded as a nuisance by the Military Authorities in Palestine.

The tension that arose from this development became acute in April 1920 when Samuel Landman, Secretary of the Political Department of the Zionist Bureau in London, warned, in a meeting which took place at the Foreign Office, that the Arabs were preparing to make trouble and secretly arming. He suggested that the strength of the Jewish troops in Palestine be increased.¹⁰⁸ Only a few days earlier, the Foreign Office had received reports from Palestine about a confrontation between the Chief Administrator and the Zionist Commission and the Provisional Committee of the *Yishuv*, concerning the Chief Administrator's order to place the Old City of Jerusalem out of bounds to Jewish troops during the holiday season; intelligence reports were also received from Haifa that the Jewish Battalion posted there was becoming troublesome and provocative; it was removed from the town. Therefore, Landmann's request and the Chief Administrator's correspondence both to Balfour and the War Office requested the opinion of the Army Council.¹⁰⁹ The latter did not consider the fighting value of the Jewish units such as to warrant their use to replace British troops and suggested that the views of General Allenby should be sought before any decision was made.¹¹⁰

Allenby was strongly opposed to any increase of Jewish troops in Palestine. It would, he wrote in June 1919, be interpreted as preparation to enforce the claim of the Jewish minority on the rest of the population and would greatly increase the distrust of Zionists among the non-Jewish population. He pointed out that there had already been incidents between Jewish soldiers and non-Jewish inhabitants, especially Muslims, and an increase in the number of Jewish troops would certainly lead to riots and widespread trouble with the Arabs.¹¹¹ Having received Allenby's telegram, Forbes Adam, of the Peace Conference Delegation, commented in a minute: 'One day, however, the claim of the Jewish minority may have to be enforced on the Arab population, if the policy of the National home is fulfilled and Jewish immigration is begun against the wishes of the majority of the present inhabitants of Palestine. But British and not Jewish troops will have then to do the "enforcing".'¹¹²

The Zionists, in the meantime, did not stand idly by. In May 1919, the Zionist Bureau in London and the Advisory Committee prepared a memorandum on the raising of units of Jewish soldiers for service in Palestine. In the following weeks, Weizmann tried hard to enlist the support of the Director of Military Intelligence and the British Delegation to the Peace Conference. The Zionists stated that, obviously, once the Mandate for Palestine was granted, the British Government would have to face a dilemma: on the one hand, the Government would have to keep a strong militia in Palestine for some years after the political settlement had been reached while, on the other hand, it would be in the interests of the Government to reduce the number of British troops in the Middle East. Therefore, the Zionist Organisation was ready to offer a substitute. Its solution was to enlist thousands of young Jews from Russia, Galicia, Poland, Romania and the Caucasus mountains, who had served in their countries' armies during the War and were suitable both for service in the militia and the pioneering work of preparing for the expected Jewish immigration.¹¹³

Balfour's standpoint was unequivocal:

... if and when the question of a mandate and the mandatory are settled and the time has come to begin Jewish immigration into Palestine, the selection of suitable immigrants will doubtless be left largely to appropriate Jewish control agencies working in consultation with the mandatory, and that *prima facie* young immigrants suitable for pioneer work, particularly of an agricultural nature, would be most desirable, but that the questions of the constitution of a militia for Palestine and whether and, if so, in what numbers Jewish immigrants should be enrolled, cannot be settled even in principle at present and must eventually be a matter for the decision of the military authorities of the mandatory.¹¹⁴

Curzon could not hide his satisfaction: 'I heartily concur', he wrote.¹¹⁵

Another Zionist effort was directed at planning future development schemes. At the beginning of July, Herbert Samuel, the Chairman of the Zionist Advisory Committee on the Economic Development of Palestine, asked the British Peace Delegation in Paris whether the Government would approve the Committee appointing technical experts to visit Palestine in order to examine various schemes of irrigation and the provision of electricity through waterpower which had been suggested for adoption in Palestine. He explained that the question of water supply would become one of urgency as soon as the country was open for immigration and that it was desirable that action should be taken as quickly as possible.¹¹⁶ The Peace

Delegation had no objection but told Samuel that, since it was an executive matter, it should be dealt by the Foreign Office.¹¹⁷ The Foreign Office advised Samuel that any expert investigations conducted officially on behalf of the Zionist Organisation, pending the signing and publishing of the terms of the Mandate, would stimulate anti-Zionist propaganda and lead to exaggerated rumours about the ultimate settlement of the country.¹¹⁸

At this point, Weizmann intervened and pointed out to the Foreign Office that there was no wish to ask for an 'official' commission of experts but for experts to proceed as individuals to Palestine. Furthermore, Weizmann approached Balfour and widened the scope of the Zionist request: he proposed that permission be granted to engineering, agricultural and commercial experts, as well as certain individuals who represented industrial and financial groups, to enter Palestine and prepare plans for its future development. He explained that such investigations would speed up the absorption of increased immigration, expected after the Mandate was granted.¹¹⁹ Weizmann's approach bore fruit. Balfour referred the matter to Curzon and suggested that Allenby be consulted. The Foreign Office referred it to Colonel French, who had replaced Clayton as Chief Political Officer in Palestine, stating that, since the Peace Delegation had no objection, there was no point in preventing experts from proceeding to Palestine pending the final decisions of the Peace Conference. Therefore, the Foreign Office, with Clayton's concurrence, suggested that missions of experts be allowed to enter Palestine on condition that they had no official character.¹²⁰ Having received French's agreement, the Foreign Office advised Weizmann that there would be no objection to the suggested despatch of technical experts and that facilities for their investigation would be provided. However, the number of experts should be kept as low as possible, they should work in small groups only and their investigations would not be carried out officially on behalf of the Zionist Organisation.¹²¹

The Zionist leadership, both in Palestine and in London, attributed the scant achievements under Military Administration to the lack of understanding and readiness of the Administration to grasp the pro-Zionist policy embodied in the Balfour Declaration. Accusations to that effect appeared repeatedly in their complaints to the Foreign Office in London throughout the period.

At the end of this period, they found a supporter in Colonel Meinertzhagen who, once again, became vocal in his support of Zionists. In response to the Arab riots which broke out in Palestine in April 1920,

Meinertzhagen sent a message to Curzon in which he strongly criticised the Military Administration and accused them of being responsible for the consequences of the riots. Meinertzhagen argued that the officers of the Administration were, almost without exception, anti-Zionist in their views and were encouraging the Arabs. 'Zionism is being brought into the world as a discontented child, accustomed only to troubles and disappointments,' he wrote. In his opinion, that was the reason the Jews mistrusted the British Administration and believed it reflected the policy of Whitehall while the Arabs were encouraged and believed that, by acts of violence, they could sabotage Zionism.¹²²

Allenby, who was enraged by Meinertzhagen's accusations, which were despatched directly to Curzon, rejected them altogether and his reply elaborated on the principles according to which the Administration under his command was functioning. According to his despatch to Curzon of 15 April, British Government policy had been loyally executed by his officers during the period of British military occupation and, despite the difficult situation in a land of mixed races, varying creeds and extreme views, the strictest impartiality towards all religions and nationalities had been maintained. In his opinion, the Zionists' complaint that they had not been treated fairly was groundless for, although the Laws and Usages of War had necessarily been the Military Administration's guide, the Zionist Commission had been given every possible facility.¹²³ In a further despatch to Curzon, Allenby added a warning that any attempt to press the extreme claims advocated by Zionists at that stage would result in wholesale disorder in Palestine.²⁴

Meinertzhagen's criticism led, in the end, to his dismissal at Allenby's demand and caused a serious discussion about the division of power between the Foreign Office and War Office. Following the Allenby-Meinertzhagen dispute, an inter-departmental Committee was set up to discuss the matter. In its conclusion, the Committee, which met on 19 April 1920, pointed out that the root of the difficulty lay in the fact that different interpretations were being placed by involved individuals on the Zionist policy of the British Government. Colonel Meinertzhagen, who had been at the Peace Conference in Paris and was an ardent Zionist, did not see eye-to-eye with General Bols or, rather, with the officers of his Administration who concurred that it was essential for a definite interpretation of the Balfour Declaration to be laid down by the Government and communicated to Lord Allenby, to Faisal and to the Zionists themselves. However, Hubert Young, who represented the Foreign Office at the meeting, commented ironically in a minute the following day: 'Only one point remains to be cleared up, and that is the most important. Is it possible for us to define exactly what our Zionist policy is and to inform all concerned?'¹²⁵

The lack of confidence of the Zionists in the Military Administration and the Zionist method of dealing with problems, not within the framework of formal relations between the Zionist Commission and the Administration but by transferring the focal point of activities and policy-making to London and Paris, also led to a protest by the Military Authorities. The latter saw the transfer of consideration of problems to authorities outside Palestine as an act of sabotage against the local administration and, once again, they brought up the question of the status and authority of the Zionist Commission.

In August 1919, having received the instructions of 4 August which were meant to guide the Military Authorities on how to inform the population of Palestine of the Government's policy, Colonel French thought that the time had come to define the status and functions of the Zionist Commission more exactly so as to be in accord with those of the proposed Advisory Council or whatever body would be allowed to assist the future government under the British Mandate. In a paper presented to Watson, the Chief Administrator, French summed up the functions of the Zionist Commission as defined at its formation in January 1918 and again in November 1918, when an attempt was made to re-define it and widen its authority. He also dealt with its difficulties under the British Administration. He described how the Commission referred questions to the European Zionist Organisation and to London, while going behind the back of the Military Administration and thus causing friction between the Administration and the Zionists and he ascribed this to the weakening and loss of prestige of the Zionist Commission after Weizmann's departure in the autumn of 1918. Furthermore, French pointed out the gap between the Zionists' and the Authorities' attitudes to the methods of carrying out the policy of a Jewish National Home. According to the Zionists, he wrote, the policy could be executed comparatively quickly by introducing Jewish capital, permitting considerable immigration, allaying artificially-created distrust of the non-Jewish population by an immediate improvement in economic conditions and facing the Arabs with a *fait accompli* against which they would be unlikely to struggle. On the other hand, the Authorities believed that the policy of 'making the country a National Home for the Jews' must be carried out patiently and by gradually allaying the genuine and deep-seated dislike and fear of Zionism on the part of the Arabs. French proposed that, whichever method was adopted, the Government should explain it to all concerned. He also recommended that the Zionist Commission be abolished and a Jewish Advisory Council be created with more influential personnel. According to him, the mere abolition of the title 'Zionist Commission' would go far towards changing the attitude of the population, while a more truly representative and stronger body – which would not feel the need to constantly refer to the European

Zionist Organisation but would regard itself as truly Palestinian – would, in all probability, co-operate with far less friction with the Administration. In the meantime, French thought that it should be proposed to the Foreign Office that the Zionist Commission, so long as it continued, should be instructed not to refer any question to the Zionist Organisation in Europe unless and until it failed to get satisfaction from the Administration and the Commander-in-Chief.¹²⁶

Watson concurred with French's analysis and the conclusion that it was preferable for the Zionist Commission to be formed of men with complete authority in the Zionist Organisation. This would not only save the constant references to the Head Organisation in England but such men would understand the many difficulties of the administration. However, Watson disagreed with the suggestion of replacing the title 'Zionist Commission' with 'Jewish Advisory Council', since the latter would, at once, play a large part in the actual administration and would create a greater sense of tension among the rest of the population. Instead, he suggested that, when the Civil Administration was established, an advisory council of the various communities be formed or, better still, one advisory council with representatives from all groups.¹²⁷

In other words, French accepted the principle of a Zionist representative body to realise the idea of a National Home and tried to further co-ordination between this body and the Administration, as well as bridging the gap between their conflicting interpretations or even bring the Zionists to bend to the interpretation of the Administration. In this context, Watson went further and anticipated the abolition of the exclusivity of Zionist representation altogether. In his opinion, it was justifiable to grant the Zionists, when in contact with the Administration, the status of representation of one of the various communities. He believed that it should not be a body whose aim was the implementation of the idea of a Jewish National Home.

The suggestion that the Zionist Commission be abolished was raised once more about eight months' later. This time, it was for different reasons and in a different manner. Following the riots of Nebi Musa in April 1920 and the attack by Jewish troops on the *Mufti's* house, Bols, the Chief Administrator, accepted an Arab demand that the Zionist Commission be removed from the country and suggested that the Zionist Commission be replaced by a so-called Zionist Advising Council of three, which would function directly under his control.¹²⁸

In a long, detailed and well-supported argument, Bols stated that the Zionist Commission was trying to establish an 'Administration within an Administration' by building a large administrative mechanism. Bols argued

that this mechanism, comprised of one hundred individuals, was dealing with the self-same administrative questions and problems as the Military Administration and, in its dealings with the Authorities, was demanding privileges rather than impartiality. Furthermore, in Jerusalem, where the Jews were in the majority, they were not satisfied with military protection but demanded to take the law into their own hands: they had instituted a complete judicial system within the country (Hebrew: *Mishpat Ha'Shalom*) which was contradictory to the principle of one system of courts for all. They insisted that recruitment of Jews to the police and gendarmerie forces must pass through their hands; they were running their own medical service, keeping a separate and intolerant educational system and were planning public works and schemes for the future development of the country, overlapping those of the Administration. Bols' assessment was that, although those 'partisans ... officially claim nothing more than a National Home ... in reality [they] will be satisfied with nothing less than a Jewish State and all that it politically implies'. If it was decided to allow the continuance of the Zionist Commission's activities, Bols warned, then the Government must be prepared to face opposition and strengthen the forces necessary to crush it. However, if it was announced that the Balfour Declaration meant that Britain would administer the country with impartiality both politically and economically then no opposition should be expected. Bols believed that, in that case, the declared formation of a Jewish National Home would be facilitated and the Zionist members, who would be admitted to 'his' Administration once the Zionist Commission's technical mechanism was dismantled, could assist this under 'him' and not in opposition to the Muslim and Christian elements.¹²⁹

The investigation committee into the disturbances of April 1920 endorsed Bols' analysis. The committee regarded the attempt to increase the authority of the Zionist Commission in November 1918 as proof that the Zionist Commission had lost its patience with regard to the *status quo* policy. It dealt with the Commission's tendency to put pressure on the Military Administration by referring problems to Zionists in London who had access to the Government, mentioning in that context the efforts made to open the land registries to enable land transactions, the protest in the matter of the Customs House Service stores and, in particular, the veto on giving loans to farmers. The investigation committee quoted at length Bols' arguments against setting up 'an Administration within an Administration' and reached the conclusion that the Zionist Commission, being impatient and trying to force its will on the Administration, was responsible for the crisis. However, it did not clear of charge the Government in London who, by their intervention, hindered the Military Authorities in executing their policy.¹³⁰

At the Foreign Office, there was general agreement. A. O. Scott, who concurred with most of Bols' assessments, agreed that it was impossible for two administrations, one official and one Zionist, to work side by side. He also expressed his wish that, when the Civil Administration was set up, the Zionist Commission would disappear and its place be taken by a council which would work not independently but in close touch with the Administration. Osborne concurred as well and emphasised that, in his opinion, the Council should be a mixed one, representing Jews and Arabs alike, with advisory and not administrative functions.¹³¹

Allenby, to whom Bols' paper was addressed, replied that he was not prepared to entertain the idea of the removal of or any change to the Zionist Commission and that a Zionist Advisory Council could not be formed under a military administration.¹³² However, in a message sent to the Foreign Office, he explained that he dissociated himself from Bols' suggestions, since the effect would undoubtedly be to weaken the belief in the intentions of the British Government concerning Zionist aspirations.¹³³ The Foreign Office agreed with Allenby.¹³⁴ Two months later, in reply to the Army Council, the Foreign Office explained that, in view of the decision taken by the Zionist Executive to reorganise the structure of the Zionist Commission, there was no intention to take any action.¹³⁵ Taking into account Samuels' nomination as High Commissioner to Palestine and the change of Administration expected three weeks later, the Foreign Office presumably preferred to sit and wait.

Notes

1. See above pp.40-2. and note 36 *ibid*.
2. See above p.44 and note 48 *ibid*.
3. See above p.45 and note 52 *ibid*.
4. C. Weizmann to A.J. Balfour, 30 May 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3395, F. 11053, No. 123475 (WL, VIII, No. 208).
5. O.E.T.A. Standing Orders (Jerusalem, 1918) Nos 75–6 (pp. 131–3); J. Thon to the Zionist Commission, 23 April 1918, C.Z.A., L4/39; Report by Ben Atar, May 1918, C.Z.A., Z4/106/39.
6. Minutes of meetings of the Zionist Commission on 7 April 1918, 13 April 1918, 21 April 1918, 23 April 1918, 29 April 1918, 16 May 1918, C.Z.A., Z4/483; Leon Simon, Diary, 6 May 1918–15 April 1918, J.N.U.L., Ahad Ha'am Archive, 1890; Aaronsohn Diary, pp. 394–422 [Hebrew]; WL, VIII, Nos 165,168, 208; memorandum enclosed with C. Weizmann to A.J. Balfour, 30 May 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3395, F. 11053, No. 123475.
7. C. Weizmann to A.J. Balfour, 30 May 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3395, F. 11053, No. 123475 (WL, VIII, No. 208).
8. G. Clayton to A.J. Balfour, 16 June 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3395, F. 11053, No. 130342.

9. A.J. Balfour to C. Weizmann, 28 July 1918, C.Z.A. Z4/16018; see also Balfour's response to Weizmann's letter of 30 May 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3395, F. 11053, No. 125475.
10. D. Barzilai-Yegar (Ed.) S. Tolkowsky, *Zionist Political Diary, London 1915–1919* [Hebrew] (Hassifriya Hazionit: Jerusalem, 1981).
11. G. Clayton to C. Weizmann, 9 April 1918, W.A.
12. G. Clayton to A.J. Balfour, 18 April 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3394, F. 11053, No. 85908; G. Clayton to A.J. Balfour, 16 June 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3395, F. 11053, No. 130342; C. Weizmann to N. Sokolow, 18 April 1918, C.Z.A., Z4/108/39 (WL, VIII, No. 165).
13. G. Clayton to W. Ormsby Gore, 20 June 1918, W.A.
14. A.J. Balfour to C. Weizmann, 28 July 1918, C.Z.A. Z4/16018; see also Balfour's response to Weizmann's letter of 30 May 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3395, F. 11053, No. 125475.
15. C. Weizmann to W. Ormsby Gore, 1 May 1918, C.Z.A., L3/285 (WL, VIII, No. 185).
16. C. Weizmann to A.J. Balfour, 30 May 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3395, F. 11053, No. 123475 (WL, VIII, No. 208).
17. G. Clayton to A.J. Balfour, 16 June 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3395, F. 11053, No. 130342.
18. R. Storrs to M. Sykes, 9 August 1918, Sykes Archive, P.R.O., F.O. 800/221; minutes of meetings of the Zionist Commission on 29 April 1918, 16 May 1918, C.Z.A., Z4/483.
19. A.J. Balfour to C. Weizmann, 28 July 1918, C.Z.A. Z4/16018; see also Balfour's response to Weizmann's letter of 30 May 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3395, F. 11053, No. 125475.
20. R. Graham to the Treasury, 23 January 1918, and the Treasury's response, P.R.O., F.O.371/3380, F. 68, Nos 11994, 15237, 25108.
21. C. Weizmann to R. Graham, 17 December 1917, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3054, F. 84173, No. 239129; C. Weizmann to R. Graham, 23 January 1918 (and enclosed memorandum, 23 January 1918), 27 January 1918, P.R.O., F.O.371/3380, F. 68, Nos 15237, 18029; C. Weizmann to R. Graham, 27 January 1928, *ibid.*(WL, VIII, Nos 34, 78, 82).
22. E.Z. Hoofein to Jewish Colonial Trust, 3 February 1918, C.Z.A. A34/15; C. Weizmann to C. French, 8 February 1918, W.A. (WL, VIII, No. 97); correspondence between the Jewish Colonial Trust, the War Office and the Headquarters in Egypt, March 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3380, F. 68, No. 45602.
23. The Anglo-Palestine Company, Jaffa, to the Zionist Commission, 4 July 1918, C.Z.A L4/3.
24. The Financial Adviser's Report, 24 January 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3380, F. 68, No.37984.
25. The Anglo-Palestine Company's proposal and the correspondence between the War Office, The Treasury and W. Ormsby Gore, 25 February 1918–19 April 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3380, F. 68, Nos 37984, 43117, 69994.
26. See minutes by R. Graham and M. Sykes, *ibid.*
27. Minutes of a meeting of the Zionist Commission for Palestine on 14 March 1918; A. Money to W. Ormsby Gore, 20 April 1918; G. Clayton to W. Ormsby Gore, 20 April 1918, 21 April 1918, C.Z.A. Z4/483.
28. WL, VIII, Nos 165, 173, 203 and the notes *ibid.*
29. See Chapter 3, p.63; see also note 91 in Chapter 5, p.175.
30. Leon Simon, Diary, 17 May 1918–20 May 1918, J.N.U.L., Ahad Ha'am Archive, 1890.
31. *Ibid.*; C. Weizmann to W. Ormsby Gore, 26 May 1918, and enclosed memorandum, C.Z.A. L4/81 (WL, VIII, No. 205).
32. A. Money to W. Ormsby Gore, 9 June 1918, C.Z.A. L4/11.
33. Memorandum by W. Ormsby Gore, 19 May 1918, Clayton Archive, London; G. Clayton to A.J. Balfour, 16 June 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3395, F. 11053, No. 130342.

34. D. Barzilay, Introduction, WL, VIII, pp. xvii–xxix.
35. C. Weizmann to Wally, 11 October 1918, C.Z.A. Z4/15001 (WL, VIII, No. 280); T. Wilson (ed.), *The Political Diaries of C.P. Scott, 1911–1918* (London, 1970), pp. 360–1.
36. ‘Proposals submitted by the Zionist Organisation to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs regarding matters affecting the Jewish population of Palestine during the military occupation of that country’, enclosed with C. Weizmann to R. Cecil, 1 November 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3395, F. 11053, No. 182887 (WL, IX, APPENDIX I. pp. 389–90). See Chapter 2, p.41.
37. G. Clayton to F.O., 20 November 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3395, F. 11053, No. 191998; in reply to F.O. to G. Clayton, 9 November 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3395, F. 11053, No. 182887.
38. Minutes by A. G. Forbes Adam, 21 November 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3395, F. 11053, No. 191998.
39. See above pp.72-5 and below p.175.
40. I. M. Sieff to M. Sykes, 8 February 1919, and enclosed memorandum ‘Statement on the internal Jewish situation in Palestine’, P.R.O., F.O. 608/99, No. 1802.
41. M. Sykes to G. Curzon, 8 February 1919, *ibid.*
42. J.A.C. Tilley to C. Weizmann, 8 March 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/99, No. 3832; see also F.O. on behalf G. Curzon to A.J. Balfour, 7 March 1919, *ibid.*
43. See, for instance, G. Clayton to W. Ormsby Gore, 20 April 1918, C.Z.A. Z4/483, in response to minutes of meetings of the Zionist Commission for Palestine, on 5 April 1918, 7 April 1918, *ibid.*; C. Weizmann to Ormsby Gore, 21 April 1918, C.Z.A. L3/285 (WL,VIII, No. 169).
44. *The Daily Malta Chronicle*, 23–24 January 1919 (Extracts in C.Z.A. A36/113).
45. S. Landman to C. Hardinge, 5 February 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4167, F.801, No. 20724.
46. Minutes by C.P. Scott, 11 February 1919, G.J. Kidston, 12 February 1919, G. Curzon, 13 February 1919, *ibid.*; J.A.C. Tilley to S. Landman, 19 February 1919, *ibid.*
47. G.H. Nutting to F.O., 13 March 1917, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4213, F.37389, No. 41163.
48. Minutes by M.D. Peterson, 17 March 1919, *ibid.* See Chapter 2, p.44.
49. Minutes by M.D. Peterson, 17 March 1919, F.O. to G.H. Nutting, 21 March 1919, F.O. to A.J. Balfour, 21 March 1919, *ibid.*
50. See Chapter 5, p.183.
51. L. Mallet (for A.J. Balfour) to G. Curzon, 2 April 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4213, F. 37389, No. 52947.
52. F.O. to G.H. Nutting, 6 June 1919, 26 June 1919; minutes by M. D. Peterson and G.J. Kidston, 4 June 1919, in response to G. H. Nutting, 29 May 1919; minutes by O.A. Scott, 23 June 1919, in response to G.H. Nutting, 19 June 1919; P.R.O., F.O. 371/4213, F. 37389, Nos 82044, 91846. See Chapter 2, p.45.
53. G. Curzon to A.J. Balfour, 26 June 1919; [?] (for A.J. Balfour) to G. Curzon, 4 July 1919; P.R.O., F.O. 371/4213, F. 37389, Nos 91846, 98463.
54. Minutes by T.R. Ritchie, 29 September 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4213, F. 37389, No. 134526.
55. R. Tower to F.O., 3 December 1919, minutes by O.A. Scott, 5 December 1919 and M.D. Peterson, 6 December 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4213, F. 37389, No. 158630.
56. Memorandum of the Department of Over Trade to Foreign Office, 2 April 1919, enclosing correspondence sent to A. Richardson, MP by the Managing Director of the Cairo Motor Company, P.R.O., F.O. 608/100, No. 7858.
57. F.O. to G. Clayton, 16 April 1919, and to A.J. Balfour, 19 April 1919, enclosing correspondence mentioned above, *ibid.*

58. G. Clayton to F.O., 8 June 1919 (received on 16 June 1919), P.R.O., F.O. 608/100, No. 13306; P.R.O., F.O. 371/4315, F. 51705, No. 89474.
59. Minutes by A.G. Forbes Adam, 29 April 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/100, No. 7858.
60. H.W. Malkin, 2 May 1919, *ibid.*
61. L. Mallet (for A.J. Balfour) to G. Curzon, 7 May 1919, *ibid.* and P.R.O., F.O. 371/4215, F. 51705, No. 70893.
62. Minutes by M.D. Peterson, G.J. Kidston, G. Curzon and R. Graham, 10 May 1919, *ibid.*
63. Minutes by M.D. Peterson, 17 June 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4215, F. 51705, No. 89474.
64. C. Weizmann to R.G. Vansittart, 13 June 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/100, No. 12505 (WL, IX, No.163).
65. F.O. to G. Clayton, 7 June 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4171, F.1051, No. 86622; G. Clayton to F.O., 19 June 1919, W. Tyrrell (for G. Curzon) to A.J. Balfour, 1 July 1919, P.R.O., F.O.608/100, No.14230 and P.R.O., F.O. 371/4171, F. 1051, No. 94476.
66. See A.J. Balfour to G. Curzon, 5 July 1919, P.R.O., F.O.608/100, No. 14230, and minutes by E.G. Forbes Adam, 3 July 1919, H.W. Malkin, 14 July 1919, *ibid.* and P.R.O., F.O. 371/4171, F. 1051, No. 98705.
67. Minutes by E.G. Forbes Adam, 29 July 1919, P.R.O., F.O.608/100, No.15297.
68. C. Weizmann to E.G. Forbes Adam, 13 July 1919, and his enclosed letter to R. Graham, 13 July 1919, *ibid.* (WL, IX, No. 181). See Note 92, p.137.
69. See Note 51, p.129.
70. Minutes by O.A. Scott, 8 August 1919, M. D. Peterson, 9 August 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 391/4226, F. 73498, No. 113300.
71. F.O. to C. French, 28 July 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/100, 18009; see also F.O. to The Secretary of the Army Council, 13 August 1919, *ibid.*
72. E.H. Allenby to War Office, 2 August 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4225, F. 73497, No. 111592.
73. Minutes by M.D. Peterson, 7 August 1919, *ibid.*
74. R. Meinertzhagen to G. Curzon, 10 November 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4185, F. 2117, No. 156779; see also R. Meinertzhagen to G. Curzon, 13 January 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4186, F. 2117, No. 171190; R. Meinertzhagen to F.O., 15 January 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4226, F. 73497, No. 171814.
75. General Headquarters, Egypt, to Director of Military Intelligence, 2 December 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4226, F. 73497, No.160011; the Secretary of the War Office to the Under Secretary of State for the Foreign Office, 18 December 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4226, F. 73497, No.163145.
76. Minutes by O.A. Scott, 9 December 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4226, F. 73497, No. 160011; see also minutes by O.A. Scott, F.D.G. Osborne, 15 January 1920, and E. Phipps, 16 January 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4226, F. 73497, No. 170523.
77. F.O. to the Secretary to the Army Council, 8 December 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4185, F. 2117, No. 156779; Under Secretary of State of Foreign Office to Director of Military Intelligence, 15 December 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4226, F. 73497, No. 170523; F.O. to the Secretary to the Army Council, 30 December 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4226, F. 73497, No. 163145.
78. R. Meinertzhagen to F.O., 15 January 1920; minutes by F.D.G. Osborne, 20 January 1920, E. Phipps, 21 January 1920, and C. Hardinge [undated]; draft of reply to R. Meinertzhagen, 27 January 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4226, F. 73497, No. 171814.
79. Minutes by O.A. Scott, 5 February 1920, F.D.G. Osborne, 5 February 1920 and G. Curzon [undated]; *ibid.*
80. The Secretary to the Army Council to the Under Secretary of State for the Foreign Office, 11 February 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5032, F. 2, No. E18; see also Note 73, p.132.

81. F.O. to the Secretary to the Army Council, 6 March 1920, *ibid.*
82. E.H. Allenby to War Office, 20 January 1919, and Stenton's Suggestions 24 December 1919, enclosed, P.R.O., F.O. 371/ 4211, F. 28899, No. 28899.
83. Pearson & Sons to F.O., 5 May 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/ 4211, F.28899, No. 69104.
84. F.O. to Pearson & Sons, 12 May 1919, *ibid.*
85. War Office to F.O., 22 August 1919; E.H. Allenby to the Secretary of the War Office, 20 July 1919; A.W. Money to Chief Secretary, 24 June 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/ 4211, F.28899, No. 120025.
86. Minutes by O.A. Scott, 25 August 1919, M.D. Peterson, 26 August 1919, and A.J. Clark-Kerr, 2 September 1919, 3 September 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/ 4211, F.28899, No. 120025.
87. C. Tufton (for A.J. Balfour) to G. Curzon, 12 September 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/ 4211, F.28899, No. 129239.
88. Draft of reply, September 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/ 4211, F.28899, No.120025.
89. Minutes by G. Curzon, 29 August 1919, *ibid.* and 18 September 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/ 4211, F.28899, No.129239; see also minutes by G. Kidston, 16 September 1919, *ibid.*
90. F.O. to the Secretary to the Army Council, War Office, 26 September 1919, *ibid.*
91. J.A.C. Tilley to C. Weizmann, 3 February 1919, C.Z.A. Z4/9, and P.R.O., F.O. 371/4170, F.1051, No. 11104; see Chapter 5, pp.204-5.
92. L. Mallet to C. Weizmann, 1 July 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 731/4181, F. 2117, No. 97957 and P.R.O., F.O. 608/100, No.13134.
93. H. Sacher to R. Graham, 23 July 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4225, F.73497, No. 108981; see also Notes 64-73, pp. 130-2.
94. See Chapter 5, pp.205-11.
95. C. Weizmann to L. Mallet, 18 June 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4181, F.2117, No. 97957 and P.R.O., F.O. 608/100, No.13134 (WL, IX, No. 170).
96. *Ibid.* Minutes by E.G. Forbes Adam, 20 June 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/100, No.13134; A.J. Balfour to G. Clayton, 19 June 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4171, F.1051, No. 93118 and P.R.O., F.O. 608/99, No. 13137; see also minutes by L. Mallet, 17 June 1919, *ibid.*
97. L. Mallet to C. Weizmann, 1 July 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 731/4181, F. 2117, No. 97957 and P.R.O., F.O. 608/100, No.13134.
98. H.D. Watson to A. Allenby, 3 August 1919, I.S.A., Chief Secretary's Archive, F. 2/37; B. Waters-Taylor to the Chief Political Officer, 12 August 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4226, F. 73497, No. 132353; C. French to G. Curzon, 30 August 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4182, F.2117, No.130392.
99. Report by H.D. Watson, 12 August 1919 enclosed with C. French to G. Curzon, 26 August 1919 and minutes by M.D. Peterson, 8 September 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4182, F.2117, No. 125609.
100. R. Meinertzhagen to G. Curzon, 10 November 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4185, F. 2117, No. 156779; see also R. Meinertzhagen to G. Curzon, 13 January 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4186, F. 2117, No. 171190; R. Meinertzhagen to F.O., 15 January 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4226, F. 73497, No. 171814.
101. See, for instance, C. Weizmann to H.D. Watson, 2 November 1919 (WL, IX, No. 233), and H.D. Watson's reply, 9 November 1919, C.Z.A., Z4/10199; R. Meinertzhagen to G. Curzon, 13 January 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4186, F. 2117, No. 174490; R. Meinertzhagen to G. Curzon, 15 January 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4226, F. 73497, No. 171814; F.O. to the Secretary to the Army Council, 6 March 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5032, F.2, No. E18.

102. C. Weizmann to G. Curzon, 2 February 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4187, F.2117, No.177085 (WL, IX, No. 280).
103. R. Meinertzhagen to A. Allenby (and copy to Curzon), 9 April 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5139, F. 131, No. E3647.
104. A. Allenby to D. Lloyd George, 24 December 1919, B.L., Lloyd George Archive, F/49/13/2; see also A. Allenby to D. Lloyd George, 14 April 1920, *ibid*.
105. A. Allenby to G. Curzon, 4 May 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5139, F.227, No. E4754.
106. Minutes by O.A. Scott, 14 May 1920, C. Hardinge, 17 May 1920, and G. Curzon, 17 May 1920, *ibid*.
107. Minutes by O.A. Scott, 12[?] February 1920, P.D.G. Osborne, 13 February 1920, R.G. Vansittart, 17 February 1920 and P.D.G. Osborne, 27 March 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4187, F. 2117, No. 177085. See also Chapter 5, pp.212-17.
108. Minutes by M.D. Peterson, 29 April 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4180, F. 2117, No. 66424.
109. Minutes by G.J. Kidston, 11 May 1919, *ibid*.; W. J. Tyrell e (for G. Curzon) to A.J. Balfour, 9 May 1919, and enclosed despatch from G. Clayton to G. Curzon, 18 April 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/99, No. 9577; F.O. to the Secretary to the Army Council, 8 May 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4180, F. 2117, No. 66424.
110. B.B. Cubitt, for the Secretary of the War Office to the Under Secretary of State for the Foreign Office, 3 June 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4180, F. 2117, No. 83594.
111. A. Allenby to War Office, 6 June 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4181, F. 2117, No. 91359.
112. Minutes by E.G. Forbes Adam 30 June 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/99, No.13896.
113. S. Landman to C. Weizmann, 29 May 1919, C.Z.A. Z4/16008; C. Weizmann to J. Simon, 11 June 1919, and enclosed draft of letter by C. Weizmann to G. Macdonough, W.A.; C. Weizmann to E.G. Forbes Adam, 23 July 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/100, No. 16111 (WL, IX, Nos 166, 186).
114. A.J. Balfour to G. Curzon, 30 July 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4182, F. 2117, No. 110404; E.G. Forbes Adam to C. Weizmann, 9 August 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4182, F. 2117, No. 114620.
115. See minutes by G.J. Kidston, 2 August 1919, and G. Curzon, 3 August 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4182, F. 2117, No. 110404.
116. H. Samuel to L. Mallet, 1 July 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/100, No. 14290.
117. R.G. Vansittart to H. Samuel, 5 July 1919, *ibid*.
118. G.S. Spicer (for G. Curzon) to H. Samuel, 11 July 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/100, No. 15205 and P.R.O., F.O.371/4225, F. 73497, No. 99059.
119. C. Weizmann to R. Graham, 18 July 1919, P.R.O., F.O.371/4225, F. 73497, No.105333; C. Weizmann to H.J. Balfour, 23 July 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/100, No. 16464 (WL, IX, Nos 182, 188).
120. E.A. Crowe (for A.J. Balfour) to G. Curzon, 6 august 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/100, No. 16464; F.O. to C. French, 31 July 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/100, No. 17340.
121. C. French to F.O., 21 August 1919, and Foreign Office to C. Weizmann, 27 August 1919, *ibid*.
122. R. Meinertzhagen to G. Curzon, 14 April 1920 (extract), R. Meinertzhagen, *Middle East Diary, 1917-1956*, pp. 79-80.
123. A. Allenby to G. Curzon, 15 April 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5118, F.85, No. E3932.
124. A. Allenby to F.O., 16 April 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5117, F.85, No. E3376.
125. Report on meeting of P. Radcliffe (DMO) and W.H. Bartolommeo (Deputy DMI) for War Office with H.W. Young and F.D.G. Osborne for Foreign Office, 19 April 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5118, F. 85, Nos E3476, E3478; minutes by H.W. Young, 20 April 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5118, F. 85, No. E3478.

126. C. French to Chief Political Officer, 20 August 1919 (sent to H.D. Watson, 25 August 1919), I.S.A., Chief Secretary's Archive, F. 2/139. See also Chapter 6, pp.1, 2, 3 and Notes 91-93, pp. 34-40.
127. H.D. Watson to C. French, 30 August 1919, *ibid.*
128. L.G. Bols to A. Allenby, 11 April 1920, cited in Allenby's telegram to the War Office, 12 April 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5117, F. 85, No. E3158.
129. L.G. Bols to General Headquarters, Egypt, 21 April 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5119, F. 85, No. E5237.
130. Report of the investigation committee, nominated in April 1920 following the Nebi Musa disturbances on 1 July 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5121, F. 85, No. E9379.
131. Minutes by O.A. Scott, 27 May 1920, P.D.G. Osborne, 28 May 1920, and J.A.C. Tilley, 28 May 1920, *ibid.*; see also minutes by J.A.C. Tilley, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5117, F. 85, No. E3158 (referring to minutes by G. Curzon, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5117, F. 85, No. E3017).
132. A. Allenby to L.G. Bols, 12 April 1920, cited in Allenby's telegram to the War Office, 12 April 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5117, F. 85, No. E3158.
133. A. Allenby to F.O., 12 April 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5117, F. 85, No. E3142.
134. F.O. to A. Allenby, *ibid.*
135. F.O. to the Secretary to the Army Council, 10 June 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5119, F. 85, No. E5237; see also minutes of a meeting of the General Council, 1 September 1919, in Y. Freundlich and G. Yogev (eds), *The Minutes of the Zionist General Council, 1919-1929* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv, 1975), Vol. I, pp. 210-11.

Formulating the Mandate and Defining Boundaries

While attempts were being made in Palestine to define the National Home in British policy-making, a process of outlining the formal frame which could make possible its future growth and of drawing its boundaries was taking place in London and Paris. This process had begun towards the end of 1918, when the proposals to be presented by the Zionists to the Peace Conference in February 1919 were drafted; it continued in a dialogue between the British Commission to the Peace Conference and representatives of the Zionist movement, in the course of which a final version was drafted and submitted to the British Foreign Office in January 1920. The process was concluded, after another course of drafting by the Foreign Office and exchange of views with Britain's Allies. The details were laid out in the fifth chapter of the Peace Agreement with Turkey of August 1920, the Mandate on Palestine.

The chapter represented the culmination of discussion which began on 19 November 1918, when Weizmann unofficially submitted to the Foreign Office a paper with the title: 'Proposals Relating to the Establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine'.¹ The Proposals were formulated by an advisory committee of Zionist and non-Zionist leaders, headed by Herbert Samuel, and were meant to define the components of the National Home, to draw its geographical boundaries and to propose a mechanism by which to carry out its development in Palestine. At this stage, the British Foreign Office had already suggested that the question of boundaries be separated from the main discussion² and the negotiations which guided the drafting process was focused, from then onwards, mainly on two issues: the first, defining the concept National Home and its composition and the second, outlining the scope of authority and the activities of the mechanism in charge of its implementation.

Defining components and objectives: the Zionists' Proposals

The Proposals, submitted by the Zionists on 19 September, provided the following definition on the meaning of the establishment of a Jewish National

Home: 'that the country of Palestine should be placed under such political, economic, and moral conditions, as will favour the increase of Jewish population, so that in accordance with the principles of democracy it may ultimately develop into a Jewish Commonwealth'. Furthermore, the measures which would secure the development of the National Home were indicated. These included: fostering the growth of self-governing institutions; including the purport of the Balfour Declaration as an integral part of the constitution of Palestine; including representatives of the Jewish population and of the Jewish Council in any nominated body to take part in the Government in such a proportion that would give effect to the policy of the Declaration; framing all legal, administrative and economic measures to give the fullest opportunities for the development of the Jewish National Home; allowing the widest practicable measures of self-government to the Jewish communities; recognising the Hebrew language as the official language of the Jewish people for all purposes of government; recognising the Sabbath and all Jewish holidays as legal days of rest.

This proposed definition of Jewish National Home was rejected at the Foreign Office. Ormsby Gore, who was first to respond, thought that the components made the definition of the term Jewish National Home liable to misconstruction. The word 'commonwealth', he argued, would be interpreted as 'state' and give rise to great uneasiness among the non-Jews in Palestine. Eyre Crowe, Assistant to the Permanent Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, suggested that this definition should be omitted, a suggestion which was fully endorsed by Lord Harding, the Permanent Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.³

In spite of this, the definition remained intact in the modified version of the Proposals, submitted by the Zionists on 4 December, which had been rephrased following the instructions of the Foreign Office.⁴ Moreover, it further emphasised the objectives of the Jewish Council: while the November version had stated that the declared object of the Council would be 'the development of a Jewish National Home', the December version declared that 'in the building up of the Jewish Commonwealth the Jews of Palestine and the world shall be represented by a Jewish Council for Palestine' and its declared object would be 'the development of Palestine into a Jewish Commonwealth'. That definition was repeated also in the clause dealing with the functions of the Council.

When Weizmann sent the December version's proposals to Eder, who replaced him as the head of the Zionist Commission, he pointed out, *inter alia*, that the whole administration of Palestine should be so formed as to 'make Palestine a Jewish Commonwealth under British trusteeship', that Jews should participate in the administration to assure this objective and that

Hebrew should be the official language of the Jewish population. Furthermore, he wrote that Faisal was in complete agreement with the Zionist Proposals and would explain to the Arabs the advantages to the country, and thus to themselves, of 'a Jewish Palestine'.⁵

When the cable was brought to the attention of Clayton, the latter protested against the attempt to impose an alien and unpopular element on the local population, 90 per cent of which was non-Jewish. He argued that only the development of a settlement by Jewish tillers of the soil would succeed in establishing Zionism in Palestine.⁶

Curzon, at the Foreign Office, joined Clayton:

I am absolutely staggered at this, if the figures of the population of Palestine given in General Clayton's telegram No. 213 of December 5th 1918 are as I believe them to be correct viz: Non-Jews 573,000 Jews 66,000, and I profoundly pity the future Trustees of the 'Jewish Commonwealth' which at the present rate will shortly become an Empire with a Hebrew Emperor at Jerusalem.

Faisal must be very keen to get Palestine and the British interests there on his side in his dispute with the French, if he can swallow this programme.⁷

About a week later, Curzon reported to Balfour on a meeting he had had with Money, the Chief Administrator of Palestine, who stated that, in his opinion and that of Allenby, the British Government 'should go slow about Zionist aspirations and the Zionist State. Otherwise we might jeopardise all that we have won. A Jewish Government in any form would mean an Arab rising, and nine tenth of the population who are not Jews would make short shrift with the Hebrews.' As to himself, Curzon admitted 'I share the views, and have for long felt that the pretensions of Weizmann and Company are extravagant and ought to be checked'. Balfour, in reply, stated that, as far as he knew, Weizmann had never put forward a claim for 'the Jewish Government of Palestine', that such a claim was, in his opinion, certainly inadmissible and that the British Government should not go further than the original Declaration of 2 November 1917.⁸

Arnold Toynbee, who served in those days on the British Delegation to the Peace Conference in Paris, dissociated himself from Weizmann's statement that Faisal approved of 'a Jewish Palestine'. In a minute attached to a copy of Weizmann's cable to Eder, Toynbee argued that Faisal had altered 'Jewish State' in Weizmann's draft to 'Palestinian State' throughout two weeks after he and Weizmann had signed the agreement. Furthermore, he stated that, in the final text, the terms of the Balfour Declaration were reaffirmed

but there was no mention of a Jewish Government of Palestine or of Hebrew being the official language. According to him, it was evident from a conversation he had had with Weizmann that, in spite of the latter's acceptance of the principle of equality of nationalities, the idea of a 'Jewish State' was at the back of his mind. Therefore, he suggested that it should be made clear that the mandatory was not the mandatory of the Zionists but of the Peace Conference and of the whole population of Palestine.⁹

A few days afterwards, Curzon asked for Graham's opinion regarding Weizmann's complaints about the British officials' attitude towards the Jews of Palestine and, particularly, about the fact that Hebrew was not recognised as an official language while Arabic was, and that an Arabic (or Turkish) inscription appeared on postage stamps. According to Graham, Weizmann had never publicly asked for more than a Jewish 'national home' in Palestine; however, with the idea of a Jewish commonwealth always looming in the background.¹⁰ In that context, Curzon referred to Weizmann's cable to Eder, in which he had stated that 'the whole administration of Palestine shall be so formed as to make of Palestine a Jewish Commonwealth under British trusteeship', and responded:

Now what is a Commonwealth? I turn to my dictionaries and find it thus defined: - 'A State', 'A body politic', and 'An independent Community', 'A Republic'. Also read the rest of the telegram. What then is the good of shutting our eyes to the fact that this is what the Zionists are after, and that the British Trusteeship is a mere screen behind which to work for this end?¹¹

Curzon reiterated this in his letter to Balfour of 26 January 1919: 'As to Weizmann & Palestine I entertain no doubt that he is out for a Jewish Gov[ernment], if not at the moment then in the near future'. And while reminding Balfour that next to the term 'Jewish National Home' in the draft Mandate, Weizmann had added 'or Commonwealth', Curzon commented: 'You meant the first but he interpreted it as meaning the second'.¹²

In the meantime, the Zionists had strengthened their offensive. On 20 January, Weizmann flooded the Foreign Office with a number of resolutions passed by Zionist Federation Jewish Organisations in various parts of the world (in particular, the resolution of the American Jewish Congress in Philadelphia on 15–18 December 1918 and similar resolutions including those passed in Germany, Poland and Russia) which had endorsed the claim that Palestine should be developed into a 'Jewish Commonwealth'.¹³

At the Foreign Office, officials were aware of the meaning of this use of the term. 'It should be noticed that in his letter Dr. Weizmann used the

phrase “a Jewish Commonwealth”, and that in almost all the telegrams from every part of the world which he now communicates this phrase, invented by himself, is used’, Kidston commented in a minute. While Curzon, as usual, added: ‘I have more than once pointed out the growing and almost insatiable ambitions of the Zionists and have written to Mr. Balfour on the subject. First the “Home” will be pushed on one side, – then the “trustee” will be found superfluous, and finally the “Commonwealth” will emerge triumphant.’

Thus, at Graham’s instructions, the Foreign Office, in their reply, refrained from using the term ‘Jewish Commonwealth’ and confirmed receipt of the resolutions concerning ‘the future of Palestine as a Jewish National Home’, unaware that they were using a phrase which had been considered unacceptable while drafting the Balfour Declaration which had stated, in its final version, that the British Government viewed with favour the establishment ‘in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.’¹⁴

On 20 January, the very same day on which Weizmann submitted the resolutions in favour of the Jewish Commonwealth to the Foreign Office, Sokolow submitted a printed memorandum to be presented to the Peace Conference in Paris, entitled ‘Memorandum of the Zionist Organisation relating to The Reconstitution of Palestine as a Jewish National Home’, in other words, the same phrase which had not been accepted at the time the Declaration was drafted. The memorandum, which was written in London taking into account the views of United States Zionists, not only failed to moderate the terms of previous papers but even increased Zionist demands. The chapter entitled: ‘Proposals to be presented to the Peace Conference’ opened by stating that: ‘The Peace Conference recognises the historic title of the Jewish people to Palestine, and the right of the Jews to reconstitute Palestine as their National Home’. Furthermore, it was suggested, as in previous versions, that, in order to give effect to this declaration, the Peace Conference would decide ‘that Palestine shall be placed under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will assure its development into a Jewish Commonwealth’. It was also stated that, since conditions in Palestine were not ripe for the immediate establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth, a kind of autonomy should be introduced into Palestine under the auspices of an external authority, in other words Britain, as mandatory of the League of Nations. To support this argument, the memorandum cited the decisions of the American Jewish Congress, representing three million Jews, and the Congress of the Jews of Austro-

Hungary, representing two million Jews, both of which used the term 'Jewish Commonwealth'.

However, the writers of the memorandum did not just use the term 'Jewish Commonwealth' or simply detail the administrative and economic conditions which would enable the development of the Jewish Commonwealth, but added new demands. In the chapter: 'Proposals with respect to the Constitution and Administration of a Jewish Palestine under the Trusteeship of Great Britain', there were many detailed suggestions: that the Governor of Palestine should be a Jew, who would be appointed by the trustee power in consultation with the Jewish Council, and would report to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; the Governor would appoint an Executive Council and a Legislative Council of which no fewer than half the members, exclusive of the Governor, should be Jews; whenever, in the opinion of the Governor in Legislative Council, the establishment of a representative assembly would appear to be advisable, all acts of such assembly should be subject to veto by the Governor; local autonomous communities should be granted the widest practicable measure of local autonomy; the education of the non-Jewish as well as the Jewish inhabitants should be assisted by state funds; Hebrew should be one of the official languages of Palestine and should be employed in all official documents, decrees and announcements, and on all stamps, coins and notes issued by the Government of Palestine; the Jewish Sabbath and Jewish holidays should be observed by the Government of Palestine as public days of rest.¹⁵

General Money, to whom Weizmann submitted the Proposals separately, pointed out the dangers involved in their implementation in Palestine, if indeed the desire of the Zionists was for the eventual development of a Jewish State by peaceful methods. He commented ironically that, in view of the fact that 90 per cent of the inhabitants were non-Jews, the Proposals, demanding the appointment of a Jew as Governor and a Jewish majority in the Executive and Legislative Councils, would not, in the eyes of the non-Jewish majority, afford satisfactory guarantees for the preservation of their civil and religious rights. Furthermore, he added that, combined with the forcible expropriation of the large Muslim landowners in favour of Jewish immigrants, these measures would give rise not only to antagonism but active hostility against the Jewish minority in Palestine.¹⁶

The new Proposals angered even the supporters of Zionism at the British Delegation to the Peace Conference. Ormsby Gore, who summed up in a minute his comments on the Proposals, supported Hebrew and Arabic being recognised equally as the two official languages of the country and appearing equally on coins and stamps. He also supported the demand 'that Saturday should be the weekly Government holiday, as is Friday in Egypt and Sunday

in Europe.' 'In Jerusalem the majority of the shops are shut on Saturday and if there is anything in the phrase "Jewish National Home", the Jewish Sabbath should be respected and observed throughout Palestine. The Zionists are, at any rate in Palestine, rather lax about religious and ritual observances, but the Sabbath is one point on which they are strict, and which really plays a prominent part in the social life of the people,' he explained. However, Ormsby Gore strongly criticised the demands which, according to him, went much further than any demands hitherto put forward by responsible Zionists and the introduction of the phrase 'the reconstruction of Palestine as the Jewish National Home', as well as 'Jewish Commonwealth' which was not defined but clearly involved steps towards the creation of a Jewish Government.

Ormsby Gore objected, in particular, to the proposals that limited the authority of the Trustee Power to the selection of a Jewish Governor and to consulting the Jewish Council for Palestine, a body representing Jews from all countries. Furthermore, he rejected the proposals for an Executive Council and a Legislative Council to have an assured Jewish majority as they were, in his opinion, even more extreme and they imposed racial and religious tests on the population.

In conclusion, Ormsby Gore summed up his objections by stating that both the expansion of the phrase 'National Home for the Jewish People' into 'Jewish Commonwealth' and the proposed constitution could not be accepted by any self-respecting trustee power. In his mind, he concluded, such extravagant demands would injure and not assist the cause of Zionism both in Palestine and elsewhere and, if they were not given up, the British Government would have to make it clear that it would not be answerable if they led to disaster.¹⁷

Ormsby Gore repeated these views in a memorandum: 'Future Government of a Separate Palestinian State', in which he outlined plans for the future Government of Palestine, in case Britain was requested to provide such a plan to the Peace Conference.¹⁸

Following consultations with Louis Mallet and Eric Drummond, Ormsby Gore advised Sokolow that it would be quite in order for the Zionist Organisation to submit their proposals directly to the Secretariat of the Peace Conference, on condition that the Zionist Organisation explained that the proposals had not been approved by the British Government and that they were requesting Great Britain as a Mandatory entirely on their own, without asking Balfour or the British Government. Furthermore, Ormsby Gore made it clear that, in Mallet's opinion, the British Government would not accept the duties of the Mandatory if the constitution proposed in the printed Memorandum were insisted upon by the Zionist Organisation. According to him, Louis Mallet had recommended that a briefer memorandum be

submitted which would be less likely to offend the susceptibilities of the majority of the present inhabitants of Palestine. As to Balfour, he responded by dissociating himself from the Zionists. Through Eric Drummond, he stated that the Zionist Organisation must present its own case in its own way. However, he did not wish to take any responsibility for advising the Zionists in terms of what proposals they should or should not submit to the Peace Conference.¹⁹

This statement of disapproval was effective. The Proposals were revised. Weizmann and Samuel were summoned from London to Paris and, on 30 January, Samuel reported to Mallet that the demands for a Jewish Governor and a majority on the Council[s] had been eliminated, and the tone of the document greatly modified. However, he explained, the reference to the development of the country later on into a Jewish Commonwealth had been left in, in deference to the views of the American Zionists who wanted something more to look forward to than a National Home.²⁰

The final version of the Proposals, presented by the Zionists to the Peace Conference on 3 February 1919, not only modified their objectives but also abandoned the term Jewish Commonwealth. The first paragraph read: 'The High Contracting Parties recognise the historic title of the Jewish people to Palestine and the right of the Jews to reconstitute in Palestine their National Home'. In the fifth clause it was stated:

Palestine shall be placed under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment there of a Jewish National Home and ultimately render possible the creation of an autonomous Commonwealth, 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.

However, the term Jewish Commonwealth, which did not appear in this wording, was mentioned in the detailed 'Statement' which was attached to the Proposals. In the chapter dealing with 'Great Britain as Mandatory of the League of Nations', the resolution of the American Jewish Congress of 16 December 1918 was quoted and similar resolutions, taken in Jaffa by a conference of representatives of the Jewish population in Palestine and by a Jewish Congress representing the Jews of Austria-Hungary and Poland, were referred to as expressions of the attitude taken by Jews to the trusteeship. In

those resolutions, as mentioned above, the term Jewish Commonwealth was used.

As to the components enabling the implementation of the concept of a National Home, those were mentioned in general in the Proposals to be submitted to the Peace Conference, namely Jewish immigration, settlement on the land, a Jewish Council entrusted with Jewish education and priority concessions for public works and for the development of natural resources. These components were referred to in detail in the Statement, in the chapter 'Proposals to the Mandatory Power', as follows:

1. In any instrument establishing the constitution of Palestine the Declarations of the Peace Conference shall be recited as forming an integral part of the constitution.
2. The Jewish people shall be entitled to fair representation in the executive and the legislative bodies and in the selection of public and civil servants. In giving such representation the Mandatory Power shall consult the Jewish Council ... Neither law nor custom shall preclude the appointment of a citizen of Palestine as chief of the executive.
3. In encouraging the self-government of localities the Mandatory Power shall secure maintenance by local communities of proper standards of administration in matters of education, communal or regional activities. In granting or enlarging local autonomy regard shall be had [*sic*] to the readiness and ability of the community to attain such standards.
4. Education without distinction of race shall be assisted from public funds.
5. Hebrew shall be one of the official languages of Palestine and shall be employed in all documents, decrees and announcements, and on all the stamps, coins and notes issued by the Government.
6. The Jewish Sabbath and Holy Days shall be recognised as legal days of rest.
7. All inhabitants who on the day of ..., have their domicile in Palestine, except those who elect in writing within six months to retain their foreign citizenship, shall become citizens of Palestine.²¹

Defining components and objectives: first drafts of the Mandate for Palestine

Early in 1919, while the exchange of views between members of the British Delegation to the Peace Conference on questions raised by the wording of

the Zionist Organisation's statement was taking place, the Delegation finished drafting the fifth chapter in the Treaty of Peace between Turkey and the Allied Government, which defined the features of the future Mandate on Palestine. Toynbee and Forbes Adam, who prepared the draft, regarded their task as formulating a chapter similar in principle to other chapters defining mandates, with additional clauses dealing with two subjects, particularly related to the Mandate on Palestine: steps to be taken in order to implement the policy of a National Home for the Jewish people and arrangements to be made concerning the Holy Places.

The National Home policy was referred to already in the preamble. The Balfour Declaration was quoted there in full and the Powers' identification with the Declaration was clearly expressed. The meaning of this policy was explained in a special clause which stated that the Government of Palestine would have full power to reserve the development of the country for local interests, including the Zionist Organisation and such Jewish bodies as might be organised to facilitate the development of the Jewish National Home and that they would be officially recognised by the Governor. Furthermore, it was made clear that the Governor would be responsible for introducing a land system appropriate to the needs of the country which, in order to avoid the evils of land speculation, would stipulate that no person except a citizen of Palestine and no company or other corporation except Jewish organisations officially recognised by the Governor should own or occupy more than twenty *dunam* of land without the special permission of the Governor. Another interpretation of the Jewish National Home policy was given in an clause which stated that Hebrew and Arabic (in this order!) should be the official languages of Palestine but English might also be used so far as was necessary for the convenience of administration.²² Apart from these clauses, no other details were provided by the authors of the fifth chapter about the essential nature of the Balfour Declaration quoted in the preamble. The discussions, led by the British Delegation to the Peace Conference and the formulators of the Zionist Organisation's statement, regarding the objectives of the National Home policy and the authority to be given to the Jewish Council²³, did appear in the draft.

The 'Statement' of the Zionist Organisation was presented to the Council of Ten at the Peace Conference on 27 February 1919. The following day, the British Delegation to the Conference launched a process of redrafting the Zionist Proposals and incorporating them – in their modified version – in the fifth chapter of the Mandate. The process was initiated by Balfour who suggested a few modifications to the interpretation of the concept National Home, as well as the authority to be invested in the Jewish Council. Balfour

dissociated himself from the terminology of the first clause in the Zionist Organisation 'Statement' according to which the High Contracting Parties recognised the historic title of the Jewish people to Palestine and the right of the Jews to reconstitute in Palestine their National Home. He softened the definition of that objective and suggested that the Contracting Parties' recognition be given to the historic connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and the claim which this gave them to find a National Home in that country.²⁴

The Proposals of the Zionist Organisation, Balfour's suggested amendments and the problems involved were submitted to a committee of experts convened by the Foreign Office on 21 and 22 March 1919. The Committee concurred in principle with Balfour and recommended a further amendment: it suggested that the words 'self-governing Commonwealth' be substituted for 'autonomous Commonwealth'.²⁵ And so it was. Following the committee's deliberations, H.W. Malkin drafted a new version of the fifth chapter of the peace treaty with Turkey into which clauses of the Zionist Organisation's 'Statement', as amended by Balfour and by the committee, were incorporated. At the beginning of the chapter, a clause was added stating that the High Contracting Parties, 'Recognising the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and the claim which this gives them to find a national home in that country ...', had agreed upon the provisions which followed herewith. These objectives were defined in the order suggested by Balfour and the committee and, in Clause 3, it was stated that the administration of Palestine should be conducted with the aim of the ultimate creation in Palestine of a self-governing commonwealth.²⁶

The experts' committee considered the questions of immigration and language as well. In the matter of immigration, the committee incorporated the version of the Zionist Organisation, according to which the British Government would promote Jewish immigration and close settlement on the land, the established rights of the present non-Jewish population being equitably safeguarded; however, they left out the word 'close'. The committee – like Balfour beforehand – omitted the word and added a condition: 'provided, however, that no person shall be excluded from Palestine on the sole ground of his religious beliefs'. In the matter of language, the committee stated that English, Hebrew and Arabic should be the official languages of Palestine.

In the course of their deliberations, the committee also discussed the question of preferences to be given to the Jewish citizens of Palestine, in accordance with the National Home policy. James de Rothschild suggested that differential treatment should be accorded by the British Government to the Jewish citizens of Palestine as distinct from the other citizens of the

country, which would prove to the Zionists that the British Government really intended to make Palestine the Jewish National Home. It was, at first, suggested that the Jewish citizens of Palestine should have the status of full British subjects. However, this idea was rejected because reciprocity might have to be given to the Arabs; it might lead to large emigration from the country of either Jews or Arabs; additionally, it would be impossible to obtain a mandate from the League of Nations on any such terms. It was agreed that the matter was not one which could be settled in the Peace Treaty but that the British Government would bear it in mind and consider later what could be done to give preferential treatment in the matter Jewish immigration.

The process of drafting the Mandate continued in April and May²⁷ without any essential modifications of the above-mentioned clauses. Throughout this period, the Zionists were not informed of some of their proposals being incorporated or amended. Balfour's comments on the 'Statement' of the Zionist Organisation and the modified draft of the resolutions were, indeed, sent to Samuel who, towards the end of April 1920, was assigned to be the future High Commissioner to Palestine, but Samuel was asked to regard them as confidential and was thus prevented from reporting to or consulting with the Zionist leadership on the matter.

In May, Samuel transmitted his observations on Balfour's amended draft and requested the wording to be reconsidered and the terms used by the Zionist Organisation to be adopted (namely 'historic title' instead of 'historic connection', 'right' instead of 'claim' and 'reconstitute' instead of 'find'). The term 'historic title' was, in Samuel's view, so indispensable that, if not retained, it was preferable to omit the whole phrase rather than use an unimpressive term like 'connection'. He also believed it was advisable to retain the word 'reconstitute' which highlighted the historic aspect on which the case mainly relied. He suggested: 'The High Contracting Parties recognise the right of the Jewish people to reconstitute in Palestine their National Home'. Samuel also requested that, in the clause dealing with immigration and land settlement, the Zionist wording 'close land settlement' be adopted and not 'settlement' as in Balfour's version. However, Samuel's suggestions had no effect on the draft Mandate, formulated in May. The authors of this draft insisted on their terminology, claiming that the terms 'title', 'right' and 'close land settlement' were too extreme and would give rise to anti-Zionist reactions.²⁸

Throughout this time the Zionists did not stand quietly by. Since the Zionist Congress, which represented citizens of belligerent states, was unable to

convene as long as the Peace Treaty had not been signed, a Zionist Conference of representatives of Zionist organisations in the Allied and neutral countries convened in London, for the first time since the War, in order to discuss ideas and establish institutions for future Zionist activities. At this conference, there was harsh criticism of the moderating of Zionist demands and the whittling down of the definition of the Jewish people's title to Palestine in the 'Statement' submitted to the Peace Conference by the Zionist Organisation.²⁹

The London conference also amended the proposals to be presented to the Peace Conference, as suggested by the Political Commission of the Conference. The definition of the concept 'National Home' in the amended formula – as well as in speeches given at the Conference – repeated the wording of the Zionist demand before the Balfour Declaration, to the effect that 'The High Contracting Parties recognise the historic title of the Jewish people to Palestine and the right of the Jews to reconstitute Palestine as their National Home' and not 'their right to reconstitute in Palestine their National Home'. Furthermore, the demand that Palestine be placed under such political, administrative and economic conditions as would secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home and ultimately render possible the creation of an 'autonomous Commonwealth' was amended and replaced by the stipulation that Palestine be placed under conditions as would secure 'its reconstitution as the Jewish National Home which will ultimately develop into a Jewish Commonwealth'. In this context of securing the historic title of the Jewish people to Palestine, the sentence stating that the sovereign possession of Palestine should be invested in the League of Nations was omitted as well. Other clauses dealing with the character of the National Home, in the chapter 'Proposals to the Mandatory Power', of its attached 'Statement', were also modified. The wording was sharpened to make it possible to widen the scope of expected British responsibilities regarding the establishment a Jewish National Home and a new clause was added to the definitions of the functions of the Jewish Council, to the effect that the Chief executive would be appointed by the Mandatory Power 'on the proposition of the Jewish Council' or 'after consultation with the Jewish Council'.³⁰ This last suggestion, as mentioned above, was included in the 'Memorandum of the Zionist Organisation relating to the Reconstitution of Palestine as a Jewish National Home', which had been submitted on 20 January 1919 to the British Delegation to the Peace Conference and rejected. In addition to adopting the above amendments, the London Conference decided that the official name of Palestine should be '*Eretz Israel*' (Hebrew: the Land of Israel) and that the Zionist flag should be the flag of the country.³¹

The spirit of the London Zionist Conference was also reflected in the draft Mandate proposed to the British Delegation to the Peace Conference by Felix Frankfurter, the legal adviser to the Zionist Delegation to the Peace Conference, on behalf of the Zionist Organisation.³² In this draft Mandate, the terminology of the modified version of the Zionist Organisation 'Statement' of March 1919 was incorporated, and stated that:

Whereas the inhabitants of Palestine are unable at the present time effectively to constitute and to maintain an autonomous commonwealth, and whereas the League of Nations and the Signatory Powers recognise the historic title of the Jewish People to Palestine and the right of the Jews to reconstitute Palestine as their National Home and there to establish the foundations of a Jewish Commonwealth, and whereas it is the wish of the inhabitants of Palestine and of the Jewish people throughout the world, that the government of Palestine ... be confided to Great Britain as the Mandatory ... therefore, the signatory Powers constitute Great Britain the Mandatory of the League of Nations for the government and administration of Palestine.

Among the conditions of the mandate, the Zionist draft mentioned, first and foremost, 'The establishment of Palestine as the Jewish National Home and its development into an autonomous commonwealth ...' Furthermore, and in order to achieve this objective, the Zionist draft listed: promotion of immigration of Jews and their settlement upon the land; establishment of the Hebrew language as one of the official languages of the land to be employed in all official documents and procedures, and upon the money and coinage of the land; recognition of the Jewish Sabbath and holidays as legal holidays for persons of the Jewish faith and permission for them to pursue their ordinary vocations on all other days; entrusting the organisation and administration of a system of education for the Jewish inhabitants to appropriate Jewish agencies; encouragement of the widest measure of self-government for localities; provision for governmental and other public ownership and development of the natural resources of the country and such ownership and operation of public works and utilities in a way which would prevent their exploitation for private profit; all lands should be owned or controlled for the benefit of the people of Palestine as a whole; citizenship defined as not to exclude any person on the ground of race, language, religion and sex and cooperation with the relevant agencies representative of the Jewish people, in effectuating these purposes. In the last clause of the draft Mandate, it was stated that, whereas in the opinion of the Mandatory or the

League of Nations the inhabitants of Palestine were fit to create and maintain an autonomous representative and responsible Government, the Mandatory should take such steps as would permit them, through the exercise of a democratic franchise without regard to race, sex or faith to establish a representative and responsible Government in such form as the people of Palestine might devise.

As mentioned above, this version was not taken into account in the drafting by the Middle East Political Section of the British Delegation to the Peace Conference. Moreover, nothing was reported to the Zionists, not even Balfour's reservations about their 'Statement'.

On 29 May 1919, Frankfurter submitted a second version, which did not essentially modify any of the definitions of the objectives of the National Home policy used in previous documents submitted by the Zionists. The only important amendment, perhaps, appeared in the preamble: the term '(Eretz Israel)' was added next to the term 'National Home'.³³

At this stage, Balfour decided to authorise the Middle East Political Section to send members of the Zionist Delegation the British Delegation's draft Mandate of 26 May 1919 and open unofficial consultations with Weizmann and Frankfurter regarding the draft, while not committing himself to it. In mid-June, the consultations began.³⁴

In mid-July, two meetings took place between representatives of the British and the Zionist Delegations. In the course of the first meeting (between Robert Vansittart, H.W. Malkin and Forbes Adam, and Weizmann, Felix Frankfurter and Howard Ganz), Weizmann urged that, in the preamble, the words 'connection', 'claim' and 'find' be altered to 'title', 'right' and 'reconstitute' (terms which Balfour had, of course, rejected). Weizmann also opposed any representative assembly or municipal councils being given authority, as suggested in the draft, arguing that the inhabitants of Palestine were not yet ready to have an autonomous commonwealth.

For the second meeting, the Zionist legal advisers, Frankfurter and Ganz, submitted a third Zionist version, which was no different from previous Zionist drafts and the terms used in them, but added details. Thus, for instance, it was stated that Hebrew, English and Arabic [in that order!] should be the official languages of the country to be employed upon money, coinage and stamps, and it was made clear that any community should have the right to educate its children in its own language, provided that the education would be up to Government standards. In addition, a land transactions policy was outlined which should be of service to the 'Commonwealth' and it was explained that

development of the natural resources of the country and operation of public works and utilities should not be exploited for private profit.³⁵

In the second meeting, which took place on 15 July 1919, between Malkin, Forbes Adam, Frankfurter and Ganz, the versions of the two Delegations were discussed in detail. In some of the clauses the wording was coordinated. Thus, for instance, the Zionist terminology for formula about controlling the educational system was approved while, on the question of self-rule, the Zionists agreed to give up their wording and accept the British version. However, in clauses defining the objective of the National Home policy there was no change. The requests of the Zionists that the terms 'title' and 'right' be returned to the text and that the 'right of Jews' to reconstitute the country as their National Home should be recognised (unlike in previous versions, they asked that the word 'the' be omitted from 'the right of the Jews') were not granted. The same happened to 'Jewish Commonwealth', in spite of Frankfurter's urging that the words 'establish the foundations of a Jewish Commonwealth' had been used by President Wilson in an official announcement in March 1919 and that it was surely safe to base the preamble not only on British Government pronouncements but also those of President Wilson. The Zionist attempt to bring the definition of the National Home policy closer to their views, by inserting the word 'Jewish' before 'self-governing Commonwealth', failed as well. The British officials retained Balfour's amendments and explained that they had no authority to decide but promised to put the Zionists' suggestions forward. The clauses dealing with the Jewish Sabbath and holidays and official languages, the Zionists' suggestions concerning economic policy and even their request that 'Zionist Council' should be replaced by 'Zionist Agency' remained open for further discussion.³⁶

Following the meetings with the Zionist representatives, the British Delegation prepared a new draft Mandate. Some general clauses, which were meant to be included in the Peace Treaty with Turkey but not in the fifth chapter, were removed.

Other clauses, which were not considered suitable for inclusion in the Mandate or in the Peace Treaty in general, were omitted and it was suggested that those should be incorporated in the future constitution of Palestine to be prepared by the Mandatory (clauses such as those dealing with the appointment of the Governor, the executive council, the advisory council, local and municipal self-government, the railroad to Egypt and the Bank). As to the clauses which remained within the Mandate chapter, those amendments agreed upon in the meeting with the Zionists were inserted, while all the open questions, the alterations and additions still desired by the Zionists were attached to the new draft in a separate list. These were:

1. The first sentence in the preamble to run as in the Zionist formula, i.e. 'Recognising the historic title of the Jews to Palestine and the right of the Jews to reconstitute it as their National Home (Eretz Israel) and there to establish the foundation of a Jewish Commonwealth';
2. Insertion in any appropriate place in the sentence 'Establishment of the land as a Jewish National Home and its development into an autonomous Commonwealth shall be the guiding purpose in the execution of the mandate';
3. Insertion of the word 'close' before 'settlement' in the article dealing with settlement on the land and addition of a sentence to the effect that the Government 'shall open public lands for such settlement';
4. Insertion of a clause stating that 'The British Government shall recognise the Jewish Sabbath and holidays as official days of rest and legal holidays, without prejudice to the civil and religious rights of non-Jews and permit to all inhabitants the pursuit of their ordinary vocations on all days other than their respective days of rest and holidays';
5. The clause dealing with the Jewish Council to be strengthened to cover a commitment that 'The British Government shall provide for state or other public ownership of the natural resources of Palestine and for such ownership and operation of the public works and utilities ... and shall adopt effective measures to prevent the exploitation of any such resources, public works and utilities for any profit in excess of a reasonable rate of interest upon sums properly devoted to the development of such resources ...';
6. The clause dealing with the land settlement to be strengthened to cover guiding lines as to the Government's land policy which should ensure the benefit of the Commonwealth;
7. Insertion of the word 'sex' between the words 'race' 'or faith' in the clause dealing with securing equality of rights;
8. Insertion of a clause to the effect that 'The British Government will adopt effective measures to foster the organisation of agricultural, industrial, commercial and financial undertakings upon a co-operative basis';
9. Insertion of a clause to the effect that 'H.M.G. will work in co-operation with an appropriate Jewish Agency' in connection with all clauses dealing with public ownership of natural resources, public works, land legislation and co-operation, instead of 'Jewish Council' or 'Councils'.³⁷

Two months passed. In the meantime, a new formulation was initiated by the Commission on Mandates formed by the Peace Conference. Robert Cecil, who was, at that time, a member (in charge of League of Nations affairs) of the British Peace Delegation and on the Committee that drafted the League's Convention, met Weizmann. Following that meeting, Frankfurter and P.J. Noel-Baker, the British Secretary to the Commission on Mandates constituted by the Peace Conference, were requested to draw up a draft Palestinian Mandate 'on the supposition that Great Britain were to obtain the mandate for Palestine and were to carry out the policy of a National Home for the Jews there'. They received the draft prepared by the Political Section summing up the negotiations with the Zionists in July 1919.³⁸ Following this development and an intervention by Brandeis, who, on his return from a visit to Palestine, was trying to moderate Zionist demands, a new Zionist version was submitted on 24 September 1919 to the Political Section of the British Delegation to the Peace Conference which matched, in form and wording, the Section's draft of late July.

In the new version, the Zionists stopped insisting on the terms 'historic title' and 'right', and adopted the Political Section's terms 'historical connection' and 'claim'. However, they did not give up on 'reconstitute Palestine as their national home'. In an addition to the draft, they explained that they insisted on including this wording in order to make it quite plain that the Jewish National Home was not limited to a part of Palestine but was co-extensive with the whole of Palestine and that its reconstitution involved political and economic measures which would affect the whole country. Furthermore, the name of the country in Hebrew, 'Eretz Israel' or the land of Israel, was moved from its place in the previous Zionist version after the 'National Home' and added after the country's English name, 'Palestine'. It was also pointed out that it should be made clear that it was the national home of the Jews which was to be re-established and not merely a national home in Palestine such as they might already be said to have in Poland and in Eastern Europe. Furthermore, in the clause defining the British Government's obligation to secure the establishment of the National Home, the Zionists were ready to compromise. They used the term 'establishment' (and not re-establishment) and even accepted the term 'self-governing Commonwealth'; however, they included it – as in the version submitted in February to the Peace Conference – in the clause dealing with provisions already agreed upon, namely: 'Great Britain shall be responsible for placing Palestine under political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the development of a self-governing Commonwealth ...' and unlike the political section of the British Delegation's version which referred to the 'self-governing Commonwealth' as a distant objective to be achieved in the

far away future. Moreover, the Zionists dissociated themselves from the wording of the political section that added a condition ‘but nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities ...’ which seems to hint at a contradiction between the two commitments. Instead, the Zionists kept to the Balfour Declaration wording and suggested: ‘... conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home and the development of a self-governing Commonwealth it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities ...’

At the same time, the Zionists continued to assert the right of the Jewish people to re-establish their National Home and be involved in all matters affecting its establishment: they demanded to be represented on the committee which would eventually draw up the boundaries of Palestine, they proposed amendments to the clause dealing with the Jewish Council (below) and they stuck to their previous version on issues which they felt were significant in shaping the future National Home. Thus, for instance, they insisted that the British Government should promote Jewish emigration and ‘close settlement’ by Jews on the land and should open to such settlement all public lands that could be made available; they insisted that, in the general legal system of Palestine, the Jews, Muslim and other communities should have the right to maintain and develop their own judicial institutions in all civil matters concerning their respective communities (thus leaving the road open for further developments); they insisted that, in construction and operation of public works and utilities and in the development of the national resources of the country, the establishment of a Jewish National Home should be the guiding principle; they made clear that the three official languages should be employed ‘inter alia’ on the stamps and ‘money’ (not coinage) of Palestine; they brought up, once more, the clause that the Jewish Sabbath and Jewish holidays should be recognised as days of rest; and, in conclusion, they added a paragraph to the effect that they should have the right to bring to the attention of the council of the League of Nations any matter relating to the interpretation or the application of the convention agreed upon.³⁹

On 18 November 1919, ‘Chapter V. Palestine’ of the Peace Agreement, provisionally agreed upon between the Zionist Organisation and the British Delegation to the Peace Conference, was drafted by the Political Section of the Delegation. Most of the Zionist amendments were included in that draft. The High Contracting Powers recognised, as suggested by the Zionist compromise, ‘the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and the claim which this gives them to reconstitute Palestine as their national

home (Eretz Israel)' (with one amendment : 'Eretz Israel' had been removed from after 'Palestine' to the end of the sentence, after 'national home'). The new Zionist version appeared as such in the draft, namely that the High Contracting Powers '... shall be responsible for placing Palestine under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home and the development of a self-governing Commonwealth, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country'.⁴⁰

Most of the other Zionist proposals were accepted as well. Only the demand to have the right to appeal to the council of the League of Nations was explicitly rejected. Three other points which the Zionists did not accept after the version of 18 November 1919 had been drafted. These were the use of the term 'pre-emptive right' in relation to the rights of the Jewish Agency,⁴¹ the Zionist suggestion regarding the legal system mentioned above and the issue of citizenship. These were reconsidered and eventually a compromise was reached on the wording which was included in a new agreed-upon draft on 11 December 1919.⁴²

The issue of citizenship was not just a matter of pedantic legal wording but also of defining intentions. It involved a new approach to the question of implementing the concept National Home. According to the Political Section's version of late July, Jews who, within two years from the coming into force of the Peace Treaty, took up their permanent abode in Palestine would lose their existing nationality and become citizens of Palestine. Furthermore, the Government of Palestine would also enact a nationality law so framed as to facilitate the acquisition of Palestinian citizenship by Jews who might take up their permanent abode in Palestine after the expiry of the said period of two years. According to the Zionist version of 24 September, the period should be extended from two to five years, in which Jews should be entitled to give up their existing nationality and become citizens of Palestine. The Zionists explained that the period of two years was inadequate since the extensive preparatory work, preceding the absorption of Jewish immigration on a large scale, could take at least two years. Furthermore, they claimed that Jews taking up residence in Palestine within those five years should have the choice either of retaining their existing citizenship or becoming Palestine citizens. They believed that such a provision was necessary, for instance, in the case of Jewish officials in the British Palestine Administration.

The draft of 18 November proposed a new version which took into consideration the Zionist amendments: Jews who, within seven years from the coming into force of the Peace Treaty, became resident in Palestine would, on the expiration of twelve months from their arrival, lose their existing nationality and become citizens of Palestine unless within those twelve months they had declared before the competent Palestinian authorities their desire not to become citizens of Palestine. In such a case, the Government of Palestine would have the right to require the person concerned to leave Palestine within twelve months from the date of his declaration.

The Zionists strongly protested against this clause, especially the last part. In response, Benjamin Cohen of the Zionists' drafting team, who said he was summing up Sokolow's, Samuel's and others' opinions, wrote that there could be little question that Jews generally would welcome the opportunity to acquire Palestinian citizenship. The Zionist version was intended to enable British and American Jews, who had participated in the public life of their country and whose attachment to their native land was particularly deep, to assist in the establishment of the Jewish national home. According to Cohen, the declaration in the last British draft would be regarded by them and their communities as a repudiation of the Jewish national home and would call into question their loyalty to the Zionist cause. Furthermore, Jews of the professional and middle class would go to Palestine, anxious to make their home there but, having no assured means of livelihood, it would not always be possible for them to determine within a year whether they should remain permanently or not; it would be a grave injustice to compel them to reject Palestinian citizenship, which would mean disloyalty to the national home, or to accept Palestinian citizenship, which might cause them economic loss with no compensatory gain to the community. The threat of expulsion was especially wrong, Cohen complained, for why should an American or English Jew who does not acquire citizenship be treated in any different manner from a non-Jewish Briton or American residing in Palestine?⁴³

The exchange of views within the Political Section and Forbes Adam's reply, in his and Malkin's name, explained the core of the disagreement:

The principle which we have attempted to carry out in all the treaties negotiated here is that persons should be citizens of the State to which they belong in virtue of race, religion or language. This principle appears to apply, if possible, more forcibly to Palestine if the policy of the Jewish national home is really carried out than to any other country, but the policy which the Zionist Organisation wishes to follow in this matter would result in Palestine becoming full of Jews

who are not citizens of the country but retain their original nationality: this is on the assumption which we think fair, that unless Palestine citizenship is conferred on the immigrants by some automatic process, a very large number of them will never take the necessary steps to acquire it by application. I do not think any Mandatory would contemplate with equanimity the presence in Palestine of a large number of Jews, not citizens of the country nor entitled to take part in the political life but retaining their original nationality and entitled to the support of the country of which they are subjects if they find themselves in difficulties with the local authorities. Such a situation could not make for good government and moreover does not seem to be consistent with the idea of the Jewish national home. Would such countries as Poland or Rumania facilitate the emigration of Jews to Palestine if they knew that such emigrants would retain and claim the privileges secured to them there by the Minorities Treaties?

Your principle objection appears to be that not of making a declaration of desire not to receive Palestinian citizenship should be construed as a repudiation of the idea of the national home, but we are not clear why the fact of the declaration should be thus regarded while the fact of the unwillingness to accept Palestine citizenship which is not declared, should not be so regarded.

As to the objection that the period of one year was not long enough to enable Jews of the professional and middle class to decide whether to remain in Palestine permanently, Forbes Adam wrote:

If the idea of a national home is one in which Jews will settle if, after having looked round, they think they will like it ... this objection could be met by an extension of the period of one year within which the declaration is to be made ... but I fear that we differ on the point of principle and cannot therefore accept your clause, nor would it seem profitable or possible for us to put forward another formula until this difference is cleared up.⁴⁴

In the draft Mandate agreed upon in December 1919, it was concluded that Jews who, within seven years of the coming into force of the Peace Treaty, became resident in Palestine would, after the expiration of twelve months from the date of their arrival, have the right to obtain Palestinian citizenship by application. Failing such application they would become citizens, *ipso facto*, on the expiration of a period of two years from the date of their arrival unless within the said period they declared before a competent authority

their desire not to become citizens of Palestine. The Government of Palestine might permit such persons to remain in Palestine after the making of such declaration.

Defining components and objectives: The final formula

On 1 January, Forbes Adams and Robert Vansittart submitted the agreed upon draft Mandate to Lord Curzon, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. 'I think that on the whole this seems fair and reasonable except that the Arabs are rather forgotten. I would have thought that [more?] might be said as to their [...ection]'; Curzon remarked with irony.⁴⁵

On 18 March 1920, following a further process of formulation which did not essentially change the clauses referred to above, Vansittart sent Curzon an amended draft (of 15 March 1920), assuming that it would be discussed with the French before being submitted to the League of Nation's Council.⁴⁶ This time, Curzon's comments were far more critical: "'Development of a self-governing Commonwealth" [is] surely more dangerous', he wrote. 'It is a euphemism for a Jewish State. The very thing they accepted and that we disallow'. And Forbes Adam explained:

This Mandate, like the American draft for the 'A' Mandates, contemplates 'development' towards 'self-government' and the ultimate cessation of the Mandate. But it is quite true that instead of saying 'development of (or towards) self-government' or 'development of a self-governing State' we have used the word 'commonwealth' (not 'Jewish commonwealth') in order to meet the Zionists. Their plea was that such a wording of the mandate would mean more to Jewry both in the west and the east than some such phrase as 'self-government' or 'self-governing State' and they rely to some extent on the wording of the mandate to rouse the energy and zeal of the prospective immigrants. It is incidentally a peculiarly popular word in America!

The use of the phrase did not, to our mind, imply any acceptance in the mandate of the Jewish idea that the Palestinian State set up by the mandate would ever become a Jewish State. The mandate specifically aims at an independent and eventually self-governing Palestinian State or 'Commonwealth'. What the proportion of Palestinian citizens of Jewish origin will ultimately be as to that of Palestinian citizens of Arab origin, only time will show. For the rest, the use of the word 'Commonwealth' can hardly alarm Arabs because there is no precise Arabic equivalent for this word or for 'democracy'

or ‘republic’, and probably the word will have to be translated into ‘State’ in the Arabic version of the mandate.

And Curzon responded:

The question is not what was in the mind of those who put in the words, but what will be the interpretations put upon them (a) by the world, (b) by the Zionists. About this there cannot be a shadow of doubt and I personally will not be responsible for admitting them. Is Mr. Forbes Adam serious where [when?] he points out that we do not use the word Jewish Commonwealth? Of course not – as however we do not mean Arab or Syrian Commonwealth – why not be honest and say Jewish Commonwealth at once? That would be intelligible. But as it is contrary to every principle upon which we have hitherto stood, I at any rate cannot accept it.

As to Vansittart’s question: ‘... will it meet the difficulty if the word “Palestine” or “State” is substituted for “Commonwealth”?’ Curzon’s reply was decidedly negative:

It all turns on what we mean. The Zionists are after a Jewish State with the Arabs as hewers of wood and drawers of water. So are many British sympathisers with the Zionists. Whether you use the word Commonwealth or State that is what it will be taken to mean. That is not my view. I want the Arabs to have a chance and I don’t want a Hebrew State.’⁴⁷

The same day, 20 March 1920, on which this reply was written, Curzon commented on a minute by Sir John Tilley, who was in charge of the Foreign Office’s Eastern Department, a comment which shows his deep feelings on this issue. Tilley had remarked on the preamble to the draft Mandate in which the Balfour Declaration was quoted:

I notice that the Arab population are spoken of or included in ‘the non-Jewish communities’ which sounds as if there were a few Arab villages in a country full of Jews. I should have thought that it would have been well to say more about the existing population and their rights before beginning about the Jews. I suppose this point of view has been considered and overruled, otherwise I should have expected the Palestine Mandate to begin like the Syrian by paragraphs about helping and providing the country in the development of its

administration, being responsible for peace, order etc. and then an afterthought to provide for the Zionists.’

‘I think these points should be considered’, wrote Hardinge, Permanent Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. ‘So do I’, wrote Curzon, ‘I have never been consulted as to this Mandate at an earlier stage nor do I know from what negotiations it springs or on what undertakings it is based.’

Curzon agreed with Tilley that the whole approach was basically wrong:

Here is a country with 500.000 Arabs and 30.000 or is it 60.000 Jews (by no means all Zionists) acting upon the noble principle of self-determination, ending, with a splendid appeal to the League of Nations, we then proceed to draw up a document which reeks of Judaism in every paragraph and is an avowed constitution for a Jewish State. The poor Arabs are only allowed to look through the keyhole as a non-Jewish community.

It is quite clear that this Mandate has been drawn up by someone reeling under the fumes of Zionism. If we are all to submit to that intoxicant, this draft is all right. Perhaps there is no alternative. But I confess I would like to see something worded differently.

In this context, one can understand Curzon’s comment. Curzon also suggested, as the lesser of two evils, an alternative to the term ‘Commonwealth’: ‘I have no idea how far the case has been given away to the Zionists. If not I would prefer self-governing institutions.’

Forbes Adam, who replied that the nature of negotiations and understandings on which the Mandate was based had already been reported to Curzon on 1 January 1920, pointed out, once more, that: ‘It had been made quite clear throughout to the Zionists that we were not binding the F.O. or the Sec. of State or H.M.G. and the Mandate can be redrafted, but it would be helpful if we could be intimated on the precise lines of policy which such a redraft should be made.’ Regarding Sir John Tilley’s minute, Forbes Adam explained that the mention of ‘non-Jewish communities’ in the preamble to the Mandate merely reproduced textually the Allied declaration regarding a national home for the Jews in Palestine.⁴⁸ To be precise, what he meant was: the Balfour Declaration, which had been accepted by the Allies and in which the term ‘non Jewish communities’ was used.

On Hardinge’s instructions, Hubert W. Young, of the Foreign Office’s Eastern Department, checked the draft Mandate with Forbes Adam and suggested amendments that he believed changed the character of the draft

without destroying its basic principles. Young's amendments, which were made in the light of Tilley's and Curzon's comments, transferred the emphasis from the recognition given to the rights of the Jews to Mandatory responsibilities concerning the Arabs.

At the beginning of the preamble, before 'Recognising the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine', etc. a new sentence was inserted: 'The High Contracting Parties: Recognising that the Turkish Government have by article ... of the Treaty of Peace renounced all rights and title over Palestine; Desiring to constitute Palestine as independent state under guarantee of the League of Nations.'

In the third paragraph, the order which had been accepted in all versions since the Balfour Declaration was overturned and the clause relating to the responsibility for preserving the civil and religious rights of the Arabs was referred to before the obligations to the Jews. Moreover, the term 'self-governing Commonwealth' was replaced by 'self-governing institutions', as had been suggested by Curzon:

His Britannic Majesty's Government shall be responsible for preserving the civil and religious rights of all existing communities in Palestine and for placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the development of self-governing institutions and the establishment of the Jewish National Home without prejudice to the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

The second paragraph of the same article which read: 'It will consequently be the duty of His Britannic Majesty's Government, while promoting, in accordance with the provisions of the present Treaty, the measures designed to ensure the establishment of the Jewish National Home, to see that the rights and interests of the non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine, are not prejudiced' was deleted.

In the sixth article, dealing with Jewish immigration and close settlement, the order of British responsibilities was changed, but not the wording:

The Administration of Palestine while ensuring the established rights of the present population are equitably safeguarded, shall facilitate Jewish immigration and close settlement by Jews on the land in co-operation with the Jewish Agency referred to in Article 5 and shall open for such settlement all State lands and waste lands not required for public purposes and all other lands that can be made available.

The ninth article, dealing with the development of the country, was also amended. In the first paragraph, which stated that the development of the country would be reserved for Jewish bodies approved by the Jewish Agency, 'as may be organised to facilitate the development of the Jewish National Home', this objective was deleted. Moreover, the second paragraph, which stated: 'In the construction and operation of public works, services and utilities, and in the development of the natural resource of the country, the establishment of Jewish National Home shall be a guiding principle', was deleted entirely.

Article 21 was amended as well. The amended version did not state, as before, that the Jewish Sabbath and the Jewish holidays should be recognised by the Government as legal days of rest, without prejudice to the recognition of the days of rest for members of other communities. Instead it was stated, in general terms, that 'The Government shall recognise the holy days of the respective communities of the inhabitants of Palestine as legal days of rest for the members of such communities ...'⁴⁹

Young's version was further amended by Vansittart. These amendments were incorporated in the draft Mandate, of 10 June 1920, which was approved by an inter-departmental conference on Middle Eastern affairs. Then it was submitted by Curzon to the Cabinet for consideration, presented to the Allied Governments and finally submitted to the League of Nations' Council.⁵⁰

Vansittart's amendments did not include Young's addition to the beginning of the preamble, quoted above, as regards the desire to constitute Palestine as an independent state. Moreover, the first sentence of the preamble (untouched by Young), '... Recognising the historical connection of the Jewish people, and the claim that this gives them to reconstitute Palestine as their national home (Eretz Israel)', was deleted entirely. The preamble to the Mandate simply stated that Article 95 of the Treaty of Peace with Turkey provided that the Administration of Palestine be entrusted to a mandatory to be selected by the Principle Allied Powers:

and whereas by the said article it was provided that the said mandatory should be for putting into effect the declaration originally made on the 2nd November 1917, by the British Government, and adopted by the other Allied Powers, in favour of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, 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 country.

Young's suggestions as to the order of Britain's responsibilities, referred to in the third and sixth article, were endorsed as well (with two amendments: the wording 'the present population' was replaced by 'the native population' and the ending 'and all other lands that can be made available' was deleted). However, Young's version of the ninth article, dealing with the development of the country, was further altered: not only was the objective '... to facilitate the development of the Jewish National Home' deleted but also the reference to the Jewish Agency and 'such other Jewish bodies approved by it for the purposes of that article'.⁵¹

The version of 10 June 1920 was reduced further. The statement in Article 14 of previous drafts, that the administration of the Jewish educational system should be entrusted to the Jewish Agency or to such other agencies approved by it for the purpose – which had been endorsed by the British Delegation in its meeting with Zionist representatives on 15 July and incorporated, with slight changes in wording, in all the following drafts including Young's version – was removed from the 10 June draft. Instead it was stated, in Article 13 of the later version, that the right of each community to maintain its own schools for the education of its own members in its own language should not be denied or impaired. Likewise, the statement in Article 21 about recognising the Jewish Sabbath and Jewish holy days as legal days of rest was deleted in the 10 June draft. Instead, it was stated in Article 20 in accordance with Young's amendment that the administration of Palestine should recognise the holy days of the respective communities of the inhabitants of Palestine as legal days of rest for the members of such communities.

Furthermore, all clauses dealing with British obligations towards international institutions were deleted altogether. Therefore, Article 25 of the 15 March 1920 draft, which stated that the British Government recognised the obligations accepted under the Peace Treaty to be matters of international concern of which the League of Nations had jurisdiction, was removed as was Article 27 which stated that in any dispute whatever arising between members of the League of Nations relating to the interpretation or application of the Peace Treaty which could not be settled by friendly negotiation should be submitted to the Permanent Court of International Justice to be established by the League of Nations.

The 10 June version was the consequence not only of the deliberations of policy-makers at the British Foreign Office and their understanding of the objectives of the Mandate for Palestine but also of the need to take into account France's position on the pledges given in the Mandate to the Zionists. Curzon, who was far from agreeing with any wording which could give a generous interpretation of Britain's policy towards Zionist aspirations, had

to struggle hard at the meeting of the Supreme Council, held at San Remo on 24 April 1920, to even include the Balfour Declaration in the preamble of the Mandate for Palestine. The French were ready to endorse the principle embodied in the Balfour Declaration but not to quote it or even refer to it as an accepted official document. There was a long and tiring debate before the British Delegation managed to formulate a draft resolution for consideration to the effect that:

The high contracting parties agree to entrust, by application of the provisions of article 22, the administration of Palestine, within such boundaries as may be determined by the Principal Allied Powers, to a mandatory, to be selected by the said Powers. The mandatory will be responsible for putting into effect the declaration originally made on the 8th of November, 1917 [the date of the Declaration's publication by the press] by the British Government, and adopted by the other Allied Powers, in favour of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, 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.

However, in response to French demands, it was made clear that:

to accept the terms of the mandates article as given below with reference to Palestine on the understanding that there was inserted in the *procès-verbal* an undertaking by the mandatory Power that this would not involve the surrender of rights hitherto enjoyed by non-Jewish communities in Palestine; this undertaking not to refer to the question of the religious protectorate of France which had been settled earlier in the afternoon by the undertaking given by the French Government that they recognised this protectorate as being at an end.⁵²

The changes that led to the shortening of the preamble of the 10 June 1920 version were made on the assumption that this was as much as the French would accept and that a more detailed version could not serve as a basis for further discussion. However, these expectations were too optimistic. Alexander Millerand, the French Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, and Philippe Berthelot, head of the Political Department and later the Secretary-General of the French Foreign Ministry who represented France at the San Remo Conference, were horrified on reading the formula presented to them.

Vansittart regarded this as an opportunity and recommended that Britain would rely on the French opposition as a pretext for further watering down the draft Mandate. This proposal was acceptable to Curzon, who wrote in reply that he was willing to water down the Palestine Mandate which he did not trust.⁵³

However, at this point, the Zionists realised that the draft was being watered down. Once the Zionists received the 10 June 1920 version, Weizmann protested both against the fact that the revised draft of the Mandate was prepared without consulting the Zionist Organisation or even affording it an opportunity of submitting its observations – notwithstanding the long negotiations that had been carried on with them previously (the draft of 15 March 1920 was the last communicated to them) – and especially against the far-reaching alterations of substance the revised draft involved. Weizmann assumed that the paragraph in the original preamble, recognising the historic connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and the claim which this gave them to Palestine as their National Home, was omitted in the revised draft because it was thought to be superfluous. He argued that this paragraph expressed awareness not merely of the existence of a Jewish State in Palestine in remote antiquity but the vital significance which Palestine had never ceased to have for the entire Jewish people throughout the dispersion. He argued that it was thus the fundamental basis of the policy which the Mandate embodied.

Furthermore, Weizmann stated that, while the Mandatory obligation to preserve the rights of the existing population was readily acknowledged, the Jewish National Home should be in the forefront of the duties assumed by it. The inversion of order of ideas in the revised draft had the effect of relegating the Jewish aspect to a secondary place. Weizmann submitted a modified formula which, while not less effectively emphasising the rights of the non-Jewish population, would have, in his opinion, the advantage of being considerably more acceptable to Jewish opinion. It read:

The Mandatory shall, while safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all inhabitants of Palestine irrespective of race or faith be responsible for placing the country under such ... conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home and the development, etc., it being understood that the establishment of the Jewish national home shall be without prejudice to the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

As to the substitution of 'Self-governing institutions' for 'Self-governing commonwealth', Weizmann only commented that the new wording was open

to misconstruction. In addition, he protested against: the elimination of the statement that the establishment of a Jewish national home should be a guiding principle; the reduction of the role of the Jewish Agency; the use of the word 'native'; the elimination of the paragraph entrusting Jewish education to the Jewish Agency; and the omission of any express allusion to the Jewish Sabbath and holy days of rest. Weizmann also protested against deleting of the articles of the 15 March draft under which the obligations accepted by the Mandatory were recognised as matters of international concern and a provision was made for reference of disputes arising out of the Mandate to the Permanent Court of International Justice.⁵⁴

Weizmann not only made these observations on the revised draft Mandate but also turned to Balfour. According to Weizmann, Balfour at once agreed that the clause regarding the connection between the Jewish people and Palestine 'ought to be re-inserted in the preamble and that the recital was highly important in order to make clear the basis of Palestinian settlement and to reconcile it with the accepted principles of self-determination.'⁵⁵ Weizmann also wrote to Herbert Samuel, who had just started holding office as High Commissioner for Palestine, and reported to him on his observations, hoping that the latter would protest as well against the further whittling-down of the definition of the concept Jewish National Home, which ought to be the guiding principle of the British Mandate and of activities towards the development of Palestine.⁵⁶

On 2 August 1920, Robert Vansittart sent Curzon a new draft Mandate which had been formulated in Paris. This draft was prepared according to the instructions of Curzon, who thought that the previous version was too complicated and might cause difficulties for the future British administration of Palestine. He instructed the formulators to limit themselves to general principles and to adapt to circumstances without causing any vital injury to Zionist interests and without provoking other elements.

After more objections by the French, who were not satisfied even with the draft of 10 June 1920, which had taken into consideration their demands, Vansittart's new draft further watered down the essence of the Jewish National Home. Under French pressure, Article 5 went through a significant change and the preferential right given to the Jewish Agency in matters of public works, services and utilities, as well as developing natural resources was eliminated from Vansittart's draft. However, Article 12 of Vansittart's draft stated that the administration of Palestine should have full power to provide for public ownership or control of the natural resources or of public

works, services and utilities which it might arrange with the Jewish Agency upon fair and equitable terms to construct or operate those resources and works. In other words, working with the Jewish Agency would not be compulsory.⁵⁷ The Article stating that the Administration of Palestine should facilitate Jewish immigration was changed to the effect that it would facilitate only suitable Jewish immigration. Furthermore, taking into account French concern of a possible conflict with French Law, the article dealing with the issue of citizenship, that had led to a Zionist protest,⁵⁸ was changed too. Vansittart's draft reduced the article to 'The administration of Palestine will be responsible for enacting a nationality law so framed as to facilitate the acquisition of Palestine citizenship by Jews who take up their permanent residence in Palestine'. The article regarding official languages was changed as well. At Samuel's suggestion, Arabic was placed before Hebrew. It stated that English, Arabic and Hebrew should be the official languages of Palestine and should be employed *inter alia* on the stamps and money of Palestine. On the other hand, the Zionists' suggestion that the term 'the present population' should be used instead of 'the native population' was accepted and the French demand that it should be stated here, too, that the rights of the Arabs should not be prejudiced, was ignored. The Zionist protest against the elimination of the articles of the 15 March draft, under which the obligations accepted by the Mandatory were recognised as matters of international concern and a provision was made for reference of disputes arising out of the Mandate to the Permanent Court of International Justice, was accepted. The formula of the March draft, which had allowed submission of disputes to the permanent Court of International Justice, was reinserted in Vansittart's draft.

Vansittart was aware that the Zionists would not be satisfied with the new draft. However, he believed that the modifications would not seriously harm Zionist interests, nor affect British policy towards them in any significant way. The best way of carrying out this policy, he explained to the Zionists, was to go quietly ahead without announcing all one's intentions with a red flag in advance. In order to make it easier for the Zionists 'to swallow the other less palatable alterations', in his own words, Vansittart reinserted in the preamble the sentence recognising 'the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and the claim which this gives them to reconstitute it [as] their national home'. However, the sentence was inserted after quoting the Balfour Declaration and not before it, as in the drafts which had preceded the June version. Vansittart explained, in his letter to Curzon of 2 August, that the Zionists had always attached great importance to this sentence and strongly objected to its elimination and that, in his opinion, it could be restored without causing harm.⁵⁹

The restoration of the 'historical connection' was, of course, welcomed by the Zionists. However, it did not hinder them from objecting to 'the less palatable alterations'. In a letter to Curzon, of 11 August 1920, Weizmann protested against the omission of the ultimate objective, namely 'a self-governing Commonwealth'. Unlike in his previous protest, when he was content with commenting that the term 'self-governing institutions' might lead to mistaken interpretations, Weizmann reasoned now that, while Jewish opinion was aware of the fact that a responsible government in Palestine could not be fully achieved for many years to come, the Mandate ought to contemplate its gradual and eventual realisation. Weizmann also objected to the wording, in the same article, which secured the rights of existing communities and argued that it might serve to perpetuate abuses and interfere with the progressive development of the country. Instead of securing the rights of existing communities, he stated, the rights of all inhabitants should be secured. Weizmann suggested writing: 'The mandatory shall be responsible to placing the country under such political administration and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home as laid down in the Preamble, and the development of self-governing Commonwealth, and for the safeguarding of civil and religious rights of all inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race or religion ...'

Moreover, Weizmann protested against the omission of any reference to the principle that the Jewish Agency should have priority in developing public works and natural resources, and against the direction to the Mandatory to facilitate just 'suitable' Jewish immigration. He argued that the suggestion that some Jews might not be acceptable merely because of their country of origin would cause resentment among the Jewish people.⁶⁰

Curzon stuck to his opinion that these modifications to the Mandate were necessary. In a letter to Samuel (who had received from Weizmann a copy of his letter to Curzon), Curzon defended the revised draft against the Zionist attack. This draft, according to him, was 'milder than the original one and Zionism does not stand out quite so proudly across the pages. But I think this is good policy ...'⁶¹ However, Curzon was not happy with the initiative taken by Vansittart in Paris to restore the recognition given to the historical connection in the preamble while he, Curzon (at Vansittart's own advice), made it clear to Weizmann that he could not allow that phrase. 'It is certain to be made the basis of all sorts of claims in the future', he commented. 'I do not myself recognise that the connection of Jews with Palestine, which terminated 1200 years ago, gives them any claim whatsoever. On this principle we have a stronger claim to parts of France.'⁶²

On 24 and 25 August 1920, both the 2 August draft and the Zionist protest were discussed by an InterDepartmental Committee headed by Sir John Tilley and attended by the Director of Military Intelligence of the War Office, Sir William Thwaites, Gilbert Clayton, The Legal Adviser to the Foreign Office, Sir Cecil Hurst and representatives of the War Office, the Treasury, the Home Office and the Board of Trade.⁶³ The Committee got Curzon's message about the danger involved in the term 'claim' which the historical connection to Palestine gave the Jews to reconstitute it as their National Home. This term 'claim', as mentioned above, was suggested by Balfour as an alternative to the term 'right' in the Zionists' draft of 3 February 1919, and was endorsed by all formulators of succeeding drafts. According to Curzon, in his Memorandum of 30 November 1920, two arguments were made at the Committee meeting. The first was:

that, while the Powers had unquestionably recognised the historical connection of the Jews with Palestine by their formal acceptance of the Balfour Declaration and their textual incorporation of it in the Turkish Peace Treaty drafted at San Remo, this was far from constituting anything in the nature of a legal claim, and that the use of such words might be...used as the basis of all sorts of political claims by the Zionists, for the control of Palestinian administration in the future

The second stated:

that, while Mr. Balfour's Declaration had provided for the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine, this was not the same thing as reconstitution of Palestine as a Jewish National Home – an extension of the phrase for which there was no justification, and was certain to be employed in the future as the basis for claims of the character to which I have referred.⁶⁴

Therefore, the committee suggested that the sentence should be lopped: the recognition of the 'historical connection' should remain intact but the second part of the sentence 'and the claim which this gives them to constitute [*sic!* according to the protocol, unlike "re-constitute", in the Zionist version] it their national home' be omitted.

The same attitude was also displayed with regard to Article 3. The Zionists amendment: 'safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race or religion' was endorsed. However, their demand that the Mandate's ultimate goal: 'self-governing

Commonwealth' should be included in the text, was refused. The Committee also rejected the Zionist proposal for restoring the claim of preference for the Jewish Agency.

The Zionist argument about 'suitable' Jewish immigration was accepted and a compromise wording was suggested: 'The Administration of Palestine, while ensuring that the rights and position of the general population are adequately safeguarded, shall facilitate, under suitable conditions, Jewish immigration and close settlement by Jews on the land, including State lands and waste lands not required for public purposes, in co-operation with the Jewish Agency referred to in Article 5'.

The article dealing with the official language, in which the order of the languages was changed, did not draw any Zionist objection but the Treasury representative suggested that the article should just deal with the official languages without specifying that the languages should be used on stamps and money.⁶⁵

The inter-departmental committee's proposals were incorporated in a new draft prepared by Cecil Hurst, the legal adviser to the Foreign Office. The word 'claim' was removed from the sentence regarding the 'historical Connection'; the wording, suggested by the Zionists, as to safeguarding the rights of the inhabitants was incorporated in Article 3; and the article dealing with the Jewish Agency was altered.

The article dealing with Jewish immigration was re-drafted as well: 'The Administration of Palestine, while ensuring that the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced, shall facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions and shall encourage in co-operation with the Jewish agency referred to in Article 6 close settlement by Jews on the land, including State lands and waste lands not required for public purposes'. In addition, the article about official languages was rephrased. It did mention the inscriptions on stamps and money but in a less strict form: 'English, Arabic and Hebrew shall be the official languages of Palestine. Any statement[s] or inscriptions in Arabic on stamps or money in Palestine shall be repeated in Hebrew and any statements or inscriptions in Hebrew shall be repeated in Arabic'.⁶⁶

On 25 September 1920, Curzon circulated for the approval of the Cabinet Hurst's revised draft, with one significant alteration: both parts of the sentence recognising the 'historical connection', not only the second part, were eliminated.⁶⁷

Once again the Zionists found themselves on the battlefield. Weizmann approached Lloyd George, Balfour, Secretary of State for Colonies Viscount Alfred Milner and Herbert Samuel. He protested both against stripping the Mandate of recognition of the historical connection of the Jewish people

and Palestine and also against limiting the preference to be given to the Jewish Agency. Devoid of these clauses – he argued – the Mandate becomes, from a Jewish point of view, almost valueless, since it would become a serious hindrance to achieving the whole-hearted support of the Jewish people which was so needed for the development of the National Home.⁶⁸

To this, Curzon responded in a letter to Balfour:

The Zionists rest their claim to have this sentence introduced upon the plea that it will enable them to raise more money in America for the development of Palestine. I may say, in passing, that I attach very little importance to this plea. The important thing is that we got the Balfour declaration – you will remember how hard a fight I made for it – into the Treaty of San Remo and that is the Magna Charta of the Zionists. What they really want this particular clause in the Mandate for is, not in order to get money now, but in order that this sentence may be the foundation on which, at every stage, they may build a claim for preferential treatment in Palestine, and ultimately for the complete government of the country ... It is impossible now, after our agreement with the French and Italians, to press at the last hour for the re-insertion of words which we have agreed to exclude. As a matter of fact, I think that the Mandate is much better without them. They will only give rise to constant disputes in the future as to what is the exact meaning of the National Home, and the precise nature of the historical claim possessed by the Jewish people. Their historical connection with Palestine is undisputed, and it has largely influenced the Powers in giving them the opportunity of resuming it. But I do not see that it gives them a claim any greater than that of any other people to go back to a country from which they had been expatriated many hundreds of years ago ...⁶⁹

This, together with Curzon's previous comments, reflects his perception of British pro-Zionist policy and his understanding of the meaning of the term Jewish National Home. In summary, in Curzon's opinion, endorsing the policy of constituting the Jewish National Home in Palestine obliged the British Government to enable the Jews to immigrate to Palestine and settle there on the land without granting them any preferences in comparison with other sections of the population. He could not accept the argument that the Jews as a nation laid claim to a special status in Palestine in order to constitute their National Home there, and definitely not to reconstitute it. He objected, not only to any claim which might be interpreted as giving

preferential rights but also to the use of the historical connection between the Jewish people and Palestine as a basis for such a claim. He believed that the Jewish people could not claim Palestine, based on the fact or memory that Palestine used to be theirs in the distant past, even if that memory was still alive and vivid. In other words, Curzon rejected the Zionist assumption that the Jews, being a nation, had the right to return to Palestine, rebuild themselves as a nation and reconstitute their home there. The argument that the Zionists were demanding a clearer formulation of their rights since they were in need of backing to enable the development of Palestine was, in Curzon's opinion, of secondary importance. He believed that the Zionists were hoping that such a backing would prepare the ground for other claims and demands and create a precedent to which they could refer and which would allow them to interpret British and Zionist views as identical. This he was trying to prevent.

In the process of implementing his idea of the pro-Zionist British policy, Curzon found himself in polar opposition to his predecessor at the Foreign Office, Arthur James Balfour. Balfour, unlike Curzon, had accepted the Zionist point of view from the beginning and had supported it ever since becoming aware of it. Furthermore, he believed that Zionism accorded with the principle of self-determination which had been endorsed by the Allies towards the end of the War. He thought that the Jewish people as a whole (and not only the Jewish communities in the lands of their dwellings) had the right to self-determination as a nation and that they should be allowed to implement their wish to constitute a National Home in Palestine. Moreover, Balfour believed that this wish and the British Government's readiness to endorse the obligation dictated by the Mandate on Palestine were complementary. He thought that it was in Britain's interest to give the Zionists the incentive they were requesting to develop the country and to formulate Britain's obligation to the Jewish people explicitly.

On 5 November 1920, Balfour was confined to bed and thus not able to raise the question of the Mandate at a Cabinet meeting that day. He issued a written appeal to members of Cabinet, explaining:

Zionism is a new experiment, and one which depends for its success not merely upon the tact and judgment of the British administrators in Palestine, but upon Jewish sentiment throughout the world. If financial assistance is not forthcoming, and forthcoming on an immense scale, from the Jewish people outside Palestine, it is quite impossible that those economic developments can be undertaken and carried through on which the success of the whole experiment depends. Every legitimate effort should therefore be made to lighten

the task of the Zionist leaders who have got to make a worldwide appeal to their co-religionists.

Now all the changes made in the successive editions of the Mandate are of a kind which will increase, rather than diminish, the difficulties of Dr. Weizmann, Judge Brandeis, and their friends. They hold this themselves very strongly, and I am bound to say that I agree with them.

By further whittling down the phrases which appeal most to Zionist sentiment, you discourage your friends. Whom do you placate? Zionism has many friends whose ardour will be cooled, and whose suspicions will be roused by the change of tone and manner in the Mandate even if unaccompanied by a change in its essential substance. These changes therefore will get you no new supporters, but will damp the ardour of many old ones; and it is on the ardour of the old ones that our hopes of success depend. The Zionist leaders, endeavouring, on one side, to deal with the masses of poverty-stricken and oppressed Jews, who wildly exaggerate what Zionism can do for their race, and, on the other, appealing for financial assistance throughout the world, have got a task of extraordinary difficulty before them. They may fail; but if they fail we are involved in their failure; and it is not only obviously right, but obviously prudent, to assist them every way we can.⁷⁰

After a further Cabinet meeting on 18 November 1920, Balfour had a conversation with Curzon in which the Prime Minister Lloyd George participated. Lloyd George's opinion was – Balfour gathered – that the original form of the Mandate should, broadly speaking, be maintained but that the words 'preferential rights' in Article 5 should be cut out. Balfour, too, believed that these words should be deleted. After the Prime Minister had left, Curzon expressed his readiness to compromise on the preamble by retaining the first half of the sentence about 'recognising the historical connection' and rejecting the second half in which the word 'claim' was introduced. He told Balfour that he was sure that if 'any claim on the part of the Jews' was admitted they would use this to extract from the Mandatory Power every concession which they could. Therefore, Curzon intimated that, short of a Cabinet decision, he could not give way on this point.

On the same evening, Balfour proposed to Curzon a revised formula deleting the word 'claim' and recognising 'the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and the moral reasons [or] grounds for reconstituting that country as their National Home'. 'I do not think', Balfour noted, 'that even the most cantankerous Zionist could base any juridical claim on such a statement as this!'⁷¹

Curzon accepted the proposal. The term 'grounds' replaced the term 'claim' and, in the draft Mandate circulated to the Cabinet by Curzon on 30 November 1920, the sentence dealing with the 'historical connection' was restored to its place in the preamble.⁷² From that point on, the same revised formula remained in the draft Mandates: both in the draft submitted to the League of Nations Council for approval on 7 December 1920 (Cmd 1176) and in the final draft, submitted to the League of Nations Council in August 1921 (Cmd 1500). The rest of the articles preserved Hurst's wording.

The Jewish Council: First drafts

The issue of the mechanism with which to implement the idea of the Jewish National Home had already been considered by the Zionist leaders in London before the Balfour Declaration was made. The Zionists believed that their aspirations could be fulfilled within the framework of a Charter company for land settlement and development. This company was included in the Demands, formulated in 1916 and, in 1917, it was discussed with Mark Sykes – who had already supported the idea of a Charter company early in 1916 when rejecting Grey's proposal concerning Palestine – and detailed plans had already been prepared, dealing with its rights and areas of activities.⁷³ However, towards the end of 1918, the Advisory Committee on Palestine, headed by Herbert Samuel, was convinced that the time for charter companies, characteristic of colonial regimes, had past.⁷⁴ The Advisory Committee, the constitution of which reflected a desire for cooperation between the Zionist Organisation and non-Zionist bodies towards future implementation of the Balfour Declaration, wanted there to be a representative body which could take responsibility in the name of the Jewish people. Therefore, it was suggested in the Proposals, submitted on 19 November 1918, that a Jewish Council for Palestine, with 'the development of a Jewish National Home' as its declared object, should be constituted. The constitution of the Council was, according to the proposal, to be determined by an All-Jewish Congress to be held in Jerusalem within a period of two years from the signing of peace. Meanwhile, a Provisional Council was to be formed consisting of representatives of the Zionist Organisation, the Jewish population of Palestine and of other Jewish Organisations, approved by the mandatory Power, as were willing to cooperate in the development of the Jewish National Home.⁷⁵

The composition of the Jewish Council was supposed to show that not only the Zionist Organisation but the Jewish people as a whole were involved in the development of Palestine and the founding of the Jewish National Home. The establishment of the Council was meant to prove that the Jewish

people had serious intentions and a real capacity to expand the economic absorption of Palestine and to increase the Jewish population of the country without harming the local inhabitants. Moreover, the Jewish Council was to implement the principle of the connection between the Jewish people and Palestine, the land of Israel. In a period when the principle of the self-determination of nations was cherished, the Jewish Council would reflect the recognition that the Jewish people, as a whole, had a right to self-determination in Palestine. This was in contrast to the attitude which took into consideration only the Jewish population of Palestine, which constituted only 10 per cent of the country's population and whose claim to self-determination was insignificant in comparison to that of the Arabs.

The scope of the Jewish Council's functions, proposed in November 1918, reflected the expected development of Palestine: the Council was to submit plans concerning acquisition of lands and promotion of Jewish land settlement as well as schemes for the irrigation of the country. It was also to use its funds to promote the development of the country as a whole. Furthermore, it was proposed that the Jewish Council should have priority in undertaking public works required for development, that it should promote and organise Jewish immigration into Palestine, organise and develop a complete system of education for the Jews of Palestine, with Hebrew as the language of instruction, and obtain control of the Jewish Holy Places.

Once these proposals were submitted to the Foreign Office, Ormsby Gore and Eyre Crowe commented only on the issue of Jewish Council control of the Jewish Holy Places and the problems which might arise in cases where Jewish Holy Places were also Muslim and Christian Holy Places. Robert Cecil, on the other hand, was worried that the land settlement paragraph might cause frictions with the Arabs and suggested that Weizmann should reach an understanding about it with Faisal.⁷⁶

In response to the Foreign Office demand for a definition of the Jewish Holy Places, the Zionists prepared a list of the Jewish Holy Places in Palestine.⁷⁷ However, in their Proposals of December 1918, they ignored the matter of controlling the Jewish Holy Places and only mentioned that the Jewish Council would have no concern with the Christian or Muslim Holy Places.⁷⁸ The rest of the Jewish Council's functions remained unchanged. The only significant alteration made in the December 1918 version was, as mentioned above, in the definition of the objective of the Jewish Council, namely not 'a National Home' but 'a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine'.

The Zionist Proposals of January 1919⁷⁹ were also far-reaching when dealing with the authority to be invested in the Jewish Council, in governmental institutions and economic development. It was proposed that

the Council should be 'recognised as an independent legal entity and endowed with adequate powers to assist in the development of a Jewish Palestine'. In other words, it should have the power to undertake the development of education, immigration, close land settlement, credit facilities, public works, services and enterprises and every other form of activity conducive to the development of the country and the general welfare of its inhabitants. As regards the powers to be given to the Jewish Council in government, it was proposed that the chief executive officer, the Governor (a Jew, as mentioned above), would be selected in consultation with the Council. In terms of economic development, it was proposed that the Governor, in council, should have the exclusive right to grant concessions but that no concession should be granted unless the Jewish Council was given the opportunity beforehand of first refusal. In the matter of lands acquisition, it was proposed that the Jewish Council should take over waste lands, unoccupied lands and state lands, should acquire by purchase all lands belonging to private owners and exceeding in extent a certain maximum area at a price to be fixed by a land court. In order to make the country productive, the Jewish Council would undertake to forward comprehensive plans for irrigation, drainage and other public works. The Jewish Council should act as the trustee of the Jewish People; it should make no private profit; the land and all the rights appertaining thereto should be held for the common use and benefit of the people and would not be sold to individuals. However, as has been discussed, the proposals were rejected outright and not even discussed with the Zionists.

In the final version, of 3 February 1919, of the Zionist Proposals to be presented to the Peace Conference it was stated that, in promoting Jewish immigration and close settlement on the land, the Mandatory Power should accept the cooperation of a Council, representative of the Jews of Palestine and of the world, that might be established for the development of the Jewish National Home in Palestine, as well as entrusting the organisation of Jewish education to such a Council. It was further stated that, on being satisfied that the constitution of such a Council precluded the making of private profit, the Mandatory Power should give the Council priority in any concession for public works or for the development of natural resources which it might be found desirable to grant.

In a special chapter dealing with the Jewish Council for Palestine, the detailed powers to be granted to the Council left no room for doubt as to Zionist goals:

1. A Jewish Council for Palestine shall be elected by a Jewish Congress representative of the Jews of Palestine and of the world, which shall

be convoked in Jerusalem on or before the First day of January, 1920 or as soon thereafter as possible by the Provisional Jewish Council hereinafter mentioned.

The Jewish Congress shall determine its functions as well as the constitution and functions of the Jewish Council in conformity with the purpose and spirit of the Declarations of the Peace Conference and the powers conferred by the Mandatory Power upon the Jewish Council.

2. The Jewish Council shall be recognized as a legal entity and shall have power:
 - (a) To co-operate and consult with and to assist the Government of Palestine in any and all matters affecting the Jewish people in Palestine and in all such cases to be and to act as the representative of the Jewish people.
 - (b) To participate in the development and administration of immigration, close land settlement, credit facilities, public works, services and enterprises, and every other form of activity conducive to the development of the country. The organisation of Jewish education should be entrusted to such Council.
 - (c) To acquire and hold real estate.
 - (d) To acquire and exercise concessions for public works and the development of natural resources.
 - (e) With the consent of the Jewish inhabitants concerned or their accredited representatives, to assess such inhabitants for the purpose of stimulating and maintaining education, communal, charitable and other public institutions (including the Jewish Council) and other activities primarily concerned with the welfare of the Jewish people in Palestine.
 - (f) With the approval of the Mandatory Power and upon such terms and conditions as the Mandatory Power may prescribe, to administer the immigration laws of Palestine in so far as they affect Jewish immigration.
 - (g) With the approval of the Mandatory Power, to issue bonds, debentures, or other obligations, the proceeds of any or all of which to be expended by the Jewish Council for the benefit of the Jewish people or for the development of Palestine.
 - (h) The Jewish Council shall hold all of its property and income in trust for the benefit of the Jewish people.
3. A Provisional Jewish Council of representatives of the Zionist Organisation, of the Jewish population of Palestine, and of such

other approved Jewish organisations as are willing to co-operate in the development of a Jewish Palestine shall be formed forthwith by the Zionist Organisation. Such Provisional Jewish Council shall exercise all the powers and perform all the duties of the Jewish Council until such time as the Council [will] be formally Jewish constituted by the Jewish Congress.

4. Finally when in the opinion of the Mandatory Power, the inhabitants of Palestine shall be able to undertake the establishment of representative and responsible government, such steps shall be taken as will permit the establishment of such government through the exercise of a democratic franchise without regard to race or faith; and the inhabitants of Palestine under such government, shall continue to enjoy equal civil and political rights as citizens irrespective of race or faith.⁸⁰

In the Middle East Political Section of the British Delegation to the Peace Conference, which was examining the objectives, authority and privileges to be granted to the Jewish Council, the dangers involved in going beyond the original intention were considered. Forbes Adam criticised the granting of a political position and privileges to the proposed Jewish Council which would be considered the representative body not only of the Jews dwelling in Palestine but also of Jewish organisations abroad. Both Louis Mallet and Ormsby Gore objected to granting political or administrative functions to the Jewish Council. However, while Mallet thought that the Jewish Council should be merely a consultative body and have no powers of administration in Palestine, as this might embarrass the Governor, Ormsby Gore objected to recognising it as a consultative body at all. He believed that it should be recognised as a non-profit making chartered company to prevent land speculation and undertake the draining of the marshes, building railways and harbours, forestation and reclamation of waste lands, development of water power, etc. Such a body would collect non-dividend earnings from Jews all over the world and would invest in developing Palestine for the Palestinian population. It should also select the immigrants and be responsible for them.

As to Balfour's comment that Article 5(I) in the Zionists 'Proposals to be presented to the Peace Conference', referring to a Jewish Commonwealth, contradicted Article 5(IV), which secured civil rights based on equality with no discrimination on grounds of religion or of race, Ormsby Gore replied, relying on Balfour's statement about the prospects of British and foreign companies being granted concessions in Palestine,⁸¹ that:

There must be civil, religious and political equality between Jews and non-Jews in Palestine. Such privileges as can be granted to the Jews in order to facilitate the development of the national home must be economic and not political, i.e. they must be given land, concessions, public works etc. on defined conditions. The political development of the Jewish national home can only come after a very large increase in Jewish population. Conditions must therefore be established which will encourage this increase.

Ormsby Gore was, therefore, ready to accept the Zionist Organisation's proposals for the Jewish Council for Palestine on condition that they were limited to the articles dealing with its economic functions (2,b,c,d,g&h), while the articles dealing with political and administrative functions (2,a,e&f) were eliminated. This opinion was also endorsed by Malkin, the legal adviser to the British delegation to the Peace Conference.

Moreover, Ormsby Gore added a reservation to his suggestion to recognise the Jewish Council as a non-profit making chartered company to prevent land speculation. He objected to inserting that suggestion into the Mandate to be conferred by the Peace Conference or the League of Nations. He explained that, if leading Zionists sat on the governors' council in Palestine, their activities would be more useful than on a body which, unless carefully limited, might become 'an imperium in imperio'.⁸²

Arnold Toynbee did not believe that the limitations suggested by Ormsby Gore were sufficient. He saw a danger even in the mere establishment of an economic body. In response to a report by Ormsby Gore on a conversation he had had with Baron Edmond de Rothschild on the issue of the Jewish Council, in which Baron de Rothschild had suggested that a non-profit Public Utility Society should be elected by and composed of Palestinian Jews and controlled by a board of experienced directors and businessmen in order to develop the Jewish National Home as well as Palestine and to provide work for Jewish immigrants, Toynbee wrote:

There is certainly a danger that professed by [sic] economic council might, by securing practically a monopoly of the material development of Palestine, obtain an irresistible political leverage, and might develop by rapid stages into just what we want to avoid – namely, a Zionist State within a Palestinian State.

If the Jews ask for us as mandatory, they must trust us to carry out the letter and the spirit of Mr. Balfour's declaration, and must refrain from the attempt (however natural it may be) to reinsure themselves by securing a Zionist organisation in Palestine which would trench in

the proper functions of the Palestinian Govt. and the mandatory Power.⁸³

Lord Hardinge summed up the whole discussion in one sentence: 'Please see Art[icle] 27 of the Draft Treaty annexed herewith. A Jewish National Home is all that we propose to be bound to create or to facilitate its creation.'⁸⁴ Balfour and Milner merely signed with their initials.

Article 27, indeed, did not explicitly mention the Jewish Council and did not detail its functions. It simply stated that 'the Government of Palestine will have full power to reserve the development of the country for local interests, including the Zionist Organisation and such other Jewish bodies as may be organised to facilitate the development of the Jewish National Home and are officially recognised by the Governor'. In other words, it made room for the idea which provided the basis for the Jewish Council without calling it that by name.

Balfour's comments on the Zionist Organisation 'Statement', which initiated the process of incorporating some of the Zionist proposals into the draft Mandate, reopened discussion about the Jewish Council. The Zionist Organisation, in its 'Statement' of 27 February 1919, had proposed that the Mandatory Power, while promoting Jewish immigration and settlement on the land, would accept the cooperation of a Council, representative of the Jews of Palestine and the world, that might be established for the development of the Jewish National Home in Palestine and that it would entrust the organisation of Jewish education to such a Council. In addition, it was proposed that the Mandatory Power, if satisfied that the council's constitution prevented it making a private profit, would give the Council priority in any contract for public works or for the development of natural resources. According to Balfour's amended version, however, it would be the duty of the Mandatory Power to establish a Council or councils representing Jewish opinion both in Palestine and in the world generally to help and advise on administrative, educational and economic questions affecting the Jewish population.⁸⁵ In other words, Balfour's version differed from the Zionist Organisation on two basic principles: it entrusted the establishment of the council to Britain and avoided granting the Council any authority, even in the field of Jewish education.

The committee of experts, which was convened by the Foreign Office on 21 and 22 March, widened the discussion. Not only did it endorse Balfour's version of the source of authority of the Jewish Council, it also

objected to its composition. The proposals of the Zionist Organisation included, as mentioned above, a method according to which the Council would become representative of world Jewry. Firstly, a provisional Jewish Council of representatives of the Zionist Organisation, of the Jewish population of Palestine and of other such Jewish organisations as were willing to co-operate in the development of a Jewish Palestine should be set up. Later, a permanent Jewish Council should be elected by an international Jewish Congress, representative of the Jews of Palestine and of the world. At the experts' Committee meeting, however, James de Rothschild expressed his fear that Jews with an anti-British orientation might take control of the elected Council. Therefore, it was agreed by the committee that the Provisional Council should either be 40 per cent or a third, nominated by the Mandatory, and 60 per cent or two thirds, elected by a Jewish Congress. It was also suggested that the terminology to be eventually inserted in the draft Mandate should be: 'The Provisional Council will eventually be superseded by a Council, a majority of which shall be elected by the Jewish Congress but the Governor (or Governor in Council) shall retain the right to nominate a percentage of members.'⁸⁶ In order to strengthen British control, James de Rothschild suggested that the Provisional Council should be located in Palestine or within the jurisdiction of the Mandatory. Mallet suggested a different solution: that the council should have its headquarters in London.⁸⁷

Another issue which was brought up by Malkin and considered by the experts' committee was the question of the functions of the provisional Council. Malkin thought that Balfour's amendments were deficient since the Council would lack authorisation to implement the task it was constituted for and it was not clear how it was to take part in the development of the country and to provide – under efficient Governmental control – the necessary funding. The committee accepted Malkin's suggestion and, in Article 9 of the draft Mandate which was prepared by Malkin following the committee's meeting, it was stated:

The British Government will provide for the establishment of a Provisional Council representing Jewish opinion both in Palestine and in the world generally. Its functions will be to advise the Government of Palestine on such administrative, educational and economic question as affect the interests of the Jewish population, and, subject always to the control of the Government of Palestine, to assist and take part in the development of the country. The Government of Palestine may grant to the Provisional Council, or to similar bodies organised or approved by the Provisional Council, concessions for public works

or similar undertakings, provided that any dividends distributed by the Provisional Council or such similar bodies shall not exceed five per cent per annum, and any further profits shall be utilised under trust for the benefit of the country. In grant of such concessions preferential consideration shall be given to the Provisional Council and any similar bodies organised or approved by it.

It was further stated that the provisional Council would enter upon its functions as soon as the Government of Palestine was established and that it would eventually be superseded by and its functions transferred to a permanent Council, the majority of which would be elected by the Jewish Congress, the Government of Palestine retaining the right to nominate a percentage of the members.

Moreover, in the clause dealing with the country's development, which stated that the Government of Palestine would have the power to reserve the development of the country for local interests, a sentence was added: 'including the Councils referred to in Article 9 and such other bodies as may be organised to facilitate the development of the Jewish national Home and are officially recognised by the Government.' The same article also stated that, in order to avoid the evils of land speculation, no person except a citizen of Palestine and no company or other corporation except Zionist organisations officially recognised by the Government, should occupy more than twenty dunam of land without special permission of the Government.⁸⁸

The experts' suggestions were inserted into the draft Mandate of 26 May 1919, where supervision of the Jewish Council was more explicitly secured. A sentence was added to Article 9 which secured the Government power to nominate some of the provisional Council's members and it was clearly stated that Council should have its headquarters in London. Another amendment – small but significant – which was inserted in the 26 May version, was in the wording of the obligation to establish a Jewish Council. The government was to 'promote' rather than 'provide for' the establishment of a Jewish Council. It seems that the drafters did not take into account Mallet's argument that this amendment did not achieve the objective of the new wording which was to retain some control of the Council.⁹⁰

The differences between Balfour and the Zionists in terms of who should have the authority to constitute and authorise a Jewish council grew more serious at the beginning of May, with Samuel's observations on Balfour's amendments to the draft 'Statement' of the Zionist Organisation to be submitted to the Peace Conference. Samuel sided with the Zionists. He believed that it should not fall within the province of the Mandatory Power to establish a Council representative of Jewish opinion in Palestine and the

world if this Council was to be really representative. Instead, he suggested changing the text to read that, on the establishment of a Council representative of Jewish opinion in Palestine and the world generally, the Mandatory Power would accept the assistance of such a Council, subject to the control of the Government of Palestine in the development of the country and in the organisation of Jewish immigration, and would recognise it as an advisory body on all administrative and economic measures affecting the interests of the Jewish population and as an executive body to organise Jewish education.⁹¹

However, Forbes Adam concluded that Samuel's observations were written in response to the wording of the draft prepared following the experts' committee deliberations and not at a previous stage. This was in reference to Balfour's version, which had said that it was for the Government of Palestine to establish a Jewish Council. Forbes Adam believed that the process by which a Jewish council was to be established should be gradual: the provisional Council should be nominated and only later replaced by a permanent Council some of whose members would be elected but who would always contain a certain number of Jewish members nominated by the Government and functioning as a liaison between the Council and the Mandatory Power. Louis Mallet commented on this, that in the revised draft it was not suggested that the council should be nominated but that the Government should undertake to 'promote' its establishment. Furthermore, on submitting the draft of 26 May 1919, Mallet proposed that both the provisional and the permanent Councils should contain members (if possible, a majority) nominated by the British Government. In this way, he believed, the problem raised by James de Rothschild that the Council might be composed of 'German' Zionists and controlled by foreign elements, would be solved and Government control would be guaranteed.

On this point there was full agreement within the British Delegation to the Peace Conference: they rejected Samuel's suggestion that a Jewish Council should be given 'executive' instead of 'advisory' powers in education. All of them agreed that a Council should not be entrusted with any executive powers, since: 'There should only be one Government in the country', according to Mallet.⁹²

The Jewish Council: From Council to Agency

While the British were endeavouring to limit the functions of a Jewish Council to an advisory role and to ensure that the Administration had a significant measure of control and guidance over the Council's activities, the

Zionists raised again the question of the character of the future Jewish Council. The Political Commission of the Zionist Conference that convened in London in March 1919 adopted radical proposals to be presented to the Peace Conference, without listening to Weizmann's warning that 'no government would bear a state-within-a-state', and they endorsed, *inter alia*, an amended formula regarding the functions of a Jewish Council. The proposal that the Jewish Council should be entrusted with the organisation of Jewish education was replaced by a proposal that it should be entrusted with all Jewish affairs and Jewish immigration. The proposal dealing with concessions was sharpened as well: it was made clear that the Council should be given priority in every contract for public works or for the development of natural resources and should be consulted at the initiation of such enterprises.⁹³

However, this version was not incorporated in the proposed draft Mandate, which was submitted by Frankfurter to the British Delegation to the Peace Conference on 20 March 1919. This draft, like the version submitted to the Peace Conference, satisfied the Zionists' wish for executive functions only in the field of Jewish education. It stated that the Mandatory 'shall entrust the organisation and administration of a system of education for the Jewish inhabitants to appropriate Jewish agencies.' As to the rest, it read: 'In effectuating these purposes it shall work progressively in co-operation with appropriate agencies, representatives of the Jewish people.'⁹⁴ In subsequent drafts, which were submitted by Frankfurter, even the demand to administer a Jewish educational system was dropped. Following a list of functions to be entrusted to the Mandatory, a short general clause was added: 'In effectuating these purposes it [i.e. the Mandatory] shall work with an appropriate Jewish agency.'⁹⁵

The term 'appropriate agencies, representative of the Jewish people' and its substitute 'an appropriate Jewish agency', which replaced the 'Jewish council' in Frankfurter's drafts, were not chosen at random. They reflected an internal debate within the Zionist movement regarding the nature of the body which was to represent the interests of world Jewry in Palestine. In August 1919, these differences reached crisis-point at the meetings of the Zionist Executive in London. At these meetings, Weizmann presented the view that a Jewish Council should represent the various trends and organisations of world Jewry, while Brandeis expressed the opinion of the American Zionists who believed that the Zionist Organisation should represent world Jewry in matters concerning Palestine and that whoever would like to take part in the work in Palestine should join the Zionist Organisation. That debate concluded on 27 August 1919 with a decision that the Zionist Organisation should fulfil the duties assigned to the

provisional Jewish Council in the statement submitted to the Peace Conference and that, within two years, the Zionist Organisation would submit to the Mandatory a plan which would ensure the cooperation of organisations and leaders that were ready to take part in building Palestine as a Jewish National Home.⁹⁶ In other words: the decision was more in favour of the American Zionists.

At a meeting on 15 July 1919, between representatives of the British Delegation to the Peace Conference and Frankfurter and Ganz, the draft submitted by Frankfurter on that day was compared with the British version of 26 May 1919. The question as to whether the term Jewish Council should be replaced by the less compelling 'an appropriate Jewish agency', as the American Zionists wished, was not decided upon. It was included in a list of questions which were left open for further discussion and attached as an appendix to the next draft Mandate.

However, another aspect of the same problem was decided upon. When Article 9, which dealt with the Jewish Council, was discussed, the Zionist representatives requested that the last three lines, which stated that some of the members of the Council should be nominated while most of them should be chosen by a Jewish congress, should be omitted. Their explanation was that they objected not to the retention of the right of the British Government to nominate a percentage of the members but the insistence on the election of the majority of the permanent Council by a Jewish Congress. It was unclear, they argued, how this body would be formed or when it would sit or what attitude it would adopt towards Zionism. The British had no reason not to agree to their request.⁹⁷

The attitudes of the British and the Zionist Delegations regarding the question of the Jewish Council – or Agency – were summed up in two drafts which were presented side by side towards the end of September 1919. Article 5 of the British Section's draft, which was prepared following the meeting on 15 July 1919 and adopted its conclusions, read:

The Mandatory will promote the establishment of a Provisional Council representing Jewish opinion both in Palestine and in the world generally. The British Government will have the right to nominate a percentage of the members of the Council ... Its functions will be to advise the Government on such administrative, educational and economic questions as affect the interests of the Jewish population, and, subject always to the control of the Government to assist and take part in the development of the country. The Government may grant to the Provisional Council, or to bodies organised or approved by the Provisional Council,

concessions for public works or similar undertakings, provided that any dividends distributed by the Provisional Council or such bodies shall not exceed a reasonable rate of interest on the capital employed, and any further profit shall be utilised under trust for the benefit of the country. In the grant of such concessions preferential consideration shall be given to the Provisional Council or to the bodies organised or approved by it.

The Provisional Council will enter upon its functions as soon as the Government of Palestine is constituted. It will eventually be superseded by, and its functions transferred to, a Permanent Council, of which the British Government shall retain the right to nominate a percentage of the members.⁹⁸

On the other hand, Article 5 of the Zionist Organisation's draft, which was submitted to the British Delegation's Section on 24 September 1919 and was in keeping with the British draft in style and form, was written in the spirit of the drafts which had been submitted by Frankfurter and the decision of the Zionist Executive of 27 August 1919. The article read:

An appropriate Jewish Agency shall be recognised as a public body with power to advise and co-operate with the Government in all administrative, economic, social and other matters affecting the establishment of the Jewish National Home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine, and, subject always to the control of the Government, to assist and take part in the development of the country. It shall have a pre-emptive right, upon fair and equitable terms, to construct and operate public works and utilities and develop the natural resources of the country. No private profits distributed by such agency shall exceed a reasonable rate of interest on the capital, and any further profits shall be utilised by it under trust for the benefit of the country. Concessions for the construction and operation of such public works and utilities and the development of such natural resources, as are not undertaken by such agency, shall be granted by the Government only after consultation with it.

The Zionist Organisation shall forthwith be recognised as such agency. It shall take steps to secure the co-operation of all Jews who are willing to assist in the establishment of the Jewish National Home.⁹⁹

In other words: the British draft continued to refer to a Provisional Jewish Council, to be replaced eventually by a permanent one. It also noted that

some of its members should be nominated by the Government, but did not explain how the members representing Jewish opinion would be elected or whom they would represent. On the other hand, the Zionist draft's reference to a Jewish agency did not mention that a percentage of its members would be nominated by the Government and stated that the Zionist Organisation would be recognised as a Jewish agency and would secure the participation of other bodies in its mission. As for the functions of the Council or Agency, the British draft listed that it should advise the government on such administrative, educational and economic questions as affected the interests of the Jewish population and, subject to the control of the Government, assist and take part in the development of the country. The Zionist draft, on the other hand, spoke of power to be given to the Agency to advise and co-operate with the Government in all administrative, economic, social and other matters affecting the establishment of the Jewish National Home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine. As far as preferences to be given to the Council or Agency were concerned, the British draft used a less strong term: 'preferential consideration' when granting concessions, while the Zionist draft spoke of 'pre-emptive right' to construct and operate public works and utilities and develop the natural resources of the country, as well as the right to be consulted before such functions were granted to other bodies.

An explanation that the Zionist Organisation attached to its draft clarified that:

the interests of the Jewish National Home are not safeguarded if the public character of the Zionist Organisation is to be ignored and the Zionist Organisation is merely to be granted 'preferential consideration' in a competition equally open to private enterprise. The establishment of the Jewish National Home depends upon the systematic development of the public works and utilities and material sources, and to ensure this systematic development it is essential that the Zionist Organisation should be accorded a pre-emptive right to undertake the construction and operation of public works and utilities and the development of the natural resources of the country, and should be consulted with preference to concessions not undertaken by it.

Malkin, the legal adviser to the British Delegation to the Peace Conference, had explained that "pre-emption" involves the idea that of purchasing something which actually exists. It is quite inapplicable to a prior right to be given a concession. He continued:

There is, however, the more important question of what exactly it is that the Zionist Organisation wants, and whether we are prepared to give it to them. This is not a legal question, and I am only afraid that under the Zionist wording we should find that, if the terms proposed by the Organisation for the concession were not such we could accept, we should find ourselves debarred from giving it to anyone else on any condition at all.¹⁰⁰

Other articles too reflected the differences between the two delegations. Article 11 of the British draft read:

The Government of Palestine shall have full power to reserve the development of country for local interests, including the Councils referred to in Article 5 and such other Jewish bodies as may be organised to facilitate the development of the Jewish national home and are officially recognised by the Government. It will be the duty of the Government to introduce a land system appropriate to the needs of the country, which shall provide, in order to avoid the evils of land speculation, that no person, except a citizen of Palestine, and no company or other corporation except Jewish organisations officially recognised by the Government, shall own or occupy more than twenty dunam of land without the special permission of the Government in each case.

That same article in the Zionist draft read that development should be reserved by the Government 'for local interests, including the Jewish agency referred to in Article 5, and such other bodies approved by it ...' However, in reference to land policy, the Zionist Agency was not mentioned at all. All the draft included was a general statement that: 'The government shall introduce a land system appropriate to the needs of the country, and adequate to prevent the evils of land speculation, which shall, among other things, further the close settlement and intensive cultivation of the land and discourage its uneconomic use or non-use, and limit the maximum areas of holdings.'

On the other hand, the Zionist Organisation's draft expanded and elaborated on its share in administrative functions which were not mentioned at all in the British draft. In Article 7, dealing with Jewish immigration, which was to be promoted only by the Government according to the British draft, the Zionist draft read: 'The British Government in co-operation with the Jewish agency referred to in Article 5 shall promote Jewish Immigration and close settlement by Jews on the land ... etc.' As to Article

17, dealing with education, in which the British draft stated that each community should have the right to maintain its own schools for the education of its own members in its own language, the Zionist draft added a sentence: 'The control of the educational system in so far as the Jews are concerned shall be vested in the Jewish agency referred to in Article 5'. While Article 29, dealing with submitting matters of dispute relating to the interpretation of the Mandate to the permanent Court of International Justice to be established by the League of Nations, had added the sentence: 'It shall be the friendly right of the Jewish agency referred to in Article 5, to bring to the attention of the Council of the League of Nations any matter relating to the interpretation or application of the present convention.'¹⁰¹

In the draft provisionally agreed upon by both Delegations, of 18 November 1919, the Zionist version was partially accepted. Article 5 established 'an appropriate Jewish agency' but the last sentence of the Zionist version, according to which the Zionist Organisation should be that agency, was not accepted. Instead, it was stated that 'the Organic Law would provide' for the constitution of such agency (but it was noted that, if the Zionist version was not accepted, the Zionists would prefer that the article should read: 'The Zionist Organisation shall forthwith be recognised as such agency for the constitution of which the Organic Law should provide').

The differences regarding the question of 'preferential right' were solved in the draft by omitting the word 'preferential'. It was decided that the agency should have 'a right' to construct and operate public works etc, and it was added that the government would give the agency 'preferential consideration' (a wording taken from the previous version of the Political Section). Likewise, the stipulation as to profits to be distributed by the agency was amended. It was agreed that profits should be utilised in consultation with the Mandatory or on conditions approved by it.¹⁰²

This wording of Article 5 was changed in the agreed-upon draft of 11 December 1919, which lent towards the Zionist Organisation's version. This draft omitted the clumsy and indecisive wording regarding the Organic Law of the country and embraced the Zionist Organisation's terminology of September, according to which the Zionist Organisation should be recognised as the Jewish Agency. The debate regarding the question of 'pre-emptive right' was also resolved in a simpler way; the wording of the Zionist Organisation was accepted, with one exception: 'pre-emptive right' was replaced by 'preferential right'. As regards the profits to be distributed by the agency, those were to be utilised by the agency for the benefit of the country 'in a manner approved by the Government'.¹⁰³

Other articles dealing with the powers to be granted to the Jewish Agency were also closer to the September version of the Zionist Organisation. The

article dealing with the development of the country accepted the Zionist version in both the agreed-upon drafts of 18 November 1919 and 11 December 1919. In the same way, the Zionist proposal that Jewish immigration and close settlement by Jews on the land should be promoted in co-operation with the Jewish agency and to the addendum to the article regarding Jewish education were accepted, though the latter had a slight change of wording so that the drafts read: 'In particular the administration of the Jewish educational system shall be entrusted to the Jewish Agency referred to in Article 5 or to such other agencies as may be designated or approved by it for the purpose'. On the other hand, the Zionist addendum on the right of the Jewish agency to bring to the attention of the Council of the League of Nations matters relating to interpretations was rejected. The drafts adopted the version of the Political Section of the British Peace Delegation.

The agreed-upon draft (with slight editing amendments) was submitted to Curzon on 1 January 1920 and was printed as the draft of the Foreign Office on 15 March 1920.¹⁰⁴ This draft, as mentioned above, did not remain as it was and, following Curzon's comment on the way the Arab majority was ignored in the preamble, changes were inserted which transferred the emphasis from implementing the promise to the Jews to securing the rights and interests of the Arabs. However, these changes did not affect the articles dealing with the functions of the Jewish agency or bodies approved by it. With the exception of the change in the order of sentences in the article dealing with immigration and the omission of 'the development of the Jewish National Home' in the article dealing with the development of the country, the articles relating to co-operation with the Jewish Agency remained as in the agreed-upon draft.¹⁰⁵

A significant change in defining the status of the Jewish Agency was made in the draft of 10 June 1920, circulated by Curzon. Most of Article 5, which defined the status of the Jewish agency remained intact but the sentence to the effect that concessions for the construction and operation of such public works and utilities and the development of such natural resources, as were not undertaken by the Jewish agency, should be granted by the Government only after consultation with the Jewish agency, was omitted. In the article dealing with the development of the country, the draft of 10 June 1920 did not just omit 'the development of the Jewish National Home', it totally eliminated the reference to the Jewish agency as a factor in the development of the country and merely said that the Administration of Palestine should have full power to reserve the development of the country for local and national interests (the word 'national' was not used in the previous draft). In addition, the article dealing with education eliminated all

reference to the Jewish agency. Article 13 of the draft of 10 June stipulated that the right of each community to maintain its own schools for the education of its own members in its own language should not be denied or impaired, while the requirement that the administration of the Jewish education system should be entrusted to the Jewish agency was omitted from the text.¹⁰⁶

A further erosion of the status of the Jewish agency appeared in the draft of 2 August 1920 owing to French government pressure. The wording of the first part of Article 5 was softened considerably. While in the previous draft it had said that the Jewish agency should be recognised as a public body with 'power to advise and co-operate with the Administration', this draft stated that it should be recognised as a public body 'for the purpose of advising and co-operating ...' The previous draft had stated that there should be consultation in all economic, social and other matters affecting the establishment of the Jewish National Home but this draft stated that the Agency should be consulted in such economic, social and other matters as, in the opinion of the Administration, might affect its establishment. The second part of Article 5 was also changed quite significantly. The differences relating to the definition of the preference given to the Jewish Agency by entrusting it with constructing and operating public works and developing the natural resources of the country were settled by omitting the whole sentence from the text. The new article only stated that the Jewish Agency, subject always to the control of the Administration, might assist and take part in the development of the country. The role of the Jewish Agency, in matters relating to public works and natural resources, was referred to in the article dealing with the development of the country. However, the wording of this article was changed in the 2 August draft which stated that 'The administration may arrange with the Jewish Agency ... upon fair and equitable terms, to construct or operate any public works, services and utilities, and to develop any of the natural resources of the country, in so far as these matters are not directly undertaken by the administration'.¹⁰⁷

The inter-departmental committee which discussed, on 24 and 25 August 1920, the draft of 2 August and the Zionist objections to it and which adopted, as mentioned above, some of the arguments raised by the Zionist Organisation, was not convinced by them on the issue of preferential right and refused to reintroduce into the text the sentence which secured this right for the Jewish Agency. Furthermore, the new wording of the article dealing with the development of the country and its reference to the Jewish Agency was confirmed. On another issue, the committee was even stricter than its predecessors: it stipulated a condition for recognition of the Jewish Agency,

namely that ‘The Zionist Organisation, so long as its organisation and constitution are, in the opinion of the Mandatory, appropriate, shall be recognised as such agency’. However, the committee omitted the addendum ‘in the opinion of the Administration’, according to which the administration was to decide which were the issues affecting the establishment of the Jewish National Home.¹⁰⁸

The recommendations of the inter-departmental committee were incorporated, as we have already seen, in the draft prepared by Hurst and in the one submitted by Curzon to the Cabinet for approval on 25 September 1920.¹⁰⁹ Zionist objections, which had succeeded in restoring to the text the principle of the historical connection (following a compromise in its wording), failed to reintroduce the principle of preference. Even the defenders of the Zionists in the Cabinet – Lloyd George and Balfour – thought that there was no place for the term ‘preferential rights.’¹¹⁰

Thus, the final version of the Mandate defined the status of the Jewish agency as follows:

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

The Zionist organisation, so long as its organisation and constitution are in the opinion of the Mandatory appropriate, shall be recognised as such agency. It shall take steps in consultation with His Britannic Majesty’s Government to secure the co-operation of all Jews who are willing to assist in the establishment of the Jewish national home.

Specifically, the Mandate assigned to the Jewish agency two functions: to encourage, in co-operation with the Administration of Palestine, close settlement by Jews on the land and to construct and co-operate any public works, services and utilities, and to develop any of the natural resources of the country in so far as these matters were not directly undertaken by the Administration.¹¹¹

The Mandate’s boundaries

In 1918, when the British Army conquered areas of the Ottoman Empire on its way from Egypt towards Syria, it took over a piece of land with no political

boundaries, the map of which was divided into *Sanjaqs* for administrative purposes by the Ottoman Administration. This division was kept under British Military Administration until the future of the area was decided by the Peace Agreements.¹¹² However, Britain was in no position to outline the boundaries of this piece of land even when discussing the Peace Agreements. Not only had Britain to take into consideration the interests and the agreement of its allies, its hands were also bound by obligations it had taken on during the War. These included the independence promised to the Arabs in Hussein-McMahon's correspondence in 1915; the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 – according to which the area north of the line Acco bay to the Sea of Galilee was to be under French control, while the area south of it was to be under international control, with the exception of a strip of land around Haifa-Acco bay which was assigned to British control – and the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which promised the establishment of a National Home for the Jewish people in Palestine but did not mention its boundaries.

The most problematic issue was the northern boundary. While the decisions concerning the eastern and southern boundaries were a matter for internal British arrangements made with an understanding with the Hashemites, the boundary in the north, between the British and French Mandates, would involve sensitive negotiations during which it would be harder for Britain to reach its goals than when dealing with other issues demanding the consent of the Allies. Thus, the issue of outlining the boundaries of the British Mandate was separated from the process of drafting the Mandate. It was left for separate negotiations.¹¹³

The issue of boundaries should not have had any influence on the programme for a Jewish National Home since the Balfour Declaration spoke of the establishment **in** Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, while explicitly dissociating itself from a previous formula which referred to Palestine **as** the National Home **of** the Jewish people. In the course of time, when Edward Grey stated during a House of Lords debate on a Palestine Constitution, that 'a Zionist home ... undoubtedly means or implies a Zionist Government over the district in which the home is placed',¹¹⁴ the Colonial Office commented that 'The National Home is not confined to one area ... The word "Home" was most particularly chosen as distinguished from "State"'.¹¹⁵

However, the area of Palestine under British Mandate could affect the chances of growth and strengthening of the *Yishuv* which was going to build the National Home. The Zionist activists in England who wrote many memoranda and articles during the War dealing with the future of Palestine and who prepared the 'Outline of a Programme for a New Administration of Palestine and for Jewish Resettlement of Palestine in Accordance with the

Aspirations of the Zionist Movement¹¹⁶ were aware of that. Accordingly, they made an effort to outline the boundaries of the area needed for the implementation of their plans.

Already in 1915, Shmuel Tolkowsky, one of the London Zionist activists, had prepared an outline of the boundaries of Palestine which were desirable from a strategic point of view. According to his proposal, the boundaries were to be in the north – to run along the river El-Awali north of Sidoon (Saida), from it to Busra while going round south of Damascus and Mount Hermon; in the east – from Busra, 15–25 kilometres south of and parallel to the Hejaz Railway, through El-Ja'afar to the eastern coast of Aqaba bay, to a point south of Aqaba; and in the south – from Aqaba to Rafah.¹¹⁷ This outline, with slight modifications, supplied the basis for discussions between the Zionists and Mark Sykes in February 1917.¹¹⁸

In April 1918, the Zionists presented a plan first considered in Theodore Herzl's times, when Engineer Max Burkhart submitted a proposal to enrich the water of the Jordan River by a regulated flow of water from the Litany River. The development of this idea was to become the main plank in various proposals submitted by the Zionists regarding the northern boundary and in plans – prepared during the following years by hydro-engineers and agricultural experts – dealing with the use of northern river water as a source of electric power and irrigation for Palestine.¹¹⁹

In the Proposals submitted by the Zionists on 19 November 1918, the boundaries of Palestine were outlined as follows: in the north – the northern and southern banks of the Litany River, as far north as latitude 33 ° 45', thence in a south-easterly direction to a point just south of Damascus and close to the west of the Hejaz Railway; in the east – a line close to and west of the Hejaz Railway; in the south – a line from a point in the neighbourhood of Aqaba to El Arish. It was also proposed that there should be free access to and from the Red Sea, through Aqaba, by arrangement with the Arab Government.¹²⁰ Ormsby Gore recommended that this proposal not be published but replaced by 'An integral Palestine including the area between Dan to Beersheba as well as the Jordan valley, the economic control of water of that river, and its tributaries', while Eyre Crowe suggested that the whole boundaries clause should be omitted.¹²¹ In the end, the Proposals, submitted on 9 December 1919, included a short clause to the effect that the boundaries of Palestine should be defined after negotiations with Emir Faisal,¹²² while the Memorandum of January 1919 stated that, in order to make the country as productive as possible, the boundaries of Palestine 'must be drawn with the general economic needs and historic traditions of the country in mind. It cannot be deprived of its natural outlets to the sea, nor of the rivers and their watersheds'.¹²³

A proposal about boundaries was added to the 'Statement' submitted by the Zionist Organisation to the Peace Conference in February 1919 after having been agreed upon by the British Delegation. This time it was based on a memorandum prepared by Aaron Aaronsohn.¹²⁴ The boundaries proposed were: in the North – starting at a point on the Mediterranean Sea in the vicinity south of Sidon and following the watersheds of the foothills of the Lebanon as far as Jisr El-Karaon, thence to El Bire, following the dividing line between the two basins of Wadi el Korn and the Wadi El Teim, thence in a southerly direction following the dividing line between the eastern and western slopes of the Hermon to the vicinity west of Beit Jenn, eastward following the northern watersheds of the Nahr Mughaniye close to the west of the Hejaz Railway; in the east – a line close to the west of the Hejaz Railway terminating in the Gulf of Aqaba; in the south – a frontier to be agreed upon with the Egyptian Government. In an attachment, it was explained that the proposed boundaries were sketched with economic needs and historic traditions in mind. In the north, since Palestine was a semi-arid country that depended on available water supply, it was of vital importance not only to secure all water resources already feeding the country but also to be able to conserve and control them at their sources, especially from the main source, the Hermon, which could not be detached without striking at the very root of economic life; in the east, because the fertile plains east of the Jordan, since earliest Biblical times, had been linked economically and politically with the land west of the Jordan, the economic needs of both Palestine and Arabia demanded free access to the Hejaz Railway; while in the south, it was imperative that Palestine should have access to the Red Sea and the opportunity of developing good harbours on the Gulf of Aqaba which had been the terminus of an important trade route in Palestine since the days of King Solomon.

The boundaries proposed by the Zionist Organisation fitted in with the British territorial goals already formulated in April 1917 by the Committee on the Terms of Peace (*Territorial Desiderata*), headed by Curzon. In the Committee's concluding report, it was stated that:

It is of great importance that both Palestine and Mesopotamia should be under British control. To ensure this it is desirable that His Majesty's Government should secure a modification of the agreement with France of May 1916 as would give Great Britain definite and exclusive control over Palestine, and would take the frontier of the British sphere to the river Leontes and north of the Hauran.¹²⁵

The Zionist emphasis on the economic needs of the country was backed, in principle, by both the Foreign Office and the British Delegation to the Peace

Conference with whom the Zionist Proposals were coordinated prior to their submission to the Council of Ten. In Balfour's detailed memorandum prepared in Paris, in August 1919, which dealt with the political problems which Britain and her allies had to solve in Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia, he clarified his position on the question of boundaries:

If Zionism is to influence the Jewish problem throughout the world Palestine must be made available for the largest number of Jewish immigrants. It is therefore eminently desirable that it should obtain the command of the water-power which naturally belongs to it, whether by extending its boundaries to the north, or by treaty with the mandatory of Syria, to whom the south-ward flowing waters of Hamon [*sic* i.e. Mount Hermon] could not in any event be of much value ... For the same reason Palestine should extend into the lands lying east of the Jordan. It should not, however, be allowed to include the Hedjaz Railway, which is too distinctly bound up with exclusively Arab interests.¹²⁶

The principle of controlling water sources was expressed in the proposal concerning the northern boundary which was formulated by the Political Section of the British Delegation to the Peace Conference. According to this proposal, the northern boundary was to run from the Mediterranean eastwards, along the Litany River watershed line to the top of Mount Hermon; from there it was to run in a general southerly direction so as to follow the watershed line between the streams flowing into the Jordan on the west and those running into the Esh Sham basin and the Nahr Yarmuk on the east; from there, it should follow along Wady El-Masaid to its junction with the Nahr Yarmuk. This was suggested as a relatively moderate alternative to the proposal of the Military Section of the British Delegation to the Peace Conference which endorsed the Proposals submitted by the Zionists in February 1919 based on Aaronson's memorandum. The officials of the Political Section believed that one of the advantages of their proposal was that the northern part of their line would not include in Palestine a predominantly Muslim area or the districts of Rasheya and Hasbeya which were strongly Arab nationalist. The second advantage was that the headwaters of the Jordan in the Baniyas area, included in their proposal, should be quite sufficient to irrigate Palestine without the need to take into account Aaronson's 'extreme projects' which included the Zaharani River. The Political Section was ready to accept as a last resort. It had the advantage of not including in Palestine the anti-Zionist Muslim population of the Tyre

area. By having this advantage they also ensured that the Jordan water supply would not be affected. In other words, in all the maps which were drawn, it was made clear that the leading principle in marking the northern boundary was securing control over the water sources so as to satisfy the needs of Palestine.¹²⁷

However, the fate of the northern boundary of Palestine was not decided by the maps of the British Delegation to the Peace Conference nor in Foreign Office debates but in top-level talks and handshakes between heads of states. On 1 December 1918, Georges Clemenceau had granted Lloyd George's request that Palestine remain in its Biblical boundaries 'from Dan to Beersheba'.¹²⁸ Nine months later, that agreement was implemented when Britain gave notice of its intention to commence the evacuation of Syria and Cilicia and to hand over responsibility for garrisoning the evacuated area to French and Arab forces. According to Lloyd George's 'Aid Memoire in regard to the occupation of Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia pending the decision in regard to mandates', dated 13 September 1919: 'The territories occupied by British troops will then be Palestine, defined in accordance with its ancient boundaries of Dan to Beersheba, and Mesopotamia, including Mosul, the occupation thus being in harmony with the arrangements concluded in December 1918, between M. Clemenceau and Mr. Lloyd George'.¹²⁹

However, when the French refused to treat the agreement on 'Dan to Beersheba' as an obligatory one and stuck to their claim to areas according to the Sykes-Picot Agreement,¹³⁰ it was Richard Meinertzhagen, the Chief Political Officer of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force and the Occupied Enemy Territory Administration in Palestine, who came to the rescue and put forward a proposal. On 17 November 1919, he approached Curzon who, on 23 October, had replaced Balfour as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and presented a plan of proposed boundaries of Mandatory Palestine. This plan was regarded at the Foreign Office as being based on the most radical demands ever presented by the Zionists, leaving 'Dan to Beer Sheba' far behind.¹³¹ Meinertzhagen argued that the Sykes-Picot Line had been fixed before the British Government was committed to Zionism and could not, in any case, meet the economic needs of Palestine. He argued that the same applied to the provisional line which demarcated the southern limit of British troop evacuation, which appeared to be a compromise between the Sykes-Picot Line and the frontier which was proposed in Paris by the British Delegation in early 1919 and which had formed the basis of discussions between Lloyd George and Clemenceau. Meinertzhagen explained that irrigation on a large scale was essential to the development of Palestine west of the Jordan while the loss of water to the power occupying Syria was small

in comparison. He, therefore, suggested that the northern boundary should run from the sea, just north of the Litany River, and follow up, and at some distance from the right bank, across it from west to east about the Litany gorges. The boundary should thence be guided by including those of the Hermon waters which flow into the Litany or Jordan basins.¹³² Herbert Samuel, after his visit to Palestine and discussions on the issue with the Military Administrators there, gave Meinertzhagen's proposal his full support.¹³³

At the British Foreign Office, the differences between the British and the French views of the northern frontier were analysed. Forbes Adam reported that the stubborn attitude of the French, sticking to the Sykes-Picot Agreement, was based on the argument that concessions had already been made to Britain by their ceding the Mosul area and by consenting to a British, instead of an international, Mandate on Palestine. According to him, the French were ready to come to an economic arrangement with the Zionists about waterpower but all the economic arguments raised by the British in favour of the northern frontier during the negotiations with the French had failed to persuade them. Forbes Adam believed that the British and French conflict of opinion on this matter arose from their different interpretations of the Balfour Declaration. According to him, the French Government interpreted the Declaration as a promise to protect and extend the existing Zionist colonies;¹³⁴ while the British Government, by their support of Zionism, had, to a much greater degree, accepted the 'natural implications' which the Zionists gave to the Declaration of a National Home, in other words an attempt to make Palestine a state in its natural geographical and historic frontiers and by gradual immigration and special economic facilities to turn this state into a Jewish State. While it was not expected that Palestine would ever be able to give a home to all the Zionists in the world, it was thought that eventually some three million instead of the present 60,000 Jews would be able to settle, and that hope and self-respect might be given to a large part of Eastern Jewry who could never actually go to live in Palestine. Forbes Adam summed up: 'behind British policy, therefore, is the recognition of the principle of Jewish nationality, which is the essence of Zionism and the intention to lay in the Turkish Peace Settlement the foundation for the reconstruction of a Jewish Palestine, as of an Armenia for the Armenians'.

Forbes Adam thought that:

if this aspect of British policy is to be fulfilled it is obvious that the frontiers of Palestine must be drawn on the same sort of principles as those of other reconstructed countries. It also seems clear that some

such frontiers are required in order to give that impetus and encouragement to Zionists, at this crisis of their fortunes, which will enable them to secure the right number of immigrants and the large sums of money, essential to the success of their cause.

He believed that an agreement was possible with the French Foreign Office which had indicated that, if Britain allowed them to settle the Tangier and Gambia questions to their own satisfaction and if the French Syrian mandate were extended down the eastern frontier of Palestine to the northern frontier of the Hejaz, they would be more accommodating in the Middle East and an agreement on the northern frontier of Palestine could be reached. Since this proposal was unacceptable because it would bring French influence down into Arabia and make it impossible to link Baghdad and Haifa by a railway and pipeline entirely in British territory and since bargaining over Tangier and Gambia was also out of the question, Forbes Adam suggested that it should be explained directly and frankly to Clemenceau – who took a broader view in these matters than his Foreign Office – how the British Government viewed Palestine and the Zionist case and that he should be appealed to for help in effecting a just settlement on the basis of nationality which Britain and France had supported throughout the Peace Conference and intended to support elsewhere in the Turkish settlement.¹³⁵

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Curzon, gave Forbes Adam his support. Although Curzon's view of the objectives of the Jewish National Home was quite different from the British one as defined in Forbes Adam's paper, he added at the end of the paper a call not to give way in the matter of the northern frontier since, when Clemenceau had promised Palestine to Lloyd George, he had undoubtedly meant 'a reasonable and feasible Palestine'. Curzon also added a personal touch: 'Neither can it be worthwhile for the French to set against themselves the Zionists of the whole world'.¹³⁶

In response to Lloyd George's suggestion that the French should be reminded that they had to honour the agreement on the historical boundaries of Palestine and that, if there was any dispute it should be referred to the Council of the League of Nations for arbitration, Curzon explained to the Prime Minister:

... I do not think that anything is to be gained by linking up the question of the frontiers of Palestine with that of the Mandate. Owing to the difficulty in settling the question of the frontiers, we have, with some effort, kept the two questions apart, and have not put into the Mandate anything about the frontiers at all. As a matter of fact, we are

discussing them separately with the French, and are putting up a stiff fight to get the best terms for the Zionists that we can. What we want is to enable Palestine to make use of the waters of the Litany and the Yarmuk ...

Historical Palestine on more than one occasion mentioned by you in the Supreme Council as being from Dan to Beersheba, the interpretation of that phrase resting upon the G.A. Smith Atlas. Well, that frontier the French have conceded to us without dispute. It is generally admitted that Dan is Baniyas, and Baniyas they have been willing to include in Palestine ...

The areas for which we are fighting lie outside historical Palestine, and have to be contended for on a different basis. That basis is one of expediency and mutual goodwill, but I am afraid that we cannot, at this stage, rest our claim upon anything that has been said or agreed by either party in the past.¹³⁷

Eventually, when Weizmann officially appealed to Curzon for his support in the matter of the northern boundary, Curzon went out of his way and wrote to Weizmann privately to assure him that he was fully aware of the vital importance for the successful future of Palestine and the National Home of a satisfactory agreement with the French, safeguarding the utilisation of the Litany and Yarmuk waters by Palestine. 'Negotiations still continue, and we are doing our best', he wrote. 'I will not say more on the subject, as I know you have been recently in touch with Vansittart in Paris, and are well aware of our and your difficulties in this matter ...'¹³⁸ To Vansittart, who was then leading the negotiations with the French in Paris, Curzon pointed out that the use of the waters of the Yarmuk and the Litany was essential to the implementation of the British obligation to establish a national home for the Jews which was supported by France.¹³⁹ As the negotiations were ending, Curzon instructed Vansittart unequivocally that: 'His Majesty's Government are not prepared to conclude any arrangement which does not contain due provision for the future utilisation by Palestine of the waters of the Yarmuk and the Litany, which may well prove vital to the economic development of the country and the creation of a national home for the Jews ...'¹⁴⁰

Vansittart, in reply, wrote that in his opinion '... The French are increasingly Anti-Zionist. They mistrust and fear our whole policy in Palestine ... They believe that we are in a direct train of making an all Jewish State, as opposed to a National Home ...'¹⁴¹ Forbes Adam, on the other hand, commented that the French 'present attitude is much more likely to be prompted by a desire to drive a hard bargain with us (knowing

as they do that we wish to carry out successfully our pledge regarding the National Home), than by fears of a Jewish State. Probably they would not mind seeing us fail in our pledge ...¹⁴² Forbes Adam also elaborated on that and argued:

The Sykes-Picot frontier is not the alternative to the frontier in the present convention. The Sykes-Picot agreement was not only modified by the conversations between Mr. Lloyd George and M. Clemenceau but has also been replaced by the terms of the Turkish Treaty which gives us the Mandate for Palestine, affirms and supports the Balfour Declaration regarding a Jewish National Home of which the Sykes-Picot agreement made no mention, and stipulates that the boundaries of Palestine ... are to be formulated by the Principal Allied Powers ... We argue that Palestine, within the frontiers proposed by the French, is not able to support any considerable immigration of Jews or the establishment of a Jewish National Home without prejudice to the existing population, unless the unoccupied land is fertilised and big irrigation schemes carried out. These require the use of the waters of the Yarmuk and Litany and we are justified in not accepting the frontiers unless this want is met by the French.¹⁴³

Hubert Young argued that the problem which Britain was facing had to do with Faisal's expulsion from Damascus at the end of July 1920. He submitted:

that we should now cut our losses so far as Arab suzerainty over Syria is concerned, and make a fresh effort to convince the French that neither our Arab nor our Zionist policy is really hostile to French interests. Unless we do this there is grave risk of French insistence nullifying our Zionist as well as our Arab policy. This would mean a renewed blow to British prestige, not only in the Middle East, but in every country in which the Zionists have an important voice.¹⁴⁴

The consistent position taken by the Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs and officials of the ministry emphasising the dependency between British and Zionist interests throughout the negotiations concerning the northern boundary, and the efforts they made to achieve the frontier they wanted did not bear fruit, nor did the multiple appeals by leading Zionists who, with tireless perseverance, explained their cause again and again to all policy-makers on whose influence they hoped to rely. Lloyd George repeatedly clarified that the leading principle was the one which had been agreed upon in his discussions with Clemenceau, namely Dan to Beersheba, the

implementation of which had started by withdrawing the army from Syria. In February 1920, when Balfour passed on to the Prime Minister a letter from Weizmann about the northern boundary, to which he lent his support, he was told by Phillip Kerr, Lloyd George's Secretary that:

... The P.M., I think, has got the French to agree to a British Mandate for 'historic' Palestine, that is to say Palestine at its greatest normal extension according to G.A. Smith Atlas, extending from Dan to Beersheba. The P.M. feels that he cannot reasonably ask the French to concede more than the 'historic' Palestine in view of the Sykes-Picot agreement, and this does not include either Hermon or the Litany River. The French have practically said that they will concede the historic boundaries, but are adamant about Hermon, which they say commands Damascus and about the Litany which is the main stream of the Bekaa, They have, however, promised to concede all the water the Zionists require and are prepared to enter into an agreement on this point. The P.M. does not think that it is possible to get more than this ...¹⁴⁵

In March 1920, the British reached an understanding with the French on a plan in accordance with this principle and, on 25 April, P.J. Berthelot stated, at a meeting of the Supreme Council at San Remo, that the British and French Delegations had reached an agreement that the southern frontier of the French Mandate:

would follow the Sykes-Picot line, with the exception of a slight modification of the frontier of Palestine, which would conform to the definition advocated by Lloyd George, who had been in favour of the ancient boundaries of Dan and Beersheba; that is to say, that Palestine should include the *casa* [district] of Safed as far north as Dan, and that the frontier should be demarcated to the east by a perpendicular line drawn from the south of Mount Hermon to where it crossed the frontier as described in the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916.¹⁴⁶

This was not, however, the end of the story. In June 1920, the French submitted to the British a new proposal, according to which the boundary was to be moved southwards. Following tiresome negotiations, this proposal was agreed to on 23 December 1920 and, after many months of measuring and outlining, the boundary was fixed on 10 March 1923.¹⁴⁷

The option of using the waters of the sources of the Litany and the Yarmuk for irrigation purposes in Palestine, which had remained open, was

discussed again in a British-French conference held in London on 4 December 1920. Again Lloyd George stated that he had come to an agreement with Clemenceau that the limits of Palestine should be the historic ones of Dan to Beersheba, that he was prepared to abide by this agreement and that he would not support the claims of the Zionists to territorial expansion outside historic Palestine. Berthelot, however, who suggested that they should distinguish between the questions of territory and water supply, stated that the French would be quite willing to allow the British sphere to receive any surplus of water of the sources of the Jordan and the Yarmuk not required by the French and to place such surplus at the disposal of the Zionists. It was decided that the matter should be examined by British, French and Zionist engineers.¹⁴⁸

The proposals regarding the south and east boundaries of Palestine also contained claims based on economic development considerations which were connected to the Jewish National Home policy, though less dramatically expressed. This was, perhaps, because the location of these frontiers was considered less crucial by the Zionists and, perhaps, because they were suggested, as mentioned above, in the framework of internal discussions about separating areas which were under British control.

While delineating the southern boundary, the question of British responsibilities for the establishment of the Jewish National Home was raised during an internal debate on the inclusion of Beersheba in the area under the Mandate. Sir M. Cheetham, of the British Delegation to Egypt, submitted a proposal on 8 March 1919 to the effect that the Beersheba area should be included within the Sinai Peninsula (Egypt). This proposal contradicted a proposal of 18 February, of the British Delegation to the Peace Conference, headed by Balfour, according to which the boundary should coincide with the Turkish-Egyptian frontier from Rafa to a point south-west of el Auga, thence to run due east to a point west of Et-Tafika. It also went against a second version of 26 March proposing a new Egypt-Palestine frontier to run from the Mediterranean coast along the right bank of Wady el Arish (which was then within Egyptian territory) to Kosima, Abda and Jebel Usdam to the western escarpment of Wadi Araba. Allenby gave Cheetham's proposal his full support and opposed the stand taken by the Delegation, arguing that 'the result would be that Egyptian territory and Egyptian subjects would be handed over to a hypothetical Jewish Government'.¹⁴⁹ To that, Arnold Toynbee, of the Delegation, objected. He explained that 'as it is not proposed to make Palestine into a Jewish Commonwealth – at any rate until the

population is predominant by [*sic*] Jew[s]'. He continued, arguing that 'giving a reasonable opportunity for extension of cultivation by Zionists' would balance the administrative difficulties the new frontier involved.¹⁵⁰ T.E. Lawrence, too, commented that, in his opinion, including Beersheba in Egypt would 'break down on the Zionist "Dan to Beersheba" formula' and that 'the Jews however may again object, since the Kurnab district is the only promising part of the Dead Sea oil field'.¹⁵¹

The discussions concerning the eastern boundary were also an internal British affair, though the details were somewhat more complicated. The Zionist desire to get hold of arable lands east of the Jordan River and minerals of the Dead Sea were supported by Balfour and officials of his ministry as well as by Meinertzhagen and Samuel, for the same reasons they supported the idea of extending Palestine northwards up to the Litany. They, therefore, believed that the frontier should pass west of the Hejaz Railway.¹⁵² Meinertzhagen also supported the Zionist demand to have an outlet to the Red Sea in the south-east which would be required by the industry of a future Palestine. However, this support for the Zionists was not translated into action and was not even considered in discussions about the meaning of a Jewish National Home. The question of the future of the area east of the Jordan was especially sensitive in view of the obligations arising from the Hussein-McMahon correspondence and the promise of 1918 of Arab independence. As long as the idea of establishing Faisal's kingdom around Damascus seemed feasible, no decision was taken about its frontiers. However, following Faisal's expulsion from Damascus in July 1920, the problem became urgent since Britain had to consider the future of the area. An attempt by Herbert Samuel, who had just recently started to serve as Britain's High Commissioner to Palestine, to annex eastern Trans-Jordan, was opposed by the Foreign Office and, in March 1921, at the Cairo Conference, Winston Churchill, the Colonial Secretary, recognised Emir Abd'Allah as the ruler of Trans-Jordan.¹⁵³

In March 1921, the Zionists were still hoping that they would be able to settle in Trans-Jordan. In a detailed letter to Churchill, Weizmann elaborated on the significance of the areas east of the Jordan for the economic development needed for the establishment of the Jewish National Home, which was more important now that the British had given up the waters of the Litany in the north. Weizmann interpreted the separation of Trans-Jordan as an administrative arrangement that would not prohibit Jewish settlement there.¹⁵⁴ However, in 1922, it was made clear that there could be no request based on the principle of a Jewish National Home in territories east of the Jordan. Following a decision taken at a meeting of the Council of the League of Nations on 24 July 1922, a note was added to the

Palestine Mandate, according to which Britain implemented its right under the provisions of Article 25 of the Mandate which entitled the Mandatory to postpone or withhold application of such provisions of the Mandate in Trans-Jordan as might be considered inapplicable to existing local conditions. According to this note, the provisions which secured the establishment of the Jewish National Home were not applicable to the territories lying between the Jordan and the eastern boundary of Palestine (a line drawn from a point two miles east of the town of Aqaba on the Gulf, up the centre of the Wadi Araba, the Dead Sea and the River Jordan to its junction with the River Yarmuk, thence up the centre of that river to the Syrian Frontier).¹⁵⁵

Notes

1. 'Proposals relating to the Establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine, presented on 19.11.1918', P.R.O., F.O. 371/3385, F. 747, No. 191828.
2. Minutes by W. Ormsby Gore, 19 November 1918, *ibid.*; S. Tolkowsky, *Zionist Political Diary*, p. 386 [Hebrew]; see also below p.157 and note 137 *ibid.*
3. Minutes by W. Ormsby Gore, 19 November 1918, notes by E.A. Crowe, 22 November 1918, regarding Ormsby Gore minutes; minutes by E.A. Crowe, 25 November 1918, and C. Hardinge [undated], P.R.O., F.O. 371/3385, F. 747, No. 191828.
4. 'Proposals relating to the Establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine, presented on 19.11.1918', P.R.O., F.O. 371/3385, F. 747, No. 191828; see also Tolkowsky, *Zionist Political Diary*, p. 386.
5. Telegram by C. Weizmann to D. Eder, 17 December 1918, C.Z.A. L4/7911, P.R.O., F.O. 608/98, No. 227 and P.R.O., F.O. 371/4170, F. 1051, No. 1051 (WL, IX. No. 71); see also Chapter 3, p.159 and note 58 *ibid.*
6. G. Clayton to F.O., 31 December 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4170, F. 1051, No. 1051; see also above p.159 and note 59 *ibid.*
7. Minutes by G. Curzon, 10 January 1919, *ibid.*: see also p.159 and note 63 *ibid.*
8. G. Curzon to A.J. Balfour, 16 January 1919, B.L. Lloyd George Archive, F/3/4/4; A.J. Balfour to G. Curzon, 20 January 1919, B.L. Lloyd George Archive, F/3/4/8.
9. Minutes by A.J. Toynbee, 16 January 1919 P.R.O., F.O. 608/98, No.227.
10. Minutes by G.J. Kidston, 25 January 1919, and R. Graham 25 January 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/98, No. 2017 and P.R.O., F.O. 371/4153, F. 275, No. 18816.
11. Minutes by G. Curzon, 26 January 1919, *ibid.*
12. G. Curzon to A.I. Balfour, 26 January 1919, Balfour Archive, P.R.O., F.O. 800/215; see also G. Curzon to A.J. Balfour, 16 January 1919, B.L. Lloyd George Archive, F/3/4/4; A.J. Balfour to G. Curzon, 20 January 1919, B.L. Lloyd George Archive, F/3/4/8.
13. C. Weizmann to R. Graham, 20 January 1919, and attached resolutions, C.Z.A. Z4/9 and P.R.O., F.O. 371/4135, F. 275, No. 13537 (WL, IX, No. 106).
14. Minutes by G.J. Kidston, 29 January 1919, G. Curzon, 30 January 1919, and R. Graham, 30 January 1919; J.A.C. Tilley (for G. Curzon) to C. Weizmann, 4 February 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4135, F. 275, No. 13537.
15. 'Memorandum of the Zionist Organisation relating to the reconstruction of Palestine as the Jewish National Home', January, 1919, W.A.; see also Note on conversation

- between L. Mallet and N. Sokolow, representing the Zionist Organisation, 20 January 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/98, No. 465.
16. Comments by A.W. Money in the memorandum, 22 January 1919. W.A.
 17. W. Ormsby Gore, 'Zionist Proposals regarding future Constitution', 22 January 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/98, No.508.
 18. W. Ormsby Gore, 'Future Government of the Separate Palestine State', 23 January 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/98, No.588.
 19. R. Ormsby Gore to N. Sokolow, 24 January 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/98, No. 633 and C.Z.A. A18/32/6; see also N. Sokolow to C. Weizmann, 25 January 1919, C.Z.A. Z4/16009; E. Drumond to W. Ormsby Gore, 27 January 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/98, No. 633; E. Drumond to N. Sokolow, 29 January 1919, C.Z.A. A18/32/6.
 20. Minutes by L. Mallet, 30 January 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/98, No. 1295; see also Tolkowsky, *Zionist Political Diary*, p. 406; see also N. Sokolow to L. Mallet, 30 January 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/98, No. 991 and minutes by E.G. F. Adam, 29 January 1919[sic], *ibid*.
 21. 'Statement of the Zionist Organisation regarding Palestine', 3 February 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/98, No. 1627.
 22. 'Sketch of a draft Treaty of Peace between Turkey and Allied Governments, Chapter V, Palestine', 1 March 1919; minutes by E.G. Forbes Adam, 4 March 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/116, No. 3561.
 23. See below pp.166-71.
 24. 'Statement of the Zionist Organisation regarding Palestine. Proposals to be presented to the Peace Conference by Dr. Weizmann as amended by the Secretary of State for further consideration', 28 February 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/99, No. 3123.
 25. The Committee included L. Mallet, D.G. Hogarth, James de Rothschild, Miss G. Bell, T.E. Lawrence, P. Noel-Baker, R. Vansittart, A.G. Forbes Adam, A. Hirtzel, H.W. Malkin and Major Waley. Minutes of meetings of the Committee, held on 21–22 March 1919 (received on 24 March 1919), P.R.O., F.O. 608/99, No. 5092.
 26. Draft, undated, P.R.O., F.O. 608/100, No. 4820; see also 'Proposal for Palestine Mandate – Communicated by Mr. Frankfurter on behalf of the Zionist Organisation at Paris, March 20th [1919]', P.R.O., F.O. 608/100, No. 4820. The proposal was communicated to the British Delegation to the Peace Conference by R. Meinertzhagen. See R. Meinertzhagen to E.G. Forbes Adam 24 March 1919, *ibid*.; F. Frankfurter to E.G. Forbes Adam, 25 May 1919, and enclosed Draft, P.R.O., F.O. 608/116, No. 11419.
 27. See, for instance, drafts, 16 April 1919 and 26 May 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/116, Nos 7441, 11419, 11420.
 28. H. Samuel to A.J. Balfour, 6 May 1919; minutes by A.G. F. Adam, 8 May 1919 and L. Mallet, undated, P.R.O., F.O. 608/99, No. 9321.
 29. Y. Freundlich and G. Yogev (eds), the Minutes of the Zionist General Council, 1919–1929 [Hebrew], Vol. I, pp. 15–23, 66–80.
 30. 'Suggestions of the Political Commission of the Zionist Conference, London', March 1919, I.S.A., H.L. Samuel Archive, File 100/5.
 31. Y. Freundlich and G. Yogev (eds), The Minutes of the Zionist General Council, 1919–1929, [Hebrew], Vol. I, p. 80.
 32. 'Proposal for Palestine Mandate – Communicated by Mr. Frankfurter on behalf of the Zionist Organisation at Paris, March 20th [1919]', P.R.O., F.O. 608/100, No. 4820. The proposal was communicated to the British Delegation to the Peace Conference by R. Meinertzhagen. See R. Meinertzhagen to E.G. Forbes Adam 24 March 1919, *ibid*.

33. F. Frankfurter to E.G. Forbes Adam, 25 May 1919, and enclosed Draft, P.R.O., F.O. 608/116, No. 11419.
34. A.J. Balfour response to L. Mallet to A.J. Balfour, 26 May 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/116, No. 11420; C. Weizmann to E.G. Forbes Adam, 25 June 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/100 (WL, IX, No. 172).
35. Two versions were submitted owing to a misunderstanding of the instructions to remove some of the paragraphs from Chapter Five. The first version was communicated on 12 July 1919. The second version, which was supposed to substitute the version communicated by F. Frankfurter on 29 May 1919 (note 33) was submitted on 15 July 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/117, No. 15601.
36. E.G. Forbes Adam's report of two informal meetings with members of the Zionist Delegation (the first undated, the second on 15 July 1919), 17 July 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/117, No. 15643; see also Chapter 6, pp.1-4.
37. 'Suggested Palestine Mandate Revised after discussion with Zionists on July 15th [1919]', P.R.O., F.O. 608/117, No.16385; see also P.R.O., F.O. 608/116, No. 14445.
38. P.J. Noel-Baker to E.G. Forbes Adam, 24 July 1919, and attached minutes, P.R.O., F.O. 608/117, No. 16195; minutes by E.G. Forbes Adam, 26 September 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/117, No. 19140.
39. Zionist Organisation draft, submitted on 24 September 1919, in comparison with British Delegation Political Section draft, and minutes by A.G. Forbes Adam, 26 September 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/117, No. 19140.
40. 'Ch. V. Palestine: Draft provisionally agreed upon between Zionist Organisation and British Delegation', 18 November 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/117, No. 20870.
41. See below pp.176-8.
42. B.V. Cohen to E.G. Forbes Adam, 29 November 1919; B.V. Cohen to H.W. Malkin, 29 November 1919; minutes by E.G. Forbes Adam, 1 December 1919, and H.W. Malkin, undated, 2[?] December 1919; E.G. Forbes Adam to B.V. Cohen, 4 December 1919; 'Ch. V. Palestine: Draft provisionally agreed upon between Zionist Organisation and British Delegation', 11 December 1919., P.R.O., F.O. 608/117, No. 20870.
43. B.V. Cohen to H.W. Malkin, 29 November 1919, *ibid*.
44. E.G. Forbes Adam to B.V. Cohen, 4 December 1919, *ibid*.
45. E.G. Forbes Adam and R. Vansittart to G. Curzon, 1 January 1920, and minute by G. Curzon, 3 January 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4164, F. 695, No. 168142.
46. 'Draft Mandate for Palestine Revision of 15.3. 1920'; R. Vansittart to G. Curzon, 18 March 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5199, F. 860, No. E1447.
47. Minutes by G. Curzon, 20 March 1920, *ibid*.
48. Minutes by G. Curzon [18 March 1920], 19 March 1920 and 20 March 1920 (2 Minutes); E.G. Forbes Adam, 19 March 1920 and 22 March 1920; R. Vansittart, 20 March 1920; J.A.C. Tilley, 19 March 1920, *ibid*.
49. Suggested alterations by H.W. Young, after checking the draft with E.G. Forbes Adam, in the margins of the Draft Mandate for Palestine, 15 March 1920, and Minutes by H.W. Young, 25 March 1920, *ibid*.
50. R.G. Vansittart to H.W. Young, 21 June 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5244, F. 4164, No. E7033; 'Inter-Departmental Conference on Middle Eastern Affairs – Draft Mandate for Palestine', distributed by G. Curzon in Cabinet, 10 June 1920, P.R.O. CAB 24/107. The Draft was prepared in May 1920. See R.G. Vansittart to G. Curzon, 2 August 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5245, F. 4164, Nos E9372, E9427.
51. See below p.187.

52. 'British Secretary's Notes of a meeting of the Supreme Council, San Remo', 24 April 1920, in E.L. Woodward and R. Butler (ed.), *Documents of British Foreign Policy*, Vol. VIII (London, 1958), pp. 159–71.
53. R. Vansittart to H.W. Young, 21 June 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5244, F. 4164, No. E7033, and minutes by G. Curzon, *ibid.*
54. 'Ch. Weizmann, Observations on Draft Mandate for Palestine, dated June 10th 1920', 29 June 1920, C.Z.A. Z4/16006.
55. C. Weizmann to H. Samuel, 29 July 1920, *ibid.* (WL, X, No. 3).
56. *Ibid.*
57. See pp.187-9.
58. See pp.188-9.
59. R. Vansittart to G. Curzon, 2 August 1920, and enclosed draft, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5245, F. 4164, No. E9427.
60. C. Weizmann to G. Curzon, 11 August 1920, W.A. (WL, X, No. 9); see also p.189.
61. G. Curzon to H. Samuel, 15 August 1920, I.S.A. Samuel Archive, File 100/7.
62. Minutes by G. Curzon, 6 August 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5245, F. 4164, No.E9427.
63. Minutes of inter-departmental meetings held at the Foreign Office on 24 August 1920 and 25 August 1920, Clayton Archive, London.
64. Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 30 November 1920, P.R.O., CAB 24/115.
65. See p.191.
66. 'Declaration Constituting the Mandate for Palestine. Amendments as suggested by Sir Cecil Hurst in accordance with the recommendation of an Inter-Departmental Committee which met at the Foreign Office on August 24 and 25, 1920', Clayton Archive, London.
67. 'Declaration Constituting the Mandate for Palestine', submitted by G. Curzon to Cabinet, 25 September 1920, P.R.O., CAB 24/111.
68. C. Weizmann to A.J. Balfour, 1 October 1920, 8 October 1920 and 11 October 1920, C.Z.A. Z4/16011 and W.A. (WL, X, Nos 34, 38, 41); C. Weizmann to H. Samuel, 11 October 1920, W.A. (WL, X, No. 43); G. Curzon to D. Lloyd George, 29 October 1920, Curzon Archive, P.R.O., F.O. 800/156.
69. G. Curzon to D. Lloyd George, 29 October 1920, Curzon Archive, P.R.O., F.O. 800/156.
70. A.J. Balfour's note, 'Mandate for Palestine', 5 November 1920, S.R.O., Balfour Archive, pouch 5.
71. A.J. Balfour to G. Curzon, 18 November 1920 and A.J. Balfour to M. Hankey, 20 November 1920, *ibid.*
72. 'Declaration Constituting the Mandate for Palestine, and Memorandum by Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs', 30 November 1920, P.R.O., CAB 24/115.
73. A.I. Ettinger, 'Palestine after the War – Proposals for Administration and Development', C.Z.A. A111/3; see also Tolkowsky, Zionist Political Diary, index, Charter.
74. Minutes of the first meeting of the Advisory Committee on Palestine on 2 November 1918, C.Z.A. Z4/1547.
75. 'Proposals relating to the Establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine, presented on 19.11.1918', P.R.O., F.O. 371/3385, F. 747, No. 191828.
76. Minutes by W. Ormsby Gore, 19 November 1918, E. Crowe, 25 January 1918 and R. Cecil, undated, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3385, F. 747, No. 191828.
77. See Tolkowsky, Zionist Political Diary, p. 386; the list 'The Jewish Holy Places in Palestine', C.Z.A. A18/32/1.

78. 'Proposals relating to the Establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine, presented on 19.11.1918', P.R.O., F.O. 371/3385, F. 747, No. 191828; see also *Tolkowsky, Zionist Political Diary*, p. 386.
79. 'Memorandum of the Zionist Organisation relating to the reconstruction of Palestine as the Jewish National Home', January, 1919, W.A.; see also Note on conversation between L. Mallet and N. Sokolow, representing the Zionist Organisation, 20 January 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/98, No. 465.
80. 'Statement of the Zionist Organisation regarding Palestine', 3 February 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/98, No. 1627.
81. See Chapter 4, pp.113-27.
82. Minutes by A.G. Forbes Adam, 11 February 1919, L. Mallet, undated, W. Ormsby Gore, 10 February 1919, 12 February 1919, and H.W. Malkin, 20 February 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/99, No. 1627; memorandum by W. Ormsby Gore, 23 January 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/98, No. 588.
83. W. Ormsby Gore to L. Mallet, 20 February 1919; minutes by A. J. Toynbee, 22 February 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/99, No. 2577.
84. Minutes by C. Hardinge [after 20 February 1919], P.R.O., F.O. 608/99, No. 1627; see also 'Sketch of a draft Treaty of Peace between Turkey and Allied Governments, Chapter V, Palestine', 1 March 1919; and minutes by E.G. Forbes Adam, 4 March 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/116, No. 3561.
85. 'Statement of the Zionist Organisation regarding Palestine. Proposals to be presented to the Peace Conference by Dr. Weizmann as amended by the Secretary of State for further consideration', 28 February 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/99, No. 3123.
86. The Committee included L. Mallet, D.G. Hogarth, James de Rothschild, Miss G. Bell, T.E. Lawrence, P. Noel-Baker, R. Vansittart, A.G. Forbes Adam, A. Hirtzel, H.W. Malkin and Major Waley. Minutes of meetings of the Committee, held on 21-22 March 1919 (received on 24 March 1919), P.R.O., F.O. 608/99, No. 5092; see also L. Mallet to A.J. Balfour, 26 May 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/116, No. 11420.
87. Minutes by L. Mallet, 25 March 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/100, No. 4820.
88. Draft, undated, P.R.O., F.O. 608/100, No. 4820; see also 'Proposal for Palestine Mandate – Communicated by Mr. Frankfurter on behalf of the Zionist Organisation at Paris, March 20th [1919]', P.R.O., F.O. 608/100, No. 4820. The proposal was communicated to the British Delegation to the Peace Conference by R. Meinertzhagen. See R. Meinertzhagen to E.G. Forbes Adam 24 March 1919, *ibid.*; F. Frankfurter to E.G. Forbes Adam, 25 May 1919, and enclosed Draft, P.R.O., F.O. 608/116, No. 11419.
89. 'Ch. V – Palestine', 26 May 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/116, No. 11420.
90. Minutes by L. Mallet, undated, P.R.O., F.O. 608/99, No. 9321.
91. H. Samuel to A.J. Balfour, 6 May 1919, *ibid.*
92. Minutes by A.G. Forbes Adam, [8] May 1919, and L. Mallet, undated, *ibid.*; L. Mallet to A.J. Balfour, 26 May 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/116, No. 11420.
93. 'Suggestions of the Political Commission of the Zionist Conference, London', March 1919, I.S.A., H.L. Samuel Archive, File 100/5.; Y. Freundlich and G. Yogev (eds), *The Minutes of the Zionist General Council, 1919-1929 [Hebrew]*, Vol. I, pp. 69, 80.
94. 'Proposal for Palestine Mandate – Communicated by Mr. Frankfurter on behalf of the Zionist Organisation at Paris, March 20th [1919]', P.R.O., F.O. 608/100, No. 4820. The proposal was communicated to the British Delegation to the Peace Conference by R. Meinertzhagen. See R. Meinertzhagen to E.G. Forbes Adam 24 March 1919, *ibid.*

95. F. Frankfurter to E.G. Forbes Adam, 25 May 1919, and enclosed Draft, P.R.O., F.O. 608/116, No. 11419. Two versions were submitted owing to a misunderstanding of the instructions to remove some of the paragraphs from Chapter Five. The first version was communicated on 12 July 1919. The second version, which was supposed to substitute the version communicated by F. Frankfurter on 29 May 1919 (note 33) was submitted on 15 July 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/117, No. 15601.
96. Y. Freundlich and G. Yogev (eds), the Minutes of the Zionist General Council, 1919–1929, Vol. I, pp. 172–86.
97. E.G. Forbes Adam's report of two informal meetings with members of the Zionist Delegation (the first undated, the second on 15 July 1919), 17 July 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/117, No. 15643; see also 'Suggested Palestine Mandate Revised after discussion with Zionists on July 15th [1919]', P.R.O., F.O. 608/117, No.16385; see also P.R.O., F.O. 608/116, No. 14445.
98. 'Suggested Palestine Mandate Revised after discussion with Zionists on July 15th [1919]', P.R.O., F.O. 608/117, No.16385; see also P.R.O., F.O. 608/116, No. 14445: Zionist Organisation draft, submitted on 24 September 1919, in comparison with British Delegation Political Section draft and minutes by A.G. Forbes Adam, 26 September 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/117, No. 19140.
99. *Ibid.*
100. Minutes by H.W. Malkin, [] December 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/117, No. 20870.
101. Zionist Organisation draft, submitted on 24 September 1919, in comparison with British Delegation Political Section draft and minutes by A.G. Forbes Adam, 26 September 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/117, No. 19140.
102. 'Ch. V. Palestine: Draft provisionally agreed upon between Zionist Organisation and British Delegation', 18 November 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/117, No. 20870.
103. B.V. Cohen to E.G. Forbes Adam, 29 November 1919; B.V. Cohen to H.W. Malkin, 29 November 1919, minutes by E.G. Forbes Adam, 1 December 1919, and H.W. Malkin, undated, 2[?] December 1919; E.G. Forbes Adam to B.V. Cohen, 4 December 1919; 'Ch. V. Palestine: Draft provisionally agreed upon between Zionist Organisation and British Delegation', 11 December 1919., P.R.O., F.O. 608/117, No. 20870.
104. E.G. Forbes Adam and R. Vansittart to G. Curzon, 1 January 1920, and minute by G. Curzon, 3 January 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4164, F. 695, No. 168142; 'Draft Mandate for Palestine Revision of 15.3. 1920'; R. Vansittart to G. Curzon, 18 March 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5199, F. 860, No. E1447.
105. Suggested alterations by H.W. Young, after checking the draft with E.G. Forbes Adam, in the margins of Draft Mandate for Palestine, 15 March 1920, and minutes by H.W. Young, 25 March 1920, *ibid.*
106. R.G. Vansittart to H.W. Young, 21 June 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5244, F. 4164, No. E7033; 'Inter-Departmental Conference on Middle Eastern Affairs – Draft Mandate for Palestine', distributed by G. Curzon in Cabinet, 10 June 1920, P.R.O., CAB 24/107. The draft was prepared in May 1920. See R.G. Vansittart to G. Curzon, 2 August 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5245, F. 4164, Nos E9372, E9427.
107. R. Vansittart to G. Curzon, 2 August 1920, and enclosed draft, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5245, F. 4164, No. E9427.
108. Minutes of inter-departmental meetings held at the Foreign Office on 24 August 1920 and 25 August 1920, Clayton Archive, London.
109. 'Declaration Constituting the Mandate for Palestine. Amendments as suggested by Sir Cecil Hurst in accordance with the recommendation of an Inter-Departmental

- Committee which met at the Foreign Office on August 24 and 25, 1920'. Clayton Archive, London; 'Declaration Constituting the Mandate for Palestine', submitted by G. Curzon to Cabinet, 25 September 1920, P.R.O., CAB 24/111.
110. C. Weizmann to A.J. Balfour, 1 October 1920, 8 October 1920 and 11 October 1920, C.Z.A. Z4/16011 and W.A. (WL, X, Nos 34, 38, 41); C. Weizmann to H. Samuel, 11 October 1920, W.A. (WL, X, No. 43); G. Curzon to D. Lloyd George, 29 October 1920, Curzon Archive, P.R.O., F.O. 800/156; A.J. Balfour to G. Curzon, 18 November 1920, and A.J. Balfour to M. Hankey, 20 November 1920, *ibid.*
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 112. G. Biger, *Crown Colony or National Home* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem , 1983), pp. 1-17; A. Allenby 's telegram to War Office, 23 October 1919, P.R.O., W.O. 106, F. 718; see also A.P. Alsberg, *The Delimitation of the Eastern Border of Palestine*, Appendix 1: Zionism (Tel Aviv, 1973), Vol. 3, p. 241.
 113. Minutes by W. Ormsby Gore, 19 November 1918, *ibid.*; see Tolkowsky, *Zionist Political Diary*, p. 386; see also below p.214 and note 137 *ibid.*
 114. Lord Grey's Official report, 27 March 1923, 'Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords', London, 1921–1923, Vol. 53, No. 19.
 115. Minutes by Moody, 7 April 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/57, No. 12971.
 116. See p.215-16.
 117. S. Tolkowsky's outline. C.Z.A. A248/14; see also Tolkowsky, *Zionist Political Diary*, p. 10, 28 September 1915, note 1.
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 119. See Tolkowsky, *Zionist Political Diary*, pp. 304, 371, 379, 23 April 1918, note 1, 19 August 1918, note 1, and 2 October 1918 .
 120. See above p.157 and note 1 *ibid.*
 121. Minutes by W. Ormsby Gore, 19 November 1918, and E.A. Crowe, 25 November 1918, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3385, F. 747, No. 191828.
 122. See pp.215-16 and note 4 *ibid.*
 123. See above pp.215-16 and note 14 *ibid.* The map which was supposed to be included was not found.
 124. See pp.216-17 and note 21 *ibid.* Memorandum by A. Aaronsohn, *The Boundaries of Palestine*, W.A. and B.A.A. Aar. Art 2C/18; Y. Ephrati (Ed.) *Aaronsohn Diary* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv, 1970), pp. 494–6..
 125. 'Imperial War Cabinet, Report of Committee on Terms of Peace (Territorial Desiderata)', 28 April 1917, P.R.O., CAB 21/77.
 126. 'Memorandum by Mr. Balfour Respecting Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia', 11 August 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4138, F. 2117, No. 132187; see also above pp.x-xi.
 127. Secretary of the Political Department of the British Delegation to the Peace Conference: 'Proposed Boundaries of Palestine' and 'Northern Frontier of Palestine', April 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/98, No. 8858; 'Palestine Frontiers', 6 May 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/98, No. 9516.
 128. D. Lloyd George, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, Vol. II (London, 1938), p. 1038; J. Nevakivi, *Britain, France and the Middle East, 1914–1920* (London, 1968), pp. 89–93, 109ff; 'Memorandum by Mr. Balfour Respecting Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia', 11 August 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4138, F. 2117, No. 132187.
 129. 'Aide Memoire in regard to the Occupation of Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia pending the decision in regard to the Mandates', 13 September 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4182, F.2117,

- No. 130943; see also Conclusion of a Meeting of the heads of Delegations of the Five Principal Allies, 15 September 1919, *ibid.*
130. Memorandum by G. Clemenceau, 10 October 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4184, F. 2117, No. 140423; see also Note respecting Boundary between French and British Spheres in Syria, by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 26 December 1919, enclosed with N.M. Henderson to G. Curzon, 27 December 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4186, F. 2117, No. 165674.
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 132. R. Meinertzhagen to G. Curzon, 17 November 1919, *ibid.*
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 135. Memorandum by A.G. Forbes Adam, 'France and the Northern frontier of Palestine', 30 December 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/4215, F. 50535, No. 166023.
 136. Minutes by G. Curzon, 29 December 1919 [sic.], *ibid.*
 137. G. Curzon to D. Lloyd George, 20 October 1920, Curzon Archive, P.R.O., F.O. 800/156.
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 139. For G. Curzon to R. Vansittart, 16 October 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5246, F. 4164, No. E12403.
 140. Curzon to R. Vansittart, 9 November 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5247, F. 4164, No. E13621.
 141. R. Vansittart to G. Curzon, 16 November 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5247, F. 4164, No. E14317.
 142. Minutes by A.G. Forbes Adam, 16 November 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5247, F. 4164, No. E14193.
 143. *Ibid.*
 144. Minutes by H.W. Young, 6 November 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5247, F. 4164, No. E13924.
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 146. 'British Secretary's Notes of a Meeting of the Supreme Council, San Remo', 25 April 1920, in *Documents of British Foreign Policy*, pp. 172–3.
 147. See Biger, *Crown Colony or National Home* pp. 35–36; Cmd.1910: *Agreement between His Majesty's Government and the French Government respecting the Boundary Line between Syria and Palestine from the Mediterranean to El Hamme* (London, 1921). A detailed description of the negotiations regarding Northern Boundary, see in G. Biger, 'Land of Many Boundaries: The first Hundred Years of the Delimitation of the New Boundaries of Palestine-Erez Israel 1840–1947' [Hebrew], The Ben-Gurion Research Center, Sede Boqer Campus, 2001, pp. 103–34.
 148. 'British Secretary's Notes of Conference between Representatives of the British and the French Governments', 4 December 1920, in *Documents of British Foreign Policy*, Vol. VIII, pp. 864–5.
 149. E.H. Allenby to A.J. Balfour, 31 March 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/98, No. 5971; see also 'Delimitation of Southern Boundary of Palestine', *ibid.*
 150. Minutes by A.J. Toynbee, 2 April 1919, *ibid.*
 151. Minutes by T.E. Lawrence, 10 March 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 608/98, No. 3965.

152. 'Declaration Constituting the Mandate for Palestine, and Memorandum by Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs', 30 November 1920, P.R.O., CAB 24/115; Cmd. 1176 – 7 December 1920; Cmd. 1500 – August, 1921 ;minutes by A.J. Toynbee, 2 December 1919, P.R.O., F.O. 371/3398, F. 27647, No. 190447.
153. See Biger, *Crown Colony or National Home*, pp. 1–14; A.P. Alsberg, 'The Delimitation of the Eastern Border of Palestine' [Hebrew], *Zionism*, Tel Aviv, 1973, Vol. 3, pp. 229–46; I. Gil-Har, 'The Separation of Trans-Jordan from Palestine', The Jerusalem Cathedre, 1981, Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, Jerusalem.
154. C. Weizmann to W. Churchill. 1 March 1921, W.A. (WL, X, No. 135).
155. 'League of Nations, Mandate for Palestine, together with a Note by the Secretary-General relating to its application to the Territory known as Trans-Jordan, under the provisions of Article 25' (Cmd. 1785), 23 September 1922. The Mandate was presented to Parliament in December 1922, P.R.O., CAB 24/282.

Early Days of the Civil Administration: Interpretations and the White Paper

Herbert Samuel entered office as the head of the Civil Administration of Palestine in July 1920. Over two months had passed since the San Remo Conference, which had ruled that the Mandate on Palestine should be entrusted to Britain, and since the office of High Commissioner had been offered to him by the Prime Minister. The Draft Mandate, in which the Balfour Declaration had been included, was then at the stage when the principle of the 'historic connection' between the Jewish people and Palestine had already been endorsed and the Jewish Council's status had been delineated. The Council was, as mentioned above, to advise the Civil Administration in all administrative, educational and economic matters that affected the Jewish population and, under governmental control and with secured preferences in the economic field, to participate in the development of the country. However, the detailed implementation of the generally-worded draft Mandate was mainly dependent on initiatives taken by the new British Civil Administration, the Zionists' ability to realise their aspirations and the Arabs' readiness to reconcile themselves to the situation.

In May 1920, once the news of Herbert Samuel's nomination was publicised in Palestine, it raised a protest and even Faisal found it necessary to object to the appointment of Samuel 'since Mr. Samuel is known to be a Zionist whose ideal is to found a Jewish State upon the ruins of a large part of Syria, i.e. Palestine'.² Allenby, who passed on the Arab protest to the Foreign Office in London, had warned of the danger involved in appointing a Jew as first Governor. He explained that the Muslim population was in a state of great upheaval owing to news that the Balfour Declaration was to be included in the Peace Treaty and the only restraining factor was an assurance which had been given by the Chief Administrator that the Government of the country would be British. The appointment of a Jew, he argued, would be interpreted as handing the country over at once to a Zionist permanent Administration and the British Administration must be prepared for attacks against Jews.³ L.J. Bols, the Chief Political Officer and Chief Administrator of OETA (South), had a different assessment. He was hoping that Samuel

would conduct a balanced policy and believed that, in the future, once the Arab protest against the appointment had calmed down, most of Samuel's difficulties would be caused by the pressures of radical Zionists rather than by the opposition of the Muslims and Christians.⁴

Foreign Office opinion was divided. Hubert Young, who assumed that the object of appointing a Jew was to show that the British Government was determined to carry out its Zionist policy, thought that such a move might be a mistake and believed, like Bols, that Samuel would find himself compelled to conduct a policy which would not please the Zionists. Osborne was afraid that this would be a devastating beginning to the Jewish National Home, while Hardinge ended the discussion by saying that the issue had been decided upon, that Samuel was the best choice and should be sent at once to Palestine.⁵

Curzon thought otherwise. When Allenby's warnings reached Curzon, the latter informed Samuel and attached a suggestion that the appointment be postponed for a year, during which time a non-Jewish governor would implement the transition from a military to a civil administration. In a meeting on 13 May 1920, Samuel discussed Allenby's warnings and Curzon's suggestion with a deputation of representatives of the Council of Jews of Jerusalem – who had been sent to London following the riots of April 1920 – other Jewish leaders from Palestine and Weizmann, who had been authorised by representative bodies of the *Yishuv* (Hebrew: the organised Jewish population in Palestine) to speak on their behalf on political questions. Following this meeting, Samuel informed Curzon that the participants were of the opinion that the one thing which had encouraged Arab agitation in the past, and would do so in the future, was uncertainty about the future of Palestine and that the appointment of a Jew as Governor would put an end to this uncertainty once and for all and would enable the Jews to come to an understanding with the Arabs. The members of the deputation also stated that, even if there were a risk of disturbances, that risk ought to be taken for the sake of the larger issues involved. Samuel agreed and referred to a letter he had received from David Eder, who replaced Weizmann as the head the Zionist Commission, according to which Gilbert Clayton and Wyndham Deedes, who were posted at the time in Cairo, believed that Samuel's appointment would solve half of the difficulties.⁶

When Samuel entered office, the question of defining the meaning of the Jewish National Home was familiar to him. In November 1914, as a junior minister in Asquith's Government, he had met Lloyd George and the

Secretary for Foreign Affairs Edward Grey, with whom he had discussed the future of Palestine. On the assumption that Turkey's entry into the War would lead to the end of the Ottoman Empire, Samuel proposed to Grey that a Jewish 'State', under British auspices and world Jewry funding, should be established in Palestine.⁷ He expanded this idea in two memoranda which he submitted to the Cabinet in January and February 1915 and in which he analysed the various possibilities for determining the future of Palestine and solving the Jewish problem. He also recommended that a British protectorate be installed in the country.⁸

Throughout the War years that preceded the Balfour Declaration, Samuel was in permanent contact with the Zionists leaders in England. He was one of the Jewish dignitaries who was consulted by the War Cabinet concerning the proposed wording of the Declaration. As mentioned above, he emphasised the significance of the Declaration for reasons of imperial interests and strategic propaganda value.⁹

In the years following the Balfour Declaration, Samuel headed two advisory committees. The first was the above-mentioned Advisory Committee of Zionist and non-Zionist leaders, which formulated the Proposals to be submitted to the Peace Conference. The second was the Advisory Committee on Palestine Economic Development, which was formed in March 1919 to advise the Zionist Organisation on practical means by which the Jews could promote the economic development of Palestine once the political status of the country had been determined and which prepared, till January 1920, plans for future economic activities in Palestine.¹⁰

Invested with these powers, Samuel had, together with Weizmann, represented the Zionists in negotiations with British policy-makers regarding Palestine and he took a significant part in Zionist activities in which they elaborated on their policy and defined in detail the meaning of the Declaration. Samuel's involvement in these activities led Balfour to consult Samuel and send his suggestions as instructions to the Military Authorities in Palestine on 4 August 1919. Samuel was even sent Balfour's suggested alterations to the wording of the Zionist Proposals to be submitted by the Peace Conference. However, Samuel's reservations about these changes, which supported the Zionist conception, were not accepted.¹¹ In other words, Samuel was well aware both of Zionist claims and plans for the implementation of their concept of a Jewish National Home under British auspices and of the process of formulating the Mandate.

The limits imposed by the existing situation in Palestine were also known to Samuel. In December 1919, he was invited to investigate and advise the Military Authorities in Palestine on the matter of future policy regarding development, finances and administration.¹² For that purpose he stayed in

Palestine in September–October 1920. Through his travels in the country and discussions held with local dignitaries and British administrators, Samuel assessed the strength of the opposition to the pro-Zionist policy, particularly with reference to the declarations of the Syrian Congress, convened in Damascus on 3 March 1920, which were in favour of an independent United Syria, including Palestine, and the crowning of Faisal as its king.

After the Anglo-French Declaration was publicised towards the end of 1918, the Palestinian Arabs kept claiming that the Balfour Declaration artificially separated them from the Syrian Arabs who were free to choose their own Government. Demonstrations by Palestinian Arabs in support of the coronation of Faisal as king of United Syria, following the Syrian Congress declaration, gave cause for concern since they were reinforced by the aspirations of the Arab nationalists in Syria to establish an independent Greater Syria on the one hand and French propaganda for the unification of Palestine and Syria under their rule on the other. Within the Palestine Administration, officials were worried about the possibility that a combination of these factors might endanger the entrusting of the Mandate on Palestine to Britain. The negotiations which Faisal carried out with Clemenceau in December 1919, towards French recognition of his rule in Syria under French auspices, were also worrying.¹³

With this in the background, Samuel outlined his view of the prospect of a realisable Jewish National Home policy. Samuel believed that the movement in Palestine for union with Syria emerged from patriotic sentiment among a small class of politically conscious Arabs in favour of an independent Arabia, which should be as extensive and as important as possible, and from fears of economic divisions between Palestine and neighboring Arab countries, which had hitherto been under a single Government. He thought that this movement was supported by anti-Zionists, who anticipated that extensive Jewish immigration would lead the rest of the population to a point where they had a lower status, that cultivators of the soil might be dispossessed of their property, that Muslim and Christian Holy Places would be affected and that administrative posts would be filled by Jews. A united and independent Syria, they believed, was the only means of combating Zionism. Samuel also noted that this attitude was combined with the personal interests of the *effendi* class (landlords) in Palestine who expected that administrative posts under an independent Government would be filled with their own members to a far greater degree than under a British Mandate, which was committed to a Zionist policy and might also exact social legislation for the benefit of the *fellaheen* (peasants).

Samuel did not regard this opposition as an expression of a national movement opposed to Zionism. He believed the movement was not deep-seated, since the mass of the population was not concerned with questions of general politics and the *fellaheen* viewed with suspicion any movement which was organised by the *effendis*. He was also under the impression, especially while traveling in the Galilee – where he was welcomed by sheikhs from the Arab villages who dissociated themselves from the anti-Zionist meetings that had taken place in the towns – that there was no antipathy and remarkably little friction between the Jewish agricultural colonies and their Arab neighbours, who knew that, thanks to the Jewish farmers, they had been able to improve their methods of cultivation. Samuel believed that economically the Zionist policy was quite practicable and that politically, if too much was not attempted at once, the difficulties that undoubtedly existed were by no means insuperable. In other words, if immigrants arrived gradually as the conditions of the country allowed, if there was no pauper class to be a burden upon the rest but the same industrious progressive type of people as those who had founded the Jewish colonies, if they brought with them capital which would help to promote the prosperity of the whole country to the advantage of all its inhabitants, the concerns of those who opposed dispossession and Zionist domination would be allayed.

The suggestion made at the Syrian Congress that Faisal should be declared king of Palestine, was strongly opposed by Samuel. He felt that the effect of this upon Zionism, if not fatal, would be most grave. Jews throughout the world, he argued, would no longer be willing to devote their energies, their money and their lives to the development of a country which might ultimately prove to be nothing more than the province of an unprogressive Muslim State. They could accept a British Administration, under a Mandate and responsible to the League of Nations, leading up eventually to a self-governing Commonwealth but they would not agree to a British Administration under Arab sovereignty. At any time the course of events, locally or in Europe, might lead the British to withdraw, leaving the Arabs supreme. Such an eventuality would give no permanence and no security and it would take the heart out of Zionism and the Zionist Movement which would feel it had been betrayed. Samuel, however, believed that it was possible to find a method which would satisfy legitimate Arab demands while avoiding the dangers which their full acceptance would entail. The solution, according to him, lay in the formation of a loose confederation of Arab-speaking States, each of which should be under its own Government but all of which should combine together for economic and other purposes. The seat of such a confederation should be in Damascus with Faisal as head of the confederation. Samuel believed that such a plan

would satisfy the economic needs of the population of Palestine, give the Palestinian Arabs a sense of connection with the rest of the Arab world, provide ports to Arab States not bordering the sea and prevent outside pressures.¹⁴

The suggestions Samuel submitted to Curzon following his visit, concerning the measures that should be adopted locally by the Civil Administration in Palestine, defined also the conditions that should be set by the Government and the Zionist Organisation in order to implement the Jewish National Home policy. Samuel believed that the establishment of the Jewish National Home was realisable if the Palestinian Arabs' apprehensions of domination, dispossession and the filling of administrative posts by Zionists were removed. He felt it was possible to create an atmosphere of trust among the Arab population if a settled, efficient and honest Government was established in Palestine, a Government which would introduce a proper representation of the population and remove its apprehensions that Arabs would be dispossessed or removed – politically, administratively and socially – into a secondary position.

As practical measures, Samuel proposed: a) the constitution of a small Advisory Council to be nominated by the Governor, with an official majority and three non-official representatives of each of the three religious sections; b) the opening of the land registers and removal of prohibitions on the buying and selling of land; c) enactment of the legislation necessary to enable Land Banks to be established and encouragement of the formation of financial institutions which would grant long term credits to agriculturists and urban businesses, some of which might be under Zionist auspices and others not; d) opening of the ports to immigration, subject to the condition that the Zionists should prepare schedules of employment to be offered to immigrants and that no large scale immigration should be permitted beyond the numbers that could expect to find employment which was actually available or which would be made available for immigrants by the Government or Zionist or private undertakings. In other words, Samuel concluded, the general principle should be that schemes of development should first be prepared and approved and that immigration should be authorised for each class of men only up to the capacity of those schemes to absorb them.¹⁵

This guiding principle, that in the following years became one of the foundation stones of Samuel's policy and his perception of the Jewish National Home, was only to be expected in view of Samuel's role as head of the Advisory Committee on Palestine Economic Development, which had just recently been preparing plans for the economic infrastructure of Palestine. At the same time, however, Samuel understood that the

relationship between immigration and development policies was reciprocal. In a separate paper on Immigration into Palestine which he submitted to Curzon, in which he clarified the suggestions for immigration under the Administration's control and ruled that the Zionist Organisation was responsible for finding employment for immigrants, Samuel explained:

It is essential to make a beginning as soon as possible with the establishment of the Jewish National Home. Almost nothing has been begun hitherto. With the substitution of a civilian administration for military a commencement cannot longer be postponed. There is a considerable demand for various kinds of labour in Palestine already. As soon as capital expenditure by the Government, by the Zionists and by private individuals commences on any considerable scale, that demand will increase. If immigration is not permitted the economic development of the country will be retarded.¹⁶

Samuel assumed office as High Commissioner for Palestine in July 1920. The principles expressed in his above-mentioned proposals appeared again in statements of policy he made to the press and at assemblies in Jerusalem on the eve of his assuming office. Samuel promised that an Advisory Council, representing the larger communities, would be nominated; restrictions on economic initiative and land transactions would be removed; the banks would be re-operated and loans for public works and agricultural and commercial development would be given. He spoke also of enabling restricted immigration while pointing out the steps that should be taken for the development of the country that, in his opinion, had room for a far larger population; not only, he believed, would this not be damaging but it would prove advantageous to the native population.

The promise of a Jewish National Home was referred to, both in Samuel's statement and in the King's message to the inhabitants of Palestine, which Samuel promulgated on assuming office. Samuel's statement read:

In accordance with the decision of the allied and associated powers, measures will be adopted to reconstruct the Jewish National Home in Palestine. The yearnings of the Jewish people for 2000 years, of which the modern Zionist movement is the latest expression, will at last be realised. The steps taken to this end will be consistent with a scrupulous respect for the rights of the present non-Jewish inhabitants.

Concerning the Jewish National Home, the King's message read: 'You are well aware that the Allied and Associated Powers have decided that measures shall be adopted to secure the gradual establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish People. These measures will not in any way affect the civil and religious rights or diminish the prosperity of the general population of Palestine.'¹⁷

However, neither statement explained what steps would be taken towards the realisation of 'the yearnings of the Jewish people', nor what 'measures will be adopted to reconstruct the Jewish National Home in Palestine' beyond an economic infrastructure and sources of employment that would remove Arab fears of dispossession. Neither clarified how the Government would bring about a self-governing Commonwealth. This was not because Samuel was unaware of the non-economic aspects of building a National Home. After all, according to the report of the Inquiry Committee into the 1920 riots, it was Samuel who, during his visit, had drawn the attention of the Military Authorities to the Administration-within-Administration which the Jewish institutions were developing in Palestine.¹⁸

Samuel, like Watson and Bols, was aware of the growing administrative autonomy of the *Yishuv* but he probably chose not to deal with the matter at this stage. Samuel also knew about the deliberations over the different wordings of the draft Mandates. Two months earlier, he had defended the attempt to find a proper expression for the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine, on which the Zionist claim was based, and had demanded that the terms 'historic title' and 'reconstitute' not be crossed out from the draft Mandate, as proposed by Balfour.¹⁹ Although using the term 'reconstruct', he was careful not to refer to the various interpretations as long as the process of drafting was confidential and open to changes. It is also possible that he postponed dealing with sensitive issues until he felt secure in his office.

The proposals, submitted by Samuel prior to assuming office, also guided him during his tenure, both in defining his policy and in building the institutional frameworks of the Civil Administration and of the local population's self-governing bodies. In his first year in office, Samuel already initiated a careful policy to make sure that the Jewish National Home was built gradually, without prejudicing the well-made being of the Arab inhabitants or preventing them from submitting their grievances and demands to the Mandatory Government. In addition to laying the grounds of an efficient administration under which all inhabitants would be equally

treated and feel they could trust it, his policy was mainly implemented by regulating immigration, setting an economic infrastructure that would enable its absorption and taking the first steps towards establishing representative institutions for the country's inhabitants.

One of the first acts of the Civil Administration was promulgating an ordinance regulating immigration and settlement on the land. Samuel and the Zionist leaders were aware that once the Military Administration came to an end and immigration was allowed, this immigration would determine the pace at which the Jewish National Home could be established, its scope and its prospects of survival in the face of Arab hostility. While carrying out the administrative steps to deal with immigration, the Civil Authorities were careful from the beginning not to let the country be flooded with immigrants who could not support themselves economically, who might become a burden on the Administration and cause protests and trouble among the native population. The Zionist leaders, who stood firm by the principle that every Jew had the right to immigrate to Palestine and take part in the establishment of the National Home, agreed about the need to regulate immigration so that it would be within the country's capacity to absorb the immigrants and provide them with sources of livelihood. In the event, the Zionists did not put this policy to the test, since they were unable to implement their plans to supply sources of livelihood.

The idea that the economic absorption capacity of the country should be the basic principle of immigration policy, a principle that was to be officially sealed with the White Paper of 1922,²⁰ had already been adopted in the first year of Samuel's holding office and, already that year, it had been stipulated by the Mandatory Government as a necessity to the development of the Jewish National Home.²¹ At the end of the year, this principle was reinforced when Samuel put immigration on hold following the Arab riots of 1921. This measure made it clear that the Government's intention was not only to stipulate that immigration and the growth of the Jewish National Home should be dependent on the economic absorption capacity of the country. Samuel also raised the question about who would decide on the absorption capacity: the Administration or elements within the population which could put the Administration under pressure. It might be the case that violent riots would influence the decision on absorption capacity and that those riots might be started intentionally in order to impede Jewish immigration.

Another area, which was to affect the concept of the Jewish National Home and was bound up with the question of immigration, was the area of economic activity. As has been discussed, the Zionists were aware of the effects economic activity would have on the growth of the National Home

and were preparing plans for the future development of the country. In the period of the Military Administration, they had already requested that waste or unoccupied lands be settled and farmed by demobilised Jewish soldiers; they were trying to acquire the German colonies and town settlements, ownership of which had been frozen under the *status quo* policy; they asked to be granted concessions for public services, for example the Jaffa-Jerusalem Railway which was owned by a French company, telephone, radio-telegraph and the water power of the Audja (Yarkon) river to generate electric power.²² Furthermore, in the course of the negotiations concerning the wording of the draft Mandate, the Zionists made sure the Zionist Council was recognised as a factor in the country's development and that it was offered priority in land allocations and settlement as well as concessions for the development of natural resources, public works and services.

In the final version of the Mandate, which was endorsed as the Foreign Office draft in March 1920, on the eve of Samuel's appointment, it was stated that:

An appropriate Jewish Agency shall be recognised as a public body with power to advise and co-operate with the Government in all administrative, economic, social and other matters affecting the establishment of the Jewish National Home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine, and subject always to the control of the Government to assist and take part in the development of the country. It shall have preferential right, upon fair and equitable terms, to construct or operate public works, services and utilities, and to develop the natural resources of the country, in so far as these matters are not undertaken by the Administration.

In the matter of settlement, it said that 'the Administration of Palestine, while ensuring that the established rights of the native population are equitably safeguarded, shall facilitate Jewish immigration and close settlement by Jews on the landing cooperation with the Jewish Agency ... and shall open for such settlement all State lands and waste lands not required for public purposes ...'²³

Although, in the course of the drafts, the priority principle and the preferential right to construct or operate public works, services and utilities, and to develop the natural resources of the country were cancelled, the Zionists still had grounds for believing that their requests would be accepted. After all, the draft Mandate, which was submitted to the Cabinet for approval in September 1920, enabled the Zionists to construct or operate any public works, services and utilities, and to develop any of the natural resources of

the country in so far as these matters were not directly undertaken by the Administration.²⁴

Once Samuel assumed office it became clear that the Zionists' expectations were unfounded and that the Civil Administration had no intention of being divested of State assets or of giving up the functions of public works and services.

Samuel objected to selling State lands on principle. In January 1921, referring to Baron De Rothschild's request that State lands be sold to the Jewish Colonisation Association (ICA), Samuel justified his objection by arguing that the land value would be higher once the country was developed and that it was unfair for the whole population to suffer a loss from their being sold to private enterprises. It seemed to Samuel that other organisations would follow the ICA and it would be difficult to differentiate between acquisitions for the benefit of the public and private acquisitions. As a general rule, he suggested that lands should be leased for a period of up to a hundred years.²⁵ However, when Samuel's suggestion that *Jiftlik* lands (State domains) be leased to their cultivators was opposed he accepted the sheikhs' refusal to recognise State ownership of the lands and, in November 1921, an agreement was signed according to which the *Jiftlik* lands were handed over to the inhabitants.²⁶

As to natural resources, public works, services and utilities, these, according to the last draft Mandate, were to be under public ownership or control and it was made clear to Samuel that no concession should be granted before the Mandate was ratified. However, this policy had already been changed by the end of the first year of the Civil Administration. In January 1921, Samuel passed on to the Colonial Office Pinhas Rutenberg's proposal for building a hydro-electric plant on the Audja (Yarkon) River. Curzon concurred with Churchill who, according to John Shuckburgh, the head of the Middle Eastern Department at the Colonial Office, suggested modifying the no concessions policy in certain cases and differentiating between concessions for development which offered employment to the inhabitants and concessions for oil and minerals production which appealed to foreign investors.²⁷ In July 1921, Samuel suggested a further change. When Moshe Novomeysky appealed for a concession to produce minerals from the Dead Sea, Samuel, anticipating Government income, was inclined to grant the request. He found a solution: that concessions for mineral-mining be different from those given to producing sea-minerals.²⁸

However, Zionist requests to carry out public services were totally rejected by the Civil Administration. All railways, including the Jaffa-Jerusalem Railway which was owned by a French company, were taken over by the Civil Administration on 1 October 1920. All post, telephone and

radio-telegraph services had already been taken over by the Civil Administration in July 1920.²⁹

Samuel believed that economic infrastructure for the Jewish National Home would be established first and foremost by the development of the country and by offering the right conditions to Jewish entrepreneurs to take part in it. He believed that, if the principle of economic absorption capacity was realised by regulating Jewish immigration and if emphasis was put on development which would benefit the whole population, conditions would eventually be created both for numerical growth and for economic strengthening of the Jewish population. Samuel thought that economic well-being would benefit the whole population and would eventually create an atmosphere of acceptance of the *Yishuv's* reinforcement, would reduce fears of a Jewish majority and Jewish domination and would shift the emphasis from political considerations of a Jewish-Arab conflict to considerations of the economic benefits.

Accordingly, the Government invested considerable resources in developing agriculture and assisting Arab villages in its first year.³⁰ Moreover, Samuel hoped that the Zionists too would help him in carrying out his tasks, both by taking part in an investment bank which would give credit to farmers and by providing a loan to enable the implementation of Government development schemes.³¹ In addition, Forbes Adam suggested that it should be explained to the Parliament that:

In order to enable a national home to be created in the country, which is undeveloped, it is preferably natural that the administration should turn to those interested in the creation of that National Home (for the benefit of their poorer brethren) in order to carry out the schemes of irrigation and improvement of communications on which the development of the country must depend. The whole population of the country and not only the Jews will be bettered by such schemes. Further, in these days of financial stringency it is next to impossible for a poor and new state to raise money on terms within its competence on the ordinary market. The Jewish people throughout the world will be probably, however, prepared to make sacrifices and Palestine money on better terms.³²

Since the loan could not be issued until the Mandate was formally conferred, Samuel asked for Curzon's approval to proceed at once with the most urgent enterprises such as a water supply for Jerusalem, the re-construction of certain roads, additional rolling-stock for railways as well as further strengthening of railways, building houses for officials and beginning a cadastral survey.

Samuel explained that Government capital expenditure could not be postponed until the Mandate was conferred and the loan issued because, to halt the considerable Jewish immigration into Palestine, which was then proceeding, would have serious political disadvantages. It would discourage the Zionists and give the impression that the policy of creating a Jewish National Home was being cut back if not abandoned. But, if the immigration was allowed to proceed, he argued, the new arrivals must be given the opportunity to find employment. Land settlement takes time, he explained, and the growth of new industries was also a gradual process. Employment in public works was a suitable temporary solution and, at that time, many hundreds of young immigrants were, in fact, being employed on road-making and railway re-construction work with quite satisfactory results. If capital expenditure were to stop during the few months which followed, or not expanded, the effect on immigration would be most serious. Samuel believed that halting expenditure would result in Arab dissatisfaction. The population of Palestine at large had been assured that the advent of a British civil administration would lead to rapid economic development of the country, he explained, and important sections looked on this development as compensation for certain aspects of British occupation which they disliked, particularly a non-Moslem administration and the possibility of their interests being subordinated to those of the Jewish immigrant population.³³

Laying the grounds for the Jewish National Home was not, in Samuel's opinion, one of the tasks of the Mandatory Government. In his own words:

It must be mainly the work of the Jewish people to bring about such conditions in Palestine as will secure the establishment of the National Home; and the principle task of the Government is to remove any disabilities or inequalities – and there were not a few in the Ottoman heritage – which would impede the fulfillment of that purpose.

Therefore, he wrote, 'The legislation of the Government has been directed towards the general aim of providing equal opportunity for all communities and classes and encouraging enterprise.'³⁴ And, indeed, an 'Ordinance' was enacted to regulate immigration and the discrimination imposed by Ottoman legislation against Jewish settlement was removed: the Civil Administration also removed the ban which prohibited Jews who were not Ottoman subjects from purchasing land; the Land Registry Offices were reopened and the Administration prescribed controls to check speculation; in the field of commercial enterprise, Ottoman law was replaced by an Ordinance based upon English Company Law and the encouragement of banking was dealt with by ordinances which laid down the conditions under

which banks could carry on business and provided facilities for the creation and control by the Government of Credit Banks lending on immovable security.³⁵

Towards the end of his first year in office, Samuel started implementing his ideas relating to population representation. In April 1921, he established an Advisory Council as the first stage towards granting expression to public opinion alongside central government institutions.³⁶ In April–May of that year, Samuel intervened in the elections for a representative institution of a different kind: the election of a successor to Kamil al-Husayni, the *Mufti* of Jerusalem, who had been given the title of ‘Grand Mufti’ and looked upon as the representative of Islam in Palestine. When, in spite of a vigorous campaign for a candidate from the al-Husayni family, one was not chosen among the top candidates, Samuel and his Administration intervened, the elections of the Muslim electing body were annulled and the al-Husayni family’s candidate, al-Hajj Muhammad Amin al-Husayni, was appointed in May 1921. He became *Mufti* of Jerusalem and, eventually, in January 1922, received the title ‘Head of the Muslim community in Palestine.’³⁷ This process, like the steps taken by Samuel to suspend Jewish immigration the same month,³⁸ was interpreted as surrender to pressures by extremists who were using violent methods and to ‘street’ public opinion. Although the intervention of the High Commissioner in the *Mufti*’s appointment did not relate directly to the question of the Jewish National Home, it created one of the biggest problems that Samuel had to face: Would he be able to realise his intentions and establish representative institutions according to western democratic principles and would these bring about a moderation of Arab opposition to the establishment of the Jewish National Home?

Samuel does not seem to have been aware of the dangers to the prospects of his policy’s realisation which were posed by his suspension of Jewish immigration and appointment of the *Mufti*. A year after he had assumed office, when summing up in an official report the principles that had guided Civil Administration policy in its first year, he re-expressed his belief that the Government’s Zionist policy, as defined by him on the eve of his assuming office, was realisable. Furthermore, now that the Mandate had been drafted, Samuel was ready to define the concept National Home which had not been finalised earlier.

Samuel declared, in his official report, that Government policy ‘contemplates the satisfaction of the legitimate aspirations of the Jewish race throughout the world in relation to Palestine, combined with a full protection of the rights of the existing population’ and that he was convinced that the means could be found to effect this combination. The Zionism that was

practical, he explained, was the Zionism that fulfilled this essential condition. It was the clear duty of the Mandatory Power to promote the well-being of the Arab population in the same way as the British Administration would regard it a duty to promote the welfare of the local population in any part of the British Empire. The measures to foster the well-being of the Arabs should be precisely those which the British Government would have adopted in Palestine if there had been no Zionist question and Balfour Declaration. There was, in that policy, nothing incompatible with reasonable Zionist aspirations. On the contrary, if the growth of Jewish influence were accompanied by Arab degradation or even by neglect to promote Arab advancement, it would fail in one of its essential purposes. The grievance of the Arab would be a discredit to the Jew and, as a result, the moral influence of Zionism would be gravely impaired. Samuel argued that the sentiments regarding Palestine, which increasingly animated the Jews of the world, must be satisfied. The aspirations of those fourteen million people also had the right to be considered. Here, too, he elaborated:

They ask for the opportunity to establish a 'home' in the land which was the political, and has always been the religious, centre of their race. They ask that this home should possess national characteristics in language and customs, in intellectual interests, in religious and political institutions.

This is not to say that Jewish immigration is to involve Arab emigration, that the greater prosperity of the country, through the development of Jewish enterprises, is to be at the expense, and not to the benefit of the Arabs, that the use of Hebrew is to imply the disappearance of Arabic, that the establishment of elected Councils in the Jewish Community for the control of its affairs is to be followed by the subjection of the Arabs to the rule of those Councils. In a word, the degree to which Jewish national aspirations can be fulfilled in Palestine is conditioned by the rights of the present inhabitants.³⁹

The Government of Palestine went through a change, not only in the country itself, by replacing the Military Administration with a Civil Administration, but also in London. In February 1921, a few months after Samuel had assumed office, the Middle Eastern Department was established at the Colonial Office; it included Palestine and Winston Churchill served as Secretary of State for the Colonies. Churchill, like Samuel, was aware of Zionist ambitions regarding a solution to the Jewish question. Since

1906–8, when he was serving in Parliament as representative of north-west Manchester, Churchill had been in touch with Jewish and Zionist leaders from Manchester and its neighbourhood and was familiar with the problems in looking for a solution to the Jewish question.⁴⁰ In 1908, he expressed in writing the preference he had for the Zionist solution in Palestine.⁴¹ However, in the course of the War, at the time when there was Zionist political activity preceding the Balfour Declaration, Churchill did not voice his opinion on the Zionist question and there is no evidence that any attempt was made to ask for his help in advancing the idea of establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine under British auspices. At the time the Declaration was made, Churchill did not participate in the debate regarding its necessity.

Churchill declared his position on the National Home and the intentions of the British Government to establish it a few weeks after assuming office as Colonial Secretary. In March 1921, while visiting Palestine following the Cairo Conference, where some of the trends of British policy in the Middle East had been outlined, Churchill met a Deputation of the Arab Executive Committee, which had been elected by the Third Palestinian Conference in Haifa and was attempting, in those days, to establish itself as the body representing the Palestinian Arab population.⁴² The Deputation submitted to Churchill a petition that the recognition of a Jewish National Home should be repudiated in principle. They believed that a national government, responsible to a parliament representing the inhabitants of Palestine who had resided there since before the War should be set up and that, till then, all Jewish immigration into Palestine should be suspended and all the rules which had been enacted after the British occupation should be abrogated. The Deputation also requested that Palestine not be disconnected from its neighboring countries. Churchill responded that the Balfour Declaration, which had been ratified by the Allied Powers, and its inclusion in the Mandate was a *fait accompli* and that this inevitably involved Jewish immigration into the country. Moreover, he made it clear that it was highly unlikely that Britain would repudiate the Declaration which was providing justice to the Jews who were scattered all over the world by enabling some of them to reunite in a national centre and a national home in a country with which for more than 3000 years they had been intimately and profoundly associated. Churchill also drew the Arab Deputation's attention to the careful wording of the Declaration. He explained that:

Balfour spoke of 'The establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jews'. He did not say he would make Palestine the National Home for the Jews ... The fact that Palestine shall contain a a National Home for the Jews does not mean that it will cease to be the national

home for other people, or that a Jewish Government will be set up to dominate the Arab people .

Churchill continued:

The British Government has promised that what is called the Zionist Movement shall have a fair chance in this country, and the British Government will do what is necessary to secure that fair chance. But after all it is only upon its merits that Zionism can succeed. We cannot tolerate the expropriation of one set of people by another or the violent trampling down of one set of national ideals for the sake of erecting another. If a national home for the Jews is to be established in Palestine as we hope to see it established, it can only be by a process which at every stage wins its way on the merits and carries with it increasing benefits and prosperity and happiness to the people of the country as a whole.

As to the claim that the Arabs might be dispossessed by the enormous numbers of Jewish immigrants, Churchill answered that that would never be: 'Jewish immigration could only come as it makes a place for itself by legitimate and honorable means; as it provides the means by which it is to be supported'. Then he elaborated:

The task before the Zionists is one of extraordinary difficulty. The present form of Government will continue for many years and step by step we shall develop representative institutions leading up to full self-government. All of us here to-day will have passed away from the earth and also our children and our children's children before it is fully achieved. The Jews will need the help of the Arabs at every stage and I think you should be wise to give them your help and your aid and encourage them in their difficulties. They may fall. If they are not guided by wisdom and good-will, if they do not tread the path of justice and tolerance and neighborliness, if the class who come in are not worthy of the Jewish race, then they will fail and there will be an end of the experiment. But on the other hand, if they succeed, and in proportion as they do succeed year by year, such success can only be accompanied by general diffusion of wealth and well-being among all the dwellers in Palestine and by an advance in the social, scientific and cultural life of the people as a whole.⁴³

If anybody expected the Palestinian Arabs to retract their objections to the Declaration after Samuel's and Churchill's explanations, he would have been disappointed. This was pointed out by Wyndham Deedes, Civil Secretary (eventually Chief Secretary) in Samuel's Administration, about a month after Churchill's visit to Palestine. In a memorandum he sent to Hubert Young, of the Colonial Office's Middle East Department, Deedes said there was a need to explain exactly what the Balfour Declaration meant since the Arabs completely misunderstood it and believed that it was their understanding of the policy that the British Government meant to apply. Deedes pinned the blame on two factors: the first, the Mandate which did not explain the Declaration and was full of ambiguities; and the second, the gap between the explanations given by the British for their policy and their methods of applying it. As an example of policy-making which, according to him, 'has unconsciously given the lie to our words', Deedes referred to the Jewish immigration issue. Immigration, he argued, was to the Arab 'the tangible, visible evidence of Zionism' and it was the measure the British were judged by. However, in practice, Jewish immigration did not bring about the economic development expected, since the immigrants were not chosen according to the feasibility of employing them in development and were, in fact, being employed as casual labourers. Deedes believed that the problem was solvable. In addition to 'more light with regard to the principle and more care with regard to the practice' of British policy he suggested, in an attached memorandum, that the next step that would inspire confidence should be to institute representative bodies and to grant more adequate representation of all sections in the Administration. For the time being, he admitted, Palestinian Officials must be restricted to Technical Departments and greater control must be introduced gradually.⁴⁴

A day after Deedes sent his memorandum, there was an outburst of Arab violence following a Jewish 1 May demonstration in Jaffa. The growing problem demanded a response and a clarification of policy. On 8 May 1921, Samuel sent Churchill an assessment of the situation after the riots. Samuel did not consider that the disturbances reflected an anti-British attitude or were a protest against the Administration. He believed that the political background to the riots was the issue of Jewish immigration and the representation of the country's inhabitants in Governmental institutions. In his opinion, comparatively few people opposed Jewish immigration, through fear of possible political consequences. The main reasons for the opposition to Jewish immigration were, according to him, tactical. That is to say: opposition to Jewish immigration was caused by a small fraction of Bolsheviks among the Jewish immigrants whose propaganda led the Arabs

to conclude that Zionism meant the importation into the country of the least desirable elements of Eastern Europe; the fact that a very large proportion of the immigrants were employed on such work as the making of roads and railway embankments only strengthened that belief. The reason for that, Samuel explained, was not because the immigrants were not suited to better employment but because of a lack of funds owing to the delay in the promulgation of the Mandate and, therefore, in the issue of Government loans and also because of world economic conditions which hampered the Zionists in the collection of funds. As a result, important public works for the development of the country and private industrial enterprises had been delayed. The second reason for the protest, according to Samuel, was a system which did not allow the Palestinian Arabs proper representation in Governmental institutions. Some of the leading men in the country, he reported, demanded the establishment of representative institutions at once in order that the people might participate in measures that would affect the country's future. They regarded the present administration as unduly autocratic.

Samuel, therefore, proposed measures to deal with the roots of the problem. At the outbreak of the riots, he temporarily suspended all Jewish immigration and recommended that revolutionary elements be deported and immigration resumed on two conditions: firstly, that the enterprises on which the men were to work were ready before the immigrants arrived; and secondly, that stricter control was exercised over the selection of immigrants in order to exclude those who were politically undesirable. Samuel also requested that the establishment of a Home Force be re-considered and that representative institutions be established as soon as possible. 'The Zionist leaders cannot fail to recognise', Samuel argued, 'that the application of their policy is not possible if it has to be conducted in face of the constant, resolute, and perhaps violent, opposition of a large, and even the greater, part of the population of Palestine'. On the other hand, he remarked, many Arab leaders were aware that the British Government would not abandon its pledge to the Jews.⁴⁵

Two weeks later, Samuel came out with a further proposal to allay Arab opposition and expand the representation of Palestinian Arabs. He reported to London that Article 4 of the draft Mandate was strongly opposed as it was seen as being a partnership between the Zionists and the Government of Palestine to the exclusion of the rest of the population. As Article 4 could not be omitted, Samuel suggested that equal recognition should be given to another body which should be consulted by the administration on matters affecting the interests of the non-Jewish population pending the establishment of a responsible government.⁴⁶

Samuel's proposals to grant representation rights to the population of Palestine raised, once more, as in the days preceding the visit of King-Crane's Commission, the fundamental question of taking into consideration the opinion of the Arab population and implementing the democratic-numerical principle regarding the very prospect of the National Home policy being carried out. At the Colonial Office there were differing reactions to the proposals. T.E. Lawrence believed that Samuel's proposals for elected members on the advisory council would go a long way to dampening the unrest, was not inconsistent with the terms of the Mandate and would not be regarded as a sign of Britain's weakness but rather of its growing understanding. In his opinion, the concordat proposed between the Arab and the Jewish nationalists was a possibility, remote in Palestine but more feasible in London.⁴⁷ On the other hand, there were those who thought that Samuel's idea of local representative institutions would not deal with the root of the problem, which was the 'anti-Semitic' (altered to 'anti-Jewish' above the line) feelings of the 'native Palestinians', and that any large electoral concessions would be interpreted as weakness and would encourage further disorder.⁴⁸

H.W. Young analysed the issue and claimed that British policy-makers had to find out first, before deciding on elected institutions, how powerful the Arab opposition was and, taking that into account, how they were to implement the National Home policy. In other words: Were they prepared to acknowledge that they could only carry out their Zionist policy to the extent to which a local representative body agreed with it or were they so convinced that local representative opinion was definitely anti-Zionist that the only way for them to fulfil their pledges was to proceed in spite of local opposition? Young pointed out that this was a real dilemma since it meant abandoning the Zionist policy or not fulfilling local aspirations to an extent which was repellent to British traditions and which might lead to military and financial commitments beyond Britain's means. He even warned that, if local opinion was incurably anti-Zionist, Britain would have to throw out not only the Zionist policy but also the Mandate. He felt, however, that a compromise was possible but that it must be brought about by agreement between the parties before they could risk any elections.⁴⁹

The possible necessity of forcing the National Home policy on a population opposed to it, of which Young was afraid, was also the argument of Richard Meinertzhagen, who had joined the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office as a Military Advisor in May 1921. He, however, reached the opposite conclusions. It was clear to Meinertzhagen that any election campaign in Palestine would revolve around the question of Zionism. Though the question was outwardly political, he argued, the practical result

would be a racial and religious conflict, the most virulent form of conflict among human beings, and would add an irritant to an already sensitive and volatile atmosphere. Meinertzhagen had no doubt about the results. It was clear to him that any elected Advisory Council would be anti-Zionist. Thus, Britain would be creating another weapon for hindering its policy and embarrassing the administration, which was supposed to implement the policy of helping the Jews to establish a National Home in Palestine. So long as Britain maintained the Balfour Declaration and the Zionist policy laid out in it, he wrote, the Declaration could not be abandoned after the many authoritative confirmations it had received at the hands of the Government and it must primarily ensure that this policy was accepted by the people of Palestine. To give them a weapon with which to defeat British policy was surely confusing the remedy with the reward. Meinertzhagen's conclusion was definitive: so long as British policy was not accepted by the people of Palestine, Britain must directly administer the country. Representation could come later, based on the principle of acceptance of Zionism. Till then, he suggested, there could be municipal elections and representation for purely social and municipal questions.⁵⁰

John Shuckburgh, Head of the Middle East Department, responded to Samuel's proposal that equal recognition to that given to the Zionist Agency in Article 4 of the draft Mandate should be given to an appropriate body to be consulted by the administration on matters affecting the interests of the non-Jewish population pending the establishment of a responsible government:

The provision in the Mandate for recognition of a representative Jewish agency is justified by the special condition attached to the Palestine Mandate, viz.: that of establishing a National Home for the Jewish people. I see no adequate grounds for providing in the Mandate for recognition of a similar agency on behalf of the non-Jewish elements. The interests of the latter are fully safeguarded by the mandate as a whole, and will certainly be provided for in any document defining the future constitution of the country.⁵¹

Churchill approved of the action taken by Samuel and allowed him to announce that, until immigrants already in the country were absorbed, immigration would not be re-opened; that more stringent measures would then be taken to prevent political undesirables being allowed in. He also thought that, for the time being, the formation of a local defence force should be suspended. However, Churchill strongly objected to setting up an elected Advisory Council or making a definite pronouncement on future defence

arrangements until the Mandate had been approved. In his opinion, Arab agitation in Palestine was doubtless engineered in the hope of frightening the British away from their Zionist policy. ‘The institution of an elected council is in any case such an important measure that I cannot approve it off-hand’, Churchill wrote. ‘To make such a concession under pressure is to rob it of half its value. We must firmly maintain law and order and make concessions on their merits and not under duress.’⁵² Churchill concluded that it would be sufficient if Samuel stated that His Majesty’s Government was considering what steps should be taken for the closer association of the people of Palestine with the administration under mandate and that he, Churchill, was giving his closest attention to the question of ensuring a free and authoritative expression of popular opinion. Any such words as ‘elected’ or ‘representative’ [council] should not be used.⁵³

With these ideas in mind, Samuel and Colonial Office officials started discussing the wording of the address Samuel was to make on 3 June, the occasion of the King’s birthday. The definition to be given to the National Home policy and the two issues which might become the criteria of its implementation, namely the immigration policy and the realisation of the representation principle, were the main subjects discussed.

On 27 May, Samuel sent a draft in which the National Home policy referred to in the Balfour Declaration was defined as follows:

What it means is that Jewish people scattered throughout the world but whose hearts always turn to Palestine should be enabled to found here a spiritual centre and that some of them within limits fixed by numbers and interests of the present population should be allowed to come help by capital labour and intelligence to develop the country to [the] advantage of all inhabitants.

To this, Samuel added: ‘If any methods have been adopted which depart or even appear [to] depart from those principles they must be changed. If in order to convince Moslem and Christians their rights are really safe ...’⁵⁴

In other words, the ‘National Home’ for the Jewish people became ‘a spiritual centre’. Not only did the term ‘National’ – which was the reason for the conflict between the Zionists and their opponents before the Balfour Declaration – disappear completely but so did the term ‘Home’. On top of that, the term ‘the Jewish people’ underwent a transformation as well. The double meaning of the word ‘people’, which could be interpreted either as a

nation or as persons, was used. The Jewish people who had been recognised by the Declaration as having the right to have a National Home, had turned into scattered human beings who would be able to found a spiritual centre in Palestine and, furthermore, only 'some of them' would be allowed to come to Palestine and help develop the country to the advantage of all inhabitants within limits fixed by their numbers and interests. The 'historic title' to Palestine amended by Balfour to 'historic connection', around which the discussions while drafting the Mandate had taken place,⁵⁵ was not mentioned at all.

At the Colonial Office people were aware of the change in the conception of the National Home in Samuel's draft but not of the further whittling down. A summary of Samuel's proposed announcement, formulated at the Colonial Office, read:

What it means is that Jewish people who are scattered throughout the world, but whose hearts always turn to Palestine, should, within limits fixed by numbers and interests of the present population, be encouraged to make their homes in Palestine, and by their resources and efforts help to develop the country to the advantage of all its inhabitants.

To that, they added: 'These principles will be maintained; at the same time it will be made clear to Moslems and Christians that their rights are safe.'⁵⁶

In other words, Samuel's definition of the National Home as a spiritual centre, to which some of the Jews could come, was not accepted. The omission of the term 'National' was maintained but the term 'Home' reappeared in the wording, while the word 'people' was used in the plural form: the reference is definitely not to a nation but to scattered people who would make their 'homes' in Palestine.

However, this version was not accepted by Churchill. Following consultation with Lawrence, Young prepared a draft reply for Churchill, in which 'homes' was replaced by 'home'. Furthermore, an explanation was given for the omission of 'spiritual centre' and 'some of them' from Samuel's proposal.

Churchill's reply read:

In my statement to Parliament I propose to explain the policy of the National Home as follows:

What it means is that Jewish people scattered throughout the world but whose hearts always turn to Palestine should within limits fixed by numbers and interests of the present population be

encouraged to make their home in Palestine and by their resources and efforts help to develop the country to the advantage of all its inhabitants.⁵⁷

‘This wording is preferable to that suggested by you as the announcement of any paraphrase of the words National Home would lead to the impression that as a result of the recent disturbances the policy of His Majesty’s Government had been altered’, Churchill explained.⁵⁸ However, the formulators did not notice that the word ‘National’ had been omitted in their wording as well.

Two other subjects that needed clarification were, as mentioned, the immigration policy and the population’s representation in government institutions. Concerning immigration, Samuel proposed repeating his July 1920 statement explaining that immigration must be proportionate to the provision of permanent employment, expressing his disappointment that this had not always been done and stating that immigration had been suspended pending a review of the situation. In addition, he suggested that he would list the categories of those who should be admitted as immigrants and state that conditions in Palestine were such as to preclude anything in the nature of mass immigration. These proposals were approved by the Colonial Office, on the assumption that they were intended only to cover the period until permanent employment on new projects could be offered to Jewish immigrants.⁵⁹

As to representation, Samuel proposed, following Churchill’s instructions, that he should state at the inauguration of the Advisory Council on 23 April that it was only the first step in the development of self-governing institutions and that he was anxious that people be associated more closely with the Administration, that ensuring free and authoritative expression of popular opinion was receiving the closest attention of the British Government and that, in the meantime, elections in the Municipalities would be held at once. At the same time, Samuel tried to find out if Churchill had reached a decision on the insertion of a clause in the Mandate that would enable the establishing of a body which would function as a counterweight to the Zionist Commission and whether or not he could include an announcement of that.⁶⁰

Churchill replied unequivocally. He explained, accepting Shuckburgh’s minute quoted above, that provision for an established Government for Palestine would be made when the Mandate came into force either by Order in Council or by another authority which might be deemed appropriate, that he saw no adequate grounds for providing in the Mandate for recognition of a non-Jewish agency along the lines adopted in Article 4 on the Zionist

Organisation. 'The Mandate as a whole fully safeguards the interests of the non-Jewish elements', he wrote, 'and they will certainly be provided for in an instrument referred to above in which will be defined the future constitution of the country'. Churchill suggested to Samuel that his statement on 3 June⁶¹ should be in accordance with this explanation.

The draft reply to this explanation, prepared at the Colonial Office, was as follows:

It must be clearly understood that the inauguration of the Advisory Council on April 23rd was only the development of self-governing institutions. The question of ensuring a full and authoritative expression of public opinion is now receiving the closest attention of His Majesty's Government. In the meantime I shall always, as in the past, give the fullest weight to the views and requests of all responsible persons and bodies, speaking on behalf of all sections of the community. The clause in the mandate according special recognition to the Zionist Organisation arose out of the special condition imposed by the mandate, viz.: that of setting up a National Home for the Jews. There are no adequate grounds for providing in the mandate for similar special recognition of a non-Jewish agency. The interests of non-Jewish elements are sufficiently safeguarded by the terms of the mandate as a whole, and will be clearly provided for in the formal instrument in which, when the mandate comes into force, it is proposed to embody the future constitution of the country. This instrument will be registered with the Council of the League of Nations.⁶²

Before receiving this reply, Samuel repeated his suggestion in another telegram. 'It is thought by most of my advisers that [that] statement is not sufficiently definite and that it will disappoint public opinion', he wrote.

For some time I have had under consideration constitution of a Christian-Moslem committee to fulfil functions equivalent to those of the Zionist commission and Jewish elected council. If such a body can be recognised in mandate so much the better. In any case I think it is desirable to announce now that pending consideration by His Majesty's Government [of] the question ensuring full authoritative expression of public opinion such a Committee with whom I should be in regular and constant consultation on administrative matters of public interest will be constituted at once among persons possessing confidence of people.⁶³

At the Colonial Office, this suggestion seemed to G.L.M. Clauson, an official in the Colonial Office, 'a policy of funk'. 'Article 6 of the Mandate confines the activities of the Jewish Agency almost exclusively to Jewish affairs and is part of the National Home policy', he wrote. 'As Palestine is already "a national home" of the Arabs there is no need to have any machinery for turning it into one. Neither should the Moslem-Christian C[ommi]tee have anything more to do with Jewish affairs than the Z[ionist] O[rganisation] in Christian-Moslem affairs'. If Samuel must say something, Clauson believed, he should confine himself to a statement that, pending consideration by the British Government of the question of ensuring full authoritative expression of public opinion, it would always, as hitherto, give the fullest weight to the views and requests of all responsible bodies representing the Christian and Muslim sections of the community.⁶⁴

Young expressed his reservations as well. 'It would be a great mistake to crystallize the distinction between Jews on the one hand and the non-Jews on the other by recognizing a Moslem-Christian body of any kind, as such', he wrote. Lawrence concurred and added: 'The Jewish body is no part of the Government of Palestine, and the Arabs would be better advised to concentrate on the official councils'. Shuckburgh, too, agreed, though with some reluctance.⁶⁵

Thus, Churchill's cable to Samuel was as follows:

My views as to inclusion in mandate of counterpoise to Zionist Organisation were communicated to you in my separate telegram. I feel similar objection to formal announcement regarding constitution of Christian-Moslem Committee. It seems to me that it is desirable to avoid as far as possible crystallising distinction between Jews and non-Jews as such. The special recognition accorded to Zionist bodies arises out of special conditions attached to mandate viz.: establishment of national Home for Jews. There appear to be no grounds for giving similar non-official representation to other elements whose natural sphere of representation are official councils. Would suggest that in statement you confine yourself to saying that pending consideration by His Majesty's Government of question of ensuring full authoritative expression of public opinion you will always like in the past give fullest weight to views and requests of all responsible persons or bodies speaking on behalf of all sections of community.⁶⁶

Samuel received Churchill's reply to his second telegram before the answer to his first. Therefore, he made another effort to have the following paragraph added to his statement: 'I propose to take – [Immediate steps to?] ensure

closer consultation on administrative matters of importance between Government and responsible persons who speak on behalf of all sections of population'. He explained:

Present arrangements, under which I receive representatives of the Zionist Commission in the interests of Jewish Elected Council every week while others have no recognized opportunity of expressing views, are strongly resented in the country. This breeds suspicion of all actions of Government ... It is essential we should adopt new methods and I trust you will agree to me arranging with opposition for their representatives to see me at regular intervals. Zionists here would, I believe, have no objection.⁶⁷

However, once Samuel received Churchill's first reply, he reported that the paragraph had been modified accordingly, but Churchill's explanation of the Jewish National Home might confirm the fears of massive immigration. The translation into Arabic did not convey the real sense of the English words 'National Home' in the Balfour Declaration, Samuel explained. Therefore, he rephrased the relevant paragraph making it clear that the meaning of National Home was:

that Jews, a people that are scattered throughout the world, but whose hearts are always turned to Palestine, should be enabled to found here their home, and that some amongst them, within the limits that are fixed by the numbers and interests of the present population, should come to Palestine in order to help by their resources and efforts to develop the country, to the advantage of all inhabitants.⁶⁸

This wording appeared in Samuel's statement of 3 June 1921. It was also cited in Churchill's statement to Parliament on 14 June, regarding the Government's policy towards Palestine.⁶⁹ As to the proposal that some framework for consulting with Arab representatives be found, Churchill explained in a private and confidential reply:

I am certainly in no way opposed to the step by step establishment of elective institutions or to any measures that you may take to secure constant and effective representation of non-Jewish opinion. I am willing at any time to receive from you proposals on this subject. I was not of opinion however that the morrow of the Jaffa riots was the best moment for making such a concession. As soon as disorder has been repressed and there is even a short lull in the agitation the

opportunity should be seized. Please let me know exactly what you wish to do.⁷⁰

A short time later, Churchill had an opportunity to clarify his stand on the establishment of representative institutions *vis-à-vis* the National Home policy. Three days after his 3 June statement, Samuel informed the Colonial Office that a Christian-Muslim Delegation from Palestine was about to leave for England in order to bring their case before the Government with a view to arriving at a 'friendly settlement'.⁷¹ The Delegation, the formation of which had already been decided on by the Arab Executive Committee in March 1921 and chosen in early June,⁷² was to leave for London in order to bring about the abrogation of the Balfour Declaration. However, Samuel, in his assessment of the political situation in Palestine following his 3 June statement, reported to Churchill that only a small minority of Palestinian Arabs would not be satisfied by anything less than the cancellation of the Balfour Declaration, while the bulk of rational-minded Christians and Muslims considered the recent statement to be fairly satisfactory and were only hoping that the Delegation about to leave for England would 'obtain further and better results.' Samuel suggested that, in view of the danger of an outburst of further disturbances, a compromise should be reached with the Delegation: '... a serious attempt must be made to arrive at an understanding with the opponents to the Zionist Policy, even at the cost of considerable sacrifices', he asserted, since 'The only alternative is a policy of coercion, which is wrong in principle and likely to prove unsuccessful in practice.'⁷³

Churchill answered that Samuel should inform the Delegation that he was working out a scheme of popular representation to be submitted for the approval of the British Government, explain that a document defining the position of the mandatory in Palestine would be prepared at once in spite of postponement of the Mandate and that, both in preparing this document and in proposals for representation, he would consult representatives of all sections of the population. Churchill stated, however, that it must be clearly understood that administrative reform could only proceed on the basis of acceptance of the policy of the creation of a National Home for the Jews, which remained a cardinal part of British policy as presented in Samuel's 3 June speech. No representative body that might be established would be permitted to interfere with measures (for example immigration) designed to give effect to the principle of a National Home or to challenge this principle.⁷⁴ In a speech to Parliament on 14 June, Churchill explained: 'If representative institutions are conceded, as we hope they will be, to the Arabs of Palestine, some definite arrangements will have to be made in the instrument on which those institutions stand, which will safeguard within reasonable limits the

immigration of Jews into the country, as they make their own way and create their own means of subsistence.⁷⁵

To the Zionist camp, the statement of 3 June was a great blow. Jewish immigration had, indeed, been suspended before. The Zionists had also been aware of the intention to establish an elected council and, on 1 June, the Executive of the Zionist Organisation had protested to the Colonial Office against the intention to implement numerical representation. The Zionist Organisation, which believed that the illiterate and politically-inexperienced Palestinian farmers would be entirely under the influence of a few *effendis*, warned the Colonial Office that the proposed elected body would be unfriendly to British policy and the National Home and, as a result, Arab extremists would be strengthened and encouraged to demand the abolition of the Mandate and the withdrawal of the British altogether.⁷⁶ The Zionists in Palestine, however, did not realise that the issue of a representative Council would be mentioned in the statement of 3 June. They were hopeful that this statement would announce the renewal of Jewish immigration and an improvement in helping immigrants adapt to the economic needs of the country. After Samuel's statement, the *Yishuv* leadership protested vehemently. David Eder announced his resignation as head of the Zionist Commission and, in an emergency meeting of the *Va'ad Leumi* (Hebrew: National Council of Jews in Palestine), he proposed that all contact and collaboration between the Zionist Commission, *Va'ad Leumi*, Jewish members of the Advisory Council and the British Authorities be cut off.⁷⁷

Samuel reported to London that the Zionists regarded the statement made on 3 June as indicating a revision of the policy of the British Government and they considered that the interpretation given to the National Home postponed, to an almost indefinite future, the full realisation of their ideals. The Zionists, he wrote:

object to the further restrictions opposed upon immigration, since, however necessary those regulation might be on purely economic and social grounds, yet they regard them as inimical to the principle ... that the doors of Palestine should be open to an immigration of Jews in numbers sufficiently large to enable the National Home to be fully established in the very near future. They regard with misgiving and apprehension the suggestion that the people of the country should soon be associated in greater measure with its administration; for in

their opinion Representative Bodies in Palestine must inevitably bar the way to execution of the Zionist Programme.

Nevertheless, Samuel believed that the Zionist 'will not withhold their confidence when they see that their fears for the most part are ill-founded'.⁷⁸ Weizmann, who was, at the same time, in the United States in the middle of an internal debate that ended with Brandeis and his supporters seceding from their American Zionist Organisation offices,⁷⁹ did not immediately join in the wave of protest. He even cabled Samuel an encouraging message and asked his colleagues in Palestine to appreciate the very difficult position Samuel was in and support him.⁸⁰ Only a few weeks later, on his return from the United States when meeting leading Zionists in London and Prague, did Weizmann join the protest against appeasing the Arabs and systematically and relentlessly reducing Zionism. In a letter to Samuel and a memorandum, prepared as a preliminary for discussions held at Balfour's on 22 July, Weizmann protested both against the legislative steps taken against Jewish immigration and the elected Council, which had reduced the scope of Zionist activities and hindered his efforts to raise funds for the development of the country, and against the wording used in the statement of 3 June, which had distorted the original meaning of the Balfour Declaration.

Samuel's statement, Weizmann argued, suggested that the Government's principle pre-occupation was to stand between the Arabs and the aggressive designs of the Jews and to propitiate the Arabs at whatever price. The Arabs were told that the British Government 'will never agree to their country, the Holy Places, their lands being taken from them' nor to 'a Jewish Government being set up to rule over the Moslem and Christian majority'. They were not told that no such demands had ever been submitted to the Government and they were left to infer that such would be the consequences if the Zionists had their way. They were told that immigration must be strictly proportional to the employment available in the country and that it had been suspended pending a review of the situation. They were left to conclude that no such suspension had been necessary until it was hastily conceded in response to Arab violence. They were told that the new Jewish arrivals included a number of Bolsheviks against whom severe measures were to be taken. They were not told what measures were to be taken against those responsible for 200 Jewish casualties in Jaffa and for unprovoked attacks on half-a-dozen inoffensive Jewish colonies nor against the Arab police who actively participated in the riots.

Weizmann's main criticism dealt with the explanation of the Balfour Declaration which was wholly irreconcilable, according to him, with the terms and foundations of the Declaration and to the interpretation which

had, by common consent, been placed upon them. The safeguards which the Declaration properly provided for the civil and religious rights of non-Jewish communities were magnified into undertakings, which, if adhered to, would empty the Declaration of all meaning. The *raison d'être* of Jewish immigration was, according to Samuel, the development of the country to the advantage of all its inhabitants. Furthermore, such immigration was to be limited not by the capacity of the country to absorb it but by the interests and, what was more surprising, the numbers of the existing population. Such an assurance clearly implied the maintenance of a permanent non-Jewish majority, the Arabs being the final judges of what was permissible since, if they doubted whether their rights were safe, the Government had pledged itself in advance to take whatever measures required to convince them. In other words: the Government's Declaration in favour of the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people was reduced, in effect, to an apologetic admission that, in so far as the non-Jewish population considered Jewish immigration to be in its interest, such immigration would, within rigid numerical limits, be allowed.⁸¹

At the meeting held at Balfour's on 22 July, in which, in addition to the host, Lloyd George, Winston Churchill, Maurice Hankey and Edward Russell were present, Weizmann repeated his charge about Samuel's statement and claimed that the Declaration actually meant an ultimate Jewish majority, a majority that Samuel's statement would never permit to happen. According to notes which were taken at the meeting and kept among Weizmann's papers, Churchill 'demurred at this interpretation of the speech', while both Lloyd George and Balfour 'said that by the Declaration they always meant an eventual Jewish State'.⁸²

In a Memorandum prepared at the Zionist Organisation Central Office in London, submitted by Weizmann to Balfour a day before the 22 July meeting, some practical ways of implementing Government policy were also suggested. It was proposed that, for the protection of the Jewish Colonies, the Colonists should be enrolled as special constables and the Colonies should be permitted to have a limited supply of arms; that the existing Police Force be replaced by a small neutral constabulary to be recruited by voluntary enlistment in Britain or the Dominions; that officials who were openly and notoriously out of sympathy with the Government's policy be asked to resign; and that the garrison of Palestine should cease to be part of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force. It was also stated that the Zionist Organisation recognised that immigration into Palestine must be carefully regulated and had every interest in not allowing it to outrun the capacity of the country to absorb it. However, it was demanded that the Government should consult the Zionist Organisation about its

implementation. As to providing openings for employment on a substantial scale, it was requested that a concession for hydro-electric power under the Pinhas Rutenberg scheme should be granted without further delay. And last but not least, it was requested that the Zionist Organisation be afforded the opportunity of submitting its observations on the draft of any Organic Law that was to be promulgated, as well as on any changes contemplated in the Mandate.⁸³

Once more, Meinertzhagen backed the Zionists. When the protest of the Zionist Organisation of 1 June, against the intention to set up representative institutions, arrived at the Colonial Office, Meinertzhagen supported the Zionists.⁸⁴ On the eve of Weizmann's meeting with Lloyd George, Balfour and Churchill, Meinertzhagen appealed in a personal letter, and not in his capacity as Military Adviser at the Colonial Office, to the South African Prime Minister Jan Christian Smuts, who had been involved in drawing up the Balfour Declaration, and urged him to use his influence and insist that the Balfour Declaration stood as it was. The interminable delay could not continue, he explained, for to 'go slow is death'. Furthermore, he proposed some policies which were almost identical with those of the Zionists, mentioned above.⁸⁵ A few days later, Meinertzhagen wrote to Shuckburgh, head of the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office, in his capacity as Military Adviser. This time he dealt with the secret gun-running of the Jewish population in Palestine and urged that it should be recognised and legalised in order to enable the *Yishuv* to protect itself against Arab aggression. Meinertzhagen justified his appeal by the arguments he had used in his letter to Smuts. In his opinion, the Government did not provide the Jews in Palestine with sufficient protection and, though it stood by its pledge to implement the Balfour Declaration which included more than allowing Jews to settle in Palestine, no progress had been made towards helping the Jews to establish a National Home in Palestine in the nearly three years since the War had ended. Meinertzhagen thought that, because the Government lacked the moral courage to face up to Arab hostility towards Zionism and because it feared Arab aggression and threats of aggression, Jews had been asked to proceed slowly which, in effect, meant stagnation. 'To go slow with a machine whose very life is to build up and progress is to ask that machine to disintegrate', he wrote.⁸⁶

Samuel's attempt to establish a Council which would represent all the inhabitants of Palestine, the departure to London of the Muslim-Christian Delegation, the Zionist protest and Meinertzhagen's support of it all led to

Colonial Office officials considering the issue of the British promise in the Balfour Declaration.

In early June, when the Zionist Organisation protest against representative institutions was received by the Colonial Office, Clauson commented that it must be understood that it was the British Government's policy to allow the local population of Palestine as large a voice in the running of the country as was compatible with Britain's undertaking to establish a Jewish National Home there.⁸⁷ John Shuckburgh analysed the problem: while objecting to the Zionist Organisation's intervention or their advice to the British Government in matters of policy, he pointed out that the Zionist Organisation protest did illustrate the dilemma with which the British Government was faced in its Palestinian policy. The British Government was confronted with two distinct obligations, he wrote. The first was to give effect to British pledges about setting up a National Home for the Jews and the second was to carry out the traditional British policy of introducing a representative element into the administration as quickly as circumstances permitted. The question was, in his opinion, whether these two obligations were mutually incompatible. The Zionist Organisation would answer: 'Yes. Your first business is to set up a Jewish State, and in order to do so you must disregard local opinion which is notoriously opposed to the project. You must, in fact, impose us upon Palestine by autocratic methods and abandon all talk of popular representation until we are a majority in the country'. Shuckburgh believed that Britain should find some means of reconciling these two obligations and must be prepared to resist pressure from both sides at every stage in the proceedings.⁸⁸

When Meinertzhagen submitted his paper about arming the *Yishuv*, the issue was analysed by Hubert Young. 'It is assumed that His Majesty's Government has no intention of departing from the Zionist Policy', he wrote. 'The problem which we have to work out is one of tactics, not strategy, the general strategic idea, as I conceive it, being the gradual immigration of Jews into Palestine until that country becomes a predominantly Jewish State. There is no half-way house between this conception and total abandonment of the Zionist programme'. Young believed that it was not enough for the British to tell the Arab Delegation that they did not intend to waver in their policy, since, in fact, they had wavered and they must be prepared to take a stronger line. However, he wrote, it was questionable whether 'we are in a position to tell the Arabs what our policy really means' and 'cannot say more than Sir H. Samuel said on 3rd June without risking a disturbance which we shall be unable to keep in hand'. As a plan of action Young, like Meinertzhagen, agreed with Weizmann's suggestions on the eve of the meeting at Balfour's, namely to exclude the proposal that the Zionist

Organisation be afforded an opportunity to submit its observations on the draft of any Organic Law that might be proposed, as well as on any changes that might be contemplated in the Mandate. Young thought that none of these suggestions was in conflict with Samuel's definition of the National Home and that the expropriation of individual land-owners under Rutenberg's concessions was not really a breach of the second half of the Balfour Declaration since all governments reserve themselves the right of expropriating individuals in favour of works of public utility. He believed that the British Government could carry out this programme without increasing its expenditure or running the risk of a wide spread conflagration in Palestine, if these measures were combined with the establishment of an Advisory Council on an elected basis and strict limitation of immigration to numbers which could be absorbed into the population.⁸⁹

Young's analysis and his proposals were discussed and approved of as an action plan in a meeting on 2 August 1921 held by Shuckburgh, Young, Meinertzhagen and Weizmann. Meinertzhagen, however, dissociated himself from the proposal to set up an Elected Advisory Council and argued that any such council could make no contribution. If it were not allowed to deal with Zionist questions or legislation arising from the Balfour Declaration, it would be reduced to a body of no importance, for no question of Palestine could be completely divorced from Zionism. Meinertzhagen also felt that a Council would be a continual embracement to the British Administration and could become a dangerous political instrument against a weak Administration. However, Meinertzhagen's remained a solitary voice for Shuckburgh, and even Weizmann, supported Young's view that the establishment of an Advisory Council on an elective basis was a necessary condition of success.⁹⁰

Since it was unanimously agreed that a decision of the Cabinet was needed and the issue could not be dealt with only on an interdepartmental level, the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office prepared a memorandum, based on Young's minute, which was circulated in the Cabinet by Churchill.

The memorandum, which commenced with a brief summary of events in Palestine since the May disturbances, a quotation from Samuel's statement of 3 June and a description of Jewish and Arab responses, continued, in Young's wording, that it was assumed that the British Government had no intention of departing from its Zionist policy and the problem which had to be worked out was one of tactics not strategy. However, unlike Young's minute, according to which the general strategy was aimed at the gradual immigration of Jews into Palestine until that country became a predominantly Jewish State, the memorandum submitted to Cabinet read

that the general strategic idea was the gradual immigration of Jews into Palestine to the extent to which they could be absorbed into the economic life of the country without detriment to the rights and privileges of the non-Jewish majority.

The writers of the memorandum dissociated themselves from Weizmann's statement that the language employed by Samuel (and subsequently quoted by Churchill in Parliament) was wholly irreconcilable with the terms of the Balfour Declaration and with the interpretation placed upon them by common consent. They disapproved of his objection to the establishment of a representative institution. However, they recommended that the measures suggested in Weizmann's memorandum to ensure that Government policy be resolutely carried out, be adopted. These measures included: disconnecting the troops in Palestine from the Egyptian command so that they were entirely at the disposal of the civil power, in effect directly under the War Office; replacing the officials, whether civil or military, who were opposed to the declared policy of the Government; adequately protecting the Jewish colonies from Arab attacks and allowing the Jewish colonists, who were arming themselves, to become an official reserve to the existing police. Additionally, the measures included explaining to the Arabs that they would not be called out except in the event of unprovoked aggression; taking strong measures to punish the villages responsible for the recent attacks and giving more authority to the Zionist Organisation for recommending immigrants and for granting to Jewish enterprises economic concessions for works of public utility which would not conflict with pre-War claims, whose disposal must necessarily await the legislation of Britain's position as mandatory in Palestine. It was also suggested in the memorandum, accepting Young's paper, that, together with the measures mentioned above, steps should be taken to establish Samuel's Advisory Council on an elected basis, since the non-elected bodies could not be indefinitely ignored on the grounds that they were not representative if the setting up of a really representative body was opposed. The dangers involved in establishing such a Council, it was proposed, could be reduced by preventing the Advisory Council from obstructing Government policy, while allowing them to freely express their legitimate views on all proposals for the economic development of Palestine. The second point brought up by Young in his paper, as a counter-balance to Zionist demands regarding the restriction of Jewish immigration to the extent to which it could be absorbed into the existing population, was not mentioned at all in the memorandum. Presumably this was because it was included in the definition of 'the general strategic idea' and the statements of Samuel and Churchill, and there was no point in repeating it.⁹¹

The need to ensure effective implementation of the Government pro-Zionist policy while preserving the principle of proper representation of the inhabitants – Muslims, Christians and anti-Zionist Jews – was also discussed at the time on an interdepartmental level at a conference of legal advisers held at the Colonial Office, at which Samuel's programme for the establishment of an Advisory Council was dealt with. According to the proposed plan, which was presented at the Conference by Norman Bentwich, the Legal Adviser to the Government of Palestine, the Council was to number thirty: ten official members, five nominated members and fifteen elected members (two Jews, two Christians and eleven Muslims). This, he explained, would give the administration a majority and the High Commissioner would, moreover, have the power to overrule all decisions.

Hubert Young, who reported at the conference on the views of the Muslim-Christian Delegation – which had arrived in the meantime in London – thought that there were two alternatives: either an advisory assembly on an entirely elective basis with no legislative power or a legislative assembly, with a permanent majority of official or nominated members, to ensure that Government policy was carried out. He considered that non-Jews were entitled to be recognised in some official way and be given some representative council, 'that should stand for their half of the provisions of the Balfour Declaration as the Zionist Organisation or whatever institution were eventually to be recognised, stood for the Jewish half'.

Another proposal, which was discussed at the conference, was the constitution of a Legislative Assembly with a majority of representatives of the population and a minority of nominated members, while the implementation of the Government's policy was to be secured by the High Commissioner having the power to overrule all decisions with regard to major issues. Here, it was the chairman of the conference, H.G. Busch, a legal assistant-adviser to the Colonial Office, who pointed out the basic difficulty for the Government. He argued that, so long as the Government's policy in Palestine was a Zionist policy and the population was predominantly non-Jewish, there would be a permanent majority hostile to the Government in any elected assembly. If the High Commissioner had the power to overrule their decisions, the result would be that the Government of the country would be in permanent opposition to what appeared to be the wishes of the people. He thought that this would be very unfortunate. This problem, like the one raised by Meinertzhagen, who disapproved of Young's paper, was not deliberated on at all.⁹²

The memorandum of the Secretary of State for the Colonies was presented to the Cabinet on 18 August 1921, with the disturbing news of Arabs and Jews in Palestine being armed or arming themselves. It was made

clear to all participants of the meeting that they had to take into consideration that a conflict might shortly break out, particularly if the Muslim-Christian Delegation, then in London, returned to Palestine without having secured the withdrawal of the pledge given to the Zionists by the Balfour Declaration, on the one hand, and the Zionists had not been reassured about the Government's support for the Declaration policy, on the other hand. The discussion dealt with the principle problem of Government policy: should the Cabinet withdraw from their Declaration, refer the Mandate back to the League of Nations, set up an Arab National Government and slow down or stop immigration of Jews; or should they carry out the present policy with greater vigour and encourage the arming of Jews with a view to reducing the numbers in the British garrison and cutting down expenses. In the course of the discussion which followed, stress was laid on the consideration that the honour of the Government was involved in the Balfour Declaration and that to go back on its pledge would seriously reduce the prestige of Britain in the eyes of Jews throughout the world. They also considered recent statements made by the Prime Ministers of Canada and South Africa to the effect that Britain's Zionist policy had proved helpful in those Dominions. However, it was also clear that the problem could not easily be solved, especially in view of the growing power of the Arabs in the territories bordering Palestine. Some argued that peace was impossible on the lines of the Balfour Declaration, which involved setting up a National Home for the Jews and respecting the rights of the Arab population, the result of which would be to estrange both Arabs and Jews while involving Britain in futile military expenditure. Against this, it was argued that the Arabs had no prescriptive right to a country which they had failed to develop to the best advantage of its inhabitants. As to the tactical political measures referred to in the Colonial Office memorandum, namely balancing endorsement of the Zionist proposals with implementing the representation principle in electing an Advisory Council, the Cabinet did not discuss the matter at all. In view of Balfour's absence, it was agreed to adjourn the discussion.⁹³

The Cabinet did, however, respond to a draft statement prepared by Weizmann, with Young's assistance, for the forthcoming Zionist congress. This statement was to ensure the Government took steps to protect Jewish life and property by recourse to the military forces and the re-organisation of the police. It also granted the Jews' request for an authorised and properly equipped form of self-protection; the Zionist Organisation was resolved to uphold the balance between the numbers of immigrants and the funds available at every given period for construction work in Palestine. Additionally, responsibility for regulating Jewish immigration would be

assumed by the Zionist Organisation in co-operation with the Government, which, however, must reserve the right of supervision and disqualification of individual immigrants; adequate steps would also be taken to ensure that Government policy with regard to the Jewish National Home was fully realised; economic concessions for public utilities would be granted with no other consideration than that of the commercial and technical soundness of the schemes and their usefulness for the economic development of the country. Last but not least, the document establishing the beginnings of representative institutions in Palestine would be drafted in such a way as to endorse, beyond any doubt, the inviolability of the spirit and the letter of the Balfour Declaration.⁹⁴ The Cabinet objected to the terms of the proposed statement and, in particular, to placing the control of immigration in the hands of the Jews and limiting it to the funds available. On the same day, Young notified Weizmann that Churchill could not authorise him to make any fresh declaration and suggested that Weizmann should base himself on existing declarations made by ministers, including Churchill's speech in the House of Commons on 14 June.⁹⁵

In the meantime, officials at the Colonial Office went on with their efforts to clarify that it was Britain's intention to carry out the Balfour Declaration policy, as interpreted by Samuel and Churchill in June 1921, and to convince the two parties, Arabs and Zionists, to accept this policy as a *fait accompli* and collaborate in its implementation.

In August 1921, unofficial discussions were held in London with the Muslim-Christian Delegation from Palestine. The demands presented by the Delegation to Colonial Office officials were unequivocal: the immediate establishment of a responsible Government in Palestine on an elective basis; the abrogation of the Balfour Declaration; the repeal of all legislation passed by the British authorities since the occupation; the re-imposition of Ottoman law; and the suspension of all immigration until the National Assembly was formed and could pass its own laws. The Delegation argued that the Balfour Declaration was self-contradictory and that the establishment of a National Home for the Jews in that country was utterly inconsistent with the safeguarding of the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities. They also criticised the specially favoured position of the Zionist Organisation in the Mandate; the appointments of Samuel and Bentwich to the chief executive and legislative posts in the Administration; the recognition of Hebrew as an official language; the rise in the cost of living and effect on the labour market produced by the immigration of Jews and

the importation of Bolsheviks into Palestine. In a further conversation they had with Churchill, they argued that their rights had not been safeguarded, for the British had promised the Arabs self-government in the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, which they regarded as an agreement ('based on entirely false assumption that it was a treaty with Hussein', according to Young).⁹⁶

Churchill met the Delegation twice. In both meetings he emphasised, time and again, that it was Britain's intention to stand by the policy of the Balfour Declaration and that there was no room for any discussions about abolishing the Declaration. He denied that the Arabs of Palestine had been promised self-government and said that all that the British had promised was that they should not be turned off their land, while Young, who participated in the discussion, clarified that the Hussein-McMahon correspondence was not a treaty; in any case, Palestine was explicitly excluded from the boundaries referred to. Churchill explained that the Government was the trustee not only for the interests of the Arabs but also for the interests of the Jews and that the establishment of an elected representative government might bring to a standstill the gradual but unstoppable execution of the Balfour Declaration. Churchill rejected the Delegation's argument that the two parts of the Declaration were contradictory. As to their request for clarification of the meaning of a National Home, Churchill referred the Delegation to Samuel's June statement and his interpretation of Balfour's pledge. Young added that the translation of National Home in the Arabic version as *Watan*, native country, was incorrect and misleading as nobody could ever imagine that Palestine would mean to world Jewry what England was to the English or that all Jews of the world would go to live in Palestine. Furthermore, Churchill explained that Jews would not be allowed to come into the country unless they could make their livelihood according to the law. They were not to take any man's property or interfere with him in any way but if they wanted to buy land they could do so and develop the country, make barren regions fertile, make terraces for cultivation as there were in the past. Britain had promised to implement the Jews' right to come into the country. As to the rights of the Arabs, Churchill said that they had been promised they would not be expropriated and the Legislative Council would deal with all the issues of the economic absorption of Jewish immigrants, solving problems like complaints about unemployment or a rise in prices. However, it was not one of the rights of the Arabs to stop Jews from coming into the country. Nor had he ever promised a National Government that would deal with immigration, as the Delegation claimed. An elected Government could not be established as it would hold back immigration. All he was going to propose was that there

should be representative institutions. At the same time, Churchill tried to mitigate Arab apprehensions about being harmed or oppressed by the Jews, arguing that it would take years before the Jews would be in a majority in Palestine. He also assured them that immigration would bring about development and economic growth and suggested that the Arabs would reap the full benefits of the Balfour Declaration's policy.⁹⁷

When it became apparent to all that the discussions with the Arab Delegation were leading to a dead end and that the Delegation was not moving from its original position, Young was sent to Palestine to investigate the causes of Arab opposition. The reports he dispatched from Palestine received Samuel's approval and were, in essence, a reflection of the latter's perception that the source of the problem was not in the policy declared on 3 June but in lack of confidence that this policy would, indeed, be executed.

Young reported that he believed that one of the chief reasons for the reluctance of people to participate in Constitutional reform was that the position of Britain in Palestine was not legal as long as the Mandate had not been conferred on her. Other reasons for people's reluctance were, according to Young, the interpretation that was given to the Balfour Declaration by the Government granting two concessions to Rutenberg. These were signed evidence that the British Government was following the principle behind their 3 June definition of Balfour's policy. The reluctance of the non-Jewish population was also nourished by the fact that the Zionist leaders were expressing views that were clearly inconsistent with the policy of the British Government and gave the impression that theirs was the definition of policy the Government intended to adhere to rather than the definition given in the 3 June statement. Striking among these views were David Eder's evidence before the Haycraft Commission, which had investigated the disturbances in May 1921, and Weizmann's announcement at the Zionist Congress in Carlsbad, in September 1921, that Palestine was to become Jewish as England was English. This announcement, coupled with the analysis by the Haycraft Commission of Eder's evidence and Rutenberg's concessions, increased the atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion in Palestine. Therefore, Young thought that the Government should prove that it was guided by the principles of 3 June in order to reassure the Arab population. Hitherto, he argued, they had only explained that the British interpretation of the Balfour Declaration was not the same as that placed upon it by radical Zionists. He believed that this was an opportunity for the Government to show that the Zionists had been warned that, unless they conform, they could not expect the continued support of the British Government. He also suggested that it should be pointed out to Weizmann,

in an official letter, that it was unacceptable for leaders of the Zionist Organisation, which was supposed to collaborate with the Mandatory Government, to express views which were inconsistent with British policy as defined in Samuel's statement on 3 June and endorsed by Churchill in the House of Commons on 14 June. Otherwise, he wrote, the Government would be compelled to consider the modification or removal of Article 4 from the draft Mandate for Palestine.⁹⁸

Herbert Samuel, who welcomed these suggestions, added his recommendation. He felt that the Arabs should cease demanding the cancellation of the Declaration or the end to Jewish immigration into Palestine. The Zionists should agree to announce that their purpose was not the establishment of a state in which Jews would enjoy a position of political privilege but a Commonwealth built upon a democratic foundation. Weizmann's statement that Palestine would be 'as Jewish as England is English' should be qualified in such a way as to bring it into conformity with the resolution of the Zionist Congress at Carlsbad on 'the common home'. The Zionists should also declare that Jewish working class immigration should be proportionate to the numbers who could find employment in new enterprises and that the rights of the present population to their Holy Places and the security of their property should be absolutely guaranteed. Samuel also suggested that the Zionist Organisation should agree to limit the functions of the Zionist Commission in Jerusalem to economic and cultural questions, leaving political activity to the Elected Assembly of the Jewish population (which had functioned as the representative body of the *Yishuv* since October 1920) and its executive committee and to the Zionist Committee in London.⁹⁹

Once the recommendations of Young and Samuel reached London, some officials at the Colonial Office believed that the announcement Weizmann would make according to these recommendations might undermine his position within the Zionist Organisation.¹⁰⁰ According to Meinertzhagen, who was distressed to see that Young had abandoned the views he had held on Zionism before he left England: 'Weizmann would never agree to Sir Herbert Samuel's declaration and it is unreasonable to ask him to do so. It is demanding certain surrender and suicide on his part. So long as the Balfour Declaration stands we must not ask the Zionists themselves to abandon it.'¹⁰¹ The recommendation that Weizmann should be warned that Article 4, which granted the Zionist Organisation a special standing, might be removed from the draft Mandate was also rejected at the Colonial Office. Churchill advised Wyndham Deedes, who replaced Samuel in his absence, that it would not be practicable to cancel Article 4 of the draft Mandate or to deprive the Zionist Organisation of the special position granted to it therein since the Zionists

would never accept such a proposal unless under compulsion and would regard it as a negation of the whole policy of the Balfour Declaration.¹⁰² Deedes entirely agreed with Churchill about the impracticability of altering the draft Mandate. However, he suggested that a formal undertaking should be given instead, to the effect that the Zionist Commission, which would operate in Palestine for the purposes of cooperation with the administration under Article 4, would do so on the basis of the June interpretation of the Balfour Declaration.¹⁰³

Deedes' proposal was discussed in London in a meeting between Shuckburgh and Weizmann. It was summarised on 16 January 1922, in a letter of the Colonial Office to the latter, which read:

Article 4 of the draft mandate places the Zionist Organisation in a special relationship towards the Palestine Administration. Mr. Churchill regards it as a corollary of this special relationship that the local commission should act in accordance with the declared policy of the High Commissioner of His Majesty's Government. In these circumstances he feels confident that your organisation will find no difficulty in giving the undertaking suggested by the Acting High Commissioner.

At the same time, it was suggested to Weizmann that changes be made in the composition of the Zionist Commission's personnel, which might contribute to the improvement of the situation.¹⁰⁴

The Military Authorities in Palestine did not wait for Zionist response. Since the sympathies of the British troops of the Palestine Garrison were with the Arabs who were considered to be 'victims of an unjust policy, forced upon them by the British Government', General Congreve, the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of these troops, decided to explain to them the British Government policy and that it was the duty of the army to support loyally whatever Government was in power irrespective of the personal opinions to which every individual was entitled. At the end of October, about two weeks after Samuel's recommendations, both speeches of June 1921, Samuel's and Churchill's, were circulated among the troops with the following updated explanation by Congreve:

It is simply the considered opinion of the British Government that a National Home for Jews may be established in Palestine, with mutual advantage to all concerned, and that, within the limits of the country's resources, Jews may be allowed to immigrate there without any hardship being inflicted on the Arabs.

The British Government would never give any support to the more grasping policy of the Zionist Extremists which aim at the establishment of a Jewish Palestine in which Arabs would be merely tolerated. In other words the British Government has no objection to Palestine being for Jews what Britain is to the rest of the Empire, but they would certainly not countenance a policy which made Palestine for the Jew what England is for the Englishman.¹⁰⁵

Three months had passed since the Cabinet commenced discussing the Colonial Office request for a formulation of policy, discussions that were stopped on 18 August 1921 with no initiative taken. All attempts to bring the Zionists to identify themselves publicly with Samuel's interpretation of 3 June failed. The discussions held with the Muslim-Christian Commission, which were renewed at the end of October, kept on going back to the starting point. The Middle East Department at the Colonial Office was still waiting, as before, for a declaration of intentions.

On 7 November, a few days after the situation in Palestine became heated once more on the occasion of the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, a new attempt was made by Shuckburgh to formulate policy. He submitted a memorandum to James Masterton Smith, the Permanent Secretary of the Colonial Office, in which he described the events that had taken place in Palestine and the discussions with the Arab Delegation in London. In this, he summed up his assessment of the political situation.

Shuckburgh's assessment was based on the assumption that the British Government did not contemplate anything like a fundamental change and that the Balfour Declaration was still their policy and must continue to be so, that the British had made promises to the Zionists and had always made it clear to the Arabs that there was no prospect of any change in this. In his opinion, to waver at that time, in the face of renewed Arab violence, would be absolutely fatal. Indeed, he wrote, it must be recognised that British policy satisfied nobody: the Zionists still maintained the British had whittled down their original pledge while the Arabs continued to argue that the Declaration, combining as it did the establishment of a National Home for the Jews with maintenance of non-Jewish rights and political status, was a contradiction in terms and could not be implemented. However, according to Shuckburgh, both parties were wrong and the policy which the British Government was pursuing was not inconsistent with the claims and interests of both sides; however, their inability to convince either party hampered their actions.

Shuckburgh put the blame on the extremists in both camps. No sooner had the British Government made a reasoned statement of their policy or given the Arabs reassuring promises than somebody got up at the Zionist Congress and talked about the privileged position of the Jews in a Jewish State, he wrote. The British explanation was at once neutralised and the Arabs believed, or affected to believe, that the British statements were mere empty words and that the rhetorical fireworks of excited Zionists represented the real intentions of the British Government.

In a minute attached to the memorandum, Shuckburgh pointed out that the Zionist Organisation, in the person of Weizmann, enjoyed direct access to high political personages outside the Colonial Office. He reported that Weizmann had told him recently that he had asked the Prime Minister in person, not very long ago, long after Samuel's and Churchill's statements, what meaning the British Government had attached to the phrase 'Jewish National Home' in the Balfour Declaration. The Prime Minister had replied: 'We meant a Jewish State' and Balfour, who was present on the occasion, corroborated the Prime Minister's statement. Shuckburgh went on:

I do not know what may have been the original intention but it was certainly the object of Mr. Samuel and the Secretary of State to make it clear that a Jewish State was just what we did not mean. It is clearly useless for us to endeavour to lead Doctor Weizmann in one direction, and to reconcile him to a more limited view of the Balfour pledge, if he is told quite a different story by the head of the Government. Nothing but confusion can result if His Majesty's Government do not speak with a single voice.

As to the Arabs, Shuckburgh explained in the memorandum, they had found advisers in England and elsewhere whose real object was to defeat Britain's whole policy and whose primary concern was to strengthen Arab resistance, if not to encourage actual resort to measures of violence. There was no point in further round table discussions with the Arab Delegation and further attempts to persuade them to collaborate in the details of the constitution. Therefore, he thought, the time had come to announce plainly and authoritatively what the British Government proposed to do. Being Orientals, he wrote, they would understand an order and, once they realised that the British meant business, they would very likely acquiesce.

As a solution, Shuckburgh suggested that Churchill invite the Arab Delegation and representatives of the Zionist Organisation to a joint conference and make a statement on the future policy in Palestine, which

would be distributed as widely as possible. An attached summary of the suggested statement included the following:

... our policy in Palestine is directed to promote the interests, not of any particular section, but of Palestinians as a whole. But by 'Palestinians' I must be understood to mean not only the existing population of Palestine, but also those future citizens of the country to whom the Balfour Declaration has promised a National Home. Our object is not to establish a state in which Jews will enjoy a position of political ascendancy, but a commonwealth built upon democratic foundation and framed in the best interests of all sections of the population. With this object in view I would lay down the general proposition that Jewish immigration of the labouring class should be proportioned to the numbers to whom employment can be found without detriment to the existing labour market.¹⁰⁶

Shuckburgh's wish was granted half a year later. On 3 June 1922, following wearying months of meetings and the exchange of letters with the Arab Delegation, in which the same arguments and positions that had been put forward in the first cycle of meetings were repeated again and again, the Colonial Office presented to the Zionist Organisation and the Arab Delegation a statement defining British policy in Palestine. This statement was formulated by Samuel and Colonial Office officials and, later on, presented to Parliament, together with essential parts of the correspondence which had taken place with the Arab Delegation, in a White Paper (Command 1700) which included the correspondence with the Palestinian Arab Delegation and the Zionist Organisation in London, June 1922.

In outlining the background to this statement of policy, it was pointed out that the tension in Palestine had arisen chiefly owing to mistaken interpretations of the meaning of the Balfour Declaration. Unauthorised statements had been made that the purpose was to create a wholly Jewish Palestine. Phrases had been used such as that Palestine was to become 'as Jewish as England is English'. However, the British Government had no such aim. Nor had they, at any time, contemplated the disappearance or subordination of the Arab population, language or culture, as seemed to be feared by the Arab Delegation. The Balfour Declaration did not contemplate that Palestine as a whole should be converted into a Jewish National Home but that such a Home should be founded *in Palestine*.

In this context, it was pointed out with satisfaction that the Zionist Congress at Carlsbad had passed a resolution which stated officially that Zionist aims were 'the determination of the Jewish people to live with the Arab people on terms of unity and mutual respect, and together with them to make the common home into a flourishing community, the upbuilding of which may assure to each of its peoples an undisturbed national development'. It was also noted that the Zionist Commission in Palestine, then termed the Palestine Zionist Executive, had not desired to possess and did not possess any share in the general administration of the country nor did the special position assigned to the Zionist Organisation in Article 4 of the draft Mandate imply any such functions. That special position was to deal with measures taken in Palestine affecting the Jewish population and to allow the Organisation to assist in the general development of the country, but it did not entitle it to share in any degree in its Government. The status of all citizens of Palestine in the eyes of the law would be Palestinian, it was stated, and it had never been intended that they, or any section of them, should possess any other juridical status.

After this clarification, the Paper continued with an analysis and definition of the substance and scope of the promised Jewish National Home:

During the last two or three generations the Jews have recreated in Palestine a community, now numbering 80.000, of whom about one-fourth are farmers or workers upon the land. This community has its own political organs; an elected assembly for the direction of its domestic concerns; elected councils in the towns; and an organisation for the control of its schools. It has its elected Chief Rabbinate and Rabbinical Council for the direction of its religious affairs. Its business is conducted in Hebrew as a vernacular language, and a Hebrew press serves its needs. It has a distinctive intellectual life and displays considerable economic activity. This community, then, with its town and country population, its political, religious and social organisations, its own language, its own customs, its own life, has in fact, 'national' characteristics. When it is asked what is meant by the development of the Jewish National Home in Palestine, it may be answered that it is not the imposition of a Jewish nationality upon the inhabitants of Palestine as a whole, but the further development of the existing Jewish community, with the assistance of Jews in other parts of the world, in order that it may become a centre in which the Jewish people as a whole may take, on grounds of religion and race, an interest and pride. But in order that this community should have the best prospect of free development and provide a full opportunity for

the Jewish people to display its capacities, it is essential that it should know that it is in Palestine as of right and not of sufferance. That is the reason why it is necessary that the existence of the Jewish National Home should be internationally guaranteed, and it should be formally recognised to rest upon ancient historic connection.

‘For the fulfillment of this policy’, it was stated:

it is necessary that the Jewish community in Palestine should be able to increase its numbers by immigration. However, this immigration cannot be so great in volume as to exceed whatever may be the economic capacity of the country at the time to absorb new arrivals. It is essential to ensure that the immigrants should not be a burden upon the people of Palestine as a whole, and that they should not deprive any section of the present population of their employment ... It is necessary also to ensure that persons who are politically undesirable are excluded from Palestine ... It is intended that a special committee should be established in Palestine, consisting entirely of members of the new Legislative Council elected by the people, to confer with the Administration upon matters relating to the regulation of immigration. Should any difference arise between the committee and the Administration, the matter will be referred to the British Government, who will give it special consideration. In addition, under Article 81 of the draft Palestine Order in Council, any religious community or considerable section of the population of Palestine will have a right to appeal, through the High Commissioner and the Secretary of State, to the League of Nations on any matter on which they may consider that the terms of the Mandate are not being fulfilled by the Government of Palestine.

With reference to an independent national government, which the Arabs of Palestine demanded, it was stated that the British Government had never promised to establish such a government in Palestine and the whole of Palestine west of Jordan was excluded from McMahon’s pledge. Nevertheless, it was the intention of the British Government to foster the establishment of a full measure of self-government in Palestine. But, given the special circumstances of the country, this would be accomplished gradually. The first step was said to have been taken when the Advisory Council was established. It was stated, at the time, by the High Commissioner that it was the first step in the development of self-governing institutions and it was proposed that a second step be taken by establishing a Legislative Council containing a large

proportion of members elected on a wide franchise. However, before self-government was extended and the Assembly placed in control over the Executive, it would be wise to allow some time to elapse, a period during which the institutions would become established, the country's financial credit would develop such that it was based on firm foundations and the officials would gain experience. Here, it was pointed out, the Administration had already handed over to the Supreme Council, elected by the Muslim Community of Palestine, entire control of Muslim religious endowments (*Wakfs*) and of Muslim religious Courts.¹⁰⁷

On 26 June 1922, the main points in the White Paper were cabled the Administration of Palestine for use as guidelines.¹⁰⁸

Notes

1. L.G. Bols to G. Curzon, 7 June 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5114, F. 61, No. E6914; L.G. Bols to F.O., 24 June 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5114, F. 61, No. E7276.
2. Faisal to E.H. Allenby, 29 May 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5120, F. 85, Nos E6996, E6112.
3. E.H. Allenby to F.O., 6 May 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5203, F. 1136, No. E4319.
4. L.G. Bols to G. Curzon, 7 June 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5114, F. 61, No. E6914.
5. Minutes by H.W. Young, 7 May 1920, F.D.G. Osborne, 7 May 1920, C. Hardinge, undated, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5203, F. 1136, No. E4319.
6. H. Samuel to G. Curzon, 14 May 1920, Curzon Archive, P.R.O., F.O. 800/156, and I.S.A., Samuel Archive, F. 100/6. See also R. Meinertzhagen to F.O., 27 March 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5034, F. 2, Nos E2517, E3145; R. Meinertzhagen to F.O., 2 May 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5034, F. 2, No. E4061; H. Samuel, *Memoirs* (London, 1945), pp. 150–1.
7. See Samuel, *Memoirs*, pp. 140–2 and report on the conversation, 9 November 1914, I.S.A., Samuel Archive, F. 100/1.
8. H. Samuel's memoranda: 'The Future of Palestine', 21 January 1915, P.R.O., CAB 37/123/43 and 'Palestine', 11 March 1915, P.R.O., CAB 37/126.
9. M. Hankey to H. Samuel, 9 October 1917, P.R.O., CAB21/58. See above pp.24-7.
10. H. Samuel's memorandum: 'Statement on the tasks of the Advisory Committee', 24 March 1919, and the minutes of the Committee's meetings, April 1919– January 1920, C.Z.A. Z4/694. See Chapter 5, p.157.
11. See Chapter3, pp. 83-5; Chapter 5, pp. 166-7.
12. R. Meinertzhagen (for Allenby) to F.O., 2 December 1919, I.S.A., Chief Secretary's Archive, F. 2/239.
13. Y. Porat, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement, 1918–1929* (1974), [Hebrew], pp.77-8.
14. H. Samuel to G. Curzon, 2 April 1920, and Samuel's communication to the press, 25 March 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5139, F. 131, No. E3109; H. Samuel to E.H. Allenby, 31March 1920, I.S.A., Samuel Archive, F. 100/6.
15. H. Samuel to G. Curzon, 3 May 1920, I.S.A., Samuel Archive, F.100/6, and P.R.O., F.O. 371/5139, F. 131, No. E4374.
16. H. Samuel to G. Curzon, 16 June 1920 (receipt date), and his proposal: 'Immigration into Palestine', P.R.O., F.O. 371/5183, F. 476, No. E6531.
17. See the statement H. Samuel was to make to the press, the 'Outline of statement of Policy

- to be made at Assemblies at Jerusalem and Haifa by the high Commissioner for Palestine after his arrival,' as well as the enclosed letter of appointment and the message from the King, in G. Curzon to H. Samuel, 19 June 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5114, F. 61, No. E7573; see also the statement by Samuel of British Policy in Palestine, as appeared in an extract from *The Times*, 14 June 1920, enclosed in Cabinet paper C.P. 1474, P.R.O., CAB 24/107, No. 1781.
18. Report of the Inquiry Committee of the 1920 riots, appointed on 12 April 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5121, F. 85, No. E9379.
 19. See Chapter 5, pp.168-9.
 20. See Chapter 6, pp. 279-82.
 21. On immigration policy under Samuel's first year in office, see: M. Mossek, *Palestine Immigration Policy under Sir Herbert Samuel* (London, 1978), pp. 4-40, 152-3.
 22. Chapter 4, pp.137-42.
 23. 'Draft Mandate for Palestine, Revision of 15.3.1920', P.R.O., F.O. 371/5199, F. 860, No. E1447; see also Chapter 5, pp.210-12.
 24. See Chapter 5, pp.211-14.
 25. H. Samuel to G. Curzon, 29 January 1921, P.R.O., F.O. 371/6386, F. 334, No. E1925.
 26. H. Samuel to W. Churchill, 23 July 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/4, F. 38832; see also A.L. Avneri, 'The Struggle with the Mandatory Government regarding State Lands' the Cathedra of the History of Eretz Israel and its Colonisation [Hebrew], *Yad Ben-Zvi*, Jerusalem, 12, pp. 110-18; N. Gross, 'the Economic Policy of British Mandatory Administration in Palestine' [Hebrew], the Cathedra of the History of Eretz Israel and its Colonisation, *Yad Ben-Zvi*, Jerusalem, 25, p. 156.
 27. J.E. Shuckburgh (for Churchill) to Permanent Secretary of the Foreign Office, 1 March 1921, P.R.O., F.O. 371/6374, F. 32, No. E2742; L. Oliphant to Permanent Secretary of Colonial Office, 9 March 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/9, F. 11532; W. Churchill to H. Samuel, 14 March 1921 (in reply to Samuel's telegram of 31 January 1921), *ibid*.
 28. H. Samuel to W. Churchill, 29 July 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/4, F. 39610.
 29. S. Hattis Rolef, 'The Policy of Economic Development of Sir Herbert Samuel' [Hebrew], the Cathedra of the History of Eretz Israel and its Colonisation, *Yad Ben-Zvi*, Jerusalem, 12, pp. 75-9.
 30. *Ibid.*, Chapter 7, pp.324-5.
 31. H. Samuel to C. Weizmann, 20 June 1920, C.Z.A., Z4/2507; H. Samuel to C. Weizmann, 5 September 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5123, F.85, No. E11966; see also Hattis Rolef, 'the Policy of Economic Development of Sir Herbert Samuel', pp. 88-9.
 32. Minutes by E.G. Forbes Adam, 21 October 1920, P.R.O., F.O. 371/5286, F. No. E12970.
 33. H. Samuel to G. Curzon, 4 February 1921, P.R.O., F.O. 371/6386, F. 334, No. E2132.
 34. Report responding to the League of Nation Questioner of 23 August 1922, summing up the period July 1920 - December 1922, submitted by H. Samuel to W. Devonshire, 15 June 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/46, F. 31957.
 35. *Ibid*.
 36. See below pp.302-3.
 37. Regarding the Mufti's appointment see Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement, 1918-1929*, pp. 184-94; E. Kedourie, 'Sir Herbert Samuel and the Government of Palestine', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 5. No. 1, pp. 44-68.
 38. See Chapter 6, pp. 242-3.
 39. *An Interim Report on the Civil Administration of Palestine during the period 1.7.1920 - 30.6.1921* (London, 1921) (Cmd. 1499), pp. 4-9.

40. M. Gilbert, *Churchill and Zionism* (a lecture) (London, 1974).
41. W. Churchill to J. Moser, 30 January 1908, cited *ibid.* pp. 4–5.
42. Y. Porat, *The Emergence of the Arab-Palestinian National Movement, 1918–1929* [Hebrew], pp.102-3.
43. ‘Official Report: Deputation of Executive Committee of the Haifa Congress before the Secretary of State for the Colonies’, 28 March 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/2, F. 21698.
44. W. Deedes to H.W. Young, and enclosed memorandum, 30 April 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/17A, F. 26735.
45. H. Samuel to W. Churchill, 8 May 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F.24660; see also H. Samuel to W. Churchill, 12 May 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F. 23678.
46. H. Samuel to W. Churchill, 24 May 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F. 26134.
47. Minutes by T.E. Lawrence, 19 May 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F.24660.
48. Minutes by [?], 18 May 1921, *ibid.*
49. Minutes by H.W. Young, 10 June 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F.28358.
50. Remarks by R. Meinertzhagen to J.E. Shuckburgh, 10 June 1921, *ibid.*
51. Minutes by J.E. Shuckburgh, 28 May 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F. 26134.
52. W. Churchill to H. Samuel, 14 May 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F. 23678.
53. W. Churchill to H. Samuel, 25 May 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F.25349.
54. H. Samuel to W. Churchill, 27 May 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F. 26711.
55. See Chapter 5, pp.166-95.
56. Summary of Sir Herbert Samuel’s proposed announcement, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F. 27262.
57. W. Churchill to H. Samuel, 2 June 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F. 26711.
58. *Ibid.* See also minutes by H.W. Young and T.E. Lawrence, 31 May 1921, *ibid.*
59. H. Samuel to W. Churchill, 27 May 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F. 26711; summary of Sir Herbert Samuel’s proposed announcement, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F. 27262; W. Churchill to H. Samuel, 2 June 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F. 26711; minutes by H.W. Young and T.E. Lawrence, 31 May 1921, *ibid.* See notes 54, 56, 57, 58.
60. H. Samuel to W. Churchill, 27 May 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F.26711. See note 54.
61. W. Churchill to H. Samuel, 2 June 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F. 26711; see note 57.
62. Summary of Sir Herbert Samuel’s proposed announcement, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F. 27262. Chapter 6, pp.242-3.
63. H. Samuel to W. Churchill, 31 May 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F. 27262.
64. See Chapter 5, note 207.
65. Minutes by G.L.M. Clauson, H.W. Young, T.E. Lawrence, and J.E. Shuckburgh, 31 May 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F. 27262.
66. W. Churchill to H. Samuel, 2 June 1921, *ibid.*
67. H. Samuel to W. Churchill, 2 June 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F. 27792.
68. H. Samuel to W. Churchill, 3 June 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F. 27920.
69. H. Samuel’s statement, 3 June 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F. 30263; W. Churchill’s Statement, 14 June 1921, *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, London, 1921–1923, Vol. 143, No. 76.
70. W. Churchill to H. Samuel, 4 June 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F. 27792; see also remarks by J.E. Shuckburgh to W. Churchill, 11 June 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F. 28358.
71. ‘The Moslem-Christian Delegation from Palestine’, 23 July 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/13, F. 37529.
72. See Porat, *The Emergence of the Arab-Palestinian National Movement, 1918–1929* [Hebrew], pp. 111-13.
73. H. Samuel to W. Churchill, 13 June 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F. 31760.

74. W. Churchill to H. Samuel, 21 June 1921, cited in: 'The Moslem-Christian Delegation from Palestine', 23 July 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/13, F. 37529.
75. H. Samuel's Statement, 3 June 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F. 30263; W. Churchill's Statement, 14 June 1921, *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, London, 1921–1923, Vol. 143. No. 76. See note 69.
76. S. Landman to Colonial Office, 1 June 1921, C.Z.A., Z4/16055.
77. D. Eder to Zionist Executive, London, 4 June 1921, C.Z.A., Z4/16151.
78. H. Samuel to W. Churchill, 13 June 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/3, F. 31760.
79. E. Friesel, *The Zionist Policy following the Balfour Declaration, 1917–1921* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv, 1977), pp. 226–50.
80. C. Weizmann to H. Samuel, 12 June 1921, C.Z.A., Z4/305/9; C. Weizmann to D. Eder, 13 June 1921, C.Z.A., L3/273 (WL, X, Nos 201, 202); see also C. Weizmann to H. Samuel, 27 June 1921, W.A. (WL, X, No. 205).
81. C. Weizmann to H. Samuel, 19 July 1921, W.A. (WL, X, No. 213); D.L. Adler (for C. Weizmann) to A.J. Balfour, 21 July 1921, and enclosed memorandum: 'The Situation in Palestine', S.R.O., Balfour Archive, pouch 9; 'Notes of conversation held at A.J. Balfour's', 22 July 1921, C.Z.A., Z4/16055.
82. 'Notes of conversation held at A.J. Balfour's', 22 July 1921, C.Z.A., Z4/16055; see also below pp.310–11.
83. C. Weizmann to H. Samuel, 19 July 1921, W.A. (WL, X, No. 213); D.L. Adler (for C. Weizmann) to A.J. Balfour, 21 July 1921, and enclosed memorandum: 'The Situation in Palestine', S.R.O., Balfour Archive, pouch 9; 'Notes of conversation held at A.J. Balfour's', 22 July 1921, C.Z.A., Z4/16055.
84. Minutes by R. Meinertzhagen, 9 June 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/16, F.27373.
85. R. Meinertzhagen to I.C. Smuts, 20 July 1921, C.Z.A., Z4/16055.
86. Minutes by R. Meinertzhagen to J.E. Shuckburgh, 31 July 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/14, F. 38372.
87. Minutes by G.L.M. Clauson, 9 June 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/16, F. 27373.
88. Minutes by J.E. Shuckburgh, 10 June 1921, *ibid.*
89. Minutes by H.W. Young, 1 August 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/14, F.38372; see also above pp.307–8.
90. H.W. Young to W. Churchill, 4[?] August 1921; minutes by J.E. Shuckburgh, 3 August 1921, and R. Meinertzhagen, 2 August 1919, P.R.O., C.O. 733/14, F.38372.
91. The memorandum: 'Palestine' (C.P. 3213), was distributed to the Cabinet by Churchill, 11 August 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/14, F.40322; P.R.O., CAB 24/127.
92. 'Report of Conference of Legal Advisers at the Colonial Office', 12–13 August 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/14, F. 42532.
93. 'Conclusion of a Meeting of the Cabinet', 18 August 1921, P.R.O., CAB 23/26. See note 85.
94. 'Draft of statement to the Congress by Dr. Weizmann', P.R.O., C.O. 733/16, F. 41798.
95. H.W. Young to C. Weizmann, 18 August 1921, *ibid.*; see also 'Conclusion of a Meeting of the Cabinet', 18 August 1921, P.R.O., CAB 23/26.
96. H.W. Young: report of a meeting with the Moslem-Christian Delegation from Palestine, 11 August 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/14, F. 40713; 'Report of conversation between W. Churchill and members of the Moslem-Christian Delegation', 12 August 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/17B, F. 41298; see also a background paper, prepared by the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office before the meetings, 23 July 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/13, F. 37529.

97. 'Notes of A Conversation between the Secretary of State and Members of The Palestine Arab Delegation', 22 August 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/14, F. 42762; see also H.W. Young to W. Churchill, 'Points for your interview with the Arab Delegation', 22 August 1921, *ibid.*
98. H.W. Young to J.E. Shuckburgh, 30 September 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/17B, F. 56584; H.W. Young to J.E. Shuckburgh, 7[?] October 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/17B, F. 53308.
99. H. Samuel to Colonial Office, 7 October 1921, *ibid.*; H. Samuel to W. Churchill, 14 October 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/6, F. 52954.
100. G.L.M. Clauson to J.E. Shuckburgh, 19 October 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/17B, F. 53308.
101. R. Meinertzhagen to J.E. Shuckburgh, 21 October 1921, *ibid.*
102. W. Churchill to W. Deedes, 29 December 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/15, F. 63677.
103. W. Deedes, to W. Churchill, 2 January 1922, P.R.O., C.O. 733/18, F. 444.
104. Minutes by J.E. Shuckburgh, 11 January 1922 (report of meeting with Weizmann on 10 January 1922) and draft letter to C. Weizmann, 16 January 1922, *ibid.*
105. 'Outline of Policy by General Officer Commanding Troops, Palestine', 29 October 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/7, F. 57955; Lloyd George Archive, B.L. F86/8/4.
106. Memorandum: 'Palestine', a statement suggested to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, submitted by J.E. Shuckburgh to J. Masterton Smith, 7 November 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/15, F. 57572; see also Chapter 7, pp.24-7; pp. 85-92.
107. *Palestine: Correspondence with the Palestine Arab Delegation and the Zionist Organisation* (Cmd. 1700), London, June 1922; and the statement: 'British Policy in Palestine', enclosed with J.E. Shuckburgh's letter to the Zionist Organisation, 3 June 1922, *ibid.*
108. W. Churchill to H. Samuel, 29 June 1922, *ibid.*

New Interpretations

Only half a year after the White Paper had been promulgated, the validity of the Balfour Declaration policy, as defined in the White Paper, was questioned once again. On 23 October 1922, a Conservative Government was set up in Britain, headed by Andrew Bonar Law. A few weeks earlier, there were warning signs of trouble in the Middle East following the Turkish offensive against the Greeks in Anatolia, which ended with the occupation of Izmir. In response to that offensive, Lloyd George appealed to the Allies and the British Dominions to join forces in the defence of the straits of Dardanelles against the Turks; he was refused. Defending British interests in the Mediterranean and the Middle East became particularly important following the termination of the British protectorate in Egypt in February 1922 and needed to be considered by the new Government.

The need to assess the situation and outline a policy towards the Middle East became acute when, just before Christmas, another Arab Delegation from Palestine appeared in England. The Delegation had earlier visited Constantinople and Lausanne, where they had tried to convince the Turks to demand at the Lausanne Conference that the Article in the Turkish National Pact – which provided that the right of self-determination be given to the inhabitants of the lands which had been torn off the Ottoman Empire – also include Palestine. In Lausanne, it had become clear to the Delegation that the prospects of bringing about a change in the status of Palestine by relying on Turkey had come to nought and they decided to continue on to London. The Delegation was encouraged to do this by its supporters in Britain who believed that, with the change of Government there, the number of supporters of the Arab cause among policy-makers in London had increased and that they stood a good chance of having the question of Palestine reevaluated.¹

The British advisers to the Arab Delegation, who encouraged it to present the claims of the Palestinian Arabs, also made every effort to help them. Their representatives in the two Houses of Parliament did everything within their power to put pressure on the Government to retract the policy of the Balfour Declaration. The members of the group active in Parliament, especially Sir

William Joynson-Hicks, Sir John Butcher and Captain Foxcroft, protested against the domination of Jews in the Government of Palestine (according to Joynson-Hicks: the British Administration had become 'Judean'). They felt that the use of Hebrew and 'the Jewish title of the country' on stamps, road-signs etc. and granting preemptive rights to Zionists such as in the cases of the Anglo-Palestine Bank and Rutenberg's concession had turned the country into a 'Zionist Dominion.' In their parliamentary questions, they also asked for data which could serve as evidence of discrimination against the Arab majority, such as the number of Jewish immigrants who were employed in Government enterprises at the expense of the Arab taxpayer.²

The members of this group who were active at the House of Lords, whose primary spokesmen were the Lords Lamington, Syndham and Islington, also protested against the influence the Jews had with the British Administration and against Jewish immigration which was threatening to make the Jews dominant. However, their main aim was to bring about the abrogation of the Jewish National policy as formulated in the Mandate.

Citing the Hussein-McMahon correspondence of 1915, the Anglo-French Declaration of 1918, Article 22 of the League of Nations' Covenant (according to which the local inhabitants' wishes should be considered when choosing the Mandatory) and the King-Crane Committee's conclusions (which they demanded be published), the members of the group argued that the Government should be obliged to take into consideration the wishes of the inhabitants of Palestine and that it was out of the question that a Jewish National Home be granted if it involved injustice to the Arabs and was against their wishes.⁴ Members of the group, therefore, did not deal with the various formulations of the Mandate or dispute the interpretations of them but tried to bring about a total change of policy.

The peak of the group's activities came close to the White Paper's publication. At the House of Lords meeting on 21 June 1922, Lord Islington demanded that the preamble and Articles 4, 6 and 11 of the Mandate, which defined the functions of the Jewish Agency, should be changed, since the establishment of 'the Zionist Home' conflicted with Article 22 of the League of Nations' Covenant. In his words: 'The Zionist Home must, and does, mean the predominance of political power on the part of the Jewish community in a country where the population is preponderantly non-Jewish.'⁵

Islington, therefore, proposed:

to move that the Mandate for Palestine in its present form is unacceptable to this House, because it directly violates the pledges made by His Majesty's Government to the people of Palestine in the Declaration of October 1915, and again in the Declaration of

November 1918 and is, as at present framed, opposed to the sentiments and wishes of the people of Palestine; that therefore its acceptance by the Council of the League of Nations should be postponed until such modifications have therein been effected as will comply with pledges given by His Majesty's Government.⁶

The House of Lords endorsed this motion by a large majority of sixty against twenty-nine.

When the new Arab Delegation arrived in London at the end of 1922, the Colonial Office prepared itself for a new offensive by it and its supporters. Lord Devonshire, the new Secretary of State for Colonies, who inherited the task started by Churchill in the discussions with the previous delegation, asked Shuckburgh to prepare a memorandum on Palestine and the 'Zionist Policy' to be studied during the Christmas holidays,⁷ and the latter did his best to prepare the ground for an answer in accordance with the Colonial Office's Middle East Department policy.

The Memorandum, entitled 'Palestine: the Zionist Policy', opened by pointing out that British policy was based primarily on the Balfour Declaration. Shuckburgh then described the process which brought about the Declaration and the advantages that were expected to come from enlisting, on the Allied side, the sympathies of world Jewry during the War. 'The point is that, having cried out to the Jews in our moment of agony (that is how they would put it), we cannot throw them over when peril is past', he concluded. He also stated that, once the policy of the Balfour Declaration had been accepted at the San Remo Conference on 20 April and embodied verbatim in the Treaty of Sèvres in December 1920 and in the Draft Mandate for Palestine which was approved by the Council of the League of Nations in July 1922, Britain was, in fact, committed to the policy in the clearest and most unequivocal fashion. He also reminded them that, under the Mandate, a special position was accorded to the Zionist Organisation.

As to the promises given to the Arabs, Shuckburgh explained that Palestine was excluded from the area promised in the correspondence of Hussein-McMahon in 1915 and the fact that, in the following year, 1916, it was concluded in the Sykes-Picot Agreement that Palestine was to receive special treatment on an international basis bore out that view. However, learning from the controversy with the previous Arab Delegation, Shuckburgh had consulted McMahon personally and the latter replied on 12 March 1922 that, in his letter of 24 October 1915 to Sharif Hussein, it was his intention to exclude Palestine ('west of the districts of Damascus, Hama, Homs, and Aleppo' because 'there was no place I could think of at the time of sufficient importance for purposes of definition further south of the

above') from independent Arabia. He so worded the letter as to make this clear for all practical purposes. He had not heard anything from the Sharif to make him suppose that he did not also understand Palestine to be excluded from independent Arabia.⁸ Moreover, Shuckburgh explained, quoting from the *Times*, that even the areas assigned to independent Arabia were given to the Sharif of Mecca and not to the Arabs of Palestine, who did not fight for the British during the War and did not know of the promise to Hussein till after the War. The Hussein-McMahon correspondence, Shuckburgh continued, was not a 'Treaty' as the Arabs called it. No treaty had been signed or even drafted. The same applied to what they called the 'Allenby Proclamation' which was, in fact, the Anglo-French Declaration of November 1918 which was promulgated in Palestine under the order of Allenby and included a promise to promote self-government in Syria and Mesopotamia, not in Palestine. This declaration was issued after the Armistice had been concluded with Turkey, in any case, and could not be quoted as an inducement given to the Arabs to take part in the War. In conclusion, Shuckburgh summed up the explanations given to the Arabs by Samuel and Churchill after June 1921 and their inclusion in the White Paper of June 1922. He also added two statements: one from Samuel who, in his last report from Palestine, had noted the tranquil atmosphere in Palestine and called for respecting the White Paper policy because, in the East, according to him, people respect accomplished facts; and the other was from Clayton, who commented on the strategic importance of Palestine for Imperial strategy and argued that British control in Palestine was vital for the defence of the Suez Canal.⁹

Another background paper, prepared by Shuckburgh following the Arab Delegation's request to meet Devonshire,¹⁰ explained that that the Delegation, encouraged by its supporters in England, returned to England counting on the new Government to show more sympathy for its demands. However – he pointed out – except for the change of government, nothing else had happened that could justify so early a modification of a very clear and precise statement of policy made by the late Secretary of State. Shuckburgh suggested that, if the new Government intended to adhere to the policy of its predecessors with regard to the establishment of a National Home for the Jews in Palestine, it was most desirable that a clear pronouncement to this effect should be made to the Arab Delegation. If, on the other hand, there was to be a change of policy, it was impossible for the Middle East Department to advise the government without knowing what the new policy was to be. Furthermore, as had been explained previously, the department agreed with Herbert Samuel that, within the limits of the existing policy, there was no room for further concessions to the Arabs without whittling

the Balfour Declaration out of existence. In fact, Shuckburgh wrote, the Government had gone as far as possible in concessions consistent with the fulfillment of British pledges to the Jews. Therefore, Shuckburgh recommended that the Secretary of State for Colonies make it clear that he could hold out no hope that there would be any departure from the policy of the previous Government, as expressed in the White Paper and approved by a very large majority in the House of Commons.

Devonshire accepted the Department's suggestion: '...as the Government have come to no decision to depart from the policy now in operation' he wrote in his minute, 'I think I should be quite safe in sending the Delegation away under the impression that no change is contemplated. My own view is that we should adhere to the policy of our predecessors generally, though there may be details which require adjustment'.¹¹ On the same day that Devonshire met with the Palestine Arab Delegation, one of its main supporters, William Joynson-Hicks, MP, received Devonshire's reply that there would be no departure from the policy of the White Paper and, therefore, that it was neither necessary nor desirable to encourage the Arab Delegation to prolong its stay in London.¹² On the same day, Devonshire's reply was sent to Samuel in order to be published in Palestine and was communicated to the press in Britain.¹³

Devonshire went further, however, and referred the policy's future to be discussed and decided upon by the Cabinet. In the following weeks, Devonshire circulated among the Cabinet three memoranda, printed as Cabinet papers, in which the deliberations of the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office on the history of Britain's political position and its commitments towards Palestine were summarised.

The first memorandum summarised the information in the files on the history of the negotiations that had led to the Balfour Declaration as well as the policy on which the Declaration was based.¹⁴

The second memorandum, which was completed on 16 February, consisted of three chapters. The first chapter dealt with the chain of events that had led up to Britain's commitments and included an edited version of Shuckburgh's summary in his memorandum of 21 December 1922. Shuckburgh had written, as mentioned above, that there could be no retreat from Britain's commitment to the policy of the Balfour Declaration which had been internationally approved, and denied the claims of the Arab Delegation based on the Hussein-McMahon correspondence and 'Allenby's Declaration' which was, in fact, the Anglo-French Declaration. Furthermore, according to the memorandum, Britain's promise to promote Arab independence throughout a wide area had been fulfilled: Hussein ruled as an independent sovereign in Mecca; Feisal ruled in Baghdad; Abd'Allah in

Trans-Jordan; Ibn Saud had vast territories and was free from all fear of Turkish interference or aggression; the Imam in the Yemen and the Idrisi in Asir ruled over independent States; the Arabs as a whole had acquired a freedom undreamed of before the War. 'Considering what they owe to us, they may surely let us have our way in one small area, which we do not admit to be covered by our pledges and which in any case, for historical and other reasons, stands on a wholly different footing from the rest of the Arab countries.' The main complaints, however, came, not from the Sharifian family, to whom the British promises had been given, but from Palestinian Arabs to whom no promises had been given and who did not fight at all. Moreover, King Hussein was engaged in negotiations with the British Government for the conclusion of a Treaty of Friendship which, he hoped, would include a clause definitively recognising Britain's position in Palestine.¹⁵ The Palestinian Arabs would never be satisfied, the authors of the memorandum said but, as long as the general body of Arab opinion was not against Britain, the dangers arising from local dissatisfaction ought not to be serious.

The second chapter of the memorandum dealt with the policy of Lloyd George's Government, implemented by the establishment of the Civil Administration in Palestine, and of the relevant departments in the Foreign Office and Colonial Office, together with discussions with the Arabs summarised in the White Paper of June 1922 and the decisions taken in the Houses of Parliament. The chapter opened by clarifying that, prior to 1921, no authoritative explanation had ever been given of what precisely was meant by 'National Home' for the Jews and that, at the time the Declaration was being framed, there was some difference of opinion in the War Cabinet itself. Two viewpoints were described. One was that of Lord Curzon, as expressed in his memorandum of 26 October 1917, according to which the National Home policy should be implemented by setting up a form of European (definitely not Jewish) administration in Palestine and some machinery for safeguarding and securing order both in the Christian and Jewish Holy Places. Additionally, it should secure for the Jews equal civil and religious rights with the other elements of the population and arrange, as far as possible, for land purchase and settlement of returning Jews. The other point of view was that ascribed to Lloyd George who, it was believed, had once informed Weizmann that by the Declaration the Cabinet had always meant 'an eventual Jewish State'.¹⁶ Whatever may have been the view of the Cabinet, it was said, it was quite certain that this was what the Jews themselves meant. They chose to imagine that there was to be a Jewish kingdom in Palestine which would take its place among the nations of the world like any other national entity – an aspiration, as Lord Curzon had pointed out, which was bound to bring them into conflict with the other local communities. It was

emphasised, however, that the attitude of the Zionist Organisation towards the policy as defined in the White Paper was worth noting, since 'the new statement involved a considerable abatement of their pretensions and was undoubtedly a bitter pill for them to swallow'.

The third chapter analysed the existing situation in Palestine, as described in Samuel's letter of 8 December 1922, which had been circulated to the Cabinet.¹⁷ The investments of the Zionists in capital (five million pounds) enterprise and additional labour in developing the country were highly praised and it was noted that the Zionists (having accepted the White Paper policy) were prepared to carry on their work without claiming any special political privileges. It was commented on that the idea of a 'Jewish State' had definitely been ruled out. The memorandum had also presented data concerning the division of administrative posts to the various communities to show that there was no ground for the charge that the Government in Palestine was a 'Jewish' or 'Zionist' Administration. As for the demands of the latest Arab Delegation for a clarification of policy, the memorandum stated that it was essential that a definite decision be reached without delay as to the policy to be pursued. The present state of suspense was fair to nobody. It was not fair to allow the Jews to go on collecting money for their projects in Palestine if there was any question of non-fulfilment of the pledge on which these projects were based. On the other hand, it was not fair to the Arabs, if the British Government intended to maintain its policy, to allow them to continue to agitate, which might cause them to suffer in the long run. It was also not fair to the High Commissioner and his officers to expect them to administer an Oriental country in which there was doubt about the policy to be pursued. In conclusion, the memorandum suggested four different paths that might be followed by the Government. Three were based on the assumption – in various wordings – that the Balfour Declaration was null and void, while the fourth ensured the fulfillment of the Balfour Declaration as understood in the White Paper. The memorandum recommended the last alternative and ruled out the others since they would compel surrendering the Mandate to the League of Nations and would be interpreted as admitting failure: Britain would always be remembered as the Christian power which, having rescued the Holy Land from the Turk, lacked the strength or courage to guard what it had won.¹⁸

When circulating this second memorandum for the consideration of the Cabinet, Devonshire requested that a decision be reached on three points:

1. Is there anything in the British Government pledges to the Arabs that precluded effect to be given to the Balfour Declaration in favour of setting up a National Home for the Jews in Palestine?

2. If the answer is in the negative, are we to continue the policy of the late Government in giving effect to the Balfour Declaration on the lines laid down in the White Paper of June 1922?
3. If not, what alternative policy are we to adopt?¹⁹

The third memorandum, of 12 March 1922, contained additional information on the background data in the first two.²⁰

The objection to departing from the White Paper policy or to fostering false hopes within the Arab Delegation of a change of policy were connected to developments in Palestine, especially the efforts made by Samuel and his Administration to set up representative institutions. Samuel had attempted, since assuming office, to establish institutional frameworks through which the Arab population would be represented. He had also attempted to implement the principle of developing self-rule mechanisms for the local inhabitants, a leading principle in administering British Empire Colonies. Samuel believed that, if the Arabs understood that this principle was sound also in Palestine, they would believe in the British Government's intention to carry out both parts of the Balfour Declaration policy and would be convinced that the establishment of the Jewish National Home would not affect the rights of the Arab inhabitants.

Samuel continued to operate along these lines. In January 1922, the Supreme Muslim Council was set up and the *Mufti* of Jerusalem was chosen as its president. Thus, the process which had begun with the appointment of al-Hajj Muhammad Amin al-Husayini as *Mufti* of Jerusalem in May 1921 was finalised and the supreme body of the Muslim community was finally institutionalised.²¹ On 10 August 1922, following the failure of all efforts to establish an elected Advisory Council, a Palestine Order in Council was promulgated. It proposed a constitution for Palestine and the establishment of a Legislative Council of ten members nominated by the Government and twelve elected members: eight Muslims, two Christians and two Jews. This constitution had already been presented to the first Arab Delegation by Churchill, in February 1922, but was immediately rejected by them. The Delegation argued that, if the people of Palestine assented to any constitution which fell short of giving them full control of issues such as immigration, they would be agreeing to a measure which might, and probably would, smother their national life under a flood of alien immigration. The best and only safeguard of their interests, they asserted, was to set up a government responsible to a parliament elected proportionately by Muslim, Christian and

Jewish inhabitants of the country who had lived there before the War. As to immigration, they demanded that this be stopped until there were guarantees that it would benefit the inhabitants of Palestine and that the Jewish National Council (Hebrew: the *Vaad Leumi*) should allow immigration only in so far as it was compatible with the interests and capacity of the country. Moreover, according to the Delegation, the question of control over immigration was connected to the issue of legislation. Since the power of legislation was to be confined to the Legislative Council, the Arab Delegation, therefore, asked that all the members of the Legislative Council be elected so that they might supervise and control the actions of the National Government and that the High Commissioner not be given the right to veto measures passed by the Legislative Council dealing with local matters.

In August 1922, once the Palestine Order in Council, dealing with the proposed constitution, was promulgated, the Fifth Palestinian Conference passed a resolution to boycott the elections for the Legislative Council. Their main argument was that participation in elections to a Council, to be set up based on the Mandate and the Balfour Declaration, was just like agreeing to these documents. In the following months, the Arab Executive Committee, the Supreme Muslim Council, which had just been set up, and various religious leaders led a vigorous propaganda campaign against the elections. Despite this, the Administration succeeded in taking a census of the population and preparing registers of voters. In January 1923, the upcoming elections were announced.²² The successful realisation of the plan depended on the readiness of the Arabs to participate, in other words, on the percentage of Arabs voting.

In order to ensure stability in the days before the elections, Samuel sent an optimistic report to London describing normal administrative routine, progressing economic development and a cooperating population with a few dissatisfied on the margins. He concluded that, if Government were to make a statement that the policy of the White Paper would be maintained, the population would respect the accomplished fact, the moderates would be greatly encouraged, those not cooperating would be discredited and the efforts to promote participation in the elections would be more likely to meet with success. However, Samuel warned, if there was a prospect of change of policy, the opposition would be encouraged and might instigate violence in order to force a change. He considered that it was possible that a declaration that the White Paper's policy was there to stay might, on the other hand, stimulate the 'revolutionary movements' to use more violent means to gain the upper hand. However, he did not regard this as likely.²³

If Samuel believed that stable political expectations were essential for Arab cooperation, he also knew that this was not sufficient and that the

tendency of the Arab population to resort to extremism would continue. Therefore, four days later, Samuel sent Devonshire another letter in which he proposed steps to be taken to remove antagonism and to secure the cooperation of the local population. Samuel came to the conclusion that Britain had exhausted all possibilities of bringing the Arabs nearer to the Government position and of convincing them to accept the Balfour Declaration policy by making statements about the meaning of the Jewish National Home and by limiting it. He believed that any further restriction would deprive the Balfour Declaration of all its substance and the policy of aiding the Jews of all its value. Therefore, Samuel tried to deal with the problem by limiting the framework within which the Jewish National Home should be established. He renewed a proposal which he had put forward in 1920, on his appointment to Palestine, which stemmed from a proposal made by Mark Sykes in 1916. This was that the British Government should take steps to promote the formation of a confederation of Arab States, a proposal which was soon after made impossible by the expulsion of Faisal from Damascus and by the French taking over direct administration of Syria.

As in 1920, the proposal was made while the Palestinian Arabs were protesting against not being included in the settlements implemented in the rest of the Arab world. Indeed, the collapse of Faisal's rule in Damascus and the setting up of a French Mandatory Government there made Damascus less attractive and changed the assessment of the situation. The moderate positions expressed by the National Syrian Movement towards Zionism also contributed to the estrangement of the Arabs of Palestine from this movement which was based on the idea of a Greater Syria. However, the demands put forward by Palestinian Arabs did not stop. Basing themselves on the League of Nations' Covenant, they requested that a National Government and a Legislative Council, under the supervision of a British high commissioner, be established and elected like similar institutions set up in Iraq and Trans-Jordan.

When the idea of securing a Greater Syria ceased to be relevant, the Palestinian Arabs turned in another direction which was no less problematic from Britain's point of view: making use of the Islamic faith to unite the Muslim population of Palestine and crystallising an overall Muslim identification with the struggle against Zionism. The British statesmen were afraid of such a development, particularly because of the large Muslim population in India which was aware of events which had taken place in the Middle East since the First World War, the Arab revolt and the participation of Indian troops in the Mesopotamia campaign. The systematic propaganda campaign, led by the Supreme Muslim Council and the Arab Executive

Committee since 1922 both in Palestine and the Muslim world, which called on Muslims to protect the Islamic Holy Places against Zionists, as well as the efforts made by them to enlist pilgrims to Mecca in opposing the British Mandate and Zionist policy, were worrying to statesmen in Britain who were afraid that, if Palestine was separated from the rest of the Middle East, it might lead to a crisis. This worry was strengthened by Palestinian Arab expressions of identification with Mustapha Kemal, who gained the Turkish victory over the Greeks and was then considered the saviour of Islam.²⁴

Samuel, therefore, proposed the formation of the Confederation of Arab States mentioned above. The nucleus of that Confederation was to consist of Hedjaz, Palestine and Trans-Jordan, with Syria (after consultation with the French), Iraq, Ibn Saud and other princes being encouraged to join. The Confederation's Council would consist of delegates from various countries, with British and French (if Syria joined) representatives present as members of the delegations of Palestine, Iraq and Syria. The president of the Confederation Council should be the King of Hedjaz, acting through one of his sons as deputy. The functions of the Council, which would meet alternately in its capital cities, should relate to all matters of common interest (communications, customs, extradition, Arab culture and education and Moslem religion). In Samuel's opinion, the Confederation would satisfy Arab National aspirations and be a visible embodiment of Arab unity, a centre round which the movement for an Arab revival could rally.²⁵

Ten days later, Wyndham Deedes, the Chief Secretary to the Government of Palestine, also submitted a detailed memorandum in favour of a Confederation, which added:

If the question of a Jewish National Home were envisaged as part of the revival of Eastern civilization in which both Arab and Jewish national life were to be fostered by England and France, there would be more hope of cooperation and good understanding. The Arabs would recognise that Jewish finance and Jewish enterprise can assist in economic development and might, therefore, be prepared to admit a Jewish representative on such a Council. The Jewish Agency, of course, would have no place on any Council or Board concerned with cultural and educational questions, nor with any Council concerned with the management of the Hedjaz Railway, but if a beginning could be made for the cooperation of the Zionists in the development of the Middle East as a whole, it would help the recognition of the Jews as a permanent factor in the Arab countries, and relieve the acute stage which the problem of Jewish-Arab relations has reached in Palestine.²⁶

The Colonial Office response to the Confederation proposal was extremely critical. The Middle East Department agreed with Samuel's assessment that there was no room for further efforts to define the Jewish National Home and that it was clear to Shuckburgh that 'the Balfour Declaration cannot be further whittled down without risk of its final disappearance.'²⁷ However, in the Department's opinion, there was no prospect of the Confederation being realised, both because of France's expected objections and the relationship between Hussein and Ibn Saud. The Colonial Office believed that not only would such a Confederation not satisfy the aspirations of the Palestinian Arabs but it might also provide them with an easy mechanism to express their protests and would badly affect relations with France as well as weakening Britain's hold on the Middle East.²⁸ In response to Deedes' idea, Clauson commented that 'a Council of this nature would no more relieve the present Arab-Jew situation than a pill can cure an earth-quake.'²⁹ Curzon, to whom Devonshire passed on Samuel's and Deedes' papers,³⁰ had his own reservations: 'If on financial and other grounds H.M.G. are unable to impose direct British Administration in Palestine on the same lines of French Administration in the Lebanon,' he wrote, 'there seems to be only two possible alternatives: either to rely on Arab support which involves the renunciation of Zionist policy or to rely on Jewish support which entails facing the persistent hostility of the Arabs.' Curzon thought that reliance on the Arabs was 'a policy fraught with considerable danger' since, although their hostility at that time was attributed to Britain's Zionist policy, he felt by no means confident that, were that policy to be abandoned, Britain could count on Arab friendship. As evidence, Curzon referred to the difficulties in Iraq which no one could attribute to Zionism and which should be regarded as a warning against staking everything on friendly Arab collaboration. On the other hand, Curzon commented, the Jews too should be regarded as an unreliable prop since the slow growth of the Jewish population of Palestine did not encourage any hope for effective Jewish support which could greatly lighten Britain's burden there for many years to come. If the Zionists were honestly anxious to collaborate with the Arabs as Samuel believed, Curzon wrote, should not the burden imposed on Britain by the Mandate lie in the Zionists themselves overcoming Arab opposition to their presence in Palestine?³¹

On 11 February 1923, three days before the appointed time for the first stage of elections to the Legislative Council, Samuel cabled Devonshire a further proposal. He reported on 'an overture on behalf of important sections of Arabs' who would be prepared to abandon opposition to the Balfour Declaration and come forward to collaborate with the Government at the elections on certain conditions, namely that: annual immigration should be

limited; Arabs be added to the Legislative Council in such a number as to constitute a majority; the number of Arabs in important positions in the Administration should be greatly increased; and an Arab Emir be appointed in Palestine, the High Commissioner remaining in his present position. Samuel was prepared to limit annual Jewish immigration to 10,000 and permit additions to that number when justified by economic conditions. He also recommended increasing the number of Arabs in the Administration. However, he was afraid of adding Arabs to the Legislative Council and objected to appointing an Emir, a step which would arouse the strongest antagonism among the Jews, impose heavy additional expenditure and would almost certainly lead to a deadlock between the Emir and the High Commissioner. Samuel requested that the Colonial Secretary agree to him continuing this dialogue.³²

This time it was Hubert Young who suggested a solution. In a memorandum submitted to Shuckburgh, he wrote:

It is quite clear that if we are to escape from incessant opposition, not only in Palestine itself, but also in this country, we must move a step further in the direction of reassuring our critics in both countries that we do not intend the Jews to become predominant in Palestine. The root of the whole opposition is the fact that Palestine is predominantly an Arab country and that the reservation by which we intended it to be excluded when we promised King Hussein to recognise and support the Independence of the Arabs was never fully understood by him and is not, in fact, very easy to support in the actual text of the document upon which we rely. There are two possible courses open to us. The first is to persist in regarding Palestine as excluded from the Arab countries; to remain a direct British Administration there for an indefinite period; to deprive the people of real self-government in order that our National Home policy may be pursued; in a word, to treat Palestine as a British dependency and to aim at its complete severance from the remainder of the Middle East.

The other course is to recognise frankly that Palestine is a predominantly Arab country, and to endeavor by this recognition and by our interpretation of the National Home policy to convince, not only the Arabs of Palestine, but all other Arabs and all critics whose arguments are based upon the Arab case, that the National Home policy is not only harmless, but actually beneficial to the Arab world.

Young feared that Samuel's proposal to establish an Arab confederation was going too far and would imperil the British position in Palestine, which was

so vital from an Imperial point of view. He also considered the suggestion that Abd'Allah or any other Arab ruler be recognised as Emir of Palestine and Trans-Jordan as most dangerous and undesirable because it would necessitate the presence of this Emir in Jerusalem. If it had not been for the division of Syria between Britain and France, Young argued, there would not have been any difficulty about the recognition of an Arab ruler in Damascus whose suzerainty was acknowledged both in French Lebanon and in British Zionist Palestine. Colonel Lawrence's 'Golden Bridge' had to stretch from Jerusalem to Damascus and not from Jerusalem to Amman, he wrote. But until circumstances permitted federation with Syria it would be unwise to encourage the federation of Palestine with Trans-Jordan or any other Arab country. Young thought the British Government should devise some formula which would show that it was not their intention to cut Palestine off permanently from the other Arab countries and that, provided they were satisfied that the Jewish National Home would not be imperiled, they would welcome the ultimate association of Palestine with her neighbours, thus going a long way towards removing the main source of criticism.

At the time, Britain was negotiating with King Hussein, the ruler of Hejaz, in order to induce him to agree to the insertion in the Hejazi Treaty an article recognising the special position of Britain in Iraq and Palestine. Young, who took part in the discussions leading to the formulation of the Hejazi Treaty, also had a proposal: that his suggestions regarding the question of Palestine be included as an article of the Treaty. Young also reported that, at a discussion on the subject held on 13 February 1923 at the Foreign Office with Hussein's representative, the latter had said that, in Hussein's opinion, the Treaty should either deal exclusively with Hejaz – and in this case the proposed Article would be out of place – or alternatively that, if the Treaty was to recognise Hussein's interest in other countries which the proposed article would inevitably do, then the principle of Arab unity should be emphasised in return for the recognition desired by the British. Young asked whether it was not possible that, while adhering to Britain's National Home policy and scrupulously refraining from any specific pledge for a federation of Arab countries, the British Government might take the opportunity of the Hejazi Treaty to remove once and for all the objections to British policy – not only in Palestine, but also in Iraq – which were based on Hussein-McMahon's incomplete correspondence. The draft formula, attached by Young to his memorandum, read:

His Britannic Majesty hereby undertakes to recognise and support the independence of the Arabs in Iraq and Trans-Jordan, and in the Arab

States of the Arabian Peninsula (exclusive of Aden). In the event of any Governments of any or all of these territories desiring to enter into an association for customs or other purposes he will readily use his good offices to further their desire if requested to do so. His Britannic Majesty also declares that in Palestine, where He is pledged to use his best endeavours to facilitate the establishment of a National Home for the Jewish people, nothing will be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the Arab community, and undertakes that so far as is consistent with His international obligations He will place no obstacles in the way of the association of the Government of Palestine with that of neighbouring Arab states for customs or other purposes to the extent that this may be desired by both parties.

His Majesty King Hussein hereby recognises the special position of His Britannic Majesty in Iraq, Trans-Jordan and Palestine and undertakes that in such matters as come within the influence of His Hashemite Majesty concerning these countries he will do his best to co-operate with His Britannic Majesty in the fulfilment of his obligations.³³

Shuckburgh jumped at Young's proposal. While Samuel had to confront the problems his Administration came across within Palestine, Shuckburgh was disturbed by the misinterpretations of the meaning of the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, which had affected the atmosphere in which the Middle East Department had to carry out its work. Including an Arab recognition of the policy of implementing the Balfour Declaration in the Hejazi Treaty, even indirectly, would have relieved the Department once and for all of the need to deal with pledges given to Hussein which had, according to him, poisoned British relations with the Palestinian Arabs and their supporters; it would have separated the question of Palestine from the framework of relations with the Arab countries and would have given Britain a free hand to implement its policy in Palestine without disruptions by supporters of the Palestinian Arabs. However, the constant opposition of the Palestinian Arabs disturbed Shuckburgh. He was afraid that, in eliminating immediate problems, the British might involve themselves in still greater difficulties in the future. He warned against using language that the Arabs might interpret as implying a modification of Britain's Zionist policy when, in fact, no such modification was intended. It was clear to Shuckburgh that implementing the Zionist policy would be difficult and unpopular and that it would be done in the teeth of the Palestinian Arab opposition which no treaty with Hussein would remove.³⁴

Young's draft was rejected by Hussein's representative who objected to any reference to Zionism in the Treaty with Hussein and demanded the insertion of a reference to an eventual confederation of the Arabs. The draft was amended accordingly. Sir Percy Cox, in Iraq, and Herbert Samuel, in Palestine, to whom the drafts were sent for consideration, accepted the amended version.³⁵ Samuel, who considered the reference to an eventual confederation to indicate support for his proposal which had been opposed by the Colonial Office,³⁶ explained his acceptance by saying that, even after including the amendment in the Treaty, King Hussein's renunciation of his claim to Arab independence in Palestine still remained. According to Samuel, it would have been preferable to mention the Jewish National Home but, if Hussein continued insisting that it should not be mentioned, Britain should insist on fulfilling its obligations according to the Mandate's articles and her other international commitments.³⁷

Therefore, Shuckburgh, in spite of his fears of being involved in greater difficulties in the future by pledging to support the establishment of an Arab confederation, agreed to submit the following formula to the Foreign Office:

His Britannic Majesty hereby undertakes to recognise and support the independence of the Arabs in Iraq and Trans-Jordan, and in the Arab States of the Arabian Peninsula (exclusive of Aden). As regards Palestine His Britannic Majesty has already undertaken that nothing will be done in that country which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the Arab community. In the event of the governments of any or all of these territories desiring to enter into an association for customs or other purposes with a view to eventual confederation, His Britannic Majesty will, if requested to do so by the parties concerned, readily use his good offices, (so far as is consistent with his international obligations) to further their desire.

Hussein's commitments remained unchanged as in the first formula.³⁸

The attempt to include the question of Palestine in the Hejazi Treaty was doomed to failure. The Arab Delegation which came to London in July 1923 in order to represent the Palestinian Arabs in the negotiations regarding the Treaty, convinced King Hussein's representative to harden his attitude and stand by the demand to establish in Palestine a representative Government based on the pledges given by the British to the Arabs. In any case, the negotiations that continued till the Wahabi offensive against Hussein neutralised him as a factor in the political arena did not reach the stage of signing a treaty.³⁹

The fate of other such ideas was also unfortunate. Samuel's efforts to establish a Legislative Council had ended in failure even earlier: in the elections which took place at the end of February 1923, only a tiny number of voters participated,⁴⁰ the establishment of a Legislative Council was indefinitely postponed and the prospect of having a representative body of all the inhabitants of Palestine went up in smoke. The same happened to the plan to re-establish a nominated Advisory Council with an identical constitution to that of the elected part of the proposed Legislative Council. In May 1923, an Order in Council was promulgated, according to which an Advisory Council was to be set up, whose members were to be nominated by the Government. It was assumed that the Arabs would accept this, since taking part in such a council would be by nomination and it would deal only with administrative questions and not be run according to a constitution based on the Mandate including the Balfour Declaration. This attempt failed as well and, towards the end of 1923, it became clear that none of the Arab dignitaries nominated for a Council would participate.⁴¹

Supporting the Arab cause was E.T. Richmond, Assistant Chief Secretary for Political Affairs in the Palestine Administration. He probably also encouraged the campaign against elections to a Legislative Council. In March 1923, Richmond submitted a memorandum in which he argued that no self-ruling bodies should be established against the will of the population. He proposed to revise the writ of Mandate in such a way that no preference be granted to the Jews over other communities in the country.⁴²

In London, the Arab cause had its supporters in both Houses of Parliament, led by the Lords Islington, Syndham and Grey in the House of Lords and Curzon and Sanderson in the House of Commons. In their opinion, the failure of all attempts to establish an elected Legislative Council and a partly nominated Legislative Council had proved that the Government was mistaken in adopting a pro-Zionist policy or, in Islington's wording, a policy 'establishing a Zionist system in the shape of a Zionist Home'.⁴³ They suggested that this policy, which had failed under the previous Government, should be re-considered and that the Government should consider changing the constitution of Palestine and adapting it to the wishes of the Palestinian Arabs.⁴⁴ The pressure put on the Government in the House of Lords, to act in Palestine in the spirit of the pledges given to the Arabs, grew in intensity and it was demanded that the Government publicise the Hussein-McMahon correspondence and King-Crane's report.⁴⁵

Lord Grey, during whose time as Secretary for Foreign Affairs in 1916 the first attempt to draft a pro-Zionist declaration had been made,⁴⁶ and who was now one of the supporters of the Arab cause, disputed the validity of the Balfour Declaration itself. Like Islington, Grey used the term 'Zionist Home'

which 'undoubtedly means or implies a Zionist Government' that had been promised in the Declaration. He argued that this term meant 'a Zionist Government over the district in which the home is placed'. In that, he saw a contradiction to the commitment not to prejudice the civil rights of the Arabs, a commitment which could be fulfilled only by establishing an Arab Government. As a way out of the complexity, Grey suggested that the Zionist policy be given an interpretation which would end the contradiction. For example, the Jews would be promised an opportunity to establish a university of their own and, in other words, to establish a home for Jewish culture of their own within a state which was, for the most part, Arab.⁴⁷

Devonshire was careful not to be drawn into a discussion of the meaning of the Balfour Declaration and the need to reevaluate policy. He refused to publicise the Hussein-McMahon correspondence and explained that he was convinced that never had there been any intention to include Palestine in the areas promised to the Arabs. Furthermore, he argued that the Arabs were wrong to refuse to cooperate since the constitution would have advanced them towards self-government. He clarified that there was no option of retreating from the Declaration policy without giving up the Mandate.⁴⁸

Another effort to outline the Jewish National Home, not by deliberating what the concept entailed but by limiting it, was made in the summer of 1923. On 27 June, about five weeks after Baldwin had replaced Bonar Law as Prime Minister, the Cabinet decided to form a Cabinet Committee to advise the Cabinet on the policy to be adopted by the Government concerning Palestine. The Committee was headed by the Colonial Secretary of State and included the Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs, War, Air, India, Admiralty, Board of Trade, Scotland and Education along with the Finance Secretary to the Treasury. The Committee received the documents which had been submitted to the Cabinet by Colonial Secretary Devonshire early that year: memoranda regarding the history of the elections of a Legislative Council; the Palestine Order in Council which included the proposed constitution for Palestine (C.P. 179 and Cmd1889); and Samuel's report of 15 June 1923, written after the nominated members of the Advisory Council had retracted their acceptance.⁴⁹

The Committee considered whether the Government was obliged to carry on the Balfour Declaration policy and to what degree it could be flexible in implementing it in Palestine, a process which the Arab protest movement was trying to block. The Committee was convinced that it was

impossible for any Government to extricate itself without substantial sacrifice of consistency and self-respect if not honour. It came to the conclusion that, for that reason, the British Government could not reject the Balfour Declaration after six years of implementing it, during which time the Declaration had been officially endorsed at San Remo and in the original Treaty of Sèvres, as well as having been included in the Mandate which had been approved by the League of Nations in July 1922. Moreover, it had been the basis upon which Zionist cooperation in the development of Palestine had been freely given and upon which very large sums of money had been contributed. In addition, the Committee stated that reversing the policy of the Balfour Declaration would definitely result in the rescinding of the Mandate, which would be followed by France or Italy claiming it and, if not and 'the Palestinian Arabs were left to work their own destiny', it might even result in the return of the Turks. Although the strategic value of Palestine was not rated highly by the Imperial General Staff – the Committee concluded – yet nobody could contemplate with equanimity the installation in Palestine of another Power.

At the same time, the Committee tried to find a way of tackling the problem raised by the Palestinian Arab opposition to Herbert Samuel's attempts to set up representative bodies for the population of Palestine. The Committee realised that the Arabs had boycotted the elections to a Legislative Council because they believed that, by refusing all compromise, perhaps even by organising some form of passive resistance, they might induce the British Government if not to abandon the Mandate at least to give Palestine full self-government which they could exploit to obtain complete ascendancy over the small minority of Jews. In spite of that, the Committee adopted the view which was, as mentioned above, also Samuel's, that it was not so much the existence of the Mandate, the Balfour Declaration or the recognition of the Jewish National Home 'in its later and narrower interpretation' to which they objected but the preferential position accorded to the Zionists in the country and the wide-spread Arab belief that the scales were weighted against them in the Administration. The appointment of a Jewish High Commissioner, however able and impartial, the existence of a Jewish Agency in Palestine with special access to the High Commissioner, the not inconsiderable immigration, although restricted, of many thousands of Jews and the encouragement of Jewish enterprises like the Rutenberg Concession had all fostered this belief, according to the Committee.

This discrimination, the existence of which was not denied by the Commission, was rooted, according to the Committee, in the Mandate itself (particularly Articles 4, 6 and 11) which attempted to reconcile the

irreconcilable and to combine, in the same framework, the creation of Jewish privileges with the maintenance of Arab rights. In other words, the Committee believed that there was an irreconcilable contradiction between the promise of a Jewish National Home and not prejudicing the rights of the Arabs.

As a solution, the Committee proposed an idea, the roots of which can be traced to the first year of Samuel's Administration: to end the inconsistency in the Authorities' treatment of the various sections of the population which was caused by the establishment of the Jewish Agency. Since the Jewish Agency was the expression of the preference given to the Jewish National Home in the Mandate, the Committee proposed that an equivalent Arab Agency should be set up which would occupy a position exactly analogous to that accorded to the Jewish Agency under the terms of the Mandate. In other words, it would be recognised as a public body for the purpose of advising and cooperating with the Administration in such economic, social and other matters as might affect the interests of the non-Jewish population and, subject to the control of the Administration, might assist and take part in the development of the country. This Arab Agency would have the right to be consulted about the means of ensuring that the rights of the non-Jewish sections of the population were not prejudiced by Jewish immigration, which was a counterpart to the right accorded to the Jewish Agency under the terms of Article 6. It would be entitled to be consulted by the Administration as regards public works, in the same way as the Jewish Agency was entitled under the terms of Article 11. Furthermore, the Arab Agency would be invested with all the powers and authority of the Committee. It was supposed to discuss questions such as regulating immigration (according to Article 84 of the Palestine Order in Council, 1922) but it was not set up once the Legislative Council was abrogated.⁵⁰

This was the development of an idea suggested by Samuel to Churchill, following the riots of May 1921, and not by chance. Samuel was the only witness who appeared before the Committee since, on Samuel's recommendation, it refused to hear the Arab Delegation, which appeared in London again in July 1923. He feared that if the Arab Delegation were given an audience the Zionists might demand to be heard too.⁵¹ Samuel was, therefore, the only source of information on the situation in Palestine and his line of thinking is recognisable both in the presentation of the problem and the reasoning behind its proposed solution. Churchill, who, at the time, had immediately rejected Samuel's idea, arguing that the lack of symmetry arising from the establishment of the Jewish Agency was the outcome of the promise to establish a Jewish National Home, found his views totally ignored.

The demands of the Arab Delegation were also not considered. Its members were regarded as a small minority of extremists not representing the Arab population in spite of the fact that their power had already been demonstrated when they blocked the elections of a Legislative Council. The Cabinet Committee on Palestine accepted the optimistic forecasts of Samuel who believed that, if the Delegation was not recognised, the moderate Arabs willing to collaborate with him would be strengthened.

The Committee considered that the Zionists needed to agree because nothing should be done which might be interpreted by them as a breach of confidence and adversely affect the contributions of the Jewish world. Therefore, it was suggested including the proposal as an article in the Mandate only after it was accepted by both Arabs and Jews. However, the chances of this happening were virtually none. The day after the Committee's meeting, Weizmann protested vehemently. He threatened to resign his position after hearing rumours that the Committee intended to put further restrictions upon the activities of the Jewish Agency in Palestine or even to alter the Mandate to withdraw official recognition from the Jewish Agency, as well as further limiting Jewish immigration.⁵²

Expectations for Arab acquiescence were also unfounded. On 4 October 1923, about two months after having been approved by the Cabinet and a day after being discussed and approved by the Imperial Conference,⁵³ the decision to establish an Arab Agency was sent to Herbert Samuel in Palestine to be executed by him. To begin with, the Balfour Declaration was cited as the key-note of British policy in Palestine, having been accepted by the principal Allied Powers at the San Remo Conference and embodied verbatim in the treaty signed at Sèvres in April 1920 and again in the Mandate approved by the Council of the League of Nations in July 1922. Furthermore, it was stated that the underlying causes of Arab discontent and opposition which found expression in the failure to form the Legislative and Advisory Councils were inspired less by dissatisfaction with the policy as actually carried out by the British Government than by fears that its ultimate result would be the establishment of Jewish political ascendancy. Therefore, and since the special position accorded to the Jewish Agency under Article 4 of the Mandate was the chief Arab complaint, it was made clear in the White Paper of June 1922 that the privileges enjoyed by the Agency did not entitle it to share in any degree in the government of the country. This was officially accepted by the Zionist Organisation at the time and respected by the Zionists later on. As to privileges formally accorded by the Mandate to the Jewish Agency, these had actually been enjoyed for some years and it would be impracticable, even if it were desirable in itself, to halt them. Therefore, the British Government was prepared to favour the establishment of an Arab

Agency in Palestine which would occupy a position exactly analogous to that accorded to the Jewish Agency in the Mandate. The various authorities to be given to such an Arab Agency were explained in detail, both in the guidelines sent to Samuel and in the report of the Cabinet Committee which dealt with the issue.⁵⁴ The draft of the guidelines was also sent to Edward Grey and Winston Churchill.⁵⁵

The Arabs in Palestine rejected the proposal right away.⁵⁶ Devonshire then informed Samuel that, since the Arabs had refused to accept the decision reached at the Colonial Office during the discussions of the Cabinet Committee to establish an Arab agency,⁵⁷ he intended to make it clear to both Arabs and their supporters that the Government had said their last word and would not make any further political concessions. He also planned to inform them that it was the intention of the British to continue administering Palestine, as in the past, in accordance with their obligations.⁵⁸

On 27 October 1923, Devonshire summed up this position in a memorandum which he submitted, with attachments, to the Cabinet. The attachments included Samuel's cables on Arab rejection of the British proposal and a draft cable of Devonshire to Samuel, announcing that the British Government, for its part, had said its last word. Since the Mandate for Palestine had been brought into final operation under the authority of the Council of the League of Nations, from 29 September 1923 – the cable read – the British Government was bound to proceed with the discharge of its obligations. In these circumstances, as all its proposals for closer association of the Arabs with the Administration had been rejected, the British Government had no alternative but to continue to administer the country in conformity with its undertakings, even if they had to forego the assistance that they had hoped to obtain from the Arab community. Samuel was authorised accordingly by Devonshire to carry on the administration of Palestine with the aid of an Advisory Council.⁵⁹ The cable was sent to Samuel on 9 November while the memorandum and its attachments were reformulated and circulated to the Cabinet on 13 November.

The Zionists attempted to make use of this favourable atmosphere but without success. When Weizmann suggested to the Colonial Office that he be sent on a mission to Palestine, since the time was right to reach an understanding with the Arabs, Samuel strongly objected.⁶¹ In his correspondence with Shuckburgh, Samuel expressed his opinion, in the light of his experience in administering Palestine, that only the Administration should be responsible for regulating the balance of power between the various sections of the population without letting the Zionists interfere.⁶²

The discussions with the Palestinian Arabs spurred on the London deliberations dealing with the National Home policy, as defined in Samuel's and Churchill's speeches in June 1922. These came to the conclusion that any withdrawal or re-definition of this policy was unfeasible. Likewise, the discussions held with representatives of the Zionist Organisation and the *Yishuv* (Hebrew: the organised Jewish population of Palestine) brought about the need to face Zionist interpretations of the new British definition of the concept Jewish National Home.

Samuel's policy was based, as mentioned above, on the assumption that, once a functioning Administration as well as an economic system and institutional frameworks representing all sections of the population were set up, a peaceful atmosphere would be created which would lead to the growth of the Jewish community and the gradual development of institutions with 'national' characteristics, as described in the White Paper.⁶³ Samuel believed that this would bring about the gradual development of the Jewish National Home. However, as in the past, policy-making in Palestine was complicated by the different interpretations given to the concept and the various expectations of its realisation. The Zionists were mainly interested in dealing with immigration, economic activities and achieving official recognition of those Jewish institutes which had 'national' characteristics: the Elected Assembly (Hebrew: *Asefat HaNivharin*), the National Jewish Council (Hebrew: *HaVaad HaLeumi*), the councils of the settlements (Hebrew: *Va'adey HaYishuvim*), the Chief Rabbinate and the Jewish educational system to name some of them.

All those who had an interest in Palestine knew that Jewish immigration was a keystone in the building of the National Home and in guaranteeing its development. As mentioned above, according to the Mandate, the Government would encourage Jewish immigration to Palestine and, once the Civil Administration had become operational, former limitations on immigration would be lifted and the economic absorption capacity of the country would become the guiding principle of immigration policy.⁶⁴ However, the question of controlling immigration and how much Zionists or Arabs should be allowed to interfere in the matter remained open to interpretation. In all discussions, held with Colonial Office people or Government authorities in Palestine, both Zionist Organisation representatives and the Arab Delegation had tried to influence the policy of immigration as much as they could and the question of who should have the authority to control immigration had never been removed from the agenda of British policy-makers.

In practice, the immigration policy was not altogether shaped by the discrepancy between the positions of the two sides involved. As mentioned

above, the Arabs continued to oppose any policy based on the Balfour Declaration. All efforts made by Samuel and Churchill to shift the focus to the economic aspect, to convince the Arabs that the well being of the population would not be prejudiced, did not move them from their opinion that the problem was a political one. They believed that they must protect their status as a majority in Palestine and prevent the Zionists from ending this status. The attempt to initiate a dialogue between the Zionists and the Arab Delegation in London and the various proposals to include Arabs in representative bodies and set up mechanisms to implement immigration policy but not direct it were blocked by Arab insistence on establishing a representative Government which would have, *inter alia*, the authority to decide whether the immigration was compatible with the interests of the country's population and its economic capacity. In response to the White Paper, the Arab Delegation made it clear that recognition of the 'national characteristics' of the Jewish community in Palestine 'is the more reason why the Arabs should be confirmed in their national home as against all intruders and immigrants placed in their control'. Furthermore, they concluded by stating that 'nothing will safeguard the interests of the Arabs against the dangers of immigration, except the creation of a Representative National Government, which shall have complete control of immigration.'⁶⁵ Because of this Arab obstinacy, the question of re-considering immigration in order to create better prospects of arriving at a compromise with the Arabs was never dealt with. Ways to implement the policy were discussed and dealt with by the Colonial Office, the Government authorities in Palestine and the Zionist Organisation.

As mentioned above, the principle that immigration depends on the economic absorption capacity of the country and the creation of sources of employment for the new arrivals had been established when the Civil Administration became operational, and the White Paper of June 1922 gave it official expression. This principle and the need to regulate and control immigration were accepted by the Zionists. The demands submitted by the Zionists in order to have a say in the process had not undermined the principle but had dealt with control of its implementation. The questions raised were: Who would control the classification and regulation of immigration – the British Administration or the Zionist Organisation? Should the headquarters of the supervising body be in Palestine or in the lands of origin of the immigrants? Or, at a later stage, what should be the status of the Immigration Department in relation to the representative bodies controlling the immigration?⁶⁶ Here the Zionists demands were backed by the Colonial Office, which was trying to increase the Zionists supervisory role.⁶⁷ Thus, for instance, the Colonial Office supported the Zionists' demand

that the Zionist Organisation be allowed to settle immigrants to whom they could guarantee employment without the necessity of referring each individual case to the High Commissioner. This demand also received, in October 1921, the unexpected support of Major Morris, the Director of the Immigration Department in the Palestine Government. In Morris's opinion, it was 'obvious that immigration is the foundation, on which the National Home must be built up, so it is to the interest of the Palestine Government that immigrants who are allowed to enter Palestine should be the best possible immigrants that can be found ...'⁶⁸

However, no decision on these issues was taken at the deliberations and there was not even a debate on the fundamental principle. In the years 1920–3 the Zionist Organisation, owing to financial difficulties, was unable to implement its programmes to bring over to Palestine either middle class immigrants or investments which could create sources of employment for working class immigration. The argument of those Zionists demanding that the Zionist Organisation should have control over the classification and regulation of immigration had nothing to back it up and Weizmann had to admit that the Zionist Organisation, when demanding that Article 4 of the Mandate (which dealt with the functions of the Jewish Agency, including Jewish immigration) be observed in spirit as well as in letter, did not desire to take part in the general administration of the country.⁶⁹ As to Samuel, he came to the conclusion that the authority given to the Jewish Agency should be restricted as far as possible and that the Administration should be invested with all regulation and control. This conclusion was reflected in the Immigration Regulations of August 1921, the classification of immigrants and inauguration of Schedule System from July 1922 and onwards. It caused considerable difficulties in the way of Jewish immigration and further reduced it.⁷⁰ Eventually, these measures affected the development of the Jewish National Home without their ramifications ever having been seriously considered.

Giving the High Commissioner control over immigration was not only directed against the Zionists. In all his proposals to the Arabs of Palestine, regarding representative bodies, Samuel ensured that the Arabs would not be allowed to regulate immigration, only to submit their positions.

As mentioned above, in 1923, Samuel was ready to adopt a proposal that Jewish immigration be restricted to 10,000 persons per annum for five years.⁷¹ This proposal could have had drastic consequences, involving as it did a complete reversal of the policy of economic absorption capacity which was to be occasionally examined and thus was flexible and not in conflict with the Mandate according to which Jewish immigration into Palestine was to be facilitated.

Weizmann protested against the new proposal. He expressed his readiness to continue the yearly discussions on limitations proposed by the Government but would not agree to a '*numerus clausus*' since 'any attempt to restrict the flow of Jewish immigration by imposition of an arbitrary numerical limit would strike at the roots of the policy to which His Majesty's Government have hitherto adhered.'⁷² However, the proposal was not decided upon. It was presented for discussion at the Cabinet meeting in July 1923 but was removed from the agenda owing to the Colonial Secretary's report that new immigration regulations were to be promulgated soon, which would not prevent the imposition of the proposed restriction limiting the total number of immigrants.⁷³

As mentioned above, in the area of economic activity, the policy adopted in the first year of Samuel's Administration was that State Lands, natural resources, as well as public works, services and utilities were to be in the hands of and under the exclusive authority of the Government. The Jewish National Home was to be built while being part and parcel of the general development, which would provide sources of employment and lay the economic infrastructure for further growth of the *Yishuv*⁷⁴

Samuel's policy of granting State Lands for Jewish colonisation was, as a rule, loyal to this principle. State Lands which were given to Jewish bodies were mainly lands which demanded big investments in order to reclaim the soil and they were generally let on lease. The largest among these areas comprised sand dunes and swamps between Caesarea and Atlit. This area was leased to The Jewish Colonisation Association (ICA) which pledged to reclaim it by a system of drainage and forestation. Similarly, marshy lands in the neighbourhood of Acre, Petach Tikvah and Jaffa were also let on lease on condition that the area be drained and planted. In addition, the licence which had been granted by Jamal Pasha to Rishon Le'Zion to plant orchards in neighboring sand dunes and incorporate them into the colony's lands was confirmed (however, the planting was stopped in practice, owing to claims laid by Arabs from Jaffa).⁷⁵

On the other hand, the principle of keeping all natural resources under public ownership or control had already been diverged from, as mentioned above, in the course of the first year of the Civil Administration.⁷⁶ It was broken in two cases: the concession for producing electricity and the concession for the production of salt from the sea at Atlit on the land which had been leased for that purpose.

In September 1921, Rutenberg was granted a permit for producing and supplying electricity to the district of Jaffa and he signed an agreement with

the government according to which he would be granted a concession for a hydro-electric project on the Jordan River and the exclusive right to supply the electricity produced to the whole country. In the process of these negotiations, the Colonial Office believed that the Rutenberg scheme was the main driving force of the Zionist plan and the most substantial practical contribution so far made by Judaism [*sic*] to the restoration of prosperity to Palestine. As such, the Office believed that it should not be conditioned on the agreement of the Arabs whose opposition Samuel was afraid of.⁷⁷ On top of the economic and public importance attributed to the scheme, the Colonial Office was aware of its political aspect. When, in the course of negotiations, Rutenberg requested permission to use the electricity produced to electrify the Jaffa–Jerusalem Railway, it was understood at the Colonial Office that the motivation was probably not simply economic. Shuckburgh summed it up:

... in this, as in all matters relating to Palestine, we stand under the shadow of the Balfour Declaration. The Rutenberg concession has always been regarded as the most practical example of the policy of setting up a national home for the Jews. It is so regarded by the Zionists themselves. We are always trying to divert the attention of the Zionists from political to industrial activities, and preaching to them from the text that their best chance of reconciling the Arabs to the Zionist policy is to show them the practical advantages accruing to the country from Zionist enterprise. For these reasons we have supported and encouraged Mr. Rutenberg's projects and I submit that we must continue to support and encourage them, so far as circumstances permit.⁷⁸

The following year, when the question of whether Government guarantees should be given to Jaffa, Tel-Aviv and Haifa City Councils for loans from the Anglo-Egyptian Bank, for joining Rutenberg's scheme of electric energy supply, was under consideration, Shuckburgh again pointed to the political aspect, unlike his colleagues at the Colonial Office who looked at the economic angle. While arguing against approving the request, he wrote that giving a concession to Rutenberg was always part of Britain's Zionist policy which assumed that the enthusiasm of the Jews for Zionism was such that there would be no difficulties in financing Zionist projects even when undertaken by a concession owner in difficult conditions, like Rutenberg. In Shuckburgh's opinion, it would be difficult to maintain this argument if it could be argued that the project, which had received the greatest publicity, could not be executed without government guarantees.⁷⁹

Since Rutenberg's Concession was considered important for implementing Zionist policy, the principle of keeping all natural resources under Government control was modified. Summarising Government economic policy in the years 1920–1, Samuel emphasised that in no other case had an arrangement been made directly with the Jewish Agency to construct or operate any public works or to develop any of the natural resources of the country. There was one exception: a clause in the projected Concession to Rutenberg for generation of electric energy from the Jordan River, that the constitution of the Company which would operate the Concession should be subject to the approval of the High Commissioner in agreement with the Jewish Agency.⁸⁰

In 1922, when granting a concession to a group of Jewish entrepreneurs for production of salt from the sea at Athlit, Samuel showed initiative and agreed to the terms of the concession without having received the Colonial Secretary's authorisation. Although Samuel stressed that the plant would provide employment for both Arabs and Jews, the agreement infuriated the Colonial Office for undermining the Secretary of State, who had pledged to both Houses of Parliament that he would take control of granting concessions. The critics emphasised that, when those who applied for the concession were Jewish, there were additional reasons not to provide an excuse for any accusation that there had been special treatment.⁸¹

If Samuel and the Colonial Office had any expectations that, in addition to these concessions, the Zionists would also fund the Government's general development schemes and would accept the idea that implementing such schemes would promote Zionists objectives, they were doomed to disappointment.

As mentioned above, towards the end of 1920 it was already clear to Samuel that there was no prospect of the Zionist Organisation establishing a mortgage bank which would give credit to farmers in Palestine. In 1921, although not having any confidence that the Jewish Organisation would collaborate, Samuel made a further effort and tried to interest the Anglo-Egyptian Bank in initiating an establishment of a mortgage bank, in which the Anglo-Palestine Company (APC) would be allowed to take part in the light of the terms of the Mandate relating to the National Home.⁸² This attempt failed as well. The directors of the Anglo-Egyptian Bank refused to allocate funds for that purpose and, in the summer of 1922, Samuel proposed that an agricultural credit bank under Government ownership, with directors nominated by the Government, be set up. Churchill approved of the proposal and added that, since the active cooperation of the Zionist Organisation would be politically helpful, he expected Samuel to make possible efforts to enlist the financial support of this Organisation.⁸³ However, the Zionist

Organisation thought differently and, in 1922, the Zionists opened their own mortgage bank which served the Jewish population in Palestine.⁸⁴

Samuel's great hopes of persuading Jewish capitalists to raise a loan to the Government of Palestine for implementing its economic development schemes proved unfounded as well. The negotiations for the loan had already failed to raise the necessary funds and get Treasury approval to grant Government securities for the loan in 1920. In 1921 the so-called Economic Council for Palestine was set up in order to deal with the loan issue. However, its efforts did not succeed and the conditions submitted by Jewish bankers for agreeing to issue a loan were not accepted by Samuel.⁸⁵ Expressions of disappointment at the Colonial Office were increasingly heard.⁸⁶

The negotiations with the Economic Council for Palestine for the loan raised the question of the relationship between the economic and political aspects of Government policy and their interdependence. At a conference, held at the Colonial Office in February 1923 to discuss the proposed issue of a loan by the Palestine Government, the representatives of the Economic Council for Palestine argued that the document defining the loan did not provide any guarantees of future economic policy in Palestine or any promise that the capital raised for the loan would be used for works which would fulfil the aspirations of the Zionists and forward the policy of the Jewish National Home. At the time, as mentioned above, the Colonial Office was occupied with a reassessment of British policy towards Palestine. Devonshire, who had just been nominated Colonial Secretary of State, submitted to Cabinet for consideration the recommendations reached at his Office regarding future policy.⁸⁷ In the light of lack of confidence in the new policy of the Government, which had been expressed in the press and might deter Jewish investors, the representatives of the Economic Council for Palestine made it clear that a loan would be impractical unless the Government publicly declared that it would continue the policy of its predecessor. Shuckburgh, who was aware of the views of his Office, agreed to this and suggested that the negotiations should be carried on on the assumption that such a declaration would be made,⁸⁸ but he failed. However, in the summer of 1923, the Government did approve the recommendation of the Cabinet Committee that the previous Government's policy should be followed in view of the commitment made to the Zionists who had contributed significant sums of money to the development of Palestine. Indeed, in November 1923, the Government officially pledged to administer Palestine as in the past, in accordance with its obligations.⁸⁹ However, this decision, which had no connection to the loan issue, had no impact on its implementation.

The interdependence of the economic and the political-administrative aspects of Government policy found expression in another smaller but

significant sphere. In March 1922, Wyndham Deedes reported to Churchill that the Administration of Palestine had received funds from the Zionist Organisation for building a road between Gdera and Richon Le'Zion and that the work would be executed under the control of the Public Works Department. However, he explained, it had been agreed in accordance with the loan's terms that the agreement was not announced in open tender but was given to the Jewish Workers Organisation and only Jewish workers would be employed in building the road.⁹⁰ This arrangement was in keeping with Samuel's belief that the Government should assist the absorption of Jewish immigration by providing sources of employment in public works.⁹¹ However, it went against the principle that the Government was not a tool in the hands of the Zionists for building their Home but was functioning, with no discrimination, for the well being of all the inhabitants of Palestine and that it was assisted by Zionist funding only because the Zionists had an interest in the economic development of the country.

The fear of being criticised for this step led to differences of opinion at the Colonial Office. G.L.M. Clauson pointed out that two principles had been broken. The first principle was that the High Commissioner had to receive, in advance, the Minister of State's approval. Receiving a loan with no interest charged from a Jewish source and using the funds for employing Jews but not Arabs, he asserted, was a new policy which would have long term repercussions on dealings with financial matters. The second principle was that the Government should not place itself in the dishonourable position of borrowing money, build an inessential road initiated in order to assist the Jews and get involved in a deal with the Zionist Organisation. Such actions, Clauson argued, gave an excuse to those who slandered the Government of Palestine as being captive to the Jews. Other officials, however, believed that the Administration of Palestine should have a free hand and Shuckburgh suggested that the expected criticism should be rejected by arguing that the loan, given under preferable conditions, as well as serving Zionist interests, would be used for the benefit of Palestine in general. The response which Shuckburgh prepared for despatching to Samuel approved of Samuel's action *post factum* while warning of future criticism that the Government of Palestine was under Zionist influence.⁹²

Samuel put into effect his belief that, under a well-functioning administration and economic system, all obstacles which were likely to impede the establishment of the Jewish National Home would be removed. The 'national' characteristics of the *Yishuv* would be strengthened. Not only did he create

the institutional frameworks of the Civil Administration but he also made sure to carry on the tradition of a British Government built on an Administration which served the whole population. He did not recoil from disappointing those Zionists who interpreted the pledge of supporting the establishment of a Jewish National Home as giving them the right to put pressure on the Administration in order to achieve their goals. He also saw to it that the principle of the British Government being responsible for preparing the population for self-rule was kept. In light of this principle, he fostered Muslim autonomic institutions and, at the same time, supported elements of autonomy which could lay the groundwork for the Jewish National Home. Thus, he felt, it was possible to solve what seemed to be a contrast between the traditions of British rule and the conditions dictated by the Mandate.

In June 1923, when answering the League of Nations' Questionnaire on measures taken in 1920–2 to establish in Palestine political, administrative and economic conditions such as would guarantee the establishment of a Jewish National Home, Samuel could point out that, among other things, he had assisted in the creation of the elected institutions of the *Yishuv* by recognising them as representing the *Yishuv* in all their dealings with the Administration. When, in 1920, the Jewish Elected Assembly (Hebrew: *Asefat Ha'Nivharim*), held in Jerusalem, elected a national executive committee, the Jewish National Council (Hebrew: *Va'ad Leumi*), to be the mouthpiece of the Jewish people in respect of their communal affairs, the Administration recognised the representative character of this Committee and its presidents had meetings with the High Commissioner at which they brought forward any questions of general concern affecting the local Jewish community. In addition, elected City Councils (Hebrew: plural of *Va'ad Ha'ir*) for the administration of Jewish affairs had been set up in the principal towns of Jerusalem, Jaffa, Haifa, Hebron, Tiberias and Safad. Elected committees, which had operated in rural settlements since Turkish times without official recognition, had been allowed to continue functioning and provide for the needs of the villages. When the Chief Rabbinical Council was established in February 1921, the Council and any tribunal sanctioned by it were recognised by the Administration as the sole authorities in matters of Jewish law. The Chief Rabbis, like the heads of the National Council, were received in regular audience by the High Commissioner.

The same applied to the Zionist Commission which had already been recognised in the days of the Military Administration as the representative of the Zionist Organisation in all matters that might affect the establishment of the Jewish National Home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine. It obtained renewed recognition under the Civil Administration

and procedures of dealing with the Government were laid down which enabled the Commission to be officially received and to communicate with Government Departments with regard to any matter that fell within the authority of the Jewish Agency according to the Mandate. A representative of the Commission had a weekly interview with the High Commissioner at which questions of policy could be discussed, and he was in regular communication with the Chief Secretary and heads of departments. The Administration authorised the Zionist Commission to function in a range of activities which contained components of autonomy. To the League of Nations, Samuel reported that the Zionist Commission took part in the selection and absorption of Jewish immigrants, that it maintained a complete education system and had its own advanced organisation for the care of the sanitary conditions and the health of the Jewish population, that the Commission had a branch which was promoting Jewish agricultural settlement, the Jewish National Fund and the Palestine Land Development company, and that there was even a department for the development of commerce and industry. Furthermore, Samuel reported, the Zionist Commission had collaborated in several public construction works undertaken by the Government and advanced the money to the Government for building roads and the Jewish Cooperative Labour Association competed for contracts for the construction of roads and other public works.⁹³

As regards the policy of what autonomy should be given to the *Yishuv*, Samuel had to confront the Colonial Office. This was followed by a process of clarification, not only of the original meaning of the term National Home in the Balfour Declaration but also of the policy declared in the White Paper of June 1922.

One of the problems facing the Colonial Office, when Devonshire assumed office in October 1922, was the Jewish National Council's request 'that the Government should proceed with the original proposals for investing the central and local Jewish communities with "juristic personality" and with the power of taxation over their members' in order to maintain their charitable institutions, their schools and their special services for the religious needs of the community. Samuel supported this request and submitted to the Colonial Office a draft ordinance to this effect. Devonshire, concerned that the enactment of a statute for the Jewish Community might provoke a similar demand from the Muslims, objected and asked Samuel to change his draft ordinance. Samuel explained that the proposed legislation would only authorise existing Ottoman Regulations since the Jewish population, like other non-Muslim Communities, had been recognised as a *Millet* in the Ottoman Regime and a regulation had been enacted which

provided for a Rabbinical Authority as well as a lay council for the government of the Jewish Community. Additionally, the councils of the local Jewish Communities and neighborhoods had been operating since the Ottoman Regime as corporations and taxing their members (an explanation which echoed the Zionists' 'Demands' of 1916).⁹⁴

This time Samuel met with an unequivocal refusal, but for different reasons altogether. Devonshire's reply stated that the Turkish *Millet* system, by which minorities maintained their racial and religious solidarity against oppression and the ruling class left the minorities to perform functions which a civilised government ought to perform itself, was entirely unsuited to an administration controlled by the British Government. Moreover, Devonshire objected that any attempt to force under the authority of central committees all Jews in Palestine, except for those expressly declaring their desire for exclusion, would be exposed to criticism not only from Muslims but also from all Jews who considered the exclusion clauses an inadequate guarantee, and from public opinion in England where the measure might be interpreted as one to bring under Zionist control even those Palestine Jews who were opposed to Zionism. As a matter of principle, he explained, to exercise compulsion in order to strengthen a racial or religious community which was tending to disintegrate was not only contrary to the spirit which should animate the administration in Mandatory territories but was also doomed to failure in the long run as being contrary to the natural development of the body politic. For these reasons, Devonshire concluded, the organisation of the Jewish Communities in Palestine must be left to voluntary agencies.⁹⁵

The Jewish National Council protested immediately. In a letter to Samuel they argued that Devonshire's decision would result in Palestine Jewry, whose internal organisation was openly recognised by the British Government in its memorandum of 22 June 1922, being deprived of those bases of organisation which had been granted to Jews in most other countries for tens and even hundreds of years although, in these cases, Jews did not possess special privileges such as the Mandate's commitment to a Jewish National Home in Palestine. This decision would deprive the Palestine Jews not only of the elementary rights which they enjoyed in other lands but the right which every community possesses and which Jewish Communities possessed in Palestine even in the days of the Turks.⁹⁶

Once again, Samuel came to the defence of the Jewish National Council, this time as a matter of principle. He argued that the Jewish population of Palestine had good grounds for their dissatisfaction since there was a real inconsistency between the promise of the National Home in Palestine, defined as it was in the statement of policy of June 1922 as the further

development of the existing Jewish Community, and the refusal to permit that Community to acquire 'juristic personality' and to organise its Councils and their finances on a statutory basis. To support his position, Samuel referred – like the Jewish National Council in its despatches – to the provisions inserted by the League of Nations into the treaty made with Poland at Versailles and into the constitution of the Lithuanian State, in which it was provided that national minorities had the right by virtue of special laws to impose taxation on their members in order to satisfy the needs of their national culture and also to elect representative organs for administering their national affairs. These measures, he pointed out, enabled national organisation of Jews even in countries where there was no policy of establishing a Jewish National Home.

As to the demand of the Jewish Councils in Palestine that they should receive a measure of autonomy from the Government, this was justified by Samuel, particularly in view of the Muslims being granted a representative body which had control over the Religious Courts and religious endowments.

Samuel responded to Devonshire's disapproval of adopting the Ottoman *Millets* system by explaining that the organisation of the Jewish Community as an autonomous body with 'juristic personality' and with powers of taxation was not peculiar to the Ottoman *Millets* system but had a long tradition dating from the Roman Empire, when the Jewish Communities had been organised in a similar way. Therefore, he argued, the special circumstances of Palestine justified a departure from the general practice of British administration. The Administration of Palestine should leave the Jewish Community its Religious Courts for dealing with matters related to the personal status of Jews and also its educational system. These public services which, in most countries under British administration, would be performed by the Government, involved heavy charge upon the Community; it was in order to maintain these costs that the power of communal taxation was required. Therefore, Samuel concluded, the Turkish *Millet* system was suited to the existing conditions of Palestine.

As to Devonshire's opposition to compelling Jews to join the *Yishuv*, Samuel was ready to change the wording in order to prevent this but vehemently denied that there was any likelihood of the *Yishuv* disintegrating. There were certain separatist tendencies in the different Jewish congregations of Palestine, he agreed, but recently there had been an increased desire on the part of the leaders of nearly all the communities to form a united Jewish Organisation. That had led to the establishment of the Jewish Elected Assembly, the Jewish National Council and the Rabbinical Council. However, without the assistance of a legal enactment, it would be difficult for the representative body of the Jewish Community to enforce an equitable system

of contribution from individuals and, therefore, it was expedient for the Government to strengthen the unifying forces and assist the Jewish Community in maintaining its communal institutions.⁹⁷

In a second despatch sent on the same day, Samuel added urgency to his request. He reported to Devonshire that, after having drafted his first despatch, a deputation sent by the elected Jewish National Council had come to see him to protest and inform him that the National Council had decided that, in response to the refusal to establish the Jewish Community as an autonomous body with 'juristic personality' and with the power of taxation, the *Yishuv* would be compelled to abstain from participation in the elections to the Legislative Council. According to the National Council, Samuel wrote, the refusal was inconsistent with the promise of a Jewish National Home, particularly as it came after the severe restrictions on Jewish immigration and after the establishing of a Council containing a large number of Arab members, who would probably use their influence to obstruct measures to promote Jewish interests. Samuel concluded that, in his opinion which was fully shared by his advisers, 'to continue to refuse this modest degree of recognition of the Jewish Community in Palestine was in the highest degree impolitic' and he urged Devonshire to send an affirmative reply in order to avoid the threatened boycott of the election by both of the contending parties in Palestine.⁹⁸

Samuel's despatches motivated the Colonial Office to hold serious deliberations on the question of the nature of the Jewish National Home according to the White Paper policy. Hubert Young did not see any inconsistency between the refusal to put the Jewish Community back onto the footing it had under the Turks and the White Paper and also believed that the analogies drawn from the status of the Jews under the Roman Empire and in Poland and Lithuania were based upon a fundamental misconception of the peculiar circumstances of Palestine. According to him, if it had been the case that the policy of the British Government was directed towards the preservation of the Jewish Community as a racial or a religious minority distinct from the rest of Palestinian citizens these analogies might hold good. However, he stated, 'our reading of the White Paper does not admit this interpretation being placed upon the policy'. The whole point of the White Paper, he wrote, was the development of the Jewish Community as a body of Palestinian citizens in whom the whole Jewish world took an interest. Britain was quite prepared to encourage the development of this Community upon lines which were equally suitable for all other Palestinian communities but it could not agree to any measure which was contrary to the principle of non-discrimination laid down by the Mandate.⁹⁹ H.G. Bushe, Assistant Legal Adviser to the Colonial Office, who agreed with Young, added

that Samuel's proposal would eventually set up a government within a government, which would be destructive of true government.¹⁰⁰

Shuckburgh, too, agreed that the problem was much more complicated than the way it was presented by Samuel and that Samuel's proposal raised the fundamental question of whether the Jews were to be merged in the general body of Palestinian citizens or whether they were to constitute a kind of state-within-a-state, with their own separate organisation, conditions of life, etc. Apart from the question of principle, Shuckburgh pointed out that Samuel's proposals would be very difficult to defend in Parliament or elsewhere since, notwithstanding any Government assurances, it would be argued that the Government was 'in fact aiming at converting Palestine into a Jewish state' and was 'taking the first step in this direction by according privileges to the Jews' that were denied to other people. People would say, not without some justice – Shuckburgh continued – that, if the Jewish community as a whole was so enthusiastic about the National Home, it should have no difficulty in obtaining the necessary contributions from its members without having recourse to State Legislation.¹⁰¹

Shuckburgh summarised these views in a despatch sent by Devonshire on 29 March 1923:

... I must dissent from the opinion that there is any inconsistency between the promise of a National Home in Palestine, which was, as you point out, defined in the statement of Policy of last June as the further development of the existing Jewish Community, and the refusal to permit that Community to acquire 'juristic personality' as such and to organise its Councils and their finances on a statutory basis. On the contrary, I am of opinion that the further development of the Jewish community as a national minority requiring special laws and a separate communal organisation with statutory powers of taxation for religious and cultural purposes is opposed to the spirit of the Mandate. I cannot regard the analogies cited in paragraphs 5 and 6 of your despatch No.Pol.156 (a) as relevant to the case of Palestine. They postulate the existence of a religious minority in need of special protection for its properties, liberties and observances, as against a religious majority in control of the state. No such conditions obtain in Palestine where the existence of a British Administration, acting under the Mandate of the League of Nations, is a guarantee for the rights and the liberties of all sections of the population alike.

I fully adhere to the language used in the statement of policy published in the White Paper of June 1922, under which the development of a National Home for the Jews in Palestine was

defined as 'the further development of the existing Jewish community, with the assistance of Jews in other parts of the world, in order that it may become a centre in which the Jewish people as a whole may take on grounds of religion and race, an interest and a pride'. But the White Paper clearly contemplates the development of the Jewish community, not as a separate national entity, but as a body of Palestine citizens; and whilst in furtherance of the above aim, I am prepared to adopt measures in order to encourage the development of this community on lines which are equally suited for all Palestinian communities, I cannot contemplate adoption of any measure which is contrary not only to traditions of British administration, but also to the principle of non-discrimination defined in the Mandate. I regard the present proposal for acquirement of 'juristic personality' by the Jewish Community, with the purpose of imposing and collecting communal taxes by official sanction for religious and cultural purposes, as such a measure; that is, as inconsistent with British constitutional traditions and as infringing the principle of non-discrimination and consequently conflicting with the spirit and letter of the Mandate.

I am anxious to re-affirm the general principles on which my decision is based, because it appears that the language of my dispatch of 28th October last, in criticising the draft ordinance submitted by you, created the impression that in certain circumstances I was prepared to modify those principles. Such was not my intention. I was indeed prepared to consider any further suggestions which you might have to make, including a draft ordinance; but only on condition that they were capable of general application and did not conflict with the principles which I had laid down.

I fully realise that, subject to the general principles outlined above, there are certain purposes for which members not only of the Jewish but every Community in Palestine, who voluntarily combine for legitimate objects, might well be given 'juristic personality'. An example which applies equally to all Communities is the Administration of the Waqfs. It appears to me possible and even in certain circumstances desirable that bodies elected from the three great religious communities for this and kindred purposes should at some stage acquire 'juristic personality'. But the legislation leading to such acquisition should in my opinion be based upon general principles rather than on individual cases.

Whilst I fully appreciate the desire on the part of nearly all Jewish Communities in Palestine to form a united Jewish Organisation, I

adhere to my previous opinion that exercise of pressure upon individuals to join a community is undesirable. I am not satisfied that the safeguards proposed, viz. the grant of facilities to individuals to contract out of the Community, would in fact be a sufficient protection against pressure. I am of opinion therefore, that the organisation of the Community should be on a purely voluntary basis ...

As to the question of the acquirement of 'juristic personality', Devonshire summarised his views as follows: nothing should be done except by legislation; legislation should, in the first place, be of general application, based on general principles and defining the purposes for which bodies may legitimately acquire 'juristic personality'; legislation should not provide for the enforcement of dues for communal purposes.¹⁰²

The discussions about 'juristic personality' were followed by repercussions beyond the issue. When the Zionist Organisation requested, in February 1923, that 11 per cent of the education budget should be allotted to the Jewish education system because the Jewish Community in Palestine formed 11 per cent of the general population,¹⁰³ the request was dealt with in a similar way. H.E. Bowman, the Director of Education in the Palestine Government, argued in response that, for financial reasons, the Government was in no position to maintain all Jewish schools and that, 'if a "Palestinian", as opposed to a Jewish or an Arab, spirit is the object aimed at, it would appear that the barrier existing today between the two systems of education should gradually be broken down'. He also recounted that, when it had been suggested in 1922 to representatives of the Zionist Executive in Palestine that a proportion of village schools to be opened that year should be Jewish, provided that they accepted the same control as Arab schools, the suggestion was rejected by the Zionist representatives. As to the Zionist Organisation's argument that it would be in the general interest that the atmosphere of the Jewish schools be preserved and that the moral values which they represented should not be jeopardised, Bowman responded that this would only maintain the present complete separation of Jewish education. He suggested that whether this was in the interest of Palestine as a whole, or indeed, whether it fulfilled the spirit of the Mandate might be open to question.¹⁰⁴

The Colonial Office backed Bowman. One official believed that, if any concession was to be made to the Zionists demand for a proportional share of the education budget, it should be in the direction of providing facilities for instruction in the Hebrew language in those Government

schools where there was a sufficiently large proportion of Jewish children. Another felt strongly that the Jews were not fairly treated in the matter of education since the language of instruction in the Government schools was Arabic. He, therefore, suggested that Government schools for Jews should be established in Jewish villages on the same basis as the village schools for Arabs, where the only difference would be that Hebrew would be the language of instruction instead of Arabic. They would have Jewish schoolmasters and, if the budget allowed, Jewish inspectors. He also proposed that such schools be established in Jewish villages which were close to Arab villages so that both Jewish and Arab children might attend them together and learn both languages. The Zionist Organisation's request that the atmosphere of the Jewish schools should be preserved and that the moral values which they represented should not be jeopardised was totally ignored at the Colonial Office. Hubert Young asserted that the root of the matter was that the Jews wished to perpetuate the race-distinction in Palestine and to keep their community entirely apart. In other words, he wrote, they did not accept the policy of the White Paper of June 1922.¹⁰⁵

Samuel disagreed. He too thought that the Jewish education system should not be funded unless it was under Governmental control and that Jewish schools should be included in the Government education system. However, he explained, budgetary constraints made it impossible to execute either of the proposals. He saw no reason why the State should be required to assume the whole burden, or a large part of it, while leaving control to the Jewish Community because then the same principle would have to be applied to the Greek Orthodox schools, Christian Mission schools and the small number of Muslim voluntary schools. In addition, there was the question of timing. Since Samuel had assumed office, nearly 200 schools had opened in Arab villages and the programme had been to provide for the opening of 75 new schools a year for a period of 4 years. However, since this programme had had to be suspended that year, owing to a complete lack of funds, Samuel was afraid that funding the Jewish education system, which was not under Government control, would be most unpopular. Furthermore, it was clear to Samuel that neither the Jewish Community nor the Christian Missions were likely to allow their schools to be absorbed into the State system. However, he vigorously objected to Young's assertions. 'I do not agree that the policy of the White Paper of June 1922, contemplated the amalgamation of the Jewish with the Arab Community', he wrote. 'Some distinctive characteristics at least are essential to the idea of the Jewish National Home, and these characteristics must be dependent upon some degree of distinctiveness in the system of education.'¹⁰⁶

Samuel had believed that, by administering the country according to the criteria accepted traditionally in the British Empire, his Government would be allowed to assist in the development of 'distinctive characteristics' which were 'essential to the idea of the Jewish National Home' and, by doing so, to implement the promises in the Balfour Declaration, the Mandate and the White Paper. In 1923, it became apparent to him that the process of clarifying the meaning of this had entered a new stage. The British Government had reached a decision that there could be no retreat from the obligation to establish a Jewish National Home but the interpretation of this by the Colonial Office under Devonshire did not take into consideration the intentions of the formulators of the Balfour Declaration, only those which, according to their understanding, were incorporated in the White Paper. In the course of these deliberations, the Colonial Office expounded its own interpretation of the White Paper in a way which emptied the concept of a Jewish National Home of its main features – a development that neither Samuel nor Churchill had foreseen when formulating the White Paper.

Notes

1. Y. Porat, *The Emergence of the Arab-Palestinian National Movement, 1918–1929* (1974) [Hebrew], pp.128-135; see also Lord Islington, 27 March 1923, *Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords*, Vol. 53, No. 19.
2. See, for instance, speeches delivered by: W. Joynson-Hicks, 14 July 1921 and 4 July 1922, *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, Vol. 144, No. 98, and Vol. 156, No. 90; Paget, 9 July 1923, Vol. 166, No. 92; C. Foxcroft, 25 July 1923 and 2 August 1923, Vol. 167, Nos 104, 110.
3. See, for instance, speeches delivered by Lord Lamington and Lord Sydenham, 20 April 1921, *Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords*, Vol. 44, No. 30.
4. See, for instance, speeches delivered by Lord Lamington, 14 March 1921, *ibid.* Vol. 44, No. 13; Lords Lamington, Sydenham, Islington, Crow, 20 April 1921, Vol. 44, No. 30; and Lord Sydenham, 21 June 1922, Vol. 50, No. 47.
5. See speech delivered by Lord Islington, 21 June 1922, *ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. J.E. Shuckburgh to J.A. Masterton Smith and W. Ormsby Gore, 21 December 1922, P.R.O., C.O. 733/35, F. 384.
8. Compare the Arabic version of McMahon's letter to Hussein, 24 October 1915, P.R.O., F.O. 371/20307 and its English version (prepared at the British Delegation office in Cairo, November 1919), P.R.O., F.O. 686/42, in I. Friedman, *Palestine: a Twice Promised Land?* Vol. I, Appendix 1, pp. 366–8, and Appendix 4, pp.373-375.
9. J.E. Shuckburgh: 'Palestine – The Zionist Policy', 21 December 1922, P.R.O., C.O. 733/35, F. 384; see also minutes by W. Ormsby Gore, 24 December 1922, on the background of the Balfour Declaration, *ibid.*
10. J.E. Shuckburgh to J.A. Masterton Smith, W. Ormsby Gore and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 3 January 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/54, F. 2240.

11. Minutes by W. Devonshire, 5 January 1923, *ibid.*
12. W. Devonshire to W. Joynson- Hicks, 11 January 1923, *ibid.*
13. W. Devonshire to H. Samuel, 11 January 1923 (two telegrams), *ibid.*
14. 'History of the Negotiations leading up to the Balfour Declaration', 2 January 1917, C.P. 60(23), January, 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/58, F. 5773.
15. See pp.299-303.
16. See Chapter 6, pp.75-8; pp.107-8.
17. See below p.295 and note 23 *ibid.*
18. Memorandum by W. Devonshire: 'Policy in Palestine', 16 February 1923, C.P. 106(23), P.R.O., C.O. 733/58, F. 10720.
19. Letter enclosed with W. Devonshire's memorandum, 17 February 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/58, F. 10720.
20. W. Devonshire: 'Policy in Palestine (Supplementary Memorandum)', 12 March 1923, C.P. 149(23), P.R.O., C.O. 733/58, F. 5773.
21. See Porat, *The Emergence of the Arab-Palestinian National Movement, 1918-1929*, [Hebrew], pp.158-64.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 116-26.
23. H. Samuel to W. Devonshire, 8 February 1922, C.P. 4379, P.R.O., CAB 24/140.
24. See Porat, *The Emergence of the Arab-Palestinian National Movement, 1918-1929*, [Hebrew], pp. 95-8, 214-15, 128-32.
25. H. Samuel to W. Devonshire, 12 December 1922, P.R.O., C.O. 733/28, F. 64281.
26. W. Deedes to H. Samuel, 22 December 1922, P.R.O., C.O. 733/38, F. 226.
27. Minutes by J.E. Shuckburgh, 30 December 1922, P.R.O., C.O. 733/28, F. 64281.
28. Minutes by R.W. Vernon, 28 December 1922, G.J. Kidston, 29 December 1922, J.E. Shuckburgh, 30 December 1922, and W. Ormsby Gore, 3 January 1922, *ibid.*
29. Minutes by G.L.M. Clauson, 3 January 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/38, F. 226.
30. W. Devonshire to G. Curzon, 10 January 1923, *ibid.*
31. G. Curzon to W. Devonshire, 18 January 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/71, F. 4160.
32. H. Samuel to W. Devonshire, 11 February 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/42, F. 7629.
33. Memorandum by H.W. Young to J.E. Shuckburgh, 13 February 1923, *ibid.*
34. Minutes by J.E. Shuckburgh, 14 February 1923, *ibid.*
35. W. Devonshire to H. Samuel, 16 February 1923, *ibid.*; J.E. Shuckburgh to J. Masterton Smith, W. Ormsby Gore and Secretary of State for the Colonies, 23 March 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/43, F. 14616.
36. H. Samuel to W. Devonshire, 6 June 1923, P.R.O., F.O. 800/387.
37. H. Samuel to Colonial Office, 21 February 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/43, F. 14616.
38. Minutes by J.E. Shuckburgh, 23 March 1923, and enclosed draft, *ibid.*
39. See Y. Porat, *The Emergence of the Arab-Palestinian National Movement, 1918-1929* [Hebrew], pp.140-8.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 126.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 137-42.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 170; memorandum by E.T. Richmond, 12 March 1923, I.S.A., Chief Secretary's Archive, F. 2/242.
43. Speech delivered by Lord Islington, 27 June 1923, *Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords*, Vol. 54, No. 51.
44. See, for instance, speeches delivered by Lord Curzon, 4 June 1923 and 18 June 1923, *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, Vol. 164, No. 67, and Vol. 165, No. 77; Lord Sanderson, 18 June 1923, *ibid. ibid.*; Lords Islington, Sydenham and Grey, 27 March

- 1923, *Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords*, Vol. 53, No. 19; and Lord Islington, 27 June 1923, *ibid.* Vol. 54, No. 51.
45. See, for instance, speeches delivered by Lord Sydenham, 1 March 1923, *ibid.* Vol. 53, No. 8; Lords Buckmaster, Lamington, Salisbury, 27 March 1923, *ibid.* Vol. 53, No. 19; and Lord Islington, 27 June 1923, *ibid.* Vol. 54, No. 51.
 46. H. Samuel to W. Devonshire, 8 February 1922, C.P. 4379, P.R.O., CAB 24/140. See also Chapter 5, pp. 41-5.
 47. Speech delivered by Lord Grey, 27 March 1923, *Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords*, Vol.53, No. 19 and 17 June 1923, Vol. 54, No. 51.
 48. Speeches delivered by Lord Devonshire, 27 March 1923 and 26 June 1923, *ibid.* *ibid.*
 49. Paragraph of the conclusions of the Cabinet meeting, 27 June 1923, CAB 33(23); list of documents presented to the Cabinet Committee on Palestine, 2 July 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/58, F. 33052; see also letter enclosed by W. Devonshire to the report by the Cabinet Committee, 27 July 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/58, F.38814.
 50. C.P. 351(23), 'Report by the Cabinet Committee on Palestine', presented to Cabinet by W. Devonshire, 27 July 1923, *ibid.* A draft of the Report, 'The Future of Palestine', was prepared by Curzon following the meeting on 24 July 1923, (while H.W. Young and J.E. Shuckburgh went through it and amended a paragraph on p. 9 after consultation with H. Samuel). It was circulated to the members of the Committee on 26 July 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/54, F. 37608.
 51. Proposal of J.E. Shuckburgh to W. Devonshire, 24 July 1923, (prepared to be put to the Cabinet Committee on Palestine on its meeting the same day), P.R.O., C.O. 733/54, F. 37431; report of the Cabinet Committee, 27 July 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/58, F. 38814. See also pp.303-4.
 52. Proposal of J.E. Shuckburgh to W. Devonshire, 25 July 1923 (and his note of 26 July 1923), P.R.O., C.O. 733/54, F. 37431; C. Weizmann to W. Devonshire, 26 July 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/59, F. 37751 (WL, XI, No. 409).
 53. Paragraph of the conclusions of the Cabinet meeting, 31 July 1923, CAB 43(23), P.R.O., C.O. 733/58, F.38814; minutes of the meeting of the imperial Conference, (speeches delivered by W. Devonshire, G. Curzon, I.C. Smuts and W.F. Massey) 3 October 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/54, F.54742.
 54. W. Devonshire to H. Samuel, 4 October 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/50, F. 49093 (also P.R.O., C.O. 733/58, F. 38814).
 55. W. Devonshire to E. Grey and W. Churchill, 3 October 1923, *ibid.*
 56. H. Samuel to W. Devonshire, 6 October 1923; W. Devonshire to H. Samuel, 9 October 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/50, F. 49093; H. Samuel to M. Devonshire, 8 October 1923, 11 October 1923 and 12 October 1923 in Cmd.1989, P.R.O., C.O. 733/54, F. 53870.
 57. See, for instance, G. Shuckburgh to W. Devonshire, 24 July 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/54, F.37431; minutes by G. Shuckburgh, 30 July 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/58, F. 38814.
 58. W. Devonshire to H. Samuel, 17 October 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/50, F. 49823.
 59. C.P. 433(23), Memorandum: 'Future of Palestine', circulated by W. Devonshire to Cabinet, 27 October 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/58, F. 52960.
 60. W. Devonshire to H. Samuel, 9 November 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/50, F. 51553; Cmd. 1989 (revised version of C.P. 433(23)), circulated to Cabinet on 13 November 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/54, F. 53870 (telegram by W. Devonshire to H. Samuel, mentioned above, is dated 10 November 1923 *ibid.*).
 61. G. Shuckburgh to H. Samuel, 24 October 1923, and H. Samuel's reply, 3 November 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/50, F. 53580.

62. Correspondence between H. Samuel and G. Shuckburgh, 12 October 1923 – 8 November 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/50, F. 53562.
63. See Chapter 6, pp.106-8.
64. See p.294.
65. Mussa Kazem al-Husayini to W. Churchill, 17 June 1922, Cmd. 1700; see also M. Mossek, *Palestine Immigration Policy under Herbert Samuel*, pp. 54–8.
66. *Ibid.*, pp. 35–92.
67. *Ibid.*
68. Minutes by G.L.M. Clauson, 7 October 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/6, F. 49714, cited in M. Mossek, *Palestine Immigration Policy under Herbert Samuel*, p. 45.
69. *Ibid.*, pp. 44, 68–71, 154–5.
70. *Ibid.*, pp. 153–4.
71. H. Samuel to W. Devonshire, 11 February 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/42, F. 7629; see also proposal of J.E. Shuckburgh to W. Devonshire, 24 July 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/54, F. 37431.
72. C. Weizmann to W. Devonshire, 26 July 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/59, F. 37751 (WL, XI, No. 409).
73. Proposal of J.E. Shuckburgh to W. Devonshire, 25 July 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/54, F. 37431.
74. See pp.295-301.
75. Report responding to the League of Nations Questioner of 23 August 1922, summing up the period July 1920 – October 1922, submitted by H. Samuel to W. Devonshire, 15 June 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/46, F.31957.
76. See pp.291-4.
77. *Ibid.* *ibid.* H.W. Young to W. Churchill, 19 August 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/4, F. 33321; draft reply to Lord Raglan's question, prepared by the Duke of Sutherland, 15 March 1922, P.R.O., C.O. 733/32, F. 11355; minutes by H.W. Young, 10 September 1921, and W. Churchill to H. Samuel, 12 September 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/6, F. 45307.
78. J.E. Shuckburgh to J.A. Masterton Smith, 17 January 1922, P.R.O., C.O. 733/29, F.278.
79. J.E. Shuckburgh to J.A. Masterton Smith and W. Ormsby Gore, 7 May 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/44, F. 21143; see also H. Samuel to M. Devonshire, 26 April 1923; minutes by R.W. Vernon, and H.W. Young, 4 May 1923; and W. Ormsby Gore to Foa, Director of the British-Egyptian Bank, 18 May 1923, *ibid.*
80. Report responding to the League of Nations Questioner of 23 August 1922, summing up the period July 1920 – October 1922, submitted by H. Samuel to W. Devonshire, 15 June 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/46, F.31957. See note 75.
81. H. Samuel to W. Churchill, 30 July 1922; draft reply, prepared by H.W. Young, for W. Churchill to H. Samuel, 6 September 1922, and minutes by R.W. Vernon, H.W. Bushe and H.W. Young, P.R.O., C.O. 733/23, F.40711.
82. H. Samuel to W. Churchill, 26 August 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/5, F. 44671; H. Samuel to Foa, Director of the British-Egyptian Bank, 8 December 1921, P.R.O., C.O. 733/8, F. 62763. See also pp.297-9.
83. H. Samuel to W. Churchill, 21 July 1922, W. Churchill's reply to H. Samuel, 22 August 1922, (proposed by R.W. Vernon on 12 August 1922), P.R.O., C.O. 733/23, F. 73364.
84. S. Hattis Rolef, 'The Policy of Economic Development of Sir Herbert Samuel' [Hebrew], *The Cathedra of the history of Eretz Israel and its Colonisation*, Yad Ben-Zvi, Jerusalem, 12, p. 89.
85. *Ibid.*

86. See, for instance, minutes by G.L.M. Clauson, 14 January 1922 (in reply to H. Samuel's financial report, 15 December 1921), P.R.O., C.O. 733/8, F. 63962.
87. See pp.291-4.
88. Conference held at the Colonial Office on 26 February 1923 to discuss the proposed issue of a loan by the Palestine Government, P.R.O., C.O. 733/59, F. 13105.
89. See pp.307-8.
90. W. Deedes to W. Churchill, 10 March 1922, P.R.O., C.O. 733/19, F. 13296.
91. See Chapter 6, pp. 246-7.
92. Minutes by G.L.M. Clauson, 21 March 1922 and 24 March 1922, J.E. Shuckburgh, 27 March 1922, J.A. Masterton Smith, 30 March 1922, and draft reply prepared by J.E. Shuckburgh, 27 March 1922, P.R.O., C.O. 733/19, F. 13296.
93. Report responding to the League of Nations Questioner of 23 August 1922, summing up the period July 1920 – October 1922, submitted by H. Samuel to W. Devonshire, 15 June 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/46, F.31957. See also note 75.
94. W. Deedes (for H. Samuel) to W. Devonshire, 28 December 1922, P.R.O., C.O. 733/28, F. 1756 (Compare with pp.4-6).
95. W. Devonshire to H. Samuel, 23 January 1923, *ibid*.
96. The Jewish National Council to H. Samuel, 26 January 1923, P.R.O., C.O. 733/42, F. 10140.
97. H. Samuel to W. Devonshire, 16 February 1923, (A), Pol/156, *ibid*.
98. H. Samuel to W. Devonshire, 16 February 1923, (B), Pol/156, *ibid*.
99. Minutes by H.W. Young, 2 March 1923, *ibid*.
100. Minutes by H.W. Bushe, 6 March 1923, *ibid*.
101. Minutes by J.E. Shuckburgh, 23 March 1923, *ibid*.
102. W. Devonshire to H. Samuel, 29 March 1923, *ibid*.
103. Memorandum by the Zionist Organisation (L. Stein): 'The Jewish Schools in Palestine and their Claims to Assistance from Public Funds', 13 February 1923, *ibid*.
104. H.E. Bowman, 'Note on Memorandum on Jewish Schools in Palestine', 20 June 1923, *ibid*.
105. Minutes by H.W. Young 16 July 1923, R.W. Vernon, 17 July 1923, Moody, 21 July 1923, *ibid*.
106. H. Samuel to J.E. Shuckburgh, 27 July 1923, *ibid*.

Summary

The cross-roads, reached in 1923 by British policy-makers who were discussing the commitment in the Balfour Declaration was an outcome of the lack of clarity of the term 'National Home for the Jewish People' in the Declaration and for a short period after and of the circumstances in Palestine.

The process of defining the meaning of the concept Jewish National Home, which was formulated by Zionist leaders in Britain in 1916 and included as 'National Home for the Jewish People' in the Balfour Declaration, started only after the Declaration had been made. The Zionists had prepared a programme which outlined the characteristics of the National Home but this was never officially presented to representatives of the British Government during the negotiations which preceded the Declaration and its details were never discussed. The main issue that disturbed British policy-makers at the time was the prospect of Palestine being under Britain's auspices. This depended on the consent of Britain's Allies, particularly France, to which Britain was bound by the Sykes-Picot Agreement and, as long as such consent was not obtained, it did not seem feasible to support a programme that the British Government could not commit itself to implementing. Therefore, the negotiations concluded with a carefully-worded general expression of sympathy in the form of the Balfour Declaration.

The term 'National Home' was included in the Declaration, as demanded by the Zionists. During the negotiations, however, it was separated from their programme, the definition given to it by its creators was removed and no alternative definition was proposed. The question of the meaning of the term 'National' only arose during the confrontation between Zionist and anti-Zionist Jews in discussion about the latter's protest against the term's use and, even then, the question of whether using the term might harm the Jews' status as British citizens was never thoroughly discussed. As mentioned above, the protest did not lead to the term being cancelled but it undoubtedly caused it to be restricted: the wording of both the Declaration and the Mandate in which the Declaration was incorporated made it clear that the National Home would not be congruent with the boundaries of Palestine but

would be established in Palestine; there was no mention of the historic claim or connection between the Jewish people and Palestine; and the establishment of the National Home was conditioned on the rights of the non-Jews in Palestine and the Jews in countries of their dwelling being guaranteed.

The explanations, sent from London shortly after the Declaration had been promulgated, gave a very general interpretation of the British commitment in the Declaration. More than outlining plans for action, it tried to allay the apprehensions of Syrian-Arabs in Egypt and of King Hussein in Hejaz. They were promised that there was no intention of setting up a Jewish administration or changing the status of the Holy Places and that the Arab population would be protected against expropriation, exploitation or subjection. All the Jews desired – it was said – was to have the right to settle in Palestine and, in their settlements, the rights to cultivate their lands, live their own national life, hold their religious rites, preserve their culture and speak their language as in the past. These explanations were also meant to convince the Arabs that it was worthwhile for them to collaborate with the Zionist movement which, being influential in countries in which Jews were living, could help them to achieve the objectives of the Arab national movement. If they failed to cooperate, they ‘might raise destructive powers of world Jewry’ against the national Arab movement and impede it from achieving its goals. The British Authorities in Egypt, who believed that Britain should rely on the national Arab movement which originated in the Hejaz, were made to understand that the Jewish national movement was no less important than the Arab one, when Britain’s prospects of controlling Palestine and having a foothold in the Middle East were being considered. It was also made clear to them that the policy was ‘The maintenance of Zionism on right lines’, in other words, preventing the Zionist movement from being interpreted as a danger to the Arabs or a threat to the safety of the Christian and Muslim Holy Places and, at the same time, enabling it to rehabilitate existing Jewish colonies and institutions.

This attitude found expression in the nomination of a ‘Zionist Commission for Palestine’ because of ‘the need for putting the assurance given in this declaration into practice’ and in order to display good will to Palestinian Arabs and form a link between the British authorities and the Jewish population in Palestine. The Zionist Commission explained that it would do its best to prevent land speculation, that it had no intention of taking over the administration of the country or controlling the Holy Places and that it was not aspiring to a Jewish State but to a British Palestine. Thus it backed the British Authorities’ account that the Zionists had not been offered independence or any promises which were contrary to Arab interests.

British Political Intelligence was under the impression that the Zionists did not desire to establish a Jewish State or a Jewish Administration in Palestine at the end of the War and that the National Home was conceived by them as a place where the Jews could lead their lives in their own way, using their own language, building up their own institutions and developing the country on the basis of equality with the other inhabitants of Palestine.

In spite of this first impression and regardless of the appeals of the Zionist Commission, Mark Sykes, the Military Authorities –which had to face the Arab opposition to the Declaration – and the Government in London preferred not to declare what their policy was towards Palestine. The shapers of British policy believed that it was preferable not to announce the Balfour Declaration in Palestine as long as it was not endorsed by the Peace Conference. They anticipated that the expected promulgation of the Conference decisions and the Mandate, which was being composed at the time, would reduce the tension within the Arab population. However, when the Military Authorities proposed, on the eve of the visit of the King-Crane Commission, that the Government declare that the pro-Zionist policy would not be imposed against the will of the population, Balfour regarded this as a departure from Government policy and decided that it was impossible to continue with a situation in which Government policy had not been clarified. Herbert Samuel, who was consulted on the matter, also felt that, since the Military Authorities were not conducting their relations with the Arabs on the assumption that the Declaration was the embodiment the British policy, the Arabs believed that if they agitated against it, the British Government might abandon its intentions. He suggested that it should be made clear to the Military Administration that the National Home policy, which had also been adopted by the Allies, was settled. In August 1919, Samuel's suggestions, almost to the letter, were sent to the Military Authorities in Palestine. However, although they did not add any new meaning to the Balfour Declaration, the Foreign Office did not agree to their promulgation. Further clarification was sent by the Foreign Office to the Military Authorities in November 1919 but this too was not made public and was only for the information of the Military Governors.

Only after the decisions taken at the San Remo Conference did the Chief Administrator Bols inform the leaders of the various communities in Palestine that the Balfour Declaration was to be included in the Turkish Peace Treaty; it was at this point that he read out the Declaration. He explained that there would be no curtailment whatever of religious liberty; immigration would be controlled by the British Government and would be allowed only as required for the development of the country; land owners would not be evicted and there would be no discrimination in granting profitable

concessions; the British Government would govern and a minority would not be allowed to control a majority of the population.

The postponement in announcing the Declaration and Government policy, however, led to many difficulties in the implementation of policy. After the occupation of Southern Palestine at the end of 1917, British statesmen and policy-makers in Palestine were compelled to operate within the framework of The Hague Convention's restrictions concerning occupied enemy territories and were prohibited from suggesting solutions – mainly to economic problems – which could affect the existing situation. However, because of these concessions they could postpone any activity until the endorsement of the Mandate and reject the Zionists' demands for realisation of the Balfour declaration. However, the continuity of this temporary situation till July 1920 demanded that they have arrangements which would enable the military administration to see to it that the necessities of the inhabitants were looked after. As a matter of fact, the dynamics of events did not enable them not to explain the mining of the concept 'National Home'. The military administration was demanded to gain time for development and public services they had to answer requests to ensure emigration to Palestine, acquiring German properties and receiving various concessions. The entrepreneurs were not just Zionists but also foreign investors whose objectives were only economic. The Military Authorities felt that it was necessary to be flexible with the *status quo* policy in order to encourage economic activity but dealing with the various requests was beyond the scope of their authority. Therefore, the requests were delivered to London and to Paris – to the Foreign Office and to the British Delegation to the Peace Conference – in order to get instructions in accordance with the policy which was being formulated in Paris at that time.

The agreement, which was being drawn up at the time by the British Delegation to the Peace Conference while the Mandate was being formulated, was that the National Home should be implemented, *inter alia*, by a Jewish council (eventually the Jewish Agency), which would operate as a company working in the field of economic development. In other fields, the Council was to have the status of an advisory body. The formulators abstained from granting it administrative authority, being concerned about having a state-within-a-state or, in other words, a Zionist mechanism which might become independent of the central Government. At the same time, they made sure not to prevent Jewish people from taking part in the development of the country. To achieve this they tried to come to an agreement on the question of preemptive right demanded by the Zionist Organisation for the execution of public services and development of national resources. In the draft Mandate, agreed upon by the British

Delegation to the Peace Conference, the Zionist formula remained almost intact. In the following drafts which were inspired by Curzon, who objected in principle to any such policy, the giving of preference to the Zionists was gradually withdrawn. The final version stated that the Jewish Agency might be allowed to construct or operate public works, services and utilities, and develop the natural resources of the country, in so far as these matters were not directly undertaken by the administration.

It stands to reason that the news from Palestine sharpened the awareness of the Mandate formulators in dealing with the authority to be given to the Jewish Agency. It also contributed to the formation of two opposing views among British policy-makers of the time. On the one side was Curzon who had warned, even before the Balfour Declaration, of difficulties in implementing such a policy in a country with an Arab majority and who believed that the Mandate should be based on the assumption that Palestine was an Arab country and that the Balfour Declaration obliged the British Government to enable the Jews to immigrate into Palestine and settle there on the land, but without any special privileges. Curzon believed that the Zionists desired to establish a Jewish State and political control over Palestine. This belief made him extremely careful not to give the Zionists any preferences in his drafting of the Mandate. He was also careful not to include anything which might give the Zionists a basis for claims in the future. Curzon rejected the Zionist ideology that the Jews, being a nation, had the right to return to Palestine, rebuild themselves as a Nation and reconstitute their home there. He also saw to it that the Zionists would have no reason to assume that the British Government shared their views. The reports from Palestine undoubtedly helped him to have changes accepted in order to moderate the wording used in the articles which might oblige Britain.

On the other side was Balfour, who supported the Zionists from the beginning. He opposed ascribing to the Arab population greater weight because of its relatively large number which, therefore, gave them the right to prevent the establishment of the Jewish National Home. He shared the Zionists' opinion that one should not measure the proportional numerical strength of the Jewish and Arab populations but consider the *Yishuv* (Hebrew: the organised Jewish population in Palestine) as the representation of the whole Jewish people, whose will was expressed by the Zionist Organisation. Balfour also believed that this aspiration and Britain's readiness to accept the Mandate shared a common interest and that the Zionist Organisation should be helped to establish a National Home. The reports of the Arab protest arriving from Palestine obviously influenced the definitions given to British commitments by the British Delegation to the Peace

Conference but did not change the concept of the Jewish National Home being an essential component of the Mandate. Balfour considered the British obligation to help establish a Jewish National Home as decided and believed that the Arab objection was a nuisance which might increase the difficulties of the Administration but could not bring about a change of British policy. However, Balfour also understood that the incentive that Britain could give to the establishment of the National Home could not be in the political and administrative arena but only in the economic one.

This principle was put into practice. The instructions sent to policy-makers in Palestine by the Delegation to the Peace Conference, led by Balfour, attempted to prevent there being a state-within-a-state but also did not to impede Zionist motivation to invest in the country's development. Balfour instructed the British Authorities in Palestine to deter British and foreign enterprises from taking over ownership of lands and industrial enterprises until the Peace Conference. Eventually, these instructions became not only an expression of a policy of keeping economic options for the Jews but also a statement of intentions to realise the Jewish National Home. Balfour made it clear that he would only deal with economic activity and would not restrict the Civil Administration that was to be set up. The British Delegation to the Peace Conference enabled some Zionists to immigrate to Palestine and purchase lands and allowed Jewish soldiers to settle on the land, though it opposed granting concessions, public services and the recruitment of Jewish immigrants to the militia during the Military Administration. However, the Foreign Office in London, under Curzon, ensured that Balfour's statements were not acted on and that any economic privileges would not be put into practice. Any attempt to bend the *status quo* and keep options for the Jews had to face the objections of the Foreign Office.

The Military Administrators in Palestine, who did not have to make a decision regarding economic options, made sure to fulfil the first part of Balfour's instructions and saw to it that requests for any kind of autonomy were not granted. They blocked the recognition of the Rabbinical Courts and the Courts of Arbitration (Hebrew: plural of *Mishpat Ha'Shalom*) as having 'juristic personality' or giving the Colonies Councils the authority to collect fines imposed by the courts. They prevented the Zionist Commission from participating in the country's Administration, opposed granting it concessions for development and public services and did not allow it to fulfil functions that, in their opinion, were within the exclusive authority of the Military Administration. They even tried to bring about the dissolution of the Zionist Commission claiming that it was laying the foundations for a state-within-a-state.

In short, the policy of keeping the *status quo* intact during the temporary Military Administration was an indication of how the plan for a Jewish National Home would be understood when the Mandate came into force.

Herbert Samuel's taking up office in July 1920 opened a new period in the process of Conceptualisation of a National Home. Samuel had to set up a permanent administration that would offer solutions to problems in line with the policy that Great Britain had adopted, would enable it to fulfil its obligations and keep the Mandate and, at the same time, would not be incompatible with traditional British Colonial administration. Samuel was fully aware both of the political background shaping British policy towards Palestine and of Zionists programmes for the development of Palestine in the preparation of which he had been deeply involved. He knew that the Zionists' objective was to establish a home with national characteristics, a common language and customs, a spiritual and intellectual life and economic and political institutions. He understood that their intention was to achieve this through Jewish immigration, Zionist development enterprises and elected councils which would administer the affairs of the *Yishuv*. He believed that all this could be achieved if Arab concerns about Zionist domination, economic dispossession and the filling of administrative posts by Jews were to be removed. In his opinion, once the Arabs were convinced that the country was administered according to the British tradition of looking after the wellbeing of the whole population and setting up representative bodies for all its communities and if the Zionists developed the country as planned, political considerations would give way to economic benefits: the National Home would not be threatening and the Arabs would be motivated to accept the gradual growth of the *Yishuv*.

For this reason, Samuel was determined that British policy should be based on two principles: the first, that the growth of the Jewish population and the establishment of the Jewish National Home should result in the development of the whole country and should contribute to the wellbeing of all its inhabitants; and the second, that representative institutions should be set up and allowed to submit their grievances to the Government and prevent any possible act that might prejudice their rights. Samuel opposed – to the Zionists dissatisfaction – Jewish takeovers of natural resources and public service from Government authorities. He believed that the principle task of the Government in establishing the National Home should be to remove the limits on Jewish immigration and enact progressive legislation which would enable Jewish entrepreneurs to take part in the general

development of the country, while the infrastructure of the Jewish National Home should be built mainly by the Jewish people. Furthermore, he stipulated that the number of Jewish immigrants be determined by the economic absorption capacity of the country, a principle which was eventually confirmed by the White Paper which was promulgated in 1922.

Stipulating that Jewish immigration depend on economic absorption capacity involved the question of who was to determine the limit of this capacity, and the cessation of immigration following the riots of 1921 was a warning to pressure groups not to interfere while these limits were being decided upon. In order to prevent this, it was stated in all the proposals to establish elected institutions that there would never be a situation in which the Arabs would have the casting vote on the question of immigration. Nevertheless, adopting the principle of economic absorption capacity had its repercussions on the Jewish National Home since the Zionist movement could not manage, in the years 1920–3, to finance the laying down of infrastructure necessary for the absorption of immigrants. This problem influenced British political thinking. Curzon concluded that Britain had no one to rely on: reliance on the Arabs was, according to him, ‘a policy fraught with considerable danger’ in the light of the difficulties in Iraq, while the Jews were regarded by him as unreliable because of the slow growth of the Jewish population of Palestine.

The second principle of British policy towards Palestine under Samuel, that of giving the local population the right of representation, was implemented by Samuel by appointing the *Mufti* of Jerusalem as the Grand *Mufti*, by setting up the Supreme Muslim Council headed by the *Mufti* and by attempting to get the Palestinian Arabs to take part in representative Councils alongside the High Commissioner. These attempts again raised the question, as it had done before the visit of the King-Crane Commission: Did the right of representation given to the population mean that the obligation to establish a Jewish National Home was to depend on its acceptance by the Arab population or was it a commitment which had to be carried out, even if most of the inhabitants objected? It was also a cause for concern that the Government might find itself opposed to the wishes of the majority. The Colonial Office was unanimous that the Government should enable the inhabitants to express their opinions within representative frameworks but only on condition that it was made clear to them that the obligation to establish a Jewish National Home was a *fait accompli* and there was no chance that Britain would repudiate the Balfour Declaration. The assumption was that the Arabs would accept the inevitable if the Zionists accepted not only the principle of economic absorption capacity but also the proposed elected Council, which would have no authority to prevent Jewish immigration, or

a Council in which a majority of members nominated by the Government would ensure that Government policy was adhered to.

This assumption was not borne out by events. The Zionists accepted the principle of economic absorption capacity and the elected Council as well as the White Paper of 1922. The Arabs, however, demanded that recognition of the right of the Jewish people to a National Home in Palestine be denied, refused to take part in any institution that drew its power from a constitution based on this recognition and insisted on their right to establish an elected government, which would truly represent the balance of power within the population.

Another attempt by Samuel to bridge the gap was his proposal to add to the Mandate, as a counterbalance to Article 4 which established a Zionist Agency, a similar article defining the authorities of an Arab Agency or, instead, to set up a Christian-Muslim Committee similar to the Jewish National Committee. This proposal raised the question which had already been dealt with in the process of formulating the Mandate: Did the Balfour Declaration contain one obligation – to the Jewish People – on condition that this did not harm the rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or those of Jews elsewhere, or was it composed of two obligations, one to recognise the right of the Jewish People to a National Home in Palestine and the other to secure the rights of Palestinian Arabs? The Arabs argued that these two commitments were contradictory and could not be reconciled. Samuel, however, believed that it was possible to implement both obligations in a balanced way.

The Colonial Secretary of State, Sir Winston Churchill, and his Ministry defined the British obligation as giving an opportunity to the Zionist Movement to reunite Jews who were scattered all over the world in a national home in a country with which for more than 3,000 years they had been profoundly associated. Churchill believed that the Zionist Movement would succeed in its mission only if it did not harm the rights of the Arab population and only if the Jewish National Home was established by a process which increased the prosperity of the country as a whole. He argued that the fact that Palestine should contain a National Home for the Jews did not mean that it would cease to be the national home for other people. Churchill disapproved of Samuel's proposal arguing that setting up a Zionist agency came about as part of the special condition imposed by the Mandate – that of setting up a National Home for the Jews – and there were no adequate grounds for providing in the Mandate similar special recognition of a non-Jewish agency. The interests of non-Jewish elements were sufficiently safeguarded by the terms of the Mandate as a whole and would be embodied in the future constitution of the country when the Mandate

came into force. Churchill similarly opposed making a formal announcement on the establishment of a Christian-Muslim Committee. It seemed to him that it was desirable to avoid, as far as possible, sharpening the distinction between Jews and non-Jews. He clarified, once more, that the special recognition accorded to Zionist institutions arose out of the Mandate's commitment to establishing a National Home for the Jews. Later, when it was suggested that the article dealing with the establishment of a Jewish agency be altered, Churchill made it clear that it would be impossible to retract the special status which had been granted to the Jewish Agency since the Zionists would regard it as a repudiation of the policy of the Balfour Declaration. Britain could not allow this to happen.

When Samuel's proposal was discussed again in the summer of 1923, by the Cabinet Committee which dealt with the policy to be adopted by the Government concerning Palestine, the Committee agreed that the Balfour Declaration did, indeed, contain two contradictory promises and they endorsed the proposal. The proposal was also accepted by the Cabinet and forwarded to Palestine. However, the Arabs rejected it on the spot and the British Government had no option but to state that the Government had said their last word and would not take any further steps on the path to political concessions. Britain declared that it was their intention to carry on the administration of Palestine as in the past, in accordance with their obligations.

This was the inevitable result of the discussions at the Colonial Office and between the Office and Samuel on limiting the possibilities of redefining the British obligation to establish a Jewish National Home. The Colonial Office was aware of the watering down of the definition of the National Home in the White Paper, by limiting Jewish immigration according to economic absorption capacity and setting up an elected Council. It was agreed upon by all policy-makers that, if Britain wanted to keep the Mandate, it could not empty the concept of a National Home of all meaning, not only because it might lose the Mandate but also because the expected assistance of the Jewish people in developing Palestine would not be forthcoming.

Nonetheless, two more efforts were made. These, like the proposal to set up an Arab agency, were meant to restrict the Jewish National Home. The first was within the framework of an Arab confederation and the other within the framework of a treaty with the King of Hejaz.

London and Jerusalem were aware of the dilemma of the National Home policy: Should Palestine be separated from the Arab countries or should it be recognised as a predominantly Arab country, and the Arabs and their supporters in Britain be shown that the National Home policy was not only harmless but actually beneficial to the Arab world?

As mentioned above, this question was already discussed during the period of the Military Administration, both in connection with the pledge given to the Hashemites in the McMahon-Hussein correspondence and in examining the contradiction between British policy and the League of Nations' Covenant. Following the promulgation of the Anglo-French declaration towards the end of 1918 and during the period preceding Faisal's expulsion from Damascus, the Palestinian Arabs objected to their separation from Integral Independent Syria and, later on, tried hard to rally the Muslim world to their cause. Samuel proposed – even before Faisal's expulsion from Damascus – that Palestine should be included in a confederation of Arab States and, towards the end of 1922, believing that any further attempt to redefine the National Home would empty it of all meaning, he raised this proposal again. The view was that, if the establishment of a Jewish National Home was envisaged as part of the revival of Eastern civilisation in which both Arab and Jewish national life were to be fostered by England and France, there would be more hope of cooperation and understanding. Furthermore, the Arabs would recognise that Jewish finance and Jewish enterprise could assist in the economic development of the confederation and might, therefore, be prepared to consider the Jews as a permanent factor in the Arab countries. Directing national aspirations towards a confederation might also bridge the gap between the League of Nations' Covenant, which was based on the principle of self-determination, and British policy which, in practice, did not enable the Palestinian Arabs to determine their political future.

The Colonial Office believed that the idea of establishing an Arab confederation had no chance of being realised and might even imperil the British position in the Middle East. They proposed, instead, adding a clause to the agreement with the King of Hejaz – which was being negotiated in 1923 – whereby King Hussein would recognise the special position of the King of Britain in Iraq, Trans-Jordan and Palestine and promise to do his best to co-operate with him in the fulfilment of his obligations, while the King of Britain would undertake not to place obstacles in the way of the association of the Government of Palestine with that of neighbouring Arab States for customs or other purposes to the extent that this was desired by both parties. The prospect, hinted at here, of being incorporated into the Arab world would compensate the Palestinian Arabs for being cut off from it. In other words, the Colonial Office renewed the approach which had, a few years earlier, led to the Weizmann-Faisal agreement, assuming that some arrangement could be reached within a framework of understanding with the Hashemites and not with the Arabs of Palestine.

This attempt was also doomed to failure. Under the influence of the Palestinian Arab Delegation, King Hussein's representative in London stood by his demand to establish in Palestine a representative Government based on the pledges given by the British to the Arabs. Eventually, there was no point in negotiating with King Hussein either, once he lost control over the Hejaz.

The discussions with the Palestinian Arabs were fruitless. However, there was a series of attempts to find formulations that might ease the confrontation which did not end up removing the term 'National Home for the Jewish people' as demanded by the Arabs but took Arab opposition into consideration. Eventually, the term was redefined, as shown in the issues of Jewish immigration, the status of the *Yishuv* institutions and the authority of its leadership.

Limiting immigration and attempts made to set up institutions that represented the Palestinian Arabs set boundaries to the establishment of the Jewish National Home, while defining the scope of the various institutions of the Jewish population demonstrated what was to be the character of that Home. The White Paper defined the national characteristics of the *Yishuv* as follows: that the community should have its own political institutions; an elected assembly for the direction of its domestic concerns; elected councils in the towns; and an organisation for the control of its schools. It identified how it should have its elected Chief Rabbinate and Rabbinical Council for the direction of its religious affairs, how its business should be conducted in Hebrew as a vernacular language and how a Hebrew press should serve its needs. Additionally, it was recognized that it should have a distinctive intellectual life and display considerable economic activity.

Samuel regarded it as his duty to encourage all these aspects. This was because he felt that, in keeping with traditional British colonial administration, the local population should be allowed representation. He also tried to achieve it by establishing Arab-Muslim leadership institutions and attempts to enable the population to be represented in elected Councils. Samuel believed that this was compatible with the aspirations of Zionism and the methods of achieving them. Therefore, at the same time as he established elected Muslim institutions, Samuel assisted in the establishment of elected Jewish institutions: the Jewish Elected Assembly, the Jewish National Council, City Councils and rural colonies committees. The Chief Rabbinical Council and the courts sanctioned by it were recognised by the Administrative authorities in matters of Jewish law. The Chief Rabbis and the heads of the National Council were received in regular audience by the High Commissioner and his staff. The Zionist Commission, which had already been recognised in the days of the Military Administration as the

representative of the Zionist Organisation in all matters affecting the establishment of the Jewish National Home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine, obtained renewed recognition under the Civil Administration and was allowed to carry out those tasks that were assigned to the Jewish Agency according to the Mandate. Furthermore, Samuel struggled to get the consent of the Colonial Office to the Jewish National Council request that the *Yishuv* and local Jewish Communities' Councils legally acquire 'juristic personality' from the Government and the power of taxation over their members in order to maintain communal services. When the Colonial Office rejected the request, Samuel explained that the proposed legislation would only endorse the existing Ottoman Regulations, the provisions of which had been accepted by the League of Nations at Versailles and enacted in Eastern Europe. Samuel also supported the Jewish National Council's argument that rejecting the request was inconsistent with the promise to establish the Jewish National Home in Palestine as defined in the White Paper of June 1922. Furthermore, in the field of education, as in the question of 'juristic personality', Samuel stood by the leadership of the *Yishuv*. In response to Colonial Office objections to the Jewish population having a special educational system, Samuel defended this right of the *Yishuv*, claiming that it was based also on the policy of the White Paper of June 1922 and that some distinctive characteristics were essential to the idea of the Jewish National Home and these characteristics must be dependent upon some degree of distinctiveness in the system of education.

Samuel's attitude towards forming the elements of autonomy of the *Yishuv* was in contrast to that of Secretary of State for the Colonies Devonshire and his office. At the Colonial Office, Samuel's request raised, once more, the question of whether the obligation to establish a Jewish National Home meant that the *Yishuv* be allowed to have its own separate organisation and constitute a kind of state-within-a-state or that the Jews immigrate to Palestine and settle down there as citizens with equal rights merged into the general body of Palestinian citizens as one of its communities. Granting 'juristic personality' just to the Jewish population was considered a privilege which would eventually lead to a state-within-a-state and be the first step on the way to Palestine becoming a Jewish State. Devonshire believed that recognising the Jewish community as a national minority that was in need of special regulations and separate communal organisation was inconsistent with British constitutional traditions, infringed the principle of non-discrimination and conflicted with the spirit and letter of the Mandate. In his opinion, the White Paper clearly contemplated the development of the Jewish community, not as a separate national entity but as a body of Palestine citizens. The Colonial Office expressed the same

opinion when the Zionist Organisation requested a separate Jewish educational system. The refusal of the Zionists to be included in the Government educational system was regarded at the Colonial Office as an attempt to perpetuate the race-distinction in Palestine and to keep the Jewish community entirely apart, which was in contradiction to the policy of the White Paper of June 1922. Devonshire returned to Curzon's definition of a Jewish National Home which specified that the British Government should enable Jews to immigrate into Palestine but without granting them any preferential treatment. Devonshire, however, added a new element to the process of defining the Jewish National Home: up until then the objectives of British policy had been to fulfil the promise embodied in the Balfour Declaration, but Devonshire's arguments were based on interpretations given to the White Paper, interpretations that neither Churchill nor Samuel had in mind when formulating the document.

Thus, when the Mandate was ratified in the summer of 1923, the question about the meaning of a National Home for the Jewish people was understood in conflicting ways. It was generally accepted by all policy-shapers that the British Government should fulfil its obligation to establish a National Home for the Jewish people, as defined in the White Paper of 1922. It was agreed that the policy was to be implemented gradually, immigration should be based on economic absorption capacity and there should be no provocation of the Palestinian Arabs without surrendering to their demand that the Balfour Declaration be abrogated. It was agreed that policy-makers had to navigate between two poles: they had to prevent the Zionists from establishing a state-within-a-state, on the one hand, and be careful not to deter the Jewish people from investing in the country, on the other. However, there were essential conceptual distinctions between these two goals. These distinctions were already clear at the time of the Declaration when the aspiration to achieve patronage over Palestine overcame consideration of the prospects of implementing that policy. These differences became more obvious when the authority of the Zionist Commission was defined and the Military Administration was set up and following the promulgation of the Anglo-French Declaration, all of which were worded so as not to sabotage the prospects of getting the Mandate. These differences also surfaced during the Peace Conference, in the discussions with the Zionists in order to secure the support of the Zionist Organisation for conferring the Mandate on Britain and during the composition of the articles of the Mandate which outlined the conditions for establishing the Jewish National Home. These

conflicting viewpoints were particularly problematic when faced with pressure from Palestinian Arabs, from the time of the King-Crane Commission, during the establishment of the Civil Administration and until the crystallisation of the policy in the White Paper of 1922 and the expressions of support given to this policy in 1923, when the common denominator of all was the wish to hold onto the Mandate.

Both what was agreed upon and the differences of opinion were reflected in the varying British trends during the rest of the Mandatory period. Despite settling on a final policy in 1923, the processes that obliged the British Government to navigate between the two poles did not come to a standstill. In the following two decades, the Arab protest, which was accompanied by bloodshed, caused a further watering down in the definition of the meaning of the Jewish National Home, mainly in the fields of immigration, acquisition of lands and building Jewish settlements. The impression that British policy was not based on solid principle but reacted to the needs of the hour and was ready to give in to violently-made political demands in order to secure its hold in Palestine was strengthened. Towards the end of the 1930s, British policy was put to the hardest test and took a significant turn when the Peel Commission concluded that there was no prospect of implementing the Mandate and that the only solution was the establishment of a Jewish National Home in part of Palestine. However, the concerns expressed in 1923 were only dealt with after the Second World War when, after a series of attempts to keep Palestine in British hands, the Mandate was returned to the international body established on the ruins of the League of Nations – the United Nations.

As to the conclusion of the Cabinet Committee in 1923, that Britain had reached the limit of possibilities in defining the scope of the British obligation to establish a National Home for the Jewish people and that any further attempts would empty the concept of all meaning and lead to the end of the Mandate, this fear was confirmed twenty-five years later when attempts to define the meaning of a National Home for the Jewish people reached the end of the road with the United Nations' resolution establishing the State of Israel.

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