

Susan Silsby Boyle

**BETRAYAL OF
PALESTINE**

The Story of
George Antonius

Betrayal of Palestine

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Betrayal of Palestine: The Story of George Antonius

Susan Silsby Boyle



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Published in 2001 in the United States of America by Westview Press, 5500 Central Avenue, Boulder, Colorado 80301, and in the United Kingdom by Westview Press, 12 Hid's Copse Road, Cumnor Hill, Oxford OX2 9JJ

Find us on the World Wide Web at www.westviewpress.com

Cataloging-in-Publication Data available at the Library of Congress

The paper used in this publication meets the requirements of the American National Standard for Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials Z39.48-1984.

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3

To Neil

*We hold these truths to be self-evident,
that all men are created equal. . . .*

—The Unanimous Declaration of the
Thirteen United States of America, In Congress, 4 July 1776

Since we know memories will persist for a long time—we aim to acknowledge those memories. This is critical if we are to build a democracy of self-respecting citizens. As a victim of injustice and oppression, you lose your sense of worth as a person, your dignity. Restorative justice is focused on restoring the personhood that is damaged or lost. But restoring that sense of self means restoring memory—a recognition that what happened to you happened. You are not crazy. Something seriously evil happened to you. That acknowledgement is crucial if healing is to go on and the undercurrents of conflict are not to be left simmering, as they have been so many times in so many parts of the world.

—Archbishop Desmond Tutu
(in “The World Is Hungry for Goodness”)

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Preface

Biography is a wonderful way to learn history, because it makes stories personal, and historical events more accessible and less abstract. This book is about a unique individual who lived during a dramatic period of history and amid a challenge that remains unresolved: the Palestinian-Zionist conflict. Although this is a personal story, its writing was motivated by the desire to rediscover the meaning of Antonius's personal life in the public context, and not by any prurient interest in private affairs. It therefore focuses on the part of Antonius's life that is most closely intertwined with the Palestinian question: his public service. It retraces his work and his thought, his analyses of the problems of his day—particularly those pertaining to Palestine—and his recommendations for solving them. In so doing, it shows that the solutions have been there all along, in the people and traditions of the Middle East.

Antonius's portrait reveals a powerful mind that refused to sacrifice a world of faith and a traditional way of life, and that was at the same time very modern. Antonius was an Arab intellectual whose European education, transposed onto an Arab heritage, never stunted his ability to see the complex reality of his nation. He was brilliant, multilingual, curious, passionate, and above all, committed to leading a meaningful and moral life devoted to truth, justice, and the protection of the weak and vulnerable.

Antonius was not born a Palestinian. When he moved to Jerusalem in 1921—just a year after Greater Syria was split into two, with French forces occupying the north, and British forces in the southern portion, which was called Palestine—most residents of the territory did not yet identify themselves as Palestinians. Antonius had been born in the village of Dair al-Qamar, in the *Chouf* (mountains) of Lebanon, at the time a part of Greater Syria. Palestine was situated within the Fertile Triangle and was also a part of the Greater Syrian administrative division under the Ottoman Empire. Pre-World War I Palestine included three districts (*sanjaqs*)—Acre (corresponding to Galilee and Haifa), Nablus, and Jerusalem—and with the exception of Jerusalem (which reported directly to Ottoman authorities in Constantinople), was subsumed under the province of Beirut. Its territory was home to hundreds of villages and

towns with centuries-old histories and families that could trace their lineage back to the great civilizations and the early in-migrations from East and West. Before World War I, Palestinians identified themselves according to the area, town or village where they lived—for Haifa, Nablus, and other parts of Palestine had their own distinct characteristics, with their own prominent families and local leaders.¹ Despite the different factions and hierarchies, despite the competition and the inequality among the three districts, beneath the surface Antonius sensed a unity of language and culture, a shared sense of morality due to ancient faiths, and a common devotion to family that encompassed all of the Arab nation.

For Antonius, Palestine—separated from Syria—became a microcosm of the Arab national movement, which sought to sustain an authentic voice and integrity of language, custom, and culture amid great change and adaptation. Antonius arrived as an outsider. Some might never consider him Palestinian, for he was not born there; he had no local roots, family, or connections to the parochial world of elite notables. Still, he became rooted in Palestine, found meaning in it, and devoted himself as an Arab patriot to a world he knew was part of his own. For Palestine was in spirit and fact part of Antonius's Arab nation. Through his devotion and public service, he became a Palestinian, sacrificing his career to stand for principle, and preferring to abstain from membership in political parties and associations or organization that he saw as weakening the body social by serving as vehicles for petty personal and partisan disputes. He did not romanticize reality; by speaking plainly against an immature political reality of corrupt elections, factionalism, and self-centered leaders, he hoped to secure good governance for the public good and the good of the nation. He was perhaps best known as a public servant, open to the world yet discriminating and powerful in his perception of injustice and his demand for institutions and organizations that could empower and enable his nation. The simplicity of his words should not lead us to underestimate their import, for the message he shared was powerful and far ahead of its time. It is a message as compelling today as it was then.

Some have described Antonius as a bridge. He made it his mission to introduce his nation to the world that existed beyond the stereotypes of empire. He sought to facilitate a shift in cultural paradigms—from that of empire, rooted to a conqueror's code, to that of nation. The real culture clash was between a code that yielded to greed and ignorance, to plunder and abuse of power; and one that compelled restraint, common concern, and social conscience. The warrior code no longer compelled trust and legitimated leadership. The moral code of caring for family, community, and nation required new skills, different virtues, and the exercise of creativity, courage, faith, and intellect far more than sheer force. To Antonius, a culture that was hospitable, that elevated men to work hard and

care for their family and community, was far superior to any culture claiming superiority based on abstract symbols of wealth and power. Antonius remained aware of the elusive wealth of his society and nation, a wealth far beyond material assets; it was this underlying culture of morality and shared meaning that sustained his hope, despite the tragedies of a lifetime. His story is that of betrayal by empires and individuals—betrayal not only of promises made to Arabs but also of the universal moral code of fairness, justice, and truth. The struggle that ensued continues to this day, as an age-old conqueror's code battles an ancient web of culture and humanity in the Arab world that was then—and remains—very modern in its promotion of a moral community.

Notes

1. Salim Tamari, "Factionalism and Class Formation in Recent Palestinian History," in *Studies in the Economic and Social History of Palestine in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Roger Owen (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), pp. 177–202.

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Acknowledgments

The first person who helped me with this work was Hisham Sharabi, professor at Georgetown University. I will always be grateful to him for his encouragement and for directing me to the gold mine of material on George Antonius in the Israel State Archives. I am also grateful to Georgetown University, the Fulbright Committee, and the University of London's Institute of Historical Research for their support. I thank the librarians and archivists who assisted me during research at the University of Durham, Oxford University, Cambridge University, Georgetown University, the Big Horn Basin Library, the Institute of Current World Affairs, the U.S. Archives, the Israel State Archives in Hakiryá, the Public Record Office, and the British Museum.

For use of the Gilbert Clayton Papers and for permission to reproduce quotations from various letters and documents, I am indebted to the Sudan Archives of the University of Durham; and to the Middle East Center at St. Antony's College, Oxford for use of various collections including the papers of Humphrey Bowman, Sir John Chancellor, Thomas Hodgkin, Sir Miles Lampson, Harry St. John Philby, and Lionel Smith. My appreciation goes to the provost and scholars at King's College, Cambridge and to the Society of Authors (the literary representatives of the E. M. Forster Estate) for permission to quote from E. M. Forster correspondence. I also wish to thank the Richmond family for permission to quote from Ernest Richmond material. I thank Penguin U.K. for permission to quote from Antonius's book *The Arab Awakening*, and Oxford University Press for permission to quote from Arnold Toynbee's *Acquaintances*. For photographs I am indebted to *Before Their Diaspora: A Photographic History of the Palestinians, 1876–1948*, by Walid Khalidi, Institute for Palestine Studies.

Some of my best insights into the person Antonius was, and what he was up against, came through personal meetings, interviews, and correspondence. I am indebted to Diana Vincent Forbes Sheean, Sir Harold Beeley, Sally Chilvers, Stewart Perowne, Sir John Richmond, Sir Hugh Mackintosh Foot, Edward Hodgkin, Albert Hourani, Stephen Nimr, Soraya Antonius, and Samuel and Lady Mary Clayton for the time they spent with me.

Many others have helped indirectly to shape my understanding of the subject: I am especially grateful to the seminal work by Carlton Hayes on nation and nationalism, and by Douglass North, Robert Putnam, and Kenneth Arrow on institutions, social capital, and the role of government in protecting that which cannot be priced. Ammiel Alcalay's *After Jews and Arabs: Remaking Levantine Culture*; and Robert Ilbert, Ilios Yannakakis, and Jacques Hassoun's *Alexandrie, 1860–1960: Un modèle éphémère de convivialité: Communautés et identité cosmopolite*, devoted to Alexandria, are wonderfully compelling narratives that enhanced my understanding of Antonius. The early writing about George Antonius by Albert Hourani and Thomas Hodgkin was also especially insightful and helpful, as were the works on colonialism and empire by Partha Chatterjee and Eric Hobsbawm, and David Fromkin's *A Peace to End All Peace*.

I thank all whose comments and questions helped me probe further. For their much-appreciated contributions of reference and archival materials, and/or their critical comments and insights on various drafts, I especially thank Neil Boyle, Lawrence Davidson, the late Albert Hourani, Yusuf Ibish, Ibrahim Ibrahim, Tarif Khalidi, Roger Owen, Edward Said, Hisham Sharabi, Salim Tamari, Judith Tucker, and Albert Wight.

My efforts to supplement primary sources in English with Arabic-language sources—especially with personal correspondence between Antonius and his Arab friends and colleagues, as well as articles he might have written for the Arabic press—proved disappointing; the turmoil in the region during two world wars and protracted civil strife left few such remnants. Nevertheless, I thank those who assisted me in these attempts: George Irani, whom I employed for the last search; and many others who responded to my queries—at the Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee and at the Institute of Palestine Studies in Beirut and Washington, D.C., especially Mona Nsouli, and members of the al-Alami, Abd al-Hadi, Abd al-Shoman, Haidar, Hannano, Husseini, Jabiri, Kayyali, Khalidi, Mardam, Nashashibi, Sleiman, and Sohl families.

I am deeply grateful to Nahed Wasfi, Fulbright scholar at UCLA (2000) and assistant professor in linguistics and translation at al-Azhar University, for her generous assistance in correlating the meanings of English words used by Antonius with Arabic equivalents.

The complexities of working with sources in several languages—and with various styles of transliteration—were many. I thank my readers, past, present, and future, for their tolerance of the resultant inconsistencies in the spelling of Arabic words and names; for although I have done my best to standardize them, variations inevitably remain.

For their help in bringing this book to publication, I am grateful to Westview Press—especially to Barbara Greer for overseeing the entire production, to Rebecca Ritke for her masterful editing, and to Karl Yam-

bert for his unflagging support. I also thank Dina Khoury for her early encouragement; Connie Eysenck for her much valued contribution in getting the process started; and Joost Polak for gifted editing and for asking the tough questions that helped achieve clarity. I thank Marjorie Farmer for her tireless cheer and meticulous help, and my numerous typists, especially Heidi Griffith. I also wish to thank that lovely Palestinian family that watched over me during my stay in Ramallah; the Abu Khalid, Audeh, Dzuback, and Wight families; and the people of Basin, Wyoming—a town of 1,180—for helping me appreciate the true meaning of social capital and village and town life.

Most of all, I thank my parents for their example, and my mother, for her steadfast support; my husband, for a love that emboldens and for being so much a part of this journey; and finally, our two wonderful daughters, for the great joy and laughter that balanced the telling of this tale.

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Author's Note on Transliteration

The transliteration of Arabic words into English in this book was guided by common usage and omits diacritical marks. Arabic name spellings vary due to my use of multiple sources in different languages and my desire to respect quoted materials.

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Chronology of Events in the Life of George Antonius (1891–1942)

- October 19, 1891—Born in Dair al-Qamar, Lebanon
- 1902–1910—Victoria College, Alexandria
- 1910–1913—King’s College, Cambridge University
- 1914—Public Works Department, Egypt, until the outbreak of war
- 1914–1916—Press censor with Egyptian Expeditionary Force
- 1915–1916—McMahon-Hussein correspondence: British pledge of support for Arab national goal of independence from Ottoman Empire
- 1916—Arab military revolt against Ottoman forces contributes substantially to British/Allied campaign
- 1917—Antonius is promoted to deputy press censor
- November 2, 1917—Balfour Declaration: letter from A. J. Balfour, then British secretary of state for foreign affairs, to Lord Rothschild, expressing the government’s support for a Jewish national home in Palestine
- 1918—Antonius attempts (unsuccessfully) to enter public service in Palestine; his brother dies in flu epidemic
- June 28, 1919—Treaty of Versailles is signed, including Articles of Covenant of the League of Nations, with implicit promise of Palestinian self-determination
- April 25, 1920—European representatives gather in San Remo; the supreme council of the Peace Conference gives Britain the mandate for Palestine
- 1920—France crushes resistance in Syria and assumes the mandate in Syria and Lebanon; demonstrations take place against European actions throughout Syria
- 1919, 1920, 1921—Antonius takes periodic leave; meets up with Faisal’s team in Europe, keeping in close, daily contact with Haidar; and begins to establish a reputation in western Europe, particularly in England, where he lectures before a parliamentary group interested in Middle Eastern affairs
- 1921—Winston Churchill goes to Cairo and Transjordan and enthrones Faisal and Abdullah in Iraq and Transjordan, respectively

- 1921—Antonius is appointed senior inspector of education, with the Department of Education in Palestine
- 1923, 1924, and 1926—Acting director of education
- 1923–1925—Works on Commission for Local Government and Education; drafts preliminary reports and final report, with recommendations for reforms; finds “loss of confidence” from British high commissioner
- 1925–1927—Participates in missions with Sir Gilbert Clayton for territorial boundary negotiations in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iraq, Transjordan; seeks long-delayed promotion
- 1927—Transferred under protest from the Department of Education to the Secretariat
- 1927—Receives award as commander of the British Empire
- 1929—Disturbances occur in Palestine
- 1930—Antonius resigns from British mandatory government, accepts work at the Institute of Current World Affairs (ICWA); is hopeful about commissions investigating the 1929 disturbances and the land and immigration issue
- October 30, 1930—The John Hope-Simpson Report and the White Paper are published with the aim of aiding the Palestinian cause
- February 14, 1931—Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald sends a letter to Zionist representative Chaim Weizmann, repudiating the White Paper of 1930; Palestinians call it the “Black Letter”
- 1931—Antonius’s father, Habib, dies; with the White Paper overturned, Palestinians feel the British have capitulated to the Zionists; Antonius becomes informal adviser to the British high commissioner and others concerning local problems and the need for representative government; begins active schedule of writing, lecturing, and preparing a book for publication, to inform officials and public about events and realities in Palestine and the region
- 1932–1933—Major Jewish immigration; Antonius sees shift in public opinion from anti-Zionist to anti-British; landlessness and lack of representation continue
- 1935—Antonius lectures in the United States and Canada and warns of Palestinian revolt; gets favorable feedback on first draft chapters of book
- 1936–1937—Continues to write his book; witnesses Palestine Revolt; participates in the Peel Commission; criticizes the partition plan
- 1938—Completes book in Egypt and arranges for first publication with Hamish Hamilton, London; travels to United States for lectures; sees degenerating conditions in Palestine leading to violence

- 1939—Participates in St. James's Palace Conference on Palestine; with the outbreak of war, Palestinian hopes are dashed; Charles Crane, his friend and patron, dies
- 1940—Tries to adjust to force majeure; collects materials about the current war and Arab public opinion on it; having agreed to a divorce from his wife, relocates to Beirut but travels frequently to Egypt and Palestine; begins to have trouble with ICWA over lack of regular reports
- 1941—Visits Iraq; returns ill to Beirut two weeks before Iraq Revolt, and spends summer in hospital during Allied campaign in Syria; saved from Vichy French imprisonment by U.S. Consul in Beirut
- 1942—Dies unexpectedly



Portrait of George Antonius. SOURCE: Reprinted with permission from Before Their Diaspora: A Photographic History of the Palestinians, 1876–1948, by Walid Khalidi, Institute of Palestine Studies.

1

Facing the Truth, 1939

History matters. It matters not just because we can learn from the past, but because the present and the future are connected to the past by the continuity of society's institutions. Today's and tomorrow's choices are shaped by the past. And the past can only be made intelligible as a story of institutional evolution.

—Douglass North, *Institutions,
Institutional Change and Economic Performance*

The Arab Awakening and the St. James's Palace Conference

In February 1939, Arabs and Palestine's British overlords gathered behind closed doors in London's St. James's Palace to decide the fate of the troubled land. The Arab side was led by 48-year-old George Antonius, whose highly acclaimed book, *The Arab Awakening*, published the previous year, offered conclusive proof that the British had promised Palestinians an independence in exchange for an Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire in World War I.

This was one of the high points in Antonius's life: After nearly 20 years of Palestinian anguish, he was helping bring his people's story to a broader public and was at last confronting the British government with its pledges to support Arab independence and self-rule. Antonius was not alone in pushing Britain to relinquish its colonial grip on Palestine and to cease implementing Zionist policy there. The unrelenting Palestinian resistance pressed home the unsustainability of British policy at a time when the ominous signs of war in Europe were demanding a shift of British military forces from Palestine to the home front. By 1939, according to historian Albert Hourani, the British government seemed to have abandoned its earlier partition plan and to be moving toward a different solution.¹ The timing of the book's publication must have heart-

ened Antonius, as it gave his ideas an opportunity for influence in the months leading up to the conference on Palestine that would take place in February 1939 at St. James's Palace. Antonius led the Palestinian and Arab delegation to this conference, and his book was the focal point of the first official hearing ever given to British wartime promises to support Palestinian independence. An erudite speaker of unyielding principle, Antonius dominated the conference, serving in several capacities and unceasingly championing Palestinian independence.² He stood his ground, refusing to compromise the fundamental democratic principles of majority rule and of "one man, one vote." He had the courage to hold the British government accountable to universal standards and democratic values for the good of civil society and toward a more inclusive diversity.

Officials, academics, and critics throughout the Arab world, in England, and in the United States praised *The Arab Awakening*. It was recognized as an outstanding historical work, masterfully written and with a grasp of psychological dimensions and political dynamics rarely found in analyses of the Middle East. It was regarded as significant and original for its unprecedented research into the Arab National Movement and its comprehensive analysis of British wartime pledges to the Arabs. Through painstaking research Antonius had unearthed documents the existence of which the British had long denied, which helped greatly to clarify the incomplete and confused story of British dealings in and about Palestine. Antonius's book was regarded not solely as a historical work destined to become a classic among scholars but also as a critical and timely piece on postwar events for diplomats and the public at large. The U.S. consul general in Jerusalem, George Wadsworth, and the principal U.S. diplomats in Cairo and Baghdad considered it the epitome of "all that is known about the Arab World"; consuls general ordered additional copies, and newly arrived American diplomats were told, "If you read the book of Antonius you will need nothing more to guide you in your work in the Near East."³

More than half a century after its publication, the book remains a classic in the history of the modern Middle East. A number of academic historians have explored in depth Antonius's historical interpretations. As Hourani noted, Antonius and Arnold Toynbee were the only two historians during the interwar period who transcended the conventional colonialist interpretation of subject peoples.⁴ Paul Monroe, professor of history at Columbia University, found Antonius's story "so fair and convincing," that "I believe it to be very important for the American public to get the straight of this discussion." He continued, "We are so moved now by injustice done the Jews that we are apt to overlook the injustice which may be done and is being done to the Arabs in their own land."⁵

Harry Snyder, executive board member of American Friends of the Arabs, gave this resounding endorsement to the book:

To Christians of the Western world this book may be disquieting in its revelations but refreshing nevertheless. To Jews it may provide for the first time an appreciation of the reasons why the Arab strives so desperately to preserve his homeland. To students of Near Eastern affairs this is an indispensable volume. . . . To all readers this is a brilliantly presented story of a neglected aspect of world history. This is truly a masterpiece from the pen of one who has had no small part in the renaissance that is sweeping the Arab world.⁶

British officials hastened to purchase the book in order to study the little-known and hitherto unpublished documents pertaining to Palestinian claims to independence. One internal memorandum noted, “[Antonius’s] views and arguments will no doubt figure prominently in any exposition of the legal case which Arab delegates may put forward.”⁷ Because of the documents and the force of Antonius’s analysis and arguments, British officials in the foreign and colonial offices were forced to restructure entirely their arguments for the denial of Palestinian independence.

Britain previously had claimed that Palestine was excluded from the British pledge of Arab independence that Henry McMahon, the British high commissioner in Egypt, had communicated to Sheriff Hussein ibn Ali, the emir of Mecca and guardian of Moslem holy places, on October 24, 1915. Antonius noted that although the pledge contained no explicit reference to Palestine, the only areas of Greater Syria specifically excluded from the pledge were “portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo”—all of which were north of Palestine.⁸ As Palestine did not lie west of those districts, it was within the territory promised independence. The British government claimed that Palestine was excluded by implication because the phrase *district of Damascus* referred to the *vilayet* (province) of Syria, a large administrative unit that in the British interpretation included Palestine.⁹ This southwest portion of territory was to be reserved for France. Antonius refuted the government’s claim, arguing that the phrase used in McMahon’s pledge was never intended to refer to the whole province of Syria but simply referred to the town of Damascus and its immediate vicinity. A. L. Tibawi notes that some of the British, including Gilbert Clayton, director of British intelligence in Cairo and architect of the British pledges to Hussein, included Palestine in the pledge of independence and that McMahon recopied Clayton’s phrase, inserting the word *district*, which was erroneously translated to *wilaya*, the word on which the British government later based its case that the reference to Damascus

meant the province of Syria. Although the Arabic word *wilaya* and the Turkish derivative *vilayet* referred to a province under the Ottoman system of administration, Antonius grasped the misuse of the term *wilaya* in McMahon's pledge and argued that since there were, in fact, no provinces of Damascus, Homs, or Hama, the terms used referred to the district in general, meaning the town and its immediate vicinity.¹⁰ Toynbee, who as a British officer had attended the postwar peace conference in Paris, had long agreed with Antonius, noting as early as 1922:

Two points deserve notice. In the first place, no Zionist claim to Palestine was yet in question, and the formula agreed upon arose purely out of a conflict between Arab claims and those of France in Syria. In the second place, while Palestine was not mentioned by name, any more than were Syria, Hejaz, Yemen or other individual provinces, it was included in the boundaries of the area laid down by Hussein . . . and was therefore included in the British promise, unless otherwise excepted. . . . The upshot is that Palestine was not excepted from the area in which the British government promised in 1915 to recognize and uphold Arab independence, and that the Balfour Declaration of 1917 was therefore incompatible with a previous commitment.¹¹

Antonius's arguments forced the British to recognize that the argument "upon which Winston Churchill relied in the White Paper of 1922 and which has been the main plank of the British case until now" was untenable.¹² Lord Chancellor Maugham found it "straw," and Malcolm MacDonald, secretary of state for the colonies, considered it "tricky"—two adjectives that H. L. Baggallay, first secretary of the Foreign Office, regarded as "thoroughly deserved."¹³ Thus, in preparation for the conference, British officials formulated counterarguments to renewed claims for Palestinian independence that they knew Antonius and his book would provoke.

The Arab Delegation

After completing the manuscript of *The Arab Awakening* during summer 1938 in Egypt, Antonius traveled to England in September, met with his publisher, and began the grinding task of proofreading the galleys. By November 21, 1938, assured of the book's publication before year's end, Antonius sailed for the United States to meet with his American publisher and officials such as Rives Childs of the U.S. Department of State's Near East Division, and to present several lectures, including one with Rabbi Judah Magnes, an early critic of political Zionism, in Cambridge, Massachusetts.¹⁴

Invitations to the St. James's Palace conference were sent to Arab delegates from Palestine and to Arab representatives from Iraq, Egypt, Transjordan, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. In early January 1939, former members of the Arab Higher Committee, a multiparty committee formed on April 26, 1936 to coordinate the Palestine Revolt, and other Palestinians in exile or recently released from detention in the Seychelles, gathered in the mufti's home in Jounieh, near Beirut,¹⁵ to discuss the conference and nominate their representatives: Jamal Husseini, Awni Abd al-Hadi, Musa Alami, Hussein Khalidi, Amin Tamimi, Alfred Roch, and Antonius, the last of whom was also elected secretary of the Palestine delegation. Palestinian and Arab delegates then assembled in Egypt to agree on fundamentals before departing for London. Musa Alami, a close friend of Antonius's and a former lawyer in the mandatory government, sent an urgent telegram to New York to inform Antonius of his unanimous election and to urge him to hasten to London.¹⁶

Since Antonius's arrival in New York, he had been giving lectures on problems in the Arab world and the likelihood of conflict arising over Italy's actions in the Mediterranean. On receiving Alami's telegram, Antonius canceled his remaining lectures and meetings and embarked on the first ship bound for England. Antonius had aimed for autumn 1938 publication of his book, to coincide with the possible conference on Palestine.¹⁷ At this point, however, he was uncertain of the purpose of the conference and unsure whether the invitation he received would "offer the scope and opportunity for constructive work in the interest of all parties concerned."¹⁸ On January 28, the day after his arrival in London, he called on officials in the Colonial Office to learn about the details.

During these meetings, Antonius discovered that British officials had attempted to contact him during his ocean voyage because they wanted him to assume the role of secretary-general of the united Arab delegations. This appointment included "the important and somewhat onerous duties of coordinating their work, acting as a channel between them and the United Kingdom delegation, and eventually [taking charge] of the custody of the archives, with all that would mean of translation to and from one language into the other."¹⁹ Given his professional background and his formidable grasp of the issues, Antonius was a natural choice for the leadership role: In many ways, his whole life had prepared him for the task. Yet Antonius seems to have doubted his own qualifications. When his friend Prime Minister Nuri Said, Iraq's chief delegate to the conference, arrived in London with the other Arab delegates on January 29, Antonius suggested that he might "perhaps render [himself] just as useful in an advisory capacity." Said encouraged him to proceed, stating that "this was an opportunity to do a useful piece of work and that [Antonius] could not under any circumstances decline the invitation, which

the Arab states backed by the British government wished [him] to accept."²⁰ Another friend, Egyptian delegate Ali Maher, and other Arab delegates who met in Amir Faisal's suite that evening dispelled Antonius's remaining doubts by expressing their unanimous support for his appointment.²¹ Empowered by their trust, Antonius spent the week before the conference "hastily improving the organization of the secretariat," meeting and discussing the issues with other delegates, and drafting the opening statements to be presented by Jamal Husseini and other heads of the Arab delegations.²²

After a week of work, Antonius's participation as member of the Palestine Arab delegation was temporarily thrown into question with the belated arrival of Raghīb Nashashibi and his Palestinian colleagues from the National Defense Party, who were bitter opponents of Mufti Haj Amin Husseini.²³ After the conference was formally opened at St. James's Palace in London, Nashashibi tried to change the composition of the Palestine delegation. As the mufti had approved all the members, Nashashibi first sought to gain an equal number of seats for his group. Failing this, he tried at least to replace Antonius and Musa Alami, Palestinian lawyer and mandatory government official, because they had never been members of the Arab Higher Committee.²⁴ After a day of discussions with British Secretary of State for the Colonies Malcolm MacDonald and with Said, Nashashibi agreed to accept two seats for his party; he realized that he could not obtain more without splitting the ranks, and that such a scenario could weaken Palestine's case.

Antonius had always given priority to Arab unity both in terms of the Arab national movement as a whole and with regard to particular efforts such as the Egyptian or Syrian negotiations for new treaties with Britain or France or the work of the All-Muslim Congress in Jerusalem. He recognized the importance of unity for the realization of Palestinian aspirations and had struggled during the 1930s to persuade the Arabs to forge a front transcending political differences and personal feuds. Antonius believed the British roadblocks to Palestinian independence were surmountable through Arab unity and by virtue of the moral weight of Palestine's arguments for democratic self-governance. The Palestinian claim for independence and self-governance was the same as that of the Arab nation as a whole. Convinced of the need for unity, Antonius devoted himself to forging consensus through meetings and telephone calls before and during the conference.

When the conference opened on February 9, Antonius's hard work paid off in the clear and compelling opening statements presented by Said of Iraq, Amir Faisal of Saudi Arabia, Taufiq Pasha Abd al-Huda of Transjordan, and Prince Saif al-Din of Yemen. During the first week of Anglo-Arab meetings, Arab presentations buttressed the Palestinian del-

egation's demands articulated by Jamal Husseini. These demands, which served as the platform for all further discussions, included the cessation of Jewish immigration and land purchases, termination of the mandate, and the creation of an independent Palestinian state possessing treaty relations with Britain comparable to Iraq's. The demands themselves were not new; but what was novel was that all of the heads of delegations not only supported them but also defended them by reference to Britain's pledges during World War I, which Antonius had so thoroughly investigated and made public in his book.²⁵

Working feverishly behind the scenes—even from his hotel bed, after he fell ill (most likely from ulcers, though it may also have been cancer)—Antonius played a decisive role in the plenary sessions. On February 10, the day after Jamal Husseini's opening remarks, Antonius took on MacDonald, criticizing him for his denial of the Palestinian claim to independence. As this claim was bound to be raised throughout the conference, he advised that the question be taken seriously through an investigation of past British pledges. On the following day, Antonius's physical stamina ebbed. Although he was too ill to get out of bed, he continued to dictate messages and to hold telephone conversations and meetings. On February 15, the fifth day of the conference, despite his illness Antonius attended the plenary session and heard MacDonald announce that the British government agreed to establish a special committee to investigate the Hussein-McMahon correspondence of 1915–1916.²⁶ For Antonius, this review was central to the resolution of the Palestine problem. "Until the fullest light is thrown on [the real nature and extent of Britain's commitments] and the significant facts are brought into their true perspective it is idle to hope for a return to sanity."²⁷ For the British, facing the truth that promises had been made to their Arab allies during the war and that Britain had broken its promise to support Arab, including Palestinian, independence after the war was most unsettling. Antonius countered MacDonald's subsequent attempt to belittle the proposed investigation as simply "an honest difference of opinion."²⁸ "The difference," Antonius stated on February 15, is "not one of points of view, but of fact." And were they to engage in serious study of these facts, Antonius told MacDonald, "there could be no room for difference of opinion."²⁹

The Examination of British Promises and Pledges

Despite his illness, Antonius led the Arab side in the investigation of British promises. He prepared statements and memoranda and worked with Baggallay to draft the final report.³⁰ On February 23, Antonius opened his analysis of British pledges with a rebuttal of the newly formulated British argument that Palestine was excluded from independence

because it was deemed to have been among the territories reserved for France in 1915. Although he made various points supporting his refutation of the British claim, Antonius concentrated on one: the strategic significance of Palestine, which would have precluded British support for French control. Palestine had been determined to be of indispensable political and strategic importance to British imperial interests before 1915. As British policy determined the content of British pledges in 1915, Antonius argued, Britain never intended to allow Palestine to fall within the French sphere of influence.³¹

Antonius then turned to an analysis of the Hussein-McMahon correspondence. He argued that Palestine had not been part of the area McMahon excluded from the British pledges of independence, and that it was never intended to be included in the territory McMahon listed as part of the French sphere of interest in his letters to Sheriff Hussein. Antonius told the committee that after he had corrected a misleading British translation of McMahon's December 13, 1915 letter to Hussein and had studied McMahon's letters of November 5, 1915 and of January 1, 1916, it was evident that when referring to the area of French interest McMahon meant the area to the north of Palestine—the *vilayets* of Aleppo and Beirut and their maritime coasts. In McMahon's letter of January 1, 1916, for example, the only regions reserved for France were "the northern parts and their coastal regions" and "Beirut and its coastal regions, which we will overlook for the moment on account of France."³² Palestine was not a territory reserved for France and excluded from the British pledge, because "had [McMahon] had Palestine in mind, he would certainly have added 'and the *Sanjaq* [district] of Jerusalem."³³

However, even if Palestine at one time had been reserved for France, Antonius emphasized, Palestine was not included in the territory turned over to France after the war. Thus, Antonius said, Palestine "must, in default of any specific agreement to the contrary, necessarily remain within the area of Arab independence proposed by the sheriff and accepted by Great Britain."³⁴ Although the delegate chairing this meeting, Lord High Chancellor Maugham, was unwilling to concede this point, Baggallay and other British legal experts, including the attorney general, agreed with Antonius: Britain's pledge to respect a French sphere of interest meant that "His Majesty's government would carry out their promises to the Arabs in any territory in which French claims were found not to have prevailed when a final territorial settlement had been reached."³⁵

Following Antonius's initial rebuttal, the British tried a different tack on February 23. Maugham argued that since Palestine was of such strategic value to the British Empire, Britain would never have pledged to support its independence. In this Maugham might have been close to the truth—at least as it was reflected by the prevailing sentiment in White-

hall and the corridors of the Colonial Office in London. Maugham also suggested that Britain had an altruistic motive for withholding Palestinian independence: the need—presumably, for the British—to safeguard Christian holy places as well as the ports and other British interests. Antonius challenged Maugham's reference to security needs. The former British Supreme Court Justice in Palestine, Sir Michael McDonnell, who was serving as legal adviser to the Arabs during the conference, remarked that the British case was so weak that Maugham was resorting to tenuous circumstantial evidence and unsupported, absolutist statements. Indeed, McDonnell noted that there was no argument in simply saying, as Maugham did, that "it was 'inconceivable' that [Britain] intended to include Palestine [in territory promised independence] and that it must have been 'regarded as automatically and obviously excluded.'" The issue was not a matter of who conceived or did not conceive, and what some might believe or not, but rather of what McMahon's texts specifically stated. There was no ambiguity in them, and the British had no case. As McDonnell put it, "It is not legitimate to consider any surrounding circumstances to modify" the McMahon pledge supporting Palestine's independence.³⁶

In addition to the McMahon pledge, Antonius also resurrected and discussed two largely forgotten messages: the January 1918 message of David Hogarth, one of the heads of the Arab Bureau in Cairo, and the Foreign Office's June 16, 1918 statement of British policy entitled "Declaration to the Seven."³⁷ These were two of the clearest articulations of British support for Palestine's cause. Hogarth's message to Sheriff Hussein assured him that political and economic freedom would be guaranteed to the Arab population in Palestine. British officials discovered that the Hogarth message could not be denied, as it was based on instructions that leading British Middle East policy makers—Sir Mark Sykes, Lord Hardinge, and Lord Robert Cecil—gave Hogarth.³⁸

But Antonius considered the Declaration to the Seven the most important and least known of all Britain's policy statements on Arab independence. This was a message from the Foreign Office, delivered to Army headquarters in Egypt on June 16, 1918 by a senior member of the British intelligence service in Egypt, addressed to seven prominent Arab leaders. The message was penned shortly after the Balfour Declaration had been issued and details of the Sykes-Picot agreement had been revealed by the Russians. Antonius considered the declaration a critically significant and possibly even more decisive pledge than McMahon's, for it expressed Britain's official promise to support the principles of self-determination and of rule through consent of the governed without any territorial reservation. In Antonius's opinion, "Its significance lies in this, that it confirms England's previous pledges to the Arabs in plainer language than in any

former public utterance, and, more valuable still, provides an authoritative enunciation of the principles on which those pledges rested."³⁹ Promises clearly had been made that had yet to be honored.

The Foreign Office, in a confidential February 21 memorandum, found the revelation of these "promises made to the Arabs with regard to Palestine" to be "obviously embarrassing," as "in all essentials Mr. Antonius's assertion is perfectly correct."⁴⁰ The author of the memorandum did not "see that they can be explained away any more than any of the rest of the declarations made regarding Palestine in the year during and immediately after the war."⁴¹

The Anglo-Arab Meetings and Proposals

Throughout February, during his participation in the conference, Antonius also managed the Arab Center and continued his numerous informal meetings with Arab delegates and British officials. He was kept well informed of the informal and confidential meetings among Arab delegates, MacDonald, and Zionist representatives. Antonius did not attend these meetings himself because he, like others, understood that Zionists opposed Palestinian independence and self-governance.⁴² A few Arab delegates—notably, the Egyptians—tried but failed to persuade the Zionist representatives to scale down their ambitions and reduce their demands, principally regarding Jewish immigration into Palestine.

On February 16, after the Arab statements had been presented, the conference focused on Palestinian independence and constitutional development. In light of all that had transpired, MacDonald conceded the Palestinian case, stating that Britain recognized Palestine's right to independence and did not support the creation of a Jewish state. But he added a qualification: Britain wanted to consult with the United States and the League of Nations before finalizing its offer of independence. Antonius countered that Britain's decision should be made on the merits of the case rather than on political grounds connected with the positions of others.⁴³

Antonius was also concerned by MacDonald's remark that independence could only be granted to Palestine after a transitional period under a form of government comparable to India's system of parity. Parity, which theoretically promoted equality by placing pre-civil group formations on a par (as in the case of Muslim-Hindu representation in India under British rule), actually retarded nation building and democratic governance by denying the equality of individuals as citizens with a common civil and social goal of nation building. For Antonius there was no alternative to democracy. He had seen the damage done by confessionalism, with French preferential treatment of Christians in Lebanon

and discrimination against others in Greater Syria. Parity was a divisive tool that did not encourage people to transcend their differences and create a civil society of shared meaning based on a democratic system of governance in the public interest.⁴⁴ MacDonald had little ammunition with which to defend the parity scheme, for the notion that there should be “no domination by sheer voting power” flouted the fundamental democratic principle of majority rule.

Zionists who had been meeting informally with British and Arab representatives during the conference were concerned about sustaining their original goal of blocking democratic, representative government. They simply could “not accept the idea of an Arab majority voice in the government,” because majority rule would have blocked unpopular pro-Zionist policies supporting immigration and land acquisition.⁴⁵

Having witnessed the denial of majority rule for nearly two decades, Antonius tried to explain to MacDonald that his proposal reflected “misguided sympathy.”⁴⁶ Antonius believed that parity was a dangerous political tool that tended to impede the institutionalization of fundamental democratic principles, values, and attitudes protective of the rights of individuals over those of groups and to hinder the creation of a civil society. It was a shallow and dangerous mechanism that ran counter to the fundamental universal value and principle of “one man, one vote,” and it offered no institutional safeguards for civil society. Fears about Jewish minority status were inappropriate in Palestine, where—as Jamal Husseini and all the Arab delegates agreed—safeguards would be introduced to protect minority rights. Most importantly, parity was anachronistic at a time when the world had conceded that “it was right, proper and universal that the voice of the majority in any country should be the predominant voice, without any suggestion of undue domination by one side or another.”⁴⁷

Antonius agreed with Husseini and Khalidi that the constitutional proposal tendered by MacDonald was unacceptable also because it contradicted the League of Nations mandate of 1922, under which Britain was charged with facilitating Palestinian self-rule. It was particularly inappropriate because it was modeled after a system of government devised for the “Crown Colony of India.”⁴⁸ In concluding the meeting, Antonius suggested that the delegates should shift their attention from the realm of theory to a more constructive discussion of safeguards both for Jewish minority rights and for the development of a democratic system of government.

Again attempting to deflect Antonius’s promotion of democracy in Palestine, MacDonald opened the next session with a brief review of his proposal for parity and then shifted the discussion to other issues. Antonius would not let him get away with this, and brought him back to the

constitutional question, asserting that it was unwise to allow the question of constitutional development to be introduced with no discussion of the alternatives to parity—democracy and rule by consent of the governed. He noted that “the principle of all these suggestions [of parity or weightage] was the same, since their common object was to neutralize an Arab majority.” Although Antonius made a valiant effort to guide the discussion toward a democratic constitutional proposal, he stood alone, and the meeting concluded with the other Arab delegates acquiescing to MacDonald’s directive that they let the constitutional question rest and move on to other issues.⁴⁹

On Sunday evening, the day after Antonius had called for a discussion of concrete proposals, MacDonald held a confidential meeting with Said, Maher, Fuad Hamza, and Faisal. Antonius was not invited, as MacDonald was attempting to undermine his proposal. MacDonald sought to gain the support of these delegates before presenting his proposal to the Palestinians and other Arab delegates, but he had little success. Said informed MacDonald that the delegation would not support MacDonald’s proposal that Britain, the United States, and the League of Nations draw up a constitution at a separate meeting following the conference. Said found this plan unacceptable, as it rejected the central Arab demands for immediate recognition of an independent Palestinian state based on the Iraqi model and for the creation of a provisional council of ministers and a constituent assembly charged with drawing up an organic law containing the necessary safeguards.⁵⁰ During this session, MacDonald also proposed to allow 150,000 to 300,000 Jewish immigrants to enter Palestine within ten years, which would increase the proportion of Jews in the total population to 35 or 40 percent. In response, Said argued that ten more years of immigration, especially at the levels proposed, would be excessive. Furthermore, the Arabs told MacDonald, future immigration would be resisted unless the immigrants entered as refugees. If European persecution was forcing their exodus, those whom the Arabs would welcome would be refugees. Moreover, Maher said, an unrelenting Arab demand for an immediate end to immigration could be expected unless concrete assurances were given regarding Palestinian independence.⁵¹

After this informal meeting, MacDonald relayed the Arab proposal for constitutional development based on the Iraqi model and for restricted immigration in a telegram to Sir Harold MacMichael, Britain’s high commissioner in Palestine. MacMichael accepted the Arab rejection of MacDonald’s proposal for Jewish immigration but severely criticized the Arabs’ constitutional proposal. He believed that Britain’s agreement to establish a Palestinian constitution based on the Iraqi model would encourage the Arab belief that “it will be possible for their group of intelligentsia in the Near and Middle East to realize their wider national aspi-

rations as set forth by George Antonius in . . . *The Arab Awakening* by some form of federation."⁵² In his view, Palestinian independence and the development of an Arab federation would threaten Britain's imperial interests. He failed to appreciate the animosity that was building up against Britain precisely because it was blocking Arab desires. Suggesting a counterproposal that he thought would safeguard British imperial interests, MacMichael advised MacDonald to propose autonomy rather than independence, conditioned on proof that the Arabs and Jews were cooperating. Until such proof were produced, he advised that a transitional form of government should be established that would prevent any possibility of popular elections and offer instead the nomination of Palestinians to an advisory council and to the executive council.⁵³ This advice set negotiations back to the point they were at nearly twenty years earlier.

On February 23, MacDonald submitted his recommendations to the Cabinet for authorization. The Cabinet's prime interest was to safeguard Britain's "vital defense interests in Palestine," and it opted for the Egyptian model of government rather than the Iraqi one, as the former would ensure both British control over the machinery of government and the stationing of British troops in Palestine. Although they intended to make it most difficult for Palestine to be rid of Britain, the Cabinet was prepared to claim to support "independence" over autonomy—but this was merely a psychological prop. Viscount Halifax, British secretary of state for foreign affairs, thought "it would have considerable psychological value."⁵⁴ The Marquess of Zetland, secretary of state for India, also "thought that the word might keep the Arabs happy."⁵⁵ MacDonald knew the word *independence* had special psychological value: The Palestinians and other Arabs would think they had been promised freedom; as for the Zionists, MacDonald noted, "Weizmann [with whom he had spoken that day] at once grasped the fact that *independence* meant that the British would remain in Palestine."⁵⁶ MacDonald explained that he aimed to ensure at least fifteen years of transition to independence, at the end of which the latter could be further postponed due to evidence of Arab and Jewish noncooperation. The meeting ended with unanimous agreement to "sugar the pill" of the intended rejection of Palestinian independence by adopting MacMichael's proposal that Palestinians be nominated to the advisory and executive councils.⁵⁷ These councils, of course, would have no power, and continued British control thus would be assured.

After this Cabinet meeting and a few general discussions of immigration and land issues during subsequent conference sessions, an Anglo-Arab policy committee was set up that included one Arab representative from each delegation, with Antonius acting as secretary-general. The pol-

icy committee's first few meetings were dominated by discussions of the parity scheme, which boiled down to keeping elections based on religious affiliations. Antonius—the principal critic of this scheme—said that his “general criticism of the whole set of suggestions which Mr. MacDonald had put forward was that they were based on devices, not on principles.”⁵⁸ Voting along religious communal lines sanctioned unusual privileges for Zionists at the expense of the nation, and engendered the “impossible situation” of a Zionist minority’s perpetually blocking the wishes of the majority.⁵⁹ It seemed to Antonius that MacDonald’s proposal would give the minority abnormal privilege and power, which it could use to obstruct democratic elections and majority rule. Antonius believed that a constitution for Palestine should promote nation building through democratic institutions: “The tendency of such a constitution would be to impel all the inhabitants towards a feeling of equal citizenship in a unitary state.”⁶⁰ He argued that to achieve this goal the constitution should only support divisions along political party lines, with elections from Palestine’s mixed population of Jews, Christians, and Muslims being based on political constituencies rather than primordial or pre-social affiliations of religion, race, ethnicity, and the like. He considered this form of constitutional development the only way in which the Zionist minority, which was “asking for the moon in demanding rights beyond those of an ordinary minority,” could learn to assume “the rights of ordinary citizens” and work for the development of Palestine as a whole: “All the elements in Palestine should work together, the only divisions being those of party alignment working in the common interest and not on a sectional or communal basis.”⁶¹

Antonius never stopped defending the Palestinian cause. Lord Chancellor Maugham tried but failed to evade and counter Antonius’s arguments for Palestinian independence. MacDonald found the task no less difficult when he discussed policy and proposals with Antonius and Arab representatives, who surprised him in their unanimity. During his meetings with the Arab delegates, MacDonald’s proposals were continuously routed, to a degree that unsettled him. He had begun with the expectation of dealing with a predominantly “moderate” group of delegates because of the inclusion of non-Palestinian Arab representatives, which he thought would tend to modify Palestinian demands. Having initially underestimated Antonius, MacDonald quickly discovered him to be an exceptionally able and “very hard bargainer.” Not only did the Arab delegation remain united under Antonius’s leadership but the Palestinians remained the dominant players. It dawned on MacDonald that he had “a very difficult delegation of Palestinian Arabs to deal with,”⁶² because Antonius never backed down and no one could challenge his political acumen, analysis, and arguments.

Antonius had witnessed twenty years of foul play and had suffered the trauma of broken trust and double-crosses; he went in to win. He would not compromise what no man should be asked to give up; and so, elegantly dressed, he went into battle, determinedly leveling the playing field as he arrested every misstep, myth, and misinterpretation. Antonius's command of the facts shattered the illusion that the Palestinians had no case.

Conclusion of the Conference

MacDonald quickly realized that the Palestinian Arab delegation had "a very good case"; but the question remained as to whether British officials really intended to concede to Arab demands. When the conference drew to a close in March 1939, MacDonald prepared to impose a unilateral decision. He set the stage for this move on March 7 by remarking that the Arab delegation had shown continuous resistance to compromise. Antonius had seen this shabby tactic deployed too many times. It was designed to allow the British to shift the blame for failure to reach agreement onto Palestinians.⁶³ Antonius responded that it was unfair "to suggest that the British delegation had made all kinds of concessions and that the Palestine Arab delegation had made none." If there was a lack of compromise, he argued, it was to be found among the British, who had failed to offer concrete proposals regarding immigration and a time limit for transition to self-rule. Furthermore, he argued, though the British had offered to support independence and restrict land sales to Zionists, these were hardly significant concessions, because Palestinian independence was already recognized under the mandate, and promises to restrict land sales had been offered previously, although nothing had yet been done to realize either fully. Antonius said: "They had not come to this conference to bargain . . . Independence . . . was implicit in the terms of the Mandate, and there was nothing new in the British Delegation's acceptance of that principle. The only thing that mattered was the fixing of a definite period for the establishment of independence, and this the British Delegation had refused."⁶⁴

On March 20, after an article in the *Times* describing the Arab delegation as unwilling to compromise during the conference, Antonius wrote to the editor that the Arab delegates had indeed been willing to compromise—but not to sacrifice their fundamental rights to independence and a democratic system of government. He noted that their willingness to compromise was evident in their acceptance of a transition period. Thus, he wrote, the real problem lay with Britain, which had failed to set a time limit on transition. A limit was crucial, because "to leave the duration of that period of transition unspecified would give any minority group the

power to hinder or indefinitely obstruct the establishment of the fully independent state."⁶⁵

On the evening of March 7, after his criticism of MacDonald's remark about the Arabs' "inability to compromise," Antonius met with Baggallay of the Foreign Office to discuss the draft report of the committee assigned to study the Hussein-McMahon correspondence.

It was a matter of particular satisfaction to me to find that *The Arab Awakening* was having a visible influence on the course of events. It had obviously been widely read before the conference had begun. During the progress of the conference, it was in constant use by both the British and Arab participants, and frequent references to it were made. Members of Parliament asked questions in the House of Commons about the authenticity of the documents I had made public, with the result that the government found it advisable at last, to publish the official versions of those texts, including the McMahon correspondence.⁶⁶

Although Antonius was pleased that the official documents would be published and that they would include his corrections of substantive errors in the original British translations, he was less satisfied with the report from the committee established to study the correspondence. He told Baggallay that the major problem with the report was that it failed to reach the logical conclusion—namely, that "it was an undeniable fact that the sheriff asked for the recognition of Arab independence over an area defined by limits which covered Palestine."⁶⁷ Although Antonius did not expect Britain to admit the truth of the whole of the Arab case, he considered it indefensible to claim at one and the same time that the correspondence was written in "vague and imprecise language" and that Palestine had been clearly excluded. He hoped Baggallay could persuade Maugham at least to support the conclusion "that unless Palestine was specifically and unmistakably excluded . . . it must be considered to be included in the area in which Great Britain was to recognize and uphold the independence of the Arabs."⁶⁸ Baggallay felt that "Antonius is quite right in substance, . . . and that it would be only honest to make the admission for which he asks."⁶⁹ But Maugham considered it "tactically unwise" to admit that Britain had made a mistake, and he rejected Antonius's request for British recognition of Palestine's inclusion in the territory promised independence. He also refused to support the proposal that "the whole correspondence was so hopelessly confused and muddled that no one could legitimately say that Palestine was excluded or included."⁷⁰ In Lord Maugham's view, since the onus of exclusion lay on Britain's agreeing with this statement, "this would have meant that the Arab contentions were right."⁷¹ Thus, Maugham aimed to go no further than asserting that the exclusion of Palestine from

independence was "not so specific and unmistakable as it was thought to be at the time."⁷²

On March 15, MacDonald effectively rejected Palestinian demands for independence during his presentation of the final British proposals to the Arab delegation. Antonius felt that MacDonald's proposal that Britain would support the eventual establishment of an independent Palestine state but that the state could be neither Arab nor Jewish was a contradiction. For Antonius, this was impossible, because a Palestinian state was synonymous with an Arab state: "After the transitional period, the Palestinian State would be independent, and if the majority in it were Arab, how could positive steps be taken to prohibit the establishment of an Arab State?"⁷³ He argued that the British denial of a Palestinian Arab state was not only illogical but also unnecessary, since Palestinians had accepted safeguards for Jewish minority rights and British commercial and strategic interests in the area. In addition, the British proposal for a ten-year transition period to self-government appeared to offer little more than what MacMichael termed an "unreal and illusory" step toward self-rule.⁷⁴ The proposed transitional government would begin with the nomination of Palestinians to the executive and advisory councils. Subsequently, Palestinians would acquire increased legislative powers and would be appointed to head certain departments. In Antonius's opinion, the problem was not only that the high commissioner would retain supreme authority but that the system of government was designed to support parity, and ending the transition period would be contingent on proof of Arab-Jewish cooperation.⁷⁵ He well understood how those who did not want to see a democratic Palestinian state could foment trouble.

MacDonald also informed the Arab delegates that the British proposed to support the entry of 75,000 Jewish immigrants over a five-year period to raise the Jewish proportion of the population to one-third of the total. Antonius asked whether MacDonald had arrived at this number through a careful consideration of the social, political, and psychological factors and the absorptive capacity of the economy or whether the figure was arbitrary.⁷⁶ MacDonald claimed that all factors had been taken into account; but other British officials, including C. W. Baxter, counselor for the Foreign Office, and the Foreign Office's parliamentary undersecretary of state, R. A. Butler, were critical of MacDonald's proposal. They understood that an additional 75,000 Jewish immigrants would increase the Jewish proportion of the population beyond one-third,⁷⁷ and they also knew that MacDonald had arbitrarily chosen this figure because it was the highest one he thought the Arabs might accept:

The present figure of 75,000 is a purely arbitrary figure; it was fixed upon as the highest figure, which Mr. MacDonald thought he could get Fuad Hamza

and his colleagues Ali Maher and Tawfiq Suwaidi to accept. The draft White Paper says the figure was fixed as the figure which would bring the Jewish population up to approximately one-third of the total population of the country. But this statement [according to Colonial Office figures] is not true.⁷⁸

As the conference ended and delegates began to leave London during the third and fourth weeks of March, Antonius carefully noted the Arab delegates' reactions to the proposals. In general, he found the non-Palestinian Arab delegates and the Egyptian delegates, in particular, quite satisfied with the British proposals. Indeed, before Hamza left London for Beirut and additional meetings with Amir Faisal and Maher in Egypt, he, Suwaidi, and the Egyptian ambassador in London gave Antonius an account of their informal March 24 meeting with British representatives. They told Antonius that they were in "quite a good mood" and that "the hurdles which remained between [the Arabs and the British] were not large."⁷⁹ Antonius had been in the game far longer and far more intensely and intimately than had any other delegate. His sense of optimism was tempered by his awareness of Palestinians' vulnerability to Zionist and imperial resistance to Palestinian independence. He remained behind to conduct follow-up meetings and discuss unresolved items.

Despite the inconclusive nature of the conference, many considered it a breakthrough. Harold Beeley, who met Antonius twice during the conference and later headed up the Palestine desk in the Eastern Department of the Foreign Office, remembered that it was "the force and persuasiveness of [Antonius's] advocacy [that] obliged the British government to modify their previous interpretation of the promises made to Arabs and Jews during the First World War."⁸⁰ Here was a moment of seeming triumph; at long last, independence seemed at hand, and Antonius and Palestinians could begin to envision a life beyond the strain of an unequal struggle with empire. This sense of triumph, however, would turn to bitterness as the British once again went back on their word.

Notes

1. Albert Hourani, *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East* (London: Macmillan, 1981), p. 196.

2. In Hourani's estimation, Antonius was the leading Arab delegate (Albert Hourani, conversation with author, 14 March 1985, Oxford).

3. Letter from J. Loder Park to Charles Crane, 15 February 1939, in the George Antonius papers, vol. 3, archives of the Institute of Current World Affairs [hereafter, ICWA]. The Institute donated a full set of Antonius's ICWA papers and cor-

respondence to the Israel State Archives (author's telephone conversation with ICWA representative, 1999).

4. Hourani, *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East*, pp. 197–198.

5. Letter from Paul Monroe to Walter Rogers, 24 March 1939, vol. 3, Antonius papers, ICWA.

6. Letter from Harry R. Snyder to Walter Rogers, 6 February 1939, New York, ICWA.

7. Memorandum, 19 January 1939, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23219.

8. George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1938), p. 177.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 178.

10. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, pp. 177–178, and footnotes on pp. 421–427. It is not known whether Antonius knew about or would have agreed with Tibawi's assertion that Gilbert Clayton was the first to coin the phrase "west of Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo" to reduce "complete Arab independence to autonomy under British control" (A. L. Tibawi, *Anglo-Arab Relations and the Question of Palestine* [London: Luzac, 1978], pp. 78, 85–87).

11. Arnold Toynbee, "The Trouble in Palestine," *New Republic* (6 September 1922); excerpt in Antonius file, Israel State Archives [hereafter, ISA], Hakiryra, record group 65, file 2755, pp. 318–319.

12. *Ibid.*

13. Baggallay, notes on the January 1939 memorandum concerning the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23231.

14. Susan Lee Hattis, *The Bi-National Idea in Palestine during Mandatory Times* (Haifa: Shikmona, 1972), p. 202.

15. The mandatory government had deported members of the Arab Higher Committee, including Jamal Husseini, to the Seychelles islands in late 1937.

16. Letter from Antonius to Rogers, 20 January 1939, vol. 3, Antonius papers, ICWA.

17. Antonius's sources included the Egyptian prime minister, whom the British had asked (as Antonius told Rives Childs at the U.S. Department of State on January 10, 1939) "to approach the mufti and to sound him out as to whether he would be disposed to take part in a round table conference on Palestine with representatives of the British government, Dr. Weizmann, and with representatives of [neighboring] Arab states" (Hattis, *The Bi-National Idea*, p. 202).

18. Letter from Antonius to Rogers, 20 January 1939, vol. 3, Antonius papers, ICWA.

19. Letter from Antonius to Rogers, 15 February 1939, vol. 3, Antonius papers, ICWA.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.* Maher was chief of the royal cabinet in Egypt and member of the Egyptian delegation at the conference; Faisal, son of King Ibn Saud, headed the delegation from Saudi Arabia.

22. Letter from Antonius to Rogers, 15 February 1939, vol. 3, Antonius papers, ICWA.

23. Nashashibi's National Defense Party joined with the Mufti Haj Amin al Husseini's Palestinian Arab Party and others to form the Arab Higher Committee

in 1936; however, the Nashashibi political party withdrew in July 1937 in support of the Peel partition plan. See Yehoshua Porath, *The Palestine Arab National Movement: From Riots to Rebellion*, vol. 2: 1929–1939 (London: Frank Cass, 1977), pp. 66–68.

24. The Arab Higher Committee was established on April 25, 1936 to represent all Palestinian political parties. The committee immediately called for a strike and for other acts of civil disobedience in pursuit of Palestinian goals of a representative government and an end to Jewish immigration and land acquisition.

25. Minutes of 9 February 1939 meeting, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23223.

26. Letter from Antonius to Rogers, 15 February 1939, vol. 3, Antonius papers, ICWA.

27. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 389.

28. Minutes of 15 February 1939 meeting, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23224.

29. Ibid.

30. Letter from Antonius to Rogers, 6 April 1919, vol. 3, Antonius papers, ICWA.

31. Antonius, Memorandum on British Pledges to the Arabs, 23 February 1939, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23227.

32. Ibid., p. 141. See texts of correspondence in Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, pp. 413–427.

33. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 179.

34. Antonius, Memorandum, 23 February 1939, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23227, p. 138.

35. Baggallay, notes on Antonius's 23 February 1939 memorandum, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23231, p. 319.

36. McDonnell, 27 February 1939 memorandum, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23231, p. 339.

37. See text in Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, pp. 433–434.

38. British memorandum, 21 February 1939, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23224, p. 323.

39. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, pp. 271–272.

40. British memorandum, 21 February 1939, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23224, pp. 322–324.

41. Ibid., p. 320.

42. Zionists focusing on the 1939 London Congress included Chaim Weizmann, president of the World Zionist Organization, and David Ben-Gurion, chairperson of the Jewish Agency. Porath notes, "The majority of the Jewish Delegation refused to accept anything which would ensure the permanent minority position of the Jews in Palestine" (Porath, *The Arab National Movement*, p. 286). Regarding the informal Arab-Jewish meetings beginning on February 23, participants included Weizmann, Ben-Gurion, and the Egyptian delegates Maher and Fuad Hamza, as well as Tawfiq al Suwaidi, representative for Iraq. The Arabs sought to "slow down" the Zionist enterprise, but Ben-Gurion argued that the efforts of the Jewish National Home should be "doubled" because he felt that 16 million Jews had a right to go to Palestine (Minutes of Arab-Jewish meeting, 7 March 1939, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23228).

43. Minutes of 16 February 1939 meeting, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23224, pp. 137–138.

44. For elaboration, please see the work of Ammiel Alcalay, *After Jews and Arabs: Remaking Levantine Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

45. Minutes of 18 February 1939 meeting, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23224.
46. Minutes of 16 February 1939 meeting, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23224, p. 138.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid., pp. 141–143.
49. Minutes of 16 and 18 February 1939 meetings, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23224.
50. Minutes of 19 February meeting, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23225.
51. Ibid.
52. Sir Harold MacMichael to Malcolm MacDonald, 22 February 1939, telegram no. 211, E. 1446/0/31, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23225, p. 136.
53. Ibid., pp. 137–141.
54. Minutes of 23 February 1939 Cabinet Meeting, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23226, p. 19.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid., p. 20.
57. Ibid.
58. Minutes of 4 March 1939 Policy Committee Meeting, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23227, p. 245.
59. Ibid., pp. 244–245.
60. Ibid., p. 245.
61. Ibid., p. 251.
62. Minutes of 15 February 1939 Cabinet Meeting, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23224.
63. Minutes of 7 March 1939 Policy Committee Meeting, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23227.
64. Ibid., p. 379.
65. Letter from Antonius to the editor of the *Times* [London], 20 March 1939.
66. Letter from Antonius to Rogers, 6 April 1939, vol. 3, Antonius papers, ICWA.
67. Baggallay, notes on meeting with Antonius, 7 March 1939, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23228, p. 68.
68. Ibid., p. 72.
69. Ibid., p. 64.
70. Baggallay, notes, 18 March 1939, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23231, p. 319.
71. Ibid.
72. Baggallay, notes on conversation with George Antonius about draft report of the commission appointed to consider the McMahon-Hussein correspondence, 7 March 1939, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23228, p. 73; Final Draft Report for Committee on Pledges, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23221.
73. Minutes of 15 March 1939 meeting, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23230, p. 129.
74. Telegram from Sir Harold MacMichael to Malcolm MacDonald, 8 March 1939, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23228.
75. Minutes of 15 March 1939 meeting, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23230. The British government proposed to make Palestinian independence contingent upon Jewish consent because, as Porath notes, “since the chances of such an agreement were slim indeed, this formula could serve as a means to ensure the continuation of rule in Palestine” (Porath, *The Arab National Movement*, p. 286).
76. Minutes of 15 March 1939 meeting, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23230.
77. Baxter and Butler comments on Draft of White Paper, 6 April 1939, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23233, p. 159.

78. *Ibid.* Suwaidi, whom Antonius met during his work on the British government missions in 1925, became the principal Iraqi delegate when a few days into the conference Nuri had to return to Iraq suddenly to deal with urgent problems; Maher and Hamza, the Saudi delegate, were both members of the Egyptian delegation.

79. Notes on Antonius and Butler meeting of 30 March, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23232, p. 262.

80. Harold Beeley, "Ernest Bevin and Palestine," in *Studies in Arab History: The Antonius Lectures, 1978–1987*, ed. Derek Hopwood (New York: St. Martin's, 1990), p. 117.

2

The Arab Nation

The open air I sing, freedom, toleration,

(Take here the mainest lesson—less from books—less from the schools,)

*The common day and night—the common earth and waters, your farm—your
work—trade—occupation,*

The democratic wisdom underneath like solid ground for all.

—Walt Whitman, “The Commonplace”

This chapter explores Antonius’s view of the culture and social capital of the Arab nation. For beyond the factionalism, divisions, and inequities of the day, the Arab nation remained a centuries-old world of culture and institutions promoting shared meaning and a moral framework of inclusive diversity. Antonius personified this world and tried to promote it. He first discovered it through his family, the Syrian expatriate community in Egypt, through his mother’s salon, his father’s work, and a first-class education in Alexandria and Cambridge. He was one of the first historians to go beyond the tradition of political and elite history to write about the common people. He was also one of the first to recognize the significance of social capital—of trust and cooperation—in nation building. He saw social capital as an important public good to be protected and increased. It was a nation’s fundamental resource for developing capacity and competence. He saw the existing stocks of social capital as instrumental in guiding good governance to generate increasing trust, coordination, collaboration, civic engagement, reciprocity, and collective effort. Although the formal instruments of Arab self-government were lacking under Ottoman imperial rule, the fundamentals of civic virtue and community were in place in the Arab nation in sufficient quantity and quality to support decentralized governance. The thesis of this chapter is that the Arab nation, which patriots such as Antonius defended as a

world rich in social capital and sought to help toward self-governance, contained the basic ingredients for the indigenous development of a moral democracy.

The Levantine Legacy: Inclusive Diversity

George Antonius was born to a Greek Orthodox family in the village of Dair al-Qamar in Greater Syria (in what is now Lebanon) on October 19, 1891.¹ He was the third of five boys. His two older brothers, Michael and Edward, died young. Of Albert, the fourth, little is known, as he appears to have moved away early on. Constantine, the youngest, followed their father into commerce. George was most like their mother, by inclination an intellectual. According to friends and Soraya Antonius, George and his wife Katy's only child, he had a wonderful sense of humor, won numerous awards for academic excellence, and supported the Arab cause during his student years.

Dair al-Qamar was a beautiful Druze and Christian village in the Lebanese mountains (*Chouf*) of Greater Syria, a historically and culturally unified area comprising current-day Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel, and the West Bank and Gaza. In 1902, when George was ten, Habib, his father, moved the family to Alexandria, where he subsequently flourished in the lucrative cotton trade until his death in 1931. George was 40 years old when his father passed away. George's mother, Emile (pronounced like *Emily*), who returned to the *Chouf* in 1931 after Habib's death, was an "eccentric bluestocking intellectual" who held literary salons in the family's homes in Syria and Egypt.² Antonius's intellectual, emotional, and social development began in the *Chouf* and in the bustling city of Alexandria, in a household that opened itself to the best the world had to offer. Experiencing village life in the *Chouf* and receiving a world-class education empowered Antonius in extraordinary ways. Loving parents doted on him but raised him with high standards and expectations for his academic excellence and eventual public service. Antonius attended the leading academic institutions in Egypt (Victoria College) and England (Cambridge University) and was introduced by a brilliant mother and most successful father to a robust world of commerce, trade, literature, and ideas. He was raised to have good form, to be charming and witty, but also raised to think critically, with sensitivity to the psychological and moral dimensions of human life and public policy.

Antonius's father's family, previously called Mtanios, came from the village of Anbal, near Dair al-Qamar, in the *Chouf*. Anbal was a village like many others in the *Chouf* and in Syria, in which it was not uncommon for families of the same lineage to have different religions.³ For ex-

ample, the Shihab family of Lebanon—part of the Ottoman elite—included Maronites, Druzes, and Sunnis. Although cousins were united by bloodline, there was considerable religious diversity in Lebanon, and sufficient cultural freedom to allow for conversion. Bashir, emir of the mountains in the early 1800s, understood that any leader who aspired to unite the people had to surmount religious sectarianism. Consequently, he kept his own religious affiliation concealed from the public, and he employed educated people from all religious faiths—Sunnis, Shiites, Maronites, Orthodox, and Druzes—including one of Antonius's relatives. When Bashir died, Druzes, Muslims, and Christians all claimed him as one of their own. His strategy, both political and religious, promoted the nonsectarian culture fundamental to a civil society and a nation.⁴

Antonius's Syrian homeland was part of the western portion of the Fertile Crescent, the Levantine landmass that stretches along the Mediterranean Sea from Turkey southwest through Egypt. The Levant has been home for centuries to a diverse collection of peoples whose roots date back to antiquity and whose religions include Judaism, Greek Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism and Protestant Christianity, and Islam. In cultural terms, the Levant is a hybrid world enriched by a legacy of interaction, accessibility, and social capital. In Antonius's words:

In the economic field, it had developed its agricultural and commercial life on a foundation of natural resources, and the whole country was criss-crossed with a close network of inter-dependent lines of activity, linking region to region, the countryside to the cities and the coast to the interior. It had also cultural and historical traditions of unity: ever since the Arab conquest, except for the interlude of the Crusades, it had formed one political unit and kept the language and the customs which it had begun to acquire in the seventh century.⁵

The works of Janet Abu-Lughod, Ammiel Alcalay, and others describe how, for centuries, the ancient Levantine world sustained customs and codes of conduct that promoted a virtuous capacity to get along. After the Crusades, sectarianism gained ground with British and French imperial competition in the nineteenth century, and with political inequalities institutionalized through the Ottoman Empire's distribution of rights and obligations along communal lines in favor of Muslims. Centuries earlier the Arab world had been distinguished by a culture of inclusive diversity that respected learning and transcended the religious conflict found in Europe. Along with China, the Arabs were in the forefront of learning for 1,000 years, including the period during which Europe suffered its Dark Ages, following the fall of Rome.

The desire to push human knowledge forward did not die out. At the time when it was missing in Europe, it was very much in evidence in both China and the Arab world. Modern mathematics and our system of numbering come from the Arabs. At the end of the Dark Ages, Europe's knowledge of its own ancient thinkers (Aristotle, Plato) had to return to Europe via the Arab scholars. China and the Arab world were the centers of human learning for a millennium.⁶

Antonius saw contemporary Arabs united in "conscious partnership to past greatness," as well as in the continuity of a common language, customs, and learning: "[I]n the eighth and ninth centuries, a civilization arose which was far in advance of the culture of the contemporary world. Literature, philosophy and the sciences flourished, and cast their light in the world steeped in the barbarism of the early Middle Ages, and for five hundred years Europe remained in intellectual subjection to the scholars of the [Arab-Islamic] Golden Age."⁷

Furthermore, the Arab nation grew by consent rather than coercion, with culture and customs promoting trust and cooperation across religious and other lines. Arabs sustained centuries of long-distance caravan trade and agricultural life; built networks of commerce, crafts, and trade; and learned to live and work together rather than fight with one another. Despite the occasional strife and scars from the Crusades, sectarianism was not part of the indigenous Levantine social or economic landscape.⁸ Indeed, for centuries people of diverse ancestry and religion learned to live together within a framework of social norms and networks promoting trust and cooperation.⁹ They did so by maneuvering to build a common culture of morality and meaning "between and within an intersection of cultures and languages."¹⁰

Over the centuries, as cooperation grew within and between "communal and familial ties, along with an international network of trade and communications," one finds that "the dense and intricate interconnectedness of the Levantine world—its conceptual and concrete, though not necessarily political, unity and texture—remained remarkably intact, particularly for the Jews, well into the twentieth century."¹¹ From east to west and north to south, migrations, conquerors (e.g., Alexander the Great (fourth century B.C.), the Roman Empire (A.D. 64), and crusaders (beginning in the eleventh century) left their mark. Despite intrusions and disruptions, local people built a world of mutual support that secured the long-standing seafaring and overland trade that enriched the Levant with a continuous flow of goods, people, and ideas. Thousands of villages, towns, and cities were connected through the ancient web of commerce. As European trade expanded from the sixteenth century on, local and regional trade persisted. By the twentieth century, Haifa and

other Levantine port cities were enjoying a robust regional trade, balancing European commercial exchange with an internal market noteworthy for its dynamism. "The old Eastern Mediterranean economic system encompassing Syria, Egypt, and the central regions of the empire had not been entirely eroded by the powerful centrifugal economic pressures exerted by Europe," according to Rashid Khalidi.¹² Whereas Levantines improved the process of economic exchange by creating codes of reciprocity and networks of mutual support that leveled the playing field and restrained domination by any single group, few institutions restrained European traders. Abu-Lughod traces the history of the Levant in contrast to European trends:

In the earlier system . . . the overall pattern of trade involved a large number of players whose power was relatively equal. No single participant in the thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century world system dominated the whole, and most participants (with the possible exception of the Mongols) benefited from coexistence and mutual tolerance. Individual rulers did jealously seek to control the terms of trade and the "foreign traders" in their own ports and inland centers, but the ambition to dominate the entire system seemed beyond their needs and aspirations (and probably capacities). The change in the "rules of the game" introduced by the European newcomers in the sixteenth century, therefore, caught the older players off guard.¹³

Arab Nation: A Culture and a Moral Framework of Being

One premise of this book is that the Arab nation provided a common culture and moral framework for Arabs of the Middle East well before World War I. The Arab nation was one culture by virtue of its shared language, meanings, and customs. Although the Arab world began in the desert of Arabia, it developed into a nation through the cultivation of a moral framework of shared meaning and civic virtue that transformed exclusive and insular family and tribal norms and customs into inclusive social norms and customs. Social capital generated through a multiplicity of ties, shared language, customs, and a sense of *asabiyah* (esprit de corps) promoted a heterogeneous world of increasing civility and inclusive diversity tolerant and respectful of religious and other differences. Despite the trauma of the European Crusades, Arabs of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faiths interacted without the medieval anti-Semitism of Christian Europe or its racist version based on nineteenth-century European reductionist views of science and man. Indeed, as Antonius reminded Europeans, there was an Arab legacy of religious tolerance that not only protected people of diverse faiths from persecution but that also enabled

them to flourish—most notably, under Muslim rulers during the height of Islamic civilization:

There is no anti-Semitism in the Arab mind. The Arab mind throughout its history has been singularly free from any such thing as anti-Semitism, which we all know, is a European and not an Arab invention, and I am sorry to say, a European Christian invention; but the Arabs throughout their history, and more particularly, the Moslems, have been entirely free of the taint of anti-Semitism; and it is a fact that the greatest days of Jewish efflorescence [since the Dispersion] have taken place when the Jews were under Moslem rule, whether in Baghdad, Cordova, or Cairo, or anywhere else where large Jewish communities were living under the rule of Moslem [sic].¹⁴

By the twentieth century, Syria had become the heartland of the Arab nation, with a legacy of great learning, commerce, and trade, as well as the homeland of some of the nation's most ardent critics of empire and proponents of decentralization. Geographically, the nation ran clockwise from Greater Syria eastward through Iraq; southward through the Arabian Peninsula and Gulf states of current-day Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, and Yemen; and westward through Oman, Sudan, Egypt, and the North African states of Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, and Morocco on the Mediterranean coast. The nation began with a westward migration from the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century and expanded from the desert to embrace thousands of settled communities in ancient villages, towns, and cities. Cultivators, artisans, merchants, traders, pastoralists, bankers, manufacturers, publishers, writers, and scholars of diverse origin, ethnicity, and religion were gradually linked over time into a vast network of trade and communication. By the tenth century, an Islamic and Arab world was clearly visible, with Syria and Iraq at its center; the majority of people had become Muslim and spoke Arabic. Between the eighth and twelfth centuries A.D., the Islamic and Arab world flourished, contributing a host of scientific breakthroughs in astronomy, algebra, medicine, and other areas that helped ignite the later European Renaissance. Sophisticated craft, trading, and banking networks were distinctly Arab creations. The nation flourished through institutions that generated the social capital needed for trade and commerce. Its inhabitants learned to trust people outside their immediate groups, families, tribes, and religions. Reflecting on the Arab nation's unity, Antonius wrote:

Across the mosaic of constitutional patchwork, a current of kinship and solidarity flows, which dismemberment has not stifled and frontiers do not seem able to arrest. This sense of unity is perhaps only relative: the races are not everywhere homogeneous, the standards of culture not always uniform.

But it has this element of strength and permanence that it rests on fundamentals: a common language and religion, a conscious partnership in past greatness and present misfortune, and faith in the future in store.¹⁵

Antonius recalled his childhood in the *Chouf* as the best years of his life.¹⁶ Childhood memories and attachments run deep. For Antonius, the *Chouf* was empowering, and its natural beauty liberating. In the recollection of Edward Atiyah, who grew up with a similar *Chouf* mountain village experience in the early twentieth century: "You ran along the village street feeling free and safe, intoxicated with the air and the joy of arrival. . . . Then you met other children and ran up the hillside with them to play among the pine and olive trees."¹⁷ The intensity and depth of Antonius's attachment to and defense of his homeland and cultivators throughout his life suggest that his love and devotion began as a child. He had a special place in his heart for the villagers, artisans, and cultivators of the land.¹⁸ As a child, he became part of their world. After Antonius left for Alexandria, he sustained his roots through return visits during summer months and holidays with family. The sense of liberty and the tough moral character and shrewdness of ordinary men and women never left him. It grounded him in a way that allowed him never to lose his way, because he learned well from his early village environment to trust in common people.

In Greater Syria, with its ancient network of trade and commerce and its settled patterns of cultivation, deeply rooted customs were handed down through the family, over centuries, from father to son and from mother to daughter. Old farming communities enjoyed a shared moral and cultural world. They were not all saints. They had their share of feuds, violence, and recrimination, their factions, divisions, and disputes. Still, as cultivators and people of the land, they shared a love of and devotion to family and land. Their material conditions of life were modest compared to their wealth of social capital. Person to person, generation to generation, century to century, they passed on robust networks and norms of common courtesy and caring about one another. Neighbors and villagers watched out for one another, maintaining a moral world just as their fathers and grandfathers had done before them. They built horizontal social relations and civic communities not because of some central authority or romantic notion but rather "for security, for justice and for fellowship."¹⁹ In a generic sense, their institutions were pragmatic customs rather than "invented tradition," and "technical" rather than "ideological" solutions to common problems.²⁰ One example of their social capital is provided by the traditional rotation of land among cultivators under the *mushaa* communal landholding system. Although Europeans initially considered this system archaic, it is now generally viewed as a practical,

nonideological instrument that helped the community more than it hindered investment or evolution in agriculture.²¹

After the Golden Age, "Arab culture, which had civilized the world, sank into decadence."²² In the early 1800s, however, after nearly 700 years of lesser glory, a renaissance in language, learning, literature, and ideas took place in Syria. Antonius the historian saw this as the beginning of a cultural revival that helped remind his nation of the past foundation of its greatness—that is, of a world based on "unison and concord" and "language and intellectual freedom" rather than on "ignorance and fanaticism." He saw the ancient world of Islam, "which had conquered the world by its simplicity," as essentially a moral framework built on faith and good works.²³ Islam was a first line of defense against poverty; and as the Koran spread the message through long-distance traders and others, it helped generate a moral culture that connected persons of faith to a universal framework of caring for one another, elevating the individual beyond ego and tribe, beyond division and "the ramparts of pride and tradition."²⁴ Antonius describes how these cultural connections gave rise to the early Arab national movement:

[It] had come into being, as we have seen, thanks to a cultural and social awakening of which the mainsprings were the literary revival and the revulsion of feeling caused by the massacres of 1860. The forces that had set it in motion were not only of a moral order, unaffected by economic needs or political theories, but they were also forces of spontaneous origin, generated by emotions from within. The movement had derived its ideas from the familial sources of its environment, long before it took to borrowing the Western notions of political evolution.²⁵

Herbert Blumer notes that "culture as a conception, whether defined as custom, tradition, norm, value, rule, or such like, is clearly derived from what people do."²⁶ What people do reflects the character of their institutions, which are either moral—that is, enabling human capacity and social capital—or immoral, in which case they cripple capacity and stunt growth. As a nation promotes horizontal relationships, networks, and norms that institutionalize cooperation, it cultivates civic virtue and trust; and all of this strengthens and improves the efficiency of whatever vertical relationships exist. This cultivation of social capital provides the social and moral foundation that reduces transaction costs in trade and commerce and enriches humanity and civil society. Antonius understood the significance of culture. "Quite apart from the material damage, which may be overtaking them" under colonial rule, Arab patriots were most concerned with the "question of damage to their own culture and to their

own standards in life," he wrote. "In other words, to the moral side. They feel Arab values and Arab cultural ideas are in danger."²⁷

With regard to the nation, Antonius shared the views of Columbia University professor and historian Carlton Hayes, with whom he formed a friendship in the 1930s. Hayes, a leading scholar who initiated the study of the nation and nationalism in American academia, felt that "linguistic, historical, and cultural peculiarities" help people feel a part of a nation:

Uniformity of language tends to promote like-mindedness, to provide an inclusive set of ideas as well as of words. . . . Language, too, is the medium in which is expressed the memory of successful achievement or distressing hardship shared in common, and thereby it acquires cementing value for a nationality. It is the bridge between the present and the past. In the words of Ossian, "It is the voice of years that are gone; they roll before me with all their deeds."²⁸

"Arabic [is] the great symbol and the most efficacious instrument of Arab unity," Antonius wrote. He continued: "[The] importance of Arabic revival [is] not sufficiently realized, especially as regards the creation of a new classical idiom. The path to political union starts from moral and cultural union. This is provided by Arabic."²⁹ Antonius supported the creation of an Arab technical lexicon and a continuous updating of the language, ever aware of the Arabic language's unusual durability and sustained role within the minds of so many:

It is an extraordinary phenomenon that wherever Arabic has spread it has remained to the present day, even where the power upon which Arab life was established had disappeared. It is a phenomenon, which you do not find with any other language, with the possible exception of Spanish in South America; but wherever the Arabs went, in Egypt, in Syria, in Iraq, their language displaced the existing languages. Latin disappeared from the countries of the Roman Empire in which it was spoken; Greek similarly. The Arabs came, their language displaced those former languages, and when Arab power itself had disappeared and been succeeded by another power with another language, the Arabic language with its extraordinary vitality and its extraordinary hold on the minds of the people remained. That may seem to you a digression, but it is important for the light it throws on the powerful hold the Arabic language and the Arabic culture have on the Arab mind.³⁰

R. A. Nicholson also wrote that the Arab language was "an invisible bond between diverse clans and formed, whether consciously or not, the

basis of a national community of sentiment."³¹ Jürgen Habermas saw the power of language

as a kind of transformer; because psychic processes such as sensations, needs and feelings are fitted into structures of linguistic intersubjectivity, inner episodes or experiences are transformed into intentional contents—that is, cognitions into statements, needs and feeling into normative expectations (precepts and values). This transformation produces the distinction, rich in consequences, between the subjectivity of opinion, wanting, pleasure and pain, on the one hand, and the utterances and norms that appear with a claim to generality [*Allgemeinheitsanspruch*] on the other. Generality means objectivity of knowledge and legitimacy of valid norms. Both insure the community of shared meaning [*Gemeinsamkeit*] that is constitutive for the socio-cultural life-world.³²

Hayes (and Antonius) distinguished between nation and nationalism as follows: "Nation," "nationality," and "patriotism" represent age-old and natural human expressions of affection, sociability, and gregariousness, as well as a shared sense of belonging.³³ The nation becomes a cultural and moral framework that refines human conduct (social interaction) through natural bonds of affection and love that restrain abuse of power. Norms of reciprocity, and collective and horizontal networks of mutual support, transform individuals into social beings and tribes into nations. In contrast to the moral and cultural world of nations, Hayes considered nationalism an aberration. There is nothing wrong with a man loving his home and nation; the danger lies in the translation of such attachments into institutions and myths that harm humanity. Nationalism is a modern, artificial creation born of European industrialization, centralized state formation, and nineteenth-century theories of race. At its worst, nationalism creates a world of "amoral familism" that promotes "vertical (often unstable) relations of authority and dependence, with little or no horizontal solidarity among equals," and is dominated by vertical social relations embedded in hierarchical and centralized state power.³⁴

Nationalism defines individuals as passive and uncritical subjects within an unprincipled and typically xenophobic group identity. With little trust and cooperation within or outside the group, a dangerously amoral culture of coercion and blind allegiance dominates. Absent a moral foundation promoting inclusive diversity based on respect for the dignity of individuals, an insular group identity prevails. Antonius directly witnessed one example of this phenomenon: the pre-World War I "movement of purely Turkish nationalism," with its "new assertion of the Turanian origins of the Turkish people . . . [effectively negating] the

doctrine of Ottomanism, which aimed at uniting the different races of the empire into one nation on a basis of equality for all."³⁵ The twentieth-century militarism, racism, and barbarism of Japan and Germany also provide classic examples of the consequences of nationalism at its worst.

Nations flourish through rules and governance mechanisms that restrain abuse of power and enable civil society to strive for the public good. Historically, patriots resist abuse and defend threatened nations. Such was the case for the Arab national movement. Antonius noted the movement's "hatred of barriers and divisions, and . . . its fervent belief in the virtues of union and concord, which it regarded as the principle of salvation."³⁶ Political demands for increasing autonomy and eventual independence intensified due to Turkish chauvinism, centralization of power, and discrimination against Arab culture, language, and representation. "The Arab national movement began as a cultural movement which had nothing to do with politics in its early days or with any of the concepts of nationalism which had begun to appear in Europe. It began entirely independently, as a cultural revival, and it was not until a generation or two after that the first signs appeared of this cultural movement turning to politics and developing into a movement for national independence."³⁷ Describing the nineteenth-century Arab patriot Kawakibi, Antonius sketched what could well have been a self-portrait:

It is certain that he had a profound belief in the destiny of Islam and of the Arab race, and a profound hatred of intolerance and injustice—injustice to the poor especially. He is described as a brilliant talker. . . . His circle of friends was large and varied: it included Christians and Jews, as well as Moslems, for he practiced what he often proclaimed, namely, that patriotism was above distinctions of creed.³⁸

The Ottoman Empire and the Arab National Movement

In the sixteenth century the Ottoman Empire, headquartered in Constantinople, conquered most of the Arab-speaking world and became one of the largest and longest-lasting multinational empires the world has known. Throughout the four centuries of Ottoman rule, however, the Arab nation was able to sustain its own language, culture, and customs—in part because the Ottoman Empire was not designed to pursue cultural hegemony. The imperial administration allowed for "diverse ethnic, religious, economic, and occupational groups"³⁹ to the extent that "Arab cities in the Ottoman era were characterized by the existence of a great diversity of community organizations (*taifa*, pl. *tawaiif*) that played a very important role in the most varied domains: professional communities . . .

religious and national communities . . . and geographical communities."⁴⁰ Although the empire discriminated against non-Muslims (e.g., through taxation), no crippling prejudice or animosity was directed at them. There was no culture of anti-Semitism, which Antonius dismissed as "a European Christian invention." Diversity and tolerance continued relatively undisturbed under the Ottomans.

Under Ottoman administration Arab territorial division into political and administrative structures did not radically fracture the nation. Local leaders were played off against each other now and again, but overall the Arab territories were regarded as a single unit. Although the Ottomans subdivided Greater Syria into the *vilayets* of Palestine, Beirut, Damascus, and Aleppo, which were managed by local urban-based notables whose wealth came from trade and agriculture, Greater Syria remained a cohesive cultural and geographic unit.⁴¹ Local differences were no greater than one might find among the French provinces of Normandie, Bretagne, Provence, and Savoie, for indigenous institutions did not promote artificial divisions along geographic, sectarian, ethnic, or racial lines. As Antonius noted: "Palestine has always been an integral part of Syria. . . . There are dialectical differences, certain small differences of customs, local differences, but on the whole the differences are trivial. For instance, I do not think the difference between Jerusalem and Damascus from the point of view of dialect and customs is as great as the difference between, say, Yorkshire and Somerset. The country is one in every way, it has always lived and worked and fought as one."⁴²

To Antonius, the Arab nation—through a common language, history, and culture—remained a cohesive moral world of shared meaning. The richly diverse population had multiple points of association through attachments to family, to neighbors, to work, to village or town, and (more artificially) to empire. Group solidarity was woven in "circular and concentric circles" through family and tributary ties, and connections with history and ancestors, far more than through any fixation on sectarianism.⁴³ People worked together and sustained a neighborliness and civility despite their diversity of background as Jew, Muslim, Druze, Christian, or otherwise in Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria as a whole. For, despite differences, they were patriots in the ancient vein of meaning: They shared profound attachments to family and neighbor, and to the land. In Antonius's words, "The country had a unity of its own in more ways than one. In spite of the great diversity of its physical features, it was geographically one and formed a self-contained unit enclosed by well defined natural frontiers."⁴⁴ In spite of the heterogeneity of its people, Syria reflected a unity based on a continuity of culture, historical tradition, language, and customs. This included the practical construction of networks of communication, commerce, and trade that crisscrossed

the region. Far more than an abstract idea, political unity was generated through the culture and networks promoting interaction and accessibility.

Although the Ottomans were not so intrusive as to destroy local culture and social capital, their chronic neglect of local institutional capacity building and their depletion of local resources through the conscription of young men and taxes that were not reinvested for local development are hardly commendable. Arabs could hardly conceive of life without empire, and they appreciated the umbrella of Ottoman military security; but they were largely self-reliant and resented the conscription that took their youth into distant battles for the empire. By the early twentieth century (and probably earlier), newborn boys were occasionally registered under girls' names to avoid conscription. Arabs had become increasingly critical of Ottoman rule as they saw the widening gap between Ottomans and Europeans, the corruption of leadership, the misguided rule, and their corresponding vulnerability. There was little to admire in an empire that crippled nation building through the erosion of social capital, as occurred during the 1876–1909 reign of Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II, whose divide-and-rule strategy exploited and promoted “family quarrels, tribal disputes, and blood-feuds.”⁴⁵ As for the empire's overall neglect of capacity building, Roger Owen wrote:

The Ottoman government made very little positive effort to increase production. Limited financial resources, the lack of competent administrators, the growing technological gap between western Europe and the rest of the world, and the constraints imposed by Turkey's social structure and weakened international position all combined to set strict limits on the types of economic policies pursued. The nature of these limits can be seen with particular clarity in terms of government activity with regard to industry and trade, the agricultural sector and attempts to improve the system of transport.⁴⁶

Patriots typically resist tyranny and institutions that cripple their nation or threaten their family and property rights, including personal and collective ownership of the nation's assets. The Arab national movement, which began with a literary revival of Arab culture and language in mid-nineteenth-century Syria, acquired a political complexion between 1865 and 1880.⁴⁷ In Antonius's description:

[It] was never a regional movement in which Syria wanted independence for Syria, or Iraq wanted independence for Iraq. It was a movement of the whole Arab race working together to free themselves from Turkish rule and establish the Arab life, a life in which they would be able to feel masters in

their own home and pursue their destiny on a basis of the development of their language and their cultural values and traditions.⁴⁸

For Antonius, the 1860 bloodshed between Druzes and Christians in Lebanon marked a turning point in Arab relations with the Ottoman Empire. It signaled Ottoman failure to govern effectively for the good of the Arab nation, and served as a wake-up call for Arab patriots to intensify demands for autonomy. Antonius and others saw the 1860 bloodshed as rooted in ignorance and in mounting tension and conflict between peasants and landlords, between the Ottomans and Egypt's Mohammed Ali, and between French and British imperial rivalries that were translated into an artificially generated sectarianism through French favoritism toward Maronites and British favoritism toward Druzes.⁴⁹ In Antonius's words: "The upheaval of 1860 deserves to be regarded, in the history of the movement of ideas in Syria, as the decisive event of the nineteenth century. It awakened men's minds to the horrors of their moral stagnation and rekindled the zeal of those who saw that at the root of the country's tribulations was the sectarian hatred that thrives in ignorance."⁵⁰

Arab concerns mounted because of Ottoman manipulation of one group against another, especially after the 1830s, and because of Turkish failure to protect the nation from European intrusions that disrupted "the balance of power between various social groups"—most notably, the promotion of sectarianism in Lebanon during the last half of the nineteenth century.⁵¹ The patronizing arrogance of French "civilizing missions," their painful colonization of Arab North Africa, and their divisive promotion of sectarianism and secession through favoritism toward Christian Maronites in Lebanon generated serious unease among Syrians, who considered Lebanon an integral part of their homeland. The manipulation of one community against another threatened the greater Arab community. Few Arabs trusted European intentions; and they held the Ottomans responsible for the general failure to restrain divisive tendencies and protect the public good in Greater Syria.

Another critical turn in the Arab nationalist movement occurred with the Young Turk revolt of 1908. Antonius was 17 years old when this revolt ushered in a new, chauvinist Turkish nationalism that glorified early tribal ancestors, discriminated against Arabs, and centralized authority in the hands of Turks. Promised reform failed to materialize. The new constitution gave no weight to the principle of equality. Turkish was to replace Arabic in schools and official forums. Exclusively Turkish-speaking teachers were sent to teach in Arab schools. The minister of war withdrew Arab officers from their posts and excluded Arabs from military schools. Arab students were denied higher educational opportunities; only two participated in a 65-person study mission in Europe. Although

Arabs constituted half of the Ottoman Empire's population, they were underrepresented in government: Of 40 senators, 3 were Arabs; in the Chamber of Deputies, instead of the 120 seats that would have constituted equal representation, Arabs held 65; of 24 governors, 2 were Arabs.⁵² As the new Ottoman leadership promoted cultural chauvinism and xenophobic nationalism that discriminated against Arabs, Arab nationalists began to coordinate their efforts for reform more intensely, beginning with Arab autonomy and continuation of Arabic as the primary language in schools.

Some scholars have described the pre-1914 Arab national movement as an elite movement that gained the support of notables only after World War I; after the war, Arabism and the demand for independence succeeded the prewar Ottomanism and demands for autonomy. Before 1914 the Arab national movement was essentially an interelite conflict between notables seeking to stabilize their positions amid Ottoman reforms and socioeconomic changes resulting from the increasing penetration of the West into Syria. Bassam Tibi, historian and author, believes that the post-1914 movement was still led by this elite with large landholdings and Ottoman connections and that it remained politically conservative, failing to support the dissolution of pre-national forms of social and political commitment.⁵³ However, in the estimation of Antonius and a number of other scholars (e.g., Rashid Khalidi and Şükrü Hanioğlu), the national movement could not be reduced to a narrowly partisan effort spearheaded by the traditional elite and by opportunists, or by eccentrics who were attempting to mimic inappropriate European examples of state formation and nationalism.

Scholars in recent decades have corroborated Antonius's interpretation of the Arab national movement taking on a political complexion when Arab patriots organized to defend their nation amid the perceived dangers of Ottoman misrule. In Antonius's view, the movement was more than an interelite phenomenon, more than a struggle between "Ottomanists" (those resisting separation from the Ottoman Empire) and "Arabists" (Arab proto-nationalists).⁵⁴ Antonius did not perceive the Arab national movement as being dominated by self-centered opportunists or eccentrics mimicking inappropriate European ideas and experiences; nor was it an example of state-based nationalism emphasizing exclusive racist, tribal, or other roots. Where some scholars perceived narrowly partisan activity, Antonius saw moral authority and democratic authenticity, for the movement took local people and their concerns into consideration, and it was increasingly coordinated by a multifarious collection of ethically motivated Arab patriots within all major urban areas in the Ottoman Empire and in Egypt. These patriots were galvanized by the desire to achieve decentralized self-governance for Arab-speaking territo-

ries of the empire so as to enable their people to develop local and national capacity for the good of the "culture, economy, and political unity of the entire region before 1914."⁵⁵ Turkish scholars such as Şükrü Hanioğlu, and others (e.g., Rashid Khalidi), corroborate Antonius's story that prior to World War I, Turkish nationalism was indeed a racist movement that censored and excluded Arabs, compelling Arab patriots (including diverse students, writers, military men, and political leaders throughout Syria and in all the major Levantine cities—Damascus, Aleppo, Jerusalem, Beirut, Cairo, and Constantinople) to join the movement for increased Arab autonomy and local self-governance under the Ottoman Empire. They came together to resist tyranny and protect their nation from what they perceived as dangerous Turkish policies and mismanagement.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, some Syrian critics of the Ottoman Empire emigrated to the more liberal climate of Egypt, then under the rule of Great Britain, which had essentially run the country from behind the Egyptian throne since the riots of 1882. These prominent Syrians' perception of the British Empire as a lesser evil and a possible partner against the Ottomans did not endear them to Egyptian nationalists, who were seeking to increase their own self-rule. Although the Antonius family moved to Egypt for economic rather than political reasons, they were deeply attached to their homeland and identified with early Arab nationalists seeking reform. For them, as for other Syrian expatriates in Egypt, their country represented a world of meaning separate and distinct from Ottoman rule and the self-serving machinations of notables jostling for power and influence. Antonius became especially close to the early Syrian nationalists, including Faris Nimr, who called for increasing Arab provincial autonomy from Turkish rule. Nimr's son Albert went to school with the Antonius boys, and Nimr later became Antonius's father-in-law. "The old man," as Antonius affectionately called him, was a leading Arab nationalist who had been born in Syria in 1856 and had become one of the founders of a secret society that distributed pamphlets calling for Arab revolt. In 1883, after Sultan Abdul Hamid sought his death, Faris Nimr escaped to Egypt, where he helped found the prestigious publications *al-Muqtataf* and *al-Muqattam*.⁵⁶

Alexandria: Cosmopolitan Society of the Age

As rich as Antonius's early, formative years in Syria had been, the family's move to Alexandria in 1902, when he was ten years old, opened a larger world to him. Alexandria was then one of the world's leading cosmopolitan centers. It was a prosperous port city with a population nearing half a million. Ten percent of these were foreigners, including Syri-

ans, Greeks, Italians, French, British, Spaniards, Hungarians, Maltese, and other nationalities. Alexandria also was home to the largest Jewish population in the world—the majority of whom had lived there amicably for centuries.⁵⁷ In this enormous city, Antonius experienced a multicultural world of diverse languages and religions, where people learned to get along, to mingle, and to find shared meaning.

As Atiyah described the typical street scene: “Out in the streets, in the tram cars, in the shops, in the cafes you heard four or five languages spoken simultaneously—exclamations, greetings, sentences, half-sentences in Arabic, English, French, Italian, and Greek crowded in upon your ears in a veritable Tower-of-Babel jumble.”⁵⁸ Jacqueline Kahanoff wrote of similar memories dating from her childhood in Alexandria: “When I was a small child, it seemed natural that people understood each other although they spoke different languages, and were called by different names—Greek, Muslim, Syrian, Jewish, Christian, Arab, Italian, Tunisian, Armenian.”⁵⁹ And in the words of Jean Said Makdisi: “So many of my friends were Muslims, so many of them were Jews, so many of them belonged to other Christian sects, that religious coexistence in those days was not a matter of theory, principles or ideology. It was, quite simply, a way of life, and one that came so naturally to us that I became aware of it only when it was threatened later on.”⁶⁰ Of the tremendous capacity of Alexandrians to get along, Ilios Yannakakis wrote: “In peaceful coexistence one next to another in a spirit of tolerance and openness to the modern world, the communities represent a model of micro-society rooted in a foreign land. This offers them a psychological protection, a known world of religion and language. . . . But above all, they reflect a realm of culture, in the full meaning of the term.”⁶¹

With substantial trade streaming through the Suez Canal from India and the Far East and a booming cotton export economy since the mid-nineteenth century, Alexandria was “the New York of the East.”⁶² It was a hybrid national city bordered by water and dominated by commerce and trade. By the early 1900s, Alexandria’s reputation as a prosperous and charming coastal city had attracted people from all over the world. The historian Eric Hobsbawm’s parents met there, and the famed mystery writer Agatha Christie had her coming-out party there. This flourishing port city offered the latest in fashion, thousands of palatial estates, a tram, parks, elegant hotels, libraries, museums, galleries, and coffee shops. Throughout the year and especially in the summer months, when the royal court and diplomatic corps relocated there from Cairo, the town was enlivened by social activities, literary and musical programs, and visiting artists, including the Comédie Française, and opera stars from Milan.⁶³ Beneath the froth of champagne and chic, age-old attachments remained, sustaining an ancient sense of faith, a confidence in truth, and

a trust in the human capacity for good. The city reflected a wisdom and special charm as it sustained a rich diversity of deeply rooted private worlds of faith, culture, and custom within an increasing, shared public domain of social capital despite the local disparities and the rough-and-tumble of global exchange.

Despite the obvious inequality between rich and poor and the unequal relations between Britain and Egypt, Alexandria was generating a national culture and civil society based on human and social capital. A handful of men controlled the levers, and a very small stratum became very wealthy; but the majority of residents were poor Egyptians and Nubians living in unserviced shantytowns and villages, and working as unskilled dockworkers and servants. They were joined by thousands of immigrants, who clustered in a mosaic of neighborhoods similar to the immigrant communities of Manhattan, Shanghai, and other fin de siècle port cities. Despite the constraints, the immigrants of this period increased the stock of human and social capital.⁶⁴ Everyone had to learn to get along, beyond artificial barriers, to survive through hard work and increasing skill and civility.

In Alexandria, people were learning to build a city's infrastructure and a country's civil society beyond closed and insular groupings. They were becoming cosmopolitan (part of the "cosmos") as they learned to interpret meaning and create a shared public domain with courtesy and compassion. The world came together, as people lived and worked together, privately grounded in diverse custom and faith while publicly sharing an outward focus on the world of common concern around them. As an avenue for growth, trade connected people to the world and to the Levantine legacy of interaction and accessibility: "Trade, altogether, was much more than the main source of wealth in the city. It was its cultural mix, its source of ideas and adventures, and in many ways the means by which almost everything from a Chinese ceramic to an absurd story could penetrate across social classes and from one end of the Muslim world to another."⁶⁵ Landed feudal and imperial interests and patron-client relationships remained. They could thwart capital formation and the functioning of open markets for a time, perhaps,⁶⁶ but there was a generation of human talent, financial capital accumulation, and a world of opportunity that offered greater promise. Even the younger European generation was becoming less enamored of empire and supportive of democratic ideas.

In Alexandria, Habib Antonius joined other expatriates from Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine—the *Shawam*, as they are called. Some of the *Shawam* ended up in England. Albert Hourani's father went to Manchester to export woolen textiles to Syria. Most who went to Manchester and other manufacturing cities became traders in remnants. For example, a mill would run thousands of yards of a woolen material. The *Shawam*

would buy the extra 100 yards here, 50 there, and so on, and pack and mail their collection under their own means to avert import duties. Many were very successful.⁶⁷

With Egypt exporting raw cotton to manufacturing towns such as Manchester, the *Shawam* were similarly engaged, buying surplus cheaply, until they consolidated enough for a consignment. If a hundred bales of raw cotton were left behind, one could pick it up for a reasonable cash payment and store it in a warehouse; and through a number of similar transactions, one gradually could accumulate enough to obtain a big consignment later. With a little enterprising social skill, connections could be made with villagers who were averse to big bankers and to dealers who set prices giving the *fellah* little leeway. With this kind of exploitation, building relations with villages in the delta, and a little capital could go a long way toward making money. Also, those who kept abreast of variations in local prices could engage in currency exchange, and knowing how to transfer capital advantageously to areas with better purchasing power could also make money that way. Many made millions. As one of the *Shawam*, Antonius's father prospered.⁶⁸

The older generation—that is, Antonius's father's generation, including Faris Nimr and other Syrian expatriates who made their way to Egypt—thereby escaped the tyranny and abuse of Ottoman rule. Many carved out lucrative niche enterprises, helping each other and contributing to the movement for reforms. Records do not indicate that Habib was a literary man. But as a wealthy member of the *Shawam*, Habib likely served as a financial contributor to the debating and secret societies of the early national movement and thus helped sustain projects of common concern. (No systematic financial records were kept, for fear of retaliation against contributors to the Arab national movement.) The *Shawam*'s contributions as advertisers and in other ways helped their compatriots found leading newspapers such as *al-Muktataf*, *al-Muqattam*, and *al-Ahram*. Important economic ventures in themselves, these newspapers also opened a forum for broader, more transparent and public debate about much-needed reforms. Secure in their identity as Syrians, the *Shawam* were a confident bunch, entrepreneurial, educated, and sufficiently comfortable in their own skins to venture out into the world, to form alliances, and to search out the best in all cultures. Although many were enamored with the best of British lifestyles, they were nonetheless devoted to Syria.

The Antonius family was among the privileged elite; yet Antonius's education, grooming, and early commitment to the Arab cause suggest that his community was actively promoting ideas and institutions that challenged the rules of closed and privileged systems, be they feudal or imperial. Within the Levant, the Greek Orthodox had a long-standing

history of being among the most highly educated minority groups, playing a role as mediators and facilitators of new and expanding relations with the world. As part of the educated middle class, they were more likely than traditional elites to seek a more liberal climate for nation building, beyond narrow patron-clientelism and cultural chauvinism. Antonius's emphasis on democratic principles and his sensitivity to colonial double standards suggest that although he may have been enamored with the British Empire, he was hardly willing to submit to Britain's or any other nation's rule. He was not only markedly self-confident and vain, but he also appears to have sustained a faith in the body social despite and beyond the factionalism and division among his nation's political leaders. His trust in his and his nation's competence and capacity for good governance, however, coincided with a youthful admiration for Britain and those of its representatives who were his mentors.

Like other Alexandrians, Levantines, and Arab patriots, Antonius was part of a world of increasing social capital. People respected the diversity of subjective worlds of meaning, all the while working and living together for a common good. As neighbors, friends, and participants in the multiple webs of relations, they built norms of reciprocity, cooperated and collaborated, and got along. Their richly diverse, centuries-old world was inherently averse to European colonialism and nineteenth-century nationalism's attempts to strip men of their complexity and souls. They resisted the unnatural compartmentalization and divisions that are so corrupting and corrosive of social capital. Antonius was among those who passionately resisted the amoral trends that tended toward destruction of the Arab nation. "In Alexandria, I believe that we were gentler, more comprehensive, far from the bizarre racism of this absolutely primitive nationalism. . . . [We had] a spirit of . . . I don't want to say cooperation, the word is too small. A love."⁶⁹ Antonius knew the value of this world, as did the poet C. P. Cavafy, who wrote:

[I]t is a hard, unusual thing
to be enrolled as a citizen of that city.
To have reached this point is no small
achievement;
what you've done already is a wonderful thing.
Even this first step
is a long way above the ordinary world.⁷⁰

Education: The World As His Book

A portrait of half-century-old memories and reflections gathered from interviews and private records of Antonius's network of friends and ac-

quaintances introduce a man for whom education was a calling. His friend, author Vincent Sheean, noted that Antonius never lost his head, for he sustained his connection to a world beyond violence.⁷¹ Sheean's wife, Diana Forbes Robertson Sheean, was especially struck by his "wonderful sense of humor"—what better mark of a man's capacity to transcend. "I would like to emphasize how marvelous George's gift of laughter was, and in the long, long serious talks that he and Sheean had over the course of their friendship they could always make each other helpless with laughter over something. . . . The end of George's nose used to quiver. Of all Sheean's men friends I loved him the best."⁷² Hassan Husseini remembered him as a handsome man, of average height (about five feet, seven inches); elegant, charming, but especially profound.⁷³ Soft-spoken and kind, he had remarkable erudition and a rich voice with melodious Oxbridge intonation. He was also proud, high strung, not easy to live with, and given to fits of temper.⁷⁴ Antonius's friends paint a portrait of a man whose voracious appetite for learning was equaled by his desire to serve, and by the courage and stamina to sustain stresses and strains that would have broken more ordinary men and turned others mad.⁷⁵ For Sally Chilvers, a young visitor in the 1930s, he was a gentle, thoughtful guide: "He must have been a very spiritual man to have stayed above the fray."⁷⁶ The strength of Antonius's character was perhaps due in large measure to his sustained loyalty to, and deep faith in, a world enriched by "people, friends, life activity, production, commitments [and] a profound intensity of meaning," to use Makdisi's description of embattled residents of Beirut, which seems to apply equally well to Antonius.⁷⁷

Moreover, Antonius could not be duped, for he knew history, the Arab past and the genius of its scholars who had so enlarged the global stock of knowledge. He also knew European history, including its myths and prejudices. Multidisciplinary, multilingual, and with a universal wit, he stood out above the crowd. His capacity to assess mental formation and tune in to interior space, psychology, and questions of conscience was uncanny. His friend Thomas Hodgkin put him on par with Henry James in his ability to read between the lines and trace the under- and overtones of a situation.⁷⁸ As a man of passionate curiosity and love of learning, he was devoted to a global frame of knowledge theoretically accessible to all men. He was unyielding in his criticism of misguided theories, ideologies, and myths that stunted learning and the social exchange and construction of knowledge. For Antonius, education was a social tool and global process that rendered complex reality intelligible. As Alcalay noted: "The very assumption that Arabic and romance cultures are so distinct they must somehow be bridged—even by scholars trying to prove connections—is itself an entirely ideological construct that would have made very little sense to a 12th century Parisian, a 17th century

Venetian, or even an early 20th century Syrian."⁷⁹ Antonius was precisely such a Syrian.

When Antonius was growing up, the Arab national movement was just beginning, and the new age of European colonial rule was still in its youth. As Syrian expatriates, the Antonius family distrusted French designs on Lebanon and questioned Ottoman rule. Although they were not blindly enamored of Britain, they saw its relatively benign role in the region and recognized its global dominance. Pragmatic in preparing their children to deal with Englishmen, they supplemented their children's education in Arab language, culture, history, and heritage with exposure to world cultures and with formal education in the best of British schools.

Early on, the Syrian community in Egypt distrusted the French colonial power and considered the British natural allies. The French and British were long-standing enemies, and all the more so during the age of competing empires. For the Arabs, the French had a brutal and rapacious reputation. Beneath their pomp and cultural arrogance, they were known for having caused a great deal of suffering in North Africa and for their meddling in Lebanon. They had a reputation for particularly heavy-handed colonial rule in Algeria. By the early twentieth century, notwithstanding the fact that Britain had become the dominant imperial power, British officers in the field had a reputation for high standards, and for all their weaknesses, the British in Egypt secured a climate far more liberal than that of Abdul Hamid. This was a time when the concept of sovereignty little protected small or less robust nations from imperial appetites. The Arabs were naturally interested in, and had a very real appreciation of, the need to ally themselves with the world's most powerful empire in order eventually to yield reforms and greater liberty for Arab nation building. In return, of course, they were prepared to extend the British favorable trade agreements and other advantages.

During this period, a new generation of British overseas personnel was cultivating a new vision of a commonwealth of nations. C. R. Lias, Antonius's headmaster at Victoria College, was among the leading personalities of this generation. He promoted learning to empower students and prepare them for leadership positions. He also labored on an English-Arab dictionary, to facilitate the finding of common ground.⁸⁰ He was a moral man, inspired to create a new culture of shared values, meaning, and understanding. Lias had a profound respect for the role of language, for its imaginative hold on the mind and its enabling of human capacity for social interaction and refinement, which characterized the *Nahda*—the Arab literary revival. Words, concepts, and ideas helped render the world, including private, personal worlds of subjective meaning, intelligible. Antonius continued the course, later devoting himself to an Arabic technical lexicon for the systematic updating of Arabic with new words

and concepts that could stretch, enliven, and enrich the Arab culture and its participation in a global construction of knowledge.

From 1902 to 1910, Antonius attended Victoria College, a special English-language school that was named after Queen Victoria. Victoria College was modeled on the British public schools, which offered a first-class education to boys who showed promise, regardless of their backgrounds, nationalities, or creeds.⁸¹ The centuries-old English public school system had been designed originally to protect the aristocracy against feeble-mindedness by assuring a continuous stock of well-educated and disciplined young men who would not squander their family estates and fortunes. Headmaster Lias had the same vision of preparing young men to manage their countries well. Interestingly, English youths destined for various government posts abroad were typically trained as young Roman proconsuls: They were well versed in their Greek and Latin and in stories of Cicero and Caesar but had little awareness of local culture and capacity. Antonius had the advantage of being richly connected to his own Arab culture and Levantine heritage as well as to European and global history and institutions.

During Antonius's attendance at Victoria College, Lias represented the new breed of Englishman, less enamored by colonial rule and more desirous of enabling self-rule in a commonwealth of autonomous nations. "The duty of Great Britain is to guide and advise rather than drive and enforce," he wrote. The goal was to go beyond a past in which "the aim has been too much to turn out civil servants for subordinate posts in public service, too little to form good citizens; too much to force the boys through a mill, too little to treat them as human beings."⁸² Lias's approach challenged more than two decades of British autocratic and bureaucratic control that had kept Egyptians out of governance. Lord Cromer had controlled the country, from 1883 until his departure in 1907, through various British officials, who were appointed to fill all major decisionmaking positions. Few Egyptians had any voice in policymaking, and those in government were little more than clerks under an Egyptian khedive, who was a ruler in name only. With Cromer's departure in 1907, a new, more decentralized approach to governance was emerging. Through Lias, Antonius was being groomed to assume responsibility and build institutions for a civil society beyond divisions of race or creed. School was exciting and meaningful because it empowered and enabled students to engage more effectively in the real world of social, economic, and political problems and concerns. They studied intensely, Antonius wrote, "not so much in . . . relation to the dreaded examinations, but rather from the standpoint of their human and living relation to the problems of life; and secondly, because our masters had tried to provide us, as well as with the facts of knowledge, with the equipment and desire to ac-

quire more knowledge."⁸³ Proof of Antonius's promise and lifelong learning was provided by his personal library of 12,000 volumes, including books on almost every country in the world; on Islam, especially Sufism; on archaeology, oil, and the West; on algebra and the sciences; and various tomes of French, German, and English literature, particularly the work of Conrad, for whom he had a passion.⁸⁴ Many of these leather-bound, gilt-tooled books contained inscriptions saying they had been awarded to Antonius as first prize for excellence in his studies.⁸⁵

At Victoria College, Antonius acquired the habits of concentration and study that made him a lifelong student. Daily, throughout his life, he devoted several hours to intensive reading.

I spend something like 2 to 3 hours a day scanning the press. I take and read regularly 5 newspapers published in Palestine, 2 in Cairo, 1 in Syria, and 1 in Mecca. I find it necessary to add to this already long list one other newspaper from Egypt, 2 more from Syria, and 1 or 2 from Iraq. This amount of reading matter may appear excessive, as indeed it is. All the same I regard it as a minimum for anyone who desires to keep in close touch with the views and tendencies not only of one particular class or creed or race or party, but of all those that matter. Fortunately, the majority of those newspapers are small in size, and one learns to skip a good deal. I also take the *London Times* (daily), the *Near East and India* (London, weekly), the *Revue des études islamiques* (Paris, quarterly), the *Oriente moderno* (Rome, monthly). To this list I hope to add, as soon as I am in a position to read German, the very important *Der Islam* (Berlin) and *Islamica* (Leipzig).⁸⁶

Antonius read, wrote, and spoke four languages (Arabic, English, French, and German), which particularly impressed audiences in Britain and the United States. He also learned about leadership, public service, and current issues of local self-governance. Lias resonated with Antonius and the Arab national cause when he wrote: "I should be disposed to recommend, among other reforms, a steady and progressive decentralization . . . , the gradual reduction of the English teaching staff concomitantly with the formation of a cadre of English and Egyptian inspectors, whose duty it would be to give counsel and encouragement."⁸⁷ In sharing and in encouraging the development of the Arab nation's capacity and competence, and of the people's hopes and dreams, Lias earned Antonius's and many other people's respect and admiration. Antonius reflected, several years after his graduation:

Now on looking back after the lapse of years, we are able to appreciate their influence. They aimed at forming our characters, not merely by dictating precepts, but also by that most powerful of all methods—the method of ex-

ample. We may be forgiven if we give the first place in our gratitude to our old headmaster and masters. If we do so it is because, putting aside all feelings of reverence and affection, we recognize that the influence of their lives and of the example which they set was both deep and lasting. To them we owe the tone and the traditions of our School, in which boys grow up to learn and practice devolution of authority and acquire habits of responsibility and self-reliance, of understanding and goodwill.⁸⁸

As wise guide and adviser, Lias was especially supportive of Antonius, a quick-witted, gifted youth, and an energetic team player. Antonius's peers also saw these qualities in him. His voracious appetite for learning and wit were matched by unusual physical stamina and by leadership qualities that led to his election as captain of the college soccer and cricket teams.⁸⁹ He was a handsome youth, well liked, and respected for his passionate commitment to the Arab cause of increasing self-governance. A former schoolmate from Victoria College wrote to Antonius years later, after seeing "from the 'Hatches, Matches and Dispatches' column of the *Times*" that Antonius was "continuing the good work," to congratulate him and to reminisce on their happy and carefree student days:

I have read, of course, from time to time in the public newsprints of your exploits, and some of your experiences must have been extremely interesting. I do not know what you do now, but I suppose you are a pretty big pot. Anyhow, you need not give yourself airs with me, because if you do I will publish the picture of you drinking a bottle of curacao in a bedroom at Damascus, which I still treasure and take out from time to time to assure myself that we were all once young and irresponsible.⁹⁰

Considering Antonius a leading historical figure even at this relatively early stage of his life and career, he saved his correspondence, writing: "I generally tear up all the letters I receive, but I am going to retain yours . . . so that I may leave it in my will to your daughter, who will no doubt sell it one day for a considerable sum to the British Museum."⁹¹

As a freshman at Cambridge, Antonius spent his first Christmas holidays away from home with Lias and his family, in Hayward's Heath. Over the years to come, Antonius and Lias passed many an hour together talking about education and self-governance and working on fund-raising plans for the school. Antonius felt at home as a student at Victoria College, and afterward he often returned there, both in spirit and in fact.

The spirit, which reigned at Victoria College, was marked by a large measure of friendly intercourse between masters and pupils. Whether in the

classroom or on the playing field or elsewhere, we were in constant contact with our masters. We knew them, trusted them, and looked up to them, for they were not only teachers but friends and men who, by leading before us and with us lives such as we were taught to aim at, have done more toward our development than anything we have experienced.⁹²

In 1937, during the Arab Revolt, when Antonius was separated from his wife and depressed by the ominous signs of war and the chronic betrayal of Palestine, he stayed at Victoria College for a time, in a vacant master's bedroom, where he struggled to complete his manuscript *The Arab Awakening*. He rendered the school various services over the years, lecturing, raising funds from alumni and from wealthy and illustrious Egyptian and British admirers of the school, including members of parliament and generals. Throughout his life he upheld the school's standards, applying his skill and learning in far more challenging and more practical contexts than he or Lias might have initially imagined. He had been prepared to serve, competently and courageously to usher in the innovation in governance appropriate for his nation.

King's College and the Arab Cause

In 1910, when Antonius arrived at King's College in Cambridge, revolutions in industry, transport, and communications were transforming European perceptions of time and space as well as universal ideas governing human relations, authority, and power. A new generation of artists, intellectuals, economists, philosophers, and others was challenging closed and static systems of thought, identity, and ideology. Among those articulating a new, more intimate, and more dynamic world were the Bloomsbury group in London, including Virginia and Leonard Woolf. On the European continent the phenomenology of Husserl and Bergson; the Cubism and Impressionism of Cézanne, Picasso, and Monet; and Einstein's breakthrough in the theory of relativity were on the verge of becoming common knowledge. Throughout Europe, a growing middle class and a newly organized working class were seeking a voice in the creation of new, more democratic institutions. Public education, public transport, and media expanded and intensified the pace and passage of events and ideas. Despite the communication and transport revolution and its corresponding socioeconomic transformations in Europe, relations between countries were poorly regulated. The lack of understanding of non-European people, cultures, and nations arose not only from ignorance based on limited historical interaction and lack of accessibility but also from prejudice based on nineteenth-century European myths and theories about science and technology, race, nationalism, and empire, which promoted a distorted and dichotomous worldview.

Lias undoubtedly recommended that Antonius attend King's College, for in addition to Antonius's being intellectually suited and his family financially able, the education he would receive there would help place him on a par with nearly any Englishman Antonius would have to deal with in the years to come. When Antonius arrived at King's, where he was registered to read for the tripos in mechanical sciences from 1910 to 1913, he took an immediate and immense liking to the school. Cambridge University had a strikingly beautiful campus, with castle-like, twelfth-century architecture, a contemplative quality throughout the halls and grounds, and a charming medieval intimacy in the design and atmosphere of the surrounding village. As an elite institution, Cambridge primarily enrolled young men from the upper strata of English society, many of whom would never have to work for a living. Antonius was quite the anomaly. Although a small number of students from long-standing British colonies, including Nehru, preceded or followed Antonius, there were few Arab students at Cambridge; most Arabs attended the American University of Beirut.

Although few records exist concerning the lectures Antonius attended, there is little question but that he sought out cutting-edge intellectual debates and acquainted himself with King's luminary John Maynard Keynes, who had arrived the previous year; with the leading European intellectuals; and with students such as Ludwig Wittgenstein, who attended King's College at the same time and who shared Antonius's interest in language, although he gave it an altogether different interpretation. Certain dons, such as G. E. Moore, may have appeared out of touch with reality and the passionate challenges facing humanity. Others, like Keynes with his "extraordinary intellect and prodigious irreverence" for "inherited imperatives" and his call for a "vigorous moral and intellectual reassessment of the society" in which they lived, would have impressed Antonius.⁹³ As attested by his later career, Antonius left Cambridge with what Keynes called both a "method of discovery by the instrument of impeccable grammar and unambiguous dictionary" and a code of ethics whereby he "claimed the right to judge every individual case on its merits, and the wisdom, experience and self-control to do so successfully." This code inevitably influenced Antonius's relation to the outside world; for, as Keynes put it, "This was a very important part of our faith, violently and aggressively held, and for the outer world it was our most obvious and dangerous characteristic."⁹⁴

Markedly self-assured, but thin-skinned when it came to prejudice, Antonius forged his own connections and friendships, searching out common ground. Hoping for shared appreciation of Damascus in addition to a mutual interest in history, Antonius took pen in hand and introduced himself to the newly retired King's College historian Oscar Browning soon after his arrival. He was "devouring" Browning's books and

was especially eager to meet the historian, who had responded to his request for an autographed picture a few years back. Moreover, he was especially eager to meet Browning, for he had come across Browning's name in the hotel register that previous summer, during Antonius's first visit to Damascus. Though alone and far from home, he enjoyed his own company, taking care to choose his friends wisely. As he put it to Browning: "I quite realize that the question of making friends is one of time and I do not mind waiting till the better sort of friends turn up. I am so afraid of getting into undesirable sets by trying to rush things."⁹⁵

Monty R. James, provost of King's College and a friend of Browning's, had unusual personal qualities and skills for mediating and resolving disputes. On a theoretical note, Antonius shared James's view of school as a "family" rather than a "machine," and his "deep personal dislike of factional unpleasantness."⁹⁶ In addition to sharing the skill and gift of tact, a "naturally social disposition" and "unruffled urbanity," as well as an aversion to factionalism, Antonius's work and qualities paralleled James's example of quiet yet firm arbitration and his use of "both principles and ability to acquit himself honorably and effectively in a controversy."⁹⁷

The Student and Patriot on the Eve of War

The period between 1909 and 1914 was an especially heady time for Arab students supporting the Arab cause. With the rising Turkish chauvinism and discrimination against Arabs after the 1908 Young Turk Revolt, this was an intense period of organization and coordination of secret societies and patriots seeking reform.⁹⁸ Antonius was passionately devoted to the Arab cause and especially impressed with the secret society of al-Fatat, founded in Paris in 1911 (later shifted to Damascus in 1914) by seven Arab university students in Paris, including Jamil Mardam (Damascus), Rustum Haidar (Baalbek), Awni Abd al-Hadi (Palestine), and Rafiq Tamimi (Nablus). Antonius admired the young founders and compared al-Fatat to the esteemed Beirut society of 1875. Of al-Fatat, he wrote: "No other society . . . played as determined a part in the history of the national movement."⁹⁹ The bonds of friendship he formed with other young Arab nationalists during their student years would last a lifetime.

Paris and Cambridge were relatively close, and Antonius—who spoke fluent French—stayed in Europe after graduation, working as the personal secretary for "someone connected with Syria"—quite likely, Nimr.¹⁰⁰ There were exciting conferences and developments in Paris focusing on the future of the Arab nation and proposals for reform of the Ottoman Empire, especially in 1913. The fact that Antonius's grade at graduation that year was barely passing suggests that he was focusing

his attention outside his academic studies. Beyond academia, Antonius was personally engaged as a passionate young patriot in a dynamic world of debate and discussion, of collaboration and work concerning the Arab national movement's attempt to achieve reforms for administrative autonomy in the Arab nation. For Antonius, these were passionately meaningful and important times.

The Arab national activities of significance in 1913 that Antonius later wrote about and undoubtedly participated in include numerous gatherings and meetings organized by members of the Arab national organizations and secret societies in major cities, including Paris, Damascus, Aleppo, Acre, Nablus, Cairo, Baghdad, and Basra. As early as 1912, the Arab nationalist Ottoman Administration Decentralization Committee in Cairo called for autonomy, spearheading further discussions of reforms. Under increasing pressure, the Ottoman Committee for Union and Progress (CUP) approved a May 5, 1913 law of the *vilayets*, which, while far shy of decentralization and hardly indicative of a change of heart, gave "increased powers to representative bodies in the provinces."¹⁰¹ That June, al-Fatat and the Ottoman Administration Decentralization Party in Cairo organized an Arab Congress in Paris that included hundreds of Arab participants from the Middle East, Europe, the United States, South America, and Australia. In the reform agenda it presented to the CUP, the Arab Congress called for autonomy and administrative self-governance and for the reinstatement of Arabic in primary and secondary schools in Arab-speaking territories. France's failure to support the Arab cause by leveraging its substantial financial investments to induce Ottoman reforms contributed to the increasing Arab distrust of French designs. Needless to say, the limited response of Turkish officials to demands for reforms in summer 1913 contributed to increasing distrust and a shift from relatively modest demands for decentralization to the more radical call for independence.

The scheme [autonomy based on decentralization] fitted into the framework of existing administrative divisions and fully recognized Turkish dominion. But it drew a distinction between questions of an imperial character, such as foreign affairs, defense, . . . communications and national finances, and questions of a regional character, such as provincial administration and revenues and local services; and it provided for the devolution of all regional services in the province of Bairut [sic] to bodies representative of the province. . . . Among other reforms, the scheme provided for the recognition of Arabic as the official language and for its adoption in Parliament on a footing of equality with Turkish; while, on the subject of military service, it required that the practice of conscripting soldiers for peace-time service outside their province be abandoned.¹⁰²

Antonius's devotion to the Arab cause crystallized in the heady years between 1909 and 1914. It was then that he gathered with other nationalists, young and old, hotly debating issues, problems, and reforms, and bonded for a lifetime. This was a special generation of youth, with great hope and optimism. Over the years, the boldness and passion of nationalist hopes and dreams dating from their student days, although frayed by the struggle, remained alive for Antonius and his closest friends. Many were exhausted and worn down. Some wavered, and a few withdrew. But the majority of patriots steadfastly demanded to be treated with respect and dignity, and to govern their own nation free from colonialism and artificial divisions. Antonius saw the passing of the torch from Nimr's generation and chose to devote himself to the cause of helping his nation.

Notes

1. Sources citing Dair al-Qamar as Antonius's birthplace include Antonius's resume in the Antonius file at the archives of the Institute of Current World Affairs; Antonius's resume in the Antonius papers at the Israel State Archives in Hakiryia; and the Tutor's Record at King's College, Cambridge. This information was further corroborated by Soraya Antonius, his only child. S. Antonius's additional statement, that her father moved to Alexandria, Egypt when he was about ten years old, is corroborated by a King's College tutor's note that he was about eleven years old when first enrolled at Victoria College in Alexandria. Stewart Perowne, Antonius's friend, also noted that Antonius spoke of his childhood [rather than simply holidays or summers spent] in the *Chouf* "as the happiest years of his life." (Soraya Antonius, interview with author, Gadencourt, France, 3 May 1985; King's College, Cambridge, Tutor's Record 472/9/95; Antonius files, archives of the Institute of Current World Affairs [hereafter, ICWA] and Israel State Archives in Hakiryia [hereafter, ISA]; and Stewart Perowne, interview with author, London, 1985.)

2. Soraya Antonius, interview with author, Gadencourt, 3 May 1985.

3. Yusuf Ibish (historian and author), telephone interview with author, July 1999.

4. *Ibid.* Also see *Mudhakkarat al-Amir Adil Arslan*, vol. 1, ed. Yusuf Ibish (Beirut: Al-Dar al-Taquadumiyya, 1983), p. 363.

5. George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1938), pp. 352–353.

6. Lester Thurow, *Building Wealth: The New Rules for Individuals, Companies, and Nations in a Knowledge-Based Economy* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), p. 101.

7. Letter from George Antonius to Walter Rogers, 5 February 1931, Enclosure One: Preface (draft for his book), vol. 1, Antonius papers, ICWA.

8. For further discussion of sectarianism as a nonindigenous element, please see Ussama Makdisi, "The Modernity of Sectarianism in Lebanon," *Middle East Report* (Summer 1996).

9. For comparative purposes, the reader may wish to refer to Robert D. Putnam, with Robert Leonardi and Raffaella Y. Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 170. Putnam's exploration of "social capital," albeit in the Italian case, is useful for understanding the Syrian reality.

10. Jacqueline Kahanoff, "From the East the Sun," unpublished manuscript of collected essays (obtained from Kahanoff's literary executor, Mrs. Evan Zeintraub of Tel Aviv), preface, pp. 4–5, cited in Ammiel Alcalay, *After Jews and Arabs: Remaking Levantine Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), pp. 71–72.

11. Alcalay, *After Jews and Arabs*, pp. 35–36.

12. Rashid Khalidi, "Ottomanism and Arabism in Syria Before 1914: A Re-assessment," in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, eds. Rashid Khalidi, Lisa Anderson, Muhammad Muslih, and Reeva S. Simon (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), p. 60.

13. Janet Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System, A.D. 1250–1350* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 361–362.

14. George Antonius, Presentation to the Peel Commission, 18 January 1937, ISA, record group 65, file 2869.

15. Letter from Antonius to Rogers, 5 February 1931, enclosure, ICWA.

16. Stewart Perowne (Antonius's friend during British mandatory rule in Palestine), interview with author, London, 25 April 1985.

17. Edward Atiyah, *An Arab Tells His Story: A Study in Loyalties* (London: John Murray, 1946), p. 23.

18. See Antonius, Presentation to the Peel Commission; and Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 390.

19. This phrase, which seemed particularly apt in this context, is from Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, and William M. Sullivan, *Habits of the Heart* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), p. 216.

20. Eric Hobsbawm's definition of terms appears to apply to the Palestinian Arab context (Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Tradition," in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983; reprint 1994], p. 3).

21. For elaboration, please see Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800–1914* (New York: Methuen, 1981), pp. 256–259.

22. George Antonius, 1935 lecture notes for Princeton students, ISA, record group 65, file 3339; Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, pp. 86–87.

23. Ibid. Also see Antonius to Rogers, 5 February 1931, enclosure; and Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, pp. 218–219.

24. Ibid.

25. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, pp. 85–86.

26. Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), p. 7.

27. Antonius, Presentation to the Peel Commission.

28. Carlton J. H. Hayes, *Essays on Nationalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1933), p. 16.

29. Antonius, 1935 lecture notes for Princeton students.

30. Antonius, Presentation to Peel Commission.
31. R. A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 72.
32. Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crises*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1977), p. 10.
33. Hayes, *Essays on Nationalism*.
34. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*, p. 147.
35. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 106.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 86–87.
37. Antonius, Presentation to the Peel Commission.
38. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 96.
39. Karl Barbir, "Memory, Heritage, and History: The Ottomans and the Arabs," in *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East*, ed. Carl Brown (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 106.
40. André Raymond, *The Great Arab Cities in the Sixteenth–Eighteenth Centuries: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 1984), p. 18.
41. As Hourani defined the political concept of "notable": "We mean by it those who can play a certain political role as intermediaries between government and people, and—within certain limits—as leaders of urban population." Regarding their socioeconomic standing, Arab notables were from leading families with wealth and power "derived from land and trade" and from religious positions (Albert Hourani, *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East* [London: Macmillan, 1981], pp. 44, 50).
42. Antonius, Presentation to the Peel Commission.
43. Gérard Khoury, *La France et l'Orient Arabe: Naissance du Liban moderne, 1914–1920* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1993), p. 9.
44. George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 352.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
46. Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy*, p. 116.
47. Antonius, Note on the Origins of the Arab National Movement, ISA, record group 65, file 858–330.
48. Antonius, Presentation to the Peel Commission.
49. Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy*, p. 21.
50. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 59.
51. Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy*, p. 153.
52. This information comes from the Antonius files at ISA: G. Wiet, "L'Antagonisme des Arabes et des Turcs," *L'Asie Française*, no. 113, August 1910 (a discussion of relations between Turks and Arabs from the earliest times); and G. Wiet, "Les révoltes en Arabie," *L'Asie Française*, no. 100, July 1909, p. 292, both in record group 65, file AT120–2663.
53. Bassam Tibi, ed., *Arab Nationalism: A Critical Inquiry*, trans. Miriam Farouk Sluglett and Peter Sluglett (New York: St. Martin's, 1981), pp. 88–89; Hourani, *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East*, p. 202.
54. Khalidi, "Ottomanism and Arabism," p. 52.
55. Khalidi, "The Origins of Arab Nationalism: Introduction," p. xiii. Also see M. Şükrü Hanioglu, "The Young Turks and the Arabs Before the Revolution," and Rashid Khalidi, "Ottomanism and Arabism," both in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, pp. 31–50.

56. Stephen Nimr, son of Albert Nimr and grandson to Faris Nimr, telephone conversation with author, 17 April 1996; also see Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 81.
57. Amos Elon, "A Letter from Alexandria," *New Yorker* (July 18, 1988), pp. 44, 46.
58. Atiyah, *An Arab Tells His Story*, pp. 51–52.
59. Jacqueline Kahanoff, cited in Alcalay, *After Jews and Arabs*, p. 119.
60. Reference to Jean Said Makdisi in Alcalay, *After Jews and Arabs*, p. 135.
61. Ilios Yannakakis, "Adieu Alexandrie!" in *Alexandrie, 1860–1960: Un modèle éphémère de convivialité: Communautés et identité cosmopolite*, eds. Robert Ilbert and Ilios Yannakakis, with Jacques Hassoun (Paris: Autrement, 1992), p. 6.
62. Elon, "A Letter," p. 44.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
64. See Thomas Sowell, *Migrations and Cultures: A World View* (New York: Basic Books, 1996).
65. Oleg Grabar, "Cities and Citizens," in *The World of Islam*, ed. Bernard Lewis (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), p. 96.
66. Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy*, p. 238.
67. I owe this description of the *Shawam* to Yusuf Ibish (telephone interview, July 1999).
68. *Ibid.*
69. Interview with Youssef Chahine, "De Cavafy à Chahine," in *Alexandrie, 1860–1960*, p. 8.
70. C. P. Cavafy poem, quoted in Jane Lagoudis Pinchin, *Alexandria Still: Forster, Durrell, and Cavafy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 43.
71. Vincent Sheean, *Personal History* (New York: Literary Guild/Country Life Press, 1935).
72. Letter from Diana Forbes Robertson Sheean to author, London, 16 August 1985.
73. Hassan Hussein, telephone conversation with author, summer 1999.
74. Letter from Roger Owen to author, Oxford, 1984.
75. Sheean, *Personal History*; Thomas Hodgkin, "Antonius, Palestine, and the 1930s," in *The Gazette Review of Literature on the Middle East*, no. 10, ed. Roger Hardy (London: Ithaca, 1982), pp. 1–33.
76. Sally Chilvers, interview with author, Oxford, 1985.
77. Jean Said Makdisi, *Beirut Fragments: A War Memoir* (New York: Persea, 1990), pp. 20, 209–211.
78. Hodgkin, "Antonius, Palestine."
79. Alcalay, *After Jews and Arabs*, p. 7.
80. Yusuf Ibish, interview with author, July 1999.
81. Draft, Appeal for an Endowment Fund for Victoria College, Alexandria, ISA, record group 65, file 2814–383.
82. C. R. Lias, Headmaster, Victoria College, Alexandria, Memorandum on Education in Egypt, 28 June 1919, Clayton Papers, Sudan Archive, Durham [hereafter, SAD], 695/1/1.
83. Given the record of editorial notes and his subsequent appeal for funds from numerous individuals and businesses in Egypt and Great Britain, Antonius probably drafted this document with the aid of, or in behalf of, the alumni who

co-signed: A. Nahas, Doctor of Dental Surgery, Northwestern University, Chicago; G. Valassopoulos, B.A., King's College, Cambridge, and Licencie en Droit, Université de Toulouse; and S. Naggiar, B.A., L.L.B., Trinity College, Cambridge (Note on Victoria College, Alexandria, submitted to the Special Mission to Egypt, 24 February 1920, ISA, record group 65, file 2814-383).

84. Regarding Egyptian literature, Antonius wrote H.A.R. Gibb on March 21, 1933, "I have long felt that the most likely form which one can visualize for the future Egyptian novel is perhaps the discursive and analytical form which one is wont to associate with a whole class of Russian works of fiction" (ISA, record group 65, file AT 149-813-329).

85. Soraya Antonius, interview with author, Gadencourt, 3 May 1985.

86. Antonius to Rogers, Jerusalem, 2 June 1930, ICWA.

87. Lias, "Education in Egypt," SAD 695/1/1.

88. Note on Victoria College, Alexandria, submitted to the Special Mission to Egypt, 24 February 1920.

89. Tutor's Record, 1910-1913, King's College, Cambridge.

90. Antonius's friend [signature undecipherable] at the Anglo-Polish Bank, Ltd., to George Antonius, Warsaw, Poland, 28 November 1932, ISA, record group 65, file AT26-866.

91. Antonius's friend [signature undecipherable] with the Anglo-Polish Bank, Ltd., to George Antonius, Warsaw, Poland, 14 January 1935, ISA, record group 65, file AT26-866.

92. Note on Victoria College, Alexandria, submitted to the Special Mission to Egypt, 24 February 1920.

93. Michael Cox, *M. R. James: An Informal Portrait* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 170.

94. John Maynard Keynes, *Two Memoirs, Dr. Melchior: A Defeated Enemy and My Early Belief* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1949), pp. 88, 97.

95. George Antonius to Oscar Browning, 16 November 1910, Antonius file, King's College, Cambridge.

96. Cox, *M. R. James*, pp. 163, 171.

97. For this description of Monty James, see *Ibid.*, pp. 163, 171.

98. Years later Antonius wrote about several other political parties/secret societies that were founded during this period, including: (1) the Literary Club (al-Muntada al-Adabi) founded in Constantinople in 1909; (2) the Ottoman Decentralization Party founded in late 1912 ("the best organized and most authoritative spokesman of Arab aspirations" and the "first essay in the science of organised effort," with branches "in every town of Syria and smaller agencies in a number of other localities"); (3) the secret society al-Qahtaniya, founded in 1909 with a bold goal and concrete plan wherein "the Arab provinces were to form a single kingdom with its own parliament and local government, and with Arabic as the language of its institutions" (Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, pp. 108-112).

99. *Ibid.*, p. 114.

100. Tutor's Record, King's College, Cambridge.

101. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 114.

102. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

3

World War I

War and preparation for war go together with: tricks of diplomacy, the suspension of moral concepts, holidays for truth, and a field day for cynicism.

—Stanley Baldwin, *British prime minister, 1936*

The British double-dealing that ruptured Arab trust began during the war. Although the abnormality of war might explain much opportunism, unscrupulous behavior, and conflicting judgments, this is not the whole story. For the double-dealing Antonius witnessed was not simply blind to Arab suffering at the hands of the empire and to Arab friendship and alliance with Britain—but far more egregious, a matter of what Antonius described as “greed” and “stupidity.” The postwar problems began with European leaders adopting an amoral conqueror’s code: Satisfying imperial appetites meant breaking promises and betraying Arab allies. The resultant culture of lies and deceit would haunt Middle East policy-making for generations. Talking straight and keeping promises are part of a universal code of conduct, and perhaps the most critical ingredient for public trust. For Antonius, although the madness of war inherently violates trust, corruption begins with the individual’s choosing not to care about promises made. Thomas Hodgkin saw that “George was very conscious of the part played by individuals in the direction of events and of the failures, the disasters, which could be attributed to a faulty understanding of human or national psychology.”¹

British Support for Arab Independence

World War I (1914–1918) was a grim conflict of unprecedented machine warfare. Millions died in Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East due

to fighting and starvation, including more than 30 percent of Syria's population.

Before World War I, European countries had scoured the world for colonies to increase their status and expand their markets and supplies. By World War I, Britain was at the peak of its almost century-long role as the leading global power. London was the "switchboard for the world's international business transactions," as Britain dominated shipping, trade, banking, and foreign investment.² Whereas the new generation envisaged the empire's evolution into a commonwealth of autonomous nations, a far more autocratically inclined old guard aimed to secure the empire forever through the British model of colonial rule in India, with its rigid system of "divide and rule," and its bureaucratic and paternal arrogance that brooked no challenge. Although Egyptians had been critical of British control over Egypt since 1882, Syrians were more inclined to align themselves with Britain against their mutual enemy, France, and later, against the Ottoman Empire as it degenerated into chauvinist Turkish nationalism.

Britain entered World War I after the August 1914 German invasion of Belgium. The Ottoman Empire entered the war on November 6 on the side of Germany and the Central Powers, and Britain proclaimed martial law in Egypt and established a protectorate. It shipped in thousands of British troops and supplies to prepare for battle and buttress its Middle East intelligence network. After returning from England and briefly working for the Egyptian Public Works Department in 1914, Antonius became a press censor at the invitation of Robin Furness, a King's College alumnus, friend of Keynes, and lover of Greek history.³ Within three years, Antonius was promoted to deputy chief press censor of the Occupied Enemy Territory Press Censorship office and of the local press bureau. At first, Antonius saw Britain as an ally against the common Ottoman enemy; but his trust evaporated in 1917, when he learned of the French-British scheme to dismember Greater Syria after the war and take over Arab portions of the Ottoman Empire.

In 1914, Horatio Herbert Kitchener, British consul general in Egypt, conceived of an alliance with the Arabs through Sheriff Hussein in Mecca. After nearly a dozen years under the watchful eye of the Ottomans in Constantinople, Hussein had been sent to Mecca as Constantinople's representative and guardian of the holy places there, to shore up Arab-Islamic support for the empire. After war broke out in August, at which point Kitchener became secretary of state for war in London, British negotiations with the Arabs continued under Sir Gilbert Clayton, Britain's director of military intelligence in Egypt. The 1915–1916 correspondence included formal pledges—signed by Sir Henry McMahon, high commissioner in Egypt—to support Arab independence in return

for an Arab revolt against the Ottoman Turks. Although the June 1916 revolt began in the Hijaz, the national movement organized in Greater Syria ensured that "the Arab revolt . . . was not a Hejaz revolt, it was a revolt of Syria, Iraq and Palestine primarily."⁴ During the war, Arab support helped shore up the British forces at a time of negligible French involvement.

Of all of the British officers in the field, Clayton was especially admired. He was a military man, not a politician, and principled rather than clever. "He is universally loved and has had long experience with Arabs—who are fond of him and trust him. He is not very clever: but shrewd and has got great charm of manner, and a captivating smile. Moreover he is good friends with Feisal, and has had many occasions of intimacy with him," wrote Humphrey Bowman, who was later appointed director of the Palestine Department of Education.⁵ Unlike future chiefs of intelligence, Clayton "never surrounded himself with reports or secluded himself from people. He never lost his human touch, even in those harried days."⁶ In his "quiet and unassuming way" he impressed staff, such as T. E. Lawrence, with his "calm, detached, clear sighted, unconscious courage."⁷ As a military man and intelligence officer, he focused on winning the war with Arab allies. He was especially averse to intrigue and to the trench warfare of French-British negotiations, which he considered below British standards and contrary to imperial concerns. Although he did not presume to set policy, he quietly offered comment and criticism. According to David Fromkin:

In his fatherly way, Clayton served as mentor to the adventurous young archaeologists and Orientalists who flocked to Cairo to serve in the intelligence services during the war. He must have had outstanding human qualities, for his young men, though diverse in other regards, all liked and respected him. They saw him as shrewd, sober, sensible, and steady. He was about ten years older than most of them and, whether or not they took it, they listened to his advice. For them he was the incarnation of the old hand.⁸

Under Clayton and his handful of supporters in the field, the Arab Bureau, which was established in 1916 to gather intelligence and to help coordinate Britain's overlapping and conflicting Middle Eastern policy-making entities, gained increasing Arab trust, most notably because of Clayton:

[T]he files never barricaded him against the world. He kept in touch with his friends, European and Oriental; again and again one could find him listening patiently to the news—often prolix—or the appreciations—often fantastic—of the situation brought by a refugee from Turkey, an old sheikh

from the Libyan desert, or a traveled merchant from a Red Sea port. For he understood the East, he knew that for an intelligence officer "haste is from the devil," and he never failed in courtesy as he never failed in understanding. He was a delightful chief; quiet, never fussy, never despondent in the blackest days, afraid of no responsibility, and ready to accept any suggestion from subordinates that his instinctive good sense approved. He was an admirable judge of men, for he had never allowed military formalism to blunt his appreciation of values. . . . The picture that is clearest in the writer's mind is from the early days of the War; the Director of Intelligence at his desk listening, always listening, and watching with those quiet, vigilant eyes that seemed to be looking through your mind.⁹

In 1914, at age twenty-three, Antonius was fresh from Cambridge and passionately devoted to the Arab cause. Far from being an enemy, the British Empire was a powerful ally, especially for Syrians concerned about French designs. For Antonius, working as a censor and dealing with British officials in the intelligence department in Egypt was not a relationship or job that conflicted with his commitment to the Arab national cause. In addition to meeting new British officers sent to Egypt, he cultivated friendships and associations with Arab nationalists and Syrian expatriates and enjoyed the company of a rather literary network, beginning with his colleagues in the censorship department. The Antonius circle included Furness, who had hired him; another member of the censorship department, Pericles Anastassiades, a Greek businessman and patron of the arts; and the latter's friend C. P. Cavafy, the British-educated Greek poet then employed in the irrigation department. With his "very pleasant, gay, but at the same time critical, mocking kind of wit," Antonius joined Furness, Anastassiades, and Cavafy for many a literary and musical evening.¹⁰ Through Furness, an elderly English major named Sir Bartle Frere and the writer E. M. Forster, another King's College graduate and friend of Furness, who arrived in 1915 to work for the Red Cross, joined the circle.

It is not known whether Antonius's bluestocking mother ever invited Cavafy to her literary salons; but Antonius often attended Cavafy's, and he was quite likely the twenty-three-year-old about whom Cavafy wrote in his poem "He came to read":

He came to read. By him two books or three
lay open there; of history and poetry.
But after he had read for just a while,
he gave them up. And on the sofa, now,
lies half asleep, belonging fully to those books
But he is only 23, and very beautiful.¹¹

Although Cavafy was more timid than Antonius and Antonius was twenty-eight years his junior, they shared many experiences and personal qualities—a unity of sense and intellect, a sensual delight, and a worldly sense of humor. Antonius's mocking wit matched Cavafy's cynicism bordering on ennui. The two especially shared a love of good form, of language and of history. Both applied meticulous attention to detail—to the accuracy of historical detail, and to their own grammar, intonation, and erudition. In some ways, they were more English than the English—perhaps for having been excluded. (Cavafy was denied permanent employment, and Antonius, a long overdue promotion, in their respective British-run administrations.) Above all, Antonius shared Cavafy's belief in the nobility of spirit, in the resilience of the seemingly vanquished, in spiritual life, and in universal ideas. They were universal noble men. Unimpressed by symbols of power, they remained attached to the more intimate realm that gave meaning to men's souls. As a Greek Orthodox, Antonius shared Cavafy's appreciation for ancient, sacred rituals and for the meaning religion gave to men's lives. Similarly, Antonius's sense of democracy, *civitas*, was informed far more deeply by Arab history than by any European philosophy or form of contemporary government, for it stretched much further back in time to a world of ancient values and to the lessons of Arab greatness and the decline of empires. Antonius and Cavafy shared an understanding of how the past informs the present, of the existence of the present in the past and the past in the present. They shared an awareness of the folly of empires, of the ways a soul can soar and the seemingly vanquished can rise up. They understood the significance of hidden meaning, and the meaning of courage. Both men understood the subjective meaning of barbarism, of life uninformed by conscience, and the significance of small steps beyond the ordinary.

In the trouble and confusion of World War I, Cavafy was the wise old friend reminding the passionate young Antonius to travel with care. There were many discussions too somber and serious for cocktail hours or literary and musical evenings. Indeed, wartime marked the beginning of a loss of innocence and a new age of violence. Cavafy deeply understood the problems of the day and the latent barbarism within those who were seemingly civilized. From his poems, we find legends of universal journeys, of heroes and of less noble conquerors. Cavafy wrote during an age of predatory empires and traumatic world war, and there is little doubt that his work spoke to Antonius, who embraced the archetype of the hero, noting: "Making efforts to remove a great injustice . . . is worth doing. It is perhaps the noblest task to which any man can apply himself."¹²

Antonius also struck up a friendship with E. M. Forster that included lighthearted jaunts to the *souk*, donkey rides, and overnight trips to Ram-

leh and nearby historic sights. Antonius had rented a run-down palace, where Forster was always a welcome guest. Neither man enjoyed the country club set, and both had tired of cocktail and dinner parties. Of Antonius, Forster initially noted he was "a very nice and amusing fellow . . . the only non-English person of whom I see anything."¹³ Although Forster called Cavafy the first-class member of the group, of all the people he met during his few years in Egypt during the war, he wrote, it was the "bright little GA" that he missed the most after he left for India. Reflecting on his stay in Alexandria while proofing a manuscript in India in 1921, Forster spoke of his sense of sadness and loss, with special reference to his loss of solidarity with Antonius.¹⁴ They enjoyed each other's company, perhaps more than they trusted each other. Although Forster called Antonius a "clever and amusing companion" who had a "real feeling for scenery and for history," Antonius was far more. He was a major support in 1915, when Forster went through an emotional crisis (and possibly a nervous breakdown), faced with the possibility of recruitment into active military service.¹⁵ Antonius also contributed a great deal to the writing of Forster's 1922 book, *Alexandria: A History and a Guide*, although the final version contained only a brief reference to Antonius. Indeed, as Forster noted, despite the "imperfect state of general intimacy" and the "solidarity that springs from imperfect knowledge," his friendship with Antonius "managed to produce quite a good book."¹⁶

Reflecting on his stay and time spent with Antonius and others in Egypt during the war, Forster wrote to his mother in November 1916:

Antonius wants me to go again to his German palace. Did I tell you about it? He is camping out in a magnificent villa at Ramleh that belongs to alien enemies who have either been interned or fled—I forget which. It is grandiose and rather uncomfortable. There is a magnificent tiled bath, oblong and level with the floor. You walk to it down steps and can actually swim, so deep is the water. An aviary in the garden too, with costly towers and tunnels for the birds. . . . The whole upper floor [of Antonius's palace] is peeled and squalid; while the only entrance to the domain is through a sort of tool shed gate, stuffed in a . . . hedge, and supporting a little nodding bell. . . . All is in the hands of the receiver, who lets Antonius stop there until a more lucrative let [rent].¹⁷

Revolt and Death, 1916

In 1916 the British military campaign against the Turks intensified following the eight-month Gallipoli campaign, which left 33,000 allied and 86,000 Turkish troops dead but achieved none of its objectives. Before the

June 1916 Arab revolt began in the Hijaz, Faisal, Hussein's son, met with members of the Arab national movement in Syria and obtained their support. By the start of the revolt, Turks were already killing Arabs in Syria whom they suspected of "treasonable participation in activities of which the aims were to separate Syria, Palestine, and Iraq from the Ottoman sultanate and to constitute themselves into an independent state."¹⁸ After the revolt began, this bloodshed and repression continued. As described by Antonius:

The Turks naturally took reprisals. And it is important to note that the sacrifices made and the penalties incurred were shared in common by Syrians and Palestinians as well as by Iraqis. In particular the Turks hanged a great many people, most of them on suspicion of belonging to societies, who were known or suspected of being in communication with the British or French, and on various occasions people belonging to the best known Moslem and Christian families of Syria and Palestine were hanged in the public squares. There was no distinction between Palestine and Syria. Their aims were one. Their future was one. Their suffering was one. The sufferings and penalties paid were one. They went into the war because they had been given to understand their independence was assured by the powers as a result of their coming into the war.¹⁹

The Arab revolt began with the capture of Turkish garrisons in the Hijaz and moved on to include the capture of Aqaba, the entry of General Edmund Allenby and the Egyptian Expeditionary Force into Palestine in 1917, and the subsequent destruction of Turkish forces in Lebanon and Syria. Even if the revolt had never spread beyond Hijaz, Britain would have been indebted to the Arab fighters who captured German-Turkish garrisons there and thwarted German plans to extend communication lines, send reinforcements, and gain control of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.²⁰ "Had the Revolt never done anything else than frustrate the combined march of Turks and Germans to Southern Arabia in 1916, we should owe it more than we have paid to this day," wrote D. G. Hogarth, scholar and staff member at the Arab Bureau in Cairo during World War I.²¹

Allenby "was quick to grasp" the significance of the Arab capture of Aqaba, and noted that it was "the first news of military significance" that he had heard upon arriving in Egypt. Antonius saw this event as "the tangible embodiment of the Revolt and a base for the political undermining as well as the military undoing of the Turkish power in Syria."²² Antonius also understood that increasing desertions and defections of Arabs from Turkish ranks and the rise of Arab support for the Allies had been generated by continued British communications that increased Arab

trust and belief that Britain aimed to assure postwar Arab independence.²³ Indeed, the Palestinians placed so much faith in British assurances that when Allenby's forces moved into Palestine in October 1917, Limon von Sanders, commander in chief of the Turkish-German forces with headquarters in Nazareth, noted, "The British forces advancing towards Jerusalem found themselves fighting in a friendly country, while the Turks who were defending their own territory found themselves fighting in the midst of a decidedly hostile population."²⁴

Conditions in Syria were dreadful. In addition to the hangings and deportations, Syrians suffered from lack of transport facilities, the unwillingness of peasants and Bedouins especially in the Hauran to sell their grain for anything but gold, gross abuses in the handling of food supplies by government officials, bribes, "graft in all its forms, and the unscrupulous cupidity of the men in power," partial crop failures, locusts, "the undeniable indifference of the Turkish authorities," and impoverishment due to currency depreciation. One Syrian traveling through Syria from Aleppo to Jerusalem wrote: "[I] was confronted with the most revolting sites of famine, disease, and misery. Death was sweeping away in thousands men, women, and children."²⁵ An American woman who witnessed the locusts and onset of starvation reported: "The Levant is starving. This is no figure of speech but the literal truth."²⁶

Antonius mourned the deaths of these fellow Syrians and Arab nationalists, many of whom he knew personally. In 1916, as a censor concerned with the writing and validity of stories in newspapers, Antonius read and investigated various reports and narratives. He kept records of articles that he found too difficult to elaborate upon, simply noting in *The Arab Awakening* that the story of suffering and death in Greater Syria was too horrible to revisit in detail. Some 20 years later, in February 1937, as he pooled some of the questions and findings together, Antonius wrote to Bayard Dodge, president of the American University of Beirut:

It is understood that the causes which brought about the famine and the diseases consequent upon it were due to a variety of causes, such as transport difficulties, inefficiency and corruption of officials, one bad locust invasion in 1915, profiteering and corners by unscrupulous merchants, etc. Would it be correct to say that an additional reason was due to a deliberate motive on the part of the Turkish authorities, which caused them to discriminate on political grounds, and to withhold or grant facilities for the acquisition of foodstuffs according as the people concerned were known to be disaffected or loyal to the Ottoman government? This accusation occurs very frequently in source material, more particularly in relation to the famine in Lebanon. It would be useful to know whether competent eyewitnesses are in a position to substantiate the charge.²⁷

The Balfour Declaration, 1917

The year 1917 was no less a difficult one, though the difficulties were of a different kind. This was the year when Antonius and other Arabs first faced the question of Britain's betrayal of promises to support Arab independence and self-rule. Arabs felt betrayed by the November 2, 1917 Balfour Declaration pledging British support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine and by the Sykes-Picot plan, a secret Anglo-French agreement for postwar dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, including Greater Syria, which was published by the Russians in December 1917.

Although officers in the Arab Bureau in Egypt opposed the fragmentation of Syria and Zionist ambitions, leading officials in Whitehall were less averse to dividing the spoils with their old rivals, the French. In December 1916 a new coalition government came to power in Britain, with David Lloyd George replacing the more patrician Herbert Asquith as prime minister. In Egypt, Sir Reginald Wingate replaced McMahon as high commissioner, marginalizing Kitchener's supporters, such as Ronald Storrs, who was then oriental secretary.

In London, Lloyd George's government backed Zionists, in part because of anticipated financial and political gains to the British Empire. For his part, Lloyd George was schooled in a religious frame that favored Zionist ambitions; he had served as the Zionist organization's attorney; and he represented Manchester, which had the second largest Jewish population in Britain, after London. Among the leading figures in the British government, Arthur Balfour, the secretary of state for foreign affairs, under whose name the statement of policy favoring the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine was issued, and Winston Churchill, one of the movement's leading supporters, were also from Manchester. Although only a few figures encouraged Lloyd George's pro-Zionist stance, they were prominent figures in the world of finance, politics, and journalism. One of Lloyd George's closest political confidants, for example, was C. P. Scott, editor of the great liberal newspaper the *Manchester Guardian*, whom Chaim Weizmann converted to Zionism in 1914.²⁸

In contrast to the pro-Zionist Rothschilds and Sir Herbert Samuel, other prominent Jewish personalities in Britain adamantly opposed the Balfour Declaration, seeing it as a threat to the fundamental principle of equality, which they and their families had long struggled for, and as a misuse of Judaism, which they argued was a religion not to be mistaken with an aggressive and acquisitive political movement. When Balfour presented the proposal to the Cabinet, Lord Edwin Montagu, secretary of state for India (and cousin to Herbert Samuel), led the opposition. Criticism also was voiced by others, including David Alexander, president of

the Board of Deputies of British Jews, and Claude Montefiore, president of the Anglo-Jewish Association, who claimed that political Zionism was unfairly demanding special privileges and economic preferences in Palestine. They rejected Zionists' ideological rejection of the principle of equal rights for all religious denominations. Discarding the vital principle of equality was not only selfish but also dangerous, for that very principle protected Jews from persecution and abuse. The only acceptable grounds for success lay in "competition based on perfect equality of rights and opportunity," without special privileges and monopolies. For Montagu, being Jewish was a matter of faith rather than nationality, and the Zionists' use of religion for a political purpose was dangerously reminiscent of the European anti-Semitism he and his family and so many other Jews had struggled so hard to overcome. Fromkin writes:

The second son of a successful financier who had been ennobled, Montagu saw Zionism as a threat to the position in British society that he and his family had so recently, and with so much exertion, attained. Judaism, he argued, was a religion, not a nationality, and to say otherwise was to say that he was less than 100 percent British. . . . The evidence suggested that in his non-Zionism, Montagu was speaking for a majority of Jews. As of 1913, the last date for which there were figures, only about one percent of the world's Jews had signified their adherence to Zionism. . . . In Britain, the Conjoint Committee, which represented British Jewry in all matters affecting Jews abroad, had been against Zionism from the start and remained so.²⁹

Unlike leading politicians and officials in London, British officials in the field were averse to Zionism as well as to French ambitions in Syria, and they supported an exclusive British replacement of the Ottoman Empire as principal guide and adviser to a newly independent Arab federation. Having secured Arab trust through his supervision of the McMahon correspondence with Sheriff Hussein, Clayton was especially averse to contradictory plans and pledges. He supported Arab unity and independence for the good of an Arab nation, and to protect the British Empire and keep its long-standing French archrival and its competing imperial interests out of the region. He criticized "mischievous" Anglo-French dealings as a treacherous form of trench warfare that could have disastrous consequences. "As far as this [military] theatre is concerned things are going surprisingly well but it is a species of political trench warfare and rashness [that] will expose us to a nasty counter attack," he wrote to Sykes.³⁰ Antonius saw the secret Anglo-French (Sykes-Picot) Agreement as "not only the product of greed at its worst, that is to say, of greed allied to suspicion and so leading to stupidity: it also stands out as a startling piece of double dealing."³¹ Sykes, a conservative member of Parliament

and a Middle East specialist, initially discounted Arab concerns about the fragmentation of Syria and about French colonial methods. He understood that the French had a reputation for "the crushing and breaking up of native organization and the obtaining for France of a special position of advantage by secret petty negotiations," but he expected this to end in the postwar era.³² With far less optimism and far greater knowledge of local Arab concerns, Clayton wrote Sykes on October 18, 1917:

It cannot be disguised that they [the French] are unpopular with both Arabs and Syrians as a whole—their colonial and financial methods are disliked. . . . Every effort on our part to put them in the forefront of the Syrian picture is met by the retort 'what have they done, except propaganda in Cairo to warrant consideration as the saviors of Syria or to establish any claim on either Syrian or Arab. The fight against the Turk is being maintained by Great Britain and by the Arabs with the help of Great Britain.' As the situation develops and time goes on, this attitude becomes more and more general and difficult to combat. I do not speak in any anti-French spirit. As you know, I am doing my utmost to help them and to act up to the spirit of our agreement, but it is impossible to get round solid facts.³³

This strange and trying year became even more stressful as Antonius assumed the increasing responsibility of deputy chief censor while facing evidence of a possible betrayal of the Arab national cause by the Arabs' most trusted ally, the British. Fiercely anxious about his own people's future, he was eager to resign and get into the field as an Arab adviser in Palestine, Syria's southern flank. The British strategy to get Arab support sought to undermine French claims by securing local support and receptivity to Britain during the war, in return for postwar Arab independence under the British Empire. During the war, the British government supported a policy of censoring news stories that were discouraging or critical, and of leaking rumors of encouraging news to sustain Arab trust. Antonius knew that "the British authorities there [in Egypt], aided by a strict censorship and an active propaganda service, had much to do to allay Arab apprehensions and prevent a collapse of the Revolt."³⁴

Although there are no letters elaborating on his attitude toward his job, Antonius probably felt somewhat responsible for helping allay Arab fears, although it would have seemed to him at that point that there was little alternative but to continue. Rather than become completely disillusioned with British allies, Antonius attempted to resign from censorship and move to Palestine to help advise officers whom he respected, such as Sir Gilbert Clayton and Ronald Storrs, and with whom he knew he could work productively. Working as censor to sustain an Arab Revolt on the side of the British against the Ottomans was meaningless if Whitehall in-

tended to betray the Arab cause and renege on British promises to support postwar independence and unity. Amid the ongoing death and dying in Syria and the Arab revolt against Ottoman forces alongside British forces, evidence of British double-dealing, and the distrust it generated, must have been particularly unsettling.

For his part, having received news of British double-dealing, Clayton urged Sykes in 1917 to keep politics in the background and not to give in to the French or Zionists, regardless of how angry they became. "It is the military problem which has first to be solved. . . . The more politics can be kept in the background, the more likely are the Arabs to concentrate on the expulsion of the Turks from Syria, which, if successful, will do more than anything to promote Arab unity and national feeling," wrote Clayton.³⁵ Indeed, military success would do more than anything to defeat French and Zionist plans, for the Arab nation's realization of unity and independence from empire would be difficult to deny and impossible to defeat morally. Trusting in military success and its implications for the Arab nation and the British Empire, Clayton was prepared to silence the critics and urge people to have faith: "I am doing my best to muzzle the innumerable talkers here and to impress upon them that they must trust the Entente, whose principles have been announced to the world, and await developments," he wrote.³⁶

Although men in the field were supportive of Arab national goals, duplicity was in the air. As Antonius became more intensely focused on these disturbing developments, Forster was disturbed by Antonius's neglect of friendship and play. War had become especially "distasteful" to Forster, and he criticized the accompanying censorship as a profession that "naturally attracts the timid and inferior mind."³⁷ Although the latter phrase did not describe Antonius, Forster got it right when he noted: "No doubt truth was suspended in the previous wars, but there was not so copious a supply of the official substitutes. It's these that weigh one down like masses of decaying flesh, and drive one for cleanliness to fancy or the past."³⁸ For Antonius, however, history, wit, and humor were insufficient antidotes to the precarious unfolding of European policy affecting his nation.

The atmosphere of lies and deceit may have first united Antonius and Forster, through a mutual desire to escape such a surreal world, in their work on a historical text about Alexandria; but it also marked the beginning of their parting. Despite their collaboration on the book, Forster saw their state of general intimacy break "at the touch of new experiences and scenes."³⁹ It was not simply that the circumstances of war precluded Forster's becoming one of Antonius's lasting friends. Rather, as the abnormal wartime conditions abated and the Arab world entered a period of postwar trauma, there was an inevitable breach between the romantic Eng-

lishman searching for some elusive, exotic East and the young Arab nationalist drawn into the all-too-real postwar problems of his homeland; here the Orientalist outlook was confronted by the nonconforming Arab. Hence the "curious and rather sad" feelings Forster felt in 1921 when reflecting on his sense of loss, particularly of lost intimacy and solidarity with George Antonius.⁴⁰ Forster could not appreciate Antonius's passion and intensity regarding the future of the Arab nation, and he thus concluded that rather than simply charming Antonius was a "born intriguer." His disparagement of Antonius reflects an underlying racism that led him to underestimate and to resent Antonius's engagement in a realm typically closed to all but an elite corps of Englishmen. Antonius's lack of timidity, his creative vigor, and his moral character and competence challenged this arrogant man who preferred that he stay in his place and not presume to be more than a clever, amusing, and bright little companion.

Never questioning the Arab birthright, which was his own as well, Antonius saw British support not as a form of paternalism promoting dependence but rather as a mutually beneficial partnership that could help leverage Arab independence and self-governance out of French and other imperial designs. Within a federative framework, the British could have supported Arab independence and self-governance in return for Arab respect and trade and security privileges for the British Empire. The British could have provided a security umbrella warding off aggression while Arabs pursued nation building without burdensome military and bureaucratic expenditures.

Restraining France and Zionism, 1918

On December 11, 1917, just weeks after news about the Balfour Declaration and the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the Middle East campaign achieved a major success as General Allenby and his Egyptian Expeditionary Force entered Jerusalem after liberating southern Palestine from Turkish forces. Before the arrival of the British forces, Palestinians raised the Arab national flag as a symbol of their independence. At war's end, this act and the Arab desire for independence were well known. Arnold Toynbee, a young officer attending the peace conference in Paris, indicated that participants knew that "within the few hours' interval that had elapsed between the defeated Turkish army's evacuation of Northern Palestine, the Lebanon, and Syria and the occupation of these evacuated territories by Allenby's victorious troops, the Arab flag had been hoisted everywhere to proclaim the Arabs' political aspirations while they were free to declare them."⁴¹

In 1918 Clayton moved to Jerusalem to serve as chief administrator for Palestine and Enemy Occupied Territory, and Ronald Storrs became mili-

tary governor of Jerusalem. Although intelligence work pertaining to the offensive into Syria remained, Clayton's primary tasks centered upon restoring trade and transport, and averting starvation. These were important tasks, especially given the 1916 report that "it is no exaggeration to say that two-thirds of the inhabitants of the villages in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, Ramallah, El-Taibeh, El-Bireh, Betin-Safafa, Selwan, Beit Hanineh, and Bir Zeit have died of hunger and typhoid fever."⁴² In addition to helping local people survive and get back on their feet, and "consolidating, resting, re-equipping, and improving communications," Clayton blocked French and Zionist efforts to establish a beachhead in Palestine when the country was most vulnerable. He blocked French representative François Georges Picot's attempt to set up a joint British-French administration, and he stood his ground against Zionist demands, explaining that he had a responsibility to protect Palestine, that no pro-Zionist policy had been articulated, and that wartime conditions and military concerns prevailed.⁴³

In 1918, the year before his death, Sykes rejected the treaty that he had helped author. He had joined the growing consensus favoring a peace based on U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's principles of self-governance and rule by consent of the governed. He had traveled around, listened to, and reflected upon Arab and British opposition to French and British colonial plans, and had decided that the Sykes-Picot Agreement was folly. Wilson's principles had perhaps influenced his judgment and interpretation of the facts, but it was the advice of others, such as Clayton, that helped him change his mind.

Clayton found that the overwhelming majority of Palestinians, including the long-standing Jewish residents, were opposed to Zionist ideology and plans. He noted that "Palestine was made up of 573,000 Arabs . . . and 66,000 Jews (half of whom were orthodox and non-Zionist)."⁴⁴ According to Fromkin's findings, as of 1913 a small fraction of the Jewish population worldwide was pro-Zionist. By 1918, the political movement was still in its infancy, and its rank-and-file membership consisted mainly of Jews from Eastern Europe, where persecution was particularly brutal. Clayton assured Faisal, Hussein's son, who had led the military campaign into Syria and who was concerned about aggressive Zionist plans to gain control of Palestine, he need not worry, for "all communities were 'looking toward independence and liberty.'"⁴⁵ Clayton felt it imperative to restrain Zionists and warned Sykes: "The trend of feeling all over the world does not permit of a government which excludes any one community from the rights and privileges granted to others. Moreover, the Jews are an element of great strength if they are incorporated into a state, but are bad enemies if a hostile attitude is taken up."⁴⁶

In 1918, after the Balfour Declaration and Sykes-Picot Agreement, Britain's attention turned to damage control: It needed to be certain that its alliance with the Arabs would remain solid during the final campaign against the Turks. Among other British officials, Clayton, Lieutenant-Commander David Hogarth, the Oxford archaeologist who had headed up the Arab Bureau under Clayton's Department of Intelligence, and others sought to reassure the Arabs that the British aimed to keep their promises to support Arab unity and independence. In January 1918 Hogarth presented an official statement assuring Arabs that their political, economic, civil, and religious rights would not be undermined by the creation of a Jewish national home. In July 1918 another official British declaration to a group of seven prominent Arab leaders in Cairo, including Faris Nimr—Antonius's future father-in-law and the father of his school chum Albert—promised Arabs freedom and independence without any territorial reservation, giving Arabs hope that the British would block French ambitions.⁴⁷ Most notably, on November 7, 1918, just days before the German armistice, an Anglo-French Declaration was circulated in Palestine and the rest of Syria and Mesopotamia promising Arabs self-government and complete and final liberation from Turkish rule.⁴⁸

The Arabs drew hope also from President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, which elaborated the American criteria for a just peace, focused on self-determination as "an imperative principle of action."

The settlement of every question, whether of territory, of sovereignty, of economic arrangement, or of political relationship, [should be] upon the basis of the free acceptance of that settlement by the people immediately concerned, and not upon the basis of the material interest or advantages of any other nation or people which desire a different settlement for the sake of its own exterior influence or mastery.⁴⁹

Arab Nation, Political Zionism

Leading scholars who write about the phenomena of nation and nationalism distinguish between Judaism and Zionism, defining the latter as a political movement essentially patterned on nineteenth-century European nationalism. Zionism was an insular movement, tribal in its fundamental features and exclusionary and nondemocratic in its culture. Zionists claimed that they—far better than the Arabs of Palestine—could help secure the empire's border. Zionism was a political movement based on invented traditions, in behalf of which shrewd political personalities lobbied a network of British officials. It was a movement designed to

achieve power and land. The danger of nationalism generally—no less for Zionism than for any other brand—as Hayes saw it, was that “nationalism as a religion inculcates neither charity nor justice; it is proud, not humble; and it signally fails to universalize human aims. . . . Its attachment involves tribal selfishness and vainglory, a particularly ignorant and tyrannical intolerance, and war. That nationalism brings not peace but the sword.”⁵⁰

Theodore Herzl, a Viennese journalist and author of *The Jewish State* (1896), founded Zionism. Adopting the nationalist criteria of nationhood, Zionism targeted a piece of land (Palestine) for the setting up of a Jewish state, and reinvented a language, Hebrew, which until then had barely been in use. In the words of Eric Hobsbawm:

[Hebrew was] a language which no Jews had used for ordinary purposes since the days of the Babylonian captivity, if then. It had just (1880) been invented as a language for everyday use—as distinct from a sacred and ritual tongue or a learned lingua franca—by a man who began the process of providing it with a suitable vocabulary by inventing a Hebrew term for ‘nationalism’, and it was learned as a badge of Zionist commitment rather than as a means for communication. . . . Zionism provides the extreme example [of nationalism], just because it was so clearly a borrowed program, which had no precedent in, or organic connection with, the actual tradition which had given the Jewish people permanence, cohesion and an indestructible identity for some millennia. It asked them to acquire a territory (inhabited by another people)—for Herzl it was not even necessary that that territory should have any historic connection with the Jews—as well as a language they had not spoken for millennia.⁵¹

As historians examined the movement in retrospect, its manipulation of the past and of the truth became increasingly evident. Contrasted with the fundamental meaning and significance of the ancient Hebrew faith and religion, the modern political movement of Zionism appeared all the less religious. It had manipulated spiritual attachments and meaning to benefit a political orientation that grasped at land and power—hardly divine goals. Hayes challenged political Zionists’ claim—just one of many myths—to being “the chosen people” with exclusionary rights and special privileges that transcended the world of ordinary men and women, including the long-standing residents in Palestine. Ancient Hebrews saw no need for an exclusionary affiliation with God based on nineteenth-century, racist criteria. As Hayes observed, in ancient times one could not presume such a singular affiliation with God based on inherited criteria of race or religion, nor was being a Hebrew so tribal. Instead, membership was far more spiritual, being based on faith and on a shared com-

mitment to fulfilling commandments. The notion of an exclusive and somehow inherently “superior” tribe had far more in common with nineteenth-century nationalism’s racist theories than with ancient Hebrew ways. Hayes wrote:

The Jews were no exception to the rule of antiquity, despite the perfervid rhapsodies of contemporary Zionists. A re-reading of the Hebrew scriptures would show that the ‘chosen people’ did not think of themselves as singularly blessed and set apart simply because they spoke Hebrew and lived in Palestine and constituted a national state. As a matter of fact, Palestine was not their original home; they had to conquer it and at a date when Egypt was already old; and even the semblance of a united national state survived with them an exceedingly brief time. The Jews were a ‘chosen people’ because they believed in Yahweh and the law revealed by Him, and the foreigner who would proclaim in the words of Ruth to Naomi that ‘Thy God shall be my God’ was admitted to full membership without embarrassing questions as to racial stock or linguistic accomplishment, as to whether the quota of immigrants from the applicant’s nation was full. Historically, both in ancient times and throughout the Middle Ages, and even down into modern times, the Jews have been not so much a nationality infused with nationalism as adherents to a religion.⁵²

Antonius understood Hayes’s observation that “antiquity knew not nationalism as we know it.” As he saw it, the Arab nation was a culture and a moral movement connected to antiquity. The Arab national movement was not simply a movement of race or religion, or an ideological expression of nineteenth-century European nationalism. Although the Arab national movement expressed a people’s profound attachments to each other, to their land and culture, and to their shared desires and networks of supports and life together, political Zionism was a qualitatively different movement. Organized in Europe, it was alien to the indigenous population. It was a movement for survival, based on a history of persecution and abuse, which generated among Zionists a distrust of non-Zionists that in turn spawned conflict and violence. As a European ideology, Zionism was alien to the indigenous people of Palestine and Syria and contrary to the interests of the majority in Palestine. In Hayes’s words: “Nationalism has always existed. Patriotism has long existed, either as applied to a locality or as extended to an empire. But the fusion of patriotism with nationalism and the predominance of national patriotism over all other human loyalties—which is nationalism—is modern, very modern.”⁵³

While Weizmann, head of the Zionist organization in London, was promoting the movement through elegant dinner parties and private

meetings with influential personalities, other Zionists were adopting a more militant approach in Palestine. The most militant Zionist leaders came from Eastern Europe, where the persecution of Jews had been much more brutal than in France or England. In Britain, Jews were among the most prominent members of society and leaders of the financial and diplomatic communities, as evidenced by the Rothschild, Montagu, and Samuel dynasties. Zionists of more modest background and far more experience with persecution took their cues from Vladimir Jabotinsky and Joseph Trumpeldor in launching a violent, militant campaign of reverse racism. This group favored rapid Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine and the creation of a Jewish state there, organized on socialist principles (e.g., in the form of the *kibbutzim*) so as to maximize the economy's capacity for absorbing unlimited numbers of Jewish immigrants. In the 1920s Jabotinsky, the founder of the current Likud Party in Israel, was imprisoned by the British for his militant activity. Trumpeldor also supported the organization of militant Zionists for battle in Palestine. As David Ben-Gurion, another Zionist leader, described Zionists: "We were entirely without roots in the civic, social, and political sense."⁵⁴ Lacking roots in Palestine, uprooted youth with nothing to lose could romanticize martial prowess and fantasize about Palestinians as "the devil incarnate."⁵⁵ Hence, the gaps between fact and fiction, and between Zionist nationalism and the Palestinian nation—two very different phenomena. Tragically, as myths and a conqueror's code blocked political Zionists from acknowledging and respecting local reality, violence and the violation of Palestinian life and liberty proceeded apace. As Ben-Gurion saw it—for Zionists, but hardly as a reflection of Palestinian reality—"This was a world where force, and force alone won respect."⁵⁶

Notes

1. Thomas Hodgkin, "Antonius, Palestine, and the 1930s," in *The Gazelle Review of Middle East Literature*, no. 10, ed. Roger Hardy (London: Ithaca, 1982), p. 31.
2. Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1875–1914* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), p. 51.
3. Laurence Grafftey-Smith, *The Bright Levant* (London: John Murray, 1970).
4. George Antonius, Presentation to the Peel Commission, 18 January 1937, Israel State Archives [hereafter, ISA], Hakiryia, record group 65, file 2869.
5. Humphrey Bowman, 3 March 1929, Bowman Diary, Middle East Center Archives, St. Antony's College, Oxford.
6. Robert O. Collins, ed., *An Arabian Diary: Sir Gilbert Falkingham Clayton* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), p. 60.
7. T. E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, Doran, 1935), p. 57.

8. David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Avon Books, 1989), p. 91.

9. "Sir Gilbert Clayton: Distinguished Service in the East," and "An Appreciation," *Times* [London] (9 September 1929). Antonius had a copy of this unsigned note in his records; perhaps he was the author (ISA, record group 65, file AT257-537).

10. E. M. Forster to Mother, Egypt, 24 August 1916, Forster Papers, King's College Archives, Cambridge. According to Thomas Hodgkin, wit was "one characteristic of George's of which one was immediately conscious" (Hodgkin, "Antonius, Palestine, and the 1930s," p. 9).

11. C. P. Cavafy, "He Came to Read," in *The Greek Poems of C. P. Cavafy*, trans. Memas Kolaitis (New Rochelle, N.Y.: A. D. Caratzas, 1989), p. 132.

12. George Antonius, Presentation to the Peel Commission, in *Sittings of the Royal Commission*, 18 January 1937, ISA, record group 65, file 2869.

13. E. M. Forster to S. R. Masood, 29 December 1915, Alexandria, in *Selected Letters of E. M. Forster*, vol. 1: 1879-1920, eds. Mary Lago and P. N. Furbank (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1983), p. 233.

14. E. M. Forster to G. H. Ludolf, 9 June 1921, India, King's College Archives, Cambridge.

15. E. M. Forster to G. H. Ludolf, 11 July 1926, England, King's College Archives, Cambridge.

16. E. M. Forster to G. H. Ludolf, 9 June 1921, India, King's College Archives, Cambridge.

17. E. M. Forster to Mother, 10 November 1916, Alexandria, King's College Archives, Cambridge.

18. George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1938), pp. 110-111; Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, p. 209; also see A. L. Tibawi, *Anglo-Arab Relations and the Question of Palestine* (London: Luzac, 1978), p. 129.

19. Antonius, Presentation to Peel Commission, 1937, ISA.

20. Similarly, Tibawi noted that the Arab fighters helped Great Britain gain "the most positive advantage," namely, "the removal of the danger of establishing German submarine bases and wireless stations in the Red Sea coast of the Yemen, signaled by the arrival of von Stotzingen's mission at al-'Ula near Medina" (Tibawi, *Anglo-Arab Relations*, p. 133).

21. D. G. Hogarth in *Century* (July 1920), cited by Antonius in *The Arab Awakening*, p. 210.

22. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, pp. 223, 225.

23. British intelligence reported that the leaflets encouraging the Arab revolt and assuring independence did indeed have "the desired effect," for in Palestine and Syria alone the numbers of Arabs prepared to rise against the Turks was "estimated at sixty-four thousand, exclusive of the Beduins" (Tibawi, *Anglo-Arab Relations*, p. 137, with ref. to F. O. 371/2777 and 2781: Reports by Sykes, 9 October and 2 November with printed Arabian Reports N. S. no. 16).

24. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 227.

25. "Syrian Suffering: Callous Cruelty of the Turks," *Times* [London], 2 September 1916, extract in Antonius papers, ISA, record group 65, file AT217-3253.

26. "Two Years with the Enemy: Woman's Experience in the Levant; Ravages of Locusts," *Times* [London], 15 September 1916, copy in the Antonius papers, ISA, record group 65, file AT217-3253.

27. George Antonius to Bayard Dodge, president of the American University of Beirut, Jerusalem, 5 February 1937, ISA, record group 65, file 858-330.

28. Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, pp. 270-271.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 294.

30. Gilbert Clayton to Mark Sykes, 15 December 1917, ISA, record group 65, file AT215-2831-384. For more detailed information on the British-French plans, see Gérard Khoury, *La France et l'Orient Arabe: Naissance du Liban moderne, 1914-1920* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1993), pp. 87-93.

31. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 248.

32. Mark Sykes, "Arab Situation," 17 June 1917, ISA, record group 65, file AT215-2831-384.

33. Gilbert Clayton to Mark Sykes, 18 October 1917, Egypt, ISA, record group 65, file AT215-2831-384.

34. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 267. Also see extracts from Memorandum (presumed to be by Mark Sykes), 28 October 1915, ISA, record group 65, file AT99-2737.

35. Gilbert Clayton to Mark Sykes, date unclear/1917, see Sykes-Clayton Correspondence, ISA, record group 65, file AT215-2831-384.

36. *Ibid.*

37. E. M. Forster to Mother, 27 April 1916, Egypt, King's College Archives, Cambridge.

38. E. M. Forster to Robert Trevelyan, 23 August 1918, Egypt, King's College Archives, Cambridge.

39. E. M. Forster to G. H. Ludolf, 9 June 1921, India, King's College Archives, Cambridge.

40. *Ibid.*

41. Arnold Toynbee, *Acquaintances* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 212.

42. "Syrian Suffering: Callous Cruelty of the Turks," *Times* [London], 2 September 1916, ISA, record group 65, AT217-3253.

43. Sir Gilbert Clayton to Reginald Wingate, 26 January 1918, Sudan Archives, Durham [hereafter, SAD], 693/13/38.

44. Tibawi, *Anglo-Arab Relations*, p. 361.

45. Clayton to Faisal, 10 December 1917, F.O. 882/7, cited in *Ibid.*, pp. 244-245.

46. Gilbert Clayton to Mark Sykes, 26 January 1918, Clayton papers, file 693/13/31, SAD.

47. Khoury, *La France et l'Orient Arabe*, p. 122.

48. Albert Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon: A Political Essay* (London: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 47-48; also see Robert John and Sami Hadawi, *The Palestine Diary, 1914-1945*, vol. 1 (New York: New World Press, 1970), pp. 100-101; for reference to the documents, see Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, pp. 431-436.

49. "Second Point of President Wilson's Address at Mount Vernon, 4 July 1918," copy in Antonius papers, ISA, record group 65, file 3260.

50. Carlton J. H. Hayes, *Essays on Nationalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1933), p. 125.
51. Hobsbawm, *Age of Empire*, pp. 146–147.
52. Hayes, *Essays on Nationalism*, pp. 27–28.
53. *Ibid.*
54. Robert St. John, *Ben-Gurion: The Biography of an Extraordinary Man* (New York: Doubleday, 1959), p. 34.
55. For Antonius's discussion of this misperception of Palestinians, see Antonius, presentation to the Peel Commission, 1937.
56. St. John, *Ben-Gurion*, p. 32.

4

Betrayal

Betray, v.t. 1. To deliver or expose to an enemy by treachery or disloyalty . . . 2. To be unfaithful in guarding, maintaining, or fulfilling: to betray a trust. 3. To disappoint the hopes or expectations of; be disloyal to: to betray one's friends. . . . 7. To deceive, misguide, or corrupt: a young lawyer betrayed by political ambitions into irreparable folly.

—Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language (1996)

On November 11, 1918, Germany signed an armistice agreement ending World War I. The Paris Peace Conference began in January 1919, and concluded in June with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. Historians would argue that Europe was exhausted, leadership was morally bankrupt, and institutions were too weak to restrain an entrenched conqueror's imposition of vindictive retribution. Even Felix Frankfurter, future U.S. Supreme Court justice and then Harvard law professor, noted: "My months at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 were probably the saddest of my life. The progressive disillusionment of the high hopes which Wilson's noble talk had engendered was not unlike the feelings that death of near ones brings."¹ J. M. Keynes, an economic adviser to the British delegation, saw the hopeless exhaustion: "Our power of feeling or caring beyond the immediate questions of our own material wellbeing is temporarily eclipsed. . . . We have been moved beyond endurance, and need rest. Never in the lifetime of men now living has the universal element in the soul of man burnt so dimly."² For Hogarth, despite nobler intentions in the field, a conqueror's code demanded a "prize of war": "Our arms had conquered it; and passion of possession follows conquest."³

Although France and Britain were the major powers that would ultimately determine the treaties, the United States had contributed so much to the war effort that it could not be ignored, and the conference agenda

was set by Georges Clemenceau, the French premier; David Lloyd George, the British prime minister, notorious for his lack of scruples and his opportunism; and Woodrow Wilson, U.S. president, who espoused an agenda based on principle rather than force.

Arab Patriots and the Paris Peace Conference, 1919

In late 1918 Arab patriots prepared to attend the Paris Peace Conference to collect their promised reward for aiding the British against the Turks. On Christmas Eve 1918, preparatory to his participation in the Arab delegation, Antonius submitted his resignation as deputy chief press censor (but he was subsequently persuaded to take a leave of absence instead). Emir Faisal, a leading figure in the Arab Revolt, headed the delegation in place of his father, Sheriff Hussein. Faisal's entourage included leading Arab nationalists and future negotiators as well as the lesser-known Antonius and his better-known peers—the founders of al-Fatat, Rustum Haidar and Awni Abd al-Hadi—with whom Antonius conferred daily during the negotiations.⁴ They all shared the perspective of the Arab nation as one of inclusive diversity. "The Arabs were Arab before Moses, Jesus and Mohammed; the religions oblige us on earth to follow the moral (the right) principles of fraternity, and he who aims to introduce discord between Muslims, Christians, and Jews is not Arab," Faisal said days before his departure from Egypt.⁵ And Thomas Hodgkin noted, "Diversity, as well as unity, were the twin guides to [Antonius's] ecumenical approach, as they must be for any sensible man."⁶

When Antonius went to London, there were few Arabs, if any, as fluent and capable of presenting the Arab case before leading British officials. As Hodgkin wrote:

He was constantly being sought out as a mediator . . . the role, for which he was admirably equipped by his essentially rational way of looking at the world and belief in the rational solution of problems, the lucidity of his reasoning, his Henry Jamesish sensitivity to the undertones and overtones of a complex situation, his imaginative power of grasping and identifying himself with, conflicting points of view, the wit and lightness of touch.⁷

Thus, while Faisal focused on France in late 1918, Antonius concentrated on British policymakers, including his friend Sir Bartle Frere, who arranged for Antonius to speak to the House of Lords.

Faisal, then thirty-three years old, was the designated spokesman for Sheriff Hussein, the leader of the Arab revolt. T.E. Lawrence was his principal interpreter. Faisal faced an especially arduous task, for few Europeans took him or the Arab cause seriously, and the conference was dom-

inated by Clemenceau and Lloyd George, men more than twice Faisal's age, who were opposed to an independent Arab federation. Neither man wanted to walk away from the war with nothing to show for the millions who had died, and neither wanted to give up imperial designs on former Ottoman territory. They were dead set against the Wilsonian principles of self-determination and the British promises to support Arab independence and unity.

Arnold Toynbee and other British officers saw the underhanded play and the resulting decisions as "criminal," and as the beginnings of a vicious circle of distrust. Toynbee, one of the few British officials dealing with Middle East affairs at the peace conference, later spoke out against the settlement and the ruthless imperial mind-set behind it:

One day [during peace negotiations in Paris] I had had to hand some papers to Lloyd George just after the close of some meeting on Middle East affairs. . . . This was the only occasion on which I had ever met him, and this encounter of mine with him had lasted for no longer than a minute or two, but it had been unexpectedly revealing; for, when he had taken the papers and started to scan them, Lloyd George, to my delight, had forgotten my presence and had begun to think aloud. 'Mesopotamia . . . yes . . . oil . . . irrigation . . . we must have Mesopotamia; Palestine . . . yes . . . the Holy Land . . . Zionism . . . we must have Palestine; Syria . . . h'm . . . what is there in Syria? Let the French have that.' Lloyd George's unconscious soliloquy had revealed a shrewd awareness of the Ottoman Arab countries' economic and political assets; but there had been no audible mention of the human factor that was to be the subject of King's and Crane's investigation and report. In counting up the Arab countries' 'points,' Lloyd George had left out the rights and wishes of the Arabs themselves.⁸

Although Lloyd George and Clemenceau aimed to ignore and deny Arab national goals of independence and the earlier British pledges, they were constrained initially by President Wilson's participation in the treaty negotiations. In January 1918 Wilson presented a new framework of values in his 14 Points speech. Whereas Felix Frankfurter tried to persuade Wilson to include the Balfour Declaration in the treaty, Walter Lippman, who became Antonius's friend, helped formulate the 14 Points that could have restrained imperialist ambitions.⁹ For Antonius and others promoting Arab nation building after years of neglect and abuse under empire, Wilson's points represented practical moral guidelines that could restrain predators and enable the people to govern themselves. The 14 Points, basic ground rules framed by the principles of self-determination and government by consent of the governed could have institutionalized a level playing field. Wilson aimed to see that "there be no annexa-

tions; national aspirations must be respected; peoples may not be dominated; and . . . (may now) be governed only by their own consent. 'Self-determination' is not a mere phrase, it is an imperative principle of action."¹⁰

After visiting France, where he was virtually ignored by the government, Faisal went to London for additional meetings before his scheduled January presentation to the peace conference in Paris. The quality of the English language in his presentation suggests that Antonius, who was in London at the time, lent a hand, for Faisal, who had never lived outside the Arab world, knew little English. Although Antonius was a master translator, he was young, an unknown quantity; thus, he was probably only unofficially in contact with members of Faisal's team, who likely engaged him on the margins in the preparation of Faisal's statements at the peace conference and to the press. According to A. L. Tibawi: "Faisal's Arab entourage included no one with a knowledge of English. Hence the complete dependence in London on Lawrence for interpreting and advice."¹¹ Faisal, who had fought alongside Lawrence and thought he could trust him, later learned of a "marked divergence between Faisal's public statements and those attributed to him and published later in English."¹² Despite their linguistic handicap, as a group, the young Arab patriots seeking postwar independence and unity represented their nation's greatest hope. They shared devotion to principle, faith in their nation's moral foundation of unity, and a vision of self-governance and federation. How unfortunate, then, that Faisal's first visit to Europe became what Antonius called an "adventure in bewilderment": "To a man in his middle thirties, who scarcely understood either English or French, had never been to England before, and had had no previous experience of the seamy side of European diplomacy, the cumulative effect . . . was bewildering and depressing," Antonius wrote.¹³

When Faisal returned to France to address the peace conference on January 29, he asked the British and French to honor their November 1918 promise of support for Arab independence. He called for "the independence of all the Arab-speaking peoples in Asia," emphasizing cultural and socioeconomic unity, the promises made by Great Britain, and Wilson's second point: "the settlement of every question, whether of territory, of sovereignty, of economic arrangement, or political relationship, upon the basis of the free acceptance of that settlement by the people immediately concerned, and not upon the basis of the material interest or advantages of any other nation or people which may desire a different settlement for the sake of its own exterior influence or mastery."¹⁴ On February 6, 1919, Faisal, accompanied by Lawrence, Rustum Haidar, Awni Abd al-Hadi, and Nuri Said, met with European and American representatives, including Wilson, Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Balfour, and

Toynbee, at the Quai d'Orsay in Paris. Reuters summarized Faisal's position that day:

The emir asks for no extension of the boundaries of his father's kingdom, but, speaking for the Arab race from Egypt to Persia, he asks that the powers should recognize that the Arabs throughout this vast region are one in blood, in history, in faith, and in speech, and that, although incapable of union under one single Arab government at the present time, they should be formed into a confederacy, each province, Syria, Irak [sic], Jesireh, the Hedjaz [sic], Nejd, and Yemen governing itself, under such native authority as it may please to set up in accordance with local circumstances and peculiarities, and the whole placed under the supervision of a single mandatory power which would attend to such matters as railroads, telegraphs, education, and whatever the Arabs could not manage for themselves. The need for a federative authority, which could not at present be Arab, is thoroughly recognized by the Arabs themselves, but they wish to bring about a union of the Arab race under a single European control, which would ultimately, perhaps 50 years hence, yield place to a native government. For this reason the Arabs strenuously oppose the division of territories inhabited by their people into spheres of influence which must happen if they are placed under the authority of various mandatory powers.¹⁵

Clemenceau told Faisal the French government desired to replace the British, and to send troops and advisers to Syria. Faisal declined the offer, reminding Clemenceau that although Syrians were likely to need foreign technical assistance, they sought independence within an Arab federation and had no need of foreign troops. Syrians could govern and police themselves without any help; although mutual defense treaties could be considered, there was no imminent threat of invasion—save from the French. On April 12, as negotiations dragged on with little success for the Arab cause, Faisal forwarded a telegram from the Syrian Union Party of Cairo to the American delegation, reemphasizing Syria's territorial and national integrity and unity, and the common desire for independence and for a constitution based on the principles of democratic decentralization and protection of minorities.¹⁶ The following day, Faisal sent a note to Clemenceau, reiterating, "Syria does not need foreign soldiers and should she ever need any she will ask for assistance."¹⁷

After the less-than-encouraging meetings in France, Faisal went to London, where he was abruptly informed by Lord Curzon, the British foreign secretary, that the British and French governments intended to introduce mandatory rule in a divided Syria. When Faisal reminded Curzon of Britain's wartime promises to support Arab unity and independence, the latter refused to discuss the pledges. Curzon wrote to Faisal in

October 1919 (as the French were preparing to take up their position in Syria) that he must have misunderstood the meaning of the British pledges.¹⁸ Antonius observed that Faisal was especially vulnerable, for he had no ability to argue his case in English or in French, and little preparation for the seamy side of power politics.¹⁹ Turning to the press as a last resort before returning to Syria in November, Faisal explained the Arab protest against the proposed mandates and the question of British promises:

I wish to come to a cordial understanding with France. . . . But I cannot lend myself to the division of a region which we had been solemnly promised would not be dismembered. Thus a few days ago when Mr. Lloyd George showed me his memorandum and asked me to accept it, I emphatically refused. I have a mandate from the Arabs and I have not the right to accept a regime ruining their hopes. On coming to Paris I saw Mr. Clemenceau. I remembered that Mr. Lloyd George had said to me, 'Try and arrange matters with the French in order that the agreement we concluded with you in 1915 may be respected.' I simply asked Mr. Clemenceau not to divide our country and to maintain a sole command until the peace conference has pronounced. I have not yet had a reply. I have a lively desire to spare France regrettable incidents with the populations, but they have a patriotic sentiment which must not be played with. If they see that beyond all doubt European nations have duped them they will seek support elsewhere. I solemnly decline all responsibility as to the consequences of this policy.²⁰

The King-Crane Report on the Arab Position, 1919

Leading Arabs, and British officials including General Allenby, Commander Hogarth, and others in the field who continued to resist French colonial power and Zionist ambitions in the region, supported the idea of a multilateral investigation into public opinion in Syria, which they thought might help override French and Zionist ambitions and the fragmentation of Syria. William Yale, a special agent for the U.S. Department of State who had been traveling throughout Syria, investigating the political and economic situation, likewise knew of Arab antipathy to European plans, and especially to French and Zionist designs on portions of Syria. Although Yale might have later briefed Wilson, Wilson had already been introduced to the realities of Syrian public opinion by Howard Bliss, President of the American University in Beirut. Bliss, whose family had founded that university and who was then dying of tuberculosis, traveled to Paris to communicate the Arab point of view in 1919. He had spent nearly fifty years living among Arabs, and he understood their pro-

found aversion to being split up and subjected to foreign rule and settlement. In Paris, Bliss met with Faisal, and although stooped with pain, gave a powerful presentation to leading officials at the peace conference. His portrayal of Arab public opinion made the Europeans terribly uncomfortable. Toynebee witnessed the event:

Dr. Bliss's testimony had anticipated the subsequent findings of Dr. King and Mr. Crane. The exactness of the agreement between their findings and Dr. Bliss's previous statement was not surprising. All three observers were honest and disinterested; all three were telling the truth; and truth, unlike falsehood is necessarily self-consistent.

The session of the Council of Ten at which Dr. Bliss gave his testimony was the strangest, and also the most moving, of any of the sessions at which I was present. Here was a man speaking with authority. He was the head of an old, established and distinguished educational institution whose students were drawn from all over the Near and Middle East, and in greatest numbers from the ex-Ottoman Arab region in which the university itself was located. Dr. Bliss was the scion of a dynasty of missionary-educators that had founded the university and had continued to be associated with it ever since. There can have been few, if any, other neutral first-hand observers who were so well qualified as Dr. Bliss. Dr. Bliss was obviously a noble character, and, as obviously, he was a sick man too. When he stood up to give his testimony, his physical weakness bowed him down, and he had to lean heavily on the back of the chair in front of him. He knew that his days were numbered. (I suppose his death was hastened by the fatigue of the journey to Paris from Beirut.)

As Dr. Bliss talked, I could see that he was putting the Ten out of countenance—or at any rate nine of them, perhaps excluding his fellow-Presbyterian, President Wilson. This was perhaps the first time, during the Ten's proceedings, that they had been confronted with a witness who had no ax to grind and whose sole concern was to tell the truth and to see justice done in the light of it. They did not like this; they did not know how to take it; and they were unable to conceal their embarrassment. Comedy and tragedy were jostling each other in a Shakespearean discord—the comedy of the Nine's manifest disarray; the tragedy that was impending over Dr. Bliss and over the Arabs, with whose destiny he was so much more concerned than he was with his own prospects of life.²¹

In 1919, when the peace conference deadlocked over conflicting Arab, French, and British claims, Faisal, Bliss, and others gained President Wilson's support for an impartial investigation of Arab public opinion. In March, General Allenby traveled to France to promote the commission; he followed up with sharp communications from the field to expedite the

investigation and avoid further delay.²² Arabs and Zionists recognized that the commission findings could help block the fragmentation of Syria and the institutionalization of French and British-Zionist colonialism. Although the British government at first agreed to participate in the effort, French and Zionist opponents lobbied behind the scenes and persuaded Britain to withdraw from the commission. France and Italy also quickly withdrew, isolating the Americans. Despite the European withdrawal, Wilson went ahead with a now all-American commission, and appointed Charles Crane, a trusted and wealthy democrat, and Henry King, president of Oberlin College, to head up the dozen-man team, which also included William Yale and Donald Brodie, Crane's assistant. A mutual friend in the American embassy in Egypt is said to have introduced Antonius to Crane, who invited Antonius to join the commission and help write the final report.

After extensive interviews and meetings with Arabs in Egypt and Greater Syria, the commission advised that a mandate be established for a united Syria (Syria, Palestine, Lebanon) and Iraq, but only if its goal was a rapid advance toward Arab independence. After discussing the proposed establishment of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine with Arabs and Zionists, the commission expressed concern that Palestinians might become subject to "unlimited Jewish immigration and steady financial and social pressure to surrender the land." Having found that Zionists were prepared to use force of arms to secure a Jewish state in the area, the commission called for "serious modification of the extreme Zionist program."²³

Allenby and Hogarth fully approved of the King-Crane findings; and Bliss on his deathbed in New York that year read and responded, "Now I can die peacefully."²⁴ Toynbee also gave the report high marks:

King and Crane correctly reported that the Syrian and Palestinian Arabs wanted independence without any strings. They had just been relieved of a Turkish domination that had been weighing upon them for the last 400 years; they did not want to see one obnoxious foreign regime replaced by others. King and Crane looked into the Syrian and Palestinian Arabs' reaction to the proposal for the imposition on them of "mandates" to be exercised by foreign powers. The finding was that this proposal was unacceptable to the Arabs, whoever the mandatory power or powers imposed on them might be. The least objectionable mandatory power, from the Arabs' point of view, would be the United States. The Arabs were totally unwilling to be mandated either to Britain or to France.²⁵

Based on popular Arab opinion and respecting President Wilson's principle of self-determination, the King-Crane Report could have

formed the basis for just and lasting postwar Arab peace. But “in the months following the filing of the report it was rumored that the French had brought pressure on the American Commission in Paris and the Department of State in Washington to suppress the report.”²⁶ After Wilson returned to the United States and fell ill, there was no follow-through, for he was too weak and no other person appeared “sufficiently interested to press the matter in the face of the very strong French opposition that we know existed.”²⁷ The report was shelved, and thus it never had an opportunity to influence the European powers. Its contents were not made public until 1922—well after the damage had been done.

With Wilson out of the picture in late 1919, Clemenceau and Lloyd George prepared to put the Sykes-Picot plan into effect. In a meeting in Clemenceau’s war office on September 15, they agreed to evacuate British troops from northern Syria in November 1919 and to proceed with the dismemberment and occupation of Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia.

Zionist Influences, 1919

The Zionists were fully aware that their political and territorial ambitions contradicted Wilson’s 14 Points. On June 24, 1919, Balfour met with Zionist supporters Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court Louis Brandeis, Felix Frankfurter, and Lord Eustace Percy to decide how to present the fact that “we are dealing not with the wishes of an existing community, but are consciously seeking to reconstitute a new community and definitely building for a numerical [Zionist] majority in the future.”²⁸ By then, there was no question that Faisal expected Britain to honor its promises of independence or that Syrians were profoundly adverse to French rule. As Balfour noted, “All advices indicate that French rule in Syria will meet with the greatest opposition and even bloodshed on the part of the populace.”²⁹ Although never publicly acknowledged, they were aware of the little-known November 1918 British and French pledge to support Arab independence and unity, issued shortly before the end of the war. They saw their case “further complicated” by this “agreement made early in November by the British and the French . . . telling the people of the East that their wishes would be consulted in the disposition of their future.”³⁰ Balfour told the group about Wilson’s proposal to investigate local public opinion, noting that he had countered with an attempt to exclude Palestinian opinion from the investigation by claiming that “the powers had committed themselves to the Zionist program, which inevitably excluded numerical self-determination.”³¹

Balfour asked Justice Brandeis how “the president could possibly reconcile his adherence to Zionism with any doctrine of self-determination.”

A decision was made to attempt to distract the peace conference from the Zionists' rejection of Wilson's principles by emphasizing the persecution of Jews. To realize their goal of gaining control of Palestine, the Zionists sought British backing at the peace conference, including support for their interpretation of the Balfour Declaration—that "Palestine should be the Jewish homeland and not merely that there should be a Jewish homeland in Palestine." This was a first step toward statehood. They also lobbied for "adequate boundaries," and "control of water," and for authority centralized in "the state and not into private hands." As states play a pivotal role in defining property rights, and a British-run centralized state would be vulnerable to capture by special Zionist interests, centralizing power was an important step in gaining "control of the land and the natural resources which are at the heart of a sound economic life."³²

While Brandeis and others focused on President Wilson, British Zionists, such as the Rothschilds, and others focused on British officials. After Clayton blocked the Zionists in Palestine in 1918, they were eager to talk with him during his visit to London in 1919, shortly after the release of the preliminary King-Crane Commission findings. At this juncture, there was no formal policy of official British support for political Zionism, and Curzon, among others, had even declined to meet with lobbyists such as Rothschild regarding Zionist demands. Clayton agreed to meet with the Zionists, and though hardly provocative in his rejection of their demands, he simply and firmly emphasized that Britain's role in Palestine was that of trustee, and that there was no official policy promoting Zionism that could justify their demands:

- (a) That the first Governor General of Palestine be a Jew.
- (b) That the Governor General's Executive Council (on which would sit heads of departments and a certain number of nominated members) should contain at least 50 percent Jews.
- (c) That the Legislative Assembly, when constituted, should contain at least 50 percent Jews.
- (d) That the future Jewish state should comprise "Greater Palestine."
- (e) That a law should be enacted, by which no one individual should be permitted to possess more than a certain amount of land, and that all land in excess of the amount laid down should be expropriated, at prices fixed by the government, and devoted to the development of Jewish colonization.³³

The Zionists who met with Clayton wanted the British government to block public and private financing and other development assistance to Palestinian cultivators that would help improve local conditions and agricultural production. If Palestinian cultivators were flourishing, Zionists would have difficulty gaining control of their land. They wanted He-

brew adopted as the third official language, although less than 5 percent of the population spoke it. They wanted the British to allow them special official privileges in decisionmaking, and to give them special assistance. Clayton responded: "He wished to point out, in fairness to the authorities, that, in the first place, they were not placed there 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." Zionists emphasized that despite the lack of formal support, there were sufficient hints indicating official backing that Clayton should support their cause.³⁴

For his part, Clayton saw what he considered the inevitable implementation of mandates, and thus thought it best to begin to deal with the reality rather than delay the announcement until December or so. He accepted some of the points, including the immigration of groups of between forty and fifty Jews to work land owned by the Zionist organization, but advised against the formation of any official commission and demands for unrestricted immigration.

Half a Peace

At the June 28, 1919 signing of the Treaty of Versailles Antonius took heart, for at least the treaty supported the principle of national self-determination and rejected earlier secret French and British agreements. Given the articles outlining the covenant of the League of Nations within this Treaty, he considered it an "epoch making pact" that could safely serve as Palestine's constitution until Palestinians established their own. For Antonius, article 22 was most important, restricting the mandate as trustee for an already provisionally recognized independent Palestine:

Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory.³⁵

Given the Syrian desire to thwart two separate mandates, Faisal and leading Syrians gathered together and proclaimed sovereignty in summer 1919. With Wilson out of the picture, by that fall the French and British had agreed to a British withdrawal of troops from northern Syria in November and the arrival of French troops in their place. In December, Faisal succumbed to unrelenting French pressure and agreed to let 100

French soldiers enter Rayak near Baalbek on the understanding that French forces were not going to occupy Syria. Having suffered enough at the hands of foreign forces, the local population protested, and French General Gouraud attacked Baalbek, and other villages near Tripoli and Saida in the "French zone."³⁶

Following this confrontation, a general Syrian congress gathered in March 1920 to declare Faisal king and overlord of independent Syria. Save for a small stratum of notables grieving the loss of their special status under the Ottomans, Syrians were ecstatic to claim independence after four centuries of imperial rule. Allenby, among others, endorsed the motion, and encouraged Lord Curzon and other British officials in England to approve Faisal's becoming "overlord" of Syria.³⁷

In March 1920 the Egyptians also vied for national independence. Antonius was back in Alexandria when Egyptians rioted against the continuation of the British protectorate and the deportation of Saad Zaghlul, leader of the Egyptian movement for independence and former minister of education and justice, and several of his friends. "Zaghlul, who had been moderate, open and above board, was labeled by Whitehall as 'extremist' and 'anti-British'" because he had dared to approach High Commissioner Wingate with the request that Britain end its wartime protectorate and let Egypt be independent.³⁸ Near the end of March 1919 General Allenby replaced Wingate, and in May, Lord Milner, secretary of state for the colonies (1919–1925), was leading a commission to investigate the Egyptian protest and anti-British feeling. When Milner arrived in Egypt, Antonius was helping Lias with a major fund-raising campaign for Victoria College. During the course of Milner's stay, Antonius met with him, obtained support for the college, and very likely told him his interpretation of the Egyptian protest and the bitter anti-British feeling, and the wisdom of British support for Egyptian demands.³⁹ On his return, Milner recommended an end to the British protectorate, and independence qualified by Britain's retaining control over foreign policy and a force on the Suez Canal. Elections were allowed in 1924, and Zaghlul became prime minister.⁴⁰

Forster felt that popular resentment in Egypt was due largely to the forced conscription of fellahin rather than to "nationalist" feelings, and he thought the British should establish a mandate in Egypt under the League of Nations rather than support nationalist demands for self-government.⁴¹ When he wrote as much in a Labor Party Fabian pamphlet, Antonius was livid, calling it "inaccurate and misleading" and harmful to the Labor Party. In response, Forster felt that Antonius might "raise the wind against" him in Egypt, and that if the British stayed on he might be denied a passport to the country.

Antonius is very pleasant and clever, but a born intriguer, and fully aware that his job, whether as censor or anything else, would disappear if the Milner report—let alone my pamphlet!—was adopted. The Syrians in Egypt, like the Armenians there, only retain their footings as jackals to the British: when we go they will go, and with less dignity. . . . And Antonius' remarks about the Egyptians to me were all part of an elaborate denigration, even when in isolation they seemed appreciative. It is bad that he is with the Milner people . . . such is the trend of events! One now looks in hope. If the report passes Parliament, he will be dumped back into Syria, where he doesn't want to be for nuts. God damn those Oriental Christians! I understand why the Turks cut their throats.⁴²

After the Syrian move toward independence in early March 1920, European officials quickly assembled and signed the April 1920 San Remo Agreement, placing the "Arab Rectangle" (all of Greater Syria and Mesopotamia) under British and French mandatory rule. This agreement, subsequently approved by the League of Nations, was greeted by intense Arab popular protest throughout Syria and Iraq. By late 1920, troops had crushed the resistance, British forces had left northern Syria, and a Jewish pro-Zionist, Herbert Samuel, had been appointed high commissioner in Palestine. French forces had bombarded Damascus and sent Faisal into exile. For Antonius, Hogarth, and kindred souls, the postwar problems in the Arab world began with the dismemberment and military occupation of Syria.

The first thing that happened after the war was that this country—the larger Syria—was partitioned, in a way not only contrary to promises given but in a way which created a violent disturbance of the social and economic habits of the country. That was done before the mandate was drawn up. This placed the country under serious disabilities from the point of view of its social and economic development, to say nothing of the denial of its independence. I insist that it is an important point because subsequent disturbances both in Syria and Palestine were due to this original cause common to both.⁴³

For Antonius and the Arab nation, the fragmentation of Greater Syria and subjection of the north to French mandatory rule and of Palestine in the south to aggressive Zionist ambitions was a traumatic breach of trust. Antonius held British leaders accountable for choosing to sacrifice a united Syria and Palestine for imperial interests. Zionists were to be their buffer in Palestine against France in northern Syria. A handful of decisionmakers may have thought there was no need for morality in foreign affairs—that is, for concern about the public good of a non-European na-

tion. Events would prove them wrong, as people defended themselves, resisting the abuse of power and discriminatory double standards. Toynbee and others considered the postwar Middle East settlement criminal. "To saddle his country with irreconcilable commitments is almost the worst crime of which the professional diplomat is capable, for it compromises that country's reputation for straight dealing. However, the blunders of a nation's servants can generally be repaired by the nation itself, if it has the courage and the patience to take the situation in hand," Toynbee wrote.⁴⁴

With postwar settlement, as the Arab nation faced debilitating dismemberment, the distrust engendered by betrayal was especially crippling. In the Arab world, and in Palestine in particular, the betrayal gave birth to a chronic insecurity and a defensive, isolationist tendency alien to the Arab and Levantine legacy of interaction and accessibility. Amoral power politics and pro-Zionist interests blocked representative government and fair play. As a special interest group, Zionists worked behind the scenes during and after treaty negotiations to capture government and dominate British Palestine policy.

Antonius held Britain morally responsible for the damage to Arabs: It had made the decision to sacrifice a people and nation primarily for the interest of empire.⁴⁵ Through the internal damage due to a conqueror's culture of coercion that betrayed trust, people were subjected to division, conflict, and erosion of social capital. As the cohesive geographic, cultural, socioeconomic unit was split up, families, villages, and land were divided. Artificial borders were erected and alien languages, policies, currencies, and passports were introduced across Greater Syria. Transaction costs mounted as Europeans fractured the centuries-old socioeconomic intercourse of commerce, trade, and communication. Moreover, Muslims were gradually locked inland as the French and Maronites and Zionists increasingly dominated the Mediterranean coastline, breaking the legacy of Levantine trade. The nation was further fractured with the breakup of the Hijaz railway connecting Greater Syria to Arabia, which had facilitated trade and the religious pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. Antonius found the dismemberment of Syria "a crippling obstacle to trade and other forms of intercourse . . . an artificial wall on either side of which each of the two powers has established her own language and currency, and instituted altogether different systems of administration, of education and of economic regulation and planning."⁴⁶ There was also a cost in social capital and national unity: "It was only after the war, that regional tendencies began to manifest themselves largely owing to the variations in the regimes set up in various parts of the Arab world: real independence in the peninsula, short-lived mandate in Iraq, die-hard mandate in Syria, virtual dictatorship in Palestine."⁴⁷ Antonius witnessed the resulting "encouragement to

the play of selfish localism and to the individualism and lack of corporate spirit which is the root of the Arab character" but was convinced of an irresistible movement toward Arab unity, by which he did not mean "federation on the American or any other Western pattern." As the Arab nation was a culture and moral framework of shared meaning and social capital, Antonius had faith in an inevitable reunification through "unification of education, abolition of artificial barriers (customs, passports), development of economic ties, etc."⁴⁸

Face to face with people in the region, British officials in the field felt the dishonor and betrayal of trust in their country's rejection of wartime pledges. Some had fought alongside the Arabs against the Turks and Germans; all had seen the death and dying, and knew the meaning of liberty in Syria. For Syria, a naturally cohesive territorial and cultural unit, was the heartland of the Arab nation. Hugh Caradon, a young officer during the mandatory period and later a member of the House of Lords, noted for his postwar decolonization efforts, wrote in 1985:

Many years ago when I was stationed in Amman I took ten days leave and walked alone from Tyre to Damascus (over the top of Mount Hermon). I was most kindly received and entertained in the villages along the way, and I got to know the area part of which has become the scene of such bloodshed and suffering during and after the Israeli invasion.

I found the villagers of southern Lebanon much like the villagers I knew so well in Palestine and Jordan (and I reflected as I walked what a pity it had been that after the First World War people of such similar character and occupation had been divided up under British and French mandates).⁴⁹

T. E. Lawrence and Churchill

From December 1920 through early 1921 Antonius took several months' leave from work in the censorship office to help with the Arab cause in London. During this trip, he raised funds for Victoria College, enlarged his network of official contacts, and spoke with high-level officials about the folly of British policy in Syria. It was during this trip that he finally met and evaluated T. E. Lawrence, and challenged Winston Churchill's postwar pro-Zionist policy. By then, Lawrence could be found dining in the Churchill home, upon occasion dressed in Arab garb.

Antonius was startled by how ill equipped Lawrence had been to serve as Faisal's principal interpreter. Antonius found him bright enough but unreliable. During their two-hour conversation in London, Lawrence's Arabic proved far from outstanding and his perspective riddled with inconsistencies. Antonius felt Lawrence was deluding himself when he

sided with Churchill and when he later claimed British obligations to the Arabs had been fulfilled. For Antonius, perhaps courage and character were more important than IQ or language, especially when faced with interests so opposed to Arab national goals. For the issues were neither complex nor difficult enough to explain Lawrence's inconsistencies, discrepancies, and distortions. Had Antonius served as Faisal's interpreter in Lawrence's place, history might have been quite different.⁵⁰

During this visit to London, Antonius learned more about the largely unaccountable world of British foreign policy making. Decisions were typically made by a handful of men representing an elite, groomed to promote the empire and the British model of colonial rule in India. With little input from and marked resistance to the Arab perspective, this decisionmaking system proceeded in an uncritical conqueror's mode, subject to capture by and alliance with special interests such as the Zionists. The Anglo-Zionist relationship cultivated by an elite in London left the Arabs out of the picture. There was simply no Arab competition for the Zionists in London. Antonius attempted to correct this imbalance, taking every opportunity to present the Arab reality and the folly and injustice of European Middle East policy.

Antonius was perhaps the person best equipped to present the Arab case to the British. Gradually he made the rounds, inviting leading officials to dinner, meeting with others in their offices or at a local club. The duplicitous world of politics was a reality Antonius had to learn to deal with. Once he got over the initial shock of betrayal, he focused on the range of characters, and saw how a handful of men managed to dominate and abuse the process through prejudice, ignorance, and greed. As he saw it, had two or three men, not more, stood up to defend the Arabs against Zionist and French designs on Syria, the world would have been spared great harm, and Palestinians and the entire Arab nation, a great moral injustice. Gradually, the truth unfolded. Over dinner with his friend Valentine Chirol and McMahon, Antonius was told by McMahon that "the government had made this assertion about the inclusion of Palestine [in territory excluded from the British promise of independence, i.e., in the district west of Damascus] long afterwards and that at the time he wrote the famous letter, he, McMahon, considered that Palestine was among the territories handed over to the Arabs."⁵¹

Among the officials who witnessed the manipulation of truth and official deceit was Arnold Toynbee, who became a lifelong defender of Palestine's inclusion in territory promised independence.⁵² Despite some confusion over terminology, he emphasized that there was no confusion over meaning, and argued, "The British aim should be the establishment of a Palestinian state for all the inhabitants without according special treatment to the Jews."⁵³

During Antonius's visit to London in 1920–1921, he met with British officials and likely influenced leading parliamentarians, some of whom he had already met during his 1918 lecture trip, to vote against Churchill's pro-Zionist policy. Then twenty-nine years old, he was a brilliant and persuasive speaker, erudite, with a beautifully modulated Oxbridge accent, intelligent, and passionate. "No one that I have ever met . . . so admirably combines the passion of the Syrian patriot with the lucidity of the Cambridge don in stating his patriotic beliefs," Hodgkin wrote.⁵⁴ Forster was far less appreciative of Antonius's activities in London:

Our young friend returns to Egypt in a few days being busily-occupied-up-to-the-last-moment-in-collecting-funds-for-his-late school, I [the word doubt is scratched out] don't think. Though what he has been busily occupied with, I don't know. Each time I see him his circumstances are more imposing. The time before last he lectured to the Royal Colonial Institute [which] consists—or consisted, for some of them must have expired by now—of very aged and unpleasing old men who dropped their bread and butter on the floor and spoke against the French. Sir Bartle Frere—to whom little of the above applies—was in the chair, and eulogized the lecturer for the part he had played with the Milner Commission. This, for some reason did not suit the lecturer's book, and he disclaimed with some petulance any intimacy with those in power. The lecture was largely based on an article by Hogarth that I had just read in the *Quarterly*; my sympathies went with it, as far as I had any—chiefly owing to the romance, I find in Feisal.⁵⁵

The House of Lords did indeed challenge the Churchill policy, and rejected the Balfour Declaration in early 1921. Lord Islington, in his own words, "raised the question in the House of Lords that the Zionist home policy was unacceptable to the people of Palestine." He continued, "The Lords supported my motion and carried it by two to one."⁵⁶ Islington knew that the Palestinian population, 93 percent of which was Arab, must be overwhelmingly opposed to Zionist policy. In his view, it was "unthinkable that a similar policy [of planned immigration and repopulation of a country] is possible in any other part of the Empire."⁵⁷ Churchill responded by turning to the House of Commons, where after a vigorous speech he managed to persuade the members to overrule the Lords' decision.

Churchill, the new colonial secretary, proceeded with his February 1921 memorandum, which interpreted the McMahon-Hussein correspondence of 1915–1916 to mean that Palestine was excluded from independence, and argued that the Balfour Declaration should go forward. In 1920 Faisal had tried to discuss the McMahon pledges during the peace

conference to show that Palestine was included in the territory promised independence, but Lord Curzon had blocked the discussion, claiming, "It was too late to undertake an interpretation of 'old pledges.'"⁵⁸ Churchill not only denied the Arab view but also unilaterally imposed his own view, excluding Palestinian claims to independence and favoring the Zionist goal of a Jewish national home.

In March 1921 Churchill went to Cairo to confer with regional leaders in an effort to shore up support and counter resistance among the Arabs.⁵⁹ After reaching a general agreement on Faisal's nomination as king of Iraq, Churchill met in Jerusalem with Faisal's brother Abdullah, who had moved his forces into Maan in November 1920 and was seemingly intent on entering French-controlled Syria or at least on provoking the French. Churchill wanted to avoid any confrontation with French forces, and he therefore offered Transjordan to Abdullah. Abdullah wanted a monarchy over the whole of Palestine, but eventually he settled for being crowned King of Transjordan. In Antonius's words:

[The Cairo conference] was not an international conference, but an all-British inter-departmental affair, held in Cairo for convenience's sake. . . . What Churchill did in fact do was (1) to find a throne for Faisal in Iraq, thus saving several millions sterling to the British taxpayer [by averting costly military conflict]; (2) to trick Abdullah into remaining in Amman as ruler of [T] on the promise of a real settlement which was never realized.⁶⁰

For Antonius and other patriots, their work had hardly begun. Regardless of Churchill's backing of the Zionists, they would persist toward their goal of an independent and self-governing Arab nation. Thus, by summer 1921, Antonius was en route to Palestine to participate in institution building there.

Notes

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2. J. M. Roberts, *The Pelican History of the World*, rev. ed. (London: Penguin, 1987), p. 823.

3. D. G. Hogarth, "Present Discontents in the Near and Middle East," *Quarterly Review* (October 1920), p. 421, extract in Antonius file, Israel State Archives [hereafter, ISA], Hakirya, record group 65, file AT59-2757.

4. George Antonius letter to Chafik Haddad, Palestine, 9 May 1933, ISA, record group 65, file 858-330.

5. Gérard Khoury, *La France et l'Orient Arabe: Naissance du Liban moderne, 1914–1920* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1993), pp. 139–140.
6. Thomas Hodgkin, "Antonius, Palestine, and the 1930s," in *The Gazelle Review of Middle East Literature*, no. 10, ed. Roger Hardy (London: Ithaca, 1982), p. 28.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 11–12.
8. Arnold Toynbee, *Acquaintances* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 211–212.
9. Sami Hadawi and Robert John, *The Palestine Diary, 1914–1945*, vol. 1, foreword by Arnold Toynbee (New York: New World Press, 1970), p. 108.
10. Harlan B. Phillips, *Felix Frankfurter Reminiscences* (New York: Reynal and Co., 1960), p. 160, cited in *Ibid.*, p. 108.
11. A. L. Tibawi, *Anglo-Arab Relations and the Question of Palestine* (London: Luzac, 1978), p. 339.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 343.
13. George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1938), p. 281.
14. Reference in Antonius file, ISA, record group 65, file AT55–2743.
15. Reuters, "Arab Confederacy under the League: Emir Faisal's Plan" (6 February 1919), Antonius file, ISA, record group 65, file AT55–2743.
16. Extract from David Hunter Miller, "My Diary at the Conference of Paris," vol. 17, pp. 487–488, referencing Bulletin no. 171, April 16, 1919, Communication from the Hedjaz Delegation with Reference to a Telegram Received from the Central Committee of the Syrian Union Party of Cairo, Peace Conference Secretariat of the Delegation of the Hedjaz to the Secretariat of the American Delegation to the Peace Conference, Paris, 12 April 1919; Antonius file, ISA, record group 65, file AT55–2743.
17. Sateh al-Hosri, *Yom Mayssaloun* (Beirut: Nouvelle, n.d.), pp. 113–115, cited in Khoury, *La France et l'Orient Arabe*, p. 215.
18. Khoury, *La France et l'Orient Arabe*, p. 263.
19. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 281.
20. "Emir Faisal's 'Mandate from the Arabs': Protest Against Division of Syria," *Times* [London] (4 November 1919), in Antonius file, ISA, record group 65, file AT55–2742.
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22. Khoury, *La France et l'Orient Arabe*, p. 192.
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39. E. M. Forster to Florence Barger, England, 10 November 1920; and Forster to Ludolf Weybridge, 17 January 1921, King's College Archives, Cambridge.
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41. E. M. Forster to Florence Barger, 6 November 1919, cited in P. N. Furbank and Mary Lago, *Selected Letters of E. M. Forster*, vol. 1: 1879-1920 (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 312; E. M. Forster to the *Manchester Guardian*, 29 March 1919, cited in *E. M. Forster: A Life*, by P. N. Furbank, vol. 2: *Polycrates' Ring, 1914-1970* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1978), p. 62.
42. E. M. Forster to Florence Barger [n.p.], 10 November 1920, cited in Furbank and Lago, *Selected Letters*, pp. 317-318.
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44. Arnold Toynbee, "The Trouble in Palestine," *New Republic* (6 September 1922), from Antonius's excerpt, Antonius papers, ISA, record group 65, file 2755.
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52. Tibawi, *Anglo-Arab Relations*, pp. 124-125.

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54. Hodgkin, "Antonius and Palestine," p. 8.

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56. Islington, "Case for Impartial Tribunal," Letter to the Editor, *Times* [London] (7 July 1936), copy in ISA, record group 65, file AT245-133.

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59. For reference to the Cairo conference, see Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, pp. 493-514.

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5

Constitutional Government

The exercise of authority enters more or less into the signification of these terms [to govern, to rule, to regulate]. To govern implies the exercise likewise of judgement and knowledge. To rule implies rather the unqualified exercise of power, the making the will the rule.

—The Lincoln Library of Essential Information

In the 1920s, government in Palestine was as confusing as it might have been hopeful. The June 1919 Treaty of Versailles had for all intents and purposes set forth the constitutional guidelines for British mandatory government; this was corroborated by the 1922 League of Nations resolution placing Palestine under “A” mandate status, meaning that Palestine was provisionally recognized as already independent. Despite these ground rules, the British government was vulnerable to corruption and capture by special interests. In 1920, it had betrayed pledges to the Arabs by allowing a French invasion of Syria; and it appointed a Zionist Jew as first high commissioner to Palestine—an appointment Zionists had lobbied for during the Versailles peace conference. In 1922, after failing to get the Balfour Declaration incorporated into the Treaty of Versailles, Zionists succeeded in convincing the British government to include it in the mandate, and thereafter claimed this meant they had equal rights—not as individuals in Palestine, but as a group seeking power on a par with, and in opposition to, the 9-to-1 Arab majority in Palestine. For Antonius and others who were aware of the ground rules for mandatory government, Zionist misinterpretations and misrepresentations were hardly what the League of Nations and His Majesty’s government had intended. Establishing a form of colonial government contrary to Palestinian self-determination would expose the system to capture by special interests, which is exactly what happened.

Ground Rules for Palestine, 1921

In the early 1920s “everything was alive and driving,” wrote C. R. Ashbee, a British officer in Palestine.¹ Palestine was free of “stodgy conventions” and was rebounding after the war. The majority of British soldiers and officers in Palestine, such as Clayton and Sir Ernest Richmond, saw their role as that of trustees facilitating Palestinian independence and self-rule. Clayton especially understood the importance of self-effacement in the transfer of responsibility.² Clayton and Richmond—and a number of other British officers in Palestine at the time—were confident, honest men who could think critically and creatively. They appear to have shared Antonius’s values—his ecumenism, his respect for the common man and for humanity—as well as his conviction that institutions and government mattered, that they were bound to be moral and to function in service to the nation.

Antonius had been exposed to Egyptian bureaucracy and monarchy, to British rule and its empire in the world, to European political theory and philosophy, and to the leading French blueprint of highly centralized, bureaucratic public administration. He and his friends knew this was Europe’s century of the state, and an age of empire and colonialism that reveled in large government. They were aware of the subtleties of pomp and ceremony, of invented tradition dating back to Europe’s early monarchs, sustaining pre-democratic culture and the division between ruler and ruled. They knew that Europeans enamored of big, centralized government believed that “decentralization was incompatible with prosperity and political progress.”³

Equally aware of his own world, Antonius especially knew that what might be popular and standard practice or mainstream thought in Europe was not necessarily part of his world or his nation’s reality. In Syria, in the Arab nation as a whole, and in Palestine in particular, there was a culture that sustained a different perspective on nation building. In contrast to European fragmentation, in Syria, Palestine, and beyond, frontiers had meant nothing. You could travel freely with no passport or checkpoints, as long as you committed no crime. You could walk from one end of Syria to the other, from Palestine north through Damascus and on to Beirut without a hitch, and with hospitality at every stop. Whereas European culture was overriding interior worlds of meaning with narrow, linear, secular views and methodology, reducing complexity and mapping and compartmentalizing the empirical world, Antonius’s culture remained rooted to a more ancient moral perspective shared by men of faith. As historian Yusuf Iyish noted: “It was understood that God provided but he left distribution and care to us. This was intrinsic to Judaism, Christianity, and the Muslim tradition.”⁴ Hence, the

traditional ethos and culture of sharing was not anticapitalist but recognized a moral obligation to care about others, especially the weak and vulnerable. Within this culture—this world—inequality was unnatural. Whereas Greeks considered slavery and inequality natural, the Judaic, Christian, and Muslim traditions with which Antonius was familiar considered the liberation of a slave one of the most meritorious acts. Similarly, tyranny and injustice were to be resisted—not as a right as in the European perspective but rather as a duty, a moral (rather than legal) obligation to care for one and all, for the common good. As Ibish noted:

In terms of leadership, the principle of equality applied as well. For example, the Imam or religious leader was an equal who leads in prayer, with no parallel to European monarchy or kingly claims such as the 'Roi de Soleil' or 'l'état—c'est moi.' Arabic has no word comparable to the European *state*. Whereas *dawla* in Arabic is from the root "turning around," state refers to something permanent, stable. There is also no [Arab] concept for church in the European version, for in Arabic it refers but to the place where people come together and pray; instead of hierarchy there is society.⁵

Rooted to his own world, Antonius understood that there was a different way of building a nation-state and resolving postwar fragmentation, beyond the narrow, state-based, bureaucratic approach. The fact that Antonius's early recommendations connected local government with the office of Secretary (then occupied by Clayton) rather than that of High Commissioner (then filled by a Zionist) suggests that Clayton shared his vision and understanding of decentralized governance in Palestine. For British officials who understood they were there under the mandate to serve as tutors collaborating with Palestinians to help set up the educational and financial systems, courts, post office, and other basic public infrastructures that facilitated Palestinian statehood, Antonius's approach made sense. The last thing a small country the size of Wales needed was a top-heavy, centralized bureaucracy run by foreign experts. The British architect C. R. Ashbee saw as much, noting, "With the present men [Clayton et al.] it [the government] will not be overtaken with the Egyptian [bureaucratic] paralysis."⁶

Early on, in 1918, Antonius had tried to obtain work in Palestine. He wrote to Storrs about a post like that of his friend Gabriel Haddad, then Storrs's Arab adviser with the military commission of major. For his part, Haddad had invited Antonius to be his assistant translating laws and regulations. On October 20, 1918, Antonius applied for the position of local adviser and inspector. He was eager to go; but it rankled him that the normal assignment of military rank of staff lieutenant was now being reserved solely for Englishmen.⁷ Although he would have far preferred to

wear civilian clothes, the principle behind the assignment of military rank bothered him. Insisting on equality, Antonius lost the job. Storrs wrote on October 31, "In my opinion, you made a mistake by insisting too much on preliminaries."⁸ For Antonius, preliminary principles mattered.

It would be three years from this first attempt before Antonius found meaningful work in Palestine, and when he did so it was with the assurance that the British mandatory policy aimed to empower and promote Palestinians. Per the June 28, 1919 Treaty of Versailles, Antonius expected to help promote Palestinian self-determination. Through Storrs he was introduced to Humphrey Bowman, the new director of the Department of Education in Palestine. Bowman, "a kind of snobbish, bumbling, Polonius-like Old Etonian . . . very paternalist, not to say colonialist" King's College alumni, was impressed with Antonius.⁹ "Bowman thought Antonius was marvelous because he'd been to King's. So he was worthy of regard."¹⁰ Antonius had been working in the education department in Egypt, and he felt there was no better domain for public service—especially in Palestine, where the possibilities were particularly exciting. "As you know," he wrote Bowman in June 1921, "I am most anxious to have a share in what I consider to be great work and the inkling I have had during this week of activities and the scope of your department has increased my desire to join it."¹¹

When the thirty-year-old Antonius went to Palestine, he was well informed and seasoned. He had been in government for six years, had seen the seamy side of power politics, knew about greed and imperial appetites, and knew better than to naïvely trust and depend on the British. He aimed to push for reforms that supported long-term capacity building for the good of his nation. The goal was to empower Palestinians to assume the responsibility and authority the Ottoman empire had withheld. As a professional public servant with very modern ideas about representative government and a head full of global best practices, he was eager to lend a hand. As an outsider moving to Palestine, albeit as an Arab patriot, he was outside the loop of factional politics, of petty personal disputes and rivalries. His primary perspective and concern centered on the cultivators and artisans. He studied their conditions and made an effort to help them, having found that they were little protected or helped by government.

Although most Palestinians were subsistence farmers, cultivators of communal *mushaa* land or of private smallholdings, Palestine as a whole rebounded after the war with an impressive "growth and development of indigenous production."¹² By the mid-1920s, its economy was on a par with that elsewhere in Syria. Small manufacturing and craft production flourished. Some 1,200 factories and workshops were turning out basic

household items, and there were dozens of soap factories in Nablus and spinning and weaving ventures in "Safad and Nazareth in the north, Nablus, Beit Jala and Hebron in the hills and Gaza and Majdal on the southern plains."¹³ As historian John Ruedy noted, this was the continuation of an age-old trend: "From the seventeenth century onward, many villages had become increasingly autarkic, developing within themselves a great variety of manufacturing skills."¹⁴ Historian James Reilly found U.S. embassy staff commenting in 1899 on how Palestinians were producing "for their own use pottery, reed mats, goats skin flasks, glass trinkets and thick cloth, the latter spun and woven 'in rude hand looms.'"¹⁵

Working at his government post, Antonius met British officers who were ill equipped and ideologically unsuited to the task of facilitating Palestinian self-governance. Colonial bureaucrats were hardly what Palestine needed. With Zionists lobbying vigorously for control, uncritical public servants confused about their role or unable to think for themselves let alone to stand up to Whitehall's interpretation of past pledges were just what Zionists wanted. As Antonius later described it:

The officials were not specially recruited. Part of them were locally engaged, from among people who had served in the forces. That, I think, was a natural thing to happen, but the net result was that instead of as in other colonies or countries under British rule which had specially picked and equipped officials, to deal with the problems of the country, in this case the selection of the personnel was haphazard and not altogether happy.¹⁶

Fortunately, however, when he first arrived in 1921, he found a handful of men who were of like mind—men who supported representative government, had an innovative and nonbureaucratic appreciation of governance, and knew the realities of Palestinian life and culture. They also understood the problems Palestinians were facing under Britain's pro-Zionist government and under unrelenting Zionist efforts to take over.

After Antonius completed the one-year probationary period, his future in the Department of Education seemed assured. In July 1922, High Commissioner Sir Herbert Samuel, with support from Churchill, promoted him to a post that made him effectively second in command after Bowman and assured him tenure and promotion to the post of deputy director in November 1924.¹⁷ Bowman, however, had mixed feelings about Antonius's promotion. Throughout the coming years he would continue to search for an Englishman to replace Antonius, although he claimed to agree with Richmond and Clayton that nothing would work in Palestine so long as Palestinians were kept out of essential positions. He turned against Antonius, all the while claiming affection and admiration for him. "He is a dear fellow and I shall never cease to like him," he wrote in

his diary in April 1926.¹⁸ “He is a delightful companion; clever, amusing, understanding and we have a great deal in common. He seems to have toned down . . . calmer and more moderate . . . a very dear friend.”¹⁹ As early as Antonius’s first year, however, he secretly “fanc[ied] the High Commissioner is not likely to renew” Antonius’s contract, and wrote to urge Lionel Smith, with whom he had worked in Iraq, to apply, promising that he would urge the high commissioner to hire him in Antonius’s stead.²⁰ Smith declined, and Antonius stayed on with high expectations, unaware of this intrigue.

Palestine’s Magna Charta: Covenant of Nations

In 1921, the pro-Zionist Winston Churchill became secretary of state for the colonies and shifted the Middle East from the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office. This move, along with vigorous Zionist propaganda, generated anxiety in Palestine, Bowman observed.

The political situation in Palestine is not very satisfactory—Everything turns on one word, ‘Zionism’—The Moslems and Christians are afraid that Zionism means ‘Rule by the Jews, of the Jews, for the Jews—in Palestine,’ and that they, although in the large majority of 9 to 1 will be left out of the government and will gradually be deprived of their properties and rights. That this is not the intention of the League of Nations nor of His Majesty’s government does not altogether affect the question, for it is undoubtedly the intention of the more advanced Zionists.²¹

Antonius shared Bowman’s understanding of the Balfour Declaration, as did Palestinians and other British officers who had studied the plethora of British declarations, pledges, counterpledges, and conflicting documentation. Since the 1917 Balfour Declaration “dominates all discussions bearing upon the present status of Palestine,” Antonius felt that “to understand the problem with which the Holy Land is now confronted one should consult the exact text of that definition of policy.”²²

His Majesty’s government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of that object, it being 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 the Jews in any other country.²³

Moreover, he felt the Declaration had to be examined relative to other pledges and proclamations, such as the earlier, October 1915 British

pledge supporting Arab unity and independence, and the subsequent French-British proclamation of November 1918, which particularly challenged British pro-Zionist policy makers. Therein:

The aim which France and Great Britain have in view in prosecuting in the East the war let loose by German ambition is the complete and final liberation 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 native population.²⁴

Most importantly, Antonius referred to the June 28, 1919 Treaty of Versailles when discussing the Balfour Declaration and the meaning of the Mandate. For Antonius, this was an "epoch making pact," because the first 26 articles, which outlined the Covenant of the League of Nations, essentially defined the ground rules, the legal status and constitution for Palestine. Article 22, in particular, set the course for mandatory government in Palestine, stating:

Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory.²⁵

For Antonius the importance of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations "cannot be too often repeated," for it "made it the sole duty of the Mandatory to render administrative advice and assistance looking towards enabling Palestine 'to stand alone.'" It is in this context—the context of the international contract signed by all major powers after the war—that all other potentially confusing and conflicting pledges were to be interpreted and evaluated. Relative to this contract, other British agreements such as the Balfour Declaration could be criticized as unconstitutional if they blocked the advance of Palestinian self-governance. Strictly on loan as trustees facilitating an already provisionally recognized independent Palestine, the British under mandatory government in Palestine were never free to interpret their role according to royal or colonial guidelines or to design policies or laws that contradicted their original terms of reference. For Antonius, Britain was obliged simply to lend advice to an increasingly self-governing Palestine. He emphasized that it was to the "Treaty of Versailles rather than to agreements or declarations of earlier date that one must now refer in seeking to appreciate at their true value the arguments advanced by Jew and Arab."

When the League of Nations approved the mandate for Palestine in 1922, and included the Balfour Declaration, the mandate and the latter declaration remained circumscribed by the original compact. "Its legality and its true import must, therefore, be constructed in connection with the terms of the Covenant of the League of Nations, for the mandate itself, it should be clearly understood, is only valid in so far as it carries into execution the delegated authority conferred by Versailles on June 28, 1919," Antonius wrote.²⁶

Despite the backpedaling by politicians, Palestine and Arabs as a whole under Ottoman suzerainty had acquired legal status and a provisional constitution in 1919, under Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, outlined in the Treaty of Versailles. Although Zionists attempted to manipulate the meaning of the inclusion of the Balfour Declaration in the mandate approved by the League of Nations in 1922, the fact remained that the meaning of the mandate had already been established by the international peace treaty, which as Antonius reminded people, had never made any reference to the Balfour Declaration. "The Covenant of the League says nothing as to the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people. It does, however, proclaim the principle of 'provisional independence.' It is obvious that it makes it the duty of the Mandatory to organize forthwith this community which was then preponderatingly [sic] Arab and to give it such administrative advice and assistance as would help it to 'stand alone,'" he wrote.²⁷

A year after Antonius's arrival, on July 24, 1922, the League of Nations approved the British mandate for Palestine. His analysis of the origin of the mandate system as set forth by the Secretariat of the League of Nations reconfirmed his original emphasis on the Covenant of the League of Nations:

The Mandate System, is 'a series of provisions reaffirming with greater detail and precision the principles laid down in the Covenant.' This is another way of saying that the Covenant of the League of Nations may be called the Constitution of Palestine and that the Mandate may be likened to a charter granted to a country or to a municipality by a legislature, or to the bye-laws of a corporation, as opposed to its organic law.²⁸

As for the Balfour Declaration, he appreciated that the idea of a Jewish national home in Palestine did not have to necessarily contradict Palestinian independence. In 1922, religious Zionists, such as Rabbi Judah Magnes, moved to Palestine to help set up a nonpolitical, strictly religious and cultural center for Jews from around the world. Such a vision of a home in Palestine was not invasive, and certainly would have been

acceptable to all Palestinians, who were sensitive to the meaning of holy sites and history and not anti-Semitic.

The promise given on November 2, 1917, in the name of His Britannic Majesty, did not contemplate subordinating the wishes of 700,000 Arabs to those of 60,000 Jews. What His Britannic Majesty's government then had in view was the establishment of a National Home for the Jewish people. The safeguarding of the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness of such Jews as resided in Palestine or who might desire to immigrate to the Holy Land was what was visualized. There was no idea of making Palestine a Jewish theocracy where the Arab majority would be merely tolerated. The establishment of Jewish home in Palestine, not the making of a Jewish home out of Palestine, is what was meant.²⁹

Beyond this, Antonius believed, political Zionist interpretations of the meaning of a Jewish national home were politically motivated, aggressively intent upon gaining control of Palestine, and arguably unconstitutional; for they "deviate from the principle which dominates the Covenant of the League of Nations," especially Article 22, which he called the "constitution or Magna Charta of Palestine":

That organic law, it will be recalled, accepts as a postulate that Palestine had already reached a stage where its "existence as an independent nation can be provisionally recognized." The part assigned to the Mandatory was definitely circumscribed. Its sole function was declared to be that of "rendering administrative advice or assistance" until such time as Palestine is "able to stand alone."³⁰

These were the ground rules, and however much others would struggle to break the original compact and confuse the issue, the original intention of the Balfour Declaration remained far less than political Zionists wished it to be. The 1922 Command Paper interpreting the meaning of the Balfour Declaration's inclusion in the mandate supported Antonius's perspective:

Unauthorized statements have been made to the effect that the purpose in view is to create a wholly Jewish Palestine. Phrases have been used such as that 'Palestine is to become as Jewish as England is English.' His Majesty's Government regard any such expectation as impracticable and have no such aim in view. Nor have they at any time contemplated . . . the disappearance or the subordination of the Arabic population, language or culture in Palestine. They would draw attention to the fact that the terms of the (Balfour)



Palestinian School Band. Music in Jaffa; school band of the National Christian Orthodox School, Jaffa (1942). The School was founded in 1921 by the Christian Welfare Society. SOURCE: Reprinted, with permission, from Walid Khalidi, Before Their Diaspora: A Photographic History of the Palestinians, 1876–1948 (Beirut: Institute of Palestine Studies, 1971).

Declaration referred to do 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.³¹

Constitutional Democracy

In 1921 Ernest Richmond, then assistant secretary in the Secretariat and an especially close friend both of Antonius's and of Clayton's from Cairo days, was assigned to deal with the issues concerning constitutional government in Palestine. As a serious critic of Zionism and a proponent of democratic, representative government, Richmond stood opposite many other officials in Palestine and Whitehall. During this time, Antonius was visiting Palestinian villages, inspecting their schools and encouraging villagers to build new ones.³² Together, Antonius and Richmond traveled the country. They

were kindred spirits, both critics of aggressive Zionism, and eager to learn about and map the local reality.³³ Richmond, who spoke a little Arabic, was known for his good manners as much as for his "fearless and outspoken honesty"—a rare quality among the Englishmen in Palestine.³⁴

In a September 21, 1921 draft memorandum, Richmond outlined "the issues involved in deciding upon a constitution for Palestine." He summarized the British option as: "Either to base our policy on force or on faith (if we have it) in the rightness of our cause. If we impose a constitution which implies distrust and denies real political power to the population, we shall have to use force and we shall have to put our trust, not primarily in moral influences, but in chariots and horses."³⁵ To rule by force and to forcibly impose Zionism was "To be reduced to methods of barbarism . . . to act in so foolish, so shortsighted, so criminal a manner." Denying Palestinians the right to govern themselves would throw Palestine "into a state not very unlike a state of war."³⁶ Richmond later sent a version of this document to High Commissioner Herbert Samuel.

With Britain "half asleep, very bored and slightly peevish at the turn of events," men in positions of power were being "misled by Jewish enthusiasts inexperienced in politics and abysmally ignorant of these countries. These enthusiasts have consciously or unconsciously, systematically misrepresented to English people the character and the capacities of the people of Palestine." Richmond warned the government to beware, for "By blindly following the lead of Jewish enthusiasts and by dangerously ignoring the character of the people, we are being [led] to the inevitable loss of any reputation we may have had for political insight and sagacity and also to witnessing a disaster of the first magnitude to the cause we have adopted."³⁷ To avoid a predictably disastrous course, Britain was urged to appoint morally intelligent men who would not be intimidated, seduced, or manipulated. "England's endeavours will positively have to be her literal best," wrote Richmond.

They will have to be the endeavours of picked men, honest men, neither time servers nor place hunters, men of wide sympathies, knowledge and real strength of character, not . . . of blunderers, or second rate men aping the "strong man" and placing their faith in the policeman's bludgeon, the machine gun, or in bribery to back up an oppressive and a stupid administrative machinery, and, above all not . . . of hypocritical minded partisans who, while pretending to favor neither party secretly strive to undermine one of them and thus succeed in spreading the spirits of distrust and sectarianism which are at present such potent poisons to any wholesome life in this country.³⁸

Although there were entrenched interests and powerful individuals who never intended to support democracy, they were being challenged

by the current of the times and by the 1921 Richmond memorandum to release their control and accede to a moral framework that relied on democracy. For democracy was never simply a structure and function of government but a set of institutions—of values, attitude, and beliefs and constitutional guidelines—that began with respect for ordinary individuals and faith in a shared public domain and in a civil society of inclusive diversity.

The theory of democracy rests upon an assertion of the worth of the ordinary man and woman and upon a confidence in the good judgement and moral rectitude of common people; upon the belief that if unwise or wrong action prevails for a time, in the long run the common sense of the bulk of society will recognize and correct the evil. Democracy further rests upon the conviction that the interests of all classes are better served when they are politically controlled by all classes rather than by a single class, even though it be superior in intelligence. Democracy is likewise of value for its educative effect, intelligence and prudence being developed by the sense of responsibility and by sharing political control.³⁹

Richmond similarly wrote that democracy was based on faith that human beings could “distinguish good from evil, profit from loss.”⁴⁰ People had a right to govern themselves, to make choices and even mistakes, to build their own institutions and organizations and hold each other accountable. World opinion supported this notion, and with it Palestinian representative government and constitutional democracy. Moreover, Palestinians were capable, and any impressions conveying otherwise were “completely false.” Here Richmond had in mind the Zionists’ false portrayal of Palestinians as some homogeneous group of Arabs and Palestine as “sparsely populated by wandering Bedouin devoid of any semblance of education, incapable of ‘progress,’ and easily subjected to whatever their rulers may desire, provided sufficient determination is shown.”⁴¹ Attempting to correct such misrepresentations, he wrote:

The people of this country [Palestine] are a mixed race descended from some of the most famous civilizations of antiquity. For centuries under the blighting influence of the Turks they have had no fair chance. Yet, in spite of that, they have proved their capacity to prosper and to progress under more favorable conditions. Many have emigrated to Europe and to America where they have done well in business in competition with particularly keen businessmen and where they have made large fortunes. Nor can it be doubted that their inherent administrative and governing power is any less than that of other Mediterranean peoples. Modern Egypt owes much to the administrative ability of Syrians.⁴²

Zionists had an opportunity to participate in helping Palestine flourish, and once people could trust them, they would find greater trust. However, achieving this meant they could not use force or privilege but rather “an attitude of self-reliance, patience and moral stability.” Richmond wrote: “It may also be assumed (for it has frequently been stated by the Jews themselves), that their cause is a moral cause; that it implies no harm to the existing population; and that it necessitates no curtailment of the rights of that population.” Zionists needed to prove as much, and begin by respecting democratic rules.

Supposing we adopt a constitution which, for the reasons given will generate opposition and so necessitate force, are we sure that we shall have the moral backing of the rest of Christendom and Islam? We most certainly shall not have that backing. Then again, supposing we are strong enough to defy the world on this point, how long can we be sure of our own stability? Will present influences in the home government endure for ever? Is the government itself a permanency, and are its policies as the laws of the Medes and Persians that change not?⁴³

The Legislative Council, 1922

In 1922 there was much discussion about government schemes for Palestine. Palestinians were seeking executive and legislative powers. Fearful of the Zionist plans of massive immigration, which the British government appeared to support, they wanted control over their own affairs. The proposed Orders in Council outlining the scheme for government was hardly suitable. The Palestinian delegation explained in February 1922 that they could not support the expressed emphasis on the Balfour Declaration, the treatment of Palestine as “a colony of the lowest order,” and the proposed centralization of power in an unaccountable executive, with an unrepresentative Legislative Council that ensured the high commissioner’s controlling 14 out of 27 votes.⁴⁴ The Colonial Office’s response in March 1922 restated Churchill’s pro-Zionist bias, and set up a catch-22 scenario that had devastating political consequences. Although acknowledging that the Palestinian delegation surely represented “a large section of the Moslem and Christian inhabitants of Palestine,” Churchill’s assistant, J. E. Shuckburgh, wrote that since the Palestinian delegation had not been elected, they could not “negotiate officially.”⁴⁵ The problem was, Shuckburgh wrote, that “no official machinery for representation has as yet been constituted”; and so it would remain throughout the mandate.⁴⁶ For with no “official Palestinian representatives,” the claim could be made that there was no Palestinian voice to be

heard; and even more importantly, there was no way Palestinians could technically hold government accountable and restrain abuse of power and the capture of government by special interests. Zionists in and out of government would fight tooth and nail to block representative government.

Richmond's former proposal, outlined in his 1921 memorandum notes on constitution, had proposed a fully elected legislative council comprising six Muslims, one Christian, and one Jew. Since there were no official or nominated members, the legislative council was expected to provide "an untrammelled expression to the country's desires." It was to be empowered to "control taxation and expenditure," and it would have legislative powers subject to the approval of a high council. The high council was to include the high commissioner as president and twelve Muslims, two Christians, and two Jews, half of them nominated and half elected. The high council would approve all laws passed by the legislative council through a two-thirds majority vote, with the high commissioner exercising veto power only in exceptional cases. To counter a high council veto, the legislative council could appeal to the House of Lords in London, whose decision would be final.⁴⁷

An intelligence report drafted during Sir Herbert Samuel's rule, after the 1921 eruption of violence on the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, stated: "The outbreak of today may be the revolution of tomorrow; establish a representative government or increase the garrison."⁴⁸ Clayton, Palestine's chief secretary, felt the same way. Aware of the unacceptable 1922 Palestine Orders in Council legislative council scheme, he advised that Britain support a more representative legislative scheme by allowing for more elected representatives, even if this meant the majority might vote against the high commissioner.⁴⁹ He felt that were Britain to refuse constitutionally representative government, Palestinians would have to turn to other measures to express their profound objections to British-Zionist control of policy in Palestine.⁵⁰ Despite these warnings, government tried unsuccessfully to institute the 1922 Palestine Orders in Council scheme for a legislative council. When elections were held for the legislative council, Palestinians would not participate. For, despite seeming support for a representative Palestinian assembly, the scheme ensured that the proposed number of Jewish and British members would outnumber Palestinians. Government did not revise the council scheme to support popular representation, but chose instead to attempt to co-opt local elites by appointing members of notable families to an advisory council.

In classic colonial fashion, government chose to control political appointments rather than support elections. It was not prepared to learn from criticism, which it considered a threat and a mark of disobedience,

rebellion, and sedition. Locally, the lack of representative government in Palestine disempowered the body social and retarded political development, including decentralized governance and the shift from an old guard to a more accountable, representative leadership. Political parties formed around leading family personalities, but with no venue for election they degenerated into increasing factionalism by the 1930s.

In the 1920s, the lack of British support for representative government not only thwarted a representative assembly in the 1922 legislative council scheme but also hindered the Islamic community's attempt to elect its own leadership to positions of authority in the local community. The denial of representative government remained the most serious issue throughout the period of mandate. In 1921, a Supreme Muslim Council was constituted to control and manage Muslim property (*waqf*) and religious (Sharia) affairs; four members were elected, each to a four-year term. Four years later, in 1925, even this council lost the option of elections—and on dubious grounds. In Antonius's account, "The first elections were held under arrangements made by the government which were copied from the old Turkish procedure." The second phase of the elections was based on an electoral law that the mandatory government had requested and had approved with minor changes from the Council. After the election results were challenged in and voided by the High Court, it was discovered that the British had mistranslated the law and that a discrepancy "had crept into the English text as a result of a translation made in government offices and not conveyed to the Supreme Muslim Council." The incorrect English version, which had been published in the official gazette, was the only version the High Court would use: "We are very sorry, we can only consider the English text, the English version; and the elections were voided." The government never acknowledged its responsibility for the error: "It was reported that the elections were voided because of certain irregularities or because the provisions of the electoral law had not been complied with." Elections were never resumed; instead the government chose to appoint council members. About the British lack of candor and the incident as a whole, Antonius later told the Peel Commission:

This may seem a trivial point, but let me assure you its effect on the people was by no means trivial. It was difficult for them to believe that a civilized Government could, in the first place, allow a mistake of that sort with all its consequences to take place without some amends of some sort; and, secondly, to disguise in their official report the real reasons why it had happened and to allow it to be believed that the reason why the elections were voided was because of irregular practices committed by the people who had taken part in the elections.⁵¹

Decentralized Governance

In 1923, after the British government reached an impasse over the creation of a constitution and legislative council for Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel attempted to shift attention to the question of local government—as if clarification of local institutions could be any less contentious than national ones. Samuel invited Antonius to join Storrs and a few other officers in the Palestine government to participate in a newly established Commission for Local Government. At the time, Antonius still thought it possible to build noncolonial institutions for increasing self-governance.

As Antonius saw it, the Arab national movement did not aim to mimic European state formation. He found the leading French model of public administration, for example, with its different history and context and highly centralized and bureaucratic administration, completely inappropriate for Palestine. He also saw the imperial colonial machinery of government as inappropriate and dangerous: “A colonial official system, a system deriving its authority from a set of regulations and a discipline and framework, meant rigidity and absence of elasticity in the system.”⁵²

From December 1923 through 1924, the Commission for Local Government prepared its report: “to consider the present and the former systems of local government in Palestine, and to make recommendations with regard to the constitution and powers of local authorities.”⁵³ The guiding principles emphasized continuity, decentralization, and devolution of authority, with financial support:

First, that it was desirable to preserve continuity with pre-war institutions, as far as the changed conditions would allow;

second, that it would be necessary, even at a certain sacrifice of efficiency, to endow local government bodies with the substance, and not only the shadow, of authority and responsibility; and

thirdly, that since local government bodies were to take over the responsibility for the discharge of services hitherto undertaken by the state, special financial provision must be made to enable them to bear that responsibility.⁵⁴

Under Churchill, colonial rules were gradually creeping in, and with them a desire for a highly centralized bureaucracy, with a hierarchical decisionmaking process that was detached from local people. As local capacity was typically and purposely underestimated and undervalued, the public sector was to control rather than enable. People were divided and kept from participating as citizens and constituents. Without a formal constitution providing for representative government, Palestinians

were to remain subject to unaccountable British rule. There were no governance mechanisms to help them achieve accountable, transparent, and high-performing public service for the common good. All key positions were held by British citizens and Zionists. Antonius was not alone in appreciating that such British control could not work in Palestine.

I do not see how any good can come to this country while the Administration is British at the top, and until the preferential clauses in the Mandate are changed in accordance with the White Paper [1922 Command Paper]. These are E's [Ernest Richmond's] views and they are also mine. They are also incidentally Clayton's who feels unhappy and would like to go. I don't think he will stay long. If he goes it will be a sad blow to the H.C. [High Commissioner] who regards ETR [Richmond] as a fanatic, and is firmly convinced of the welfare of the country under the present regime—But as long as the labour government is in power—I see little hope for change.⁵⁵

Although Richmond left in protest in April 1924 and Clayton followed soon after, Antonius pushed on to design what in current terminology could be called decentralized, participatory institutional capacity building. He promoted a decentralized framework of government that empowered and enabled local people to work together for a more accountable and better performing system of governance. For Antonius, the public good began with a civil society in which institutions were built beyond race, ethnic, or religious lines, to promote cooperation, most notably of local people for the public good, as they pulled together to help build and maintain basic infrastructure and social services, and to coordinate resources. The simple mimicry of European state formation or colonial machinery was inappropriate, and not only underestimated local capacity but also disabled it.

On June 2, 1924, after the commission's meetings, Antonius wrote the interim report for the Palestine government. Antonius explained that decentralized local self-government was not new to Palestinians: "It had been known and practiced ever since the enactment of the Vilayet Law of 1864", and proceeding in fits and starts, eventually culminated in the enactment of the Vilayet Laws of 1913–1914.⁵⁶ Now as then, the advance of local government was to be viewed "not as a favor granted by a benevolent government, but rather as the just recognition of their rights and aspirations."⁵⁷ Local government would continue a process that had already begun:

At the outbreak of the late war, the provinces of the Ottoman Empire, including Palestine, were endowed with a highly organized system of local government, which involved a considerable measure of local autonomy. It

was only natural, therefore, to find (as we have found) that there is a general desire in the country for a revival of the former system of local government institutions, or at any rate for the establishment of some system such as would give the people an effective share in the management of the public services.⁵⁸

Based on the past and on a review of existing services, a devolution of substantial public services made good civic sense. By keeping fiscal and administrative authority and responsibility with local government and placing authority and responsibility on a local level close to the intended beneficiaries who would be paying for the services, Palestinians would acquire a voice in the management of public services that they would help build and pay for.

The 1924 design for local self-government began with existing capacity, and integrated stakeholders. Most public services would devolve onto one organization with a coordinating authority corresponding to a local government board. Local government essentially meant non-government. Antonius preferred, for example, that a public loans commission (as in Cyprus) be entrusted to make agricultural and other loans to local authorities, in place of a central government-administered agricultural bank. Overall, the scheme for local government was a three-tiered framework involving:

1. A central administrative council, which would include the chief secretary as president and ex-officio members including director of public works and a majority of non-government members to be nominated by the high commissioner, to which administrative councils would be subordinate. Duties would include approving district council budgets and the general road program, ensuring proper audits of district and village councils, and coordinating activities of municipalities.
2. District administrative councils, comprised of the district or sub-district governor as president and the medical officer and district engineer and possibly the district revenue officer along with a majority of non-official members nominated by the high commissioner, to which are subordinate village commissions. Duties would include coordinating services performed outside municipalities.
3. Village commissions.

The new system of village authority would no longer simply rely on traditional village *mukhtars*, or councils of elders. Even though village consensus appeared to precede former Ottoman appointments (e.g., of the village

mukhtar), Antonius favored elections. The council of elders was eventually to be replaced by a village commission consisting of elected community representatives, and the *mukhtar*'s former duties (e.g., collecting tithes) and role were up for review and reevaluation. Beyond the village authority, the five district administrative councils envisioned in the scheme would serve as "a local government body to participate in and co-ordinate the services performed outside the municipal areas" under a new central administrative council.⁵⁹ Throughout, various global best practices—such as relevant laws from Cyprus on village roads, public health, and public authorities—and the British model of local government helped inform the proposed changes. Whereas the Ottomans' Vilayet Law of 1913 had supported increasing local nongovernmental involvement, Antonius's long-term goal was more likely to follow the British approach to local government, which meant even greater local autonomy because there were no official government members in local authorities.

The report also recommended that a central education council be created to control and coordinate policy and review and approve the budget, employment, curriculum, and other issues, with the central government Department of Education functioning more to regulate and to monitor accountability by means of various financial and technical controls (e.g., through annual audits). Antonius wanted the local education authorities to be in charge of hiring and promoting staff for primary, secondary, and technical education.

The report noted that since municipalities were already providing public health services, "the existing services performed by the Department of Public Health might safely be devolved on local government bodies."⁶⁰ The hospitals were located in municipalities, which supported them financially; and local administrative committees consisting of government and nongovernment members had already been established to help manage them in Nablus, Jaffa, and Gaza, with another under discussion in Jerusalem. Devolution of authority would include responsibility for employment and promotion of personnel. Central administration would retain regulatory functions of quality control and accountability.

Additionally, the national government would assume responsibility (financial and otherwise) for isolation wards for infectious diseases that presented a national hazard. Municipalities would manage preventive health care including sanitation in towns and villages and the organization of antimalaria campaigns. With Department of Health supervision, they also would be responsible for other duties, such as licensing trades and industries, allocating ground for cemeteries, and taking anti-rabies measures against vagrant dogs.

The report recommended devolving public works authority to municipalities for all but main road construction and maintenance, and that de-

cisions on road construction be placed “in the hands of the Central Administrative Council.”⁶¹ Although the revenue and expenditure side was not fully fleshed out, the system appeared to offer a rational, low-cost framework of expenditures. Public servants would be discouraged from becoming politicians and bureaucrats. Funds would go more directly to needed infrastructure and not to bureaucratic machinery. Bureaucratic expansion and fixed costs were kept to a minimum. Local beneficiary user fees and taxes covered the cost of services and essential investment and regulatory functions. For example, a qualified engineer employed for an annual inspection of engines and boilers would be paid out of the user fees; fees would also help pay for health and education services. Furthermore, local people contributed their labor toward road construction and maintenance, or paid a sum instead of donating their share of physical labor.

None of this was radical. It was occurring around the world, in Britain, Cyprus, and other countries. It fit with past practice in Palestine and with the letter and spirit of the mandate. Nevertheless, in Palestine, these proposals conflicted with colonial rule and Zionist ambition, neither of which was compatible with the empowerment of local capacity. Evidence of this assertion is provided by the fact that a number of Zionists subsequently were appointed to the Commission for Local Government, tipping the scales in their favor and blocking Antonius’s proposals for decentralization and devolution of authority. By 1925 the members of the commission consisted of Ronald Storrs, chairman; M. F. Abcarius; Antonius; and the latter’s two main critics, S. Moody, secretary, and N. Bentwich, Zionist attorney general.

The new high commissioner, Lord Plumer, who replaced Samuel in 1926, shelved the commission’s 1924 and 1925 reports and Antonius’s recommendations on local governance and education. He also played a pivotal role in Antonius’s removal from government. Although the June 1924 and the February 1925 recommendations from the Commission on Local Government went unheeded, in many ways the reports were remarkable efforts for their time, with lessons for institutional capacity building that remain relevant in the twenty-first century. Had these recommendations been implemented, they would have empowered Palestinians to achieve more transparent and accountable public service, without costly British rule and bureaucratic machinery.

Educational Policy

Antonius’s proposals for educational policy and for governance in general were based on his study of relevant laws and best practices from Cyprus, Britain, and the more enlightened Ottomans, as well as of local

conditions and capacity. The recommendation for local government regarding education envisaged a three-tiered process, with principal authority for primary and secondary education resting with autonomous, local, nongovernmental authorities. Although government officials would participate, nongovernment members elected to four-year terms would be in the majority.

The Palestinian education proposal kept costs to a minimum. Rather than assume steep central administrative fixed costs (salaries and overhead), the Education Council would engage nonmembers of government, who would only be paid fees for the days on which they attended quarterly meetings of the council. Although primary and secondary school teachers might have preferred to remain government employees, they were to become subject to local authorities, who would have increasing authority over employment and promotion, with accountability monitored through annual audits exercised by the government auditor, as occurred in England.⁶² The organization of local education authorities for parallel Arabic- and Hebrew-speaking schools was to include:

1. a central education council based in Jerusalem composed of seven non-government members and four officials, namely, the chief secretary as president, the director of education or his representative, the director of health or his representative, and a legal official or local government officer;
2. district education committees for specified geographic areas, with scheduled fortnightly meetings and a membership comprised of a majority of elected non-officials with three-year terms (with remuneration for each day of attendance at meetings), and a minority of three government officers in ex-officio capacity, namely, the district governor or district officer as president, the district inspector of education, the district medical officer; and
3. town and village commissions in various education areas as prescribed by the District Education Committee would be comprised of local residents and include a president and two or three members nominated by the district governor for a three-year term with the possibility of serving as local authority for whatever other services might be devolved in addition to education.

Reflecting on the 1925 proposal, Sidney Moody declined to sign it, for it conflicted with his underestimation of Palestinians. Mired in a classic colonial mind-set, he expressed a patronizing and racist perspective: "The government is our father, we are its children, and we must be com-

pelled to do what is for our good."⁶³ From this perspective, the goal was to resist local government and forge a hierarchical, centralized, British-run administration. He would have preferred to withhold assistance, thinking it inappropriate to help expedite any aggregation of groups of villages or real national unity through local government institutions.

Antonius challenged Moody and others, stating that on the contrary there was a "real and widespread demand," as well as a history of local self-governance, and an international treaty, a compact requiring as much from the mandate. "The 'local' form of government is not new to Palestine" and was "dictated by the spirit as by the letter of the Mandate."⁶⁴ Antonius tried to encourage British support, stating that the proposal "represents a step forward in the direction of encouraging 'the widest measure of self-government for localities consistent with the prevailing conditions.'"⁶⁵ And the benefits would far outweigh any added costs or "falling off in efficiency," for supporting "local initiative" and "the establishment of some system such as would give the people an effective share in the management of the public services" was essentially "the development of the public sense."⁶⁶ In this sense, government would be fulfilling a prime function, for far more than simply providing infrastructure and services, it would provide protection and justice so that nation building and a civil society could be nurtured and developed through the intangible ingredient of social capital—that fundamental public good of trust and cooperation, which though so often underestimated, undervalued, and underinvested, remained so crucial to democracy and nation building. Like Thomas Jefferson, Antonius trusted in ordinary people to work together. Coordination and collaboration were key to securing the public good and a better informed and more transparent and accountable system of governance. Popular participation would help keep government honest, and the public would be well served.

Loss of Confidence

Antonius's June 1924 proposals were not well received by senior officials in government. He sensed that High Commissioner Herbert Samuel and Bowman had "lost confidence" in him. After a year of fruitless devotion to the attempt to implement much "needed and feasible" reforms, *he* had certainly lost confidence in *them*. "I feel that since my views differ so fundamentally from those of the High Commissioner to whom my first duty is loyalty, the only loyal thing to do is to recognize the divergence frankly and, at whatever cost to myself, to resign."⁶⁷ Persuaded not to resign, he pressed on with suggestions and reforms—an arduous task in an administration dominated by colonial bureaucrats and Zionists. Although he would get perks—a medal here, a commendation there for putting out

fires—he would be kept out of governance and institution-building work that could have preempted crises, enabled local capacity, and secured independence and self-rule.

Throughout the 1920s Antonius had been hopeful about Palestine's future. Others were less sanguine, especially Ernest Richmond, assistant secretary in the Secretariat from 1920 to 1924. Richmond felt the die had been cast when Samuel, who had advised against Faisal's being "overlord" of Greater Syria, was appointed first high commissioner. He saw this as the beginning of the end, a portent that the conqueror's code had won and that Zionists would be favored at the expense of Palestinian self-governance. By Easter 1924, Richmond had left. Soon after, Clayton also departed, unable to abide the corruption. Lacking referees, special interests appeared to dominate in a ruthless play for power. With no accountability mechanisms to back him up, Clayton felt overwhelmed. Because he did not lobby intensely to change the situation, he was later rewarded with the post of British high commissioner in Iraq. However, he did voice to friends his concern about the lack of fair play and absence of a transparent and level playing field. Of the sense of treachery and foul play that he could no longer endure, Clayton wrote in 1924:

Egypt I feel I could compete with, but Palestine under the present regime and with the present methods of carrying out the policy beats me. There is an intangible "something" behind everything, an unseen influence—something stealthy, and certainly not British, which has to be felt to be realized. Frankly, unless the place is to be run by Englishmen on British lines, I am off and that within a few months. To you in confidence I will say that this Palestine policy—difficult and contradictory as it is—has only one chance of success which is that it be implemented by pure-bred Britishers whose justice and impartiality cannot be questioned. . . . I should envy no man the task—but the long and the short of it is that you cannot have Jews—however upright and honourable—in control, and hope to convince the Arabs that they are going to get a fair run.⁶⁸

In Palestine, there was no mistaking the unequal game under way and its systematic destruction of any manifestations of Palestinian civil society. Clayton believed that it was important to increase popular representation, even if that meant a majority vote against the high commissioner. It was important to promote real development, and not simply flood the country with money and immigrant labor. It was important to appreciate the reality of popular antipathy to Zionism and to British autocratic rule and pro-Zionist policies. It was also important to recognize the unfair advantage given Zionists at the same time as Palestinians suffering economic hardships received little financial aid. He saw how tough circum-

stances and lack of assistance were forcing people to sell their land against their real feelings, and how little government was doing to help. Knowing the Palestinians were being typecast as incompetent or incapable of economic and political development, he also argued that they were indeed capable of “enterprise and progress on their part,” and wrote Samuel on January 19, 1924, “It must be remembered that had funds been forthcoming to support and encourage Arab enterprise even to the same total as in the case of the Jews, and still more if pro-rata—the population, the general condition of the population might have been very different.”⁶⁹ Without a state designed to protect the nation and without self-government empowering Palestinians to hold public officials accountable, there was little means of securing a level playing field and protecting Palestine from plunder and abuse. The value of institutional constraints is aptly described by 1993 Nobel laureate for economics Douglass North by analogy to the rules of play in sports:

Institutional constraints include both what individuals are prohibited from doing and, sometimes, under what conditions some individuals are permitted to undertake certain activities. As defined here, they therefore are the framework within which human interaction takes place. They are perfectly analogous to the rules of the game in a competitive team sport. That is, they consist of formal written rules as well as typically unwritten codes of conduct that underlie and supplement formal rules, such as not deliberately injuring a key player on the opposing team. . . . Continuing the sports analogy, taken together, the formal and informal rules and the type of effectiveness of enforcement shape the whole character of the game. Some teams are successful as a consequence of (and have therefore the reputation for) constantly violating rules and thereby intimidating the opposing team. Whether that strategy pays off obviously depends on the effectiveness of monitoring and the severity of punishment. Sometimes codes of conduct—good sportsmanship—constrain players, even though they could get away with successful violations.⁷⁰

Notes

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4. Yusuf Ibish, telephone interview with author, July 1999.

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6. Ashbee, *A Palestine Notebook*, pp. 32–33.
7. George Antonius to Ronald Storrs, 20 and 24 October 1918, Israel State Archives [hereafter, ISA], Hakiryra, record group 65, file 2952.
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17. Antonius to Lord Passfield, secretary of state for the colonies, Jerusalem, 10 January 1930, ISA, record group 65, file 2662–379.
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20. Bowman to Lionel Smith, 25 June 1922, Lionel Smith folder, box 1, file 3, MEC, St. Antony's College, Oxford.
21. Humphrey Bowman, 30 January 1921, Bowman Diary, January 1921 to March 1924, Bowman papers, box 3B, MEC, St. Antony's College, Oxford.
22. George Antonius, 1935 Lecture to Canadian Institute of International Affairs on "The League of Nations in Its Relation to 'A' Mandate," ISA, record group 65, file AT69–2754.
23. Ibid.
24. Extract from Anglo-French Declaration cited in Ibid.
25. Extract from Treaty of Versailles cited in Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Passage from the Command Paper of 1922 cited in *A Survey of Palestine*, Prepared in December 1945 and January 1946 for the information of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, reprinted in full with permission from Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1991), p. 92.

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33. Sir John Richmond (Ernest Richmond's son), interview with author, Durham, 20 April 1985.

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35. Sir Ernest Richmond, "Note on the issues involved in deciding upon a Constitution for Palestine," 21 September 1921, copy received from Sir John Richmond during interview with author, Durham, 20 April 1985.

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56. Report on Education, 24 February 1925, p. 61.

57. Report on Local Government, 24 June 1924, p. 4.

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63. S. Moody to Storrs, memorandum explaining his view and inability to sign the 24 February 1925 Report for the Local Government Commission, 25 February 1925, ISA, record group 65, file AT146-125.

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6

Resignation: A Protest

The revolutionary innovation introduced into the American system of government nearly two centuries ago was the concept that a government could be designed and established where those who govern would themselves be subject to the rule of law. Many classical political theorists had argued that this concept was a logical impossibility, that law is established and enforced by government and thus government is above the law and cannot itself be held accountable to law.

—Robert L. Bish and Vincent Ostrom, *Understanding Urban Government*

As the battle between imperial and democratic institutions intensified in Palestine in the 1920s, Antonius made a number of choices that were fatal to his career. In 1925, after obtaining Palestinian citizenship, Antonius continued pushing for reforms and for his long-awaited promotion. Although he tried to avoid lengthy absences on official business, he was called upon to escort the infamous Arthur Balfour safely out of Syria, and to help Sir Gilbert Clayton negotiate territorial boundary disputes in Yemen, Iraq, Transjordan, and Saudi Arabia. Consistently working to restrain colonial impulses to divide and rule with coercion, he urged the British to help prevent the French from breaking up the Hijaz railway, which linked the Arabs from Damascus and beyond to Mecca, both for purposes of economy and unity, let alone for the annual Haj (Muslim pilgrimage). He criticized the empire's use of force as evidenced in its aerial bombing of tribes that failed to abide by the treaties he helped negotiate and in its attempt to silence Egyptian nationalists such as Zaghlul. Unable morally to sustain his association with British mandatory rule, which increasingly contradicted its predefined role of facilitating Palestinian independence and self-government, he was forced on principle to resign in protest. He kept his head above the political fray, focusing on democratic rules, and arguing that government had a moral obligation to truth and justice.

Problems in the Department of Education

On June 1, 1925, having witnessed Antonius's competence as well as his uncompromising promotion of democratic institutions, Bowman felt: "Antonius is too good for the job. He . . . is so well qualified academically that he deserves a better post—but in a country where lack of sympathy for the [colonial] rules does not consist for so much."¹ Focusing on more personal items, Bowman noted in his diary: "GA is out of sympathy with [a junior officer in the department Jerome] Farrell, and is of course temperamentally difficult to work with—obstinate, autocratic, hot tempered."² There was, however, little criticism of Farrell's contempt for Arabs and his anger at, and resistance to, working with Antonius, who was far better educated and in a higher social stratum than he, and who was working openly to shift power into Palestinian hands. Bowman knew there were problems with the department's staff: "[Miss Ridler] is efficient and clever, but does not care for the people in the East, and openly shows her contempt for them. Jerome Farrell also rather despises the Arabs."³

Bowman superficially attributed the department's problems to personal conflicts and seems to have been blind to the underlying issues, most notably the institutionalization of unfair rules. He managed to live in denial of the institutional conflict, never tackling the question of how a man such as Antonius, or any man, could accommodate racism and colonial rules that disabled rather than enabled human capacity—particularly that of his own people. Indeed, Bowman lived in denial of his own internal contradictions. He would talk about his affection and concern for Antonius, and yet he would work behind his back, seeking as he said as early as 1922 to replace him with an Englishman, such as Lionel Smith, to whom he wrote: "I believe you might like the work here. [High Commissioner Herbert] Samuel moreover knows you and will I feel welcome you, provided I can persuade him to appoint an Englishman and not an Arab."⁴

Antonius, for all his charm and good manners, had a temper and used it in resisting what could not be rationalized. He was far too proud and principled either to be bullied or to allow bullies to hurt others; Antonius believed that everyone deserved to be treated equally, with dignity and compassion, and empowered to think for and to govern themselves. The colonial dualism that portrayed local people as inferior and incapable of self-rule, and colonial officers in superior roles as fathers and rulers, would never do. Although he saw the internal problems—the ill-equipped and poor peasants and the factionalism and self-centered ambitions of local notables—he considered Palestine capable of learning and implementing practices that could enable and enrich the lives of the majority. He never underestimated his people's capacity as the British had.

As Antonius clashed with Farrell and others, through his work on the local government commission, he pushed the envelope to reveal a powerful competency, character, and commitment to institution building that contradicted and seriously threatened colonial rules. For his part, Bowman went full circle, as had Forster: He had first embraced Antonius as a charming and amusing companion, and was later shocked to encounter a manhood and passion for empowering Palestinians that directly challenged colonial rules. Although Whitehall intended for the Zionist colonialists and the British to run things, Antonius would not compromise on fundamental democratic principles of majority rule.

Because Antonius had shown his uncompromising support of democratic institutions and decentralized governance, he was perceived as a threat to the perpetuation of colonial institutions and organizations. By the end of 1926, Chief Secretary Symes and Bowman spoke privately of transferring him to some other job, in some other department, unbeknownst to him.⁵ Antonius was too perceptive not to have had some sense of the implications of his actions. However, he seems never to have anticipated the degree to which manipulation and deceit could damage his career. He had trusted Bowman, had sensed his weaknesses but liked him as a colleague and never expected to be so lied to and deceived. As he was attempting to institutionalize democracy, he had more to deal with than did the local officials. The rules of the unequal playing field were being dictated from the Colonial Office in London. Antonius was supposed to become simply a bridge between two worlds, an interlocutor for elites. Despite the attempts to restrain him, Antonius remained a civil servant, a public servant in the full sense of the term—one of the best that Palestine ever had. He was certainly one of the most principled and prescient; for he knew that before erecting all the paraphernalia of bureaucratic machinery—a flag, official titles, hierarchies—the major task lay in getting democratic institutions to enable nation building. He resisted compromising the fundamentals, and rarely confused institutions with organizations, knowing that government in its organizational structure did not ensure moral policy enabling the nation and protecting it from abuse of power.

A. J. Balfour

1925 was an important year for Antonius. It was the year he became a Palestinian citizen, faced the loss of confidence of important officials, and came face to face with a principal architect of the Zionist incursion into Palestine. That spring, Arthur James Balfour (1848–1930) came to Palestine, and Antonius served as his escort. By then, Balfour was in his late seventies, and Antonius, in his early thirties. Balfour had a long and pres-

tigious record. Having entered parliament as a Conservative in 1874, he succeeded his uncle as prime minister in 1902. He was foreign secretary under David Lloyd George when he promoted the 1917 Balfour Declaration pledging British support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, with the proviso that Arab rights would be respected. Subsequently, in 1922, Balfour had become the Earl of Balfour. He was also the author of a number of books dealing with religious problems in a secular world.

Since 1917 Balfour had acquired an increasingly negative reputation in the Arab world, especially among British officials and Arabs in Palestine, for they had witnessed the manipulation of a predominantly European community to settle and claim Palestine regardless of the wishes of the majority of people in Palestine. The local populace in Syria and Palestine was especially upset at having never been consulted; people were furious that Balfour would claim the right to dispose of their country as he did. When he arrived in 1925, his complete disregard for local residents was still in evidence. On April 13, 1925, Bowman noted in his diary: "Lord Balfour was here for 10 days and was surrounded by Jews the whole time, so that he never had a chance of hearing the Arab point of view. Indeed, he did not seem to wish to do so."⁶

Officials who understood what Balfour represented were against his coming and upset at not having been consulted and prepared for what was predictably a very controversial visit. "Both Clayton and Ronald [Storrs] were much against his coming, but it was arranged [by the Zionist Executive] before they or anyone else knew of it."⁷ They were hardly surprised by the local reaction, as Palestinians and Syrians declared a strike and staged demonstrations, the intensity of which compelled Balfour's early departure via Beirut.⁸ Historian J. M. Jeffries, who was very critical of Balfour, wondered whether the demonstrations might have prompted him to rethink his pro-Zionist declaration. Learning about Antonius's role as escort, he wrote to the latter: "I have heard that you were one of a group of two or three people with Balfour when he embarked, or was embarked, at Beyrout after his experiences in Damascus and elsewhere. He is supposed to have said then, shaking his head, 'Has all this happened because of me?' Was this so?"⁹ To Antonius, Balfour seemed a peculiar man, to whom Palestine was but a game, and the local residents, largely invisible. His mind-set was racist, as evidenced by a superiority complex that at the time was typical of upper-class Englishmen and proponents of the British empire. With Zionists they were able to share a realm of abstract ideas, in which fantasy, ambition, and dreams were played out without any interference from local reality. People were simply not allowed to talk back. They were the elect, the chosen few, the men with ideas to whom others would be subject. The notion of consulting those outside this elite sphere of shared interests, ideas, and success

never entered their minds, for there was no concept of equality, no respect for local reality or knowledge, or incentive to take others seriously. They and their ideas were not to be held accountable, as they cynically rejected stakeholder engagement and popular consultation.

Imperial colonial culture was based on racist assumptions that institutionalized discrimination and abuse. Unequal relations prevailed. There was no reciprocity. Colonial rule was never designed to enable and empower local people to secure the public good but rather to ensure the continued tenure of the British empire. The rules that applied to Palestine applied throughout the colonial world, including Kenya, as Antonius was well aware. Jomo Kenyatta discussed the experience in his 1938 book, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu*.¹⁰ One reviewer noted:

Challenging the racist assumptions of settlers, missionaries, and colonial administrators, Kenyatta set out to show that Africans were “conditioned, by the cultural and social institutions of centuries, to a freedom of which Europe has little conception.” Ignoring customary laws governing individual land ownership, described by Kenyatta in expert detail, the colonists had settled on African farmland and tribal land under the pretext that it was accessible because as communal land no one owned it. From a prosperous, virtuous, and healthy way of life, colonial rules had reduced the Kikuyu social order to ruins and its members to serfdom.¹¹

Antonius echoed Jeffries’s criticism of Balfour:

About Balfour, I have a good deal of material and of personal information, for I was with him on that journey of his in Syria, from beginning to end; and his remarks about the origin and significance of the disturbances in Damascus were made to me. I am not using any of it, however, until the time comes when I decide to write the full story of that amazing journey. The remark which you attribute to him is, so far as I am aware, not literally true. But he did say something uncommonly like it, only worse, that is to say more revealing of abysmal ignorance about political forces in the Arab world. Between you and me, his remarks were to me a shocking revelation. Like yourself, I would treat him very severely. As you say, Palestine was to him a game, a sort of historico-intellectual exercise and diversion, into which he found himself drawn by the flattery of a plausible and astute Jew. Of the Arabs he was at first not even conscious, except to the extent to which he may be said to have been conscious of, say, the ground-lads who fielded the balls for him on the courts at Cannes. When the Arabs became vocal, he regarded them as a nuisance—hooligans who had never read Hume or Bergson and who must not be suffered to disturb the serene philosophy of

his historical meditations or the delicate equilibrium of his fantastic experiment.¹²

Balfour had failed to listen to—and learn about—those whose lives he was to so dramatically impact. In Balfour, Antonius encountered the imperial mentality—arrogant, self-righteous, and self-assured of superiority. “Arrogance is the act of the great; presumption, that of the little. The arrogant man takes upon himself to be above others.”¹³ Challenging policy was, if not treasonous, certainly unacceptable—the mark of outsiders, hooligans and the like, who were not to be taken seriously. Antonius was disturbed by the culture of cynicism, by the prejudice and the lack of conscience and character that Balfour evidenced. He was struck also by the latter’s racism, his arrogant and ruthless condescension to and humiliation of others, which was rooted in profound ignorance.

It is hard to imagine Antonius remaining completely silent when faced with Balfour’s ignorance of and prejudice against the Arabs he stereotyped. The fact that Antonius’s official career in the British mandatory government pretty much ended in 1925 may not have been completely the doing of one man, but surely Balfour shared the institutional makeup that was Antonius’s undoing. Like children, Arabs were not to be heard. Whereas Clayton had been open and accessible and even eager for Antonius’s insight and suggestions, the older breed represented by Balfour was less likely to appreciate Antonius’s comments concerning Palestine.

Negotiating Territorial Boundaries

In 1925 Clayton left Palestine to serve as envoy to Sultan Ibn Saud for negotiating the Bahra and Hadda Agreements and the Treaty of Jeddah, and to the Imam Yahya of Yemen in 1926. Antonius accepted Clayton’s invitation to join the September 1925 mission, which resulted from Ibn Saud’s ousting of Sheriff Hussein from the Hijaz. Clayton found Antonius indispensable and later nominated him for two awards (Commander of the British Empire [CBE] and Commander of His Majesty’s Government [CMG]), noting that the successful treaty negotiations had been due to Antonius’s contribution as mediator and mission leader. Tawfiq al-Suwaidi, who was a member of the Arabian delegation with which Clayton and Antonius negotiated during the frontier disputes with Iraq in 1925, found Antonius “very able in the conduct of discussion and debate.”¹⁴ After their first mission, as they passed through Jerusalem briefly in December 1925, Bowman wrote in his journal: “It has apparently been a great success. After three weeks in camp with Ibn Saud and his followers, they have come away with the treaty sealed, signed, and delivered. Bertie [Clayton] told me GA [George Antonius] had been extraordinarily

useful to him not only in translating but in helping him to understand the psychology of the people he was dealing with."¹⁵

Indeed, Antonius not only guided Clayton vis-à-vis the culture and psychology of the people concerned but also explored and discussed all the relevant issues with the principal Arab negotiators to prepare the way for Clayton's successful treaty negotiations. He also managed the mission when Clayton became ill: "I have had something to do at first hand with the negotiation and determination of the frontier lines between the Hijaz and Nejd on the one hand, and the mandated territories of Transjordan and Iraq on the other; with the boundary dispute in the Yemen and the Aden hinterland; and with the still disputed frontiers between Syria and Iraq, and Syria and Transjordan," wrote Antonius.¹⁶

The missions introduced Antonius as a mediator in the delineation of territorial boundaries for the Arab national goal of federation, and expanded his pan-Arab network. "His travels, with Clayton and elsewhere, during the 1920s . . . helped George to develop his wide international network of friendships and relationships," wrote Thomas Hodgkin.¹⁷ This work introduced Antonius to parts of the Arab world that he previously knew little about. He saw a useful role for the empire in promoting the peaceful resolution of conflicts—a role that also benefited imperial strategic and economic interests in the region.¹⁸ On a more personal note, the missions into Arabia were especially meaningful because of the great respect and friendship that arose between Antonius and Clayton, noble mentor to the younger generation of British and Arab officers alike. With a cordial and trusting atmosphere, the missions bore fruit, generating hope and optimism for nation building. With the empire represented by such trusted characters, mediating between the Arabs in dispute, Antonius, as others, saw the empire as a partner—that is, as a principled rather than a coercive promoter of peaceful resolution of territorial and other disputes. Hence his lightness of heart as Antonius reflected on the experience and what he called their months of "gallivanting." Returning to a quiet and rather deserted Jerusalem, with cherished memories of work with Clayton, he wrote to thank Clayton on July 16, 1926:

It is now nearly 10 months since we embarked on our Arabian jaunt and I find it difficult to believe that it is at last over. To me, the idea that our association has come to an end, and that imperial necessities may be taking you to countries in which I cannot hope to be of use to you is a sad thing. But you can have no idea of the pleasure or of the gratitude with which I look back upon the months I spent with you. I am grateful to you not only for choosing me and giving me this wonderful opportunity; but also for your personal treatment to me and your unfailing kindness. I should find it impossible to tell you, to your face, even in a letter, the many reasons why I

could not wish for a better chief. But please let me tell you this at least, quite simply and without artifice, that if you have found that at times I worked hard or worked well, it was solely because your treatment of me and your guidance were the best incentives to work I have ever had.¹⁹

Edward Hodgkin, a former editor at the *Times* in London who came to know Antonius in the 1930s, remarked, "He had a very good, critical brain, and to be treated as an interpreter when he went with Clayton he must have been conscious that his talents were not being fully utilized."²⁰ In fact, he was far more than an interpreter, as Clayton himself acknowledged, noting that Antonius had essentially managed the process when he became ill during one of the missions. Among other things, Antonius was entrusted for three weeks with the almost daily, detailed negotiations with Ibn Saud's chief advisers, sheikhs Hafez Wahba and Yusuf Yasin. And through a "combination of firmness and persuasion," he prepared the way for Ibn Saud's agreeing to Clayton's terms.²¹ At one time, Antonius worked so hard during a mission in Yemen that meetings had to be postponed until he recuperated from his exertions. Indeed, Clayton felt greatly indebted to Antonius, and noted in his diary shortly before the conclusion of this mission on September 22, 1925, "If we get our agreements it will be due in a very large measure to George Antonius, and I am quite convinced that I could not have succeeded without him."²²

Although Clayton proved a steadfast supporter and admirer, less highly ranked colonial officers treated Antonius shabbily, rejecting his request for reimbursement for expenses and treating him as if, as he put it to Clayton, he were "a beggar asking for a tip."²³ As for the Colonial Office, it turned down Clayton's recommendation that Antonius be awarded the CMG, but agreed to his additional request for the CBE. When Antonius's name was left out of the Birthday Honors, he wrote Clayton that he was less interested in the award than in receiving respect and fair treatment. Antonius eventually did receive the CBE, which he considered declining because of his problems in the mandatory administration in Palestine. The higher award of CMG was withheld because—as Clayton learned from the Foreign Office on August 22, 1927—"The Colonial Office felt that it would have led them into serious difficulties in their administration."²⁴ This was an especially sensitive subject, given the increasing discrimination against Arabs in Palestine. "If you hear me complain or if I appear bitter," Antonius informed Clayton, "it is not at all because of the absence of reward. It is simply because no matter how hard one may work, when it comes to the point one finds oneself in the intolerable position of a man on his knees asking for a favor."²⁵

After his 1925–1926 missions with Clayton, Antonius served as a second delegate on another mission to Ibn Saud in November 1926. During

this period, Antonius would have preferred to stay home and focus on constructive reforms and policy matters, as well as on the progress of his long-awaited promotion: "I am anxious that my absence from Palestine should be as short as possible," he wrote in September 1926. "After my recent absence, and in view of the exceptionally interesting points of policy which are under consideration, I am naturally chary of embarking upon an outside task if it is likely to keep me away indefinitely."²⁶

In the spring of 1927 Antonius joined Clayton in reopening negotiations with Ibn Saud. He served his final mission with Clayton in the spring and summer of 1928. Between his last two missions to Ibn Saud, during the June 1927 Egyptian army crisis, Antonius served as an unofficial negotiator. In Egypt, where the conflict concerned Arab nationalists' opposition to the continued presence of British troops, Antonius negotiated with Prime Minister Sarwat Pasha and President of the Chamber Saad Zaghlul, and helped draft their notes for presentation to High Commissioner Lloyd on June 12. Throughout his work as negotiator, Antonius knew there was no desire to provoke violence but rather to obtain British respect for Arab desires and rights to self-governance. Hence he was critical of Lloyd's view that shipping in British troops might have helped resolve the problem. When asked by Lloyd to comment on his draft manuscript, he challenged the version that portrayed the British threat of landing marines as the factor that brought nationalists to the table. Antonius told Lloyd that Sarwat and Zaghlul had wanted to "secure a treaty by negotiation" and not by bloodshed, and that Lloyd had mistakenly assumed their draft notes were advanced because of the threat of landing British marines.²⁷

During his missions with Clayton, Antonius sought to peacefully resolve territorial disputes and end the transborder raids between Ibn Saud's tribes and tribes in Transjordan and Iraq. Antonius's missions with Clayton helped promote negotiations and formal contracts and agreements on the new territorial boundaries that would govern the relationship between peoples in the newly established territories of Transjordan, the Hijaz and Nejd, and Yemen. The treaties especially concerned largely tribal and nomadic Arabic-speaking peoples. Although their leaders might have agreed to sign a negotiated document with British representatives such as Clayton, they understood little of the agreement, with which no one had troubled to acquaint them. Yet they were expected to simply desist and to abide by rules and boundaries at odds with generations of tribal custom and conduct. With classic colonial impatience and lack of attention to local meaning and concerns, British officials responded ruthlessly to internecine raids that breached official agreements. Tribesmen who did not adhere to the agreements and who engaged in transborder raids were shot and bombed. In Antonius's view, the 1928

Royal Air Force bombings of Ibn Saud's tribes were not only a breach of the Bahra Agreement but also fueled retaliatory raids because innocent people were killed.²⁸ Little wonder that the border questions remain rife with controversy in the twentieth century.

During his period of service as a negotiator for the British, Antonius witnessed and experienced British discrimination against Arabs in their continual denial of pledges to support Arab independence and unity, and in their arrogant and coercive resistance to Arab demands for self-governance. In Palestine, the pro-Zionist administration was increasingly evident. Nonetheless, in the 1920s the idea of a Zionist state seemed unreal, albeit a "dangerous dream." For despite the fragmentation of the Arab nation and imperial resistance to self-rule in Palestine, Syria, and Egypt, other Arab governments were securing entry into the League of Nations, beginning, ironically, with the least experienced—Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. In 1930, Iraq obtained independence, albeit with a retinue of British officials remaining behind the scenes. Antonius viewed the French in especially critical terms, for they had forced themselves on Syria, occupying Damascus and violently overthrowing "the first independent Arab state established in modern times outside the peninsula."²⁹ Antonius thought the French were especially hostile to the Arab national movement toward unity and independence because "they feared the consequences in their North African empire."³⁰ Hence their strategy of weakening Arab cohesion and coordination in the administrative fragmentation of Syria, their promotion of sectarianism, and their failure to sustain their end of the Hijaz railway, which had connected the region.

Before World War I, the Hijaz railway, which was called the *Darb al Haj* (the road of pilgrimage), had effectively functioned as a "natural means of communication and transit" along the historic route of pilgrimage and trade "from Damascus and Haifa to Medina." The problem of the railway not being sustained symbolized the widespread "dislocation . . . caused by political frontiers cutting across natural means of communication and transit." As Antonius explained to John Wright in 1931, "owing to the post-war partitioning of the Ottoman Empire the Hijaz railway is subjected to dismemberment into four sectors of different nationality, each of which is managed by the authorities of the territory in which it lies, namely British in Palestine, the French in Syria, the Amir's government in Transjordan, and Ibn Saud in the Hijaz."³¹ Drawn to assist in the resolution of the problem, Antonius held discussions with Hafez Wahba in Cairo and confidential meetings with Ibn Saud during his 1928 mission, on the subject of the Hijaz Railway Conference, which was under way in Haifa and which Antonius anticipated was "foredoomed to failure." Antonius advised Clayton, among others, to seek an alteration of the pertinent clauses in the 1923 Lausanne Treaty, which had introduced British

and French mandates into Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia, to advance "some 40,000 pounds *on account* [presumably, as a line of credit] to enable [Ibn Saud] to repair his section" in time for the 1927–1928 pilgrimage, and to resolve the questions of principle and technical matters with French officials, whom he considered unwilling and incapable of just dealings with the Arabs. Antonius felt the French could not be trusted to secure the continuation of the railway for the greater good of a unified Arab nation. As he put it to Clayton, "Their only interest in the Hijaz railway is from Damascus to the Palestine frontier, and we all know that they have raised fares and freights on their section in order to favor the Beirouth–Damascus line which is a French company. Besides, they are not at all keen on linking Damascus with Medina."³²

Driven to Resign

In 1921, aware that an estimated 90 percent of the British army in Palestine and leading officers (e.g., Clayton, Richmond, Allenby, and others) supported Arab national goals of unity and independence as Britain earlier had pledged to do, Churchill circulated a memorandum to the Cabinet in London that sought "the removal of all anti-Zionist civil officials, however highly placed."³³ Since Antonius had accepted the post in Palestine's Department of Education, he had expected—particularly because of Samuel's assurances in 1922—that he would be promoted to the post of deputy director after he had fulfilled grade III requirements in November 1924. Despite his sense of Bowman's and Samuel's "loss of confidence" in him due to his work on the local government commission, his expectations of promotion continued, as Bowman highly recommended that he be promoted to this post in 1925.³⁴ On June 9, 1925, Bowman recommended that the post of deputy director be reopened, because, as he explained, "The Department of Education is the only department of importance in the country in which the officer [Antonius] holding the post second to the director is not in grade II." Bowman recommended Antonius's promotion to the post, because as he put it, Antonius was an invaluable principal adviser—"sound and reliable" on all matters concerning Arab affairs, uniquely qualified through his education and fluency in languages, a personality commanding "the confidence of Muslims and Christians alike," and as regards financial and administrative matters, the most "loyal [and] capable assistant" he could wish for.³⁵

During his first four years in the department, Antonius appears to have gained Bowman's confidence, respect, and admiration for his services as principal adviser and as acting director during Bowman's absence. Through his duties as translator and interpreter and his professional relationships with the high commissioner, with other British

officials, and with leading Arab notables, he "created a very favorable impression with the highest authorities," particularly with Clayton, chief secretary from 1922 to 1925.³⁶ Antonius's success was achieved through his deft handling of controversial and tense situations. He had a brilliant mind and a genius for communicating perspectives and ideas fluently in Arabic, English, and French. On one occasion, Bowman complimented Antonius for not "losing his head" during a tense moment at the farewell tea party hosted by the Mufti at the Supreme Muslim Council for Ernest Richmond and his wife.

ETR [Ernest Richmond] feels the situation keenly of course but again was v. tactful in his allusion and thanked H.C. [High Commissioner] for his presence. It was indeed rather wonderful to find H.E. [His Excellency] there. There was an uncomfortable moment when, as GA was interpreting for H.E., Shaikh Muzaffar said rudely and loudly: 'Translate that again I did not catch the words.' The phrase was something to this effect: 'And before many years have passed I hope the Muslims of Palestine by their own endeavors will have made still greater progress, and will have succeeded in their efforts, by cooperating with the government, in attaining their desires.' It was not an easy sentence to interpret off-hand, and was more intricate and involved than is here expressed: G.A. however did the translation most efficiently, and Muzaffar's interruption was uncalled for and . . . H.E. did not understand the meaning of the interruption though of course he knew the source; but G.A. did not lose his head, and gave a somewhat cleaner version.³⁷

In March 1926, after Antonius completed his first mission with Clayton and returned to Palestine, he wrote to remind Bowman, Chief Secretary Symes, and High Commissioner Lord Plumer that he had been recommended for the post of deputy director nearly a year previously. In light of his background and his record as principal adviser, Antonius said, he found it "not unreasonable . . . to expect that the same grade should be attached to [his] post as is attached to similar posts held by officers in the other departments."³⁸

In September 1926, nearly half a year after his first mission, Antonius again agreed to participate in a mission to Ibn Saud if, among other matters, he could be assured a brief absence from the Department of Education. In addition to various projects that required his attention in Palestine, Antonius wanted to be on hand to receive his long-awaited promotion. He may also have wished to be present because Bowman intended to resign the following year and was seriously searching for a successor. Although Antonius may not have known that Lionel Smith was the main candidate, with Jerome Farrell in the wings, he was well

aware and clearly dismayed that he was being overlooked. He wrote to Clayton on September 11, 1926:

This is my sixth year in the department, and my third time of acting for the director. The opinions I hear about my work are as good as I can desire, and yet no sooner is there a hint of Hum [Humphrey Bowman] resigning next year than everybody's first preoccupation is to find and appoint his successor. It does not seem to enter their heads to give me, if not his succession, at any rate a trial.³⁹

In November 1926, Antonius left Palestine for his mission to Ibn Saud, and he rejoined Clayton for further negotiations with Ibn Saud in 1927. Before concluding this latter mission, Antonius called on the Egyptian high commissioner in April 1927 to find out whether a decision had been made on his promotion. It was then that he first heard that instead of promoting him, the Palestine government had decided to transfer him to the Secretariat. Antonius did not believe this appointment was either compulsory or permanent, and he quickly wrote to Chief Secretary Symes to request that he be allowed to remain in the Department of Education:

My objections to the proposed transfer are not merely selfish. Having been connected with the department for close upon six years, I have acquired a special and lasting interest in its activities, and I should be extremely sorry to sever my connection with it, at a time more particularly when a constructive policy is in the process of elaboration. . . . I have been told that the proposed transfer is dictated solely by the public interest, and I realize that it is not for me to question that opinion. At the same time, I may perhaps be forgiven for pointing out that there is much to be said for the view that in a department like mine, it is highly advisable to have as the director's immediate assistant an officer who is conversant with the language and the ways of the country. More so perhaps than in any department in Palestine. But be that as it may, I should like to submit the following suggestions.⁴⁰

In his letter to Symes, Antonius was so powerfully committed to the promotion of constructive reforms and policymaking in the Department of Education that rather than resign, he suggested a year's trial in the Secretariat while retaining his title in the Department of Education, for which he would work overtime:

I am confident that, while discharging a whole-time function in the Secretariat, I should not shirk the additional effort of taking a share in such activities of the Department of Education as may be connected with the scheme of constructive reform. . . . To me, as a Palestinian, the prospect of service in

some other territory under the crown is, by definition, ruled out. Avenues of promotion in the Secretariat are, for the same pretext practically barred. In a department like that of education, I have clearly a better scope not merely for advancement but also for public usefulness.⁴¹

When Antonius returned through Egypt after completing his mission in the Hijaz, in June, he was detained to assist with the Egyptian crisis. There he received Symes's letter informing him that Lord Plumer had refused to stop his transfer to the Secretariat.⁴² This news was startling, but Antonius's greatest fear was realized when after returning to Palestine in June he read in the press that Jerome Farrell, his junior colleague in the department, had been promoted in his stead to the post of assistant director of education. Even Farrell was surprised by his promotion over Antonius, for as he wrote Lionel Smith on July 9, 1926:

There is not much chance of me getting the A.D.E. job—I have only three years in the Colonial Service and have only just been confirmed. Moreover, it is a grade I post and I am grade III. And however the Colonial Office were disposed they could not promote me over G.A.'s [George Antonius's] head on academic qualifications and experience, seeing that he has been longer in the Palestine service.⁴³

Upon his return, Antonius was transferred under intense protest to the post of assistant secretary for Arab affairs in the Secretariat. He was essentially marginalized from any public service that might contribute to building local capacity, and henceforth was to simply inform the British about the Arabs and mediate between traditional leaders and current officials. The post was utterly unsatisfactory not only because the chances for promotion were barred to him but also because he knew he would be far more productive as a civil servant in education. Antonius would not give up his attempt to return to the department, and he wrote dozens of letters over the next several years, to all of the essential officials who might help him obtain a transfer back to the Department of Education. He hoped that once informed, the government would alter its decision and honor the past promise regarding his promotion and tenure in the Department of Education. However, when all his efforts to win a transfer back to the department came to naught, he found the government's "unfair and arbitrary" responses so outrageous that he wondered, as he wrote to Clayton on August 7, 1927, "whether [the Palestine government] (or at any rate somebody) are playing a game of which the object is to drive me to resign."⁴⁴

After news in September 1927 that his past post with the department was scheduled for termination at year's end, Antonius prepared to bring

the matter to Secretary for the Colonies Ormsby Gore, and wrote to inform Symes and Lord Plumer why he was so incensed by his transfer. In part, Antonius was critical of the fact that he had not been consulted about the move. He also was disturbed by the compulsory nature of his transfer, when the norm was to allow officials some say in the matter. However, he was particularly incensed because he considered his ejection from the Department of Education not only a "virtual dismissal" but also "highly prejudiced and injurious to his good name," and because Farrell, a junior officer, was promoted to the post he had been promised, had been recommended for, and in effect had carried out for five years. Antonius wrote Symes, "Perhaps what I resent most in this treatment is the slur implied in it," namely, "that my ejection from the post of second means that I am no longer considered suitable for it."⁴⁵

Throughout 1928 and 1929, Antonius wrote many letters and met with many British officials in the hope that the justice of his case would persuade them to lobby for his return to the Department of Education. He specifically requested promotion to the post of deputy director of education, which was about to be re-created.⁴⁶ The government's response was the final humiliation Antonius suffered in British employment. In October 1929 the government agreed to transfer him back to the Department of Education, but in so doing, effectively demoted him to assistant director of education.⁴⁷ Antonius again appealed this decision. On November 7, 1929, he wrote Chief Secretary Symes, "I believe that the moral law is as binding on governments as it is on individuals"; that his case had yet to be examined on principle; that at one time, under the first high commissioner, there was an "avowed policy of government to open certain of the higher posts in the administration to qualified Palestinians as soon as they had proven their worth"; and that a change in such policy had yet to be made explicit. Hence, the real issue was a moral one, and the real question was whether the policy of promoting Palestinians had changed. "It is a question which affects not only my own position but that of all Palestinian officers who were led when they joined to believe that they would receive strictly equal opportunities of advancement."⁴⁸

Throughout the 1920s, Antonius was a witness to and a victim of British discrimination against Palestinians. There was a parallel between Palestinians' being denied key posts in the administration and their being denied a representative, democratic form of government. Preferential appointments of Zionists and Englishmen blocked Palestinian advances and secured British and Zionist control over Palestine at the cost of a constitutional democracy and representative system of government that could be held accountable and subject to majority rule. According to Lt. Col. W. F. Stirling, who served as chief staff officer under T. E. Lawrence and as adviser to Emir Faisal from 1918 to 1919, the British support for

unbalanced, essentially racist rules that allowed the administration to be captured by Zionists "led to the final downfall of our reputation for fair play."⁴⁹

No one could say that Antonius was not qualified for the promotion he insisted upon; Stewart Perowne, who later worked in the Department of Education under Farrell, said simply that Antonius was "brilliant," a "phenomenon," but that he "did not fit in."⁵⁰ Surely Antonius fit into education, but obviously not in an administration manned by Englishmen whose policy and prejudices promised little future for Palestinian education and self-government, let alone career advancement. As a Palestinian who had been exposed to the best institutions of the day, he was far more qualified to guide and advise on education than any Englishman in Palestine in the 1920s. Perhaps, as Farrell put it bluntly yet honestly in his October 8, 1927 letter to Lionel Smith, "he is no good to us," as from a British colonial perspective he was far too ambitious and desirous of reforms supporting the advancement of Arabs (and in particular, of Palestinians).⁵¹

Edward Hodgkin, Lionel Smith's nephew and former foreign editor at the *Times* of London, met Antonius in the 1930s. He particularly noted that although the discrimination and the "shabby treatment" to which Antonius was subjected did not "warp" him, it surely pained him to realize that beneath the surface of his "perfectly cordial personal" relations with British officials and Bowman's description of him as "a delightful companion" with whom he had "a great deal in common" there existed fundamental prejudice.⁵² Not the least of Antonius's problems was, as Hodgkin said,

a certain degree of jealousy among the British that here was a young man who was not only more accomplished in many ways than they were, linguistically and also richer, with a wealthy wife, and who could, with a large house, entertain them in such a way that their wives would find it difficult to repay in kind. As I say, I think there was an element of jealousy; he was regarded as too clever by half and too rich by half.

...

Antonius had faced the same sort of intellectual, moral, and personal dilemmas as somebody like Nehru, really, of affections and connections with England, but with all the policies which were being carried out it seemed at the expense of his own people. I think this is a very unenviable situation. . . . I am sure he did feel [discrimination]. I mean this was probably one of the reasons why, as they say, we lost the Empire. People would come to Oxford and Cambridge from dependencies, and then found they were second-class when they got back to their own country. They were subordinate, and they had not got the responsibility, and the top jobs were re-

served for the British—foreigners—and paid much more. . . . It is the classic colonial dilemma that in England we are all equal, but then you go back to a different hierarchy and it is very upsetting.⁵³

Notes

1. Humphrey Bowman, 1 June 1925, Bowman Diary, Humphrey Bowman Papers, Middle East Center Archives, St. Antony's College, Oxford [hereafter, MEC].
2. *Ibid.*, 13 May 1926.
3. *Ibid.*, 1 June 1925.
4. Humphrey Bowman to Lionel Smith, 25 June 1922, Lionel Smith folder, MEC.
5. Humphrey Bowman, 13 May 1926, Bowman Diary, MEC.
6. *Ibid.*, 13 April 1925.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Sami Hadawi and Robert John, *The Palestine Diary, 1914–1945*, vol. 1 (New York: New World Press, 1970), p. 195.
9. J. M. Jeffries to Antonius, Devon, 4 October 1936, ISA, record group 65, file AT26–866–330.
10. Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1938).
11. Gail M. Gerhart, "Review of Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1938)," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 76, no. 5 (September/October 1997), p. 236.
12. Antonius to J. M. Jeffries, Jerusalem, 17 November 1936, ISA, record group 65, file AT26–866–330. In a similar vein, Hisham Sharabi writes: "An example of the privileged self-view implicit in the European perspective is provided by Edmund Husserl in his important book, *The Crises of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, published just before World War II. In it, Husserl asserts that only European man enjoys the historical privilege of philosophy; he describes non-Western cultures as primitive and prescientific and in any case congenitally incapable of philosophical reflection. Husserl assumes the qualitative superiority of the European perspectives as a starting point never for a moment thinking of putting the privileged viewpoint of European consciousness into question" (Sharabi, "The Scholarly Point of View: Politics, Perspective, Paradigm," in *Theory, Politics and the Arab World: Critical Responses*, ed. Hisham Sharabi [New York: Routledge, in cooperation with the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, 1990], pp. 3–4).
13. *The Lincoln Library of Essential Information* (Buffalo: Frontier Press, 1951), p. 141.
14. Tawfiq al-Suwaidi, *Mudhakkarati* (Beirut: Dar al-Katib al-'Arabi, 1969), p. 123.
15. Bowman, 2 December 1925, Bowman Diary, MEC.
16. Antonius to Wright, 21 August 1931, ISA, record group 65, file 131.

17. Thomas Hodgkin, "Antonius, Palestine and the 1930s," in *The Gazelle Review of Middle East Literature*, no. 10, ed. Roger Hardy (London: Ithaca, 1982), p. 11.

18. After Ibn Saud conquered Hail and Shamar near Iraq in 1921 and advanced against Sheriff Hussein's forces in the Hijaz, the British government incorporated portions of the Nejd into Iraq, and Maan and Aqaba, the northern provinces of the Hijaz, into Transjordan in their attempt to secure Transjordan, Palestine, and Iraq for British strategic and economic interests—in particular, to assure "a strategic outlet in the Red Sea . . . and right of way for any future railway line from Aqaba to Baghdad" (Robert O. Collins, ed., *An Arabian Diary: Sir Gilbert Falkingham Clayton* [Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969], pp. 34–36, 42; see also George Antonius, "Memorandum on the Eastern Frontier of Transjordan," 22 September 1925, Sudan Archives, Durham [hereafter, SAD], Clayton papers, 471/6).

19. Antonius to Clayton, 16 July 1926, Jerusalem, SAD, Clayton papers, 471, 1/1–43.

20. Edward Hodgkin, interview with author, London, 14 April 1985.

21. Collins, *An Arabian Diary*, p. 120.

22. *Ibid.*

23. Antonius to Clayton, 11 September 1926, SAD, Clayton papers, 471/8.

24. The awards that Clayton recommended Antonius for are issued twice a year, on the king's or queen's (as the case may be) official birthday and on the New Year's honors list for distinguished service. Foreign Office to Clayton, 22 August 1927, SAD, Clayton papers, 471/12.

25. Antonius to Clayton, 11 September 1926, SAD, Clayton papers, 471/8.

26. Antonius to Mills, 12 September 1926, Jerusalem, ISA, record group 65, file AT35–402.

27. In response to Lloyd's request for Antonius's comments regarding his version of the army crisis of 1927, which was to be published in Lloyd's book *Egypt since Cromer*, Antonius wrote Lloyd on May 12, 1933 that his dissent was directed to "questions of fact in the narrative" and to "matters of interpretation and appreciation" (George Antonius, "Short Account of the Negotiations which Led to the Settlement of the Egyptian Army Crises in June 1927," ISA, record group 65, file AT270–00855–330; Antonius to Lord Lloyd, 12 May 1933, ISA, record group 65, file AT153–704–327).

28. Antonius to Clayton, 23 March 1928, SAD, Clayton papers, 472/2.

29. A. L. Tibawi, *Anglo-Arab Relations and the Question of Palestine, 1914–1921* (London: Luzac, 1978), p. 406.

30. George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1938), p. 369.

31. Antonius to Wright, 21 August 1931, ISA, record group 65, file 131.

32. Antonius to Clayton, 6 August 1927 and 15 March 1928, SAD, 471/12 and 472/2; also ISA, record group 65, file 2772–328.

33. David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Avon Books, 1989), p. 524.

34. Antonius to Bowman, Jerusalem, 2 October 1924, ISA, record group 65, file 2662–379.

35. Bowman to Symes, Jerusalem, 9 June 1925, 642/2/PE, ISA, record group 65, file 2662–379.
36. *Ibid.*; Bowman, 13 September 1925, Bowman Diary, MEC.
37. Bowman, 31 March 1924, Bowman Diary, MEC.
38. Antonius to Bowman, 24 March 1926, ISA, record group 65.
39. Antonius to Clayton, 11 September 1926, SAD, Clayton papers, 471/8.
40. Antonius to Symes, 25 April 1927, ISA, record group 65, file 2883.
41. *Ibid.*
42. Symes to Antonius, 6 May 1927, ISA, record group 65, file 2883.
43. Farrell to Lionel Smith, 9 July 1926, MEC, Lionel Smith papers, box 1, file 3.
44. Antonius to Clayton, August 1927, SAD, Clayton papers, 471/12.
45. Antonius to Symes, 4 October 1925, ISA, record group 65, file 2883.
46. Antonius to Symes, June 1929, ISA, record group 65, file 2662. For additional correspondence, see ISA, record group 65, files 2662 and 2882.
47. Chief Secretary Symes to Antonius, 16 October 1929, ISA, record group 65, file 2662–379.
48. Antonius to Chief Secretary Symes, 7 November 1929, ISA, record group 65, file 2662–379.
49. W. F. Stirling, "Palestine: 1920–1923," in *From Haven to Conquest: Readings in Zionism and the Palestine Problem until 1948*, ed. Walid Khalidi (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1971), p. 232. Such appointments appear to have begun with that of Sir Herbert Samuel, a Jew and Zionist, as first high commissioner. Geoffrey Furlonge notes: "The Immigration Department was headed by Hyamson, a Jew; the Lands Department by Abrahamson, a Christian but of Jewish origin; the Customs Department by Harari, another Jew; the Legal Department by the celebrated English Zionist Norman Bentwich who doubled the roles of Attorney General and legal advisor to the Government" (Furlonge, *Palestine Is My Country: The Story of Musa Alami* [London: John Murray, 1969], p. 90).
50. Stewart Perowne, conversation with author, London, 26 April 1985.
51. J. Farrell to L. Smith, 8 October 1927, MEC, L. Smith papers, box 1, file 3.
52. Edward Hodgkin, conversation with author, London, 14 April 1985; Bowman, 24 October 1926, Bowman Diary, MEC. Antonius severed his ties with Bowman after his transfer and may never have realized that from the start Bowman had fancied that Antonius's contract would not be renewed after the first year, or that as early as 1922 he was seeking to obtain "an Englishman not an Arab" as his second and to "fix it" so that this Englishman would be Lionel Smith (H. Bowman to L. Smith, 25 June 1922 and 24 December 1924, MEC, Lionel Smith papers, box 1, files 2–3).
53. Edward Hodgkin, conversation with author, London, 14 April 1985.

7

The 1929 Disturbances

The Palestine of the Biblical conception is not a geographical tract. It is in their hearts. But if they must look to the Palestine of geography as their national home, it is wrong to enter under the shadow of the British gun. A religious act cannot be performed with the aid of the bayonet or the bomb.

—Mahatma Gandhi

Antonius's trust of the British was not a sign of weakness but of his moral courage and realism. As historian Yusuf Ibish reflected on Antonius's work in the British mandatory government in the 1920s: "Sometimes one may reduce evil by softening it, by working from within. Antonius had a great advantage for this with his education."¹ In the 1920s, Antonius, along with all Palestinians, suffered and resisted the British shift from tutor and trustee to colonizer; in 1929, Antonius also resisted the Zionist provocation to violence. When he saw a Zionist pathology of hatred leading to collective breakdown and bloodshed, he called for Palestinians not to respond in kind but with peaceful resistance and on the basis of high moral principles. He knew that if Palestinians responded with violence, the British mandatory government would only harden its position against them. The British Empire could not allow itself even the appearance of capitulation to popular revolt; to do so would have set a dangerous precedent in a tenuous world of imperial rule. Yet militant youth groups were emerging in Palestine in 1929 as they were elsewhere in the world: The rise of militant fascist youth groups in Europe, including the black and brown shirts under Mussolini and Hitler, was part of a broad trend toward increasingly militant, xenophobic nationalism.

Despite Zionist threats of force and violence, Antonius sustained his faith in civil society and moral democracy. He knew the best of the British were men of integrity and fair play who would recognize abuse when

they saw it and who would stand up for justice—for Palestinian self-governance. He knew Palestinians as unarmed cultivators, peace-loving, family-oriented men and women who shared a moral world of profound meaning, faith, and mutual support. Palestinians had demonstrated against British support for Zionists since the 1917 Balfour Declaration. By 1929, they were forced to deal with the escalation of systematic violence by aggressive Zionists who were ruthless in their goal of taking over Palestine. The 1929 violence marked a tragic turning point in the breakdown of trust between and among members of long-standing religious communities in Palestine. This crisis also resulted in an unprecedented British investigation of the Palestinian reality.

The Western Wall Dispute

By 1929, Antonius was thirty-eight years old. He was a mature, thoughtful, and eloquent man. He was also physically attractive: Although not tall, he had natural grace and impressive stamina. His face was slender, with expressive brown eyes, a high forehead, prominent nose, and sensuous lips accentuated by a trim mustache. He wore his dark hair brushed back from his slightly receding hairline. At age thirty-six he had married Katy Nimr in a civil ceremony, and later, at his insistence, in a Greek Orthodox ceremony in Jerusalem. Although some of Antonius's friends, including his friend Vincent Sheean's future wife Diana, found Katy less than suited for Antonius, she was quite a beauty, a brilliant hostess, and a passionate personality in her own right. She supplemented Antonius's salary with a hefty allowance she received from her wealthy father, Faris Nimr; and from her mother, who was said to be the daughter of a Scottish duke, she acquired the art of entertaining that endeared her to British officials. With her sense of fashion, "enlivening chatter," and charm, Katy became "the social queen of Jerusalem." An admirer, Stewart Perowne remembered, "Her clothes, her style—it was all so new."² To Thomas Hodgkin, Katy was "a highly cultured Syrian . . . (the kind who had read more of the sort of books you pride yourself on reading than you have—and all French, Italian, and German literature—or at least have the air of having done so)," and who served delicate finger sandwiches that reminded him of home.³

The Antoniuses' homes—their apartment at the Austrian Hospice in 1929, and the house they rented later from the Mufti Haj Amin al-Husseini in the Karm al Mufti, a suburb of Jerusalem—were havens that connected visitors to a world of culture and refinement beyond the prejudice and barbarism of the day. They filled their home with colorful Bokhara carpets and paintings (including fauvist works by Raoul Dufy and impressionist paintings by Katy's sister, who displayed with Picasso) and

with music, books, fine dining, and rich conversation. Even before his marriage to Katy, Antonius had practiced the Levantine tradition of sociability, hosting dinner parties that included leading officials, friends, and visitors such as Charles Crane in the early 1920s. As one young visitor, Sally Chilvers (the daughter of Antonius's friend Philip Graves, a *Times* correspondent formerly with the Arab Agency in Egypt under Clayton), remembered, the Antonius home accommodated a perpetual flow of people.⁴ There was a refreshing openness there and a complete absence of snobbery. Antonius addressed their servant's son no differently from anyone else. Sometimes, while sitting and visiting with guests, he was called out to settle some dispute among the kinsfolk of his gardener or otherwise to lend his advice and counsel. His home had the atmosphere of an extended household in the Arab tradition—highly cultured and intimately connected with social circles such as small groups interested in archaeology (Perowne), antiquities (Richmond), poetry, and literature—in which friendships could be forged across national borders and cultural divisions.

As Antonius matured, his visitors more and more often included leading Arab, British, French, American, and other officials and political personalities, scholars and academics, journalists, and intelligence officers seeking perspective on, or insight into, complex local and regional problems. They trusted Antonius's judgment and often availed themselves of his advice as well as of his library. To the inquisitive Sally Chilvers Antonius seemed a quiet, serious man who must have had a deep spiritual base, for he remained above the fray—at peace. During her visit, she found him deeply concerned about the conditions of the fellahin, the cultivators. He suggested that she accompany an Arab tax collector on his rounds, and recommended various colonies that she might visit. On a more personal note, she remembered hearing plates crash as George and Katy, both passionate personalities, lost their tempers—presumably because although Katy had proposed an open marriage, seeing it as something the “smart” set would do, she was very jealous. Although the couple's marriage ended in the 1930s, for a time they created a beautiful home that reconnected war-weary souls to an enlivening world of good fun, lighthearted chatter, stimulating wit, and rich discourse, to kindness and moral fiber sustained despite the violence and prejudice outside their door. For his part, Antonius “kept an even keel, remained interested in the world outside the walls of the city, and remembered his obligation as an intelligent and cultivated human being not to lose his head.”⁵

Although Antonius knew in the 1920s and 1930s that liberty was fragile and that democracy, where it existed, was a fledgling form of government, he sustained his belief in and his connections to a world of humanity, the exchange of knowledge, and the best in all cultures and all people. He

lived without boundaries and without blinders. He enjoyed much that was British: the soothing, luxurious, but not ostentatious upper-class lifestyle; the elegance and refinement of manners; the well-tended yet seemingly natural English gardens; the sense of wholeness, of completeness in the centuries-old towns and villages; the breadth of sky and landscapes that inspired Gainsborough; the friendships of men—especially the insightful, straight-shooting, courageous type; glamorous dinners and drinks at the Savoy; the laughter that would double him over; a quiet read in the old, wood-paneled reading room at the club off Piccadilly Square; visits to the British Museum, the libraries and archives, and Parliament; and the murmur of hushed voices over tea in the plush comfort of the Brown Hotel. At the same time, he embraced the beauty and history of his homeland, uplifted by the human resilience he saw there, by the achingly familiar yet often breathtaking landscapes—the wonder of a Jerusalem sunset striking the golden Dome of the Rock, the mystical blue hue of the Mediterranean off the Beirut coastline, and Alexandria’s horizon at dusk; the rolling, lush green hills and salmon-colored roofs of Syria; the golden glow of afternoon sun on white, dusty hills and gnarled, ancient olive trees in Palestine; the delicacy of manners of shy, young village girls, the bluster of young bucks, and the beauty of the less polished, rugged village men and women; the wondrous warmth of the villagers’ hospitality; the sumptuous pleasures of song, sight, and sound; and the sense of uncommon grace, of kindness and compassion, connecting everyone in this land of immense complexity and diversity.

In 1929, George and Katy were living in the Austrian Hospice when the well-traveled American journalist Vincent Sheean arrived with a letter of introduction from Forster. Sheean had been passing through London for scheduled meetings with Zionists when Bloomsbury friends introduced him to Forster, who encouraged him to look up Antonius for a non-Zionist perspective. When Sheean set sail for Palestine, he had little knowledge about the recent developments in the region and was eager to explore the Zionist enterprise. He had found that “Zionists were eager to have the progress of their experiment described by non-Jews,” and accepted their offer to write four articles for the *New Palestine*, a Zionist paper published in the United States, and to lecture before Zionist groups in the United States the following year.⁶ At this time, few American Jews were Zionists; the overwhelming majority of long-standing Jewish residents in Palestine were not political Zionists; and nonpolitical religious leaders such as Rabbi Judah Magnes had no political ambitions or territorial designs on Palestine. Unlike Europeans, who had suffered severe persecution, pogroms, and anti-Semitism, Jews in Palestine had lived in harmony as friends and neighbors with Christians and Muslims, as had their ancestors for centuries before them.

After Sheean arrived on June 25, 1929, Antonius helped him find lodging in the Austrian Hospice. The two agreed not to discuss Zionism until Sheean had thoroughly explored the Zionist enterprise in Palestine and made up his own mind on the subject.⁷ On July 9, after investigating Zionist aims and advances in Palestine solely through his Zionist contacts in the Zionist Agency and various colonies, Sheean returned the money they had given him for his articles and lectures and ended his contract.⁸ Drawing on his past journalistic experience as a witness to violence, he had concluded that the Zionist enterprise was dangerous. He saw Palestine as a thoroughly Arab country and felt that Palestinians were never going to submit to being "dominated or interfered with in [their] own home" by Zionist immigrants.⁹ As an American, he drew a parallel between the violence against American Indians and the political Zionists' violation of Palestine: Both were motivated by a feeling of superiority and a claim to divine destiny combined with disregard for local people's centuries-old attachments to their land and way of life. Thus, Sheean ended his exclusive association with Zionists to explore the question of Zionism on his own, and to begin to speak with Palestinians and to study the controversy of the Western Wall, which was heating up in the summer months. When violence erupted in August, Sheean found refuge in the Antonius home, which "constituted, particularly in later weeks, when the atmosphere grew murderous, a personal refuge: It was a connection with the outside world, a reminder that there still existed forms of life in which the miserable antagonisms of an unnecessary struggle could be forgotten."¹⁰

Antonius, who was still disputing his case with the British at the time and working in the job vacated by his friend Ernest Richmond in 1924, observed firsthand the mounting controversy surrounding the Western Wall of the Muslim Haram al-Sharif (Noble Sanctuary). As it unfolded, he monitored public opinion daily, pored over Palestinian press reports, and met with the Grand Mufti Haj Amin al-Husseini and other Palestinians. Intimately aware of Palestinian public opinion, Antonius understood the rise in Palestinian and particular Muslim fears from May through August 1929.¹¹

The Western Wall was of religious value both to Jews and to Muslims. Registered as a Muslim religious property (*waqf*), the wall had been sacred to Muslims for 13 centuries. It bordered Islam's second holiest site, the Dome of the Rock, and was itself considered sacred for having been the place where the Prophet Muhammad tethered his horse before his ascension to paradise. It was also of religious importance to Jews, because the wall held remnants of the second Temple of Solomon, which had been destroyed by the Romans in the second century A.D. Through the centuries, Muslims had respected the desire of religious Jews to come and pray at the wall.

The Zionists, however, focused on the Western Wall as a site where they could foment unrest that would help their plan to gain supporters and financial donations to help fund immigration and land acquisition and settlement plans en route to the establishment of a Jewish state. As early as 1921, Lord Melchett, a leading British Zionist, made a speech expressing the Zionist desire to rebuild the Temple of Solomon on the site where the Dome of the Rock stood. This aroused Palestinian fears, as did other publications and photographs including one showing Herzl, the founder of Zionism, standing in front of the Dome of the Rock, above which flew a Zionist flag.¹²

In 1928 and 1929, Antonius watched Palestinian anxieties increase as political Zionists continued to attempt to gain symbolic control of Palestine through extended control of the area around the wall. Starting in September 1928, they went beyond traditional Jewish worship at the wall by setting up tables and benches in the area, which Palestinians interpreted as Zionist attempts at controlling the space around the wall. In November 1928, the British government, guided by its obligation under the mandate to maintain the status quo, issued a ruling upholding Palestinian rights and calling on Zionists to cease incursions in the area of the wall.¹³ Zionists criticized this ruling, and they and Muslims were invited to provide documents to substantiate their claims. Muslim guardians of the religious properties put forth documents proving long-standing ownership and respect for the customary form of Jewish worship at the wall, but Zionists submitted no documents to support their case. Perhaps such documents were unavailable. At any rate, although the majority of traditional Jewish residents were overwhelming non-Zionists, the local Jewish pro-Zionist leadership organized to support increasing Jewish control (albeit ineffectively, in the case of Chief Rabbi Kook in Jerusalem, who simply argued that Jewish claims needed no documentation).¹⁴ In mid-May, after concluding another review, the British reaffirmed their ruling and called on Jews to limit themselves to their traditional forms of worship at the wall.

The fear and apprehension Antonius had observed among Palestinians in May 1929 was rekindled by the British mandatory government's failure to follow through and implement that ruling. This failure became even more disturbing on August 2, when the Zionist Congress in Zurich adopted a provision calling for recognition of the wall as Jewish property. After nearly ten years of evident Zionist success in influencing Whitehall and the mandatory government, Arabs feared Zionists would succeed in persuading the British to accept Jewish control of the wall, which symbolized for the Arabs the Zionist goal of controlling Palestine as a whole. "The design in question is a question both religious and political," the mufti said.¹⁵

By August 14, tension had mounted and “word had been passed around [that] hundreds of *haluzim* [Jewish immigrants] were coming in from the colonies and Tel Aviv, ready to fight.”¹⁶ Pinhas Rutenberg, president of the Jewish National Council and managing director of the Palestine Electric Corporation, had passed this information in various forms to British police and officials. He told Harry Luke, acting high commissioner in Palestine between August 6 and 9, that “he had reason to believe that on the impending Feast of Tisha B’av (the Day of Atonement, August 15) a number of that type of Jew, that is, not the Orthodox Jew who habitually goes to the wall, would probably be coming” from 135 different colonies.¹⁷ Sheean had also been informed of an impending *melée* to be provoked by truckloads of young Zionists, and saw that hospitals had increased their number of beds in anticipation. He was horrified by the prospect of impending bloodshed and by the cold and calculating manner in which the violence was apparently being planned. The demonstrations were apparently designed to pressure the British government, to evoke world sentiment in support of Zionist Congress resolutions, and to increase financial aid for Zionism at a time when it was not a popular movement among Jews and when the Zionist Agency in Palestine was facing a financial crisis.¹⁸ The cynical spirit in which he was informed of the plans for bloodshed haunted Sheean, and eventually propelled him to speak out:

You know that if it hadn’t been for Anne Goldsmith I shouldn’t care very much one way or the other, by now. But I can’t help thinking all the time (not all the time, but at frequent intervals) of some of the really horrible things that Anne said. The worse one was when I said “Why do you want to get these poor Arabs killed?” and she said, “I didn’t say I wanted only Arabs killed. It’d be useful if they’d kill a few *Yahuds* as well.” I was thinking of that particular exchange just last night. Of course in most of her comments Anne was just being “smart” and cynical—impressing me, so she thought, with the superiority of her intelligence. I realize all that. But at the same time her spirit is the spirit—must be—of a lot of others.¹⁹

On August 14, 6,000 to 10,000 demonstrators in Tel Aviv raised the Zionist flag, chanting and calling for Jewish control of the wall; in Jerusalem, another 6,000 to 7,000 gathered for a Brith Trumpeldor meeting and then moved on to the wall for a similar demonstration. It was there, in the midst of a mass gathering of clearly nonreligious Jews who were acting as thugs intent on provoking Palestinians (who were “shut up [in] their houses and remained invisible”) that Sheean himself became convinced that the Zionist movement was “aggressive, dangerous, and unjust.”²⁰ Sheean described the demonstration as “an invasion from the

colonies."²¹ Laurence Harrington, deputy superintendent of the Jerusalem District Police, called it highly provocative and nonreligious.²² The demonstration continued on August 15 with another march to the wall, complete with Zionist flag, national anthem, political speeches, and demands submitted en route at various government offices, including the Zionist demand to "full rights" over the wall and for the dismissal of any official opposed to the creation of a Jewish state.²³

What did it mean? What could it mean? No sensible human being can believe that the responsible Zionists, like Sacher or Kisch, could have ordered their adherents to make such a show of force at the wall of the *Haram al Sharif*: such a thing would be madness. And yet, who did tell the young men to come in from all over the country? I saw them, felt their temperature, knew they were out for trouble; I had ample experience in this kind of thing for many years; I had seen mobs and street fights from Chicago to Hankow and back again; I knew the electricity that hatred sets up in the air.²⁴

The demonstrators appeared to be principally Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe who were members of Vladimir Jabotinsky's paramilitary Brith Trumpeldor and of the Maccabees, who followed a similarly militant program that aimed to regain the wall and establish a Jewish state in Palestine.²⁵ The Maccabees were named after Judas Maccabeus, who defeated the occupying Syrians and rebuilt the Temple in the first century. Jabotinsky was the leader of the Zionist Revisionists (which became the Likud party), whose objective was to establish a "colonization regime." If necessary, this group was prepared to use force in order to obtain Jewish dominance in Palestine within 25 to 30 years through the immigration of between 30,000 to 60,000 Jews a year. Jabotinsky had been sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment. Subsequently released and deported in 1920, he was allowed to return to Palestine in 1928, where he headed up the Brith Trumpeldor. *Doar Hayom*, the Revisionist newspaper in Palestine under Jabotinsky's control, was publishing articles calling for revolt and violence just prior to the demonstrations in August.

Throughout these first two days, Palestinians, in a state of high anxiety, remained invisible, angry that the mandatory government, which had banned a proposed Palestinian demonstration on August 15, had made no attempt either to ban the illegal Zionist demonstration or to prosecute the leading Trumpeldors for disturbing the peace, let alone breaking the law.²⁶ On August 16, Muslims carried out their own demonstration after midday prayers at the al-Aqsa Mosque. Led by their religious leaders, 1,000 to 1,500 Muslims marched to the wall, where they remained for 15 minutes. Although this demonstration was legal because it took place in an area registered as Muslim property, Zionists criticized it bitterly,

claiming that some of the illegal items they had brought to the wall area were turned over and papers they had placed in the wall were burned.²⁷

After three days of disruptive demonstrations, the mandatory government issued a communiqué on August 18 that stated that the Jewish demonstrations, overwhelmingly regarded as provocative and political, had been the cause of the August 16 Muslim demonstration. In response, Jewish leaders demanded that the government not attempt to establish a cause and effect relationship between the Zionist demonstrations and that of the Arabs, let alone between Zionist actions and the ensuing outbreak of violence in Palestine. However, Luke saw a clear relationship of cause and effect, and "it is just that relation which the Jews are unwilling to recognize."²⁸

Physical violence and abuse began on August 17, the Feast Day of the Prophet. Although violence was anticipated near the wall, where police saw large crowds of Zionists "wandering about behaving rather truculently,"²⁹ the actual disturbances occurred in the Jewish area of Bukharim and Mea Shearim and on a nearby football field. According to evidence later presented to the Shaw Commission of Inquiry, the unrest began around 2:30 P.M. with groups of Zionists wandering about with the apparent intention of attacking Palestinians, and lasted several hours. A *melée* broke out on the football field at 4:30 P.M., resulting in the stabbing death of a Jew (Avraham Mizrachi).³⁰ Throughout the day, Palestinian houses were burned and looted and Palestinians were attacked and threatened by groups of militant Zionist youths.³¹ Jack Belifante—probably a Jewish immigrant but in any case an immigrant carpenter for the past six years—witnessed the escalating violence that led up to Mizrachi's murder. Seeing "big crowds [of Jews] gathered close to the football ground, not far from the Bukharim quarter,"³² he stood fast, saw Jews chase several Arabs, and minutes later, as he recounted to the Shaw Commission:

Two Arabs passing through, one with a *tarbush* and the other a fellah, were badly attacked by the Jews. . . . They were taken away as though under escort by four Jews. The Jews kept hold of them tightly, and in the meantime other Jews were jumping on their backs, kicking them on the back, and throwing stones the size of coca-nuts. . . . Soon after this happened, the Jews had thrown a big stone and split open the cheek of a man who had been a chauffeur to Lord Plumer [this Palestinian chauffeur was wearing his police officer's uniform at the time].³³

News of the attacks increased Palestinians' fear and anger, and their sense of injustice rose due to the inadequate police response. At the end of the day, one British officer, Aubrey Lees, had discovered along with

Subhi Bey al Khadra, a Palestinian lawyer, that "nearly all those under arrest were Arabs."³⁴ The problem was not simply that the Zionists who had attacked Palestinians remained at large but also that the police arrested and incarcerated Palestinians who had been wounded or beaten. Khadra, who defended and gained the release of Palestinians jailed on August 17, noted that in the Mea Shearim jail, for example, only one Jew—compared to twenty-seven Arabs—had been jailed, and among the Palestinians imprisoned without charge there were fourteen wounded who had received no medical attention.³⁵

Because Lees had become concerned by the "one-sided" approach of the police to quelling the August 17 disturbances, he traveled on August 18–22 to a number of villages in the area to assure the Palestinians that they need not fear future attacks and that wherever possible those arrested would be released.³⁶ During his tour of villages he heard Palestinians' complaints about the lack of police protection. Palestinian men demanded that their wives and children be shielded from Zionist assaults as they went to market through the Mea Shearim quarter.³⁷ In contrast, during his visit to Jewish colonies in the area, such as Miquor Hayim and Nevev Yakev, he not only received no complaints but found these villages practically deserted.

On August 21 and 22, groups of Zionists continued milling about with the intent of fomenting trouble and perhaps seeking vengeance for the death of Mizrahi, whose funeral on August 21 had turned into a heated demonstration that police barely managed to hold back from entering the crowded, predominantly Arab, Old City. On the evening of August 21, Lulu Kurban, a nurse, along with three nuns of the Talitha Kumi order, were stopped as they returned to Jerusalem by a crowd carrying sticks. The following evening Lees saw "an unusually large crowd of Jews, the young Jaffa road type, Poles and Russians" . . . "hanging about in groups, large numbers . . . in an uneasy and rather aggressive manner."³⁸

Such crowds portended trouble, and Lees became even more worried when on a visit to Lifta he heard that Palestinian workers in Jewish quarters had discovered that the Jews had guns.³⁹ On the evening of August 22 Lees, who "thought there was a great deal of truth in what they said," reported this fact to the police in Mea Shearim, but failed to persuade them of the need to conduct a house-to-house search for arms.⁴⁰ Sheehan called the government's failure to search for arms, to check aggressive Zionist demonstrations, and to arrest and prosecute those who attacked Palestinians "the strongest element in the tragedy of August 1929, the refusal of persons in authority to believe that the worse would actually come to the worst."⁴¹

Outbreak of Major Disturbances: August 1929

From August 10 to 20, Antonius was on vacation at his family's home in Lebanon, and he did not hear of the violence until he returned to work in the secretariat on August 21. When he had had a chance to review press reports of the incidents and to speak with many individuals who were involved, including Sheikh Tewfik Hammad, the mayor of Nablus, he concluded that Palestinians' fears and panic were not due to the Western Wall demonstration alone. Although intimately related to this issue and to recent Zionist demonstrations, their fears were undoubtedly heightened by the Zionist Congress resolutions, which revealed the aggressive intentions of the Zionist movement. Among other matters, Zionists were demanding greater control over British policy so that they could speed up Jewish immigration and acquisition of land that would thereafter forever be deemed exclusively Jewish land.

On August 23, Palestinians rose up in protest throughout the land. Violence broke out after the murder of two Palestinians: Hanna Karkar was found by Constable S. Zayed when he dispersed a crowd of 30 to 40 Jews near the Mea Shearim quarter, some 150 yards from Damascus Gate around 12:30; and minutes later, Dr. Shamas, a Jewish physician, witnessed the brutal killing of Khalil Berham al-Daudi.⁴² Shamas later recounted that he had first seen several Jewish immigrants pulling what appeared to be a sack, as 40 to 50 others carrying sticks and iron bars ran down the street in the Mea Shearim quarter. As the crowd neared his house, he saw that they were actually pulling al-Daudi, face downward, and hitting him "on the head with sticks."⁴³ By the time Shamas found him, al-Daudi was dead. As Assistant Superintendent of Criminal Investigations Edward Cosgrove later testified, this was "the premeditated murder of a man going about his business, his sole offense being that he was an Arab in a Jewish quarter."⁴⁴

As these deaths occurred near the Damascus Gate, news quickly spread to the crowds of Palestinians who were leaving the mosque after midday prayers, sparking frenzied fear and anger. British officers were quickly assigned to break up the crowds that had gathered at the Damascus and Jaffa gates, to offer protection to those seeking to return to their villages and to prevent possible retaliation. However, despite a police escort by Inspector A. E. Sigrist and his officers, some 40 to 50 Lifta villagers were subjected to a shower of bricks and stones thrown from the roof of the post office and then attacked by some 200 Jews.⁴⁵ Nearby, while Constable William Dove and his officers were escorting another group of unarmed Palestinians through the Mea Shearim quarter where Hanna Karkar had been killed, Jews opened fire and began to throw bombs.⁴⁶

From his office, Antonius heard the gunfire and saw wounded Palestinians leaving the Damascus Gate area. He quickly left to accompany the mufti in an effort to defuse the panic and persuade the Palestinians gathering at Damascus and Jaffa gates to remain peaceful. After the mufti's calls for nonviolence were shouted down, Antonius took the stand and spoke to the crowd, assuring them that the government would intervene and asking them to stay calm and return quietly to their homes. On his way to the Muslim Council offices with the mufti, he persuaded several Palestinian shopkeepers in the Old City to urge others not to retaliate. However, other Palestinians kept arriving "with stories of how so and so had been killed and the government were firing on the Arabs and they had no arms and wanted firearms to repel the attack. Otherwise, there would be a general massacre of Muslims."⁴⁷

Within a matter of hours, the news of fighting in Jerusalem had spread through hundreds of Palestinian villages. A series of bloody battles took place over the next several days, in which hundreds of long-standing Palestinians (Muslim, Christian, and Jew) and new immigrant Zionists were killed and wounded.⁴⁸ The bitterest fighting occurred in Hebron, Haifa, and Jaffa, where the immediate cause of the Palestinian attacks upon Jews was the news that Jews in Jerusalem had killed Palestinians. According to Raymond Caffetarata, assistant district superintendent of police in Hebron, Palestinian attacks on Jews on August 24 and 25 occurred only after "the report of the murdering of an isolated Arab family [the Sheikh Oun family] in the Jewish quarter in Jerusalem, reached town."⁴⁹ Hebron's Jews suffered the most. Although a small community of religious Jews had "lived [in Hebron] in amity with their Arab neighbors up to that day," Sheean noted that they were nearly all killed because, upon news "that Arabs were being killed by Jews in Jerusalem, and that the Mosque of Omar was in danger, [the non-Jewish Palestinians of Hebron] went mad."⁵⁰ However, elsewhere where Palestinian Arabs were also in the majority, the Arabs were the principal victims, because Jews had guns and ammunition. Major G.R.E. Foley testified that Jews in Haifa were on the offensive and fired at unarmed Palestinians, for "the purpose of killing Arabs without end," and did so using the cover of makeshift ambulances.⁵¹ A certain Mr. Smith, managing director of a firm in Haifa, confirmed the police reports that "Jews had put the Red Cross insignia on some of their cars and entered Arab quarters, where they could kill Muslim and Arab passers-by."⁵² In other places, such as Jaffa, where Arab Palestinians were also in the majority, police officers apparently did not even wait for Palestinians to go on the offensive, and overreacting, fired upon some who minutes earlier had helped free a British truck from a sand dune. The bloody killings spread, with attacks of Palestinians upon Jews, Jews upon Palestinians, and British upon both.⁵³

When the fighting first broke out, Sheean threw himself into service as a foreign correspondent for the North American Newspaper Alliance—specifically, for the *New York World*. As he met the government officials on hand, he was shocked to discover that the government consisted merely of a “handful of harassed young men”—“Mr. H. C. Luke, the officer administering the government; Mr. [Eric] Mills, the acting chief secretary; and three Assistant Secretaries, Antonius, Moody, Edwin (Nebi) Samuel.” He understood that the government, the feeblest he had ever seen, had so few resources that had the mufti not intervened, tribes from Jordan could have swept it away.⁵⁴

During the first three days, before British reinforcements arrived from Egypt and Malta to shore up the beleaguered Palestine police, check the violence, clear the streets, and conduct a house-to-house search for Zionist arms, the government apparently relied heavily on the mufti’s support. From the start, Antonius was the principal government official working day and night with the mufti and other Arab notables. His work began on August 23 when, after returning to the Muslim Council Offices, he and the mufti drafted a manifesto calling for peace that was read aloud by village leaders throughout Haifa and elsewhere. Like Sheean, who as a journalist was visiting the hospitals and talking with the wounded, Antonius saw the horror of death and dying in a seemingly endless bloody line of stretchers bearing dead Palestinians and immigrant Zionists. Sheean had a nervous breakdown during the course of his investigations, as a result of the terrifying magnitude and insanity of it all. Antonius took time out to visit his bedside, and later lent the convalescing journalist the comfort and safety of his own home. Although Sheean found Antonius “strained” and “nearing the breaking point” himself, he also found Antonius a powerful character with remarkable stamina. “It took nerves of steel and the constitution of a draft horse to do the work he was doing; the sight of him made me ashamed of my own weakness.”⁵⁵

For Antonius, the violence in Palestine that summer came as a tremendous shock. He had little experience in dealing with the sort of terror that could grip a whole country and descend into mass violence. In 1920 he had witnessed demonstrations in Egypt, and he had seen the Palestine strike and Arab hostility in Syria against Arthur Balfour during his escort service in 1925. When he first came to Palestine in July 1921, the May disorders had already been suppressed. Frustration and anger had been visible, but never the fear and terror the Zionists provoked this time around. As it got out of hand, the circle of violence hurt everyone, and madness, insanity, and a complete lack of restraint set in. Antonius tried to restrain the mounting fear; few, however, restrained the newly immigrated Zionist youth.

By 1929 Antonius had become a very harsh critic of the Zionist program, for he saw its disregard for the Palestinians and its goal of taking over their lands as profoundly immoral. Although Zionist immigration and land settlement had not radically altered the demographic composition and the distribution of landholdings in Palestine, the well-publicized claims and plans of the Zionists were disturbing nonetheless. "The threat of population displacement appeared distant indeed, but even in nascent form this potential threat seems to have been perceived and reacted against sharply."⁵⁶ For Antonius, there was no question that political Zionism "was unfair to the Arabs without offering any solution to the Jewish problem [and] he was convinced it would lead to serious and recurring troubles."⁵⁷

Reflecting on the Palestinian psychology, Antonius saw how "fears for the future were already in evidence and had indeed been among the underlying causes of the . . . outbreaks."⁵⁸ However, since "Zionist settlement had not yet made great strides," Antonius knew that "the main source of Arab discontent was the denial of independence."⁵⁹ The chronic denial of independence and self-government contrasted sharply with developments elsewhere in the empire, and the prevailing pro-Zionist policies continued to generate a profound sense of unease and anxiety among Palestinians: "In February 1928 a representative government under a provisional constitution was established in Transjordan; British-Egyptian treaty negotiations were in progress for more independence; Iraq was promised that Britain would support its entrance into the League of Nations; and even in Syria, where a major rebellion had been quelled in 1925, reforms were promised and a constituent assembly set up to draft a constitution."⁶⁰ In October 1929, when John Philby advanced a plan for proportional representation in a new Palestinian parliament, the mufti accepted it but the principal Zionists rejected it. Proportional representation would have resulted in the Zionists' representation being quite small indeed, for they were but a fraction of the total population. Antonius opposed the Zionists' counterproposal of parity, which would have denied Palestinians their democratic right to majority rule. Instead, he supported proportional representation, and toward that end encouraged the lobbying efforts of Jamal al-Husseini, the secretary of the Supreme Muslim Council and the Palestine Arab Executive, in London in December.

Antonius was committed to the peaceful assumption of Palestinian self-government and independence through negotiation rather than armed violence. As Palestinians had not yet had the opportunity to officially defend their rights and discuss the British wartime pledges, he believed the British could be influenced by reason to see the justice of the Palestinian case. Having witnessed and understood the apprehension

and violence, Antonius felt an ever greater need to help communicate the history of the Palestinian struggle for self-governance. After the 1929 violence in Palestine and the death of his good friend Clayton in Iraq—whom he might have worked for, had the opportunity arisen—Antonius was ready to leave government. He spoke with Sheean about work as a journalist and about possible work for the Institute of Current World Affairs (ICWA).

After recuperating from the trauma in Palestine, Sheean reviewed the course of events and became convinced that Antonius had grasped the fundamental reality; namely, that Palestinians had an “absolute case” and “the Zionists no case at all.” To Sheean, the problem boiled down to the split between empire and nation, between empire and democracy. The Palestinians had an absolute and unquestionable right to their country and to democratic institutions that could safeguard it against abuse: “A population has the right to govern itself in such freedom as it can bring under its own institutions. The Zionist policy denied that elementary right to the Arabs of Palestine—and was obliged to deny it.”⁶¹ Moreover, although he was convinced that “the Palestine Arabs, like other members of the human race, could depend in the last analysis only on themselves,” he noted that they had “no political rights of any kind, no parliament or council or legislature.” As he investigated “the whole tangle of their history, claims, grievances, and political position,” he traced the origin of violence back to the “British betrayal of Arab interests after the war.”⁶²

After returning home to lecture throughout the United States about the Palestine problem and Zionism, Sheean found himself dogged by political Zionists who unleashed a campaign of character assassination against him, calling him anti-Semitic (which he was not), and pressuring groups such as the Los Angeles Jewish Club to cancel his speaking engagement—a pressure they resented and dismissed. On more than one occasion, Sheean met slander head on, simply asking his accusers whether they really believed what they were saying. One Zionist responding to his lecture in Pittsburgh stated that if the Arabs did not like Zionism they should move to Syria or Mesopotamia. Sheean wrote Antonius:

Never before have they been driven to such a silly suggestion, and I though[t] for a minute the audience was going to hiss the man (Steinbach’s secretary) who said it. I replied to this by saying that mass emigration was difficult, that it would be particularly difficult to move a population which had settled in the same place for so many centuries, and that in equity and in practice I thought it would be easier to move the non-Jewish population out of New York and give that territory to the Jews for a national home. But, said I, the Americans in the territories surrounding New York would be just as

likely to object to this, as do the Arabs in the territories surrounding Palestine.⁶³

Despite the attempts to intimidate him, Sheean pressed on, and he was greatly encouraged that the overwhelming majority of Jews with whom he met were not supporters of political Zionism: "The real hope of doing something about Zionism here lies in the non-Zionist and anti-Zionist Jews. They are in the majority, you know (huge majority—Z.O. represents only 5 percent of the Jews of America). They are also, many of them, far more bitter against Zionism than anybody else anywhere."⁶⁴ He wrote Antonius on April 2, 1930, "Some day I want to do an article (in my book perhaps) on the Zionist mind . . . how idealism goes hand in hand with the most terrific cynicism; how they never can or will admit that anybody who disagrees with them is honest; how they are Fascists in their own affairs, with regard to Palestine, and internationalists in everything else."⁶⁵ As to the Zionists' attempts to silence him, he wrote Meyer Weisgal, editor of the *New Palestine* on January 15, 1930:

Most of my lecture engagements are public, and if the Zionist Organization is so anxious to know what I say, they can send somebody to be present at each lecture. This is a free country and I can't see any reason why you shouldn't be amply documented. If you want to have stenographers trail me around, that also is all right. You can even have dictaphones in my hotel bedrooms, in case I talk in my sleep. I don't object in the least. Everything I have to say can be heard by anybody who is interested. But certainly I think it is a tactical mistake on your part to engage in such gumshoe methods. You ought to know my views well enough by this time, anyway; and I should think you might also know that neither defamation nor coercion makes any difference to me.

It would be wiser, on the whole, for you and the organization to let me alone. And I say, it doesn't mean anything to me one way or other, but these clubs are likely to resent every effort you make in that direction.⁶⁶

Notes

1. Yusuf Ibish, telephone interview with author, July 1999.
2. Stewart Perowne, interview with author, London, 1985.
3. E. C. Hodgkin, ed., *Thomas Hodgkin: Letters from Palestine, 1932–1936* (London: Quartet Books, 1986), p. 31.
4. Mrs. Sally Chilvers, interview with author, Oxford, 1985.
5. Vincent Sheean, *Personal History* (New York: Literary Guild Country Life Press, 1935), p. 338. Sheean's first publisher was Hamish Hamilton, whom he introduced to Antonius with a view toward the publication of *The Arab Awakening*.

6. Sheean to Meyer Weisgal, editor of *New Palestine*, 9 July 1929; Sheean to the editor of *Jewish Daily Bulletin*, 30 December 1929, Israel State Archives, Hakirya [hereafter, ISA], record group 65, file 1961.
7. Sheean, *Personal History*, p. 338.
8. Sheean to Weisgal, 19 July 1929, and to the editor of the *Jewish Daily Bulletin*, 30 December 1929, ISA, record group 65, file 1961.
9. Sheean, *Personal History*, p. 344.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 338.
11. Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (Commons), 1930, col. 48, "Evidence to the Palestine Commission on the Disturbances of August 1929" [hereafter, "Palestine Evidence"], vol. 1, p. 396.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 497. Also see Sami Hadawi and Robert John, *The Palestine Diary, 1914–1945*, vol. 1 (New York: New World Press, 1970), p. 209.
13. A similar ruling was previously issued in 1924.
14. Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (Commons), 1930, cmd. 3530, "Palestine: Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August 1939" [hereafter, Shaw Commission Report], p. 35.
15. "Palestine Evidence," vol. 1, p. 499.
16. Sheean, *Personal History*, p. 355.
17. "Palestine Evidence," vol. 2, p. 933.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 932–933; Shaw Commission Report, p. 45.
19. Sheean to Antonius, Pittsburgh, 2 April 1930, ISA, record group 65, file 1961.
20. Sheean, *Personal History*, pp. 356–357; Sheean to Weisgal, 30 August 1929; "Palestine Evidence," vol. 1, p. 211. Upon future review of these demonstrations during the Shaw Commission of Inquiry, W. H. Stocker, a British lawyer and former colonial attorney general, noted that "not a single witness" was called in from Tel Aviv to explore the first demonstration. According to Stocker, "There is just as remarkable a silence about the events in Tel Aviv as there was going on at Zurich at the time that these processions were being organized by somebody" ("Palestine Evidence," vol. 2, p. 934).
21. Sheean, *Personal History*, p. 357.
22. "Palestine Evidence," vol. 1, p. 89; and Shaw Commission Report, p. 50.
23. Sheean, *Personal History*, p. 357.
24. *Ibid.*
25. Hadawi and John, *The Palestine Diary*, p. 203.
26. See the Report from the Society for the Protection of the al Aqsa Mosque, *Al Ikdam* (Jaffa), 18 August 1929.
27. Police evidence refuted one Jewish witness's claim that prayer books had been deliberately burned by 40 to 50 Arabs. Indeed, this witness's testimony was undermined by that of a Jewish constable, Sub-Inspector Langer, who found no "charred books or book covers." He also noted that the witness, Wolfgang von Weisl, a Revisionist immigrant from Vienna then working as a Zionist journalist, only arrived after the demonstration had ended and at a time when only 10 to 15 women and children were near the wall. Von Weisl was later charged with assaulting an Arab who looked like the mufti ("Palestine Evidence," vol. 1, pp. 224, 238, 963).

28. Shaw Commission Report, p. 95.
29. "Palestine Evidence," vol. 1, p. 389.
30. *Ibid.*
31. For police records of assaults, see *Ibid.*, p. 420.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 254.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 472–473.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 389–390.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 481.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 389–390.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 390. In two cases confirmed by police reports, one Palestinian had been stabbed and another beaten with a stick; others were cursed and their baskets were overturned.
38. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 565, and vol. 1, p. 391.
39. Whereas Palestinians were disarmed after World War I, illegal arms are known to have been smuggled into Jewish colonies.
40. "Palestine Evidence," vol. 1, pp. 391–392.
41. Sheean, *Personal History*, p. 359.
42. "Palestine Evidence," vol. 1, p. 386.
43. *Ibid.*
44. *Ibid.*, p. 421.
45. For the testimony of British witnesses, see *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 414–415, 473, and vol. 2, pp. 560, 972.
46. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 416–417.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 399.
48. The Palestine Department of Health calculated that 133 Jews and 116 Arabs were killed and 198 Jews and 232 Arabs were wounded and treated in hospitals. These statistics were not completely accurate, for those concerning Jews included statistics provided by Jewish authorities, whereas those concerning Arabs excluded all but those who actually died or were treated in the hospital (Shaw Commission Report, p. 66).
49. "Palestine Evidence," vol. 1, pp. 154, 163. In Haifa, Major G.R.E. Foley, superintendent of the Northern District, noted that disturbances arose among Palestinians only after the arrival of news concerning Palestinian deaths in Jerusalem (*Ibid.*, p. 114).
50. Vincent Sheean, "Holy Land 1929," in *From Haven to Conquest: Readings in Zionism and the Palestine Problem until 1938*, ed. Walid Khalidi (Beirut: The Institute for Palestine Studies, 1971), pp. 298–299.
51. "Palestine Evidence," vol. 2, p. 546.
52. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 127.
53. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 202.
54. Sheean, *Personal History*, pp. 37, 32.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 375.
56. Janet L. Abu-Lughod, "The Demographic Transformation of Palestine," in *The Transformation of Palestine: Essays on the Origin and Development of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, ed. Ibrahim Abu-Lughod (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1971), pp. 150, 143–149.
57. Sheean, *Personal History*, p. 338.

58. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1938), p. 408.
59. *Ibid.*
60. Hadawi and John, *The Palestine Diary*, p. 202.
61. Sheean, *Personal History*, p. 382.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 381.
63. Sheean to Antonius, 2 April 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa., ISA, record group 65, file 1961.
64. Sheean to Antonius, 21 January 1930, Sacramento, Calif., ISA, record group 65, file 1961.
65. Sheean to Antonius, 2 April 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa., ISA, record group 65, file 1961.
66. Sheean to Weisgal, 15 January 1930, Los Angeles, ISA, record group 65, file 1961.

8

A Moment of Hope

An empirical world exists as something available for observation, study, and analysis. It stands over against the scientific observer, with a character that has to be dug out and established through observation. . . . It is this obdurate character of the empirical world—its ability to resist and talk back—that both calls for and justifies empirical science. . . . The obdurate character of the empirical world is what it is found to be through careful and honest study.

—Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism*

After the bloody summer of 1929 the British government established a commission headed by Sir Walter Shaw to investigate the causes for the demonstrations and violence in Palestine. From October 24 through December 28, 1929, the Shaw Commission traveled through Palestine, examining hundreds of documents, diaries, and reports, and gathering testimony from 120 British, Zionist, and Palestinian witnesses. As they reconstructed the events that led to bloodshed, the commissioners found that the violence was not due to a simple religious conflict, nor engineered by the Grand Mufti as was the account preferred by Zionists.¹ However, Henry Snell, one of the four commissioners, added a note of reservation in the final report, claiming that the Mufti held greater responsibility for the disturbances than was attributed to him by the other commissioners.² Snell and the Zionists essentially claimed that the Arab violence in 1929 was attributable to an anti-Zionist propaganda campaign by Muslim religious leaders who aroused and exploited “exaggerated” Palestinian fears about “the future ownership and occupation of their land.”³ The commission majority concluded, however, that there had been no premeditated Palestinian violence and that Palestinians’ political and economic concerns were well founded. Above all they concluded that the problems between Palestinians and Zionist Jews were primarily political, not religious, and centered upon Britain’s failure to

fulfill its obligation to facilitate Palestinian independence and self-governance. Had Britain not been conflicted by the Balfour Declaration, the mandate in Palestine would not have been impeded and Palestinian "hopes and expectations [for self-government] might to some extent have been realized."⁴

Antonius thought that the Shaw Commission and subsequent Sir John Hope-Simpson investigation and recommendations marked a turning point and a potential return to sanity. In view of the findings from both inquiries, Britain was advised at last to attend to Palestinian rights to representative government and to secure property. The importance of representative government in maintaining property rights is well expressed by Gary Libecap:

Property rights are the social institutions that define or delimit the range of privileges granted to individuals to specific assets, such as parcels of land or water. . . . Property rights institutions range from formal arrangements, including constitutional provisions, statutes, and judicial rulings, to informal conventions and customs regarding the allocations and use of property. Such institutions critically affect decision making. . . . By allocating decision-making authority, they also determine who are the economic actors in a system and define the distribution of wealth in a society.⁵

The Shaw Commission of Inquiry, 1929

Although Snell placed different emphasis on the underlying causes for violence, his colleagues, Shaw, Sir Henry Betterton, and R. Hopkin Morris emphasized essentially three problems: the mandatory government's failure to facilitate Palestinian self-government; Zionist land acquisition; and Jewish immigration.⁶ Without representative government to defend cultivators' moral and customary rights, property rights were vulnerable to exploitation. The playing field was not level for all concerned. The British in charge of Palestinian policy locally and in Whitehall, including leading Zionists, had an unfair advantage over Palestinians in terms of money, political power, and organization. They lobbied aggressively for special privileges, and they organized major fund-raisers, including donations to the Jewish Fund, from wealthy benefactors such as the Rothschilds and members of the Zionist Organization. In contrast, the majority of Palestinians were poor cultivators with limited financial and legal means to protect themselves and their villages, homes, and communities from a Zionist agenda intent upon displacing them, destroying their villages, and taking over the land for Jewish resettlement.

The Shaw Commission recognized the problem facing cultivators and raised the point that they had moral rights to remain on the land. The fact that Zionists were evidently proceeding with their plans regardless of the violence done to local cultivators and villagers was particularly disturbing. Tenants and cultivators were excluded from land transactions, and no thought was given to their resettlement or to the social costs. Evidence of the Zionists' unequal advantage and the failure of government to protect the vulnerable prompted a revision of British policy.

Land Ownership

Between 1918 and 1929–1930, Zionists had accrued some 500,000 dunums (1 dunum is equivalent to approximately 0.6 acre) out of an estimated 6,544,000 dunums of cultivable land in Palestine.⁷ What this seemingly small percentage masked was the fact that almost 90,000 rural families were landless and that even if all cultivable land were distributed to Palestinian Arabs, there would be a shortfall of 8 million dunums needed for all to gain “a decent livelihood.”⁸ Whereas Ottoman laws protected cultivators from displacement, displacement became a problem when Zionists insisted that the land they purchased be free of occupants; hence the pressure to get rid of local villagers and cultivators by force. Beyond land sales, factors contributing to scarcity of land included natural population increases and redistribution of land among family members, which resulted in increasingly smaller plots.

The Shaw Commission found the immigration of Jews between 1925 and 1926 excessive. Through immigration, the Jewish population in Palestine nearly doubled, rising from 83,790 in 1922 to 156,481 in 1929, which contributed to the rise in unemployment in Palestine in 1927 and 1928.⁹

The commission's concern with Zionist acquisition of land was twofold: It learned that little unoccupied land was available for Zionist purchases and that past sales by absentee landlords had created a growing number of landless Palestinians due to the eviction of peasant cultivators. From 1917 through 1929, Zionists concentrated on acquiring the fertile coastal land. Although most land along the coast (80 percent) was divided among a large number of smallholdings, only 10 percent of land sales to Zionists were by smallholders.¹⁰ Many Palestinians leveled charges of disloyalty and greed against Arabs who sold land to Zionists. In contrast, Antonius expected the British government to protect local people against expropriation, and he emphasized that the problems began with the dismemberment of Greater Syria after the war.

The vast majority, 70 percent if not a good deal more were people not living in this country and who have become foreigners in the country in which

they lived then. After the war owing to the partition of Syria, those very people became foreigners to Palestine, and that created an entirely new factor. Difficulties of passport and other restrictions made their lands lose a great deal of value they might otherwise have had.¹¹

When the absentee landholders sold off Palestinian land to Zionists, earlier protective ordinances were evaded. With the sale being contingent upon cultivators and villagers being off the land, cultivators were pressed from both sides to be gone. Cultivators and villagers had little protection from dispossession, and little experience and help with legal defense of their rights to remain on the land and in their villages.

Although the British never completed a cadastre of landholding and the majority of land was registered as communal *mushaa* holdings in the early 1920s, attempts were made to support the privatization of communal lands in areas where Zionists were keen to expand. Registration of land under *mushaa* tenure was pursued less to secure tenure for cultivators than to prepare the way for Zionist land acquisitions. Zionist settlement and survey operations appear to have gone hand-in-hand "by the fact that their country-wide settlement and survey operation, designed to break up *mushaa* tenure and settle title on individuals, concentrated mainly on the areas in which there was most Jewish land-buying and also the greatest concentration of land in *mushaa* tenure."¹²

For the most part, the British discouraged *mushaa* landholding because it was viewed as inferior to private landholding. As a form of economic property right, *mushaa* landholding was inferior to exclusive private ownership, but not as inferior as assumed. As *mushaa* land was communal property, it was not as inefficient a use of an economic resource as common pool property. On a land-use management continuum, *mushaa* land was somewhere to the right of center, between common pool land on the left end of the continuum, and private property on the right end of the continuum. Excessive common pool losses were not the rule, in fact, they seemed to be the exception. *Mushaa* landholdings "probably acted for a time as a kind of safety net which temporarily retarded the effects of market mechanisms for those peasants still living near the margins of subsistence and unable to respond positively to the market."¹³

What was missing from the equation and what might have facilitated economic growth *en sitio* was a state working to enable cultivators by improving on the outmoded fiscal and administrative systems left by the Ottomans. British mandatory government's failure to respect and then to correct the property rights of villagers and cultivators who were being forced off their land was not only a moral or ethical failure but also a matter of unsound economic policy. Those who failed to see this did not consider the social cost of their failure to protect what amounted to rea-

sonably efficient, existing local property rights of *mushaa* tenure. The Shaw and John Hope-Simpson commissions appeared to recognize this.

In the early 1920s, before adjustments in the tax code, Palestinians paid three major taxes: The Osher (*ushr*) was a kind of land-cum-product tax on gross product resulting from economic activity on the land. This meant that cultivators were taxed regressively in bad times, when income was low. There was also an animal tax and a tax on immovable property.¹⁴ According to Douglass North's simple wealth-maximizing model of the state,¹⁵ payment of these taxes entitled Palestinians at a minimum to protection and justice from their government, neither of which was forthcoming. There is little doubt that the payment of taxes entitled Palestinians to a number of "rights," such as access to formal credit and policies to improve yields and incomes; but even before these "technical rights" can be considered, taxation also entitled them to a set of fundamental rights—namely, protection and justice under the law. To make matters worse, the revenues collected by mandatory government from Palestinians went primarily toward defense, internal security, and the operating costs of the British-run mandatory government. In effect, taxes were essentially paying for very little protection and practically no justice; in fact, Palestinians were paying for their own economic and social dislocation.

Throughout the 1920s, land transactions ignored the fact that cultivators had traditional rights to remain on their land, as cultivators and as residents of age-old villages. Where cultivators agreed to sales, Antonius and other Palestinians believed that the cultivators should be compensated not only monetarily but also in kind; that is, they should receive land at least equal in value to what was taken away, with value being calculated as both sociological and economic benefit. Antonius knew that this very principle was being applied elsewhere in the British empire: A series of articles in the Palestine press in 1930 described the passage of the British "Native Lands Trust Bill" guaranteeing Kenyans against dispossession. Apparently, where some British territories were concerned, the Colonial office supported the provision "that where land was taken for public purposes other land of equal area should be given in exchange." Although this principle had been established by the time of the British investigation of the land question in Palestine, and despite the finding that "not enough security was provided" to protect Palestinians from dispossession, the principle was never applied there.

The European element, the British settlers, in Kenya fought the Kenya Bill to this effect very hard, but in spite of that strong opposition the Colonial Office put it through. The British settlers made a proposal to make an offer of cash compensation, but the Colonial Office came down and said, "No, we

cannot allow that. Then there would be no security for the natives of Kenya," and they rejected it and insisted on the principle that wherever land was taken for any reason, equivalent land should be provided.¹⁶

Although Zionists had acquired a small fraction of the total land mass in Palestine by 1929, it was part of the land mass most suitable for agriculture or animal husbandry. Land purchases were not friction-free, strictly market-based transactions. Through the 1920s the British had failed to conclude a comprehensive cadastre of landholding arrangements or install a credible land management and information system.¹⁷ Title deeds could be bought and land purchase arrangements manipulated to favor a privileged few. Zionists manipulated the market and lobbied for special trade and tariff arrangements, and for the withholding of public assistance to Palestinian cultivators. They spearheaded the interpretation of *mushaa* holdings as inferior to private holdings, portraying the former as a common pool resource rather than a communal one that minimized losses due to inefficient common usage of the land resource.

Shaw and High Commissioner Chancellor were disturbed by the evidence of forced displacement of Palestinians and the increasing numbers of homeless and landless Palestinians whose villages and homes had been destroyed through uncontested Zionist transactions. Backed by British soldiers, Zionists had managed to force thousands of Palestinian villagers out of their homes, and the villagers had nowhere to turn for legal redress to defend their customary rights as cultivators or as long-standing residents.

By 1929, in the coastal area of Tulkarem's subdistricts, where prior to 1920 Zionists had no holdings, as much as 100,000 *dunums* were acquired by Zionist associations and Zionists such as Lord Melchett.¹⁸ Absentee property owners of the Tayan family in Beirut sold a tract of over 30,000 *dunums* (Wadi al-Hawareth) in the Tulkarem subdistrict to the Jewish National Fund.¹⁹ The commission learned during its visit to Wadi al-Hawareth on November 30, 1929 that the 1,200 occupants—long-standing cultivators of melons and owners of 2,000 to 3,000 head of livestock—had been given eviction notices. By the time the commission left Palestine in December, the villagers were still in Wadi al-Hawareth because the police "did not know of any locality to which they could move the present occupants and their flocks."²⁰

In the interior, the commission found additional evidence of this pattern in the Jewish acquisition of more than 200,000 *dunums* in the Plain of Esdraelon from another absentee landholder in Beirut.²¹ This area had accommodated twenty-two Palestinian villages and a population of 8,730. All of the villagers, except a few in Mahloul, had been forced to

leave their land and homes by the time the commission reviewed the sale.²²

After reviewing the Zionist-Palestinian violence and its underlying causes, the Shaw Commission concluded that the Palestine problem was rooted in politics and resulted from the British government's adoption of the Balfour Declaration in 1917. Although the commission declined to review past British pledges to the Arabs, considering such an investigation beyond its purview, the commissioners found that the creation of a Jewish national home conflicted with the underlying purpose of mandatory government—namely, the facilitation of Palestinian independence.²³ To avert future conflict, they recommended that the government redefine and clarify "the meaning they attach to the Balfour Declaration as a whole" and redirect attention to the protection of Palestinian rights.²⁴ Snell believed that "the greatest danger at the present time is that Arab resentment may become permanent," and he therefore encouraged Jewish leaders to help remove Palestinian apprehension by declaring publicly "that they do not desire to create a landless Arab proletariat."²⁵ Jewish leaders never did make this declaration. The commission also urged that concrete measures be implemented to protect Palestinian cultivators from expropriation and dispossession, and thereby to show the Palestinian majority in Palestine that the government was not supporting the subordination of their rights and goals to the interests of Zionist immigrants. The commission rejected the Zionist claim to "full and undiminished expression in the conduct of the administration in Palestine," and encouraged the government to adopt some measure of popular representation.²⁶ Finding that immigration had been excessive, the commission called for the establishment of appropriate machinery to regulate and when necessary to restrict future immigration.²⁷

As for the question of Zionist land acquisition and the consequent dispossession of Palestinian cultivators, the commission asserted that "the plain facts of the case are, so we are advised, that there is no further land available which can be occupied by new immigrants without displacing the present population."²⁸ Perhaps even more importantly, they went beyond technical issues of absorptive capacity to note that Palestinians had "strong moral claims to be allowed to continue in occupation of their present holdings." The commission strongly urged the government to send a second commission to review the problem in depth, so that it could redefine its policy and take steps to stop the alienation of land and the dispossession of Palestinians.²⁹ In the interim, in light of the scarcity of land and the perceived injustice of Palestinians being evicted and made landless, the commission advised the government to move rapidly to check further dispossession by "(1) reintroduction of the 1920–21 Land Ordinance, which gave cultivators the right to retain sufficient land for the

maintenance of themselves and their families in the event of a sale; (2) introduction of legislation that could restrict Zionists from acquiring certain tracts; (3) adoption of legislation based on Egypt's Five Feddan Law, which could protect cultivators from eviction."³⁰

Cooperation

On May 7, 1930, Antonius resigned from British mandatory government to work for the Institute of Current World Affairs (ICWA). When friends expressed their disappointment at his leaving government office, Antonius assured them of his continued devotion to public service.³¹ In late May and early June, he met with members of the Palestinian delegation returning from London "with frustrated hopes" because they had failed to persuade the British government to end Jewish immigration, ban land sales, and promulgate a constitution supporting a democratic government based upon equality and majority rule. Antonius learned that a restricted constitution was on the table; but whether or not the government meant to "meet or reject" Palestinian aspirations concerning genuine constitutional development he found hard to decipher from the "imprecise" official reply.³² Sensing that the constitutional issue remained deadlocked,³³ he felt the situation was sufficiently grave to assure a continuation of "discontent, political tension, and general unsettledness."³⁴

In June 1930, Antonius witnessed "the political stage" held by the international commission appointed by the League of Nations to adjudicate conflicting Muslim-Jewish claims to the Western Wall. On the one side, he found "the forces of Jewry—Zionist, non-Zionist, anti-Zionist . . . arrayed with a formidable equipment of scholarship, advocacy, and fervor." On the other side were the Palestinians, who, though "less ably organized," had the support of many delegates including Christians as well as the Muslims who had traveled to Palestine from all over the Arab world to assist Muslim authorities in the defense of their case to the League commission.³⁵

That Christians joined Muslims, and that Antonius, a Greek Orthodox Christian, was invited to help in the defense of the Palestinian case concerning the wall (he had offered his services and library for the preparation of their case), Antonius considered "symptomatic of the political complexion which this controversy has assumed": "The Wailing Wall dispute may appear to the outside spectator as a trivial controversy, as indeed it is; but, in view of the series of incidents which have occurred in recent years, and of the fears and passions aroused, the question has ceased to be one of mere religious observances and has assumed the character of a racial and political tussle of a somewhat explosive character."³⁶ In this Antonius was in agreement with the Shaw Commission

finding that “the Wailing Wall became a symbol of racial pride and ambition, the question of rights and claims in connection with it ceased to be a religious issue, and a smoldering spark was set to the long fuse that in the following August [1929] was to result in conflagration.”³⁷

Although Antonius declined formal participation in the case, Walter Rogers was upset by his assisting the general proceedings as a translator-editor and allowing the Arab delegates the use of his library.³⁸ Jacob Landau, director of the Jewish Telegraph Agency in Palestine, met with Rogers in New York and claimed that Antonius was “anti-Semitic in sentiment.” In turn, Rogers wrote to advise Antonius to meet with Landau and extend “a friendly gesture” for this “might prove of value in the future.”³⁹ The 1930s were a period of social anti-Semitism in the United States, and of civil rights movements among blacks, Jews, and others who felt discriminated against. It was a time when anti-Zionism was confused with anti-Semitism, and the former critics of a political movement were thrown in with the lot that were genuinely prejudiced against Jews for religious or racist reasons. Some of political Zionism’s staunchest critics were Jews who considered the movement an affront to their religious and spiritual values and beliefs. Rabbi Judah Magnes was such a critic. Emphasizing the profoundly spiritual⁴⁰ since he had emigrated from the United States in 1922 to pursue quiet, constructive, nonpolitical work in Palestine, Magnes criticized the aggressive and destructive character of political Zionism. He spoke out against it partly because he found so few others criticizing what he regarded as “our preachers of hate and disseminators of lies, our armed youth, our provocative processions, our unforgivable stupidity in handling of the Western Wall incidents.”⁴¹ He felt the Zionists had provoked the violence that led to the 1929 bloodshed. More importantly, Magnes considered it his duty as a rabbi to publicly denounce aggressive political Zionism, which he believed was undermining the spiritual-religious values of Judaism.

Magnes wanted to promote a form of cultural Zionism that had nothing to do with acquiring Palestinian land or mounting a political movement to establish a Jewish state. Magnes had simply sought to help create a religious and cultural center in Palestine that could serve as a beacon for Jews all over the world. It would share with Muslims and Christians in the historical and spiritual significance of Palestine, albeit from the vantage of the Jewish religion. Magnes believed that Palestinians—Jews, Christians, and Muslims—would support his vision of a spiritual and cultural center for Jews in Palestine. At a time of mounting xenophobia, Magnes remained sensitive to the integrity of Palestine as a heterogeneous world of multiple faiths.

In contrast, political Zionism promoted a fierce form of sectarian racism against non-Jewish Palestinians, and even against local Jews who

rejected its agenda. The movement ignored local knowledge, the traditional diversity of faiths and religious affiliations, and traditional property rights, for its primary aim was to gain control and build a state. The Zionists expected to receive "political privileges and economic preferences" from Britain, and continued to suppress the emergence of democratic institutions in Palestine until Zionists gained a majority.⁴² Markets were corrupted and local institutions were crippled. There was little opening for cooperation, as long as the goal was unilateral control and rejection of democratic institutions.

Throughout the 1920s, as Magnes worked to create a spiritual and cultural center for Jews in Palestine, he tried to restrain political Zionists, and argued against "mass [Jewish] immigration, a Jewish majority, a Jewish state, or . . . depriving the Arabs (or the Jews) of their political rights for a generation or a day." As Zionists captured government through the increasing promotion and appointment of their supporters, Magnes and the Palestinians became increasingly alarmed. The increasing aggressiveness and lack of restraint among Zionists was evident in the character of Jabotinsky, who helped provoke the 1929 violence and argued for an "imperialist, military, and political policy . . . based upon mass immigration of Jews and the creation (forcible if necessary) of a Jewish majority, no matter how much this oppresses the Arabs . . . or deprives them of their rights."⁴³ As Magnes witnessed the misuse of religion for amoral power politics, and the absence of concern for the pain being inflicted on Palestinians, he spoke out severely during the reopening of Hebrew University in November 1929. "If the only way of establishing our home be upon the bayonets of some empire, our whole enterprise is not worthwhile," he said.⁴⁴

In an attempt to stop religious conflict in Palestine, Magnes tried to develop a program for Arab-Jewish cooperation. On October 30, 1929, he first discussed Arab-Jewish cooperation and constitutional development with Harry St. John Philby, informal British adviser over the years to Emir Abdullah and Ibn Saud. He then presented Philby's proposal for constitutional development to Palestine High Commissioner Sir John Chancellor. The proposal, which was purportedly based on the Balfour Declaration, the Mandate, and the notion of fraternity between Jews and Arabs, promoted the principle of proportional representation in a Palestinian parliament, with the high commissioner holding veto power over legislation. As for Magnes's idea that Jewish leaders mediate peace, Chancellor saw a conflict of interest and declined the proposal.⁴⁵ Magnes subsequently called on Antonius for his advice and suggestions regarding Magnes's proposal advocating a policy of cultural Zionism, which aimed to begin with the publication of a periodical for the development of mutual understanding and cooperation between Arabs and Jews.

Magnes sought Antonius's guidance not just because of the latter's influence but also because he trusted Antonius and knew that Antonius respected his efforts. He knew that Antonius was equally concerned about how Palestinians of all faiths were being hurt by an aggressive political movement intent on religious-ethnic cleansing. Antonius found Magnes "a man of the highest principle and character," a man who had the courage to challenge political Zionists but limited resources with which to restrain them.⁴⁶

At first, Antonius thought that Magnes's proposal for cultural and spiritual understanding and cooperation between Jews and Arabs was "perhaps the most valuable and commendable contribution that has been attempted in recent years toward the solution of the Palestine problem."⁴⁷ However, as he met other members of the group seeking Arab-Jewish cooperation and learned more about the proposal, he began to find that other participants had altered the original idea. He was most concerned that Zionists were misusing the word *cooperation*. Rather than reflecting a commitment by men of different religions to the creation of shared meaning that could help bring them together, Antonius sensed that the word was being interpreted to mean that Palestinians ought to accommodate the exclusionary and self-centered Zionist ideology. Until this group openly refuted political Zionists' ideology and agenda, Antonius felt that little could be done to generate authentic cooperation. How could Palestinians trust and cooperate with a movement they saw as aimed at controlling and displacing them?

During his July 5, 1930 meeting with Magnes, Antonius commented on these deeper problems. He told Magnes that the meaning of *cooperation* had to be clarified and the scheme for cooperation more solidly grounded. He shared his concern about members pursuing political Zionist goals, which Palestinians feared and rejected, and told Magnes that success depended on two things: "that (1) the repudiation of the present aggressive aims of Zionism be publicly declared by the official Zionist body, and (2) he should enlist the support of influential Jews outside Palestine before launching his campaign."⁴⁸ Although Antonius admired Magnes, he concluded that Magnes "has not given enough thought to the all-important question of the ways and means whereby his scheme should be put into execution, and . . . he is over-sanguine about its chances of success."⁴⁹ Most of all, Antonius saw an uphill battle for an official public repudiation of political Zionism's aggressive aims, because "influential Zionist opinion [was] far from ripe for adopting" a new, non-chauvinist and nonpolitical orientation.⁵⁰

After the July 5 meeting, Antonius conducted a more exhaustive session at his home on July 8 with Magnes and two colleagues who had immigrated to Palestine from Prague in the 1920s: Samuel Hugo

Bergman, the librarian at Hebrew University, and Hans Kohn, an author of some note, who was said to have resigned from the Jewish National Reconstruction Organization because he could not support political Zionism. By meeting's end, Antonius questioned all the more the likelihood of the program's success, because he found that its principal architects differed "amongst themselves on the value each attaches to the various aspects of the common aim."⁵¹ Although Magnes's vision of Arab-Jewish cooperation centered on cultural and religious issues, Kohn and Bergman intended to obtain Palestinian support less for a religious, cultural, or spiritual center for world Jewry than for the political Zionist vision of a state. The only difference between them and more ambitious Zionists lay in their proposal for two nations living together under one state.

For Antonius, the meaning of *nation* meant one people learned to live together. Ideally, nations were socially constructed worlds distinguished from tribes and segregated communities by virtue of shared meaning, common culture, and devotion to a civil society built through inclusive diversity (with the emphasis on inclusivity rather than on division). Becoming a nation essentially meant that the virtues of kinship were cultivated beyond exclusionary ties to promote a world of common concern and shared morality—caring for one another—regardless of differences of background, origin, religion, race, and the like. Achieving a moral and civil society was hard work; it might begin with a leap of faith, but its attainment depended on sound mechanisms. Moreover, Antonius knew that nation and civil society could not simply be coerced into existence, for most of all they were distinguished by the generation of trust and cooperation that helped men move beyond selfish tendencies.

Zionists with whom Antonius met proposed a binational state with a parity-based system of government that promised the fraction of Zionist residents representation in government equal to the overwhelmingly non-Zionist Palestinian majority. They intended to begin by reactivating the government's 1922 Legislative Council Scheme.⁵² However, without equality based on individual rather than group rights and on a conception of citizens as social beings responsible for the public good (beyond distinctions of race, creed, and the like), representation in government was meaningless. Proportional representation might have been a better first step toward representative government; but even there, the danger of group-oriented sectarianism's undermining the fundamentals of democratic government based on "one man, one vote" was present. In this vein, although Kohn and Bergman denounced the Zionist goals of achieving a Jewish majority and a Jewish state in all of Palestine and supported forums for Arab-Jewish discussions of humanitarian concerns, they appeared to remain ideologically rooted to an exclusionary, sectar-

ian ideology that denied the possibility of full democracy and nation building for the good of a civil society.

Blind to local reality and to the universal applicability of the principles of fairness and justice, Zionists expected Palestinians to compromise their fundamental rights and common devotion to nation building. Zionists who proposed a binational state based on parity might well have considered themselves superior to the more militant Zionists who sought full control. However, Antonius saw them as deluding themselves if they failed to perceive how Zionism's denial of fundamental democratic principles compromised them from the start. Without the principle of equality, there was no institutional support for civil society; for society was not forged by groups but rather through the participation of individuals as social beings in the creation of a common public domain of justice and fair play. Just as you cannot have two democracies in one nation-state, so a nation cannot be split in two or a state comprise two nations, for "nation" is essentially a dynamic and complex construction of shared meaning in a civil society of inclusive diversity. Even as Zionists attempted to claim equal rights to Palestinians, they were doing so from a philosophical standpoint that rejected individuals, civil society, and the possibility of moral democracy. Democracy is not built through groups but rather through the empowerment of individuals as social beings, and group formation based on sectarianism was essentially the antithesis of nation. In the words of Ussama Makdisi:

'Sectarianism' . . . is a neologism born in the age of nationalism to signify the antithesis of nation. . . . In Lebanon, sectarianism is as modern and authentic as the nation-state. . . . In India, scholars such as Gyan Pandey and Partha Chatterjee have persuasively argued that contemporary communalism is rooted not in ancient history but in the governing politics and discourses of the British colonial regime which were appropriated by the nationalists to legitimate specific paths of elitist development. Sectarianism in Lebanon can be interpreted similarly. [Hence,] the unutterable contradiction that has haunted Lebanon: the paradox of a national unity in a multi-ethnic society wherein religion is inscribed as the citizen's most important public attribute. . . . Although it is constructed as the dark deviant underside of the nationalist narrative, sectarianism is a nationalist creation that dates back no further than the beginnings of the modern era when European powers and local elites forged a politics of religion amid the emerging nation-state system.⁵³

Under the circumstances, Antonius declined to participate in the proposed scheme of Arab-Jewish cooperation until the scheme reached a more mature phase based on the fulfillment of his two conditions. He felt that no movement seeking to establish peace in Palestine through Arab

and Jewish cooperation could succeed or function in good faith unless the Jewish participants openly rejected the "aggressive aims of Zionism," which denied representative government.⁵⁴ If the movement was not based on a conscious and public repudiation of the central tenets of political Zionism, then genuine cooperation and peace would remain elusive, and the projects of cultural Zionists would amount to little more than propaganda for political Zionists' ends. When Hans Kohn later requested that Antonius contribute to and help market the journal *East and West*, which was an offshoot of Magnes's original proposal, Antonius found the situation unchanged and again declined. Antonius thought Magnes would not want the journal used for propaganda; but the latitude that Kohn proposed for contributions made Antonius wonder whether the journal would "adhere to [Magnes's] standards of impartiality." He wrote H.A.R. Gibb, who was himself wondering about this publication, "The long and short of it is that I think it almost inevitable that the journal will be used by some for propaganda."⁵⁵

As one who was inclined to study religious questions, meet with all and sundry, and explore political Zionism firsthand, Antonius set off after his meeting with Magnes to visit Zionist settlements. After examining the organization and economic structure of colonies such as Ain-Harod, Giva, Kfar, Ezechiel, Merchavia, Ginevar, and Nahalel, he returned to Jerusalem, where he found the controversy surrounding the Western Wall so intense that it was unlikely to be settled through the League's international commission. Having dealt with similar disputes in the past, and with Magnes's notion of cooperation fresh in his mind, Antonius tried to persuade the mandatory government to assume the role of third party to help mediate a settlement of the conflict over the Wailing Wall. As the government was interested but unwilling to become directly involved, Antonius assumed the role of mediator and conducted a series of meetings with the Mufti and Magnes. Late in July, when his efforts had come to naught and he saw little chance of a resolution during the next few months, Antonius decided to take the research trip to Europe that he had been postponing since his return to Jerusalem in May.⁵⁶

Hope for Cultivators

After Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald received the Shaw commission's report, he agreed to Colonial Secretary Passfield's appointment of Sir John Hope-Simpson to further investigate the land and immigration problems in Palestine. Hope-Simpson was a member of the League of Nations commission for the resettlement of Greek refugees, and a former civil servant in India. The Shaw commission's report induced government "to suspend further Jewish immigration pending submission of the

expert's report," a move that Antonius expected would send "the whole Jewish press (not only of Palestine) into a fit of almost hysterical indignation."⁵⁷

After Hope-Simpson arrived in Palestine in late May, Antonius appreciated the comprehensive course of his investigation, and felt it was "increasingly clear that his findings will have a determining effect on the future policy to be pursued in Palestine with regard to the establishment of the Jewish national home."⁵⁸ When the Hope-Simpson report was issued in late summer, followed by the October 1930 White Paper No. 3692, titled "Palestine, a statement of Policy of his Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom," Antonius praised this as the single most critical government-sponsored investigation of land and immigration problems in Palestine to date. Antonius praised the report for addressing the question of land and immigration "not in the light of passion and partisanship as is only too common, but sanely in the cold light of numbers and space."⁵⁹ He and others praised the government for stating that the administration's primary duty was "to ensure peace, order, and good government in Palestine," and that it stood by the official 1922 definition of the "national home" as a "center in which the Jewish people as a whole may take on grounds of religion and race, an interest and a pride." He also wrote to compliment Arthur Hays Sulzberger of the *New York Times* for the "insight, courage, [and] sanity" of the editorial praising the Hope-Simpson report, noting that it was no less than a "striking confirmation, 11 years after the event, to the forecasts of the King-Crane Commission."⁶⁰ Of the Zionists' "bitterness of feeling," Antonius felt it was due primarily "to the unpalatable facts upon which [the report] is based." He felt that those who opposed the policy paper and ignored the facts upon which it was based—those "who add fuel to the fire of the recent [Zionist] uproar"—were, however unwittingly, "the worst enemy of Jews in Palestine and perhaps elsewhere."⁶¹ If Zionists in or out of government were encouraged to ignore the facts, they would be harming Jews as well as Arabs; for the violation of Palestinian human rights was equally a violation of conscience and of the ethical character of Judaism.

Land Management

In his report, Hope-Simpson emphasized the limited availability of cultivable land and the problem of Arab landlessness. Although an earlier, inflated assessment of cultivable land cited a total of 12,500,000 dunums, Hope-Simpson more accurately assessed the figure at 6,544,000 dunums and concluded that there was no more land available for Jewish settlement.⁶² Simpson was particularly concerned about the minimal availability of cultivable land due to the evidence that 29.4 percent of the 86,980

families in rural areas were landless.⁶³ As for those cultivating smallholdings, they were known to be 40 dunums short of the amount necessary for subsistence.⁶⁴ At this rate, even if all cultivable land excluding the Jewish-Zionist holdings was distributed to Palestinian Arabs, 8 million dunums would still be necessary for Palestinian Arabs to gain "a decent standard of living."⁶⁵

Hope-Simpson believed that the problem of Zionist land acquisitions was compounded by the Zionist Agency's new constitution of August 14, 1929, which designated all Jewish-Zionist holdings as inalienable Jewish property. This meant that once Zionists acquired land in Palestine, whether collectively or privately held, it was to be taken off the market and kept forever in Jewish-Zionist hands. Zionist acquisitions thus represented a double alienation of land—first, from cultivators, and second, from the nation as a whole. As Hope-Simpson said:

Jewish property ceases to be land from which an Arab can gain any advantage either now or at any time in the future. Not only can he never hope to lease or cultivate it, but, by the stringent provisions of the lease of the Jewish national home, he is deprived forever from employment on that land. Nor can anyone help him by purchasing the land and restoring it to common use. The land is mortmain and inalienable.⁶⁶

Bound by the fact that he found "no margin of land available for agricultural settlement by new immigrants," Hope-Simpson concluded his inquiry with the recommendation that Jewish immigration and land acquisition be seriously restricted. He defended this restriction of the Zionist enterprise through reference to the mandate's Article 6, which obliged the British government to protect the rights of Palestinians. He found the British government legally and morally obliged to stop further alienation of Palestinian land, including the transfer of state land and wasteland, stating, "It cannot be argued that the Arabs should be dispossessed in order that the land should be available for Jewish settlement."⁶⁷ Since he felt the government was morally and duty bound to help impoverished Palestinian cultivators and landless Palestinians, he further recommended the establishment of a development department for this purpose.

After intensive German-language training and meetings with leading Middle East scholars and officials in Berlin, Antonius visited London and Paris in November to examine historical records and meet leading scholars at oriental institutes with whom he wished to establish or renew ties and discuss his plans for a book. Through this course of meetings and research, he refined his outline and decided to write two books. In one, he aimed "to edit, with a historical introduction and commentary, a series of

diplomatic documents bearing on the political situation in the Arab world"; in the other, "to write . . . in the form of a personal record, on the subject of post-war developments and tendencies in the Near East."⁶⁸ Regarding his biographical approach to the second book, Antonius wrote Rogers on February 5, 1931, "My only excuse for adopting the first person is that the accidents of an official career have, now and again, placed me at close range to some significant event or personality in the corner of the world of which I wish to write, and have enabled me to watch with a reasonably naked eye, the process of its history in the making."⁶⁹

Additionally, while in England in November 1930, Antonius met with leading officials and academics, friends, and acquaintances to discuss the recent Hope-Simpson report and the October 1930 White Paper. Hope-Simpson's findings and recommendations had had a pronounced effect on government and influenced a new formulation of policy to restrict immigration and to assure that future Jewish immigration would not exceed Palestine's economic absorptive capacity. Given the increasing Palestinian landlessness and Zionist goal of rendering new holdings inalienably Jewish, Zionist land purchases were also to be restricted and state and waste lands to remain open for the resettlement of landless Palestinians.⁷⁰ To help secure cultivators' customary property rights, government also aimed "to confer upon the Arab tenants statutory occupancy rights; and to carry out a development project to reclaim lands mainly for the resettlement of evicted Arab families."⁷¹

Zionists immediately tried to discredit Hope-Simpson's findings and reverse the unprecedented pro-Palestinian policy. Despite their campaign, Hope-Simpson's findings were sound, and leading Zionists knew that there was virtually no unowned or unoccupied land in Palestine.⁷² The historian Stein later found Simpson's assessment of cultivable land "very close to the actual amount."⁷³ Nonetheless, unrelenting in their goal of massive land acquisition for Jewish resettlement of Palestine, Zionists continued to criticize Hope-Simpson's findings and recommendations, claiming, for example, that his definition of cultivable land was too restricted, and lobbying prominent politicians throughout Whitehall for a return to a pro-Zionist land policy.

Being in London during the backlash, Antonius witnessed the intense Zionist lobbying efforts to reverse policy. He knew that were his negotiations to succeed, they had best occur quietly, in private. During his meetings with friends and acquaintances in parliament, Antonius was asked to consider participating in future negotiations.⁷⁴ Among others, Lord Lloyd and members of parliament Sir Hopkin Morris (a former member of the Shaw Commission), Sir Archibald Sinclair, and Major Walter Elliot (the pro-Zionist conservative member from the Kelvingrove division of Glasgow) sought him out to discuss how best to resolve the Palestine

problem. Antonius felt that final settlement talks that would bring Palestine closer to independence through the establishment of policies akin to those adopted in Iraq needed to be protected from Zionist pressure to abort them. The challenge remained to sustain the recent reversal of pro-Zionist land policy. Prominent British officials endorsed his proposal for “long-sighted and patient diplomatic action” and were eager to have him participate if they could obtain government support for official negotiations. Member of Parliament Walter Elliot told the House of Commons on November 17, 1930:

We are dealing here with a question of such size and importance that it would well repay the attention of our international diplomats in conference both official and unofficial, both here and elsewhere, for months and even years to come. Many of the leaders of the Arabs are grave and responsible men like, for instance, Mr. George Antonius, whom I have met myself, and to whom this nation is greatly indebted for his services in connection with the negotiations which took place with the Arab rulers of the desert and elsewhere. There are men like him, deeply trusted by the Arab people, through whom, I believe, arrangements might be made and negotiations conducted.⁷⁵

Before Antonius left England for France, he was encouraged by the interest shown in his proposal for careful negotiations. After several days in Paris, he sailed home aboard the *Majola*, where he saw Elliot’s speech for the first time, in the official record of the House of Commons lent to him by fellow passenger Colonel Frederick Kisch, director of the Zionist Agency. Antonius was dismayed that the pro-Zionist Elliot had not been more circumspect in his public reference to Antonius as well as his discussion of the agenda.⁷⁶ Palestinians had merely received a first sign of government support, and the translation of policy into reality was not assured, given the well-entrenched pro-Zionist interests. In Antonius’s words, “If negotiations of an international character are to be undertaken on this thorny question, it is essential, I believe, that they should be conducted, at any rate in the initial stages, in the strictest confidence.”⁷⁷

Notes

1. Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (Commons), 1930, cmd. 3530, “Palestine: Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August 1939” [hereafter, Shaw Commission Report], p. 158.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 172.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 174, 178.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 125.

5. Gary D. Libecap, *Contracting for Property Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 1.

6. Snell signed the final report but added a note that he did not believe that the absence of measures of self-government "contributed in any degree to the outbreak" (Shaw Commission Report, p. 178).

7. Kenneth Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine, 1917–1939* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), pp. 20–29, 105.

8. Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (Commons), 1930, cmd. 3686, "Palestine: Report on Immigration, Land Settlement, and Development . . ." [hereafter, Hope-Simpson Report], p. 16.

9. Shaw Commission Report, p. 165; *A Survey of Palestine*, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies), p. 141.

10. Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine*, p. 26; Shaw Commission Report, p. 114.

11. Antonius, Presentation to the Peel Commission, January 1937, Israel State Archives, Hakiryia [hereafter, ISA], record group 65, file 2869.

12. Sarah Graham-Brown, "The Political Economy of Jabal Nablus, 1920–48," in *Studies in the Economic and Social History of Palestine in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Roger Owen (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), p. 123.

13. Graham-Brown, "The Political Economy of Jabal Nablus," p. 125.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 95–96.

15. Actually, North's simple model of the state specified three essential characteristics. The first two are relevant to the Palestinian case but the third is not, because there was no substitute to the monopoly power of the British at the time. The first characteristic of the state is that it trades a group of services, which North called protection and justice, in return for revenue. Total income in the society would be higher as a result of economies of scale in the organization specializing in these services. The second characteristic is that the state attempts to act like a discriminating monopolist, separating each group of constituents and devising property rights for each so as to maximize state revenue. Neither of these essential characteristics obtained in the case of Palestine. For more details, see Douglass North, *Structure and Change in Economic History* (New York: Norton, 1981), p. 23.

16. Antonius, Presentation to the Peel Commission, January 1937, ISA, record group 65, file 2869.

17. Roger Owen, "Introduction," in *Studies in the Economic and Social History of Palestine in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, p. 3.

18. Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (Commons), 1930, col. 48, "Evidence to the Palestine Commission on the Disturbances of August 1929," vol. 2, pp. 567–568.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 568.

20. *Ibid.*

21. Shaw Commission Report, p. 118.

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 119, 139.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 182.

26. Ibid.
27. Ibid., pp. 161, 165.
28. Ibid., p. 123.
29. Ibid., p. 120.
30. Ibid., pp. 124, 166.
31. Antonius to Rogers, 2 June 1930, Antonius papers, vol. 1, Institute of Current World Affairs [hereafter, ICWA].
32. Ibid.
33. As Porath noted, "Discussion of the constitutional problem ended in deadlock" (Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement: From Riots to Rebellion*, vol. 2: 1929–1939 [London: Frank Cass, 1977], p. 25).
34. Antonius to Rogers, 2 June 1930, ICWA. Frustrated by the lack of immediate change in British policy, Palestinian Arabs held a strike and mass meetings "to demand fulfillment of the Covenant of the League of Nations and of Great Britain's own pledge of Arab independence" (Sami Hadawi and Robert John, *The Palestine Diary, 1914–1945*, vol. 1 [New York: New World Press, 1970], p. 213).
35. Antonius to Rogers, 2 June 1930, ICWA.
36. Ibid.
37. Shaw Commission Report, p. 158.
38. Antonius to Rogers, 6 July 1930, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.
39. Rogers to Antonius, 26 June 1930, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.
40. For elaboration and insight into the impact of Zionist activity relative to Oriental Jews, see the work of Ammiel Alcalay, *After Jews and Arabs: Remaking Levantine Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).
41. Magnes to Felix Warburg, 13 September 1929, in *Dissenter in Zion*, ed. Arthur A. Goren (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 279.
42. George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1938), p. 265.
43. Magnes to Chaim Weizmann, 7 September 1929, in *Dissenter in Zion*, p. 276.
44. "Dr. Magnes Inaugural Lecture at the Re-opening of the University," 19 November 1929, *Palestine Bulletin*, Chancellor Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.
45. In response to Magnes's assertion that "the Jews could be a mediating element and would bring peace," Chancellor was especially pessimistic, because in his view, "the evidence that they were on the other hand a disruptive element socially and politically was overwhelming" (Sir John Chancellor, notes on meetings with Magnes, November 1929, file 20, MF 12, Chancellor Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford). Also see Susan Lee Hattis, *The Bi-National Idea in Palestine during Mandatory Times* (Haifa: Shikmona, 1970), p. 68.
46. Antonius to Rogers, 6 July 1930, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.; Antonius to Rogers, 17 October 1930, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA. Magnes was especially strongly criticized by political Zionists in 1932 when he supported the termination of the mandate after an interim period and the estab-

lishment of a binational "Arab-Jewish State . . . , possibly joining an Arab Federation" (Hattis, *The Bi-National Idea*, pp. 70–71).

51. Antonius to Rogers, 17 October 1930, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.

52. Hattis, *The Bi-National Idea*, pp. 51–52.

53. Ussama Makdisi, "Reconstructing the Nation-State: The Modernity of Secularism in Lebanon," *Middle East Report* (July–September 1996), pp. 23–26.

54. Antonius to Rogers, 17 October 1930, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.

55. Antonius to Gibb, 17 May 1933, ISA, record group 65, file 149–813–329.

56. Antonius to Rogers, 17 October 1930, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.

57. Antonius to Rogers, 6 July 1930, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.

58. *Ibid.*

59. Antonius to Rogers, 24 November 1930, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.

60. Antonius to Sulzberger, 22 November 1930, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.

61. *Ibid.*

62. Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine*, pp. 102, 105–107.

63. Hope-Simpson Report, p. 16.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 17; also see Stein, *The Land Question*, pp. 107–108.

65. Hope-Simpson Report, p. 16.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

68. Antonius to Rogers, 5 February 1931, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.

69. *Ibid.*; Antonius, September 1930 report, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.

70. Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (Commons), 1930, vol. 16, cmd. 3692, October 1930, "Statement of Policy" by HMG in the United Kingdom.

71. Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement*, vol. 2, p. 30.

72. Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine*, pp. 105–106.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

74. Antonius to Rogers, 24 November 1930, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.

75. *Ibid.*

76. *Ibid.*

77. *Ibid.*

9

Representative Government

A theory of state is essential because it is the state that specifies the property rights structure. Ultimately it is the state that is responsible for the efficiency of the property rights structure, which causes growth or stagnation or economic decline. . . . If one could assume a "neutral" state, then the forms of property rights which would emerge in the world of scarcity and competition would be efficient in the sense of being a least-cost solution. . . . This simple dichotomy actually is anything but simple, since the parties to an exchange will devote resources to influencing the political decision-makers to alter the rules.

—*Douglass North, Structure and Change in Economic History*

After a brief spell of hope in Palestine in 1930, the decade turned grim and graceless. The British government succumbed to lobbying and reinterpreted the October 1930 White Paper in the Zionists' favor, yielding to pressures for higher immigration. Taxes and trade and tariff measures hurt the already struggling Palestinian farmer and consumer. Taxpayers continued to assume the cost of paying for troops, the high salaries of British officials, and other fixed costs, at the same time as the government made little investment in protection and justice for Palestinians. Government continued a policy of reduced spending in anticipation of having to lay out large sums to put down demonstration and revolt. Antonius perceived the major problem as the ongoing absence of any vehicle through which public opinion could gain official representation to influence public policy. The Indianized, colonial form of rule remained the order of the day. Colonialism categorized the indigenous peoples of India, Ireland, and Palestine as subject races whose claims to the right of self-government were treasonous at worst and presumptuous at best.¹ For Rudyard Kipling and his kind: "The Indian Civil Service with its long tradition of the leadership of 'a strong man governing alone,' unencumbered by

democratic interference was as good an administrative organization as the world had ever known."²

A Black-Letter Day

On February 14, 1931, British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald dispatched a letter to Chaim Weizmann reversing the policy outlined in the British government's 1930 White Paper. Since the October 1930 White Paper had been issued, the British had suffered economic depression and a stock market crash. The government had been weakened, and the Zionists and their supporters held sway. MacDonald's letter was heartening to Zionists, for it repeated the government's support for the establishment of the Jewish national home as a "positive obligation." To appease Britain's Zionist critics, the October 1930 White Paper's proposal to limit immigration to Palestine's economic absorptive capacity was liberally reinterpreted and no reference was made to increases in Arab unemployment. MacDonald asserted that the government would regulate rather than prohibit transfers, and the earlier proposals for tenant legal protection from land transfers were dropped. MacDonald also promised a study of land resources to help designate additional areas for settlement by future Jewish immigrants.³ Concerning Sir John Hope-Simpson's finding after the Shaw Commission's review of problems underlying the 1929 violence—that is, that virtually no cultivable land was available for further Jewish settlement—the Zionist response was so overwhelmingly negative that the issue was dropped and never raised again.⁴ Weizmann reflected years later that "it was under MacDonald's letter to me that the change came about in the government's attitude, and in the attitude of the Palestine administration, which enabled us to make magnificent gains in the ensuing years. . . . Jewish immigration into Palestine was permitted to reach figures like 40,000 for 1934 and 62,000 for 1935, figures undreamed of in 1930."⁵

Purged of the recommendations for representative government and protection of Palestinians from expropriation and landlessness, the reinterpreted White Paper was a striking disappointment for Palestinians. After its publication, the Arab Executive Committee declared on behalf of Palestinians, "Before anything else we must give up the idea of relying upon the British government to safeguard our national and economic existence, because the government is weak in the face of world Jewry."⁶ Antonius wrote Rogers on May 11, 1931, "The hopefulness which had been aroused in Arab circles by the White Paper of October last has been more than dispelled by the publication in February of Ramsay MacDonald's letter to Weizmann, which the Arabs regard as rendering the provisions of the White Paper utterly nugatory."⁷

After a three-week visit to Syria beginning May 14, 1931, followed by his father's death in June, Antonius did not resume work until mid-August, at which time he was struck by a "marked recrudescence of discontent and unrest in Palestine." This rise in Palestinian discontent continued through September. Antonius wrote to Rogers on September 28: "At one time there was reason to fear an outbreak of disturbances. All danger of this is now past, yet discontent is rife both among the peasantry and the politically minded classes of the Arab population." Through his daily reading, meetings, and attendance at political meetings organized during August and September "to discuss (and as a rule to agitate against) one or other of measures recently taken by the government," Antonius found that Arab discontent was attributable "mainly to a growing conviction that the British government are under the thumb of the Zionists."⁸

As a spectator at one Palestinian political meeting in Nablus on September 20, 1931, Antonius witnessed the passage of several resolutions, including "one to the effect that so long as Zionist aims remained what they were, no sort of cooperation or negotiations for cooperation could be entertained." This resolution was evidently drafted to dispel the notion that the newly reorganized Zionist agency could be expected to advance Arab-Jewish cooperation. Antonius also sat in on a court hearing at which three Palestinians were prosecuted "for alleged incitement to sedition in connection with a political meeting held at the end of last July."⁹

From August through September, as Antonius focused on the state of unrest and political agitation, he took special note of the arduous conditions facing Palestinians in the global economic crisis. Concerned about deteriorating economic conditions and financial hardships suffered by Palestinian cultivators, he saw increased suffering in 1931 due to "a worldwide overproduction of cereals and substantial dumping of foreign wheat on the Palestine market," which resulted in a dramatic fall in the price of Palestinian agricultural produce.¹⁰ Wheat dropped from £10.81 a ton in 1929 to £6.97 per ton in 1931, and barley, from £7.66 to £3.03 a ton.¹¹ Palestine's exports were also hurt by the Egyptian government's imposition of high tariffs on Palestinian agricultural produce. Although Antonius lobbied for a reduction in Egypt's high tariffs on Palestine's behalf when Egyptian Prime Minister Ismail Sidky Pasha visited him at home in Karm al Mufti in 1932, no reduction was forthcoming, leaving a "universal disappointment" in Palestine in the wake of the Egyptian dignitary's visit.¹² Moreover, under the 1929 Palestine-Syria Customs Agreement and an open-door policy, there were no reciprocal trade agreements. Unencumbered by customs duties, Syria, India, and other countries flooded the Palestine market with cheaper products.

Without a representative government acting in their behalf, Palestinians were doubly handicapped. They were subject to unfair trade practices

abroad and unfair commercial practices at home. Antonius saw a "rise in the price of commodities," stemming from protective tariffs for the "artificial" establishment of Jewish industries.¹³ Antonius was particularly concerned about the 25 percent increase in the price of commodities, because as he explained in a September 28, 1931 letter to Rogers, the most serious consequences of the rise in prices were borne by the poorer classes in Palestine. "The Palestinian peasant is so badly off as it is that it would be in the nature of a disaster if he is suddenly called upon to pay higher prices for the essential commodities which have to be imported."¹⁴

In addition to barriers on trade and the decline in prices of Palestinian agricultural produce, Antonius found domestic fiscal policy contributing to the impoverishment of the Palestinian Arab cultivators. Antonius commented on the high taxes and government expenditures in the early 1930s, which were due to "an abnormally large and costly bureaucracy" and to military expenses incurred by the implementation of the Balfour Declaration. Taxes were diverted from economic and social investments to prop up the unpopular mandatory government. Antonius found that Palestinian military expenditures were abnormally high when compared to Iraq's after independence. Iraq's budget was less than half of Palestine's: Iraq's totaled \$17,000,000 in relation to a population of 3.5 million; Palestine's budget for a population of 1 million totaled \$10,250,000. Antonius noted that Iraq had 8,000 men in its security forces at a cost of \$2,500,000, whereas Palestine, with less than one-third Iraq's population, had 2,500 men at \$3,500,000 per year.¹⁵ Not only were taxpayers paying for an unaccountable government administration and security forces, but the government was creating a secret fund, knowing that its policies were likely to lead to Palestinian revolt.

Factionalism and the Muslim Congress

In early October 1931, Antonius witnessed "a perceptible abatement of the Arab tendency to agitate," because of a distracting "household quarrel" between the two main Palestinian parties headed by the Mufti Haj Amin al-Husseini and the mayor of Jerusalem, Raghib al-Nashashibi.¹⁶ This incident, which was symptomatic of the factionalism among Palestinians (fostered by a lack of elections and of representative government), involved Nashashibi's attempt to block the mufti's convening of an All-Muslim Congress in Jerusalem in December by publishing "a fallacious report" that "ingeniously maneuvered" to play upon the ambition of Muslim leaders by claiming that this congress aimed to restore the Caliphate.¹⁷

Despite political intrigue and tension, the Muslim Congress was convened on December 6, 1931, with some 150 delegates attending. It con-

cluded on December 16, after sixteen meetings, with the election of an executive committee of 25 members, which then elected a sort of action committee or "bureau" of 7 members headed by a secretary general.¹⁸ Antonius considered it an "epoch-making conference . . . the most constructive effort among Muslims in recent years, and one which is fraught with far reaching consequences."¹⁹ He felt the previous All-Muslim Congress held in Mecca by Ibn Saud in the summer of 1926 had been a failure. The 1931 congress included, however, Muslim leaders from the Arab world as well as Nigeria, Yugoslavia, China, Turkestan, India, and other countries. Antonius felt it could "provide an opportunity for furthering the movement for better cohesion and closer solidarity among the Muslim peoples."

Antonius saw Islam as a cultural vehicle facilitating unity across geographical and other borders, and an important force sustaining the moral character of the nation. Antonius never perceived Islam as a narrow, inflexible ideology or a threat to non-Muslims or the West. He trusted in its core values of simple faith and moral concern for the welfare of others. He believed it could help sustain the character and integrity of individuals and the nation as they struggled for authenticity and control amid destabilizing global forces. For Antonius there were grave dangers to a shallow, secular interpretation of progress and modernity that looked down on religious faith as some primitive mental formation. Rigorous scientific methods of discovery, planning, and development did not have to occur at the expense of an elusive and ancient world of faith. Although Antonius was capable of appreciating the "remarkable" achievements in the "new Turkey"—such as its careful urban planning for Ankara—he was more concerned with the underlying character of the country when he found that Turkey had "completely and, as it appears, finally turned her back on Islam."²⁰ "It was a sad sight to see the general indifference, not to say hostility, with which the religious life is regarded," he wrote after a visit in 1936.²¹ Although Antonius never wrote a comparative analysis of Islam and his own religion, as a Greek Orthodox Christian he shared the perspective of his French Catholic friend, Louis Massignon, on Islam and colonial rule. Hourani admired Massignon: "He was perhaps the only Islamic scholar who was a central figure in the intellectual life of his time in France," and his work significantly influenced a new Catholic and Christian appreciation of Islam.²² Massignon considered imperial rule "an 'abuse of hospitality,' an expression of 'our secular rage' to understand, to conquer, to possess." He believed that "Islam was a genuine expression of monotheistic faith, claiming descent from Abraham by way of Ishmael, and that it had a positive spiritual mission."²³

Throughout his life, Antonius sustained a deep respect for and a close association with Muslims. He especially admired the "new spirit of Is-

lam" represented by former minister of state and "distinguished Egyptian man of letters" Gaafar Wali and Azzam. He also kept in touch with Shaikh Maraghi, rector of al-Azhar University, the oldest Islamic university in the region, and with some of Crane's closest friends, including the "brothers Abdul-Razek, Shaikh Fauzan and Abdul-Rahman." When Harvard University was preparing a celebration in honor of al-Azhar, Antonius felt "that personalities like Wali or Azzam, with their command of English, their interests and their ideals, might prove to be better representatives of the new spirit in Islam than delegates chosen primarily for their academic standing."²⁴

Antonius also kept in touch with members and activities of the Muslim Congress, advised on the establishment of its executive, defended its work in letters to the editors, and criticized corruption. He nearly accepted a seat on the committee it established to raise funds for, among other things, the creation of an Islamic University in Jerusalem; but he withdrew his nomination upon learning that others had gained seats through personal contacts and were apparently prepared to disrupt constructive work for partisan ends.²⁵ He wrote Khalil Bey Tabet, editor of *al-Muqattam*, about an article the paper had published criticizing the Mufti Haj Amin al-Husseini and Mohammed Ali Pasha's trip to India to raise funds to establish the university, because it seemed inspired by "the bad faith which animates certain people and causes them, from motives of jealousy and party strife, to discredit the purpose for which they have gone to India."²⁶

Land

In October 1931 Antonius wrote Rogers that "the dominant issue is the new development scheme" by the British government under the direction of Lewis French. The plan was aimed at providing a livelihood for Palestinian cultivators who had been rendered landless by Zionist land acquisitions, and at promoting agricultural extension and intensification that would enable Palestine to absorb and support a larger population.²⁷ As he considered this the first serious government effort to deal with the land and immigration problem, Antonius was disappointed to find Zionists and Palestinians withholding their support. The Zionists did so largely for fear that immigration and land acquisition might be curtailed, and the Palestinians, for fear that the scheme ultimately aimed to realize MacDonald's expressed support for increased Jewish immigration and land settlement. Given MacDonald's letter to Weizmann, the Palestinians considered the scheme an attempt to introduce intensive cultivation as a means to release additional Palestinian lands for Jewish settlement. This was all the more serious because the resettlement scheme for landless

Palestinians excluded a large category of the landless, including those who had lost their land because of the increase in rents that followed the rise in property value due to Zionist land acquisition.²⁸

Thousands of Palestinian tenants, cultivators, plowmen, and laborers had been forced off the land; but the definition of Palestinian landlessness was so restrictive that between 1932 and 1935, only 664 Palestinians were added to the landless register, and 2,607 applicants were turned away. Thousands more were unaccounted for.²⁹ In the 1930s Antonius studied rural conditions and the plight of villagers and cultivators in Palestine. In 1932 he investigated the deletion of the names of four villages in the Haifa subdistrict: "Does it mean that those four villages have ceased in fact to exist?"³⁰ What "of the fate of the inhabitants of the villages which have ceased to exist. . . . Has the government any information as to the present whereabouts of the villagers and their means of livelihood?" he asked the chief secretary.³¹

As these problems intensified through the mid-1930s, Antonius was troubled by the injustice, the chronic lack of government protection, and the resulting breakdown of Palestine as evidenced by increasing numbers of landless and unemployed Palestinians who were being forced out of their homes and villages. In Haifa alone, there were an estimated "11,000 Arab workers living in hovels made out of petrol tins, without any water supply or the most rudimentary sanitary conditions."³² In 1936, after the eruption of revolt, one journalist in the port of Jaffa wrote about the "bitterness of 6,000 homeless Arabs squatting in makeshift quarters. . . . They cannot forget, most of them, that they were given but a few hours to vacate their homes, poor as they were, before they were demolished by way of corporate punishment unfortunately called 'town improvement.'"³³

Central to the tragic situation, Antonius felt, was the government's misdiagnosis of the problem. He found the British "laying too much stress" on the "material side" of conditions, issues of absorptive capacity, and discussions about "whether or not there is sufficient land to accommodate the agricultural community" and "whether it is a fact or not that certain people have been rendered landless." A deeper understanding of the land and immigration problem in Palestine required an appreciation of "the moral and psychological factors involved." To wrench villagers away from their age-old attachments, pursuits, and world of meaning—as well as from their homes and livelihoods—was not only to deprive these individuals and families of their dignity but also to traumatize and demoralize an entire nation.

There is another aspect of [landlessness]; there is the aspect that, quite apart from the material loss involved in the displacement of people from the land,

there is the more important question of the moral loss. The problem of the exodus from villages to towns is one which has bothered and has been a factor in almost every civilized country and it is a thing which governments have always tried wherever they could, wherever it was not too late, to stop because it is an unhealthy sign and a movement which brings with it a lot of undesirable consequences. Here in Palestine the policy hitherto has been to accentuate that exodus, and in fact not only to accentuate it, but to make it a necessity for certain people. Apart from all the material disadvantages it brings with it, it brings with it also the loss of something I consider extremely valuable, that is the loss of the moral values and moral characteristics which people acquire when they live on the land and live an agricultural life with all that implies, from father to son.³⁴

By the late 1930s Antonius was emphasizing the moral side of the equation over the material side. Because the government failed to protect Palestinians, the entire culture and microcosm of the Arab nation was being destroyed through forced expropriation and demolition of villages and lack of public services that could have legally and financially helped cultivators during arduous times. In Antonius's words:

The fact that [Palestinians] are suddenly uprooted from that life and driven to seek their living elsewhere, in the towns, or on the roads, or in casual labor, is a very serious loss from the moral point of view. It is not only the loss to the individuals themselves; it is the loss of the traditional life of the country with the very valuable feature of the traditional crafts which went with it. These traditional crafts which were a very important feature of the agricultural life of Palestine (to my certain knowledge, because I have actually seen it in the years before the war and since) formed a steadying influence on the character of those people and are now tending to disappear. They are fast disappearing from a great many villages. I have seen the disappearance of it in certain localities myself and I want to put it before you that, in estimating the factors of discontent, some attention should be paid to this very important feature of the moral loss involved. The moral deterioration which overtakes people in their own characters when they are uprooted and forcibly driven to the towns or away from the villages and the land upon which they had their roots is a thing which government should do a great deal to avoid; and what has happened in Palestine is that, instead of the government trying to avoid that, the policy has been as I say to create that exodus and accentuate it.³⁵

The cultivators were in a precarious position. As one journalist wrote in 1933, "There is nothing to 'defend' in Palestine, but a lot to organize." The central issue was the building of institutions. Many cited the cultivators'

vulnerabilities to expropriation due to "heavy indebtedness" through usurious interest rates (200 percent) charged by moneylenders; but almost nothing was said of the administration's failure to support Palestinian applications to create formal credit and financial support services that might have helped avert such indebtedness. When the American-trained businessman Abdul Hameed Shoman tried to obtain a license to establish a national bank that would provide Palestinian cultivators with commercial loans at lower interest rates, the license was withheld until he obtained help from Palestinian lawyer Musa Alami. Zionists lobbied against government subsidies to Palestinians, and what fiscal revenues accrued were diverted elsewhere. The fiscal burden of programs to compensate landless Palestinians whom the government had failed to protect was not only borne by Palestinian taxpayers but was also used to justify the withholding of a constitution and representative government indefinitely. British officials used the financial liability argument to propose that in return for Britain's guaranteeing loans to "generously repatriate" landless Palestinians, they were to "postpone giving self-government" and "cease . . . giving a constitution to Palestine which the Jews do not want."³⁶

Antonius was also aware of other disturbing evidence of unaccountable government: Not only was the government failing to use local tax revenues for much-needed social services such as schools or to help financially strapped cultivators but it was secretly accumulating "a large surplus out of the revenues of Palestine" (estimated at £6 million) because they knew their policies were bound to fail. They were preparing to put down anticipated riots and revolt instead of attempting to reform and restructure the policies that were pushing Palestinians toward revolt.

While this surplus was accumulating, the government was carrying out economies. It was not only withholding its approval of certain measures for which there was an obvious need such as more schools; it was actually curtailing some of the existing essential services. On the other hand, it was accumulating that large surplus, and it was known that the surplus was being accumulated because the government knew that the time would come when the resources of the Palestinian budget would be put to a strain of some sort. They knew, in other words, that there would very likely be in the near future a slump and trouble which would make a call upon their accumulated reserves. This dual attitude on the part of government, economizing on the one hand by withholding or the curtailment of certain important services, and, on the other, accumulating a large reserve balance was most unfavorably commented upon in the press and in private conversations.³⁷

Throughout the 1930s, Antonius felt the British and Zionists were ignoring the writing on the wall, going against practical common sense,

and flouting justice. He understood the mounting anger, anguish, and sense of helplessness and desperation among Palestinians. Observers in neighboring states commonly likened the situation to rape. It did not take uncanny prescience to anticipate revolt and bloodshed.

They are today in Palestine in a hopeless minority. British bayonets and nothing else are saving their throats from Arab knives and their bodies from Arab bullets. The Muslim and Christian Arabs of Palestine stand as a unit. They are 700,000 against 100,000. They believe, in their heart of hearts, that they opened the gates of Jerusalem to Allenby's troops. They consider that they have been betrayed. Jewish gold is buying up their land. They are grinning and bearing with this condition. They will probably remain more or less quiet as long as English troops control all strategic points. But the British taxpayer will eventually tire of this expense. If he does not, India and other Muslim lands may raise their voices in the wilderness. A day will come when these soldiers will leave. The longer it is postponed the more terrible will be the bloody retribution which will be taken.³⁸

Machinery of Government

In 1932, emboldened by the sense of mortality one acquires with the death of a father and by the stark injustice of renewed pro-Zionist policy in Palestine, Antonius returned to public service with an intense desire to make a difference. His first year with ICWA had been one of disengagement as he turned down requests for lectures, articles, and consultations that Rogers feared might result in his being viewed as a spokesman of the Arabs. Rogers, whom Zionists had visited with criticism of Antonius, may have been naturally averse to controversy; perhaps he preferred to avoid it at this juncture, when ICWA was attempting to attract funds and men of consequence to its board. His actions also, however, might have reflected the standard academic perspective Herbert Blumer so thoroughly critiqued—namely, the idea that objectivity required distance. For Blumer as for Antonius, any attempt to portray reality required the reverse, an approach best termed that of a participant-observer.

Having made his case, Antonius began to devote himself in 1932 to his vocation of interpreting Palestine and his nation to the world, and most immediately to British officials who were distant and out of touch. He aimed to supplement ICWA's basic tasks of reporting on local and regional developments and problems with a host of short- and long-term projects, including advisory services, his book, and the establishment of an institute for historical studies and an Arabic technical lexicon. No longer a philosophizing spectator, he aimed to "advise and direct the ef-

forts of others" and initiate and build up "something new and hitherto non-existent" that he could later hand over "as a going concern."³⁹ Antonius turned to diagnosing the causes of government policy failures, with British officers as his prime audience. He knew they were "perplexed" by "the growing discontent and their failure to gain the good will of the Arab population," and he hoped his forthcoming article on "The Machinery of Government in Palestine" would help bring about much-needed change.

His article was to be published in the 1932 *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* along with several others by Arab and Jewish colleagues, resulting in a volume of 200 pages (that he had earlier declined to co-edit)⁴⁰ focused on controversial aspects of Palestinian mandatory history. For Antonius the root of the problem of mandatory government was traceable to the British establishment of a rigid and inflexible form of colonial rule.⁴¹ He later said:

The system which was introduced in Palestine in 1920 was . . . of all possible systems the most unsuitable to apply to a country like Palestine, and a system which was possibly more calculated than any other I know of to produce friction and trouble. . . . In Palestine there is so much diversity and so many difficult problems, and people of the country have reached a stage and have a culture which fits them for a different kind of government, and that system was not at all suitable. . . . The fact that this was a Colonial Office system, a system deriving its authority from a set of regulations and a discipline and framework, meant rigidity and absence of elasticity in the system. This is a country which is full of diversity and problems requiring special handling, and which doesn't altogether fit into the rather rigid framework of colonial administration.⁴²

Based on the colonial model of British rule in India, this rigid system was structurally designed to block good governance and Palestine's independence as a sovereign nation-state. As historian Partha Chatterjee observed, it "was destined never to fulfill the normalizing mission of the modern state, because the premise of its power to rule was a rule of colonial difference, namely the preservation of the alienness of the ruling group."⁴³ Given the divide-and-rule strategy that distanced ruler and ruled, Palestine's high commissioner was but an ill-advised autocrat supported by paper-pushing bureaucrats who were themselves detached and out of touch, focused on bureaucratic procedure and colonial protocol, never thinking to question or reform policy let alone learn directly about complex local reality. "Perhaps the worst feature of the colonial system is its acquired distaste for individual contacts and its naïve belief in the efficacy of paper transactions," he wrote. There was no account-

ability, no feedback mechanisms to influence and guide public policy formation and upgrade public performance on behalf of the Palestinian citizen-taxpayer. Instead, the system remained chronically “distant, aloof, and out of touch with realities” and a “a grotesque travesty of real administration.”⁴⁴

There is here a lot that is entirely unsuitable, and that is one of the reasons why Palestine has had such difficulties. Largely contributing to the growth of estrangement is the lack of contact between the administration and the Arab population. It was not a system which was organized to tide over the barriers which naturally existed between the British administration and the population of this country. It seemed to be devised in a way to make even greater this difficulty. No real contact was established between the people and the central administration, which as I said was fruitful of misunderstanding.⁴⁵

Unfortunately, the British had misdiagnosed reality and assumed blind loyalty, and thus believed that a simple, centralized, hierarchical form of rule would function well enough. This system included the old notion of the leader as autocrat rather than as facilitator. It was a military-bureaucratic model that did not tolerate change or encourage participation or dissent. Uninformed autocratic rule helped create the problems it could not understand. For autocratic rule was never designed to deal with complexity and to support participatory government, pluralism, or a culture of civil society promoting inclusive diversity. As a closed and isolated system, it retarded and handicapped its own administration and the country at large.

Democracy is not simply an idea or irresistible yearning for human rights but a very practical form of social organization for accountable governance. Egalitarian, representative, and decentralized governments are likely to be more flexible than mechanistic, autocratic forms. In Palestine, Britain underrated local creative and collegial capacity and the democratic strengths of traditional forms of social and political organization. Failing to adapt to local reality and to learn to facilitate rather than control, they lost the public trust, and failed in their mandate. The Palestinian case illustrated the point so well expressed by 1998 Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen: that authoritarian rule typically neglects society’s most vulnerable because constituents cannot hold them accountable and influence public policy and spending.

If Britain truly desired cooperation, Antonius felt, the government would abide by fundamental democratic principles, beginning with a constitution that guaranteed Palestinians rights based on an “equality of partnership” between the government and the people—in this case,

Britain and Palestine.⁴⁶ The old dualism of ruler versus ruled, of master and slave, was unacceptable. Palestinian representative government and accountability mechanisms were necessary if government was to be “so equipped as to establish and maintain close contact with the life and psychology of the people.” Because true cooperation cannot exist without equality, Britain had to rescind its double standard.⁴⁷

Advising the High Commissioner

From 1932 through 1935, during the tenure of Sir Arthur Wauchope as high commissioner in Palestine, Antonius was often called upon for advice and suggestions pertaining to the creation of representative government. In 1932, Antonius vigorously reengaged in the analysis and interpretation of local problems. Some who were unaware of the origins and purpose of the ICWA thought that his “mysterious profession” was that of spy for the British. Antonius filed and won a libel suit against one newspaper (*Mir at al Sharq*, the leading Palestinian paper, which had close connections to the Nashashibis) for a February 1932 article alleging that he was a British spy.⁴⁸ After an April 1932 attack of nine revolver shots into his house, he hired security guards to protect his family and bought a revolver at the recommendation of the commandant of police.⁴⁹

After a long night discussing local problems over dinner with Wauchope into the early morning hours of January 19, 1932⁵⁰ Antonius was invited to draft a constitutional proposal, which he submitted on March 22.⁵¹ Antonius’s proposal was hardly radical, though in the context of the times it was considered far too liberal. He designed the proposal based on Britain’s “A mandate” obligation to facilitate the independence of the already provisionally recognized independent Palestine, and to past British pledges and compacts supporting independence. The scheme recommended establishing “a unicameral legislature working in combination with an enlarged executive”⁵² consisting of four British officers and three representatives—a Muslim, a Christian, and a Jew. Beyond the 1922 version, Antonius proposed a degree of popular representation and real power so that the council would be less an advisory body to an unchecked executive and more a legislature helping to balance power. His proposed legislative council, which was to be “constituted, without a greater risk, on a more liberal and (to the people) more acceptable basis than that proposed in 1922,” included 32 members, 19 of whom would be popularly elected; 6, nominated by the high commissioner; and the others, selected from the Executive Council. It was to have the power to veto any laws introduced by the government and to enact legislation subject to the high commissioner’s approval.⁵³ The high commissioner retained veto power over legislation.

After discussing his constitutional proposal with Wauchope on March 22, Antonius conducted a series of meetings on similar problems of representation in Lebanon and Syria. When he and Wauchope met again on May 7, three days after Antonius's return from Beirut, Antonius was heartened to find that Wauchope not only had studied his critical analysis of the machinery of government in Palestine but also appeared to have come to similar conclusions and was eager to learn more about "the previous history of the problem . . . legislation and other enactments."⁵⁴ Thus, Antonius devoted the next several days to researching these issues for Wauchope. By the end of the month, when he had concluded that there appeared little chance that a constitution would be implemented, he set off for England and several months of further research.

When Antonius returned to Palestine in September, he resumed his informal and confidential association with Wauchope and continued his meetings and research, which took him to Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and Iraq. Anxious about the increasing numbers of landless Palestinians and the destruction of their villages, which were being replaced by Zionist settlements, Antonius focused on rural conditions. In October and November 1932 he was particularly concerned about the fate of Palestinians who had been forced to leave their homes and the land they cultivated in four villages in the Haifa subdistricts of Jidru, al Har Baj, al Harathiyeh, and Tall al-Shamman. The chief secretary's office informed him that the land had been sold to Zionists by the Sursoq family in Beirut, and all these villages "have ceased to exist and new [Zionist] settlements have been established on their lands."⁵⁵

Upon his return to Jerusalem in May 1933 from one of his many visits to Damascus, Antonius became even more concerned about the situation in Palestine. Antonius believed that Zionists were successfully pressuring the government into increasing Jewish immigration through skillful exploitation of the "anti-Jewish measures of the Hitler government." He found that the increasing immigration was subjecting the Palestinian population to serious strain because Palestine already "contains far too great a population in proportion to its resources."⁵⁶ "Each tide of Jewish settlers in the land results in a corresponding batch of Arab cultivators being driven off the land on which they have been making a living for centuries and left to fend for themselves." Beyond the question of immigration, Antonius also understood that the number of Palestinian landless increased because, for want of government support, access to credit, and legal protection, deteriorating economic conditions were forcing owner-occupiers, tenants, and laborers to leave agricultural pursuits. Smallholders, who owned the majority of Palestinian land, were operating below-subsistence holdings. By 1933 their economic situation was particularly dire and many were losing ownership and control over their

land because of bad harvests and increased indebtedness and default. In the early 1930s, Palestinian cultivators were especially hard hit by drought, which destroyed "60 percent of the durra crop, 80 percent of the olive crop, and 85 percent of the sesame crop," as well as grazing pastures.⁵⁷ Despite the economic hardships facing the majority of Palestinians, the government provided a mere £50,000 in agricultural loans—a fraction of the original development loan appropriation of £7 million.⁵⁸ As Antonius viewed it, there was no actual assistance to protect Palestinians from disenfranchisement, and despite the increasing number of landless Palestinians, the administration's measures for resettlement remained "half-hearted and inadequate."⁵⁹ And the inadequacy was directly related to a poorly designed government:

It was not properly organized to deal with its own policy and problems. Take the case of lands, for instance. They passed legislation from time to time which provided that certain security and guarantee had to be given to the tenants affected by sale of land. I maintain government was not equipped to supervise and control the carrying out of such legislation, and a good deal of the trouble which occurred in the past is directly to be laid at the door of the government in that they did not have the proper machinery to carry into effect the legislation laid down by those laws.⁶⁰

On July 20, although still anxious about the situation in Palestine, Antonius left Jerusalem again to conduct historical research in England. He spent the following months primarily in London, at work on his book and quite likely also consulting with various concerned officials. Antonius also managed to visit the League of Nations in Geneva before his return to Palestine on October 17. At the League, he attended sessions on the problem of anti-Semitism and the need to resettle Jewish refugees from Germany. He felt that the solution proposed by the Zionists—that the refugees be transferred to Palestine instead of being defended and protected by the Western powers—was too easily accepted. Apparently, few in the League were apprised of the adverse effects that Jewish immigration was having upon Palestinians. As further indication of unbalanced representation, Antonius noted that the League's mandate commission was poorly informed and misguided about the Palestinian case. Although there were "shelves which contained Jewish reviews and Zionist literature of every kind, everything properly docketed, and read and minuted," there was "not a single Arabic newspaper or a single officer, translator, or others by whom memoranda or literature put up in Arabic could be intelligently translated and considered."⁶¹ Antonius held the commission responsible for this imbalance. The inadequacy of knowledge and information to guide policy in the mandate commission paral-

leled the lack of knowledge in the mandatory government's decision-making regarding the issue of immigration.

In the case of immigration the government continually said that immigration was going to be ruled according to the economic capacity of the country, [but] what machinery, what efforts has government made to determine from time to time the economic capacity of the country? It has all been haphazard rule of thumb, based not on any scientific investigation. That sort of thing is difficult in any country but here in Palestine it is still more difficult and still more necessary to have proper machinery to work it out. There should, for instance, be employment exchanges in order to enable the government to get at a nearer approximation of the state of unemployment and the economic absorptive capacity. Government has done nothing of the kind. They have not organized themselves in such a way as to be able to carry out their policy.⁶²

When Antonius returned to Palestine on October 17, he saw that he had not overestimated the effect of Jewish immigration into Palestine. Through meetings and a review of the press, he discovered that the unprecedented influx had caused such serious concern and raised such problems in Palestine that the Arab Executive had been pressed to hold a series of meetings during the first week of October. The sessions ended with the decree that special meetings and mass demonstrations aimed to express popular protest against the government's immigration policy would be "held successively in different towns on alternative Fridays."⁶³ The first was held in Jerusalem four days before Antonius's return and included several thousand Palestinians headed by the octogenarian president of the Arab Executive.

[They] assembled in the Haram and, after the midday prayer, moved in a body to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, in token of Muslim-Christian Solidarity. Thence, they proceeded through the streets of the Old City, in defiance of the orders of the government. . . . A scuffle took place between the crowd and the police and several were injured.⁶⁴

The second demonstration, which was held in Jaffa on October 27, ended with a "clash with police, as a result of which some 20 people lost their lives and over 100 were more or less seriously injured."⁶⁵ As a result, crowds assembled in Haifa and Nablus to express "their solidarity," and there, as in Jaffa, the police fired upon the crowds, causing further fatalities and casualties. By day's end, the mass arrests and casualties had resulted in an intense bitterness toward the British, a feeling that was not restricted to Palestinians. On the following day, Syrians held a protest

demonstration at the Ummayyad Mosque and attacked the British consulate in Damascus.⁶⁶

Antonius was aware that in the past—particularly during the 1929 disturbances—“the animus was all directed against the Jews.” But as he wrote Crane on October 28, the markedly different character of the October 1933 disturbances was evident in the fact that “no news has come of a single case of attack or molestation of Jews.” Antonius considered this the inevitable result of the Palestinian belief that “Jews would be powerless” had it not been for British support. The October demonstration showed the shift in Palestinian feelings “veering from an attitude directed against the Jews, as being the real enemy coming to occupy their country and to dispossess them of it, to an attitude primarily aimed against the British government, as being their real enemy.” Moreover, these demonstrations, remarkable for being the first staged in protest against the British, arose because “the people felt that things had come to such a pass that they had to express their detestation of the policy by the only means left to them.” That they had ended in bloodshed he considered the tragic consequence of a flawed and undemocratic system of rule, which, seeking to evade popular criticism of its immigration policy, not only stifled formal representation but also forbade and forcibly crushed the manifestation of popular protest.⁶⁷

When Wauchope called upon him for advice during the October disturbances, Antonius again expressed his views and urged the government to adopt his constitutional proposal. Other officials who sought his advice and counsel at this time included Parkinson, assistant undersecretary of state for the Colonial Office, and Sir John Maffey, governor general of the Sudan, who was passing through Palestine en route to London to accept the post of undersecretary of state for the Colonial Office. Through his meetings with Wauchope and visiting officials in 1933, Antonius perceived little if any chance for a change in the government’s policy and little support for a representative form of government. Thus, although he continued to give advice and information to journalists and officials investigating the October violence, he devoted his efforts primarily to his book and to consultations with colleagues and friends in Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria. He left Palestine again, in February 1934, for nearly another half year of research and informal lobbying.⁶⁸

After returning to Palestine on August 9, 1934, with batches of documents and a good amount of progress made on his book, Antonius again agreed to meet with Wauchope, and learned that “he had singled out my scheme as being the best of those which had been prepared for him by other advisors, and that he intended to adopt it subject to certain modifications.” However, in the course of discussion with Wauchope, Antonius discovered that the proposed alterations invalidated the essentials of his

scheme. Wauchope's official advisers in Palestine had suggested that he "abandon the idea of a representative council" and opt instead for "a consultative council composed of members nominated by the government." Antonius understood the popular criticism such a proposal would receive among Palestinians; being aware that it had no chance of success, he was not inclined to waste time in considering or discussing it.⁶⁹

Wauchope told Antonius that the government intended to preclude the proposed council from "debating any matter which conflicted with the Mandate." Antonius told Wauchope that this suggestion was unacceptable, principally because since the mandate had become the subject of controversy and varying interpretations, any decisions about what might conflict with the mandate would be open to dispute. In probing Wauchope's own views further, Antonius discovered that Wauchope was seriously thinking of banning "all discussion in the council on the two subjects of immigration and sale of land." For Antonius, this measure would have set a dangerous precedent. The continued frustration of expressions of popular grievances and of views on two of the most fundamental issues affecting the Palestinian population was unacceptable.⁷⁰

Still, Antonius remained hopeful, and in August 1934 he wrote, "I have reason to believe that my activities in this matter are about to bear fruit in a practical manner." At least, he hoped for a scheme that would pave the way toward a reduction in the inequality of the sides involved in the struggle, first by "setting well defined limits to the play and inter-play of those forces"; and second, by ensuring "real equilibrium without which no real progress may be hoped for." He knew the difficulties, for the struggle to achieve representative government had been chronically blocked since the start of the mandate:

This question is one of the most complex and difficult problems with which the Mandatory Power has been faced. An attempt was made, as far back as 1922, to establish a legislature in Palestine, but the attempt failed ignominiously. Two other attempts were made subsequently, of which the object was to establish, if not a proper legislature, at all events some representative machinery to enable the people to participate in the task of government; but both those attempts met with failure. Again in 1929, the then High Commissioner Sir John Chancellor, set to work on the task of devising a constitution for Palestine; but the outbreak of serious disturbances in that year, as well as other factors, interfered with the prosecution of the scheme.⁷¹

Now, finally, Arthur Wauchope was trying again, and at his request, Antonius quickly drafted a note on safeguards for the proposed legislative council on the eve of Wauchope's trip to London. Antonius felt that

the important issues of land and immigration, among others, had to be addressed by Palestinian representatives in council. At this stage, there was no other way to officially influence (rather than force) policy changes. He urged Britain to safeguard freedom of speech and not to restrict matters the council might wish to investigate and debate. Aware that the government was again on the verge of blocking the legislative council altogether, he emphasized that even if the majority of council members criticized government policy, sufficient safeguards existed in his proposal to allow for the continuation of the mandate, in that the high commissioner retained veto power over all legislation.⁷²

After Wauchope left Palestine in October 1934 to review the constitutional question with officials in London and Geneva, Antonius devoted his time to work on his book, and in early 1935, to preparing the numerous lectures he had been invited to present during his visit to the United States that spring. Before his lecture tour began, Antonius received a request from Harvard University Professor Ernest Hocking for information on the Palestine problem. Hocking was preparing to present a lecture on the Arab point of view, which would be juxtaposed with a presentation of the Zionists' viewpoint by Jabotinsky. Antonius wrote back that the most serious problem was caused by the "vast immigration of the last three years." The most incredible aspect lay in the government's claim that the quotas were set after due consideration of the country's economic absorptive capacity. "No serious attempt is made to arrive at a scientific or even quasi-scientific estimate; no organ of statistical investigation exists; the computation is arrived at by rough and ready methods which are too crude to command respect."⁷³ He remarked upon the increasing number of landless Palestinians, and the Zionist policy of employing only Jews: "Jewish pickets have lately been terrorizing private Jewish owners who happened to employ Arab labor on cultivation and building works." He explained that the idea of "prosperity" from Jewish immigrants was a myth, and most people were expecting a depression like the one that had occurred in 1927–1928 because of the boom in immigration. Antonius wrote Hocking that Zionism was a nonreligious movement "swamping the spiritual significance of the Holy Land under an avalanche of nationalistic aggression." He continued: "The expansion of Zionist activity is undoubtedly a menace to peace. It is driving the Arabs of Palestine nearer and nearer to despair and the Arabs of neighboring countries to agitation."⁷⁴

When Antonius returned from his lecture tour in the United States in late 1935, he learned that his constitutional proposal had been defeated. The British government had decided to establish a legislative council that, in all but name, would be merely an advisory body prohibited from dealing with the critical question of Jewish immigration and forbidden

even to introduce any legislation not approved by the high commissioner. Thomas Hodgkin, who had worked on the legislative council proposal and had resigned in protest of Britain's Palestine policy, wrote that the government's version "would have been so restricted in respect of everything that really mattered—immigration, land sales, police, and internal security—that they would have had little to offer even the most right-wing Arab nationalist."⁷⁵ The government proposal was issued on December 21, 1935, and Antonius, seeing the rising frustration and discontent among Palestinians, again urged Wauchope promptly to introduce a scheme "providing for an elected legislature," for "feeling was running so high on this question that it would be imprudent to delay its introduction."⁷⁶ Even the first British high commissioner in Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, understood that after 15 years "the administration was still conducted entirely by officials, with no formal constitutional link with the people—a state of things which was unhealthy and unsatisfactory."⁷⁷ For Antonius, "the establishment of a legislature" would have been a "turning point in the history of Palestine." He firmly believed that "the absence hitherto of any such organ of population representation has been . . . at the root of the political stagnation in which the country has wallowed under the mandatory regime."⁷⁸

Notes

1. Lord Birkenhead, *Rudyard Kipling* (New York: Random House, 1978), pp. 295–362.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 222.
3. Copy and reference to MacDonald's letter, Israel State Archives, Hakiryia [hereafter, ISA], record group 65, file AT267–798. Also see Yehoshua Porath, *The Palestine Arab National Movement: From Riots to Rebellion*, vol. 2: 1929–1939 (London: Frank Cass, 1977), p. 33.
4. Kenneth Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine, 1917–1939* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), p. 107.
5. Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error: The Autobiography of Chaim Weizmann* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1949), p. 335, cited in Sami Hadawi and Robert John, *The Palestine Diary, 1914–1945*, vol. 1 (New York: New World Press, 1970), pp. 233–234.
6. "Declaration to the Noble Arab Nation," signed by Yaqub Farraj, Mughannam Ilyas Mughannam, and Awni Abd al-Hadi, February 1931, ISA, AT1022.
7. Antonius to Rogers, 11 May 1931, Antonius papers, vol. 1, Institute of Current World Affairs [hereafter, ICWA].
8. Antonius to Rogers, 28 September 1931, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine*, p. 143. Also see Ted Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt: The 1936–1939 Rebellion and the Palestinian National Past* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).

11. Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine*, p. 143.
12. Antonius to Rogers, 12 February 1932, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.
13. George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1938), p. 407.
14. Antonius to Rogers, 28 September 1931, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA; Antonius to Rogers, 12 February 1932, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.
15. Antonius to Rogers, 18 April 1933, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.
16. Antonius report, 24 October 1931, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.
17. Ibid.
18. Antonius to Rogers, 12 February 1932, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.
19. Antonius to Rogers, 30 September 1931, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.
20. Antonius to Charles Crane, 8 June 1936, ISA, record group 65, file 870.
21. Ibid.
22. Albert Hourani, *Islam in European Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 48.
23. Louis Massignon, "Toute une vie avec un frère parti en désert," in *Parole donnée*, p. 71, quoted in Ibid., p. 45.
24. Antonius to C. Crane, Jerusalem, 8 February 1936, ISA, record group 65, file 870-330.
25. Antonius to Rogers, 7 September 1931, ISA, record group 65, file 854-330; Antonius, "Muslim Congress," ISA, record group 65, file 3339.
26. Antonius to Khalil Bey Tabet, editor, *al-Muqattam*, 17 May 1933, ISA, record group 65, file AT256-864.
27. Antonius to Rogers, 24 October 1931, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.
28. Ibid.
29. Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (Commons), 1937, Evidence to the Palestine Royal Commission of the 1936 Disturbances, col. 134, p. 28. For additional details, see *A Survey of Palestine*, prepared in December 1945 and January 1946 for the information of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, reprinted in full with permission from Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1991).
30. Antonius to Chief Secretary, Government of Palestine, Jerusalem, 28 October 1932, ISA, record group 65.
31. Antonius to Chief Secretary, Government of Palestine, Jerusalem, 16 November 1932, ISA, record group 65.
32. Reference to Nevil Barbour's findings in Pamela Ann Smith, *Palestine and the Palestinians, 1876-1983* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), p. 54.
33. "Arab and Jew: The Impasse in Palestine," *Times* [London], 28 August 1936, copy in ISA, record group 65, file AT144-534.
34. George Antonius, Presentation to the Peel Commission, 1937, ISA, record group 65, file 2869.
35. Ibid.
36. See Colonel Wedgwood's discussion with Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, *The New Judea*, July-August 1933, p. 153, ISA, record group 65, file 52.
37. Antonius, Presentation to the Peel Commission, 1937.
38. George Antonius, 1935 Lecture to Canadian Institute of International Affairs, "The League of Nations in Its Relation to 'A' Mandate," ISA, record group 65, file AT69-2754.

39. Antonius to John Crane, 15 February 1932, ISA, record group 65, file 854–330.
40. *Ibid.*
41. George Antonius, "The Machinery of Government in Palestine," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, vol. 164 (November 1932), eds. Harry Viteles and Khalil Totah, pp. 7, 4.
42. Antonius, Presentation to the Peel Commission, 1937.
43. Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 9–10.
44. Antonius, "Machinery of Government," pp. 5, 7.
45. Antonius, Presentation to the Peel Commission, 1937.
46. Antonius, "Machinery of Government," p. 7.
47. *Ibid.*
48. Antonius to Rogers, 23 February 1932, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA; "Who Are the Tools of Colonization and the Supports of the Mandate," *Mir at al Sharq* (Jerusalem), 20 February 1932. The case came up for hearing in October and concluded with the editor, Boutros Shehadeh, issuing a public apology in several Palestine newspapers.
49. Thomas Hodgkin, "Antonius, Palestine, and the 1930s," in *The Gazelle Review of Middle East Literature*, no. 10, ed. Thomas Hardy (London: Ithaca, 1982), p. 8.
50. Antonius to Rogers, 12 February 1932, and 24 March 1932, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.
51. Antonius to Rogers, 24 March 1932, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.
52. Antonius to Rogers, 28 August 1934, Antonius papers, vol. 2, ICWA.
53. *Ibid.*
54. Antonius to Rogers, 13 May 1932, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.
55. Antonius to Chief Secretary, 28 October 1932 and 16 November 1932; Acting-Chief Secretary to Antonius, 12 November 1932; and Chief Secretary to Antonius, 13 December 1932, all in ISA, record group 65, file 866.
56. In 1933, Zionist immigration jumped to an unprecedented 30,327 (Walid Khalidi, ed., *From Haven to Conquest: Readings in Zionism and the Palestine Problem until 1948* [Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1971], p. 842).
57. Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine*, p. 145.
58. *Ibid.*
59. Antonius to Crane, 12 July 1933, ISA, record group 65, file 860–330.
60. Antonius, Presentation to the Peel Commission, 1937.
61. Antonius to Rogers, 2 August 1932, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA; Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (Commons), 1937, Evidence to the Palestine Royal Commission of the 1936 Disturbances, col. 134, pp. 362–363.
62. Antonius, Presentation to the Peel Commission, 1937.
63. Antonius to Charles Crane, 25 October 1933, ISA, record group 65, file 860–330.
64. *Ibid.* According to Porath, the number of participants was listed at "2,000 according to the police; 10,000 according to *al-Jami'ah al-Arabiyyah*" (*The Palestinian Arab National Movement*, p. 44; ref. Joint Bureau News 5, 7, 23.7.35, ZA, s/25, 3139; CID Reports, 31.5.35, 5.8.35, and 24.8.35, FO 371/18957).

65. Antonius to C. Crane, 28 October 1933, ISA, record group 65, file 860–330.

66. Ibid. Porath noted that non-Palestinian Arab support was also evidenced during the Jaffa demonstration through “the participation of two delegations as a token of Arab solidarity: one from Transjordan, and one from Syria” (*The Palestinian Arab National Movement*, p. 45). Also see Hadawi and John, *The Palestine Diary*, p. 248, and ref. *New York Times*, 29 October 1933, IV, 2:3.

67. Antonius to C. Crane, 28 October 1933, ISA, record group 65, file 860–330.

68. Antonius to Rogers, 30 September 1934 report, Antonius papers, vol. 2, ICWA. Among the correspondents who came to his home, Antonius spoke with Christopher Lumby of the *Times* (London), Wallace Deuel of the *Chicago Daily News*, de Launois, editor of *La Bourse Égyptienne*, and Lindt of *Le journal de Genève*.

69. Antonius to Rogers, 28 August 1934, Antonius papers, vol. 2, ICWA.

70. Ibid.

71. Ibid.

72. Ibid.

73. Antonius to Ernest Hocking, 11 March 1935, ISA, record group 65, file AT464.

74. Ibid.

75. Hodgkin, “Antonius, Palestine, and the 1930s,” p. 19.

76. Antonius to Rogers, 5 September 1936, Antonius papers, vol. 2, ICWA.

77. Sir Herbert Samuel, “Great Britain and Palestine,” *Jewish Chronicle*, 29 November 1935, ISA, record group 65.

78. Antonius to Rogers, 28 August 1934, ICWA.

10

Syria and Lectures, 1935

Managers are not scientists, nor do we expect them to be. But the processes of problem solving, conflict resolution, and recognition of dilemmas have great kinship with the academic pursuit of truth. . . . It accentuates freedom of opinion and dissent. It is against all forms of totalitarianism, dogma, mechanization, and blind obedience.

—Philip E. Slater and Warren G. Bennis, *Harvard Business Review*
(September–October 1990)

In 1935, when Antonius wrote and spoke about the problems facing the Arab nation, he emphasized the nation's unequal relationship with empire, the truncation of Syria, and the lack of progress toward Palestinian and Syrian independence. By then, Iraq and other Arab states had joined the League of Nations as sovereign countries. For Antonius, the movement of all Arabs toward independence and unity was irresistible, for the nation was already united in language, culture, and history. It was divided by easily surmountable policy hurdles that had been introduced after World War I, such as different currencies, passport requirements, and trade policies. However irresistible the yearning and need for unity, however, many other forces were generating conflict and division. Hence, the challenge to promote and sustain real unity—not simply symbolic, ideological, or political unity, but the more fundamental wealth-generating unity derived from concrete projects promoting increasing cooperation, collaboration, and social, cultural, and commercial networks and exchange between and among the different Arab states.

In addition, Antonius had a premonition of revolt, and he warned his audiences that there would never be peace until Palestine obtained independence and reunited with Syria, in federation with other parts of the Arab nation. By 1935, he still sustained his faith in a spiritual interpretation and ultimately moral resolution of Palestine's problems, trusting that material force could never sustain an unjust course of action.

Problems in Syria

Antonius was called upon to help settle a conflict between the Greek Orthodox patriarchate and the lay community in Palestine in 1932. This conflict exemplified in microcosm the intense Arab national desire for representation: The Palestinian laity was pushing for electoral reforms that would allow it to participate in the election of the church patriarch in Jerusalem.¹ Just as the Western Wall controversy in the 1920s became a heated political issue rather than a religious conflict, so too the seemingly religious issues raised by the Greek Orthodox community in Palestine symbolized Arab national demands for increased voice in matters affecting Arabs. There had long been criticism in the lay community over the lack of Arab representation in the hierarchy of the Greek Orthodox Church in Palestine. By 1926, "their resolutions were now almost exclusively nationalist, calling for the election of an Arab patriarch and the rejection of anyone elected without the participation of the Arab people."² In 1932 Antonius accepted the request of the patriarchate and the lay community that he involve himself in the issue, and he began by counseling the parties involved, including mandatory officials.

Throughout the 1930s Antonius never lost sight of the fact that Palestinian and Syrian problems were connected; nor did he lose touch with friends and colleagues who were struggling, just as he was, against colonial institutions opposed to independence and self-government. Antonius's service as a mediator in the 1930s began with electoral problems in his church, followed by his confidential meetings with Wauchope. French officials and Arab nationalists in Lebanon and Syria also sought out Antonius for advice. These meetings helped him develop sections in his book concerning postwar developments outside Palestine, and helped him maintain close, supportive connections with his friends who were pushing for unity and good government in Lebanon and Syria.

By the 1930s, the French administration had effectively severed Lebanon from the majority of Muslims, who were segregated inland, away from the Mediterranean. France was promoting sectarianism through elections based on different denominations rather than on broadly based, nondenominational political parties and constituencies. It had also parceled out the key positions of president, prime minister, and speaker of the house among the three religious groups: Maronites, Sunnis, and Greek Orthodox. The country was divided into multiple administrative units subject to centralized French rule.

When Antonius met with Lebanese friends and colleagues, he always encouraged unity based on coordination and commitment to the nation beyond petty personal and party differences. In early 1932, after meeting with Chauvel, head of the French high commissioner's political cabinet,

he traveled to Beirut, Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo to study elections in Syria and Lebanon and to meet with officials and politicians. He was most concerned with "the failure of [Syrian] elections held at the end of December" 1931.³ From his review of the Arab press, he had gathered that High Commissioner Ponsot's plans for the election of Syrian representatives and for the structure of the interim government had initially received wide support. Even Hashim Bey al-Atasi, "the normally irreconcilable leader of the Nationalist Union," the most influential politician in Homs and the former prime minister under Emir Faisal, had agreed to serve on the provisional council of state. In Damascus, Jamil Mardam, another major player in the moderate wing of the popular National Bloc and one of Antonius's friends, met regularly with Ponsot's officials to hammer out election procedures.⁴ "So far, so good," Antonius wrote Rogers on February 12, 1932—until "Ponsot took a step which, unimportant though it may have appeared, proved fatal to the success of the election." In addition to assuming the functions of chief of state and packing a consultative council with pro-French members, Ponsot appointed Tawfiq al-Hayani secretary-general of the council. Antonius described the latter as infamous "for his blind attachment to the French and his lukewarmness about national aspirations."⁵

As Syrian elections drew near, complaints mounted and intensified to such a pitch due to the zeal shown by police and officials that rioting broke out in all major urban centers. "Polling stations were invaded and ransacked," and more police and troops were sent in, leading to more clashes between the forces of order and the crowds, and causing many injuries and deaths. Consequently, no elections were held in Damascus or Hama. Of the 70 delegates elected from Homs and Aleppo, as Antonius discovered, 54 came from the Moderate Party, "which is patriotically working for the perpetuation of the enslavement of Syria to French rule."⁶ The French-backed Liberal Constitutionalist Party soundly beat the Nationalist Bloc in Aleppo, although the Bloc candidates won in Homs. Historian Philip Khoury has carefully documented how the French manipulated the elections, subtly gerrymandering electoral districts and rigging the vote, reshuffling deputies, engaging in character assassination and smear campaigns, arresting some, intimidating and terrorizing others by promoting obsessive fears between minorities, especially between Christians and Muslims.⁷ Antonius felt that the French were to be severely criticized for their use of "harsh and devious procedures" against the Nationalist candidates and parties.

When Antonius paid another visit to Syria and Lebanon on March 25, 1932, he was primarily interested in discovering how the Syrian Nationalist Party was faring under the "smarting blow" of defeat in the December elections and how the right wing of the Nationalist Party had been

persuaded to enter into a pact with the French. Through meetings with Mardam, among others, Antonius learned that the pact was "in reality, a bargain of a somewhat mercenary nature," which, after weeks of negotiations, resulted in the right wing of the Nationalist Party gaining some six out of ten seats⁸ in primary elections in the Damascus constituency, with the remaining three having been reserved for moderates.⁹ As for the party's left wing, Antonius learned through meetings with the powerful Riad Sulh and others in Beirut and Damascus that it was seeking to maintain unity with its colleagues of the right. As the chamber was scheduled to assemble on April 25 to elect a president, the Syrian Nationalist Party hoped that despite its minority status of 20, relative to 49 moderates in the chamber, sufficient unity might allow the party to pressure and persuade moderates within the chamber and outside to vote along Nationalist lines.¹⁰ Sulh, Emir Adil Arslan, Nabih al-Azmah, and Shukri al Quwwatli were prominent members of "The 'Istiqlal' group, descended from one of the secret societies of the years before 1914" with the objective of "complete independence of the Arab countries."¹¹ Antonius was hopeful that unity could be achieved, and he told Chauvel during their meeting in Beirut, "One thing is pretty certain, and that is that the difficulties of the French in Syria, far from having been overcome by the bargain with the right wing . . . have only just begun."¹²

After exploring electoral problems in Syria, Antonius turned his attention to the presidential election in Lebanon, which was scheduled for the third week of April. As he studied the campaign platforms of some dozen candidates and interviewed several of them, he uncovered an "unedifying and somewhat disgusting state of affairs." The problem he encountered centered upon the French high commissioner's role in the election. It was "a matter of common knowledge cynically tolerated by the majority of people concerned," that Ponsot's choice of a president determined whom the Chamber of Representatives in Lebanon elected. Hence, "intrigue and protestation of loyalty to the French" dominated the electoral campaign.¹³

Antonius returned to Palestine in April, but felt compelled to visit Syria and Lebanon again near month's end, for he saw that the situation portended outbreaks of violence well beyond the two assassination attempts made on the lives of pro-French moderates. In Lebanon, popular discontent appeared likely if Ponsot followed what Antonius perceived as the inflexible logic of the French Christianizing policy and effectively nominated a Christian president to the chamber instead of the most popular candidate, Muhammad Jisr, who was a Muslim. On April 25, just before Ponsot's nomination of the Lebanese president, Antonius arrived in Beirut and held meetings with Chauvel and other French officials, as well as with President Charles Dabbas.¹⁴

As he understood it, "the French have made and are anxious to keep Lebanon as a sort of Christian citadel to stem the tide of Muslim nationalism which pervades the rest of Syria." France's Christianizing policy had already heightened French unpopularity, and its continued attempts to block the movement toward independence and unity through the appointment of a Christian president were bound to increase popular resentment. Antonius, himself a Christian, tried to explain that the policy was not only "wrong and contrary to progress" but also that the French should take into account Muslim opinion, and study "the effect which this or that solution might have on the psychology of the Muslim population." In particular, he sought to persuade Dabbas, whom he considered a man of "the highest integrity," to accept an extension of his term of office; and he encouraged the French mandatory officials "to seek a provisional solution and make use of the interregnum to bring about the most urgent needed reforms."¹⁵

On May 9 the high commissioner issued decrees dissolving the cabinet, suspending the constitution, disbanding the chamber, and entrusting the government for an indefinite period to President Dabbas. Antonius wrote Rogers on May 13, 1932 that "primitive though it may be, it was the only feasible" course of action, especially as it cut administrative costs at a time when "Lebanon is, without exaggeration, on the verge of bankruptcy." Stephen Longrigg wrote that the cause of the high commissioner's intervention "lay in the continued factions and extravagances of the Chamber, the excessive confessionism which it encouraged—and which the forthcoming presidential election would but increase—and, above all, the continuance of the world-wide economic crisis which was currently afflicting the Lebanon."¹⁶ In the interim, Antonius expected the French to administer a more cost-effective government; but "it remains to be seen whether the French will have the sense to put it to good use" and formulate a new constitution "which will serve to mitigate rather than emphasize denominational differences."¹⁷ For Antonius, there was no alternative to issue-oriented, democratic, transparent, and accountable systems of government.

Having concluded his meetings in Beirut, Antonius hastened to Aleppo, not merely because the chamber's convocation had been postponed but because rumors had reached him that the left wing of the Nationalist Party in Aleppo was planning to "disassociate themselves from their colleagues in Damascus." While in Aleppo, Antonius met with District Commissioner Lavastre and received a visit from Subhi Bey Barakat, "the anti-French rebel leader from Antioch turned self-seeking Aleppine politician and French collaborator,"¹⁸ who had led the Moderate Party and recently had escaped an assassination plot (arranged in retaliation for the rigged voting). He devoted most of his time to meet-

ings with his friends, two of the three "ablest and most powerful personalities in Syria," Sa'adallah Bey Jabri, vice president of the National Bloc, and 'Abd al-Rahman al-Kayyali.¹⁹ Many of his discussions with these individuals concerned the Aleppo nationalists' attitude toward the chamber.²⁰

Overall, Antonius was heartened by assurances that they aimed to maintain unity within the Syrian Nationalist Party as a whole and between the Aleppo and Damascus members in particular, for only through such unity did he perceive some hope for an end to French rule. "So long as the Nationalists in the Chamber can count upon the support of the Nationalists outside of it, for so long will the endeavor of the French to apply partial remedies remain futile."²¹ Antonius understood that despite their intention to maintain unity, the Syrian nationalists remained skeptical of the chamber's effectiveness and of the Moderates, as well as of the right-wing members of the Nationalist Party negotiating with the French. Indeed, the Aleppo nationalists, like Antonius himself, had observed the continued divisiveness caused by French involvement in Syrian affairs generally, and in the elections particularly. Moreover, since Nationalist aims had been thwarted since the French military occupation in 1920, Antonius well understood the attitude of Jabri and Kayyali: "They say and say with great force, that the experience of the last 12 years has disillusioned them about the possibility of coming to terms with the French until there were to come a radical change in French policy."²²

Antonius always felt that Syrian and Palestinian problems primarily stemmed from Britain's failure to respect the integrity of Greater Syria and to honor its wartime pledges to support Arab unity and independence. Hence, when Lord Winterton, chairman of the Imperial Affairs Committee, asked Antonius to speak about "Problems in the Arab World" before a closed gathering of some forty members of parliament, and when the Royal Institute of International Affairs also asked that he present a lecture on "Syria and the French Mandate" during a visit to London in the 1930s, Antonius spoke passionately on the issues, explaining the origin of the problems and the continued frustration of Arab desires for independence. "It is perhaps [with] what is called the 'dismemberment of Syria' more than in anything else, that the key to unrest and trouble which the French have experienced lies."²³ Antonius explained how, after the French military occupation of Syria in 1920, Syrians were further divided by the forced French partition of Lebanon and Syria, with Syria being further subdivided into four separate administrations. The French, as he viewed it, were intent upon crushing the Arab nationalist movement, which appeared to threaten their rule in North Africa. They blocked Arab unity in Syria by raising new territorial boundaries aimed at keeping Muslims inland. Moreover, by erecting what Antonius termed

their "Christian citadel" in Lebanon, where only a Christian was allowed to become president, they were promoting harmful sectarian strife.

Through travel, study, and meetings in Baghdad in 1933, and through an examination of Syrian and Palestinian problems and popular opinion—particularly in relation to the end of the mandate in Iraq and the latter's entry into the League of Nations as a sovereign state in 1932—Antonius saw an inevitable intensification of Palestinian and Syrian discontent. "[Iraq's] final emergence from the mandated stage is bound to make it increasingly difficult for France and Great Britain to defend the state of vassalage in which they continue to keep Syria, Palestine, and Transjordan."²⁴ After the proclamation of Iraqi independence in 1932, Syrian resistance intensified against French manipulation of elections, and against the French government's proposed treaty of November 1933, which was aimed at perpetuating French domination and denial of Syria's existence as a sovereign state.²⁵

As Antonius later wrote in *The Arab Awakening*, in 1933 after the Syrian Chamber of Deputies rejected the treaty on the grounds that certain of its clauses undermined "the sovereignty, the unity, and even the internal autonomy of the proposed independent Arab State," the new French high commissioner, M. de Martel, "suspended the Chamber for an indefinite period, [and] restricted the functions of the government to those of a mere channel for the execution of his orders."²⁶ "I think the French were taken completely by surprise. They did not expect that 46 of the people whom they had helped over the hurdles of the election would reject the treaty," he told his audience at the Royal Institute of International Affairs' Chatham House in London during his address on "Syria and the French Mandate," which was subsequently published in their journal, *International Affairs*.²⁷ The problems had begun with the postwar truncation of the naturally cohesive geographic and cultural unit known as Syria since Roman times; and although these problems were complex, they were traceable not only to "the rigid and rather narrow conceptions which the French hold of their interests in Syria, but also in the psychological make-up of the French . . . the apparent inability of the average French administrator to grasp the difference between governing by influence and governing in virtue of acknowledged right."²⁸

The Arab Awakening

Antonius adopted many new duties and pursued many special projects from 1932 to 1935, but he concentrated intensely on the research and writing of his book. Crane had supported the idea of such a book in 1930, but it was not until 1932 that the idea became a major focus of Antonius's attention. He was especially encouraged in the spring of 1931, when after

a meeting with Sheriff Hussein and additional meetings with Emir Abdullah in Jordan in September and October he was given access to a "jealously guarded chest" containing hundreds of documents, including the McMahon-Hussein correspondence of 1915–1916, which expressed Britain's pledge to support Arab independence in return for Hussein's mounting an Arab revolt against the Turks.²⁹ This chest of documents served as the "documentary edifice" upon which Antonius proposed to write a "new and accurate" history of the Arab national movement, wartime promises, and postwar developments.³⁰ Crane wrote suggesting that Antonius send him a copy for safekeeping, for rumor had it that the British were interested in finding and destroying it. Antonius spent hours and days in Cairo, transcribing and making photostats of batches of documents from Transjordan. He then moved on to collect other materials, including substantial oral testimony of early Arab nationalists and witnesses to the Arab Revolt and infant national movement dating back to the nineteenth century. He intended "to travel to and fro between Baghdad, Aleppo, Damascus, Beirut, Cairo, Jedha, Constantinople, Berlin, Paris, and London, and to devote a good deal of time to the often thankless task of persuading people to speak frankly and accurately about a tangled and elusive subject."³¹

In researching the early years of the National Movement, Antonius gathered fact upon fact in Egypt through meetings with his father-in-law, Nimr, who had been one of the five founders of the first secret society of Christians, Muslims, and Druzes in Beirut in 1875. Antonius considered this society "the first organized effort in the Arab National Movement."³² He corroborated Nimr's information with that of another living member, and following "the faint trail of the secret society of 1875 . . . questioned people in all parts of Syria and in Cairo and Baghdad."³³ Through additional meetings and archival research in the British Public Records Office, he traced the record and impact of the placards young Arab nationalists secretly wrote and posted at night to encourage Arabs to revolt in the 1880s. These placards called for an end to Turkish tyranny and censorship, for recognition of Arabic as an official language, and for progress toward Arab autonomy. They were, in his view, "the first trumpet call emitted by the infant Arab movement."³⁴

Among other secret societies, Antonius learned of some half dozen established between 1909 and 1914, through information gathered "from numerous written and oral sources—in most cases from the founders themselves."³⁵ Regarding the Literary Club (*al-Muntada al-Adabi*), which had been established in Constantinople in 1909 and functioned as a clearinghouse for ideas, with "a membership running into thousands of whom the majority were students" from Syria, Iraq, and other parts of the Ottoman Empire, Antonius gathered details from

his friend Jamal Husseini, who had been one of the founders³⁶ and whom Hodgkin described as one of the best and nicest among the old guard of Palestinian nationalists.³⁷ Antonius also obtained information on the Ottoman Decentralization Party, established in Egypt in 1912, from Rashid Rida,³⁸ a founder. Although some leading Arab nationalists from Palestinian families such as the Nashashibis and Abd al-Hadis had been killed for their anti-Turkish activity during the war, Antonius gathered information from their associates and relatives. Antonius was uniquely situated to conduct research into the various secret societies, for many of their founders and members were his friends—including Palestinians such as Awni Abd al-Hadi; Rafiq Tamimmi of Nablus; Hassan Hammad, also of Nablus; and emirs Amin and Adil Arslan, Druzes from Lebanon.³⁹

Having begun his research with material gained from participants in the Arab National Movement, such as his father-in-law, Antonius focused on the early stages of revolt and the documents concerning British promises that encouraged the Arab nationalists to mount a revolt against the Turks in return for Arab independence. He traveled from Jerusalem to Baghdad in February 1933. There, in addition to studying developments arising out of the end of the mandate in Iraq, he explored the history of the National Movement and the Arab Revolt during four long audiences with King Faisal and with other participants in the Arab Revolt, such as the former king Ali and Yasin Pasha al Hashimi, a distinguished soldier and minister of finance.⁴⁰ In April 1933, Antonius compiled lists of people to interview, contacted the Institute of Arab Studies, examined the files of *al Sharq* in Damascus, and researched other materials at the American University of Beirut. He then proceeded to London in July for extensive research in 150 volumes of parliamentary debates, the files of the *Times*, and other materials located at the Institute of International Affairs and the Royal Central Asian Society in London.

After returning to Palestine and witnessing the disturbances in October 1933, Antonius continued his work. He pored through the files of *al-Moqattam* and *al Qibla* in Egypt from November 22 to December 10, and the complete files of *al-Balaq* and *al-Ittihad al-Usmani* in Damascus, where he interviewed twenty-five or so witnesses and participants in the Arab National Movement. On February 20, 1934, he left Palestine again via Egypt for further research in London, where he examined additional documents at the Foreign Office and the historical section of the Committee of Imperial Defense. He also gained access to confidential documents in British government departments; the Arabian Legation minister's personal collection of papers dealing with Ibn Saud's conquest of the Hijaz in 1924; and the private papers and diaries of Sheriff Hussein, D. G. Hogarth, Sir Gilbert Clayton, and Sir Mark Sykes.

Although Antonius obtained many of Hogarth's papers, he learned that the diary Hogarth had once shown him was missing. While in London, Antonius followed up on his previous year's interviews with Lord Allenby and Wickam Steed. He complemented meetings with British historians such as Harold Temperley at Cambridge and H.A.R. Gibb in London, with a series of interviews with "Field Marshal Sir William Birdwood, Sir Ronald Storrs, Lord Winterton, Ja'far Pasha, Iraq Minister in London, Colonel S. F. Newcombe, and Colonel W. F. Stirling, to say nothing of officials in government departments."⁴¹ In the end, he was prepared to deal with the striking "discrepancy between what really happened and what the public knows."⁴²

Through research into European sources, Antonius became all the more aware of British overtures preceding the promises McMahon communicated to Sheriff Hussein in 1915 and 1916. Indeed, from his meetings with Storrs, he discovered that Kitchener and Storrs were the first to support "an alliance with Mecca." From Reginald Wingate, commander in chief of the Egyptian Army and governor general of the Sudan during World War I, he learned about Wingate's early "veiled encouragement" of Sheriff Hussein's leading an Arab revolt and jihad (holy war) against the Turks.⁴³ After studying British communications to Sheriff Hussein of the Hijaz, Ibn Saud of the Nejd, and Imam Yahya of Yemen, he reviewed the revolt's beginning on June 10, 1916, after the formal British pledges to support Arab independence and shortly after the "wholesale arrest," torture, and killing of Arabs by the Turks in April and May 1916, and traced the fulfillment of the Arab side of the contract on the battlefield.⁴⁴

Through his review of German and other sources and through his meetings with Englishmen, Europeans, and Arab participants in the Arab Revolt, Antonius fleshed out the Arab role in the Revolt. Antonius learned that Allenby, who took command of the Egyptian forces and moved into Palestine in 1917, "was quick to grasp" the significance of the Arab capture of Aqaba and noted that it was indeed "the first news of military significance" that he learned of upon arrival in Egypt. Antonius saw the political significance of this event—namely, that it "became the tangible embodiment of the Revolt and a base for the political undermining as well as the military undoing of the Turkish power in Syria."⁴⁵

After his comprehensive course of interviews and research (begun in 1932) in London, Beirut, Damascus, Amman, Baghdad, Cairo, and Jerusalem, Antonius completed the first two chapters for his book in 1935 and ended the year with a visit to the United States, where he collected additional materials.⁴⁶ In Washington, D.C., he gained access to confidential papers of the Department of State through the assistance of Wallace Murray, chief of the Near East Division. In Chicago, he met with Professor Albert H. Lybyer of the University of Illinois, studied his papers concerning

the Versailles Conference, and discussed his work as adviser to the King-Crane Commission. In New Haven he examined papers at the Edward House, and in New York he gathered "useful information and material derived from Donald Brodie's association with the King-Crane Commission." Antonius also spoke with Wallace Westermann, a professor at Columbia University, who lent him his diary and papers collected during the Versailles Conference and spoke with "unrivalled knowledge of certain phases of the negotiations."⁴⁷ Westermann's papers were particularly important, because as a member of the U.S. delegation during the Paris Peace Conference, he had obtained "two documents prepared by the intelligence department of the British Foreign Office for use by the British delegation at the peace conference" that showed "categorically that Palestine was included as part of the British pledge to the Arabs."⁴⁸ Thus, by year's end, Antonius had covered much ground. He planned to return home and devote much of the following year, 1936, to writing his book.

The Arab National Movement: 1935 Lectures

In the spring of 1935, when Antonius traveled to the United States and Canada, he presented a number of lectures and participated in various group discussions about the Arab national movement and the Palestine problem in particular at universities such as Princeton, Harvard, Yale, Michigan, Chicago, and Illinois, as well as at the Brookings Institution, the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, and the Canadian Institute of International Affairs. He did the same at gatherings in Cambridge, Manhattan, Connecticut, Washington, Chicago, and other U.S. cities, as well as in Ottawa, Toronto, and Montreal. Occasionally his appearances followed fresh on the heels of Vladimir Jabotinsky's. Throughout this tour he was welcomed by leading scholars, journalists, editors, officials, and businesspeople who knew his work and trusted him. He had befriended many leading U.S. diplomats in the Middle East, who facilitated his meeting President Franklin Roosevelt on May 1, 1935. His visit was rich and meaningful, for his audiences showed great sympathy and interest. Among others he met were Henry Luce, editor of *Times* and *Fortune*, and Luce's wife; Max Mason, president of Rockefeller Foundation, and his wife; and John Finley of the *New York Times*.⁴⁹ And although the pace of his visit was serious and intense, the depth of interest and encouragement shown by all buoyed his spirit. He greatly enjoyed "a gay dinner in the Rainbow Room," during which he shared photos of his little girl with Mr. and Mrs. Charles Merz of the *New York Times*, who found the 1935 draft of his book "immensely worth telling . . . the background well set; the style direct and engaging."⁵⁰

Before beginning his 1935 lecture tour, Antonius completed his first chapters on the early Arab nationalist movement, which he defined in terms of a nineteenth-century revival of the Arab language and the activity of secret societies. By then, he had also collected most of the source material on the Arab Revolt and the postwar developments. In his lecture notes of 1935, we find in skeletal form his thesis on the Arab nation and national movement, and his analysis of the problems and issues that he expanded upon in *The Arab Awakening* published in 1938.

Of the early Arab national movement, he explained that it was “essentially a cultural, not a regional movement,” which gradually acquired a political complexion.⁵¹ He spoke about the importance of the Arabic language as “the great symbol and most efficacious instrument of Arab unity,” and praised the efforts of the Arabic Academy in Cairo “to safeguard [the] integrity of Arabic and adapt it to the needs of progress in the arts and sciences, by means of dictionary lexicons, etc., and by purification; to compile [a] historical dictionary, to study . . . dialects and several questions relating to the development of Arabic.”⁵²

Of the major problems facing the Arab national movement, he emphasized the inequality of the struggle between nation and empire. He retraced the problems of postwar fragmentation and division to the empire’s betrayal of its wartime pledges supporting Arab independence and unity. He defined the “economic imperialistic interests” in Palestine as primarily “strategic, economic, transport” concerns. For example, Britain was interested in Palestine’s harbors to ship oil from Mosul and potash from the Dead Sea, as well as in Palestine’s strategic location as a buffer for continued British control of the Suez Canal and India.⁵³

Antonius told his American and Canadian audiences that the Palestinian problem should be considered within the context of the Arab national movement. He believed the movement drew its strength from the Arab desire for political union, which had developed from a “moral and cultural union,” and that the movement was “based on an essentially modern idea, definitely truthful and indestructible.” Although he thought that the movement would be unable to achieve its goals “so long as present forces remain active, so long as [the] Arab movement remains powerless to overcome [the] strength of economic pressure,” he was convinced that the “nationalistic spirit cannot be so easily quenched.”⁵⁴ Although it was facing dire challenges, Antonius said, “The movement was directed toward unity, that is, towards unity of Palestine and Syria and towards federation.”⁵⁵ He believed the Palestine mandate would end someday, and that the longer Britain continued to deny its original and fundamental obligation of facilitating Palestinian independence, the “more terrible will be the bloody retribution.” Antonius called for the

British government and the League of Nations to redraft the mandate to stop Zionism and protect Palestine's rights.⁵⁶

Antonius said that "the development of consciousness which helps the interchange of ideas may enable [the Arab movement] to build up [an] increasingly stronger front against Britain, France, Zionists."⁵⁷ He believed that as consciousness developed, there would be "not only positive effort, but also negative, such as [a] boycott which, however insufficient, has (now and then) helped their cause." "If peaceful methods are unsuccessful," Antonius wrote, "[the Arabs] may resort to force when the psychological time presents itself."⁵⁸

Antonius was convinced that the emancipation of Palestine would not necessarily be determined by the currently dominant forces. He wrote in his lecture notes for a Princeton University audience in 1935, "It often happens in the history of nations that a conflict of opposing forces which seems destined inevitably to end in the triumph of the stronger party is given an unexpected twist by the emergence of new forces which owe their emergence to that very triumph."⁵⁹

In his Canadian lecture focusing on the articles of the Covenant of the League of Nations and the Treaty of Versailles as well as the "A" Mandate in Palestine, Antonius told his audience that "the way in which [the British mandate in Palestine] had been applied" contradicted the original obligation and intention.⁶⁰ The Zionist and colonial abrogation of the fundamental constitutional obligation of facilitating Palestinian independence and self-rule "demonstrates that its entire orientation was and is directed toward converting a predominantly Arab land into a Jewish theocracy euphemistically called a home. The Balfour Declaration, so metamorphosed and distorted, thus bids defiance of the Covenant of the League of Nations." Amid evidence of a flawed and unworkable mandate, Antonius urged that "England, or the assembled wisdom of the League of Nations, redraft a state paper which has produced disastrous result." He predicted, as his friend Richmond had said 14 years earlier: "If this is not done, one of two alternatives must be accepted. One is a permanent standing army. The other is bloodshed."⁶¹

Notes

1. Antonius to Rogers, 12 February 1932, Antonius papers, vol. 1, archives of the Institute of Current World Affairs [hereafter, ICWA]; Antonius to Bertram, 18 March 1932, Israel State Archives, Hakiryia [hereafter, ISA], record group 65, file AT251-457.

2. Derek Hopwood, *The Russian Presence in Syria and Palestine, 1843-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 205. For Antonius's correspondence on this matter, see ISA, record group 65, files AT251-457-332 and AT153-704.

3. Antonius to Rogers, 12 February 1932, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.
4. Philip S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920–1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 351.
5. Antonius to Rogers, 12 February 1932, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA. Here Antonius apparently disagrees with the later C. Ernest Dawn interpretation, which suggests that al-Hayani had some secret sympathies for the National Bloc (despite findings that he apparently provided the French with intelligence reports on rebels). See C. E. Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism: Essays on the Origins of Arab Nationalism* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1973), p. 176; and Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, p. 363.
6. Antonius to Rogers, 12 February 1932, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.
7. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, pp. 362–365.
8. Khoury writes that there were ten seats; Antonius, that there were nine.
9. Antonius to Rogers, 12 February 1932, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA; Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, p. 374.
10. Antonius to Rogers, 9 April 1932, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.
11. Albert Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon: A Political Essay* (London: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 192.
12. Antonius to Rogers, 9 April 1932, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Antonius to Rogers, 23 April 1932, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Stephen Hemsley Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate* (New York: Octagon Books, 1972), p. 203. (This book was issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs.)
17. Antonius to Rogers, 13 May 1932, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.
18. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, p. 375.
19. Hashim al-Atasi (president), Ibrahim Hananu (*za'im*, or political chief), Faris al-Khuri (*amid*, or dean), Jamil Mardam, and Shukri al-Quwwatli were the additional five of the seven members elected by the National Bloc Congress in Homs in 1932. They “ran the daily affairs of the National Bloc and constituted its effective leadership” (Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, p. 265).
20. *Ibid.*
21. Antonius to Rogers, 13 May 1932, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.
22. *Ibid.* For further reference, see Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*; and Albert Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon: A Political Essay* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 180–199.
23. George Antonius, “Syria and the French Mandate,” *International Affairs*, no. 4 (July–August 1934), p. 525.
24. Antonius to Rogers, 18 April 1933, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.
25. Antonius, “Syria and the French Mandate.”
26. George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1938), p. 381.
27. Antonius, “Syria and the French Mandate,” p. 534.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 534–535.
29. Antonius to Rogers, 15 September 1934, Antonius papers, vol. 2, ICWA.
30. *Ibid.*

31. Antonius to Rogers, 28 January 1933 and 15 September 1934, Antonius papers, vol. 2, ICWA.
32. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 79.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 108. For a full review of Antonius's work concerning "The Infant Movement: 1868–1908," see *Ibid.*, pp. 79–125. Antonius's account of the secret societies, based largely on oral research and published in *The Arab Awakening* in 1938, remains a prime source, but for further details see Majid Khadduri, "Aziz Ali al Masri and the Arab Nationalist Movement," *St. Antony's Papers* 17, ed. Albert Hourani (Oxford, 1965), p. 140.
36. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 109.
37. Jamal, whom Hodgkin considered a "bourgeois (sometimes quasi-feudal) nationalis[t]," came from a leading Palestinian Arab family with extensive landholdings and political influence. During the British mandate, he was closely associated with the political activity of his uncle Haj Amin al-Husseini, the mufti of Jerusalem (Thomas Hodgkin, "Antonius, Palestine, and the 1930s," in *The Gazette Review of Middle East Literature*, no. 10, ed. Roger Hardy [London: Ithaca, 1982], p. 26).
38. Well known to Antonius, Rashid Rida was a nationalist and a leading Syrian Muslim in Egypt whose periodical *Al Manar* focused on the question of Islamic modernism, which Hourani noted sought to "combine rigid adherence to the essentials of the faith [Islam] with flexibility in reinterpreting law and social morality in light of the interests of the Muslim community" (Albert Hourani, *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East* [London: Macmillan, 1981], pp. 122, 187).
39. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, pp. 110–111.
40. Antonius to Rogers, 28 January 1933, Antonius papers, vol. 1, ICWA.
41. Antonius to Rogers, 20 September 1933, and 1 June 1934, Antonius papers, vols. 1 and 2, ICWA.
42. *Ibid.*
43. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 139; Antonius, "Notes from a conversation with Sir Ronald Storrs in Paris on 24 May 1934," ISA, record group 65, file A7227–2779.
44. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 143.
45. *Ibid.*, pp. 203, 187, 189.
46. *Ibid.*, pp. 223, 225.
47. H. A. R. Gibb immensely enjoyed reading Antonius's first draft chapters, and on June 7, 1935, he wrote Antonius that there was "little indeed which I can criticize." Overall, Gibb felt "the preliminary survey on Islamization-Arabization gives the essential facts concisely, (I think) accurately, and the study of the educational movement in Syria is full of interesting material, most of it new to me" (record group 65, file 2907, ISA).
48. Antonius to Rogers, 30 September 1935, Antonius papers, vol. 2, ICWA.
49. The Hoover Institute at Stanford opened the Westermann Papers to public access in 1964. Yahya Armajani, "The Awakening of the Arabic-Speaking People," in *Middle East Past and Present* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), pp. 293–294.

50. Antonius to Rogers, 30 September 1935, Antonius papers, vol. 2, ICWA.
51. Charles Merz to Antonius, 25 May 1935, ISA, record group 65, file AT12-464.
52. Antonius, "Notes for Princeton Students," 1935, ISA, record group 65, file 3339.
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Ibid.*; Antonius, "Nationalism in Arabia Discussed by Antonius," *Princetonian* (15 March 1935).
56. Antonius, "Notes for Princeton Students."
57. Antonius, "Notes on 'A' Mandate."
58. Antonius, "Notes for Princeton Students."
59. *Ibid.*; Antonius, "Nationalism in Arabia."
60. Antonius, "Notes for Princeton Students."
61. George Antonius, 1935 Lecture to Canadian Institute of International Affairs, "The League of Nations in Its Relation to 'A' Mandate," ISA, record group 65, file AT69-2754.

11

The Palestinians Revolt: 1936–1938

The premium that an individual places above his opportunity cost before engaging in an illegal act is a measure of the value he places on legitimacy (an ideological consideration). Likewise the net cost an individual incurs in attempting to force change is a measure of the injustice and alienation an individual feels.

—*Douglass North, Structure and Change in Economic History*

From 1936 through 1939, Palestinians revolted. The rebellion began with a general strike in April 1936. Its primary causes were unrealized political demands, increasing landlessness, and the general sense of vulnerability among Palestinians under government policies favoring Zionist goals. There were three phases: the first, from April to October 1936; the second, from 1937 through 1938; and the third, in 1939. George Antonius played no active role in the revolt, but he lived in Palestine during the first phase and witnessed much of the violence. As he had earlier, he grieved at the tragedy caused by failed British colonial policy, rejection of diplomacy, and the resort to deceit and brutality.

In the 1930s Antonius continued to hold public officials and policy accountable to a moral standard; policy reflected their interpretation of reality, and their respect or abuse of humanity. Antonius argued that they had a moral responsibility to know the truth, and to protect the public good and the vulnerable. Antonius never underestimated the role of individuals, because he trusted in their defining human capacity and the power of the courageous and moral man to lead, and to restrain aggression. During the revolt, he wrote, "The insane situation goes on, with the same destruction and bloodshed. And it goes on because two or three—not more—men lack the courage or the honesty to say what they think."¹

A number of scholars, in researching the imperial past, have explored the darker side of European colonial rule and corroborated Antonius's views. Works by Chatterjee, Keay, and Hosking all reveal the high costs of that rule. Hobsbawm, Anderson, and others have shown how imperial projections of "imaginary communities" and "imaginary leadership" helped rulers control and marginalize local people. Dozens of articles and numerous books have shown in increasing detail the deleterious impact of imperial rules and institutions. Imperial state building obstructed nation building, civil society, and moral democracy. Divide-and-rule strategies eroded ancient stocks of social capital, exacerbated differences, and froze complex social and economic dynamics. The harm done to nation, culture, and the indigenous capacity for self-governance has yet to be fully accounted for.

The First Six Months: April–October 1936

The most difficult years Antonius experienced were 1936 through 1939. He saw and lived through the revolt in Palestine in 1936. In 1937 he watched as the proposed partition plan provoked renewed unrest, which continued through 1938. While living in exile in Egypt in 1938 (for fear of having his manuscript for *The Arab Awakening* confiscated by the censors in Palestine), Antonius suffered through the bloody repression and violence, albeit from a distance, and underwent a painful personal crisis as he questioned the existence of justice in the British system and of a moral framework of values. Antonius was horrified by the violence being unleashed against Palestinians. It disturbed him greatly to see the British heritage he had so long admired and trusted overrun by bloody brutality with no evidence of conscience, morality, or compassion. In 1938 he wrote, "Their policy has turned Palestine into a shambles, they show no indication of a return to sanity, that is to say to the principles of ordinary common sense and justice which are held in such high honor in England."²

In January 1936 Antonius found Syria, and to a lesser extent, Palestine, engaged in a "crisis of the greatest importance to their future." He learned that in an attempt to check popular opposition to the planned division of Syria into separate political units, French authorities "made a sudden raid on the offices of the Nationalist Party Executive, seized their archives, and arrested two of their leaders."³ Syrian nationalists responded with demonstrations, university and labor strikes, shop closures, and clashes with police that began in Damascus, spread to Aleppo, Homs, Hama, and other cities, and resulted in many wounded and arrested. Hourani notes that the strike "was directed by the Nationalist Bloc, which issued a 'National Pact,' demanding independence, equality

of rights between members of all sects, national unity and cooperation with nationalist movements in the other Arab countries, and the raising of social, economic, moral and cultural standards . . . as well as the abandonment of the policy of the Balfour Declaration in Palestine."⁴ On his return to Jerusalem on February 4, Antonius found the "effervescence" had spread to Palestine, where large meetings were being held and telegrams sent in the name of "the people of Southern Syria" to express "condemnation of French methods and solidarity with the people in Syria."⁵

By May Antonius had seen "a recrudescence of vigor" in the Arab "desire for unity which is so deeply ingrained in the Arab National Movement."⁶ He was pleased to learn that just as the British had bent to the inevitability of new treaty relations with Egypt and to concessions in Iraq and Transjordan, so the French mandatory authorities in Syria had been pressed by a general strike (from January 11 to March 1, 1936) to invite a delegation to negotiate a treaty comparable to Britain's with Iraq.⁷ The delegation arrived in France in March. After an agreement was reached on a number of key points (such as the inclusion of Jebel Druze and Latakia in the Syrian state), a new Franco-Syrian Treaty, which Antonius considered the "turning point" in French-Arab relations, was drafted on September 9, 1936. This treaty, however, was not ratified by the French Senate until 1939.

In addition to the possibility of increased independence, Antonius was heartened by the other steps taken by the Arab National Movement toward unity: Iraq and Saudi Arabia concluded a treaty of alliance based on Muslim brotherhood and solidarity; and Egypt and Saudi Arabia settled their outstanding differences and established closer ties.⁸ However, despite these positive signs, Palestine was still suffering from British intransigence and repression. On April 15, sporadic outbreaks of violence coalesced into a demonstration. On April 21, with the pressure and strain of continued Zionist advances generating more militant Palestinian opposition, and under the influence of the obvious success of the six-week Syrian strike, a newly formed Arab Higher Committee called for a general strike throughout Palestine. The committee represented a coalition of the principal parties in Palestine, including Haj Amin al-Husseini's Palestine Arab Party; Awni Abd al-Hadi's Istiqlal Party, which envisioned Arab unity under Iraqi leadership; and Raghīb Nashashibi's National Defense Party, which supported a union of Palestine and Transjordan under Emir Abdullah.⁹ Although the committee called for a general strike, Rosemary Sayigh notes that it "initiated neither the strike nor the rebellion, both of which burst out spontaneously from mass discontent."¹⁰ The strike "included the stoppage of private and public motor transportation, the abstention of pupils from attendance at schools, and the refusal to pay taxes," as well as "violence directed

against railway traffic, telegraph and telephone wires, and motor car circulation."¹¹

The three-year revolt that began with the April 1936 strike was the most sustained Arab struggle during the interwar period, and the first to be characterized by popularly based, armed resistance. Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam and his followers were the first to call for military struggle against the British in Palestine. Ambushed and killed by police in late 1935, Qassam was regarded by Palestinians as the first martyr to their cause. The recent discovery of an arms shipment for Jews in Jaffa; the shooting death of a Palestinian resisting eviction; the continued lack of popular representation; and "the collapse of the short Palestine boom; and consequent economic distress and unemployment in Palestine," all contributed to popular discontent.¹² The most serious underlying cause, however, was the influx of 174,000 Jewish immigrants from 1932 to 1936, including 61,854 in 1935 alone.¹³ The Jewish population in Palestine had doubled in a scant five years, and in 1936 Jews made up 28 percent of the total population. In the words of Janet Abu-Lughod: "The fears of the Arabs had now a more tangible basis. At the rate at which immigrants had come in during 1935, the Jews who had formed 8 percent of the total population in 1918 might acquire a majority in another ten years."¹⁴

Britain's chronic refusal of democratic representative government denied Palestinians control over policymaking, including the power to control Jewish immigration into Palestine. Antonius understood that the majority of Palestinians felt there was no alternative but to rise up; he also understood the revolt's complex, underlying causes. The revolt was symptomatic of the violation of Palestinian property rights, which was forcing a breakdown of Palestinian society. It was a protest against the disenfranchisement of Palestinians and the destruction of their villages, which had been replaced by Zionist settlements.

In the 1920s, the majority of land sales to Zionists had been sales by absentee landowners who completely ignored local stakeholders—the thousands of villagers and cultivators with moral rights to the land and villages they had lived and worked in for generations. In the 1930s, most land sales originated with smallholders ravaged by climatic vicissitudes, bad harvests, indebtedness, and lack of protection from dispossession, for whom there was little public assistance.¹⁵ Antonius knew the Palestinian cultivators were profoundly attached to their land and villages.¹⁶ He saw the continued Zionist influence over the machinery of government under the British mandate in Palestine in the continued absence of effective legislation and of an agrarian policy, including credit facilities and tax reforms that could have protected Palestinians. What measures did exist to protect cultivators from landlessness were often circumvented, and Antonius realized that large Arab landowners who sold their

land to Zionists were as culpable as were the Zionists in exacerbating Palestinian landlessness. Increasing numbers of impoverished smallholders defaulting on their loans and losing their land to moneylenders and landlords, who in turn sold it to Zionist buyers in the 1930s, caused a socioeconomic and political transformation that led to the Palestine revolt.

In the 1920s, nearly half of Palestinian landholdings were communal *mushaa* holdings, and only 10 percent of the Palestine population were tenants.¹⁷ Throughout the 1930s, Zionist efforts to break up *mushaa* landholdings, which were concentrated in the most fertile areas (the cereal-growing plains and valleys), increased the number of vulnerable private smallholders who were forced to sell. Palestinian cultivators' disenfranchisement resulted in the emergence of a large class of Arab tenants and laborers in the 1930s. Antonius saw how people were being forced off their land, and understood their revolt as a struggle for survival as well as for self-determination, with violence being "the inevitable corollary of the moral violence done to them."¹⁸

When the strike first broke out in April 1936, Antonius met with Rabbi Judah Magnes, who invited Antonius and other Palestinians to join with Zionists in Palestine in seeking a solution. In April Antonius met three times with David Ben-Gurion, chairman of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. During the first meeting, on April 17, Antonius offered Ben-Gurion an opportunity to respond to Palestinian fears, telling him that "in the entire 18 years of British rule not a single step had been taken by the Jews that gave the Arabs the impression that the Jews were interested in their goodwill."¹⁹ He explained that it was fruitless to ask Palestinians to cooperate with Zionism, as the goal appeared to be to build a state wherein "all of this country would be handed over to Jewish rule, with the Arab merely tolerated; the state would be sovereign and separate, and none of the Arabs would have any share in it."²⁰

On April 22, 1936, a few days after the Palestinian riots in Jaffa in which 16 Jews died, Antonius met Ben-Gurion a second time in Magnes's home, and told him the violence was due to the Zionists' total disregard for Palestinians. Palestinians believed "that the Jews were totally indifferent to the views and needs of the Arabs and that there was no course open but to fight against Jewish immigration."²¹ On May 5 Antonius wrote:

The last fortnight has been a turbulent one. It began in Jaffa exactly a fortnight ago, when the Arabs rose and attacked the Jews. Almost simultaneously a political strike was declared over the country and a Higher Committee of all the Arab parties (presided over by Amin Husseini) formed to direct the strike. Transport is almost completely paralyzed, and all Arab shops are

shut. The toll of casualties is 20 Jews killed by Arabs and 8 Arabs killed by the British, and a large number of wounded on both sides. The Higher Committee have announced their determination to go on with the strike until Jewish immigration is stopped, and the other fundamental grievances of the Arabs are remedied. The British have retorted by strengthening the garrison by reinforcements from Egypt. Still, the strike goes on at full pitch and does not show signs of abating.²²

Antonius was probably quite shocked by Ben-Gurion's total disregard for Palestinians and the scale of his ambitions. Ben-Gurion rejected spiritual Zionism and aimed at Jewish settlement of Palestine and Transjordan. Ignoring Antonius's urging of restraint, he sidestepped the issue of discrimination and Palestinian fears of Zionist domination, saying simply that a Zionist state would not "dominate" Palestinians and that Zionism would liberate them through the example of "women's equality under the law and hard work."

He never considered that just as religious Jews were anathema to the commune and its Marxist and socialist ideology, so most Europeans (not to mention Palestinians) found the idea of communes anathema to their vision of family and society in the full sense of a heterogeneous society. Romanticizing Zionist settlers, Ben-Gurion was totally detached from the Palestine reality. The evidence of how unbalanced his position was lay not only in his evident ignorance of Palestinian hard work and family life but also in his disregard for the pain the Zionist adventure was causing in Palestinian lives. Perhaps the most egregious example of Zionist blindness was Ben-Gurion's and other Zionists' apparent expectation that it would be a simple matter for Palestinians to move to some other country—as if they had no attachment to the land, villages, and homes that had been theirs and their ancestors' before them for many centuries. Antonius knew that Palestinians would be as unwilling to be thus transplanted as would "farmers of Kent or Yorkshire . . . to go and settle in Ireland." He explained further that "forcible expulsion of the peasantry from the countryside in which they have their homesteads and their trees, their shrines and graveyards, and all the memories and affections that go with the life on the soil, is bound to be forcibly resisted."²³ Antonius told Ben-Gurion that the Palestinian future lay within the Arab national goal of reuniting Greater Syria. He said consideration could be made within the grander geographic framework of Syria for some accommodation of autonomous Zionist communes.

Whether or not he held a racist view of Arabs, Ben-Gurion, like other Zionists before and after him, clearly failed to respect Palestinians, their basic human and civil rights, and their capacities to develop their own country and choose their own way through a democratic framework. It

was an odd twist of mind that retained a rosy, romantic image of the demonstrably ruthless Zionist enterprise yet kept the Arabs at arm's length as they clamored for basic representative government.

Antonius understood that Palestinians were being asked to give up their rights by allowing for unrestrained territorial ambitions and parity—in essence, that the Palestinian majority was expected to share power until Zionists became the majority. If Antonius was appalled or shocked, he never showed it; but it was clear to him that there was no room here for accommodation. For his part, Ben-Gurion showed no awareness of or compassion for the Palestinian situation. At the end of the conversation, Antonius explained that Palestinians could not accommodate political Zionists' goals of a binational state and especially of a theocracy that discriminated against the Palestinians.²⁴ As Ben-Gurion had little use for the idea that Zionism should be restrained, no cooperation was possible from his side either. Magnes was aware that political Zionists were unwilling "to bring about an agreement," and that some had incredibly aggressive ambitions: "There are those who speak of a Jewish National Home containing millions of Jews—present-day Palestine, Transjordan, the Houran, and Sinai as far as the Suez Canal."²⁵ He recognized that "the Jewish people and the Arab people know that the Revisionists harbor no hope for an agreement until the Jews are a majority."²⁶ He also saw a portent of great tragedy, as he wrote his friend, Arthur Ruppin, on April 8, 1936, in that Zionists adhered to the saying: "Give the land without a people to the people without a land"—when, in fact, Palestine already had a people.²⁷

After their meeting, on April 29, Antonius wrote a memorandum to Sir Ernest Bennett, a member of the British parliament, to answer "questions about the land question." Regarding the fundamental problem of Zionist land acquisition in Palestine, Antonius explained that Zionist holdings had been allowed to increase to 19 percent of all cultivable land (although the proportion of total landmass owned by Zionists was less than half that). The Zionists' concentration of holdings in Palestine's most fertile areas was hurting thousands of long-standing cultivators and their families. The essence of the Zionist problem, as Antonius emphasized, was the essentially racist claim to exclusivity and inalienability of Jewish holdings, which John Hope-Simpson had recognized years earlier: "It must be remembered that all land purchased by the Jewish National Fund is purchased on the understanding that it becomes the inalienable property of the Jewish people in perpetuity, and that no Arab labor can ever be employed upon it."²⁸ This Zionist policy of exclusive control of the land was especially disturbing given the dramatic rise in the number of unemployed and displaced Palestinians.

Although the British-run Palestine government was aware of the problem and had “to purchase land from private owners at the expense of the taxpayer to settle landless Arabs uprooted through Zionist purchases, there had been no legislation to protect cultivators.” Because a Palestinian-Zionist settlement of the conflict seemed unlikely, Antonius hoped that a settlement would be determined by an inquiry into the problem of land and immigration, which had intensified since the 1930 Hope-Simpson Report, and through official recognition of Britain’s long-ignored pledges to support Palestinian independence. With dramatic evidence of the damage suffered by Palestinians, he urged Bennett on April 29, 1936 “that a proper inquiry be made with the least possible delay into all aspects of the [Zionist] experiment.”²⁹ However, Antonius soon realized that the proposal to send another commission to investigate Palestinian grievances was not sufficient to halt the uprising in Palestine that spring and summer.

At first, as the uprising was characterized by a strike rather than by intense fighting, Antonius thought it safe to leave his wife Katy and daughter Soraya in Jerusalem when he set off on May 10 for Turkey, for meetings and research into developments in the new republic under President Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Before his departure, Antonius helped his friend Musa Alami write a memorandum that “analyzed the situation in Palestine, the Arabs’ despair and frustration, and the grievances, and suggested that the only remedy was a cessation of Jewish immigration.”³⁰ After all of the high-level Palestinian officials in the Palestine government signed the memorandum to express “their solidarity with the aim of the strike,” it was submitted to Wauchope and to the colonial secretary’s office. Porath discovered that it “left a deep impression on the Colonial Office” and stimulated some 1,200 Palestinian officers in the public service in Palestine to submit similar memoranda.

In Turkey, Antonius met with John Crane and Walter Rogers about his book, his plans, and the problems in his area, and with numerous officials, diplomats, journalists, and members of the Arab national movement. Among the latter groups were Vedat Tor, director general of the Press Bureau in Ankara (whom Antonius described as “an intelligent and keen little Turk, something of a poet and of a communist. Served a term of imprisonment once, but I am not certain whether it was on account of his communism or his poetry”³¹); Semesettin Arif Mardin, a young, intelligent, and sympathetic Turkish diplomat in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and Leon Haykess, USSR consul general in Istanbul. He also spoke with John Crane and Walter Rogers about his book and the problems in his area and generally observed the changes brought about by the new rulers of the country. Antonius was disturbed by one of the changes, the complete rejection of Islam, due to its effect on the “moral character of the nation.”³²

Throughout his visit, Antonius followed the events in Palestine in the Turkish press. On June 9, he wrote to Edward Hodgkin: "The scare headlines of the Turkish press got the better of my nerves, and I felt I had to get back to my family."³³ The revolt had intensified during Antonius's absence, because the mandatory government had granted "a new schedule of immigration quotas" on May 18. Six hundred Palestinians—the majority of them Arabs—had been arrested, and 60 leaders of the Palestinian strike committees had been deported.³⁴ Antonius hastened home by train via Aleppo and Beirut, where, with no taxis going to Palestine, he caught the Beirut–Haifa mail car. From Haifa he flew to Ramleh, and from there traveled by car to Jerusalem, along a stretch of road where, as he wrote Rogers on June 23, "an hour or so later two cars . . . were fired upon and two persons were killed."³⁵

By June 3 the uprising had taken such a serious turn with the outbreak of bombing and fighting that Antonius felt compelled to send Katy and Soraya to Alexandria. However, he decided to remain in Jerusalem, for he was already scheduled to leave Palestine in late December for a year's appointment as a possible successor to the late Richard Gottheil, a professor at Columbia University and former president of the American branch of the Zionist Organization. In addition, he did not wish to submit his manuscript and historical papers to censorship, which had been established at the start of the uprising.

Within a week of his return, Antonius realized that although the British government proposed to send another commission of inquiry to Palestine, the Palestinians were "tired of commissions whose reports get pigeonholed" and wanted guarantees that their grievances would be taken seriously. By then it was evident that the Palestinians had lost faith in the government and had increased their commitment "to continue the strike until a radical change was brought about into the policy governing Jewish immigration."³⁶ Reviewing the situation as a whole in June, Antonius wrote to Crane: "What makes this revolt more serious than anything I have known in the past is that it is shared in by all elements in the Arab population. It is a national uprising in the full sense of the word."³⁷ Neighboring countries expressed solidarity and sent funds to assist the distressed.

One of the most remarkable features of the movement in Palestine is the courage and fortitude with which Arabs of all classes are bearing the effect of the strike on themselves, and accepting the great sacrifices and losses which are a consequence of it. Relief committees have sprung into existence all over the country, to supply the distressed classes of the population with the necessaries of life especially among the Moslems who have certainly



Collecting contributions for afflicted Palestinian families, Jaffa Gate, Jerusalem. Note the Hotel Fast on the left. SOURCE: Reprinted, with permission, from Walid Khalidi, Before Their Diaspora: A Photographic History of the Palestinians, 1876–1948 (Beirut: Institute of Palestine Studies, 1971).

proved that they have not lost any of the traditional code of charity to the poor which is one of the noblest features of the Muslim life.³⁸

Antonius and others were extremely critical of the government's reaction. Sir Hugh Mackintosh Foot, later Lord Caradon, an officer of the Palestine Administration, described the situation in Palestine as "a textbook example of . . . waste and futility."

Worst of all there was no political initiative. There can be no solely military solution to any rebellion, which is supported by the mass of the people. But throughout the Arab rebellion we had no political initiative to propose, no means of persuading the people to turn against violence, no alternative to submission to offer them, no assurance and no hope that their deep seated fears might be removed.³⁹

Instead of recognizing the people's distrust and loss of faith in the government, the government expressed a desire for conciliation at the same time as it instituted a policy of severe repression. William Ormsby Gore, the new colonial secretary, had announced in the House of Commons on April 19 that the government promised an impartial study of Palestinian grievances. "Regarded as a statement designed to deceive public opinion in England, it was admirable, but as a contribution to peace," it had a "disastrous effect—and rightly so," Antonius wrote his young friend Thomas Hodgkin, who had resigned in protest over the government's policy in Palestine.⁴⁰ Antonius believed that Ormsby Gore's speech invigorated the strike because it ignored Palestinians' "loss of faith in British promises" due to the British government's having failed to honor its wartime pledge to support Arab independence.

"It seems extraordinary that the British government should have thought of nothing better for allaying the discontent than to make another promise," he wrote to Charles Crane on June 25.⁴¹ By the end of June, the government was issuing frequent—sometimes, daily—emergency laws that "restricted civil liberties to a vanishing point."⁴² As a witness to the perceptibly deteriorating situation, Antonius wrote Rogers on June 23:

Since my return, . . . it has gone from bad to worse. Not only in the sense that the political deadlock has hardened but also in the sense of a marked increase in acts of lawlessness and violence. The government have been passing frequent—sometimes daily acts of emergency legislation and have in the process restricted civil liberty almost to [a] vanishing point. There is a censorship on letters as well as telegrams, and of course on newspapers, both local and foreign. The use of long-distance telephone is prohibited, except to a few favored persons. Everybody must be home by 7 P.M. and stay indoors until 5 A.M. You have to have a special permit to run your car even in the streets of the town. Passers-by are liable to be stopped and searched (I have been searched three times in the last ten days), and the police have been given power to arrest anyone, without a warrant. Private residences are likewise liable to be raided and searched at will, on the strength of mere information. . . . Railroads and bridges are mined, rails torn up, trains bombed and sniped at. The normal British garrison is of two battalions; there are now eight in the country and more are reported to be on their way. I am confining myself to news which has appeared in official communique in the hope that my letter will thus be passed by the Censor.⁴³

By June 19, 2,598 Palestinians—including 81 Arab leaders—had been arrested and incarcerated in two detention camps, one in the Sinai and the other near Jaffa.⁴⁴ The majority of Arab villagers were facing collec-

tive fines as well as the confiscation and demolition of their homes on suspicion of their involvement in the revolt.⁴⁵ In the worst examples of such destruction, the British blew up large sectors of the old Palestinian city of Jaffa and the Hourani quarter, under pretense of “urban renewal.” When Michael McDonnell, chief justice in Palestine, criticized the bombardment of Jaffa (which had left 6,000 Palestinians homeless) and ruled that collective fines were unconstitutional, he was relieved of his post and recalled to England for having embarrassed the government.⁴⁶

Antonius wrote Edward Hodgkin and Crane in mid-June that “the number of British battalions has risen to seven (from two) and an eighth is on its way,” in addition to all the other “auxiliaries such as tanks, armored cars, and corps of engineers”—all part of what he considered Wauchope’s barbaric military response to the Palestinians.⁴⁷ For Antonius, this martial response was not simply madness and folly but was immoral. He believed that Wauchope had betrayed “their common assumption—the justice of Arab claims for independence.”⁴⁸ As Antonius had expected would happen, the situation deteriorated under the government’s martial policy throughout the summer, with Palestinians becoming more embittered and united in their resistance. He wrote Crane on June 25, “Armed bands of villagers, numbering 60 to 100 men, have appeared in the hill country, have been attacking Jewish settlements and convoys, and have had several encounters with the military.”⁴⁹

Antonius began to live like a hermit, hardly going out, save for urgent errands. As his sense of outrage mounted over the machismo and madness of men in power who were causing the violence to escalate, his anger began to turn to depression over the seeming hopelessness of the situation. He felt isolated and disconnected as violence engulfed Palestine, breaking off all external communications and human connections. As he struggled to retain normalcy and his usual routine of early morning reading, he harangued the postman and postmaster for failure to deliver the mail and newspapers he relied on for a link to the outside world. The newspapers brought further gloom as the grim story was misinterpreted and the chances declined that public opinion could be rallied in Britain to hold officials accountable and stop the egregious policy of violence. With little alternative, Antonius turned inward, devoting himself in near solitary confinement to the completion of the final portions of his manuscript. Of the strain, the isolation, and the violence beyond his doors, he wrote to Rogers on June 23:

I feel more than usually depressed, and a bit run down. I like to think that is because I have been working hard and in loneliness, but that is probably not the real reason. . . . Hardly a night passes without my hearing, and some-



*The leaders of a brigade of 150 volunteers from Arab countries, who infiltrated Palestine to lend their support to the revolt (August 1936). SOURCE: Reprinted, with permission, from Walid Khalidi, *Before Their Diaspora: A Photographic History of the Palestinians, 1876–1948* (Beirut: Institute of Palestine Studies, 1971).*

times being awakened by, noise of firing in the hillsides immediately adjoining my home. Hardly a day passes without some new attacks being reported on trains, on convoys of cars, or on military camps.⁵⁰

By late July, he was urging Hodgkin to take a break and leave Beirut for a rest. By late August, although Antonius was eagerly awaiting a formal offer for the Columbia University job, he felt the need:

to take a month's holiday commencing about the middle of September. I have not been at my best either physically or mentally, and I felt that a complete change and rest was necessary. The strain of the conditions we live in together with my concentration on my writing task, have been telling on me, I suppose. I get bouts of headache almost daily and sleep badly and irregularly. . . . The situation is still serious and outrages continue with ups and downs, but with unabated violence. In some ways, conditions are worse than they ever were: there have been cases, in the last three weeks, of people being murdered at night in their homes. Although I am not yet convinced

that feature of the lawlessness is about to become general. The restrictions on freedom of movement are still in force. The difficulty of getting adequate food supplies still prevails, but it is more in the nature of an inconvenience than a serious shortage.⁵¹

In August, the government responded to Palestinian demands for a halt to Jewish immigration by stating that an impartial government could not concede any points until law and order were restored. This was a classic ploy to keep underlying institutional issues and substantive discussion at bay. A shallow strategy of coercion prevailed—the same strategy that had fostered the disturbances in the first place. Antonius felt the government's position would have carried more conviction had it "shown, in their handling of Palestinian grievances, the same concern for impartiality as they profess now."⁵² Moreover, he considered the rise in violence during August attributable to the government's publication of terms of reference for the next Royal Commission of Inquiry. He wrote Rogers on August 27 that the fundamental problem was that the terms reconfirmed the Palestinian conviction that the government was not going to play fair, for they precluded the commission from inquiring into the historical background of the controversy, thus denying Palestinians the opportunity to discuss the promises of Arab independence extended by McMahon to Hussein in 1915 and 1916.⁵³

On September 13, after learning from Joseph Jones, foreign editor for United Press, of allegations that he was "the chief source of funds financing Arab strikes," Charles Crane, the founder of the Institute of Current World Affairs (ICWA), which employed Antonius at the time, cabled back: "Not one penny for Arab strikes or Arab politics of any sort STOP Institute of Current World Affairs is an entirely independent organization working all over the world STOP."⁵⁴ These were controversial times, and Zionists knew that Crane sympathized with Palestinians and supported Antonius, and that Antonius was a critic of Zionism and was also working on a book that was to validate the Palestinian case. Since Antonius had begun working for ICWA, Crane had supported his proposal for a book and had known about the documents that were to bolster the historical narrative. Curiously, Crane also learned from "one who knows Near East affairs very well and also British Near East politics" that the British Foreign Office "has no copy of the papers and promises to Hussein and that, confirming what Sheriff Hussein had mentioned to him years earlier, efforts had indeed been made by the British via T. E. Lawrence to 'get back Husayn's papers.'"⁵⁵ This may explain why the papers were so carefully guarded when Antonius gained access to the Hashemite family's copies. As Crane believed the originals may have been stolen and "every effort in the world will be made to get hold of

Husayn's copy," he wrote to advise Antonius on September 22, 1936 to distribute copies of the Hussein–McMahon correspondence widely and send him one, which he would store "very securely."⁵⁶

Antonius found the *Times's* coverage of the revolt "manifestly biased" and responsive "to Zionist propaganda, in defiance of the facts, in contradiction to the statements of its own correspondents, and in confusion of the plainest issues." Although several of his English, Palestinian, and Arab friends were "shocked to find how blindly *The Times* . . . adopted even the crudest points of Zionist propaganda," Antonius defended his friend Philip Graves, the *Times* correspondent. "I am doubtful that the articles are attributable to Grave's influence, for I know Graves and cannot believe that he is such a fool as to be taken in so grossly. There must be some powerful Zionist influence behind the scenes," he wrote to H. W. Richmond on September 25. In a footnote, which a censor tried to delete with a black mark but which could be seen when held to the light, he added, "It was, of course, the influence of the money power."⁵⁷ "The lie which has been persistently spread by the hired press," Sir Herbert later noted, was "that the opposition of the Arabs to Zionism is the work of a minority of fractious *effendis*."⁵⁸ With additional misrepresentations appearing in many other British papers as well, Antonius began to lose faith in the press.

During this period Antonius himself was the target of a vigorous Zionist campaign of character assassination in New York City, which succeeded in pressuring Columbia University's administrators to retract their invitation to Antonius to join the faculty as a visiting professor. Antonius especially wanted the post, not merely because he would have an opportunity to present lectures and advise students but also because he would finally have sufficient time and peace of mind in which to complete his book. The Zionists contended that Antonius was an anti-Semitic journalist and an inciter of civil war in Palestine. They wrote numerous letters to university administrators, who met with them several times. On October 6, 1936, Columbia's President Nicholas M. Butler wrote to inform Antonius that his appointment had been withdrawn.⁵⁹

Meanwhile, in August, Emir Abdullah of Transjordan failed in his attempt to end the strike. During the third week of August, Nuri Pasha, Iraq's foreign minister, arrived in Jerusalem and met with members of the Higher Committee in another attempt to mediate an end to the strike. Antonius had lunch with him and came away believing that although he might succeed, he was more likely to cause a "split in the Arab ranks" between those who felt the revolt had lasted too long and those who felt it had barely begun. At first, Nuri's efforts appeared to be succeeding, and several days later, Antonius wrote to Admiral Richmond, "the Arab Committee accepted it unanimously . . . and they began actually to pave the way for peace."⁶⁰ With "a rigorous suppression of disorder" being the only alternative in Wauchope's view, Wauchope supported Nuri's medi-

ation—including, as Porath notes, “the proposal to temporarily suspend immigration.” Nuri aimed to end the strike by persuading the British to grant “all legitimate demands of the Arabs of Palestine whether such demands arise out of the present disturbances or are connected with the basis of the general policy in Palestine.”⁶¹

Despite this move, the revolt continued into October. On September 25, Antonius wrote Richmond, “The mediation is off, knocked on the head by His Majesty’s government.” Antonius identified the culprits as Zionists who disliked “the idea of solidarity between the Arabs of Palestine and other Arabs.” Apparently, a story had been fabricated about Nuri’s terms, which, when sent to Ormsby Gore, resulted in his falling “like a booby . . . into the trap” and issuing a statement ending the effort at mediation.⁶² The British Cabinet subsequently voted to authorize martial law and to send in an additional 20,000 British troops augmented by the Royal Air Force.⁶³ In the aftermath of these events, Antonius noted:

The Zionists are jubilant, *The Times* roars its approval of the trickery, and the result is that the Arab Committee and the Arab population, dumbfounded at the reception given to their genuine peace move, stand back in despair and do not know which way to turn. Meanwhile, the rebels in the countryside intensify their efforts and the shooting and killing goes on with redoubled vigor.⁶⁴

Upon further investigation and analysis, Antonius learned that “the real reason for His Majesty’s government’s move is that they were genuinely apprehensive of the implication of admitting the mediations of Arab rulers, and of the precedence it might set up.” Antonius understood the government’s fears and how Zionists could play upon them. He perceived the government’s apprehension that increased Arab unity would end in the expulsion of Britain from the Middle East. Antonius asserted that such fears were spawned by ignorance, a lack of understanding of the Arab attitude, and principally, the failure “to see that Arab and British interests in this part of the world are so interwoven that it is sheer folly to put such a strain on Anglo-Arab friendship, which, for myself, I regard as a sine qua non of peace.” Antonius realized that although the British government had improved its relations with Egypt and Iraq “wisely and with foresight,” these relations would be threatened if Arab unity were thwarted and the Palestine problem remained unresolved. As he told Richmond on September 25, Palestine “is an essential link, lying as it does between Egypt and Iraq”; and through the “unnatural strain of British policy in Palestine,” relations with Iraq and Egypt were inevitably bound to suffer.⁶⁵

Notes

1. Thomas Hodgkin, "Antonius, Palestine, and the 1930s," in *The Gazelle Review of Middle East Literature*, no. 10, ed. Roger Hardy (London: Ithaca, 1982), p. 6.
2. George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1938), p. 398.
3. Antonius to Charles Crane, 8 February 1936, Israel State Archives, Hakiryá [hereafter, ISA], record group 65, file 870–330.
4. Albert Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon: A Political Essay* (London: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 199. For a description of the pan-Arab organization, see Philip S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920–1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 398–433.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Antonius to C. Crane, 5 May 1936, ISA, record group 65, file 870–330.
7. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 383; also see Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon*, pp. 199–204.
8. Antonius to C. Crane, 5 May 1936, ISA, record group 65, file 870–330.
9. Yehoyada Haim, *Abandonment of Illusions: Zionist Political Attitudes toward Palestinian Arab Nationalism, 1936–1939* (Boulder: Westview, 1983), p. 27.
10. Rosemary Sayigh, *Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries* (London: Zed, 1979), p. 36; for further discussion see Ted Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt: The 1936–1939 Rebellion and the Palestinian National Past* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).
11. Antonius to Rogers, 30 September 1936 report, Antonius papers, vol. 2, archives of the Institute of Current World Affairs [hereafter, ICWA].
12. Sami Hadawi and Robert John, *The Palestinian Diary*, vol. 1: 1914–1945 (New York: New World Press, 1970), pp. 251, 258; also see Pamela Ann Smith, *Palestine and the Palestinians, 1876–1983* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), p. 63.
13. Janet Abu-Lughod, "Demographic Transformation in Palestine," in *The Transformation of Palestine: Essays on the Origin and Development of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, ed. Ibrahim Abu-Lughod (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1971), p. 150.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 150–151; Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 408.
15. Kenneth Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine, 1917–1939* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), pp. 19, 142; see also John Ruedy, "Dynamics of Land Alienation," in *The Transformation of Palestine*, ed. Abu-Lughod, pp. 119–139.
16. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 409.
17. Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine*, p. 188; Sarah Graham-Brown, "The Political Economy of the Jabal Nablus, 1920–48," in *Studies in the Economic and Social History of Palestine in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Roger Owen (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), pp. 88–177.
18. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 409.
19. David Ben-Gurion, *My Talks with Arab Leaders*, ed. Misha Louvish, trans. Misha Louvish and Aryeh Rubinstein (New York: Third Press, 1973), pp. 42–43.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
21. *Ibid.*

22. Antonius to C. Crane, 5 May 1936, ISA, record group 65, file 890–330.
23. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 390.
24. Ben-Gurion, *My Talks with Arab Leaders*, pp. 46–47.
25. Arthur A. Goren, ed., *Dissenter in Zion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 318.
26. Magnes to Arthur Ruppin, 8 April 1936, in *Ibid.*, p. 312.
27. *Ibid.*
28. Antonius to Sir Ernest Bennett, 29 April 1936, ISA, record group 65, file 26–866–330.
29. *Ibid.*
30. Yehoshua Porath, *The Palestine Arab National Movement: From Riots to Rebellion*, vol. 2: 1929–1939 (London: Frank Cass, 1977), p. 171.
31. Antonius to Thomas Hodgkin, 23 August 1936, cited in Thomas Hodgkin, “Antonius, Palestine, and the 1930s,” p. 7.
32. Antonius to C. Crane, 8 June 1936, ISA, record group 65, file 870–330.
33. Antonius to Edward Hodgkin, 9 June 1936, personal files of Edward Hodgkin, London.
34. Porath, *The Palestine Arab National Movement*, pp. 179–180; John and Hadawi, *The Palestine Diary*, p. 260; Barbara Kalkas, “The Revolt of 1936: A Chronicle of Events,” in *The Transformation of Palestine*, ed. Abu-Lughod, p. 250.
35. Antonius to Rogers, 23 June 1936, Antonius papers, vol. 2, ICWA.
36. Antonius to C. Crane, 8 June 1936, ISA, record group 65, file 870–330.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Antonius to C. Crane, 25 June 1936, ISA, record group 65, file 870–330. Richard Mitchell notes that the Muslim Brotherhood provided special assistance throughout the revolt, in funds and supplies as well as moral support and letters sent to British authorities urging a change in policy (R. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* [London: Oxford University Press, 1969], pp. 16–18, 55–58).
39. Sir Hugh Foot, *A Start in Freedom* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964), p. 53.
40. Antonius to Thomas Hodgkin, 23 June 1936, Thomas Hodgkin papers, Middle East Center Archives, St. Antony’s College, Oxford.
41. Antonius to C. Crane, 25 June 1936, ISA, record group 65, file 870–330.
42. Antonius to Rogers, 23 June 1936, Antonius papers, vol. 2, ICWA.
43. *Ibid.*
44. Kalkas, “The Revolt of 1936,” in *The Transformation of Palestine*, p. 251.
45. Antonius to Rogers, 23 June 1936, Antonius papers, vol. 2, ICWA.
46. Kalkas, “The Revolt of 1936,” in *The Transformation of Palestine*, pp. 252–253.
47. Antonius to Edward Hodgkin, 9 June 1936, personal files of Edward Hodgkin, London.
48. T. Hodgkin, “Antonius, Palestine, and the 1930s,” p. 18.
49. Antonius to C. Crane, 25 June 1936, ISA, record group 65, file 870–330. Also see Swedenburg, *The Arab Revolt*.
50. Antonius to Rogers, 23 June 1936, Antonius papers, vol. 2, ICWA.
51. Antonius to Rogers, 27 August 1936, Antonius papers, vol. 2, ICWA.
52. *Ibid.*

53. Ibid.

54. Joseph Jones, UPI foreign editor, to C. Crane, 12 September 1936, Antonius papers, vol. 2, ICWA.

55. C. Crane to Antonius, 22 September 1936, ISA, record group 65, file 870–330.

56. Ibid.

57. Antonius to Sir Herbert Richmond, 25 September 1936, copy shown to author during interview with Sir John Richmond, 1985, Durham.

58. Sir Herbert Richmond to C. Crane, 6 February 1939, copy given to author during interview with Sir John Richmond, 1985, Durham.

59. See relevant correspondence in Antonius papers, vol. 2, ICWA.

60. Antonius to Richmond, 25 September 1936; Antonius to Rogers, 27 August 1936, Antonius papers, vol. 2, ICWA.

61. Porath, *The Palestine Arab National Movement*, pp. 209–210.

62. After receiving Zionist reports from Chaim Weizmann and Moshe Shertok, including a report on Nuri's terms (which was published in the *Palestine Post*, an English-language newspaper in Palestine), Ormsby Gore wrote to Weizmann stating that no terms had been accepted and Nuri had no authority to give assurances (Porath, *The Palestine Arab National Movement*, pp. 209–210; John and Hadawi, *The Palestine Diary*, p. 265; Kalkas, "The Revolt of 1936," in *The Transformation of Palestine*, p. 266).

63. Ibid.

64. Antonius to Richmond, 25 September 1936.

65. Ibid.

12

Prejudice and Partition

Inside of the "scientific protocol" one can operate unwittingly with false premises, erroneous problems, distorted data, spurious relations, inaccurate concepts, and unverified interpretations.

—Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*

On October 12, the general strike in Palestine ended. The mediation of the rulers of Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Transjordan, and Yemen played a part; but the principal reason for the strike's termination was the toll it had taken as well as the desire to avoid the economic losses that would be incurred if the strike continued through the orange season. Barbara Kalkas notes that "missing one season would mean that most Arab growers would fail to make payments on their farm," and as a result, that their land would become available to Zionists.¹ With the end of the strike and a royal commission of inquiry about to depart from England, the Arab Higher Committee focused its attention on gathering and coordinating material in preparation for the commission hearings. However, shortly before the commission arrived, the mandatory government issued a new quota for Jewish immigrants, in complete contradiction of Palestinian expectations. Outraged by the government's refusal to suspend immigration now that order had been restored and pending the completion of the commission's investigation, the Palestinians boycotted the Inquiry until January 1937.

Antonius believed that the Peel Commission had an important opportunity and a moral obligation to dig beneath the surface of stereotypes and facile solutions. The commissioners had an obligation to learn about the local meaning and reality of the Palestine revolt before issuing a solution. However, as Antonius observed, the investigation was stymied by the adoption of a premature solution designed in the abstract rather than

in the context of local worlds of meaning—to say nothing of a framework of principle.

The Peel Commission of Inquiry, 1936–1937

The commission under the chairmanship of Lord Peel conducted three months of hearings, from November 1936 to January 1937. Unlike its counterpart following the 1929 disturbances, the Peel Commission was guided by terms of reference that excluded any examination of specific events or thorough analysis of problems and questions. Its objectives were instead to tabulate Arab and Jewish grievances and to make recommendations regarding those they considered legitimate in terms of Britain's mandatory obligations. The hearings were devoted principally to official and Zionist testimony, and were thus easily used by the Zionists to express their interpretation of Britain's obligations under the mandate and to present a list of far-reaching demands.

Chaim Weizmann, president of the World Zionist Organization, began his testimony by asserting that Jewish immigration should be supported regardless of "overcrowding," because Britain's primary obligation was to support the establishment of a Jewish national home, which he defined as the establishment of "something in Palestine which will be as Jewish as England is British"—that is, something to which every Jew can return freely.² Weizmann's Zionist colleagues continued on with an aggressive list of demands. They called for unrestricted Jewish immigration and for exclusively Jewish immigration;³ the transfer of more state land to Jews; the opening of Transjordan to Jewish settlement; compulsory parceling of land in collective Palestinian possession; and the compulsory expropriation of Palestinian lands that Zionists wanted in order to expand or consolidate their holdings.⁴ In particular, the Zionists wanted the government to acquire Palestinian land containing water and to lease or sell it to Jewish settlers.⁵ They also urged the government to introduce measures to stop Palestinians from contesting Jewish land titles and to pass legislation authorizing police to assist Zionists in forcibly ousting any Palestinians whom the Zionists deemed to be "trespassers," even if the Palestinians were contesting Jewish titles to land.⁶ Apparently, the government had already tried to speed up land transfers by transferring the settlement of title disputes from land courts to a special body of government officials in the Office of Land Registry. As a result, between 1927 and 1936, the ownership of 1,364,631 dunums of land under dispute was settled—mostly in favor of Jews.⁷

Additional Zionist demands centered on government loans⁸ and support for Jewish exploitation of water resources and the marketing and export of their cash crop (citrus).⁹ They demanded that the British govern-

ment offer Palestine the status of a "Crown Colony" so that Jewish settlers could gain imperial preference and customs concessions for their citrus crop, to which Commissioner Sir Harold Rumbold responded, "You are forcing the whole of the inhabitants of Palestine to buy more expensively in order to favor your citrus exports."¹⁰ Zionists also urged that the mandatory government complement the Zionist policy of employing only Jews on Jewish land and in Jewish industries by increasing Jewish employment in public works projects. Zionist witnesses argued that the number of Jews thus employed should not be determined according to the proportion of Jews in the population. Responding to this additional demand for special treatment, Lord Peel asked the Zionists:

You have been seeking all sorts of percentages and distinctions and fixings of percentages for Jews in all classes of labor, government, and otherwise, the civil service, railways and so on, but do you think that is a very healthy condition in a country . . . [?] Would it not be far better if they [Jews and Palestinians as a whole] were treated . . . as citizens of a country, and that all these distinctions of race should be, as far as possible, put aside?¹¹

Brushing aside suggestions that they focus on building a civil society and country beyond distinctions of race or creed, Zionists continued their demands, calling on the British government to continue to view the Jewish minority in Palestine as its "larger partner" and to assure that no representative form of government based on majority rule would be established until they became the numerical majority in the country they wanted officially renamed *Eretz Israel*. Jabotinsky took the stand to summarize the Zionists' most far-reaching ambitions:

You have of course heard of compromises and halfway houses which are being suggested, including cantonization, or the parity scheme, or the cultural rapprochement, or the Jews "giving in" and so on. . . . We wish a halfway house could be possible, but it is perfectly impossible. We cannot accept cantonization, because . . . even the whole of Palestine may prove too small. . . . Cantonization is a dream and parity is a lie.¹²

From January 12 to 18, only a half dozen Palestinian witnesses were invited to present their interpretations of the Palestinian problem. After briefly outlining the damage done to Palestinians during the course of the Zionist movement and the British mandate, Palestinian witnesses called on Britain to keep its long-ignored pledge of independence to the Palestinians. For, as Jamal Husseini asserted, failure to honor this pledge had allowed Britain to be consumed by the "welfare and development of an alien race," to the detriment of the majority in Palestine.¹³ Britain was

also reminded that its primary mandatory obligation, according to Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, consisted of giving "administrative advice and assistance" to help realize an already provisionally recognized Palestinian independence. However, when Palestinian witnesses such as Awni Abd al-Hadi, a central member of the Arab Higher Committee, attempted to focus attention on Britain's wartime promises supporting Palestinian independence, Lord Peel, like Lord Curzon, Winston Churchill, and others before him, refused to allow such testimony, claiming that the question of British promises was "a very long and complicated matter" and outside the commission's purview.¹⁴

Any attempt to defend the Palestinian claim to independence within the framework of the mandate would be ineffective, because as Amin Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem, noted, the government consistently responded that Palestinian "demands are inconsistent with our obligations to the Jews."¹⁵ As another Palestinian witness and member of the Higher Committee, Izzat Darwazah, put it, the government's consistent reply to Palestinian demands had always been: "It is not a question whether or not you deserve independence, but we are bound by an obligation to the Jews."¹⁶ In light of the fact that the Palestinians had been discriminated against by the British, Jamal Husseini told the commission, it was time the British government honored its promise of independence, given to the Arabs before the Balfour Declaration. Indeed, Husseini said, it was time the Zionists were informed that their demands would not be met because they contradicted British obligations to the Palestinians. Moreover, since Britain's failure to fulfill its obligations to the Arabs had "rendered the Mandate null and void," the Palestinian witnesses argued, the mandate should be terminated with an Anglo-Palestinian Treaty comparable to Iraq's.

Antonius was the last Palestinian witness to testify before the committee. In late December, after a six-day trip spent collecting information on the Syrian-French Treaty in Damascus and Beirut, Antonius had returned to Jerusalem, and John Martin, the royal commission secretary, had come to see him at his home in Karm al-Mufti. Martin told Antonius the commission would like to hear him, but Antonius criticized the commission's narrow terms of reference. In response, Martin said the commission might allow him to speak more broadly if his testimony were relevant. However, Antonius concluded that the commission hoped that he would speak to them in private and that he would concentrate "on the subject of practical solutions to the Palestine problem."¹⁷

Thus, on January 15, a few weeks after Martin's first visit and just over a week after the Palestinian boycott of the inquiry ended, Antonius accepted Peel's invitation to appear before the commission on the following day; however, he declined to do so in private. As Lord Peel and an-

other commissioner were already scheduled to leave Palestine on January 19, Antonius was offered the choice of a two-hour presentation on January 18 or a private session with the few remaining commissioners on the following day. He decided to speak on January 18, deliberately avoiding any discussion of "practical" solutions. During his presentation, he tried instead to give the commission an idea of the underlying causes of Palestinian discontent and disturbances and "an idea of the cultural and moral values at stake, in their relation to Arab ideals in general and to the Muslim attitude in particular." However, since he was restricted to two hours, as he wrote John Crane, "I found myself obliged to curtail my statement considerably" and focus on the most salient points from "the great amount of material, which I had collected."¹⁸

Despite the constraints, Antonius's presentation was the most powerful and compelling, for he was the only one that focused on the underlying institutions—the underlying values and attitudes in British policy and behavior, and their moral and psychological significance. He came "as an independent person, a student of affairs," and briefly reviewed the Arab revolt, noting that it was directly connected to the movement that had begun before the war and that was betrayed by the partition:

The first thing that happened after the war was that this country—the larger Syria—was partitioned, in a way not only contrary to promises given but in a way which created a violent disturbance of the social and economic habits of the country. That was done even before the Mandate was drawn up. This placed the country under serious disabilities from the point of view of its social and economic development, to say nothing of the denial of its independence.¹⁹

Antonius told the commission that the "rigid colonial system" was a major factor in the revolt. It was markedly inappropriate for Palestine, unusually ill-staffed, and "largely contributed to the growth of estrangement . . . between the administration and the Arab population." Antonius went on: "It seemed to be devised in a way to make ever greater this difficulty. No real contact was established between the people and the central administration, which as I said was fruitful of misunderstanding." As for the staffing, "Instead of as in other colonies or countries under British rule which had specially picked and equipped officials, to deal with the problems of the country, in this case the selection of the personnel was haphazard and not altogether happy." Little wonder, then, that "government was not equipped to supervise and control the carrying out of" legislation that "from time to time . . . provided that certain security and guarantee had to be given to the tenants affected by sale of land." In summary, Antonius told them:

The system which was introduced in Palestine in 1920 was, I should say, of all possible systems the most unsuitable to apply to a country like Palestine, and a system which was possibly more calculated than any other I know of to produce friction and trouble. It is a system which may be and probably is very suitable to colonies in which the problems are relatively simple, and in which the majority of the population are quite content to be governed, but in Palestine there is so much diversity and so many difficult problems, and people of the country have reached a stage and have a culture which fits them for a different kind of government, and that system was not at all suitable.²⁰

The government's performance revealed a pattern of rule that was discriminatory, haphazard, and conducive to violence. Antonius cited the "haphazard rule of thumb" governing immigration and the lack of any organized, scientific investigation of the country's absorptive capacity or of unemployment. The administration that evolved was "much too large for the needs of the country," badly staffed, poorly organized, and amoral:

I think the officials of this country are laboring under two very special disabilities. One is the disability of working under the system which as I say is an unsuitable system for this country and puts obstacles and increases barriers rather than diminishes them; and the second disability is that officials in this country are carrying out a policy which, in many cases, they can only carry out by doing violence to their conscience.²¹

The discrimination, Antonius pointed out, was not simply due to the distancing of government from nongovernment but more fundamentally due to underlying institutions—attitudes—that were prejudiced against local residents. Arabs felt "the dice are loaded against them," Antonius said, partly because so little effort was made to understand their point of view. Arabic-English translation was tricky and required careful attention:

What you want is not merely production of dictionary words, . . . the whole caste of the languages being so different. The right emphasis, however, must be put into the English in an entirely different way to the Arabic expressions. So that a good deal of misunderstanding which eventually led to the disturbances, is due to that barrier. And that is one of the respects in which government here has singularly failed.²²

Just as too little translation of Arabic opinion made its way to the British government, too little made it to the Permanent Mandates Com-

mittee under the League of Nations—and this at a time when the League was to be kept informed of developments in three Arab countries under “A” mandates. As Antonius informed the commission, “Arabs have come to feel they lost their case by default, and that their memoranda and petitions are dismissed summarily and certainly not on an understanding of all factors in the case.” Concerned about this, he had traveled to Geneva in 1934 to interview members and the director of the League of Nations Permanent Mandates Commission and learn about the processing of grievances. In the process, he had discovered a “bias by the Permanent Mandates Commission [that] was difficult to accept.”

I found there was an appalling state of affairs. I found that in that office, the Mandates Section of the League of Nations in Geneva, there was not a single Arab newspaper or a single instrument for translation by which memoranda in Arabic could be intelligibly translated and considered. And this, if you please, was when the Mandates Commission were responsible for Iraq and Syria as well as for Palestine. . . .

When I expressed surprise at this, and pointed to shelves which contained Jewish newspapers, Zionist literature, etc., everything properly sorted and arranged, I was told that for budgetary reasons it had not been possible to provide a translator for Arabic language.²³

Antonius considered discriminatory colonial institutions the “second main underlying cause of the disturbances,” after the partition of Syria.²⁴ As he explained:

The Arabs quite apart from their objection to the policy, feel that they are treated on a different footing from the Jews in a variety of ways. In the first place the way in which the administration regards Arabs. Arab nationalists and Zionists are quite different things. This is a psychological phenomenon, but it is true that in the minds of the government and many of the officials, a Zionist is a man who is perfectly all right and entitled to every kind of consideration. An Arab nationalist is the devil incarnate, a revolutionary, he is spied upon, he is watched with suspicion. I give you a rather crude picture but it is because it is difficult to explain this subtle difference of attitude, but although subtle and difficult to define, it is none the less very true, and has a bearing on the behavior of officials and the administration in general toward Arabs, and on the Arabs themselves who have the feeling they don’t belong, that they are considered as people who are ‘agin’ the government. . . .

There is a certain amount of discrimination apart from [whether the Arabs accept the mandate or not], which breeds prejudice. It is there all the time. It doesn’t operate in times of peace because there is no occasion, but as soon as any difficulty arises, any decision is to be taken, it is evident. . . .

The Arab has acquired the position of the man who is watched, defended against. He is the trouble. He is the man who is suspected of flaring up at any time. It is a psychological attitude.²⁵

Discrimination was evident in the areas of immigration and land. For example, Antonius noted that when government cracked down on illegal immigrants, three times as many Arabs were picked up as Jews, and this at a time when "thousands of Jews were coming into the country . . . [compared to] a few hundred Hauranis [who] came in to eke out a living and go back—not illegal immigrants, illegal travelers." Regarding the land question, Antonius showed how Palestinians lacked legal protection at a time when Britain was introducing laws to protect cultivators from dispossession elsewhere, including in Kenya and in Egypt. He felt strongly "that no land should be sold by anybody settled on it unless provision has been made that those settled on it find land elsewhere of equal area and equally suitable." He was not speaking for the Jews, the landlords, or the tenants, but for the "cultivators who have been settled and working on the land for generations." From their perspective, he argued, "It is, to my understanding, quite wrong to allow sales over their heads or even by themselves without adequate provision having been made." During the mandate, the Shaw and Hope-Simpson commission reports and recommendations, which had recommended that help be given Palestinian cultivators, had been rejected, and protective measures such as the early "Protection of Cultivators Ordinance" either were not fully implemented and enforced or were rife with loopholes and too easily evaded. Antonius said, "The point I am making here is that the articles written and the comments made on this question, on the different principle applied in Palestine over the land question, gave the Arabs of this country an additional feeling that they were being discriminated against, and this feeling was one of the contributing causes of disturbances."²⁶

In the afternoon session, Antonius presented another set of grievances under the rubric of "the loss of confidence or lack of confidence in the government on the part of the Arab population." In addition to the fact that the organization of government did "not provide for easy and frequent contact between the central government and the people of this country and that it was devised on a basis which was fruitful of misunderstanding," incidents arose that eroded popular trust and confidence in British mandatory government. Most notable among these was the continuous British resistance to popular elections. Government's schemes for unrepresentative legislative councils, and its failure to conduct the 1925 elections to the Supreme Muslim Council as had previously been ruled in the Order of 1921, contributed to the growing sense of

grievance. Arabs felt that "the Government in dealing with them have shown a certain lack of candour" and that it was "speaking with two voices."²⁷ The government had been dishonest.

In addition to the sense of discrimination regarding issues of land and immigration, Palestinians were profoundly concerned about the moral and cultural questions of life and livelihood. Because the British did not appreciate the moral issues at stake and Palestinian motivations for revolt, they too readily portrayed Palestinian Arabs as irrational madmen with a penchant for evil and violence. Such portrayals were used to justify military action and other forms of ruthless retaliation against Palestinian opposition by a seemingly superior British-Zionist presence. Antoun concluded his presentation with these words:

The next point I want to get on to is the question of the moral and psychological factors involved. . . . Quite apart from the material loss involved in the displacement of people from the land, there is the more important question of the moral loss. The problem of the exodus from villages to towns . . . brings with it also the loss of something I consider extremely valuable, that is the loss of the moral values and moral characteristics which people acquire when they live on the land and live an agricultural life with all that implies, from father to son. The fact that they are suddenly uprooted from that life and driven to seek their living elsewhere, in the towns, or on the roads, or in casual labor, is a very serious loss from the moral point of view. It is not only the loss to the individuals themselves; it is the loss of the traditional life of the country with the very valuable feature of the traditional crafts which went with it. These traditional crafts which were a very important feature of the agricultural life of Palestine (to my certain knowledge, because I have actually seen it in the years before the war and since) formed a steadying influence on the character of those people and are now tending to disappear. They are fast disappearing from a great many villages. I have seen the disappearance of it in certain localities myself and I want to put it before you that, in estimating the factors of discontent, some attention should be paid to this very important feature of the moral loss involved. The moral deterioration which overtakes people in their own characters when they are uprooted and forcibly driven to the towns or away from the villages and the land upon which they had their root is a thing which government should do a great deal to avoid; and what has happened in Palestine is that, instead of the government trying to avoid that, the policy has been as I say to create that exodus and accentuate it. . . .

Lastly, I want to ask your permission to consider this aspect of the matter. The policy that has been followed in this country in the last eighteen years has brought in its train, as you know, as you must have seen, a lot of distress, of mental anguish, of suffering, on the part of people whose only

crime has been that they are patriots who want to see their country develop and progress, who want to see their traditions installed and flourishing and who want to be able to govern themselves and live a life based on self-respect and dignity in their own country.

A great injustice has been done to these people. I say it, and I repeat it, that their only fault is that they are patriots. Under the present system and the policy that has been followed here, the suffering and the anguish from which Arabs of all classes have been suffering all this time is merely because they are deeply attached to their country and deeply attached to their traditions and they want to make them secure and develop them and make them flourish. If I may say so without impertinence I think your commission have a great opportunity before them of doing something towards the removal of this great moral injustice. . . .

Last year when it became known that Italy was about to attack Abyssinia, the British Empire rose in a fine frenzy of indignation. What I want to say is that there is little difference between the action of Italy in Abyssinia and the attitude of Great Britain in this country, the two actions are indistinguishable. Italy had concluded an agreement with the Powers securing the integrity of Abyssinia. Italy had sponsored Abyssinia's admission to the League of Nations. She had definitely pledged herself in those two ways to respect and protect the integrity of Abyssinia. Great Britain had done the same with regard to the Arabs. She had promised that if the Arabs did certain things in the War, she would recognize and uphold their independence. On the second point, Italy needed an outlet for her population and the Jews wanted a refuge from persecution and wanted to come to Palestine. I say the two cases are absolutely parallel, and yet you see with what indignation the world in general received the news of the attack which Italy contemplated in Abyssinia. I want to submit to you that Palestine and the state of subjection in which the Arabs are being held is morally indistinguishable from the unprovoked attack by Italy on the Abyssinians. As I say, I think your Commission has a great opportunity before it. That opportunity resolves itself into making efforts to remove a great injustice, and that alone, I think, is worth doing; it is perhaps the noblest task to which any man can apply himself.²⁸

Antonius argued that the mandate would indeed be a "wicked" document if it were used to justify injustice. By now, he had no illusions. Although he had at first hoped that the articles outlined in the Covenant of the League of Nations under the Treaty of Versailles would guide the mandate in such a way as to facilitate Palestinian independence, he later recognized that it had been corrupted. There were no mechanisms of accountability by which colonial, imperial, and other special interests could be restrained from corrupting nation building:

In the case of this country [Palestine], the question of drawing up the Mandate was one which was carried out in secret negotiations between the British government and certain of the Powers, and representatives of the Zionist Organization, in which the people directly concerned, the inhabitants of this country, had absolutely no say and were never consulted; and that Mandate, which is inconsistent with the Covenant, was foisted upon the Council of the League with all the might and power of Great Britain, and the influence of the two or three Great Powers whom England had negotiated with in order to get the Mandate through.²⁹

After his presentation, Antonius had new concerns about the potential outcome of the hearings. He was disturbed by the commission's hasty, abrupt departure and by the composition of its membership. Nearly eight weeks had been devoted to the testimony of nearly one hundred government officials and Zionists; only four days and a dozen witnesses were allowed for the presentation of the Arab point of view. Although the Arab Higher Committee boycotted the inquiry until January 6, the royal commission had quasi-judicial status, and it could have used its power to call any Arab witnesses it desired during this period; but it did not. Antonius believed that after the Arab boycott ended, the commission at least should have extended its stay and probed "the Arab evidence with the patience and thoroughness which they had devoted to the British and Jewish evidence."³⁰

While attending the public sessions, Antonius was troubled by the "many gaps in the ground covered by the inquiry." He wrote Rogers on February 16, 1937 that the commissioners "disposed perfunctorily of questions which needed thorough investigation and on which the facts as presented by the government—let alone the political parties in the dispute—were palpably questionable."³¹ In particular, Antonius was critical of the commission's handling of the historical background of the Palestine problem. The commission was willing to review Zionist claims to rights and British obligations, yet it declined to examine the Palestinian case concerning the McMahon-Hussein correspondence and other agreements and select articles of the mandate. No mention was made of the January 1918 pledge to Sheriff Hussein about the scope of the Balfour Declaration, the June 1918 Declaration of the Seven, or other key agreements.³² Most significantly, the commission refused to hear any analysis of the McMahon-Hussein correspondence from Palestinian witnesses. Antonius considered Lord Peel's reasons for refusing to hear such testimony altogether "inconsistent" with the commission's comprehensive review of the Zionist case.³³ Moreover, he found it "puzzling," because "it was precisely the fact that the British Government had never accepted

the Arab case that was the underlying cause of the disturbances which the Royal Commission had been appointed to investigate."³⁴

In light of the unequal investigation of perspectives, Antonius felt the case had been prejudged against Palestinians. Moreover, the skill mix and composition of the commission membership promised a poor interpretation of the underlying problems and the recent crises: "There was no economist among the six members, and no one who had any Orientalist background—whether linguistic or cultural or historical." One member, Reginald Coupland, was a professor, but his specialty, colonial history, "is inappropriate since one of the main underlying causes of the trouble in Palestine is precisely that its administration is wholly inspired by the rigid conceptions of the colonial system."³⁵ Antonius felt that the commission's unbalanced review and abrupt departure were attributable to its having lost interest halfway through the inquiry. He believed the commission had already decided, even before the gathering of testimony from the Palestinians, on a premature and unworkable solution to the problem. By the time he made his presentation, the commissioners had "definitely made up their minds about the causes of the disturbances, and transferred the whole of their interest and activities to the examination of the proposed solution."³⁶ With so little care and attention given to the Palestinian reality, Antonius was pessimistic about the forthcoming report and recommendations. Based on nearly two months of British and Jewish testimony as opposed to five days of Arab evidence, the final report was bound to "alter the present order of things fundamentally and . . . its publication . . . [to] give rise to a fresh outbreak of controversy."³⁷

Antonius had staked his reputation on building a relationship with the British. He trusted that a deeper knowledge about the Palestinian reality, and a reminder of their moral obligation to respect basic human and democratic rights, not to mention past pledges, would yield policy reforms supporting Palestinian independence and self-governance. Antonius also understood, however, that changing a colonial culture was difficult, for such cultures involved centuries-old institutions and structural incentives that had little to do with concern for the well-being of other nations. A paradigm shift beyond empire and colonial discrimination had yet to occur.

The Partition Plan and Renewed Revolt, 1937–1938

Between January, when the Peel Commission left Palestine, and July, when its report was published, Antonius maintained a rigorous schedule of meetings and lectures in Europe and the United States. On March 12, he left for Europe from Egypt after attending the Arabic Academy's an-

nual meeting. He sailed to Rome in the company of Louis Massignon, who read and commented on the typescript of Antonius's book.

After four days of meetings with members of Rome's Instituto per l'Oriente and with John Crane, Antonius left for Paris to discuss the Syrian-French treaty negotiations with the Syrian prime minister. In England, Antonius found a publisher (Hamish Hamilton) for his book through his friend Vincent Sheean. He also renewed his contacts in various government departments and at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, and met with friends and scholars such as Cambridge University professor H. W. Temperley, and Arnold Toynbee, who discussed Antonius's comments on a chapter on Syria he was preparing to publish in his forthcoming survey of international affairs. Shortly before his departure for the United States, Antonius accepted an invitation from the secretary of the Peel Commission to supplement his January 18 statement during a private session on April 19; and at Commissioner Coupland's request, he permitted the publication of excerpts from his historical work on the Arab national movement in the commission's forthcoming report. Perhaps his presentation had not fallen on deaf ears after all, Antonius may have thought. Perhaps the case had not been so prejudiced as to preclude the Palestinian side an honest hearing and a just solution?

From mid-April to mid-June, Antonius continued his travels through the United States and Canada. He attended dozens of luncheons, dinners, and meetings where he discussed and lectured on the forces underlying the Arab national movement; the political, economic, and cultural aspects of the Zionist experiment in Palestine; "the birth of Italian imperialism in the Mediterranean and Red Sea, and of Soviet anti-imperialistic policy in the East."³⁸ During his meetings with such personalities as Eliot Palmer (U.S. consul general in Ottawa), Walter Lichtenstein (of the First National Bank of Chicago), and other bankers, businessmen, lawyers, and officials, as well as with students and professors, Antonius was encouraged by their "intensity and awareness" and the "range and depth of interest in the present problems in the Near East."³⁹ In addition to attending meetings in Washington, D.C., Cambridge, and Princeton, he "went frequently to Columbia University to attend luncheon meetings and discussions with various faculty groups in the Department of History." One of the most eminent professors he met at Columbia, with whom he found he had a great deal in common, was Carlton Hayes, who had done much to further scholarship on the nation and nationalism and who had cochaired the National Conference of Christians and Jews since 1925. Antonius left New York for England on June 16, having concluded a new publishing agreement for his book with an American press (J. B. Lippincott), and with increased confidence gained from the expressions of sup-

port and encouragement for his work as “a bridge between two different cultures and an agent in the interpretation of one to the other.”⁴⁰

In London, in July, before moving to a secluded cottage in Wales where he intended to complete his book, he devoted ten days to studying the newly issued Royal Commission Report, which was being described as some “new kind of book of Revelation . . . ‘the most brilliant report of the century,’ and . . . ‘one of the greatest state papers of all time.’”⁴¹ He wrote Roger, “In one way I am delighted; it makes my book more useful than ever, and increases my justification for having embarked on such a task.” His early suspicions were confirmed: the report was filled with “errors and omissions,” and having misdiagnosed the problem, set forth an unworkable solution.⁴² Not only was the country to be divided, but the richest portion—the west, which included “a settled Arab population of some 300,000 souls”—was to be turned over to Zionists for a Jewish national home. After John Philby reviewed the partition plan in the *Times*, Antonius wrote, “Partition puts A [Arabs] and B [Jews] on the same footing as regards rights, and requires of A not that he should consent to B’s cooperation in improving the garden, but that he should surrender all the garden including the main gate and content himself with the kitchen garden and a huge area of the derelict part of the estate.”⁴³ Throughout the summer, he would elaborate on the problems during meetings in London with officials and other concerned parties, warning that partition was an unworkable and unsound resolution of the Palestine problem.

By not carrying their inquiry to its proper limits, the Commissioners found themselves defenseless against the argument that Zionist and Arab rights in Palestine stood on an equal footing, and were persuaded into adopting it, thus giving the weight of their endorsement to a claim which is historically invalid and, so far as natural rights go, fictitious. And having adopted the claim as valid, they based their proposals for a solution upon it.

The solution proposed by the Royal Commission rests on the argument that, since Arabs and Jews have equal rights to the possession of Palestine, the country should be divided between them.⁴⁴

Regarding the details of the partition plan, the proposed Jewish state was to include “central and northern” Palestine along with the coastal shore and historic Arab towns such as Acre and Galilee, as well as some of the most fertile land in Palestine.⁴⁵ “Arab” Palestine was to be united with Transjordan to form an Arab state; with “the Holy Places (Jerusalem-Bethlehem enclave and Nazareth and Lake Tiberias) being placed under a new mandate.”⁴⁶ Antonius saw great problems with the scheme that “a portion of Palestine west of the Jordan, far larger than the

area of present Jewish settlement, be detached from the rest to form a Jewish state" or that Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nazareth be segregated as a separate religious zone, with the remainder, in union with Transjordan, being established as the Arab state.⁴⁷ He felt the partition plan fully confirmed "the Arab objection to the Balfour Declaration by recommending that the Zionists be given far more than was actually promised them on the broadest possible interpretation of the declaration."⁴⁸ He also considered it particularly unworkable because it perpetuated one of the "most deep-seated causes of discontent:"

the feeling the Arabs have that a barrier is being erected between them and the sea; that European policy, unable to prevent the Arab political revival, is resorting to devices by which the Arab power shall be contained inland, e.g., the balkanization of the Lebanon, the concessions made to Turkey in the Sanjaq of Alexandretta. The present scheme, whatever else it may do, does consummate the process of strangling.⁴⁹

When Britain supplemented its partition plan with an appeal to "the spirit of compromise," Antonius found it a poor use of the term; for the "appeal to the Arabs to get out and make room for a Jewish state" left no room for compromise to begin with.⁵⁰ Absent Palestinian support, partition could only be achieved by "dislodging or exterminating the nation in possession."⁵¹

The scheme is based on the expectation that the Arabs would, or could be made to, renounce their natural and political rights in any part of Palestine; that frontiers may be laid down in defiance of physical features and of ingrained habits of human intercourse; that trade and good government can thrive in a small country not larger than Wales after its dissection into some half-dozen entities made up of separate states, enclaves, and corridors; and that a population of 300,000 settled people, deeply attached to their homes and their culture, would submit to either of the alternatives proposed for them by the Royal Commission: forcible eviction or subjection to a Jewish state to be established over their heads.⁵²

Antonius believed the commission's scheme ran "counter to the lessons of history, the requirements of geography, the natural play of economic forces, and the ordinary laws of human behavior."⁵³ He also considered it morally indefensible to portray the plan as the solution to Jewish persecution: "To place the brunt of the burden upon Arab Palestine is a miserable evasion of the duty that lies upon the whole civilized world. No code of morals can justify the persecution of one people in an attempt to relieve the persecution of another."⁵⁴ In a similar vein, Mahatma

Gandhi wrote: "My sympathy [to persecuted Jews] does not blind me to the requirements of justice. . . . Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same sense that England belongs to the English or France to the French. It is wrong and inhuman to impose the Jews on the Arabs. What is going on in Palestine cannot be justified by any moral code of conduct."⁵⁵

Whatever its motives, Antonius believed that the Peel Commission, like the British administration of Palestine since the King-Crane report, had essentially acted as if blind to the "writing on the wall." He saw how they had turned a blind eye to injustice—to the fact that

Zionist colonisation involved the actual wiping out of villages and the eviction of their peasantry; that the money which the Zionists brought and the resulting prosperity—if real prosperity there were—did not make up in Arab eyes for the loss of all that a peasant holds dear and sacred in his village surroundings; that the peasants were defenceless against the process of dispossession and the legalised but relentless pressure that went with it; that the sense of helplessness against the inexorable advance of Zionist colonisation had led to obviously unpremeditated outbreaks on the part of the population who are by nature peaceful and hospitable to strangers, and was bound, if allowed to continue, to cause unpredictable losses in lives and property.⁵⁶

For Antonius, the blindness could not "be explained rationally, or even psychologically: only historically, by analogy with Ireland where the same obstinate persistence in an unwanted policy and the same blindness to the writing on the wall were shown and continued to be shown until Ireland was lost."⁵⁷ In parallel fashion, he saw the plan as opening another chapter of violence. Britain might have thought that repopulating Palestine with Zionists might safeguard the empire's interests, and that imposing an artificial separation could bring peace; but Antonius saw the lessons of history, and of Ireland in particular, pointing to a far more unstable future of sustained bloodshed and violence.⁵⁸ For Antonius, the problem remained in the failure to understand history and humanity:

In drawing [the partition plan] up, the Commissioners appear to have overlooked that it is no more feasible to drive a peasantry from its soil than to impose an alien government upon an unwilling population, except by constant resort to force; and that the use of superior force to hold down a nationally-conscious people, while it may for a time achieve its immediate purpose, is bound sooner or later to defeat its own ends.⁵⁹

Through the summer months, as Antonius heatedly debated partition with Philby and others during visits to London, he was not alone in his

opposition to the plan. Judah Magnes was among those who realized the dangers and spoke out against the scheme. Magnes told the Council of the Jewish Agency in Zurich in August that he had grown up in the United States, "a country where people are raised without fear," and had never felt much fear until, when faced with the partition plan, he saw the inevitability of war. Explaining why the plan would lead to war, he said, "In the first place because the Jewish state as it is offered to us contains lands about three-quarters of which are in the hands of the Arabs." He warned his fellow Jews against the plan, saying:

The mandatory system had arisen out of the conception of President Wilson that had been accepted by nations of the world, namely "that people and provinces are not to be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were [mere] chattels and pawns in a game." Now if your Jewish state has three quarters of its land in Arab hands; if there are 225,000 rural Arabs in this state, more rural Arabs than there are rural Jews; if in the four cities which are to be under temporary British Mandate there are many thousands of Arabs—in the city of Acre, for example, I believe hardly a Jew—and you accept this gift from the nation that conquered that country, for it is only by the right of conquest by the sword that the country would dare to try to present you or me with these lands; if you accept them you are transferring in these words "peoples and provinces from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were chattels and pawns in a game." By the Treaty of Versailles, people and provinces were transferred from sovereignty to sovereignty, against the will of those peoples and the world today is suffering from that action.⁶⁰

As Antonius and Magnes had warned, the partition plan did indeed provoke renewed violence. Palestinians resumed their revolt after publication of the partition plan in July 1937, and the government was ruthless in response, generating further attacks and assassinations. Among other measures, the government again increased its force by 20,000 troops, conducted aerial bombardment by the Royal Air Force, imposed measures for "the mass dynamiting of villages," imposed collective fines, confiscated villagers' food and livestock, arbitrarily arrested and imprisoned anyone suspected of supporting the revolt, and summarily executed anyone found in possession of a gun.⁶¹ In 1938 the Arab Higher Committee was banned and Palestinian Arab leaders were arrested, imprisoned in camps in Palestine, and deported to the Seychelles islands—except for the Mufti Haj Amin al-Husseini, who escaped to Lebanon. Nevil Barbour remarked that "The measures taken against the Arab Higher Committee . . . could be regarded by every Palestinian Arab only as a deliberate affront to national feeling and as an attempt to deprive Arabs of their only

political representation, and so prepare the way for the enforcement of the partition scheme."⁶²

By 1938 Antonius and other observers knew that no elite stratum or class was leading the revolt, nor was the effort directed solely toward independence and self-government, the main concerns of Arab nationalists in the past. Rather, as Antonius understood it, this was a desperate popular revolt by the majority of Palestinians against the British plan for partition. "The moving spirits in the revolt are . . . men of the working and agricultural classes who are risking their lives in what they believe to be the only way left to them of saving their homes and their villages."⁶³ As Sir Hugh Foot, commander of the British forces in the Nablus area, noted, "Leaders could rely on the Arab villages to contribute volunteers and rifles at any time and to help them escape."⁶⁴

In the late summer of 1938, Palestinian Arab fighters had secured the greater part of Palestine and were estimated to include a force of "9,000 to 10,000, including 3,000 full-time band members, 1,000 urban rebels and 6,000 villagers who could be called on in time of need."⁶⁵ British officers such as Foot awoke daily to find fresh lists "of disorders and disturbance—telephones cut, bridges damaged, trains derailed, convoys ambushed, fighting in the hills."⁶⁶ As the revolt escalated and reached its peak in 1938, the British responded even more brutally. As Foot (Lord Caradon) noted years later:

I later heard that, after I left Palestine in 1938, the methods used by some of our troops became more ruthless. For many years afterwards I heard stories of the patrols led by [Charles Orde] Wingate. . . . He formed his own gang comprised of Jewish volunteers. . . . His methods were extreme and cruel. He had many successes, but he forfeited our general reputation for fair fighting.⁶⁷

Antonius was not alone in voicing criticism. As early as February 11, with "Palestine . . . up in arms" and the government refusing to abandon the idea of partition, which had provoked the new revolt, and simply instituting repressive measures, Antonius observed that the British measures "not only outraged the sentiments of the Muslim world in general, but have also created the worst kind of bad blood between British and Arabs—a mixture of loathing and contempt which has brought into being a general desire for vindictive retaliation."⁶⁸ In the increased criticism of British policy among Arabs everywhere, Antonius saw a reinvigoration of the Muslim desire for unity. In Egypt alone, the influential Sheikh Maraghi urged the prime minister to express Egyptian criticism to the British government; students at al-Azhar staged demonstrations; and the Muslim association passed resolutions, and the Egyptian Chamber ap-

proved a motion calling for the Egyptian government's more active support for the Palestine-Arab problem.⁶⁹

At the beginning of 1938, still unable to publish his book because the French-Syrian treaty, which he wished to discuss, remained unresolved, Antonius left London for Egypt. Though willing to endure the ever more violent conditions in Palestine as he had in 1936 and desirous of returning so that he could report on developments firsthand, he could not chance taking his material through the censors posted at the Palestine-Egypt border. Sadly, now formally separated from his wife, he searched for a place to live, and took up temporary quarters at Alexandria College, where he aimed to complete the manuscript.

While he prepared his index and his preface and inserted several pages here or there to bring the book up to date, he also tried to undertake some new projects, including a study of cultural institutions in Egypt and research and writing concerning "the political stakes in the Mediterranean, the impulse given by recent events to Muslim solidarity and to the movement of Arab unity, and the new orientation given social and economic development by scientific processes of the West."⁷⁰ However, he decided to drop these within the first few months, for he found freedom of expression "becoming increasingly curtailed and that the presentation of facts in a way, which is both objective and frank, is in effect barred."⁷¹ This applied even to cultural and academic issues. As he wrote to Rogers on February 11, 1938, "A feeling of anxiety permeates all classes, even the small class of thinkers and educationalists who are normally aloof from politics."⁷²

As the international situation grew more tense and foreboding and he saw a trend toward "chauvinism and malice" with the start of the new year, Antonius found little mental capacity for serious work. He was sensitive by nature, and the new anxiety took a serious toll. As an intellectual, Antonius suffered from the creeping oppression that constrained "the spirit of searching and frank analysis." Although it was difficult to bear, he knew this was hardly novel, for such reaction "happens to a greater or lesser extent everywhere" when "one's conclusions lead one to criticize the powers that be."⁷³ During this period, Antonius witnessed Egypt in the grip of an electoral battle at the start of the year and watched as the governments in Syria and Lebanon gradually assumed dictatorial powers. For his part, alone, wracked with anxiety, and having nowhere to turn, he fell victim to his own "crisis," a certain mental dislocation, and a "falling off in quality" in his work. He wrote Rogers on May 17, 1938:

There is hostility everywhere and no peace of mind, and my life is one of depression and anxiety. It is becoming an impossibility to speak one's mind

without arousing immediate hostility somewhere or other, breaking up personal relations, and fostering suspicion. . . . It is difficult for anyone who is not in direct touch with conditions in the Near East to realize the part played by animosity and hatred in the pursuit of public affairs.⁷⁴

Despite his suffering, Antonius welcomed his friend Carlton Hayes, who came to visit for a week. Among his other visitors during this time was the young John Richmond, son of Edward and nephew of Herbert, who observed how respectfully Antonius was treated by the "old guard" in Alexandria, many of whom called him *bey* and wished him well as they drank their coffee together. Although all intellectuals have a general tendency toward introspection, Antonius's isolation was far more acute than usual, because the depth of his awareness enabled him to foresee the coming violence—"a long period of uncertainty and difficulty ahead."⁷⁵

Beyond the conflict in Palestine, Antonius's personal crisis was also related to the ominous signs of impending world war and to the underlying absence of moral constraint that both sets of events represented. It was this absence, and the consequent reality of barbarity, that most disturbed him. For how can there be trust, or peace, if people have no sense of morality and no conscience? All his life Antonius had trusted that good would prevail, that ultimately Britain would rebound and would act honorably, compassionately. His life's work had been based on trust that communication and face-to-face negotiations would result in just solutions. As this trust was shattered, Antonius lost hope and broke down. He was forced to question his life's work as an adviser and mediator. "Now that my home life and peace of mind have been shattered by the [Palestine] folly, I feel it more acutely than ever," he wrote Crane on April 2, 1938.⁷⁶

When Antonius learned that the British were considering holding a conference on Palestine, he began anew to hope that with the publication of his book the story might be set straight. This was his lifeline and ultimately his legacy. Having lost his faith in men in power and come face to face with evil, which nineteenth-century Europeans and modern secular men preferred to ignore, he wrote Rogers on August 24, 1938 that he had lost a "well defined sense of direction" and "felt confused and muddled, and seized with all sorts of doubts about the soundness and the reality of accepted values."⁷⁷ The "perplexity caused by the European situation and the general bankruptcy of moral standards and values" left him nearly overwhelmed by the sense of evil "all around."⁷⁸

Notes

1. Barbara Kalkas, "The Palestine Revolt," in *The Transformation of Palestine: Essays on the Origin and Development of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, ed. Ibrahim Abu-

Lughod (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1971), p. 269. Also see Yehoshua Porath, *The Palestine Arab National Movement: From Riots to Rebellions*, vol. 2: 1929–1939 (London: Frank Cass, 1977), pp. 211–212.

2. Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (Commons), 1937, col. 134, “Evidence to the Palestine Royal Commission of the 1936 Disturbances,” pp. 35–36, 38.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 272, 98.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 152.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 136–137.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

8. Between 1920 and 1937, the government advanced £805,599 in loans to Jews, of which £25,000 was written off, £100,000 was considered “irrevocable,” and £67,000 was still outstanding in 1936. At the same time, Palestinian Arabs were being denied loans (*Ibid.*, p. 21).

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 153, 111, 180.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 183.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 221.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 379.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 317.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 304.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 294.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 315.

17. Antonius to Rogers, 16 February 1937, Antonius papers, vol. 2, archives of the Institute of Current World Affairs [hereafter, ICWA].

18. Antonius to John Crane, C. Crane’s son, 19 January 1937, Israel State Archives, Hakirya [hereafter, ISA], record group 65, file 854.

19. George Antonius, Presentation to the Peel Commission, 18 January 1937, ISA, record group 65, file 2869.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Ibid.*

25. *Ibid.*

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*

30. George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1938), p. 400.

31. Antonius to Rogers, 16 February 1937, Antonius papers, vol. 2, ICWA.

32. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, pp. 400–401.

33. Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (Commons), 1937, col. 134, “Evidence to the Palestine Royal Commission of the 1936 Disturbances,” pp. 304–305.

34. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 401.

35. Antonius to Rogers, 16 February 1937, Antonius papers, vol. 2, ICWA.

36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Antonius to Rogers, 28 May 1937, Antonius papers, vol. 2, ICWA.
39. Antonius to Rogers, 19 May 1937, Antonius papers, vol. 2, ICWA.
40. Antonius to Rogers, 28 May 1937, Antonius papers, vol. 2, ICWA.
41. Antonius to Rogers, 29 July 1937, Antonius papers, vol. 2, ICWA.
42. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, pp. 402–403.
43. Antonius to John Philby, 26 August 1937, Philby papers, box 10, file 2, Middle East Center Archives, St. Antony's College, Oxford [hereafter, MEC].
44. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, pp. 401–402.
45. Porath, *The Palestine Arab National Movement*, p. 228.
46. Ibid.
47. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 402.
48. Ibid.
49. Antonius to Philby, 8 July 1937, Philby papers, box 10, file 2, MEC.
50. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 404.
51. Ibid., p. 412.
52. Ibid., pp. 403–404.
53. Ibid., p. 404.
54. Ibid., p. 411.
55. Mahatma Gandhi, "My Non-Violence," cited in *From Haven to Conquest: Reading in Zionism and the Palestine Problem until 1948*, ed. Walid Khalidi (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1971), p. 367.
56. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, pp. 397–398.
57. Ibid, p. 398.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid., p. 404.
60. Judah Magnes, "Address to the Council of the Jewish Agency," Zurich, 18 August 1937, in *Dissenter in Zion*, ed. Arthur Goren (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), pp. 332–334.
61. Pamela Ann Smith, *Palestine and the Palestinians* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), p. 64; Nevil Barbour, "The Dark Path of Repression, 1937–1938," in *From Haven to Conquest*, ed. Khalidi, p. 340; Rosemary Sayigh, *Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries* (London: Zed, 1979), p. 43.
62. Barbour, "The Dark Path of Repression," in *From Haven to Conquest*, ed. Khalidi, p. 339.
63. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 406. Rosemary Sayigh notes that during the revolt, in addition to the imprisonment of thousands of Palestinian Arabs (5,679 Palestinians were jailed in 1938 alone), an estimated "5,000 Palestinians were killed and 14,000 wounded through British action, excluding victims from Zionist attacks" (Sayigh, *From Peasants to Revolutionaries*, p. 43).
64. Sir Hugh Foot, *A Start in Freedom* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964), p. 48.
65. Ibid.; also see Subhi Yasin, *Al Thawreh al Arabiyyah Bayna al-Kubra fi Filastin, 1936–1939* (The Great Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936–1939) (Cairo, 1959), p. 42, cited in Porath, *The Palestine Arab National Movement*, p. 247.
66. Foot, *A Start in Freedom*, pp. 48–49.

67. *Ibid.*, pp. 50–52. Beginning in 1937, Captain Charles Orde Wingate trained Zionist groups in Palestine, including the Special Night Squads, which he led on nighttime raids into Arab villages and which became the early Jewish Army (Porath, *The Palestine Arab National Movement*, p. 241; Sami Hadawi and Robert John, *The Palestine Diary, 1914–1945*, vol. 1 [New York: Methuen, 1970], p. 274; also see David Ben-Gurion, “Britain’s Contribution to Arming the Haganah,” in *From Haven to Conquest*, ed. Khalidi, pp. 371–374).

68. Antonius to Rogers, 11 February 1938, Antonius papers, vol. 3, ICWA.

69. Antonius to C. Crane, 21 May 1938, Antonius papers, vol. 3, ICWA.

70. Antonius to Rogers, 17 May 1938, Antonius papers, vol. 3, ICWA.

71. Antonius to Rogers, 24 August 1938, Antonius papers, vol. 3, ICWA.

72. Antonius to Rogers, 11 February 1938, Antonius papers, vol. 3, ICWA.

73. Antonius to Rogers, 24 August 1938, Antonius papers, vol. 3, ICWA.

74. *Ibid.*

75. Antonius to Rogers, 11 February 1938, Antonius papers, vol. 3, ICWA.

76. Antonius to C. Crane, 3 April 1938, Antonius papers, vol. 3, ICWA.

77. Antonius to Rogers, 17 May 1938 and 24 August 1938, Antonius papers, vol. 3, ICWA.

78. *Ibid.*

13

War and Death

*I traveled in the Arab homeland
With only a notebook.
Police stations tossed me about,
Soldiers tossed me about,
And all I had was a sparrow in my pocket. . . .
The word in my country needs a passport.
I waited for the pass
Staring at the sand bags,
Reading the posters
That spoke of one homeland,
That spoke of one people.
I was discarded at my country's gates
Like broken glass.*

—Qabbani, *"The Ruler and the Sparrow"*

The London Conference Aftermath

After devoting several months to the St. James's Palace Conference on Palestine in early 1939, Antonius was hopeful that additional meetings might finally conclude with Palestinian independence. While he awaited the white paper the government promised to issue on its findings from the conference, Antonius stayed in London, hoping to bring British representatives closer to the Arab point of view. He began on March 30 by assuring R. A. Butler, the undersecretary of the Foreign Office, and F. H. Downie, secretary to the conference, that "he did not regard the conference as a failure,"¹ for it had provided an important opportunity for an exchange of views. He told them he felt subsequent informal meetings and another conference in May could settle the points under dispute.

Through these initial meetings, Antonius gained both Downie's and Butler's assistance in arranging a meeting with Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald. Butler was especially helpful; he felt Antonius "seemed genuinely desirous of reaching a settlement" and that "it would be wise to keep in touch with Mr. Antonius to advise him as to his movement."²

Antonius asserted that he found the British proposals a rather startling advance on what had been offered to Palestinians in the past. He also mentioned two fundamental problems that he perceived, which he pressed Downie and Butler to communicate to MacDonald. First, after expressing his desire to see Jewish immigration stopped, he asked that the British government make clear that its obligation to support Jewish immigration under the Balfour Declaration had been discharged and that it would support the further immigration of Jews in whatever number only as refugees. Second, Antonius argued that rather than discuss independence for Palestine with other Arab states at the end of some transition period, the British, from the start, should support independence as a transitional process to an independent Palestinian state.³

On April 6 Antonius met with MacDonald before his meeting with the Cabinet to discuss the policy statement. He restated the Palestinian demand for an immediate end to Jewish immigration and an assurance of independence, and argued against the proposal for the immediate appointment of Palestinians to head certain departments. On this point, Antonius disagreed with most of the other Arab delegates to the conference, most of whom were "politicians rather than administrators."⁴ Egypt's ambassador in London informed Secretary of State Halifax on April 6 that the Palestinian delegates, except for Antonius and Nashashibi, supported the British proposal because they believed that if Palestinians were appointed only to the executive council, "they will be considered by the population of the country to be accepting some form of corruption from the British government."⁵ The Egyptian ambassador attempted to persuade Halifax that Antonius's criticism was motivated simply by self-interest, but MacDonald knew better. He told the Cabinet on April 6 that "Mr. Antonius, who was perhaps the best informed and ablest of the Palestinian Arab delegation, thought that we should make a profound mistake if we accepted this proposal, both because in his view there was at present no Palestinian Arab capable of becoming the ministerial head of department, and also on the general merits of the position."⁶

Antonius's position appears to have been based on his conviction that Palestinians could and should assume legislative and executive powers first, as continued postponement might prevent Palestinian self-government from being realized for a very long time. Although Antonius recognized the need for Palestinians to take on administrative and technical duties, he had always emphasized that acquiring executive and legisla-

tive powers was of greater importance. This was evident in his criticism of the Palestine mandatory government and in his observations regarding Iraq's advance toward self-government. His criticism of Palestinians' heading departments was undoubtedly generated by the political implications of Palestinians in administrative, rather than executive and legislative, positions. Unless they could control policy and rule making, not even the best-intentioned bureaucrat had a chance. He had been there, and put up the fight, while the British derailed the process of self-governance.

Antonius was undoubtedly aware of the Egyptian ambassador's April 6 message to Secretary of State Halifax that if the Colonial Office was concerned about the "bad direction of affairs when in the hands of Palestine ministers, then at least let it be decided that Palestinians be nominated gradually as heads of the various departments, but let the question of the scope of their sitting on the Executive Council be dropped."⁷ Antonius appears to have been the only delegate who was farsighted enough to see the political implications of the proposal: that it could be used to deny Palestinians a role in executive and legislative policy formation.

After Antonius's April 6 meeting with MacDonald, Sir John E. Shuckburgh, deputy undersecretary of state for the Colonial Office, and Sir Grattan Bushe, the Colonial Office's legal adviser, were appointed to hold more detailed consultations with Antonius. On April 12 they met with Antonius to discuss the results of the conference and the modifications of the British proposals Antonius considered necessary in order to gain Palestinian support for the forthcoming white paper.⁸ Antonius held that the paper should support the principle that Britain had no further obligation in the establishment of a Jewish national home. He argued that Jewish immigration should cease altogether, but it was conceivable that 25,000 could be allowed to enter as refugees. He also felt that no more land should be allowed to be purchased "in perpetuity for the Jewish people in Palestine." For Antonius this discriminatory policy was untenable. Although he was primarily concerned with the registration of land as inalienable Jewish property and he was willing to support a few additional, isolated transactions, Antonius remarked that "in view of the land hunger existing in certain areas, it might be as well to have a general or local prohibition for, say, five years."⁹

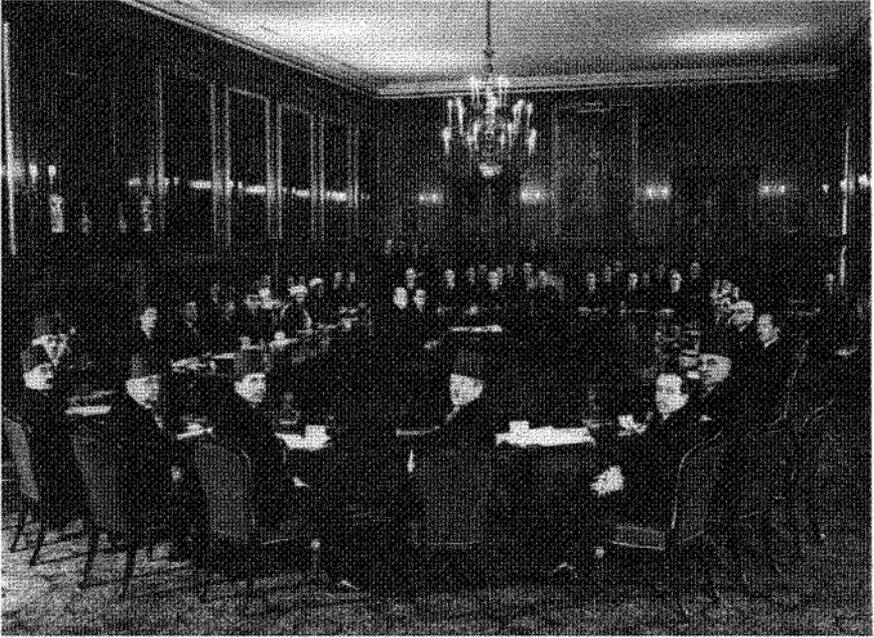
Shuckburgh explained that the proposed two-stage concept for independence included the appointment of Palestinians to head departments, followed by the appointment of a cabinet of ministers with legislative responsibilities. Antonius again rejected the proposed first phase as a matter of "pride and prestige," because Palestinians "regarded themselves as fit for self-government as any of their neighbors."¹⁰ Antonius proposed, instead, a first stage in which the high commissioner would retain veto

power but would have limited authority over legislation and policy in Palestine—which would be vested in an executive council with a Palestinian majority. In the subsequent stage Palestinian executive council members would assume responsibility for departments, and an elected chamber would be established to “take over from the council the functions of legislation [and] in due course, draw up the constitution of an independent state.” At the end of the transition period, the independent state would support special treaty relations with Britain comparable to Iraq’s and Egypt’s.¹¹

At the end of this meeting, Antonius offered to fly to Egypt and Syria to inform Arab leaders of any changes in the British proposal. He assured Shuckburgh that if the changes were acceptable, Arab leaders “would do everything in their power to secure peace and cooperation with the British government.” Though Shuckburgh considered their discussions most valuable, he was afraid that a modification of the British proposals might be regarded as a sign of weakness. Thus, he “was very doubtful about the possibility of narrowing the differences between views of the British government and those of the Arabs to the point, which Mr. Antonius has stated to be necessary in order to secure Arab acquiescence.”¹²

Although the white paper was supposed to be issued immediately after the conference, Antonius’s private consultations and Britain’s protracted discussions with the Egyptian government and other Arab states led to delays. By mid-April there was little more Antonius could do to influence the British statement of policy, but he remained in London through the end of the month. Further delaying publication of the white paper was the European crisis, as British officials awaited Hitler’s April 28 speech before announcing their statement of policy.¹³ In the interim, there was much discussion of possible reactions to the British proposals. Fearing a loss of U.S. support through Zionist agitation during this critical period, officials contemplated opening British colonial territory elsewhere to Jewish settlement. On May 17 the government published the white paper, which committed Britain to grant Palestine independence after ten years and to see that Arabs and Jews shared in government, and that British commercial and strategic requirements were secure. They were to develop a constitutional form of government beginning with the appointment of Palestinians to head various departments, and to limit Jewish immigration to 75,000 over five years with land transfers subject to the high commissioner’s approval.¹⁴

A few weeks later Antonius met with the British ambassador to Cairo, Sir Miles Lampson, who was at first apprehensive about being associated with a critic of the British Empire. Antonius’s brother-in-law, Sir Walter Smart, the highly regarded oriental secretary in Egypt, persuaded Lampson to meet with Antonius, because he “might have something of impor-



*The London Conference, St. James's Palace, February 1939: a meeting between the British and Arab delegates. The Palestinian delegates are seated in the foreground. From left to right, they are Fuad Saba, Yaqub al-Ghusayn, Musa al-Alami, Amin Tamimi, Jamal al-Husseini, Awni Abd al-Hadi, George Antonius, and Alfred Roch. The delegates from other Arab countries are seated to either side of the Palestinians. The British delegation directly faces the Palestinians, with Sir Neville Chamberlain, prime minister, presiding. To his right sits Lord Halifax, secretary of state for foreign affairs, and to his left, Malcolm MacDonal, secretary of state for the colonies. SOURCE: Reprinted, with permission, from Walid Khalidi, *Before Their Diaspora: A Photographic History of the Palestinians, 1876–1948* (Beirut: Institute of Palestine Studies, 1971).*

tance [to share] in regard to the Arab attitude over the white paper, and that it would be unwise to close the door on any possibility of an agreed settlement."¹⁵ As Lampson informed Butler, "At first I refused to receive him owing to his obvious and to my mind quite gratuitous intransigence in London as revealed by the conference minutes."¹⁶ However, having met Antonius, and finding him "infinitely more reasonable and sensible than . . . expected,"¹⁷ he wrote Butler that he was "pleasantly surprised at the moderation with which [Antonius] expounded his views" concerning Palestinian reactions to the white paper.¹⁸

He told me that as a matter of fact the difference between what the WP [White Paper] laid down and what the Arabs wanted was very small. It was true that over certain matters the difference might theoretically be considerable but in fact it should be slight, but what was wanted in getting the Arabs to play up was something to convince them of our sincerity, and it had occurred to him that if the British government could in some shape or form make a declaration to the effect that with the publication of their WP policy they regard themselves as having fulfilled their obligations to the Jews, then the Arabs would realize there was no joker in our hands and that they might safely go ahead and collaborate with us in Palestine.¹⁹

Antonius told Lampson the white paper's positive features included that Palestine was not to become a Jewish state and that the Palestinians would eventually acquire veto power over immigration. Regarding the Arab Higher Committee's rejection of the statement of policy, in Antonius's opinion, no representatives from other Arab countries could expect to persuade the committee to accept it. In Antonius's view, all of the Arab rejections "seem to boil down to explanations of a psychological order," that is, to a sense of distrust rather than disappointment. This distrust was not a "relic" of the past; it was caused by the contents of the white paper, particularly because there was no assurance of Palestinian independence after the transitional period. Antonius said the white paper fostered Palestinian distrust by invoking "the mandate as its gospel without any apparent allowance for the Arab attitude in regard to the mandate."²⁰ He explained to Lampson that Palestinians distrusted the proposal for independence because a genuine promise of independence would not have made a distinction between Arab states and a Palestinian state or espoused the parity argument.²¹ British insistence that neither Arabs nor Jews should dominate Palestine "is interpreted in Arab circles as an espousal in disguise of the Zionist slogan of parity and as robbing the promise relating to independence of all value, the argument being that if neither side is to be dominant there can be no room for the constitutional exercise of majority rights."²² Furthermore, all the "verbal tributes to Arab rights" appeared to be no more than "the old wolf in a new lamb's clothing," because even after a review of the McMahon correspondence, the British government continued to reject its earlier wartime pledges to support Palestinian independence. This was particularly serious because "the belief that Palestine was included in the pledges to the Sheriff Hussein is deeply rooted in the Arab mind." In conclusion, he advised that the British government publish some statement or declaration that "they regard themselves as having fulfilled their obligation to the Jews."²³

Although Lampson forwarded Antonius's remarks to Butler in the Foreign Office, together with a memorandum he had Antonius draw up regarding Arab reactions to the white paper, he was concerned that he might be "suspect of not backing up adequately his Majesty's government's Palestine policy." It is interesting to note the degree to which he felt it necessary to defend himself against the possibility of any such accusations: "This is, I need not say, quite untrue, and incidentally most unfair, but as to that no matter! It's part of our job to be shot at, both physically and metaphorically; but nevertheless I feel that I have to tread warily in this Palestinian business."²⁴

After receiving Lampson's memorandum, C. W. Baxter, Downie (head of the Foreign Office's Eastern Department), and others in the Foreign and Colonial Offices decided that there would be no further official clarification or explanation of the statement of policy, and Lampson should be advised to avoid controversy and to simply put Antonius "off with some vague oral reply."²⁵ Within weeks, Britain declared war against Germany, and soon after, Winston Churchill and his pro-Zionist cabinet came to power. Yet even then Antonius refused to give up hope for Palestine.²⁶

American Friends and Arab Federation

From 1940 to 1942, Antonius's greatest supports came from his friends among the Arab nationalists and American diplomats in the region. For decades, he had cultivated friendships with leading American officials in Egypt, Palestine, Beirut, and Iraq, such as Rives Childs, J. Loder Park, Bert Fish, George Wadsworth, P. Knabenshue, and Eliot Palmer, as well as Wallace Murray, chief of the Near East Division at the Department of State in Washington, D.C. He knew all the leading diplomats, and kept them abreast of Arab public opinion and concerns. He also helped with special problems, as in July 1939, when U.S. Consul George Wadsworth in Jerusalem enlisted his aid in resolving a kidnapping in Palestine. In the words of one of the victims: "When my son Reverend R. Goldner and I were kidnapped by Arab bandits in the wilderness of Judea in Palestine, and my son was held for ransom, Mr. George Wadsworth, U.S. consul in Jerusalem did a sacrificial piece of work in helping to bring about the release of my son (e.g., he advanced \$250 and worked with G.A. via the Mufti)."²⁷

In January 1939, Wallace Murray, chief of the U.S. Department of State's Near East Division, had recommended Antonius's book to assistant secretary of state Berle, stating that Antonius was "rightly considered, I believe, a great authority on the Arab world" and *The Arab Awakening* was "recognized by critics as one of the most penetrating accounts of the Arab Nationalist Movement ever published."²⁸ Among others rec-

ommending the work was P. Knabenshue, a seasoned American diplomat with more than 27 years of experience in the Arab countries, who had studied the Palestine problem intensively since 1929. Knabenshue felt that with his "thorough knowledge of English and Arabic and his intellectual training, and because of his associations in the Arabic countries," Antonius was "perhaps the best qualified person to have presented such a book."²⁹ "I unhesitatingly pronounce Mr. Antonius's book the best work which has ever been produced on the subject," he wrote the U.S. secretary of state. "It is so thorough and so well presented that the Arab delegates at the forthcoming conference in London might well with impunity place it upon the table and rest their case upon it."³⁰ J. Loder Park, another American official in the region, also found it a "monumental work."

I know at least three American principal diplomatic officers among the Arabs who have said in one way or another recently, that this book epitomizes all that is known about the Arabs. These are, respectively, our Minister Resident at Baghdad, our Minister at Cairo and our Consul General at Jerusalem. My own chief, a Consul General, has ordered additional copies to lend to his friends, and a local Arabic editorial discussed this fact at interesting length, in a review of the book. One of our representatives said to an important new official in these parts: "If you read the book of Antonius, you will need nothing more to guide you in your work in the Near East."³¹

Before Antonius left the United States in 1939 for the St. James's Palace conference on Palestine, Murray heard him speak at the Brookings Institution (in January) and was so impressed that he summarized Antonius's points in a memo to the secretary of state. Among other things, Antonius explained that German and Italian money was not financing Arab rebellion, and that misdiagnoses of Arab reality had led to intelligence gaffes. As one "instance of the inability of officialdom to appreciate the realities" Antonius noted that British intelligence officers who had listened in to the Bari broadcasts from Italy had been overly impressed by the "inflammatory character of these broadcasts" and had made certain assumptions about their effects on Arabs. Had they visited Arabs in their homes, as Antonius knew, they would have found that far from being seduced by Italian fascists, Arabs found the broadcasts so comical that they would tune in for amusement, "to laugh at the clumsy efforts of the Italians to cultivate Arab good-will."³² In answer to another inquiry, Antonius agreed that "he considered that Palestine should remain Arab." As for the question of "where the persecuted Jews of the world might find refuge:"

[He said] that he was without sufficient knowledge of the geography of the world, and of the special factors which might determine the possibilities of the emigration of the Jews from Central Europe, to answer the question. He added that no humane man could fail to sympathize with the desperate plight of the Jews in Europe who had been treated abominably. Palestine, he thought it was obvious, could not solve the Jewish problem and it was unfair to the Arabs to expect them to assume the burden of the solution of the problem which was one for which all countries should be expected to make sacrifices.³³

As in 1913, when the Arab national movement had appeared close to achieving autonomy for the region under the Ottoman Empire, so Palestine in 1939 seemed on the verge of realizing its independence when war broke out. Ordinary lives were shattered as the arsenals of empire replaced the normalcy of family and nation. Antonius prepared to sustain the course, knowing all too well that despite "the best will in the world . . . the resulting dislocation is apt to be considerable."³⁴ First, there was a question of where to live. Formally separated from Katy, who remained in their home in Jerusalem, he relocated temporarily to Beirut, where other Palestinians and some of his good friends and leading nationalists offered a network of support. Second, as to the question of what to do and how to fulfill his obligations of monthly and quarterly reporting to his employer, the Institute of Current World Affairs (ICWA), he considered writing another book, knowing that regular, scheduled reports would be impossible.

Antonius had lost his normal framework for reporting, which for decades had included routine, quiet, discipline, and access to the dozens of journals and papers and hundreds of books in his home, where he had become accustomed to writing undisturbed. He could no longer rely on mail to flow uninterrupted to or from his residence. The idea of original research, although conceivable, was hardly encouraged by circumstance or by censorship. A dull climate of conformity prevailed in the local press. Still, he did begin to consider writing a second book, and to collect materials and data concerning the war. He would attempt to report on substantive concerns facing the Arab nation. He tried to prepare Walter Rogers and the ICWA for disruption, while pressing forward with plans to study the "current problems of the countries of my area, . . . the moral and social issues, which confront the world today."³⁵

After Italy entered the war in June 1940, conditions deteriorated further. Thousands more troops arrived in Egypt for battle, and aerial bombardments wracked Alexandria, Tel Aviv, and Maadi. "Due to the entrance of Italy into the war, mail communications with the Eastern Mediterranean area had been disorganized and . . . communications we were receiving from Beirut and Jerusalem were coming in only after long

delay and even when such communications were forwarded by air mail," Rives Childs told Rogers.³⁶ Antonius was technically based in Lebanon during this time but was shuttling between Cairo, Beirut, and Jerusalem. In early July, he discussed Arab affairs with Wadsworth in Jerusalem; in August, he was back in Beirut; in the fall, he discussed the Arab federation with Bert Fish in Cairo, and so on. American diplomats relied upon him. "I knew from my own experience and from what our officers in Egypt, Palestine and Syria had reported that Mr. Antonius has been of real assistance as a source of information and as a useful contact concerning developments in the Arab world," said Childs.³⁷ A number of leading British officials also trusted Antonius and were disposed to aid his efforts. The formerly skeptical Sir Miles Lampson became a supporter of Arab unity and a rapid implementation of the May 1939 White Paper on Palestine in July 1940.

For his part, British Consul General P. S. Havard tried to help Antonius by warning him via Eliot Palmer, U.S. consul general in Beirut, that the Vichy French were viewing Antonius's activities with increasing suspicion. Ominous rumblings were emanating from the office of French High Commissioner Puaux:

Mr. A [Antonius] and another Palestinian (a member of the Husseini family whom the consul general [Havard] considers as of little consequence) were seeing too much of the Syrian (National Bloc) political leaders and others interested in political affairs in Syria. At that time Jamil Mardam and Saadallah Jabri, as well as Sheikh Ajib al-Yawer from Iraq, were either guests at the Grand Hotel at Sofar or were visiting the hotel practically every day and were frequently seen in Mr. A's company.³⁸

With relations between British and French officials in Beirut being particularly delicate, Palmer, as a neutral party (the United States had not yet entered the war), attempted to mediate. In defense of Antonius, he explained to Puaux:

Mr. A had pointed out that all these men whom he was seeing at Sofar were old friends of his and that the very fact that they were not resorting to secret meetings with him might in itself be considered as proof of the innocent character of such meetings; also that Mr. Antonius, while interested in the pan-Arab movement and in following all aspects of this movement in his capacity of student, author, lecturer, had insisted in conversation with me that he was not in any way concerned with the internal politics of Syria.³⁹

He asked Puaux "to give Mr. A. [Antonius] an opportunity to call on him and explain his presence here [in Lebanon]." Puaux agreed and said "that perhaps police and other authorities responsible for reporting the

movements of Syrian political leaders and others under observation had been unwarrantedly suspicious of Mr. A." Palmer learned that they "had had a very satisfactory talk" during the meeting he scheduled. "I believe that this meeting (their first one) will at least enable the HC to evaluate reports concerning Mr. A that may come to his attention and accordingly save Mr. A from possible embarrassment, even if it does not, as it may, result in their seeing one another from time to time and discussing the situation in the N.E. in which they are both sincerely interested."⁴⁰

Meanwhile, Rogers—who had an aversion to Antonius's engagement in public affairs and who had felt increasing pressure due to Zionist criticism—no longer had Charles Crane to contend with (Crane had died in 1939). On August 14, 1940, he went to the Department of State to request a formal investigation of Antonius by American officers in the field. Were any evidence of suspicious activity to turn up, Rogers would have an easily defensible case for firing Antonius immediately, putting an end to the ICWA's association with this uncomfortably articulate critic of Zionism and defender of Palestinian independence. If no evidence of wrongdoing were found, Rogers's only remaining pretext for ridding himself of Antonius would be that he had received no word from Antonius for three months. When Childs had described to Rogers the disruption in communications from the region due to Italy's entry into the war in June, Rogers appeared to appreciate that "censorship might account in part for his (Mr. R's) failure to receive some letters while the censorship might also account for the lack of fullness of Mr. A's communications."⁴¹ Still Rogers persisted in his attempts to enlist the involvement of the U.S. state department, seemingly concerned "lest the activities of Mr. George Antonius, representative in the Near East of the Institute, might be a source of embarrassment to the Department."⁴² To men in the field who knew Antonius and the wartime disruptions and difficulties in the area, this request for investigation seemed odd. "I rather wonder at Mr. Rogers' not having realized that only censorship could have prevented so keen a student and able a penman from writing him regarding the state of increasing tension in this corner of the Mediterranean and Arab reaction to its various facets," wrote Wadsworth.⁴³ Certainly Crane would not have allowed such an investigation. For years his friendship and patronage had shielded Antonius from those who considered him a liability when he stopped being a "philosophizing spectator" and entered the fray as adviser and mediator on Palestinian and regional affairs in the early 1930s.

When officials in Beirut, Palestine, and Egypt heard of the investigation, they warned Antonius, wrote letters defending him, and offered him their help in forwarding reports to ICWA. Bert Fish, who had been with the American Legation in Cairo for seven years and had met with Antonius fairly often, wrote: "I do not hesitate to say that I have always

found Mr. Antonius to be friendly, courteous and helpful. Furthermore, aside from the personal esteem in which I hold Mr. Antonius, I have been given to believe that he is well thought of in influential quarters in the Near East," and that despite Antonius's absence from Cairo during the past year, there was no reason to revise the high opinion of him.⁴⁴

Wadsworth "heartily endorsed" Childs's review and tried to help Antonius patch up his relations with ICWA. When Antonius arrived in Jerusalem for a brief visit with his family—shortly after the August 1940 memo requesting that he be investigated—Wadsworth told Antonius about Rogers's call at the state department and offered to forward anything Antonius might wish to send Rogers via department channels. Antonius followed up with an unsigned letter and memorandum to Wallace Murray, which Wadsworth considered "a brilliant summary of his subject," and "an extremely interesting bit of concrete proof that he is still very much on the job."⁴⁵ Murray was so impressed with Antonius's review of "the war situation in the Arab world and the reactions of public opinion in regard to the issues arising out of the conflict between Great Britain and the Axis powers" that he sent a copy to Assistant Undersecretary of State Berle.⁴⁶

The trend of public opinion follows a very intricate course, and there is so much doubt and misunderstanding abroad as to its real nature and to the relative value of each of the many strands that make up the stream of Arab opinion that it is a matter of constant regret to me that I am prevented from writing about it for public consumption. The censorship which is in force in Syria, Palestine and Egypt makes it quite impossible for anyone who has to live in these countries to publish impartial and objective studies. All I can do is to pursue my studies as best I can, keep notes for future reference and use, and, when an occasion such as this presents itself, communicate my conclusions for what they are worth to those learned societies or persons in the public service who I think ought in the public interest to see them.⁴⁷

Antonius discussed mainstream Arab public opinion, with brief reference to less representative and more partisan views, and summarized the common economic concerns and the general unease in Arab political circles: "The opinions I have heard expressed in countless conversations with personalities from the several countries of the Arab world were generally characterized by uneasy forebodings as to the future of these countries."⁴⁸ Although there were various opinions concerning with whom and how the Arabs might best ally themselves during the war, the general stream of speculation was distinguished by "a common denominator of apprehension which is all the more striking as it is grounded not only upon distrust of Italian and German assurances but also upon uncer-

tainty as to British and French intentions in respect of the political and economic future of those countries." Regarding Axis powers, the consensus was, "We have no love for either Germany or Italy." As for the Allied powers:

All the great powers of Europe are, from our point of view, equally imperialistic. But Great Britain is on the one hand a satisfied Power, and on the other less harsh than the others in her exploitation of weaker nations and less intolerant of their national aspirations. The blackest mark against her is Palestine, and it is all the blacker as she does not seem able to shake off the Jewish hold upon her mandatory policy. The present composition of Mr. Churchill's Cabinet, with its high percentage of proved Zionist partisans, is such that due recognition of our rights and aspirations is scarcely to be expected at their hands.⁴⁹

Days later, after Antonius told Palmer about his meeting with Wadsworth, Palmer also wrote in his defense:

Personally, I should like to take this opportunity to tell you that I have found Mr. A. not only well informed regarding the Near East but also disposed to make his information available to the Department when the opportunity offers. His contacts in the Arab World are, as you know, numerous and varied; and I am glad to be able to inform you that his relations with the British Consulate General here and his standing with the French authorities seem to be all that could be desired.⁵⁰

On October 24, 1940, Antonius met with Bert Fish in Cairo, through whom another memorandum was forwarded to Murray, this time regarding Antonius's views on the Arab Federation.

Antonius prefaced his comments on this subject by repeating his often stated dictum regarding the frequent misapprehension which arises from the translation of the Arabic term *al-Wihda al-Arabiya* as "Arab Federation." The trouble, said Mr. Antonius, is that occidental observers insisted in interpreting Arab political matters in terms of Western political concepts (as for example comparing the Caliphate to the Papacy), with the result that a completely erroneous opinion was formed as to the basic factors in such questions.⁵¹

Antonius explained that to the Arabs *al-Wihda al-Arabiya* did not refer to a formal structure or function of government. It did not mean "federation" in the American sense of the word. "When using the term 'al Wihda al Arabiya' an Arab had in mind the general idea of 'Arab oneness' and the

specific idea of giving effect to this 'oneness' by: (1) achieving the independence of the various Arab countries; and (2) once having achieved independence, to set about effecting such cooperation as was possible between these states."⁵²

There was no plan for a formal structure akin to that of the United States but rather to achieve a gradual unfolding of cooperation "on a purely voluntary and individual basis" between and among the various states, on matters of "mutual interest." Achieving independence essentially meant that the Arabs had "the opportunity to work out their own destinies as they saw fit," which for Palestine and Syria meant a likely future political union. As for their cooperation with Egypt, Antonius noted that it "would probably take the form of facilitating trade."⁵³ Gradually, artificial borders would diminish as mutual interest, cooperation, and an increasing capacity to work together and trust each other prevailed.

Antonius believed that the British did not support the idea of an Arab Federation not because it was too vague a notion but because they feared its implications: "They fear raising the Palestine question. . . . They feared making any statements regarding arbitrary boundaries," as the repercussions might entail concessions on their part or increased aspirations in other colonies. As a result of their fears, concerns, and objections concerning Arab aspirations, the British failed to appreciate the enormous positive impact their support of an Arab federation would have had: "The British always seemed to delay taking a step of this kind until they were absolutely forced to do so, by which time it often happened that the good-will which might have accrued from action taken at the propitious moment was lost when the same action was taken under appearances of compulsion." Antonius felt that the British government had a great deal to gain by supporting "(1) the independence of the Arab countries; (2) such steps of a cooperative nature as those countries might wish to take; and (3) the alteration of arbitrary boundaries."⁵⁴

During a month-long visit to Iraq in the spring of 1941, Antonius saw "a good deal of what was going on . . . and sent WSR a long account of it."⁵⁵ While in Baghdad he became very ill and was diagnosed with a duodenal ulcer, which typically is accompanied by chronic and acute pain, hemorrhaging, and vomiting. The doctor's prescription included dope to ease the pain, a very bland diet, and no worrying. "I . . . returned from Bagdad a sick man about a fortnight before the outbreak of the Iraq conflict," Antonius wrote. The conflict in Iraq was viewed by many as essentially a continuation of the Palestinian revolt against Britain and an expression of the Arab nation's shared sense of violation. "The Iraqi rising was only a continuation of the Palestinian, and both were only phases of the general revolt which has been gathering force throughout the last thirty years," wrote the young British officer Albert Hourani.⁵⁶

Antonius landed in a Beirut hospital just as allied troops went on the offensive: "I was in hospital at the American University during the whole of the British campaign into Syria. . . . Shortly after, my persecution by the Vichy French and the Italian Commission began. At first they wanted to expel me, and later to put me in a concentration camp. It was only my illness in hospital and the intervention of the American Consul General (Engert) that saved me from the worse effect of that persecution."⁵⁷

Since his departure from New York in 1939, Antonius had been sending the ICWA only irregular reports of his activities (e.g., during the 1939 conference in London and afterward). In 1940, some materials from Antonius arrived at the institute via post or embassy channels, and U.S. diplomats responding to the question of whether Antonius was at all an embarrassment expressed high esteem. By 1941, force majeure applied: It was common knowledge that normal communications were impossible and that mail between the Mediterranean and New York was typically delayed by four or five months, if it arrived at all. Still, Antonius continued to forward material from Baghdad in the spring.

Despite the very difficult circumstances, ICWA showed little compassion. The institute continued to complain about Antonius's failure to send monthly and other reports and financial statements. They gathered impressions about Antonius from people who saw him briefly in passing, which over time accumulated in a file that eventually was turned over to an attorney. Among those interviewed, Thomas Whittemore of the Byzantine Institute appears to have sensed the danger of his debriefing when he read John Crane's summary notes. He tried to tell Crane that Antonius would likely have sent ICWA something if Whittemore had not already passed through the censors, and that "Antonius seemed to crave patience on the part of the Institute in his belief that he had an extended usefulness to the Institute."⁵⁸ (Whittemore's letter was filed as Annex 7 in materials compiled for the institute's lawyer.) Perhaps most telling were the impressions Samuel Harper recounted to Walter Rogers two weeks before Rogers sent Antonius a letter of termination. The strange element in this letter was not that the reporter did not know that Antonius had been diagnosed with a duodenal ulcer, that he was in acute pain and taking medication that made him dozy, or that war was horrible and difficult and Antonius was doing his best to survive. Antonius may not have known the fellow well enough to discuss such things with him; indeed, the commentator remarked on having spent very little time with Antonius. What was odd, however, was that the debriefing of someone who did not know Antonius well occurred at the instigation of the president of ICWA and never involved any real probing or any sense of humility, compassion, or curiosity about how Antonius was faring and why.

At Axelson's [the new president of ICWA] request have seen McEwan. Antonius impressed him as lost and confused . . . very discouraged and down, complaining also he could get no word from you about his work. Antonius was to bring letter to hotel an hour before McEwan flew, but did not turn up. McEwan was not surprised because he felt that in his state of mind he could not write a letter with anything definite in it. Mc also said that there was no difficulty in getting letters out of Beirut. He saw Ant. in Bagdad. One of Antonius's grievances was that British had searched him and taken his papers when he crossed into Egypt. This was considered by A an affront. Mc remarked that British told him they did not trust Ant., because if put in an office he would be trying to run the whole office in a couple of days. While British recognize that he is in a sense anti-British with respect to Palestine, no one even suggests that Antonius is pro-Nazi with respect to the Arab movement as a whole. The lack of trust is simply on the point mentioned above, that he will be willing to fit in and cooperate, rather than run the whole show. Apathetic was another adjective which Mc used in describing Ant. Mc did not talk shop with Ant., only met him several times socially. Found him evidently living well and comfortably at the home of the wife of former president of Lebanon as I recall description of this aspect. . . . This is practically stenographic of short talk with Mc who regrets that he could not give more, but emphasized that he had seen little of Ant., and got little out of him because of latter's general apathetic state of mind.⁵⁹

The picture of Antonius that emerged from these impressions is of a man verging on mental illness, whining and complaining for no good reason; a lost and befuddled, thoroughly incompetent soul who could not even show up on time to send news to his employers. Character assassination is a dark art that survives through highly descriptive yet superficial impressions; there is no incentive to question assumptions, to learn, to search for the truth, to ask the question *Why*, or to use the interpretive process to understand. Instead, seemingly detached and neutral observers or philosophizing spectators observe and document surface reality: How someone sounds or looks, and what they say. Subtle points of emphasis and judgment appear as objective fact. In contrast to character assassination, scientific observation is based on a methodology—on a set of principles that guide honest study. It begins with a respect for the nature of the empirical world and a presumption of innocence, and it requires self-critical release from prejudice or ill intent. It entails an attempt to *understand*, rather than to “stand over against”; an attempt to engage with the other and to see from the other's perspective rather than to disengage and scrutinize as detached observer. It requires transparency and accountability. Study accommodates resistance and yields ultimately to the reality beyond oneself and to the interior space of meaning—the ob-

durate reality that demands respect and does not yield to fantasy and abuse. Antonius was such an observer of humanity; unfortunately, his own portrait was not always so painstakingly obtained.

Two weeks after Harper's letter, Rogers sent Antonius a letter of dismissal. Antonius never received Rogers's original letter of dismissal, which was sent to Beirut. He only received a copy of the July 29, 1941 letter of dismissal in November (four months after Rogers wrote it), through a chance meeting with Mr. Spalding of the U.S. Legation in Cairo, to whom Rogers had sent a copy.⁶⁰ As he read it, he was "bewildered"; "puzzled, to say the least, by the wording of the decision"; and could "scarcely believe" that the institute would conclude the agreement signed in 1930 "before" negotiations began for a new one. That "would surely constitute a breach of the terms as well as the spirit of the existing agreement," he wrote Rogers on November 15. Most of all he felt he had to "emphatically protest the statement that 'Trustees consider your long since repudiated arrangement through your failure currently report activities and account for expenses and royalties'. This accusation is unjustified and manifestly unfair, and I am quite certain that it could not have been made by anyone who was in possession of all the facts."⁶¹

Antonius's letter to Rogers, which was sent in November 1941, did not arrive until April 1942, five months after Antonius had sent it and almost a year after Rogers had sent Antonius the letter of termination. In his letter to Rogers, Antonius reviewed all the facts in hopes of readjusting the ledger and correcting misapprehensions. He urged that Rogers wire the late installments of his salary to offset his overdrafts. He reminded Rogers that ICWA (via his March 1940 letter to Brodie) knew he was reducing costs by paying for his own office and traveling expenses out of his own salary. As to the royalties question, checks from the London publisher had fallen shy of the salary the institute had failed to wire him, and the records in any case were insufficient for the generation of an accurate report. He suggested that the publishers in London and Philadelphia deal directly with ICWA.

Regarding ICWA's requests for monthly reports, he said, "I am depressed and demoralized by my present impotency." His inability to earn his salary from normal reporting was irksome, and he hoped to find alternative employment to offset "the sterile period of war." Personally, he was eager to work and upset that "there is not enough to keep me sufficiently occupied and to provide my mental energy and needs with the outlet of expression; and even such studies as I can carry out are often necessarily incomplete in the sense that they do not satisfy my ideas of thoroughness." Regarding the job search: "I have offered my services in turn to the French, the British and the American authorities in my area, and I offered them without restriction as to locality or scope save for two

stipulations, namely (1) that the work to be entrusted to me should be in my area to enable me to continue to watch current affairs for Institute purposes, and (2) that it should be constructive work in the public service and not merely propaganda."⁶² He said he was hopeful some part-time work that met his stipulations would turn up, and urged that they wire the overdue quarterly installments to offset his overdrafts. In closing, he wrote:

When I decided to give up my career in public service in order to join the Institute in 1930, I did so on the understanding that our agreement would be a permanent one, and that it was not liable to be terminated without valid cause. It is not easy at my age and in the midst of a world war to embark on yet another career. But I am doing what I can to tide over the period of enforced restriction of activity created by the war. And if the Trustees have other arrangements in mind, I beg that they will do me the favor of communicating their ideas to me in the form of proposals for discussion rather than in the form of a unilateral decision in respect of an agreement to which there are two parties.⁶³

During the last year of Antonius's life, the demand for prompt delivery of reports issued from quiet offices in New York to a world gone mad and a man bankrupt and ill must have seemed surreal and absurd at best. As ICWA stopped wiring quarterly installments of funds and his debts mounted, Antonius fell back on the kindness of friends. There he was, 50 years old, having devoted thirty years to public service—sixteen years in government, and ten with ICWA—with no assets, no home, no officially recognized country, and—to his surprise—no pension to fall back on, even though he claimed this had been agreed to when he first joined the institute.⁶⁴

Few people seemed aware that he had been diagnosed with a duodenal ulcer or had been hospitalized in Beirut in 1941. For years Antonius had lived with an abnormal degree of stress. Although passionate and acutely sensitive, he had disciplined himself and internalized the pain. Depression, pain, and ulcers fit his profile. When Antonius first went to Europe under ICWA sponsorship in the early 1930s, ill health drove him to the healing springs in Bath. As his condition deteriorated, he suffered as had Rudyard Kipling before him, from "constant and often acute pain, vomiting, hemorrhages, and ultimately perforation, leading to death."⁶⁵ How strange to have suffered the same illness as a man so much his opposite. Kipling embodied the paradigm against which Antonius had struggled his whole life: Kipling was the classic racist, known for his rudeness; a zealous defender of empire and the British genius to rule; and a believer that the world was built by strongmen.⁶⁶ Antonius was hot

tempered, passionate, yet gentle and refined—a man of courtesy and depth who opposed racism and defended the nation. In place of strongmen, the glory of empire, and the fashionable theories of superior races, he had faith in humanity's combined genius, its joint efforts to build a world together—beginning with devotion to family and nation.

The extent of Antonius's agony and discomfort is not known. Although he was pained by Rogers's letter of dismissal, he still seemed to trust John Crane, to whom he wrote about his sudden and worrisome decline in February 1942.

I left Beirut a week ago bound for Cairo, and have had to stop a few days here [in Jerusalem], having been laid up with a recurrence of my intestinal trouble. I do not know whether you have heard that, for some months now, I have been plagued with a duodenal ulcer which has been causing me a great deal of pain and worry, as well as of diet and treatment. It came to light during a visit I paid to Bagdad last spring. Since then, I have been undergoing treatment and living on a very strict diet all the time. I had a long spell in hospital in Beirut at the beginning of the summer [1941] and shall probably have to have another spell there on my return from Egypt, if only for the purposes of a thorough analysis. I am distinctly better now but not quite cured, and still liable to get sudden bouts of pain, when I have to take some dope or other and go to bed. It is a very depressing ailment, and it has this "vicious circle" peculiarity, that it makes one worry, and worry makes it worse. The only bright spot is that my doctors are confident they can cure me without operating.⁶⁷

On May 21, 1942—a week after Katy's divorce came through and the day that ICWA issued a letter to its lawyer to explore the institute's legal liability and fire him—Antonius died of a perforated duodenum in Jerusalem. On May 24, John Crane sent a handwritten note to Rogers:

Dear Walter—In case it does not see print, I wanted to tell you that I got word this morning that George Antonius died last Thursday in Jerusalem. No details accompanied the message. I still expect to leave here Tuesday afternoon for Boston. Incidentally, I don't see anyone to whom we might send condolences. I have of course no idea how Dr. Nimr feels about him these days. Best greetings, John.⁶⁸

Many of Antonius's friends and admirers wrote to Rogers to express their shock and sense of loss as well as their sympathy. Charles Merz of the *New York Times* wrote on May 25: "I was shocked yesterday to read of the death of George Antonius. It never occurred to me that he was not to be a useful figure on the scene in the Near East for many years to come. I

know that you feel a deep personal loss and I should like to tell you that I have a share in it.”⁶⁹ Rogers replied on May 27:

I deeply appreciate your note in regard to Antonius. For well over a year I have been vainly casting about for some means to get in closer touch with him. He wrote only occasionally and his letters were none too informing. From them and from bits of news from other sources, I came to have a feeling that he was bewildered and ill, perhaps both physically and mentally. The sensitive intellectual who tries to make sense out of the present world and to participate effectively in it is certainly in a tough spot. Perhaps especially so if he tries to function in a bedlam like the Near East. Today the following radiogram, sent from Jerusalem was received: “George died here suddenly on twenty-first please inform press Katy Antonius.” You were the first person to call my attention to Antonius and for it I shall ever be grateful to you.⁷⁰

For Antonius’s friends and those who knew him, his death was a severe shock. They felt a profound sense of loss personally, for the Arab nation and Palestine in particular. Sheean, who “loved and admired him, respected him as a major intelligence in Middle Eastern affairs . . . [and] believed his *Arab Awakening* to have been the single most important book on the subject . . . looked on his death as a true disaster as well as a personal loss.”⁷¹ Adil Arslan could not believe it, and wrote in his diary:

Today [Friday] it was reported, I hope by mistake, that Radio Jerusalem had announced the death of George Antonius. My dear, prominent, bright, and intelligent friend George Bey son of Habib Antonius, author of *The Arab Awakening*. . . If this bad news is true, then the Arabs have lost a significant personality known for his light spirit and kindness. Although many Arabs thought Antonius was spying on them, Antonius was the faithful Arab. He is without question the Arab intellectual best known to the British. . . His book is widely read and is highly regarded . . . His father was a friend of my father. The origin of their family were the Greek Catholic Mtanios [family] from the village of Anbal (Chouf). I came to know George in Damascus and then in Jerusalem. We became such close friends and after long experience I came to count him as one of my best friends. . . I write these words and in my heart secretly wish that this information is untrue. But if true, the tragedy and the loss will be great and lethal. . . [Saturday] The Palestinian press has published a notice of the death of my dear friend George. No doubt is then left that the information is true. Regretfully, it seems that he died from a short illness that was not mentioned by the media. My heart tells me that he died poisoned by a Zionist hand.⁷²

The celebrated Palestinian man of letters, Khalil al-Sakakini (d. 1953), wrote these words:

Thursday, May 21, 1942. I was deeply shocked today to learn of the death of my most faithful friend, the lamented George Bey Antonius. I found the news terrible. His loss is enormous. My sorrow is intense.

...

Saturday, May 23, 1942. I went out today to take part in the funeral of G.A. We carried his body from his house to a hearse. We carried him out, Sariyy [Sakakini's son], Musa al-Alami, Rajai al-Husseini and I. It pained us so much to do so. And thence to the Russian church.

...

The ceremony was most impressive. When the church service ended, Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi stood up and delivered a good eulogy. Another man whom I did not know also spoke. Then I thought I ought to say a few words. But hardly had I begun than I choked and almost stopped. Recovering my poise with difficulty, I went on. What I said, in brief was this: "I am not here to mourn or condole for the loss is greater than any condolence. Nor am I here to cry or make others cry, for the loss is greater than any tears. Tears do not return a man from the dead nor do they satisfy real longing. Rather I am here to give thanks for what our dearly departed did by way of service to the Arab countries in general and to Palestine in particular. He was noble in struggle, was never a charlatan nor ever tried to turn right into wrong or wrong into right. He never preferred private interest to public but sacrificed his interests for the sake of public good. He did not wear coats of many colors. He was the highest possible example of loyalty, truthfulness, dignity and tact. When the history of the Arab nation in recent times comes to be written, the story of our late lamented and much loved friend will be a shining page of the history." We then left for the Sahyun cemetery. The funeral was crowded. We chose a grave for him next to the grave of Hanna al-Isa, who was also a hero of the Arab renaissance and welfare. It is fitting that these two should lie next to each other in death.⁷³

Notes

1. Notes on Antonius and Downie 30 March 1939 meeting, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23232, Kew Gardens.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Minutes of 6 April 1939 Cabinet Meeting, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23233.
5. Egyptian Ambassador to Halifax, 6 April 1939, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23233.
6. Minutes of 6 April 1939 Cabinet Meeting, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23233.

7. Egyptian Ambassador to Halifax, 6 April 1939, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23233.

8. Notes on Antonius and Shuckburgh, 12 April 1939 meeting, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23233.

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*

13. With Hitler's reoccupation and remilitarization of the Rhineland, and with widespread concern about a second world war, Britain delayed any new policy statement on Palestine until May (Yehoshua Porath, *The Palestine Arab National Movement: From Riots to Rebellion*, vol. 2: 1929–1939 [London: Frank Cass, 1977], p. 140).

14. Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (Commons), 1939, cmd. 6019, "Palestine: Statement of Policy by His Majesty's Government" [1939 White Paper].

15. Sir Miles Lampson, 25 May 1939, Killearn Diaries, 1938–1941, p. 115, in the Middle East Center Archives, St. Antony's College, Oxford [hereafter, MEC].

16. Lampson to Butler, 12 June 1939, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23237.

17. Lampson, 25 May 1939, Killearn Diaries, MEC.

18. Lampson to Butler, 12 June 1939, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23237.

19. Lampson, 25 May 1939, Killearn Diaries, 1938–1941, MEC.

20. Antonius to Lampson, 3 June 1939, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23237.

21. *Ibid.* Regarding the constitutional question, Nevil Barbour notes the white paper provisions "compelled [Palestinians] to reject the proposals," because the terms were "vaguer . . . even than the white paper of 1922 or the Legislative Council proposals of 1935–36." As Barbour wrote, the "multiplication of precautions, including 'should public opinion in Palestine hereafter show itself in favor of such a development' and 'provided that local conditions permit,' taken together with 'adequate provision for the special position in Palestine of the Jewish National Home,' . . . seemed to the Arabs that Jewish opposition would still be allowed to block constitutional development indefinitely" (N. Barbour, "The White Paper of 1939," in *From Haven to Conquest: Readings in Zionism and the Palestinian Problem until 1948*, ed. Walid Khalidi [Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1971], p. 471).

22. Antonius to Lampson, 3 June 1939, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23237.

23. *Ibid.*; Sir Miles Lampson, 25 May 1939, Killearn Diaries, 1938–1941, MEC.

24. Lampson to Butler, 12 June 1939, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23237.

25. J. Bennett, British embassy, Alexandria, to Lacy Baggallay of the Foreign Office, Eastern Department, 8 August 1939, P.R.O., F.O. 371, 23239.

26. Zionists in Palestine reacted with hostility to the 1939 White Paper, taking it as a signal that Britain was on the verge of renegeing on its commitment to the National Home. Barbour notes that the broadcast of the white paper in Palestine on May 17, 1939 "was delayed by Jewish sabotage [and] . . . later, on the same night, bombs were exploded in the Department of Migration in Jerusalem, and the government offices in Tel Aviv were assaulted and sacked" (Barbour, "The White Paper of 1939," in *From Haven to Conquest*, ed. Khalidi, p. 472; Porath, *The Palestine Arab National Movement*, p. 291).

27. The Rev. Jacob H. Goldner to U.S. Department of State, 21 May 1941, USDS/NEA 123 W 111/350, U.S. Archives, Washington, D.C.

28. Wallace Murray, chief of Near East Division, to Mr. Berle, assistant secretary, United States Department of State, 30 October 1940, USDS/NEA F.W. 811.43, U.S. Archives, Washington, D.C.

29. P. Knabenshue, Legation of the United States of America in Baghdad, to the Secretary of the United States Department of State, Washington, D.C., 5 January 1938, USDS/NEA 020/840.1, U.S. Archives, Washington, D.C.

30. *Ibid.*

31. J. Loder Park to Mr. Charles Crane, 15 February 1939, Beirut, ICWA.

32. Wallace Murray to Secretary of State, 13 January 1939, "Antonius at the Brookings Institution," U.S. Archives, Washington, D.C.

33. *Ibid.*

34. George Antonius to Mr. Rogers, 30 December 1939, Antonius papers, ICWA.

35. *Ibid.*

36. Rives Childs, "Memorandum of Conversation with Rogers," 14 August 1940, USDS/NEA 811.43/11, R.G. 59 N.A., U.S. Archives, Washington, D.C.

37. *Ibid.*

38. Eliot Palmer, Memorandum for Wallace Murray, 9 October 1940, USDS/NEA 811.43 ICWA/16, R.G. 59 N.S., U.S. Archives, Washington, D.C.

39. *Ibid.*

40. *Ibid.*

41. Rives Childs, "Memorandum of Conversation with Rogers," 14 August 1940, USDS/NEA 811.43/11, R.G. 59 N.A., U.S. Archives, Washington, D.C.

42. Bert Fish, Legation of the United States of America, Cairo, to Wallace Murray, USDS/NEA, 29 October 1940, copy in ICWA archives.

43. Wadsworth to Murray, 5 October 1940, USDS/NEA 811.43, ICWA/15, R.G. 59 N.A., U.S. Archives, Washington, D.C.

44. Bert Fish, Legation of the United States of America, Cairo, to Wallace Murray, USDS/NEA, 29 October 1940, copy in ICWA archives.

45. Wallace Murray to Rogers, with Antonius letter and summary of wartime conditions and public opinion, 4 October 1940, sent to USDS via George Wadsworth, Jerusalem, ICWA; insert to Antonius letter to Wallace Murray, via Wadsworth to Murray, 5 October 1940, USDS/NEA 811.43, ICWA/15, R.G. 59 N.A., U.S. Archives, Washington, D.C.

46. Murray to Berle, 30 October 1940, USDS/NEA 811.43 ICWA/15, R.G. 59, N.A., U.S. Archives, Washington, D.C.

47. Antonius to Murray, 4 October 1940, extract on war, cited in Murray to Rogers, 2 November 1940, ICWA.

48. *Ibid.*

49. *Ibid.*

50. Eliot Palmer, consul general, Beirut, to Wallace Murray, 9 October 1940, USDS/NEA 811.43 ICWA/16, U.S. Archives, Washington, D.C.

51. Bert Fish, Legation of the United States of America, Cairo, to the Secretary of State, 20 January 1941, regarding George Antonius October 1940 discussion of

Arab Federation, USDS/NEA 890B.00/192, PS/DB, U.S. Archives, Washington, D.C.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.

55. Antonius to John Crane, 12 February 1942, ICWA.

56. Albert Hourani, *Great Britain and Arab Nationalism*, Report to the Foreign Office, 1943.

57. Antonius to John Crane, 12 February 1942, ICWA.

58. Thomas Whittemore, Byzantine Institute, Inc., to John Crane, 9 May 1941, ICWA.

59. Samuel [no last name] to Walter [no last name], 22 July 1941, ICWA.

60. Walter Rogers to George Antonius, 29 July 1941, ICWA.

61. Antonius, Beirut, to Rogers, 25 November 1941, ICWA.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

64. Perhaps Antonius had fallen between the cracks; for although Charles Crane had hired him with tenure in mind, soon after Antonius was hired, ICWA was reorganized with a new, expanded board of directors and a new approach to employees that included no lifetime tenure or pension. There is no evidence in Antonius's papers that he had ever been informed of this, and the shock of ICWA's lack of compassion and understanding as well as the loss of his friend and patron Crane must have been particularly painful to him.

65. Lord Birkenhead, *Rudyard Kipling* (New York: Random House, 1978), p. 320.

66. Ibid.

67. Antonius, Jerusalem, to John Crane, 12 February 1942, ICWA.

68. John Crane to Walter Rogers, 24 May 1942, ICWA.

69. Charles Merz to Walter Rogers, 25 May 1942, ICWA.

70. Rogers to Charles Merz, 27 May 1942, ICWA.

71. Mrs. Vincent Sheean to author, 16 August 1985, London.

72. Translation by George Irani, from *Mudhakkarat al-Amir Adil Arslan*, vol. 1, ed. Yusuf Ibish (Beirut: Al-Dar a-Taqadumiyya, 1983), p. 363.

73. Khalil al-Sakakini, *Kadha Ana Ya Dunya*, second edition (Beirut: General Union of Palestinian Writers, 1982), pp. 350–351. My particular thanks to Tarif Khalidi for this reference.

Conclusion

A few months after George Antonius died in Jerusalem in 1942, the young Albert Hourani (future Oxford University don of Middle East history), who was traveling through Palestine exploring local conditions and public opinion for the British Foreign Office, concluded, "Antonius died at the moment when he was most needed—at the moment for which his whole life had been a preparation."¹ What Hourani found unsettled him. He sensed that with Antonius's death the young generation—and future generations—would be driven to fight, for they had lost their voice to the world. This loss was the worse for having occurred just when the myths and legends long conjured up by Zionists were being replaced by documented horrors of the holocaust—horrors that Zionists would use to overwhelm public opinion and override Palestinian protests. There was no one as capable as Antonius to serve as spokesperson against the forces arrayed against Palestinians. He not only had more training and more tenacity than most, but more importantly, he had the moral capacity and integrity to hold to first principles. Antonius never yielded on those principles: He never sacrificed truth or betrayed the cause of those who lacked language, money, and organization with which to control the story line, manipulate the press, influence public opinion, or hold public officials accountable. With Antonius's death in 1942, Palestinians did indeed lose their most prominent voice to the world. For Antonius had been their bridge—not in the sense of a connection between two opposite worlds but rather in the sense of a skilled interpreter of one nation's history and actuality to the rest of the world (which had been poorly informed by other sources). Antonius had the genius, and moral sense—here was his legacy, and the great loss felt by Palestinians—to reintroduce local history and the human being back into a narrative that had been distorted by stereotypes.

Throughout Antonius's professional life, he devoted himself to public service: first with the British forces in Egypt during World War I, and later in Palestine and the region as a whole. (Before World War I, Palestine occupied an area that is now divided among Israel, Jordan, and the West Bank and Gaza. It was part of Greater Syria, a geographically and

culturally unified land including current-day Syria and Lebanon.) In 1921 Antonius moved to Palestine to promote education and decentralized government. There he became a critic of empire and a proponent of Arab federation; and there he died a pauper, vilified by empire builders and political Zionists who aimed to gain control of Palestine. Antonius never accepted the presumption of Arab inferiority to the English or to any other people, nor that of his nation to empire, be it British or French. He believed that an alliance between his nation and the British empire did not necessarily imply or entail submission to the “conqueror’s code.”²

Increasingly aware of the Arab nation’s vulnerability, Antonius struggled to gain British support for representative government in Palestine. He struggled to help Palestinians obtain a state free from capture by special interests, and to protect local property rights. Decentralized governance promised accountability mechanisms at a time when the formal instruments of the state were far too weak, and the foreign apparatus either irrelevant (as was the French model of bureaucratic, highly centralized public administration adopted by Germany and Italy) or untrustworthy (as was the British colonial government in Palestine). In the 1920s, as a civil servant in the British mandatory government in Palestine, Antonius designed the first Palestinian national plan for decentralized governance with the goal of expanding existing capital stock (including human and social capital) by building local capacity. In remarkable parallel to conceptions of good governance that were debated more than half a century later, he organized capacity building from the ground up, through planned coordination and consolidation of local teams of experts, between and within sectors, and across boundaries and jurisdictional layers of authority. Acting with local knowledge of indigenous capability and with faith in a process of social construction of knowledge and institution building acquired through his own experience with Arab secret societies, he promoted governance based on collaboration and coordination within and among networks and across sectors.

Antonius emphasized subjective meaning, psychology, and a social construction of knowledge and reality. He was aware of the institutions—values, attitudes, and behaviors—that promoted prejudice and discrimination and eroded civil society. He opposed the inequity of empire, the arrogance and the patronizing machinery of colonial rule, and the culture that detached men from conscience and from consciousness of local reality. He defended local peoples, challenging European myths and stereotypes, racism and prejudice.

Recognizing the difference between abstract ideas and practical knowledge, Antonius took European officials to task for their failure to learn about the local reality, the people and their culture. His approach is prob-

ably best summed up as a precursor of what came to be called in the 1960s a social construction of knowledge:

The theoretical formulations of reality, whether they be scientific or philosophical or even mythological, do not exhaust what is "real" for the members of a society. Since this is so, the sociology of knowledge must first of all concern itself with what people "know" as "reality" in their everyday, non- or pre-theoretical lives. In other words, commonsense "knowledge" rather than "ideas" must be the central focus for the sociology of knowledge. It is precisely this "knowledge" that constitutes the fabric of meanings without which no society could exist.³

As Antonius saw it, the Arab nation was never simply a passive recipient of European political theories and models of nationalism and state formation. Instead, he had a vision of decentralized governance: He designed what we might today call low-cost knowledge networks, flattening the organization of public administration to encourage high performance at low cost. His governance model for Palestine—a poor country the size of Wales—made sense: The public-private partnership he envisioned for the planning, design, investment, construction, and maintenance of a shared public domain—for improving roads, education, and other social tools—was aimed at guaranteeing that government would serve the people and that stakeholders could hold each other accountable for improving the public good.⁴ Perhaps most notably by seeking to enable local people to govern themselves, Antonius took on both the empire and its conqueror's code. For, as Edward Said has written, although imperialism was an occupation for profit, it was also a frame of mind that portrayed some people as inferior and incapable of assuming responsibility for self-government.⁵

When Antonius first moved to Palestine after the war, Greater Syria had been dismembered. The French controlled its northern portion, and the British controlled Palestine—Syria's southern flank—which served as a buffer between the French and Egypt's Suez Canal. Antonius saw British officers as only temporary advisers, morally and duty-bound by the Treaty of Versailles to facilitate self-governance for a Palestine already provisionally recognized as independent.⁶ In short, the British were on loan to their wartime allies in order to work themselves out of a job by enabling Palestinians to "stand alone."⁷ Perhaps that is what they would have done, had not political Zionism entered the picture.

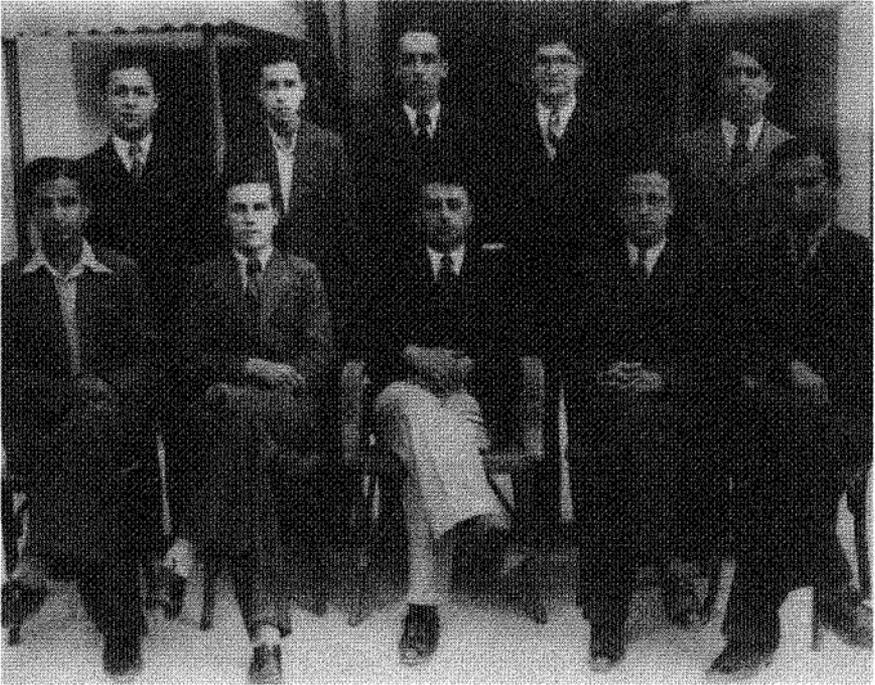
Zionists had great lobbying power in Great Britain, although in Palestine they had no popular support as well as no moral, constitutional, or legal ground to stand on, for their plans entailed the destruction of the nation in residence, and thus the reversal of morality. For morality tran-

scends tribe, sect, ethnicity, and race; and exclusionary morality is ultimately no morality at all.⁸ Morality, alas, often falls victim to monetary interest; and the Zionists promised Britain that a number of economic benefits would ensue as a result of massive Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine. What the Zionists envisioned was in essence a replay of the British enclosures, overriding customary property rights.

Of British enclosures, Lester Thurow writes: "The process [British enclosures] was messy, unfair, and violent—much like the process of establishing who owns what in Russia today. In both cases, the strong seized assets that had in the past been used to support the entire community. The strong then called upon the policy powers of the state to help them protect their new ownership rights."⁹ Conflict was inevitable between Zionists, who had adopted the philosophy and ways of nineteenth-century European nationalism, and Palestinians, people of diverse religions and ethnic origins united within an ancient Arab nation of shared language, culture, and institutions, whose property rights were not to be dealt with lightly.

Antonius understood the central importance of institutions;¹⁰ hence his uncanny prescience. If you go against the grain in fundamental ways, there will be certain, predictable outcomes. History tells us so; the stories of revolution—the U.S. War of Independence, civil rights movements, and anti-slavery movements—show us so. Rebels might have led them—no change occurs without rebels. Looking deeper, however, the major shifts in paradigms typically resonate with stories of people who despite weakness sustain a degree of stamina and moral courage to fiercely and tenaciously journey beyond the norm in struggles of epic proportion. Such journeys began in the "awakening" of mind as conscience, and in the humble learning about a shared world beyond one's immediate surroundings. Seeking to shift beyond a Manichean worldview, Antonius, Mandela, and later leaders saw there were certain principles that could not be compromised, and that equality was prime among those principles—ultimately, a matter of "one man, one vote." Antonius trusted that individuals were naturally, inherently inclined as social beings to come together to learn and build civil society as a world of inclusive diversity, shared meaning, trust, and cooperation. The refinements of culture and civil society ultimately begin with the awakening of this interior space of social conscience and connecting the concept of morality to a world of common meaning, beyond ego and tribe, beyond closed and insular enclaves.

Throughout his professional life, Antonius had focused on practical plans and social investments—the "social tools"—that could enable his nation.¹¹ He had focused on education: encouraging the construction of new village schools; critiquing government's failure to invest in educa-



Palestinian Debating Team. The English Debating Society of the Najah (Success) School, Nablus (1942). Issam Abbasi (standing second from right) became a poet and novelist as well as literary contributor to al-Ittihad, a newspaper in Haifa. SOURCE: Reprinted, with permission, from Walid Khalidi, Before Their Diaspora: A Photographic History of the Palestinians, 1876–1948 (Beirut: Institute of Palestine Studies, 1971).

tion and other basic infrastructure; promoting an Arabic technical lexicon and broad distribution of updated, modern, standard Arabic; envisioning an Institute of Historical Research to correct European distortions; and accumulating a personal library of 12,000 books that he made available to anyone in need. He was also concerned with transportation issues: with planning and developing roads in Palestine; with the impact of new modes of transport on the lives of camel owners; with saving the Hijaz railway, which connected Syria in the northwest and Saudi Arabia in the southeast, from French plans to break it up; with imperial use of airpower as a new instrument of coercion; and with British-Zionist and French-Christianizing policies that isolated a majority of Moslem Arabs inland, away from the Mediterranean ports and from their formerly vibrant world of commerce, trade, and communication. Antonius also was

concerned with communications—with promoting free, open, transparent, and accountable circulation of ideas and knowledge both within and outside of government. He lobbied the postmaster general for prompt, early-morning delivery of mail to everyone in Palestine; he lobbied the first high commissioner in Palestine for decentralized governance that would allow stakeholders to “learn by doing”; he lobbied a later high commissioner for representative government that could override the mindless machinery of bureaucracy and hold officials accountable for good public policy; and he exposed flaws in judgment and interpretation due to prejudice, ignorance, and failure to learn about the Arab psychology and point of view, or to invest in accurate translation of Arab language sources for those engaged in decisions that affected the Arab nation, including members of the League of Nations.

Antonius kept his eye on the ball—on the rules of the game that would determine whether the process of nation building would be vulnerable to corruption. He maintained an unyielding commitment to the principle of equality—as a covenant shared by men of faith (Jews, Christians, and Muslims), that all men are equal in the eyes of God. Religious prejudice and discrimination, as Antonius saw it, and particularly anti-Semitism, were not part of the Arab tradition but rather of the European one—unfortunately, of European Christian constructions, in particular.¹² Antonius considered the Ottoman empire’s failure to include equality in its constitutions the major institutional weakness that led to its downfall. For Antonius, equality was nonnegotiable. In the grand scheme of things, the little things mattered—a little lie here, a little prejudice there. He lost an employment opportunity in Palestine in 1918, and submitted his resignation on more than one occasion in the 1920s, due to his unyielding stand against examples of discrimination that some of his British colleagues considered insignificant.

As Antonius saw it, the rules were simple: There were some things that no man should be asked to compromise, and losing one’s self and one’s nation because of another’s prejudice was one of them. No one should be asked to give up his or her conscience, or his or her right to an independent and self-governing nation. Throughout his life, Antonius honed a fierce resistance to prejudice, discrimination, and the betrayals of faith that violate conscience and civil society. He also believed that regardless of military and material superiority, no conqueror’s code could vanquish the human spirit and that ultimately a morally superior code of compassion, truth, justice, and fair play would prevail: “It often happens in the history of nations that a conflict of opposing forces which seemed destined inevitably to end in the triumph of the stronger party is given an unexpected twist by the emergence of new forces which owe their emergence to that very triumph,” he wrote.¹³

Antonius, a Greek Orthodox Catholic, respected diverse faiths, admired Muslims' tradition of charity, and perceived the culture of civic virtue as beginning with fundamentally moral concerns from ancient worlds of faith. Although Islam was dominant in the region and people of other faiths were vulnerable to political manipulation, the Arab nation, particularly in Greater Syria, comprised people of different religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. Antonius never perceived religious diversity as a problem, so long as everyone began on the same plane, with no special advantage or privilege, and bore equal responsibility for the common social enterprise.

Yusuf Ibish, historian and biographer, says:

Antonius's great role and fascination lay with the little groups, the debating societies, the secret societies through whom he perceived the Arab nation could work into something bigger. No one has recorded all these inter-sectarian groups, e.g., the Beirut Society, Istanbul, al Fattat. With his fascination and devotion to secret societies espousing reform, Antonius collected sources and eventually published the only recorded knowledge of these societies. His fascination was also that he himself belonged to the philosophy of getting together, to share, learn, and build a better world.¹⁴

Just as knowledge is a social construction, Antonius saw Arab nation building as best served by decentralized governance built from the ground up by stakeholders who could coordinate, collaborate, and ultimately hold each other accountable for the public good.

Antonius's public career spanned two world wars, beginning with work as an Allied censor during World War I, and continuing through postwar British betrayal of Arab independence and imposition of colonial rule, until his death during World War II. He spent a lifetime seeking to empower ordinary people so that they could restrain abuses of power and protect the public good. He also recognized that releasing the grip of empire and a conqueror's code required a dismantling of the institutions, the myths and legends, the attitudes and behaviors of prejudice that had been centuries in the making and that blocked Palestinians' way to independence. Hence, he urged in his book that the first task was one of confronting and dismantling "the mist of legend and propaganda," the racist myths, prejudice, and discrimination of European empires and Zionists that distorted reality and crippled the Arab nation as a whole and Palestine in particular. In matters of political economy, he argued that precisely because markets were not perfect—men were not "angels"—government was morally bound to protect the weak and vulnerable from cupidity. On this score he stated:

In immigration, you find the same lack of concern for the moral welfare of the people concerned. There has been, so far as I know, no attempt made yet to look after the welfare of the workers, the working classes, by way of providing them with certain tuition in their crafts, in their calling or in some of the other directions in which useful tuition could be given to manual labourers. It has been a question of stark competition, of material needs entirely. The principle upon which the government has been controlling this question has been, in their own definition, the economic capacity of the country to absorb immigrants. I consider that to be wrong, and that that phrase, with its subservience to material considerations to the exclusion of all other considerations, is not one that should ever have been adopted. As I say there are a great many other factors besides the factor of material needs and material considerations.¹⁵

In an effort to counteract this tendency, Antonius consistently emphasized the nonmaterial, moral issues and matters of psychology, culture, and conscience, and called upon the government to act morally and responsibly to protect the weak and vulnerable. Antonius's ideas were intellectual precursors to the work of Kenneth Arrow, Nobel laureate in economics, who focused on "moral welfare" and saw government's role as securing "that which price and markets cannot effectively factor in"—the externalities such as culture, social capital, and customary codes and property rights critical to the health and morale of a nation and people.¹⁶

Trust is an important lubricant of a social system. It is extremely efficient; it saves a lot of trouble to have a fair degree of reliance on other people's word. Unfortunately, this is not a commodity, which can be bought very easily. If you have to buy it, you already have some doubts about what you've bought. Trust and similar values, loyalty or truth telling, are examples of what the economist would call "externalities." They are goods, they are commodities; they have real, practical, economic value; they increase the efficiency of the system, enable you to produce more goods or more of whatever values you hold in high esteem. But they are not commodities for which trade on the open market is technically possible or even meaningful. . . . The fact that we cannot mediate all our responsibilities to others through prices, through paying for them, makes it essential in the running of society that we have what might be called "conscience," a feeling of responsibility for the effect of one's actions on others.¹⁷

Antonius tried to build institutions and governance mechanisms to secure government from capture, and he tried to persuade British officials and Arab notables to act according to their conscience with respect to the

public good, and help protect the weak and vulnerable from abuse. Although ever impatient, he was always respectful of the hardworking and longsuffering cultivators whose customary property rights were being manipulated out from under them. Despite the “inequality of the struggle,” he sustained his faith in his nation’s centuries-old moral framework and culture of civic virtue. His nation’s legacy of social capital¹⁸—of trust and cooperation—sustained hope for independence and self-rule, and the promise of a robust civil society and moral democracy.¹⁹

The challenges of historical circumstances and institutions that constituted the working environment of George Antonius’s public life provide an opportunity for understanding the complex interplay between individual character and public institutions, and between psychology, culture, and public policy. Antonius’s personal qualities and skills, his personal triumphs and disappointments can all be viewed as timeless lessons in building a civil society. On a still larger canvas, George Antonius’s story provides a panoramic view of the bifurcation between empire and democracy in the twentieth century, and the changing nature of Middle Eastern life in particular. The story that has unfolded has set the stage for today’s headlines from Palestine.

Antonius was an intellectual trained as an engineer at Cambridge. He was a self-taught historian and one of the few during the interwar period to voice the issues affecting ordinary people subject to empire in the Arab world. He became the most critical voice for Palestine and the Arab nation, and an arbiter of standards to which all men, empires, and governments could be held accountable. Ultimately, he believed in the individual’s capacity to be moral—to resist coercion and act responsibly. He never lost his common touch, and remained acutely sensitive to the implications of public policy for the weak and vulnerable. He predicted continued tragedy and bloodshed if Palestinians were denied independence and self-governance. Perhaps as a result of his predictions, some in the West believed him to be a violent man, interested in stirring up unrest; but other Arabs and critics of empire were similarly stereotyped. In Hourani’s words, the British were particularly given to “the neurotic defensive attitude of thinking that all Arabs who criticize HMG [His Majesty’s Government] (that is to say, all Arabs), are ‘disloyal,’ ‘anti-British,’ ‘Nazi’ or whatever term of abuse is current at the moment.”²⁰ Stereotypes often do not survive personal encounters, however: Many of Antonius’s critics who met him underwent a dramatic change of mind, and commented in their later communications that Antonius actually made a great deal of sense and that he was unusually insightful, constructive, and principled.²¹

However, Antonius also experienced firsthand the personal risks of speaking out. When a Zionist reported to his boss that he was anti-Se-

mitic, Antonius understood that being falsely accused of being anti-Jewish—be it on the grounds of race or religion—was just a matter of course. It was a classic Zionist tactic to undermine critics and distract their hearers from rational discourse by evoking negative emotions associated with religious and racist persecution. Although some critics were probably anti-Semitic (truly anti-Jewish on racial or religious grounds), Antonius was not one of them, and hence his lack of intimidation and his ongoing challenge to Zionism, which he perceived as harmful to all Palestinians, Jews, Christians, and Arabs alike. Noting the European origin of religious and racial prejudice against Jews, Antonius challenged Europe to assume responsibility for compensating the Jews and to stop placing the burden on Palestinians. Moral injustice against Jews could not be used to justify moral injustice against Palestinians. Antonius reminded British officials that carrying out unjust and immoral policy was as much a violation to the conscience of British officers as it was a violation of the people it hurt. He believed that individuals of courage and character could make a difference, and that if only two or three British officers had stood up and spoken out, violence and bloodshed could have been avoided in Palestine.

Antonius set the stage for future scholarship and for resolution of the Palestine conflict by challenging myths and promoting institutions that leveled the playing field for a civil society beyond divisions based on race and creed. He challenged the myths that distorted the reality of Palestinian and Arab capacity for self-governance and civil society. As a Greek Orthodox, he challenged sectarianism—the French Christianizing policy in Lebanon and Syria as well as the British Zionist sectarian agenda in Palestine. Face to face with Antonius, neither empire builders nor Zionists could trivialize Palestinians as “wandering Bedouin devoid of any semblance of education, incapable of ‘progress,’ and easily subjected to whatever their rulers may desire, provided sufficient determination is shown.”²² He exposed the injustice of the policy that denied independence to Palestinians, who were among the most politically mature of Arabs—a policy maintained even after Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and other portions of the Arab-speaking nation obtained independence and entry into the League of Nations. Antonius would not allow the world to forget that Palestinians were among the descendants of some of the greatest civilizations of antiquity, and that together for centuries they had accumulated a moral and cultural treasury of shared meaning and social capital. As Putnam and others have since shown, even if moribund for centuries and riddled with inequity, a nation’s stock of social capital—its clusters and networks of mutual support, trust and cooperation—remain as traces and critical ingredients for healthy civil society and moral democracy. In contrast, Zionism espoused a racist and sectarian form of nationalism

anathema to moral democracy and civil society; for in promoting one group over another, it failed to institutionalize the fundamental principle of equality that could hold every individual (not group, sect, or race) accountable for working with others to generate shared social capital. Antonius devoted his life to protecting and promoting the institutions critical to the formation of a civil society in the interest of the public good and the nation in all its inclusive diversity.

After Antonius's death in 1942, many British officials recognized their mistake. Most notably, Ernest Bevin, the new head of the Foreign Office, opposed the post-World War II partition of Palestine, noting that Palestinians had suffered a "raw deal": "Out-gunned and out-maneuvered" by highly organized Zionists, they had indeed been the underdogs discriminated against by British pro-Zionist policy toward Palestine. As Bevin put it, "The Balfour Declaration was the biggest mistake of British foreign policy in the twentieth century."²³

* * *

Antonius died because he would not let go, he would not give up. Though he died at a time when he was greatly needed, he is no less needed today as Palestinian-Israeli negotiations proceed without attention to first principles. The talks and solutions reflect the ongoing failure caused by lack of vision and of faith. For instead of a bold vision that could embrace and elevate, forgive and move, compensate and alleviate—seeming negotiations serve as short-term skirmishes in the fragmentation and compromise of truth, principles, and a world built through civil society. Despite the muddling and denial of Palestinian history, truth and first principles do not age; and fundamental solutions to chronic problems remain as important at present as they were in the past. Although demographics have changed, the country today hosts as much diversity as it did yesterday, and its need for institutions supporting democracy based on individual rather than communal rights is as great as ever. History crosses time and space; and as Palestinian history has shown, Antonius's uncanny prescience and unparalleled example remains as relevant today as half a century ago.

Antonius's prediction of continued violence and bloodshed until Palestinians gain independence and self-rule needs no revision. After decades of their subjection to Zionist control, the predicted crippling of Palestinians has finally been documented by many sources, including several volumes published by teams of World Bank experts during the 1990s. As for Antonius's concerns that "Zionist propaganda is active, highly organized and widespread . . . [and that] the world has been looking at Palestine mainly through Zionist spectacles and has unconsciously acquired the habit of reasoning on Zionist premises,"²⁴ Palestinians are

no longer viewed simply as madmen and terrorists. U.S. citizens concerned about the corruption of their political process by Zionist special interests recently took the American Israel Political Action Committee (AIPAC) to court, gaining a 1996 U.S. court ruling that AIPAC had violated campaign finance laws.

Antonius saw that there could be no compromise of fundamental principle, if a bloodbath were to be averted and a level playing field achieved peacefully and without recrimination. Yet at the same time, only when we have forgiven past ills can we leave pain and suffering behind and build a better future. In forgiving, we do not discount the pain or the evil but publicly acknowledge both, and recognize the devastation they have caused. Only after such acknowledgment can forgiveness take place. In the words of Archbishop Desmond Tutu:

Denial doesn't work. It can never lead to forgiveness and reconciliation. Amnesia is no solution. If a nation is going to be healed, it has to come to grips with the past. . . . You know we live in a moral universe after all. What's right matters. What's wrong matters. You may keep things hidden, but they don't disappear in the ether. They impregnate the atmosphere.

For Antonius there was no other way but to act locally and think globally—to share that blessed common devotion to family and nation and to one's own private journey of faith while connecting to the world outside oneself, to a shared world of hope and learning that transcends artificial borders and barriers. As a Levantine and an Arab, he came from a world of great, inclusive diversity whose culture and civilization were founded on common decency based on first principles. To return to first principles—as Antonius would say, to be moral—means having the courage to yield to truth and justice; to respect the dignity of all people and their diverse worlds of faith and meaning; and to create a public space that protects the weak and vulnerable. For Antonius, a return to first principles in Palestine would entail an independent Palestinian state and the creation of a framework of good governance that could restrain abuse of power and enable all citizens for the good of the country as a whole.

Notes

1. Albert Hourani, *Great Britain and Arab Nationalism* (Foreign Office, 1942), p. 60.

2. Antonius used powerful, emotive, and unambiguous words (such as *stupid*) to communicate his interpretation of imperial and local psychology and behavior. Among other words he used to describe (1) empire, and or (2) Palestine cum Arabs in turn, are the following: (1) (re empire)—*mischievous disregard of moral val-*

ues, stupidity, cruelty, deluded, dishonest, condescending, discourteous, greedy, cynical bargain, lack of moderation, insanity, betrayal, breach of faith, sentence of servitude, wicked, moral injustice, sterility and wastefulness of the British bureaucracy, arrogant, boorish, tactlessness, lack of judgement, act of savagery, fool's paradise, startling ignorance, smoke-screen of legend and propaganda; (2) (re Palestinian Arabs)—psychological revulsion, outraged feelings, disillusion, pain, bewilderment, turmoil, strife, contempt (see Israel State Archives, Hakiryra [hereafter, ISA], Antonius file, record group 65; Institute of Current World Affairs archives, New Hampshire [hereafter, ICWA], Antonius papers; and George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* [London: Hamish Hamilton, 1938]).

3. Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor Books, 1967), p. 15.

4. See Chapter 5, which explores Antonius's ideas for Palestinian governance in greater detail.

5. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993).

6. George Antonius, 1935 lecture to the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, "The League of Nations in Its Relation to 'A' Mandates," ISA, record group 65, file AT69-2754.

7. The phrase *stand alone* comes from a section in Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, cited in Antonius, 1935 lecture to Canadian Institute for International Affairs.

8. For reference to the issue of "amoral familism," see Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 88, 92, 144, 177, 222 n.34, 245-246.

9. Lester C. Thurow, *Building Wealth: The New Rules for Individuals, Companies, and Nations in a Knowledge-Based Economy* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), p. 116.

10. "Institutions," as Nobel laureate Douglass North defines them, "are the rules of the game [not to be mistaken with game theory] in a society or, more formally, are the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction. . . . Institutions may be created, as was the United States Constitution; or they may simply evolve over time, as does the common law. . . . They are perfectly analogous to the rules of the game in a competitive team sport. That is, they consist of formal written rules as well as typically unwritten codes of conduct that underlie and supplement formal rules, such as not deliberately injuring a key player on the opposing team" (Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990], pp. 3-4).

11. Thurow, *Building Wealth*.

12. George Antonius, Presentation to the Peel Commission, 18 January 1937, ISA, record group 65, file 2869.

13. George Antonius, "Notes for Princeton Students," ISA, record group 65, file 3339.

14. Yusuf Ibish, historian and author, telephone interview with author, August 1999.

15. Antonius, Presentation to the Peel Commission, 1937.

16. Kenneth J. Arrow, *The Limits of Organization* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974).

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 22–23, 26–27.

18. By *social capital* I mean trust, norms of reciprocity, and networks of civic engagement “that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions” (Putnam, p. 167). Social capital is a capital stock that can be diminished or enhanced by investments (Picciotto). It is a public good, like the clean air we breathe, typically undervalued and underproduced (Putnam). Ideally, capital is most productive when it generates spontaneous cooperation. Simply put, social capital represents people’s capacity to trust one another and to work together to simplify economic exchange for the public good (Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*; Robert Picciotto, *Participatory Development: Myths and Dilemmas*, Policy Research Working Paper [Washington, D.C.: World Bank, July 1992]).

19. Moral democracy is not merely a structure and function of government but an enabling environment of institutions that promote a compassionate and just system of governance for a world rich in social capital—i.e., in trust and cooperation. (See Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*.)

20. Hourani, “Great Britain and Arab Nationalism,” p. 80.

21. Sir Miles Lampson, Killearn Diaries, 1938–1941, p. 115, Middle East Center Archives, St. Antony’s College, Oxford.

22. Sir Ernest Richmond, “A Note on the Issues Involved in Deciding upon a Constitution for Palestine, sent to the High Commissioner Sir Herbert Samuel, Jerusalem, 21 September 1921,” copy received from Sir John Richmond during interview with author, Durham, 1985.

23. Harold Beeley, “Ernest Bevin and Palestine,” in *Studies in Arab History: The Antonius Lectures, 1978–1987*, ed. Derek Hopwood (New York: St. Martin’s, 1990), p. 125.

24. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 387.

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Appendix: Interim Report, Final Version [2 June 1924]

Your Excellency,

We have the honour to submit, in accordance with Your Excellency's instruction, a preliminary Report of the Commission appointed by Your Excellency on the 27th December, 1923, with the following terms of reference:

"To consider the present and the former systems of Local Government in Palestine and to make recommendations with regard to the constitution and powers of Local authorities".

2. We have held thirty meetings and have had the advantage of discussion with the Directors of Public Health, and Public Works, so far as concerns the services performed by their Departments and on the subject of Education with the Director of Education and with the following gentlemen: Isma'il Bey Husaini, Raghav Bey Nashashibi, Khalil Effendi Sakakini, Rafiq Effendi Tamimi, Adel Effendi Jabr so far as concerns Arab Education and with Colonel F. Kisch, Dr. Zurie and Dr. Mossinsohn so far as concerns education services supervised by the Palestine Zionist Executive.

As requested, we have also considered so far as time has permitted, the legislation on local government of the Ottoman Empire, Egypt, Syria, Cyprus and Palestine. In this connection we wish to acknowledge our indebtedness to His Majesty's Consul-General at Beirut who has kindly placed at our disposal valuable information regarding the system of local government in Syria established by the Mandatory Power.

In accordance with Your Excellency's request we have, so far as has been found practicable, excluded from our enquiry the problems of local government in Municipal areas although, as appears later in the report, we think that certain aspects of local government and some local services cannot be considered on the one hand in relation to Municipal areas and on the other in relation to areas outside Municipal areas but must be considered in relation to an area which includes Municipal areas.

We regret that Mr. Mills, after attending ten meetings, found it impossible to come to Jerusalem from Haifa with sufficient frequency and resigned in order that he might not further delay the work of the Commission. Mr. A.S. Kirkbride was appointed a temporary member in his place.

Meanwhile the Education member of the Commission had been more than once absent from Palestine on duty, the Legal member was detained at Haifa for

weeks at a time, and, when finally it proved possible to arrange a series of consecutive meetings, they found the Chairman in charge of the Senior Governorate without an Assistant District Governor throughout the annual crisis of the Jerusalem season.

3. We think that Your Excellency will appreciate that the time at our disposal for the consideration of so comprehensive and difficult a problem has not been sufficient to enable a Commission, working mainly as indicated above in the spare time of its members, to furnish a report which can do more than describe the stages through which our enquiry has progressed and indicate in outline, certain tentative proposals which we do not put forward as final recommendations but rather as part of a provisional scheme of which, as appears from the Report, we have not yet considered certain essential aspects.

We ask, therefore, that this report, which we should have preferred not to submit until the completion of our investigations, may be considered in the light of these qualifications and that our tentative proposals may be regarded as subject to such modifications as we should have found necessary if a report had not been called for at this stage of our enquiry and further investigation were possible.

4. The terms of reference have divided our enquiry into two parts:

(1) consideration of the former and present systems of local government in Palestine;

(2) our recommendation as to what Local Government Authorities should now exist in Palestine and the constitution and powers of such authorities.

PART I.

(1) FORMER SYSTEM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT.¹

5. The development of Local Government institutions in the Ottoman Empire reached its climax in 1913 and 1914. Until then the administration of the Imperial Province excluding Municipal areas was determined by the Vilayet Laws of 1864, 1871, 1875, 1877 and 1896 under which provincial Local Government bodies enjoyed a measure of local autonomy extending in practice only to the right to make recommendations, on the other hand municipalities under the Municipal Law of 1877 possessed real authority and responsibility.

¹The following Ottoman Laws were referred to in order to determine the former system of local government:

(i) The Vilayet Law dated 6th November, 1664 (Young, vol. I, pp. 36–45).

(ii) The Vilayet Law dated 21st January, 1871 (Young, vol. I, pp. 47–69).

(iii) The Provisional Vilayet Law dated 26th March, 1915, as amended by the law of 16th April, 1914 (Translation of Turkish Laws, pp. 35–48).

(iv) Instructions regarding the election of Councils dated 31st December, 1876 (Young, vol. I, pp. 45–47).

(v) The Municipal Law dated the 5th October, 1877, and the addendum dated 12th November, 1886 (Translation of Turkish Laws, pp. 49–57).

(vi) Regulations regarding the administration of Nahias dated 17th March, 1877 (Young, vol. I, pp. 84–88).

(vii) Imperial Iradeh on Local Government (1896) (Young, vol. I, pp. 99–108).

(viii) The Law of Primary Education dated 23rd September, 1915, as amended by the Law of 5th April, 1914.

In 1913 however, the provinces of the Ottoman Empire were granted local government powers involving real autonomy by means of the Provisional Vilayet Law of 1913, as amended by the Law of 16th April, 1914.

At the outbreak of war, the new system was in operation in Syria and Palestine.

6. The circumstances which led to the enactment of the Vilayet Law of 1913 are not without significance.

The Ottoman Constitution of 1908 had awakened new hopes among the subject races of the Empire. In various provinces, and in Syria and Palestine in particular, a widespread movement took place in favour of decentralisation which had in 1912 assumed such proportions as to threaten to become a dangerous separatist movement. The Turkish Government thought it wise to pass the Provisional Vilayet Law which was received with peculiar satisfaction and pride. To the people of Syria and Palestine it came, not as a favour granted by a benevolent Government, but rather as the just recognition of their rights and aspirations; and we think that, in considering the Turkish system of 1913 due attention should be paid to the circumstances which brought about its establishment as well as to the satisfaction with which it was received.

7. At the outbreak of war the system of administration in the provinces of the Ottoman Empire and in particular the machinery of local government was as follows:

(a) Territorial Divisions of the Ottoman Empire.

The Empire was divided into Vilayets, which were sub-divided into Sanjaqs. Sanjaqs were again sub-divided into Qadas and Qadas into Nahias. Every village containing more than 200 houses constituted a Nahia. Villages of less than 200 houses were aggregated so as to form one Nahia.

In every town or village 50 houses constituted a quarter.

The boundaries of a Vilayet could only be changed by Imperial legislation. A change in the boundaries of a Sanjaq or Qada or the transfer of a Nahia to another Qada could only be effected by Imperial Iradeh confirming a resolution of the General Council of the Vilayet.

A change in the boundaries of a Nahia or the creation of a new village or quarter or transfer of a village or quarter to another Qada could only be effected by resolution of the General Council of the Vilayet.

Municipalities could be established in the larger towns and in a town having a population exceeding 40,000 it was possible for more than one Municipality to be established.

On the recommendation of the Vali a Municipality could be created at the Headquarters of a Nahia or in any large village which was in the process of development. Such a Municipality was entitled to collect and retain the same taxes and fees as a municipality established in a city or town.

(b) Administrative Officers.

8. The administrative officers of a Vilayet were the Vali, the Assistant Vali (wherever necessary) and the Maktubji (Secretary-General) together with the Na'eb (Director of Public Prosecutions and legal adviser), the Defterdar (Finance Officer) and other delegates of such Ministries as Education, Public Works, Agriculture, State Domains and Land Registry, etc.

The Vali, the Assistant Vali and the Maktubji were appointed by Imperial Iradeh; and the remaining officers by their respective Ministries.²

The Vali was the Chief Executive Officer, was regarded as representing every Ministry, and was responsible to the Imperial government for the general administration of the Vilayet.

As representative of the Minister of the Interior he was in charge of the Police and Gendarmerie.

9. The administrative officers of the Sanjaq were the Mutasarrif, who was appointed by Imperial Iradeh, and certain officials representing the various Ministries (Public Works, Agriculture, Land Registry, etc.), who were appointed by their respective Ministries.

The Mutasarrif was the Chief Executive Officer in the Sanjaq and was responsible for general administration, but his responsibility was to the Vali, except in the case of an independent Sanjaq (e.g., that of Jerusalem) when he was regarded as a Vali and consequently responsible to the Imperial Government.

10. The administrative officers of a Qada were the Kaimakam who was appointed by Imperial Iradeh, and certain representatives of various Ministries who were appointed by their respective Ministries.

The Kaimakam was the Chief Executive Officer of the Qada and responsible for general administration, but his responsibility was to the Mutasarrif of the Sanjaq.

11. The administrative officers of the Nahia were the Mudir, who was responsible to the Kaimakam, the Council of the Nahia and the Mukhtars of the villages or quarters of the towns or villages within the Nahia.

The Mudir was elected by the Council of the Nahia from among its members: his election had to be approved by the Vali. If the Nahia contained more than one community the Mudir was elected exclusively by those electors who belonged to the community comprising the majority. The Mukhtars were elected by the same persons as were entitled to elect the Council of Elders. (See paragraph 21 below).

There were two Mukhtars for each community in each Nahia, unless one community occupied less than 20 houses when they elected one Mukhtar only.

Every village had one Mukhtar, but if a village consisted of more than one quarter or contained more than one community it had one Mukhtar for each quarter or community.

Every Mukhtar in a Municipal area was regarded as an executive official of the Municipality so far as his community was concerned.

(c) Administrative Local Bodies.

12. In every Vilayet there was a General Council, an Administrative Council and a Committee of the Vilayet.

The General Council of the Vilayet consisted of the persons elected in the manner prescribed in paragraph 16 below.

The Administrative Council was presided over by the Vali and consisted of the Na'eb, the representatives of the Ministries of Land Registry and State Domains,

²There was an organisation known as the Directorate of Nufus which dealt with statistics, registration of population, identification of individuals, etc., and a Vilayet Dragoman who dealt with all matters concerning foreigners.

Finance, Education, Public Works, Agriculture, the Mufti and other spiritual heads and certain members elected as described in paragraph 18 below.

The Committee of the Vilayet consisted of four members appointed by the General Council in the manner described in paragraph 17 below.

13. In every Sanjaq there was an Administrative Council presided over by the Mutasarrif and composed of the Na'eb, the representatives of the Ministries of Finance, Public Works, and Agriculture (if any), the Mufti and other spiritual heads, the Clerk of the Sanjaq and certain elected members who were elected in the manner described in paragraph 19 below.

14. In every Qada there was an Administrative Council presided over by the Kaimakam and composed of a representative of the Ministry of Finance, the Na'eb, the Clerk of the Qada, the Mufti and other spiritual Heads and certain members elected in the manner described in paragraph 20 below.

15. In every Nahia there was a Communal Council presided over by the Mudir consisting of four members elected by the persons entitled to elect the members of the Council of Elders.

In every Nahia and for each Community in the Nahia there was a Council of Elders consisting of not less than three or more than twelve members elected in the manner set out in paragraph 21 below.

The Imam and the representatives of the non-Moslem religious Committees were ex-officio members of the Council of Elders.

(d) Method of Constituting Administrative Local Bodies.

16. *The General Council of the Vilayet:*

The number of members was in proportion of one member for every 12,500 of the male population and the number of Moslem and non-Moslem members was in proportion to the male Moslem and non-Moslem population in the Vilayet. The number of members and the proportion of Moslem and non-Moslem members was determined by the Administrative Council of the Vilayet.

The members were elected by Qadas, the actual electors being the secondary electors of the most recent parliamentary elections and the Municipal Council in the Qada headquarters who elected jointly.³

17. *The Committee of the Vilayet:*

Where the number of the General Council exceeded eight in number the Committee of the Vilayet consisted of four members, but where the General Council was less than eight in number the Committee consisted of two members.

The Committee was constituted by the General Council electing from among their own members double the number of members required for the Committee of the Vilayet. The half of this number who obtained the greatest number of votes, constituted the committee, and the remaining half was used to fill vacancies occurring during the term of office of the Committee.

18. *Election of the Elected Members of the Administrative Council of the Vilayet.*

A list of twelve candidates who had to be Ottoman subjects 30 years of age, paying at least £150 per annum in taxes, was prepared by the official members of

³These are the provisions of Article 103 of the Vilayet Law of 1913: their operation was suspended until the necessary regulations should be issued and the provisions of Part V of the Vilayet Law of 1871 were revived (see provisional article following Article 149 of Vilayet Law of 1913).

the Administrative Council of the Vilayet and eight candidates were elected by the Administrative Councils of the Sanjaqs within the Vilayet. Four members were appointed by the Imperial Government out of the eight candidates so elected.

19. *Election of the Elected Members of the Administrative Council of the Sanjaq.*

The official members of the Administrative Council of the Sanjaq prepared a list of twelve candidates having similar qualifications to those of the candidates for the membership of the Administrative Council of the Vilayet. This list was sent to the Administrative Councils of the Qadas within the Sanjaq. They elected eight out of the twelve candidates and the Vali appointed four members out of the eight candidates so elected.

20. *Election of the Elected Members of the Administrative Council of the Qada.*

The official members of the Administrative Council of the Qada prepared a list of nine candidates, residents of the Qada, and qualified in the same way as the candidates referred to in paragraphs 18 and 19. This list was sent to all the Councils of Elders in the Qada, who had to elect six out of the nine candidates. The names of the six persons so elected were forwarded to the Mutasarrif, who appointed three members from this list.

21. The Council of the Nahia consisting of four members and the Council of Elders, consisting of not less than three or more than twelve persons representing each community, were elected by persons who, being male Ottoman subjects, were at least 16 years of age and paid at least £50 Werko per annum. [Werko was a tax on immovable property. Although it was replaced in urban areas in 1928 by the urban property tax, werko remained in effect in rural Palestine until 1935.—SSB] The qualification for election to the Council of the Nahia was that the candidate should be a male Ottoman subject of at least 30 years of age who paid State taxes amounting to at least £100 per annum.

If the Nahia contained more than one Community, the representation on the Council of the Nahia was proportional, provided the Community in the minority occupied at least 25 houses.

(e) *Functions of Local Bodies.*

22. The General Council met once a year. The period of session was forty days. Its functions were:

(a) to examine the accounts of the previous year together with the report of the Vilayet committee thereon;

(b) to approve the budget for the ensuing year and to consider the report of the Vilayet Committee thereon;

(c) to sanction loans for Public Health, Sanitation and Education within the limits of Article 131 of the Law of 1913;

(d) to consider any projects for developments which might be submitted to them, together with the report of the Vilayet Committee thereon.

23. The Committee of the Vilayet was a Standing Committee holding office for one year. The President was the Vali. The duties of the committee were:

(i) to report upon the Budget of the Vilayet;

(ii) to examine the monthly returns of expenditure;

(iii) to report on the terms of tenders and auctions;

(iv) to allocate to appropriate heads of expenditure provisions for unforeseen expenditure and to authorise the transfer from one to another head of expenditure;

(v) to report to the General Council on schemes of development and to the Vali on any matter referred to them by him;

(vi) to submit to the General Council a report on the work of the Administration of the Vilayet during the preceding year.

24. The functions of the Administrative Councils of the Vilayet, Sanjaq and Qada were identical. They are defined in Article 66 of the Vilayet Law of 1913 as follows:

“The duties of the Administrative Council shall be to try all government officials, to arrange all auctions and requests for tenders made by Government in accordance with the proper law or regulation and to determine the conditions of any agreement made accordingly, to arrange for the auction and farming of Government Ushr and other dues in accordance with the law or regulation relating thereto, to arrange for the administration of such dues as remain unfarmed, to arrange for the auction of the monopoly of cutting wood from Miri forests in accordance with the regulation relating thereto, to supervise and protect all State movable and immovable property, to allocate grounds for cemeteries, to examine all statistical lists and tables before issue, and furthermore to decide such matters as are by law or regulation assigned to them for decision”.

[Ushr was the main agricultural tax or tithe under the Ottomans. Until 1897, ushr was 10 percent of gross product from the land; after 1897, supplementary taxes increased it to 12.6 percent. Under the Ottomans it was collected by urban merchants, landowners, and the like, who obtained tax farms; under the mandate, the district governor managed taxes through assessment commissions.—SSB]

In addition they heard appeals from decisions of Administrative Councils subordinate to them.

The Administrative Council either of the Sanjaq or Qada in the Headquarters town of which a Municipality existed, met twice a year with the Municipal Council and formed a Municipal Assembly for the purpose of auditing the accounts of the Municipality and approving their Budget (See Articles 50–55 of the Municipal Law 1877).

25. The functions of the Council of the Nahia were:

(1) to preserve the peace;

(2) to endeavour to settle disputes by arbitration;

(3) to ensure collection of taxes;

(4) to account for all revenues collected;

(5) to elect the members of the Administrative Council of the Qada. (See paragraph 20).

The Council was elected annually.

26. The functions of the Council of Elders [of the Nahia] were (inter alia):

(1) to endeavour to settle disputes by arbitration;

(2) to supervise division of taxes among the communities they represented and to ensure collection;

(3) to settle disputes between Communities by meeting in joint session with the Council of Elders of the other contending Community or Communities;

(4) to report cases of persons dying leaving property and absent heirs;

(5) to report cases of lapse of cultivation of cultivable lands.

(f) *Local Services.*

27. Article 78 of the Vilayet Law of 1913 defines the local services for which the Vilayet was made responsible.

They included:

(a) The construction, maintenance and repair of roads and bridges connecting Sanjaqs, Qadas and Nahias and roads passing through towns or villages within the Vilayet other than public roads constructed, maintained and repaired by the Ministry of Public Works;

(b) the drainage of marshy land, and the cutting of irrigation canals;

(c) the grant of concessions for certain purposes where the term of the grant did not exceed forty years, the issue of licences to factories, bus-companies, etc.;

(d) the establishment of experimental farms, agricultural schools and other institutions and organisations for the benefit of Agriculture, the promotion of agricultural shows and competitions;

(e) afforestation;

(f) the establishment of Credit and Savings Banks;

(g) the establishment of Primary and Elementary schools, or semi-Secondary (I'dadi) schools and of Elementary Training colleges and the supervision and management of such schools;

(h) the establishment of industrial and technical schools;

(i) the establishment of Chambers of Commerce, Exchanges, the holding of fairs and exhibitions; measures for the promotion of trade;

(j) the establishment of Orphanages, Hospitals, Workhouses and Lunatic Asylums;

(k) the management of all movable and immovable property belonging to the Vilayet.

28. An amendment of Article 28 of the Law of 1913 provided that the General Council of the Vilayet should formulate its programme for a period of five years in advance and should submit that programme to the Minister of Interior for approval, in order that after consultation with the other Ministries concerned he might reconcile that programme with the general programme of the Imperial Government.

29. Article 82 of the Vilayet Law of 1913 sets out the services of which the expenditure was charged on the ordinary revenue of the Vilayet. Those services include the services referred to in paragraph 27.

(g) *Local Revenue.*

30. The sources of revenue of the Vilayet are set out in Articles 80 and 81 of the Law of 1913.

They include:

(a) The share or tithes appropriated to Education;

(b) The share of temettu which by the Temettu Law was appropriated to Agriculture but was made payable to the Vilayet by Article 80;

(c) The share of Werko on buildings which was appropriated to Education;

- (d) The additional animal tax declared to be payable to the Vilayet;
 - (e) The road tax payable under the Road Tax Law of 27th February, 1329 [1869?];
 - (f) Compulsory labour for road-making and commutations for such labour;
 - (g) The amounts granted from the Imperial Budget;
 - (h) Certain fees and royalties.
- (h) *General Financial Provisions.*

31. The Articles referred to in paragraphs 27–30 are the only articles dealing with local services and local revenue and expenditure other than the law relating to Municipalities.

It will therefore be seen that no local services were charged on any local revenue other than that of the Vilayet, and that no other local authority was financially responsible for maintaining such services; so that revenue and expenditure in relation to local services were controlled in all respects by the authorities of the Vilayet and the authorities of the Sanjaq, and other administrative divisions were in regard to local revenue and local expenditure responsible only as representing the authorities of the Vilayet.

32. It would further appear that the revenue of the Vilayet consisted:

- (i) of allocations by the Imperial Government of amounts granted in aid of current and extraordinary expenses;
- (ii) of specified shares in certain Imperial taxes and fees;
- (iii) of certain other revenues from fees and royalties and from properties owned by the Vilayet; but that neither the local authority of the Vilayet, Sanjaq, Qada or Nahia had any general power to levy any local tax or raise any local rate.

The only exceptions appear to be the following:

- (a) Under Articles 80 (xvii), 81 (iii) and 130 of the Law of 1913 the General Council of the Vilayet seems, although the point is not clear, to have had power to increase any direct tax by a percentage which became part of the revenues of the Vilayet;
- (b) Under the Provisional Primary Education Law 1913 as amended by the Law of 5th April, 1914, the expenses referred to in Article 67 of the Law of 1913 were charged upon the revenues of the Vilayet and were met by the revenues referred to in Article 76 of the same Law, which included a form of local Education rate to be raised under the terms of Article 15 of the same Law as amended by the Law of 5th April, 1914.

Under the Law of 1913 the Education Committees were given the power to raise an educational rate to meet certain specified expenses. They determined the rate to be paid by each inhabitant of the village or quarter.

Any person objecting to the amount of the rate could appeal to the Administrative Council of the Qada whose decision was final. The rate was collected by the Education Committee.

(2) *PRESENT SYSTEM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN PALESTINE.*

33. Under Article 46 of the Palestine Order-in-Council the whole of the Ottoman Law reviewed in the preceding paragraphs, is now in force in Palestine, but since there exist no Vali, General or Administrative Council or Committee of the Vilayet, no Mutasarrif or Administrative Council of the Sanjaq, no Kaimakam or Administrative Council of the Qada and no Mudir or Council of a Nahia, the

only part of that body of Ottoman Law which can, in practice, be applied at all is the Municipal Law. But even that Law can not be applied literally or in its entirety either owing to the changed machinery of Government or because certain services which under the Ottoman Law were charged upon Municipalities are now performed in whole or in part by Government Departments.

34. Since the British Occupation, legislation of three kinds regarding local government has been passed:

(1) Amendments of the Municipal Tax Law 1914, e.g. the Foreign Imports Additional Duty Ordinances 1921 and 1923;

(2) Amendments of the Municipal Law 1877, for example, Town Planning Ordinance 1920; Municipal Courts Ordinance 1921;

(3) The Local Councils Ordinance 1921 under which the High Commissioner may, on the recommendation of the District Governor by order declare that any large village or group of villages, or quarter of a town which is distinguished by its needs and character from the rest of the Municipal area, shall be administered by a Local Council.

The Order must specify the functions of the Council, its powers and obligations and the area of its jurisdiction and may prescribe the composition of the Council.

A local Council so constituted has power to levy rates and fees in accordance with the terms of the Order, and to issue by-laws for securing order.

It is under an obligation to draw up the annual budget showing its estimated revenue and expenditure and must submit it to the Municipality if the area of its jurisdiction is a quarter of a town, and in other cases, to the District Governor, for approval.

In the case of a Local Council being established in a quarter of a town, the Order can only be made if the agreement of the Municipality has been obtained and, subject to the provision of the Order, the powers of the Municipality over the quarter are not impaired.⁴

35. Before proceeding to the second part of our enquiry, we think it desirable to indicate the principles by which we have been guided in that part of our work.

In the first place, we think that, if possible, the principle of continuity, sanctioned alike by British and Oriental traditions and reinforced by the circumstances set out in paragraph 6 above, should be maintained and that therefore so much of the Ottoman system of local government should be retained as can be reconciled with the existing machinery of government created by the Palestine Orders-in-Council and is found appropriate and applicable to Palestine.

It must be remembered that the Ottoman system was devised for a large and scattered Empire in which, owing to lack of communications and other causes, highly centralised government was impossible; and that therefore it is inevitable that the machinery of local government under Ottoman Law will be found to be inappropriate in some respects to Palestine, which was not even a Vilayet of the Ottoman Empire and is now a small country with a Central Government and adequate internal communications.

⁴It is to be observed that the system of Local Councils corresponds closely to the system under Ottoman Law under which a Municipality could be established in the headquarters of a Nahia etc. (see paragraph 7).

Secondly we think that although any measure of local self-government probably results in a loss of efficiency all that is essential is that the measure of local self-government conferred should be subject only to such safeguards of financial and technical supervision as will ensure that the interests of the persons contributing to such services are protected; but that, with these limitations, local self-government should be conferred in such a way that the Local Government bodies have the substance and not the shadow not only of authority but also of responsibility.

Thirdly, there is the obvious necessity that, if Government is to devolve certain of its present services wholly or in part on Local Government bodies, and such bodies are to perform those services adequately if not with the highest efficiency, then the necessary financial provision must be made.

36. An application of the principles enunciated in the preceding paragraph to the second part of our terms of reference has resulted in the order of our enquiry being as follows:

- (1) to ascertain provisionally what services may be regarded wholly or in part as local services which Government could devolve on Local Government bodies;
- (2) to determine, having regard to the financial provision that could be made, the extent to which the services referred to in (1) could be devolved;
- (3) to determine the constitution of the Local Government bodies to be charged with the services referred to in (2).

As is stated in paragraph 2, we have endeavoured to exclude from our enquiry the problems of local government in Municipal areas.

We desire to draw attention to the remarks contained in paragraph 3 (which apply with particular force to Part II of the Report) in order that there may be no doubt that the contents of that part of the Report are admittedly incomplete and, so far as they represent specific proposals, are tentative and conditional on further investigation.

PART II.

(1) PROVISIONAL LOCAL SERVICES.

(a) EDUCATION.

37. The present Educational system may be said broadly to consist of the following categories of schools:

- (1) *Primary Schools:*
 - (a) Government Schools;
 - (b) Private Moslem Schools;
 - (c) Private (local) Christian Schools;
 - (d) Private (foreign) Christian Schools;
 - (e) Private Jewish Schools.
- (2) *Secondary Schools:*

There are certain Government schools which, without reaching the standard of a complete secondary school, attain a standard lying midway between the complete primary and the full secondary standards. These schools correspond fairly exactly to the Turkish *I'dadi* schools.

There are also certain private Jewish and other secondary schools.

(3) *Training Colleges:*

There are at present two Government Training Colleges (one for men and one for women) and a certain number of private Jewish training colleges.

The Government training college for men is to be converted this year into a complete secondary school with a training section.

38. All Government educational institutions are maintained out of the general revenue (except so far as villages provide and maintain accommodation and equipment) and are controlled in all respects by the Department of Education although there are in existence certain voluntary local committees who are advisory or consultative.

The Government offers a small grant in aid to all private schools on certain conditions laid down by the Department of Education. The grant is accepted by certain private schools and the total amount expended by the Government in this connection is £5,000 per annum.

Save as above mentioned all Educational institutions are maintained and controlled by private authorities.

The organisation created by the Palestine Zionist Executive for the control of their schools is shortly the following:

There is a Department of Education and a Central Board known as the Va'ad Hahinukh which consists of nine members, three of whom are nominated by the Palestine Zionist Executive, three elected by the Va'ad Haleumi and three representatives of the teachers. The Director of the Zionist Board of Education attends all meetings and has a right of veto on all requests determined by the Va'ad Hahinukh.

There are also local school committees for individual schools.

There is a special supervisory Committee for the control of Orthodox Schools who are within the jurisdiction of the organisation.

There are a number of private Jewish schools which are not controlled by this Organisation.⁵

39. In Government schools, private Moslem schools and private (local) Christian schools the language used as the principal medium of instruction is Arabic; in private Jewish schools controlled by the Va'ad Hahinukh it is Hebrew although there are other private Jewish schools in some of which it is Hebrew in others not; in private foreign Christian schools it is neither Arabic nor Hebrew.

40. The system of education outlined above involves great diversity of language, of creed and of nationality and before considering the question of devolving education as a local service we think it necessary to find some basis of classification which would reduce this diversity to its simplest expression.

We think that, for the purpose in view, the schools in Palestine should be classified as Arabic-speaking and Hebrew-speaking.

The classification excludes private (foreign) Christian schools and private Jewish schools in which the language of instruction is not Hebrew.

At first sight it may seem arbitrary thus to exclude certain schools on the sole apparent ground that their language of instruction is neither Arabic nor Hebrew; but in support of this exclusion we would put forward two considerations of fact.

⁵The number of Government schools of all kinds is 314 and they are maintained at an approximate annual cost of £105,000 of which sum £75,000 approximately represents teachers' salaries. The number of private Jewish schools of all kinds controlled by the Organisation created by the Zionist Executive is 116; teachers' salaries total approximately £80,000 per annum.

One is that the bulk of those schools belong to some religious order or mission or some foreign authority with governing bodies in Europe or America, and consequently cannot be made the subject of local government control. We have good reason to believe, moreover, that the governing bodies of those schools would themselves elect exclusion.

The second is that no school in which the medium of instruction is not a vernacular language can legitimately expect inclusion. But if we recommend their exclusion as inevitable, we do by no means consider that they should not be entitled to a grant-in-aid on the same conditions as obtain at present.

We would observe that the representatives of the Palestine Zionist Executive voluntarily advance this classification as the only practical classification on the ground that the national aspirations of both Arabs and Jews could not be satisfied unless Arabic and Hebrew were the recognised medium of instruction in their primary schools. The Arab representatives also accepted this classification.

41. Having adopted this classification we are forced to two conclusions, namely:

(a) that, whatever form the Organisation or Local Government bodies charged with other local services may take, the service of Education will have to be entrusted to an "ad hoc" educational organisation distinct from and independent of Local Government bodies charged with other local services, since such bodies must be of mixed constitution.

(b) that the organisation for the devolution of the service of Education must take the form of two parallel groups of bodies, one for Arabic and the other for Hebrew education. We are satisfied that in the present circumstances no single organisation, however nicely adjusted, would be found workable in practice.

42. We are agreed that of the powers and duties which, in the case of Government schools, now rest with the High Commissioner or the Director of Education, the following which concern education as a whole can safely be devolved to the extent and with the safeguards prescribed to a controlling and coordinating body which we have called the Central Education Council.

(a) To discuss and approve the budget prepared by the Department of Education and to submit such budget to the High Commissioner for his approval;

(b) To determine the number and type of schools to be opened or closed within the limits imposed by the approved estimates, and fix and amend the establishment of personnel in the schools;

(c) To examine and approve all syllabuses and regulations relating to school discipline which might from time to time be submitted by the Department of Education;

(d) To approve such conditions governing the appointment and promotion of teachers as may be submitted by the Director of Education. The appointment of teachers will be effected by the High Commissioner;⁶

⁶I think that this sub-paragraph should read as follows: "(d) to recommend to the High Commissioner the regulations regarding the classification and qualification of teachers for appointment and promotion; and to recommend to the High Commissioner the names, class and salaries of the teachers to be appointed at each school." I think also that the following power should be added: "to recommend to the High Commissioner that a Local Education authority in a town or village be required to provide, repair or improve School buildings, etc." [unsigned, but most likely G.A.]

(e) To examine and approve for use in schools such text books as may be recommended by the Department of Education, and to prohibit the use of any text book;

(f) To approve plans of buildings and the type of furniture and equipment required;

(g) To receive and consider periodic reports from the Department of Health on the hygienic and sanitary condition of schools and make representations;

(h) To consider the Annual Report of the Department of Education and make recommendations;

(i) To have the right of enquiry into (and possibly of confirming) all appointments and dismissals carried out by the Department of Education.⁷

(j) To consider and report to the High Commissioner all matters connected with Education;

(k) To hear and pronounce on appeals from District Education Councils on matters within their jurisdiction, in the event of appeals being ultimately considered admissible.⁸

We are aware that some of the duties enumerated in this list require elucidation; but we are not in a position, at this stage of our enquiry, to do more than indicate, as we have endeavoured to do, the heads of services in which the Council might usefully exercise its activities. We would, however, draw attention to the fact that, in drawing up this list, we have constantly aimed at giving the Councils as great a measure of authority as seemed to us safe and consistent with the retention by Government of financial and technical control.

43. We think that the following powers and duties, as distinct from those devolved on the Central Authority, can be entrusted to local education authorities.

(1) To the District Education Council the following:

(a) To provide buildings for use as schools, and to equip and maintain them;

(b) To assume responsibility for the entire management of town and village schools in the area (apart from the duties of inspection and technical supervision carried out by the Departments of Education and Public Health) within the limits imposed by the syllabuses, regulations and budget as passed by the Central Education Council;

(c) To examine reports from the Department of Education and carry out whatever recommendations they may contain which fall within the competence of the Council;

⁷We think that this paragraph should read as follows: "In case of misconduct, neglect or inefficiency to order the dismissal, reduction in class, withholding of salary or suspension of any teacher provided that the teacher shall have a right of appeal to the High Commissioner within one month; provided also that the Director of Education may suspend any teacher in case of serious misconduct or neglect".—R.H.D. and A.S.K.

⁸We think that this paragraph should be omitted; we are not prepared to express any opinion as to what is the appropriate tribunal of appeal until the following points have been decided: (a) that an appeal is desirable; we are doubtful whether this is so, since a system of appeal derogates from the second principle enunciated in paragraph 33; (b) from what decision an appeal is to lie; (c) by whom an appeal can be brought, e.g. is a teacher or parent to be entitled to appeal.—R.H.D. and A.S.K.

(d) To report to the Director of Education on the progress and the needs of schools in their area, and to make specific recommendations of a financial, disciplinary and educational nature;

(e) To take steps, within the powers assigned to them to stimulate the progress of education in their area;

(f) To organise and carry out the collection in their area of such contributions as they may find necessary, within the powers assigned to them;

(g) To submit to the Central Education Council, through the Department of Education, their annual estimates of revenue and expenditure;

(h) To ensure the proper attendance of pupils at the school and levy fines.

(2) To the Education Authorities in villages:

(a) To provide the building and equipment of the school;

(b) To ensure the proper attendance of pupils at the school and levy fines;

(c) To report to the District Education Council on all matters affecting the welfare of the school;

(d) To organise and carry out the collection in the village of such voluntary contributions as the Village Council may decree subject to the approval of the District Education Council.

44. We regret to say that the consideration of finance, which is at the very root of the schools, has not progressed beyond an elementary stage. That is the main reason why our proposals are being submitted in this conditional form. On the question of finance itself, we are not in a position to make any recommendations. It is apparent that the financial resources must be a combination of Government contribution from general revenues and local revenue contributed by the Local Bodies and that the local revenues will be derived from:

(1) Rates and "voluntary" contributions.

(2) School and other Fees and Fines.

(3) Income from property.

In regard to rates we think that, in order to save the cost of separate assessment and collection, it will probably be found necessary to collect the rate by means of an addition to existing State taxes.

It is also apparent that rates must be collected from Arabs for Arab education and from Jews for Hebrew education. With regard to the government grant, we think that it should be proportional to the Arab and Jewish populations.⁹ This basis was suggested by the representatives of the Palestine Zionist Executive.

We have gone further in our analysis, but we do not think that any useful purpose would be served by any detailed exposition at this stage.

⁹I do not associate myself with this recommendation. I think that, before we express an opinion as definitely as is done here, we should consider this important question in much greater detail than we have. I think it is quite conceivable that we should find it necessary to recommend that the Jewish Community be given a greater share than its proportional lot. The fact that the Palestine Zionist Executive accept a proportional allocation should not be an argument against them.—G.A.

One point, however, seems to us worthy of special mention. It is that the establishment of Local Bodies and the devolution of local services to them will probably result in an aggregate increase of expenditure, although there will probably be a decrease of Government expenditure, and an increase of expenditure from local rates. We believe, however, that, if an increase of financial burden were found inevitable, it would be borne less grudgingly by the people, provided it carried with it the right of having an effective voice in the management of the service to which they were contributing.

45. Although we have not examined in detail the essential aspect of finance, we are able to indicate certain principles regarding the organisation for primary education on which we are agreed. We consider it highly desirable that these principles should apply also to secondary education if on further investigation it be found possible.¹⁰

These principles apply equally to the parallel organisations for Arab and Hebrew Education.

We think that the Central Education Council should be composed of official members appointed in an ex-officio capacity, and non-official members nominated by the High Commissioner and representing the Arab Community or Jewish Community (as the case may be); the Chief Secretary should be the President of the Council.

We are not in a position yet to fix definitely the numbers and designations of the official members, or the numbers and variety (as between religious communities or sects) of the non-official members. But we are agreed on provisionally recommending:

(a) That the official members include in addition to the Chief Secretary, the Director of Education and Director of Health;¹¹

(b) That the non-official members be in a majority;

(c) That the non-official members be selected on a basis which would ensure adequate denominational, and the widest territorial, representation, consistent with personal qualifications.

We think that the Central Council should be empowered to appoint so many of its members as it may deem sufficient to form a Sub-committee to transact such business as the Council may determine that may require to be dealt with in the intervals between the meetings of the Council and that the Chief Secretary or his representative be the Chairman of such Sub-committee.

46. The second question is that of the nomination, as against the election, of non-official members. We think that, if circumstances permit, the representation

¹⁰I should like to explain that I have always considered and do still consider the present scheme as one designed for all, and not only primary, education. I agree that specific recommendations for Secondary Education must at this stage be deferred. I wish merely to emphasise what I consider to be a particular merit of the scheme, namely that it is designed to cover, with some modifications of detail, the devolution of the services pertaining to secondary, and possibly technical education.—G.A.

¹¹I do not think that the presence of the Director of Health is essential as his services will always be available; I think that service as an official member would necessitate his attendance at many meetings when subjects with which he was not concerned would be discussed.—G.A.

of the people should be achieved by the process of election rather than of nomination. Still, we have provisionally recommended nomination, and that for two reasons. In the first place, we believe that, owing to the prevalent political atmosphere, it might be injudicious to hold elections. Secondly we think that, since the whole scheme is an experiment, it would be preferable not to subject it, at the first trial, to the possible risks of electoral caprice.

This is, again, a question on which we should prefer to suspend our final judgment until further enquiry. All that we are in a position to say now is that our enquiry, so far as it has gone, has led us towards the conclusion that election should be the principle of the scheme, but that nomination should be resorted to at the first trial—it being understood that nomination need not exclude, but rather should imply, the previous sounding of qualified public opinion.

We think it possible that, when a Legislative Council is elected, a proportion of the nominated members should be substituted by members of the Legislative Council.

47. It will be further observed that we have recommended a preponderance of non-official over official members.

In so doing we have been guided by the second of the principles enunciated in paragraph 35 and, when the possibility of abuse is considered, we think that the question of whether a majority can be given to non-official members should be considered not by itself but in close relation to the nature and scope of the powers entrusted to the body with the official majority. Further it should not be forgotten that, in addition to the specific limitations on the powers of the Central Education Council, such as the approval of the budget by the High Commissioner, the influence of the official members will in practice be very real: nor do we think that it must be assumed that the non-official members will embark upon their duties with a settled polity of opposition to the Government especially on the essentially uncontroversial issues with which they would be charged.

Lastly we cannot forget that under the Turkish system the non-official members were in a decided majority on Local Government bodies which were entrusted with still wider powers than we propose to devolve.

We have not overlooked the possibility of the people of Palestine rejecting a scheme which does not provide for an unofficial majority and if it be thought that the powers which we recommend should be conferred on the Central Education Council are too wide to be entrusted to such a body, we suggest that the objection should be met by restricting those powers and not by curtailing the preponderance of unofficial members.

Other safeguards could be provided: e.g. by specifying that certain of the more vital questions should not be debated except on the motion of the President.

48. From paragraph 43 it appears that the powers and duties which we propose should be devolved on local education authorities relate only to material and administrative services and not to personnel.¹²

¹²I do not associate myself with the contents of paragraph 48. I think that this analysis of the proposals is too partial to be of real value; and, furthermore, that it is misleading. For it is based on figures purporting to represent the economy that would be effected in the Education estimates, but which in reality represent no such thing.—G.A.

This was the proposal favoured by the Director of Education who also submitted the alternative suggestion that, in addition to the services referred to, there should also be devolved the expenditure on teaching staff in the case of primary schools in the municipal and town areas and that Town Education Committees should be established in such areas; by town areas we mean areas over which Local Councils have jurisdiction.¹³

We have not had sufficient time to consider the financial aspect of the second alternative and we are therefore unable to express an opinion whether it is a proposal which, on further examination, would prove to have advantages over the other proposal.

The arguments that may be quoted in support of the second paragraph seem to be:

(1) The saving from the point of view of the current estimates of the Department of Education;

(2) The probability that, in regard to Hebrew Education, it must be adopted since the Government cannot bear the cost of teachers' salaries in Hebrew schools and, consequently, if it be found practicable, from a financial point of view, it may have to be adopted in regard to Arab Education, in order that differentiation in treatment may be avoided.

(3) In the words of the Director of Education: "Local enthusiasm for education is strong but it is confined almost entirely to the township and hardly extends even to the immediate neighbourhood. The citizen of Safad for instance, takes little or no interest in Tiberias or the Nablusi in Tulkaram". If it is desirable to encourage parochial enthusiasm, town committees would do so.

(4) If Town Committees are not established presumably the Local Education authority would be charged with services in respect of schools both in town and village areas and the difficulty of village representation on such an authority and the tendency, existing under the similar organisation of the Turkish system, that the interests of town education were promoted at the expense of village education, would arise.

On the other hand it may be possible to devise safeguards against village interests being prejudiced under such an organisation.

The arguments which may be quoted against the second alternative would seem to be that:

(a) It involves multiplying the number of local authorities and consequently increasing the aggregate cost and rendering effective control and supervision more difficult;

(b) Teachers in town schools would become the employees of the Town Committees and, consequently, the Town Committees would demand greater power in regard to their appointment and dismissal and it would be more difficult to ensure a high standard in the qualifications of the teaching staff.

¹³Under the first alternative the saving on the Budget of the Department of Education would be approximately £18,000; under the second alternative approximately £38,000.

We, however, desire to defer any decision as to whether Town Committees should be established.

We think, however, that whether or not Town Committees are established, the following Local Educational bodies for primary education are necessary:

(1) A District Education Authority by which we mean an authority having jurisdiction in an area declared to be a District Education area; such area need not coincide with any administrative division;

(2) An Education Authority in the village which would be the Village Commission, suggested in paragraph 61 below.

49. We think that the District Education Council should be composed of official and non-official members, and should sit under the presidency of the District or Sub-district Governor. The exact composition of the Council remains to be determined, but we are agreed on provisionally recommending:

(a) That the official members include the Inspector of Education and Medical Officer;¹⁴

(b) That non-official members be nominated by the High Commissioner and be in the majority;

(c) That, if Town Committees are not established, the non-official members be selected on the basis which would ensure the direct representation of the villages.

50. In regard to secondary education (including I'dadi schools) and Training Colleges we are agreed that it is highly desirable to keep such institutions within the framework of the organisation outlined in the preceding paragraphs but we are not able, without further investigation, to make any specific proposals to secure this end.

(b) *PUBLIC HEALTH.*

51. We have considered which of the existing services performed by the Department of Public Health might safely be devolved on Local government bodies.

In doing so we have found it impossible to exclude from our enquiry the question of the devolution of such services to Municipalities who already perform certain public health services and consequently are bodies on whom further services would naturally be devolved before they were entrusted to newly created local bodies.

52. Furthermore the question of the devolution of Government general hospitals cannot be considered apart from Municipalities; all Government general hospitals are in Municipal areas and it is unlikely that any general hospitals maintained by a public authority will ever exist outside a Municipal area. There is a further difficulty that the existing general hospitals serve not only the Municipal area but also the surrounding villages.

The first steps towards the devolution of Government general hospitals are already being taken. Local Committees consisting of official and non-official members who share in the administration and control of the hospitals have been set up in Nablus, Jaffa and Gaza and negotiations are in progress for a similar

¹⁴ desire to make the same comment as appears in the footnote to paragraph 45 [FN11].—R.H.D.

arrangement in Jerusalem. The Municipalities of Nablus, Jaffa and Acre contribute to the cost of maintaining the hospital in their area.

The Department of Public Health retains control of the technical services in such hospitals and also manages and maintains the isolation wards since Municipalities object to the free treatment of infectious cases.

53. Our views as to the public services which can be devolved include therefore devolution to Municipalities.

They are also subject to the following conditions:

(1) That the local authorities appoint and employ the necessary qualified medical assistance; the appointment of every doctor should be approved by the Department of Public Health;

(2) That the Department retains the power of inspectional control.¹⁵

54. Subject to these conditions, we think that the following services might be devolved:

(a) The isolation and treatment of infectious patients, disinfection of infected houses, clothing, etc.;¹⁶

(b) The provision of hospital accommodation for Gendarmerie, Police and other government officers, the treatment of such patients remaining with the Department of Public Health;

(c) Hospital and out-patient dispensary treatment;

(d) To provide the expenses required for pauper lunatics native to the area of local authority on the understanding that the treatment of lunatics will remain entirely in the hands of the Department of Health;

(e) The supervision of the Sanitation of towns and villages;

(f) The provision and organisation of labour for the carrying out of anti-malarial projects and measures; on the understanding that both the approval and the supervision of such projects and measures are to remain in the hands of the Department of Health;¹⁷

(g) To control and carry out the Licensing of Trades and Industries under the Ordinance of the 1st March, 1924;

(h) The allocation of ground for cemeteries and the control of cemeteries;

(i) The provision of maternity centres for the training of midwives and the appointment of midwives to attend maternity cases among the poor;

(j) The destruction of vagrant dogs and jackals as an anti-rabic measure.

We think that the doctors appointed by local authorities could also relieve the medical officers of the Department of some of their medico-legal work.

It will be appreciated that the services referred to above could only be devolved by degrees.

¹⁵We agree provided that by inspectional control is meant only the power to inspect at all times and to report to the appropriate local government body the matter which the Department considers is being neglected.—R.H.D. and A.S.K.

¹⁶If the existing Government General Hospitals (including isolation wards) are devolved, the estimated saving on government expenditure is approximately £10,000.

¹⁷On further consideration we may find it possible to recommend a system of forced labour as is done in the case of roads. See paragraph 57 below.—R.H.D., A.S.K.

(c) PUBLIC WORKS.

55. At present roads may be divided into the following categories:

(a) Roads which are constructed and maintained by the Department of Public Works; these are termed main roads although they have not been so declared by legislation;¹⁸

(b) Roads outside Municipal areas which are not main roads. The Department of Public Works is not concerned with such roads except in so far as they provide supervision and technical advice with regard to alignment and grading and in some areas tools, material and steam-rollers;

(c) Roads within municipal areas; in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Haifa all are maintained by the local authorities.¹⁹ In other municipal areas the Municipality maintains only the roads which are not main roads. With regard to roads in Municipal areas maintained by the Municipality, the Department of Public Works is not concerned unless their advice or assistance is requested.

56. We do not think that the construction or maintenance of main roads can be devolved but we think that the construction and maintenance of secondary roads (by which we mean all roads other than main roads) can be devolved provided that the general policy of road construction is left in the hands of the Central Administrative Council to which we refer later.

57. We think that it may be of advantage to revive the legislation concerning forced labour, which is sanctioned by the Turkish precedent in Palestine itself. But we are not in a position at this stage of our enquiry, to put this forward as a definite recommendation.²⁰

(d) MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES.

58. We think that the following services might also be devolved:

(a) The grant of intoxicating liquor licences and other licences under the Intoxicating Liquors and Public Entertainments Ordinance;

(b) The inspection of engines and boilers for which a qualified engineer is usually employed for an annual inspection and remunerated out of the fees collected.

59. We have taken note of the practice that exists of villages appointing watchmen to guard their crops, etc.

The practice is voluntary and the watchmen have no legal status.

We suggest that the Cyprus Law No. 16 should be taken as a useful model for similar legislation in Palestine.

¹⁸These are the trunk roads from Beersheba to Hebron, Jerusalem, Nablus, Nazareth and Haifa; from Nazareth to Tiberias, Safad and Jesr Banat Ya'qub; from Nablus to Tulkaram; and from Jaffa to the Jordan. All other roads in Palestine are secondary roads, and will be referred to as such in this Report.

¹⁹The Township of Tel-Aviv maintains all roads within its jurisdiction.

²⁰We recommend that the system of forced labour for road construction be introduced, at any rate, outside municipal areas on the basis that every able-bodied male be compelled to work six days a year on road construction or to commute such labour for a cash payment equivalent to the current cost of six days' unskilled labour. The system of forced labour existed under the Ottoman Law and prevails in Cyprus today. Of the sum representing commutation, we think that a proportion should be appropriated to main roads and the remainder to secondary roads.—R.H.D., A.S.K.

60. We are unable at the present stage to make any specific recommendations in regard to finance. We would call attention to the general remarks contained in paragraph 44 which apply equally to local services other than education.

61. Nevertheless, we are able to indicate certain principles on which the organisation and constitution of Local Government bodies should, in our opinion, be based.

In the first place, we think that all the services referred to in paragraphs 51 to 59 could be devolved on one organisation and that "ad hoc" bodies would not be necessary as for education.

Secondly, we think that, if only for the services of Public Health and Roads, it is essential that there should be a coordinating authority corresponding to a Local Government Board.

Thirdly, we think that, if the services are to be effectively performed, there must be a village authority; We think it essential that the powers and duties of Mukhtars should be reviewed in order to meet the changed circumstances and that the Council of Elders should be substituted by representatives of committees so as to constitute, with the Mukhtar, a Village Commission.

We think that in connection with Village Commissions the following Cyprus Laws are worthy of consideration:

The Village Roads Law of 1892, 1899 and 1900.

The Public Health (Villages) Law 1892.

The Public Authorities Law 1923.

Fourthly, we think that there should be a Local Government body to participate in and coordinate the services performed outside municipal areas. We think that such bodies should be set up in the following areas:

Southern District at Gaza.

Jaffa Sub-district at Jaffa.

Jerusalem Sub-district at Jerusalem.

Ex-Samaria District at Nablus.

Ex-Northern District at Haifa.

We have called these bodies District Administrative Councils although it appears that their jurisdiction does not correspond with the existing administrative divisions.

The organisation we have in mind consists therefore of:

(a) A Central Administrative Council to which are subordinate

(b) District Administrative Councils to which are subordinate

(c) Village Commissions.

We have yet to determine whether, and if so in what respect, Local Councils established under the Local Councils Ordinance should form part of this organisation.

62. We contemplate that, among the duties of the Central Administrative Council, would be the following:

(a) To approve the budgets of the District Councils and to compile from such budgets for submission to the High Commissioner a budget for the local services which the Central Council controls;

(b) To approve the general road programme submitted by the Director of Public Works and to allocate the sums available for construction and maintenance of secondary roads to the District Councils;

(c) To take such steps as may be prescribed to ensure the proper auditing of the accounts of District Councils and Village authorities.

It is possible that the Central Council should also be the body through which coordination in certain activities of Municipalities (such as road construction) and the technical supervision over such activities should be secured.

Further that the Central Council take such steps as may be prescribed to ensure the proper auditing of the accounts of Municipalities and Local Councils.

63. We think that the Central Administrative Council should consist of the Chief Secretary as President and certain *ex-officio* members such as the Directors of Public Health and Public Works, and possibly the Treasurer, and a number of non-official members representing the three communities, [The authors are referring here to religious communities: Christians, Jews, and Muslims.—SSB] to be nominated by the High Commissioner.²¹

We think that the non-official members should be in the majority and we advance the same reasons in support of their being nominated and in the majority as are contained in paragraphs 46 and 47.

We think that the Council should have similar power to appoint a Sub-committee, of which the Chief Secretary or his representative should be Chairman, as we recommend should be given to the Central Education Council.

We are not yet in a position to recommend the numbers of official and non-official members since this must, to a large extent, be determined by the powers and duties which may ultimately be entrusted to them, although we are agreed that the linguistic basis recommended for Education need not necessarily be adopted in regard to unofficial members.

64. We think that District Administrative Councils should be similarly composed of official and non-official members nominated by the High Commissioner and in the majority.

The President should, we think, be the District or Sub-district Governor and the official members should include the Medical Officer and District Engineer and District Revenue Officer.²²

We advance the same arguments in support of nomination and a majority of non-official members as are contained in paragraphs 46 and 47.

(e) *GENERAL.*

65. We desire to draw attention to the following matters:

(1) In addition to the services dealt with above, we had set aside as being specially important in Palestine, other services such as Agriculture, Afforestation, Water Supply, Poor Relief and Orphanages, but since we have not had time to consider them we are not in a position to make any useful recommendations; fur-

²¹We do not think that it is necessary that the Treasurer should be an *ex-officio* member; his advice will always be available; nor do we think it desirable that the Government's financial adviser should be on such a body, in the position of being outvoted by official and non-official members.—R.H.D. and A.S.K.

²²I do not agree that the District Revenue Officer is an appropriate official member; it seems to me that since the District Governor is the Chief Revenue Officer of the District, it is not desirable that an officer who is subordinate to him and to the Sub-district Governor, should also be an *ex-officio* member with voting powers.—R.H.D.

ther, we do not wish it to be thought that these additional services would necessarily complete the services which on further examination we might find it possible to recommend should be devolved;

(2) We think it is a matter for consideration whether it is not necessary to establish a body of Public Loans Commissioners (such as exists in Cyprus) to whom should be entrusted the duty of making agricultural loans and other loans to local authorities; it seems to us also to be a matter for consideration whether it is not more appropriate to establish such a body rather than that the Government should finance an Agricultural Bank which, we believe, is contemplated.

(3) We think that, even in present circumstances, a revision of the Municipal Law of 1877 is necessary.²³

We have the honour to be,
 Your Excellency's obedient servants,
 Chairman
)
)Members [George Antonius, et al.]
 2nd June, 1924

²³I do not associate myself with this expression of opinion. If our proposals are adopted, it seems to me a self-evident fact that the whole of the relevant Turkish legislation would be revised. I fail to see, therefore, the advantage of singling out this particular law. Moreover, I am not satisfied that this Law calls for revision "even in present circumstances", that is to say whether our proposals are adopted or not.—G.A.

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