

Kenneth W. Stein, "What if the Palestinian Arab Elite Had Chosen Compromise Rather than Boycott in Confronting Zionism?" in Gavriel D. Rosenfeld (ed.) *What ifs of Jewish History*, Cambridge University Press, 2016, pp. 215-237.

Introduction

The Palestinian Arab elite's choice to boycott or not participate in virtually all British and United Nations overtures to them from 1920-1948 had egregious consequences for them. In choosing boycott, the Palestinian Arab elite shunned a host of British officials who were staunch supporters of Arab rights or definitely anti-Zionist in outlook. Palestinian Arab choice of boycott repeatedly benefitted the Zionist movement. Jewish nation-building grew without certain impediments that would have otherwise certainly been applied against them. Consciously and willfully, the Palestinian Arab elite did not choose political patience, engagement, compromise, and foresight; they opted for physical resistance, estrangement, absolutism, and immediacy.

There were at least four reasons why the Palestinian Arab elite employed political boycott in dealing with the British and London's support for a Jewish national home. First and foremost, the Arab elite staunchly opposed Zionism and the right of Jews to establish a national home or state in Palestine. Second, they opposed British presence in Palestine because they believed that the British were not interested in establishing an Arab state run by Palestinians. Third, employment of boycott meant that consent to self-determination would not be given by the British, and self-determination was a sure way for their political, economic and social status to be challenged by other Arabs in Palestine. The Arab elite may have said otherwise from time to time, but they were never genuinely keen to see self-determination and majority self-rule applied, unless their positions could be reaffirmed or enhanced. And fourth, political change certainly meant diminishing the power, influence, and social status that the small elite had over the vast majority of Palestine's poor rural population. Blaming Zionism and the British was a genuinely articulated attitude; yet, maintaining the political and social status quo was undeniably preferred. Official non-cooperation and boycott preserved personal status, while it enabled many in the elite to promote fierce public antagonism against Zionism and the British. The Palestinian Arab political elite from which the Mufti emerged as a paramount political leader was a tiny slice of the society, perhaps no more than 3,000 in number, less than one percent of the entire Palestinian population at any time during the Mandate. From 1936-1948, there were 64 different members of the four differently formed editions of the Arab Executive Committees. This was a super narrow, highly inegalitarian elite, whose members possessed income, wealth, property, landownership, reputation, ascriptively acquired social status, or a combination of all these.¹ They held enormous economic control over a highly fragmented, illiterate, and impoverished rural population,² and almost all of them inherited their wealth and status through family ties and wealth in land that had been accumulated from the middle of the 19th century forward. Control of land meant either collecting rents and benefitting from the vast indebtedness of the peasantry, for it kept the elite in control over large numbers of people, and offered income should the decision be made to sell to

Zionists. In the late 1920s and 1930s, the Arab political elite in towns and villages slowly gave way to a younger generation of more militant nationalists. The fathers and grandfathers had sold land to immigrating Jews. Several among the younger generation, sons of notables and landowners who had the wherewithal from their family's income [some derived from land sales], to be more ideologically committed in deed and word to anti-British and anti-Zionist sentiment.³ Anyone who has closely studied Palestinian Arab society from the late Ottoman times to the end of the 1940s knows that the peasant classes endured impoverishment, postponed intermittently by employment stimulated by a foreign influx of capital that came primarily from sustained British presence and imported Zionist capital.

In 1936, Dr. Izzat Tannous, a Palestinian Arab Christian, headed the Arab Center in London, an organization formed to promote support for the Palestinian Arabs and was also a member of a Palestinian Arab delegation to London in early 1939. The organization sought a political solution in Palestine that would satisfy Palestinian Arab national interests, namely the establishment of a majority Arab state in Palestine. Tannous was described by Malcolm MacDonald, the British Colonial Secretary at the time, as "a moderate, therefore his influence in Palestine was not very great... he [was] a man capable of reason and some courage... whatever influence he may have had would be exerted on the side of peace."⁴

Palestinian Arab delegations had gone to London half-a-dozen times between 1920 and 1947 to protest the British policy of supporting the development of a Jewish national home and to urge Palestinian Arab self-determination. Those engaged in representing the Palestinian Arab political community were not elected through self-determination of the population at large, but were in great measure self-appointed. The political elite had consistently opposed the contents and implementation of the 1917 Balfour Declaration, which called for the "establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and protect the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish population." Though many Zionists declared otherwise, a "national home" meant the eventual establishment of a Jewish state. Among the Arab elite like Tannous, there were "moderates" in their political outlook, both toward the British and Zionism. Some of the Arab moderates willingly tolerated Zionist presence, but only if the Zionists remained a political minority. Others actively collaborated with the Zionists for either personal gain or political belief.

From the end of World War I, Palestine was administratively and politically separated from Greater Syria by French and British agreement. Paris and London were victorious over the Ottoman Empire during World War I and divided the spoils of the Middle East between themselves. They created mandates or trusteeships for newly created Arab states, promising self-rule, but not providing it immediately. Arabs in Palestine gradually established their own political organizations, separate from Syria. These included Muslim-Christian Associations in many urban areas, the Arab Executive Committee which conducted Palestine wide meetings every year or two, the Supreme Muslim Council that influenced religious politics and policies from Jerusalem and throughout Palestine, and eventually in the 1930s, individual political parties that reflected a wide spectrum of political opinion and often the interests of a particular family and their affiliates across Palestine, and during the 1930s and 1940s, an Arab Higher Committee, made up at various times of 20 or more individuals, again

self-selected or appointed. While the Arab community officially boycotted participation with the British, it did not keep the British Administration from repeatedly sounding out the opinion of Arab leaders. The British Administration's unofficial discussions with the Arab Executive gave the British some access to a narrow slice of Arab political opinion.⁵ The intention of appointing a Mufti of Jerusalem in May 1921 was aimed at providing the Muslim community an opportunity to govern its own religious affairs and open a conduit for an exchange of political views. Britain walked gingerly on matters of religion, particularly with the Muslims because of His Majesty's Government presence or relationships with other Muslim Arab leaders in Egypt, Iraq, Transjordan, and along the Persian Gulf coast. Half-a-year after appointing Hajj Amin Al-Husayni the Mufti of Jerusalem, the British established the Supreme Muslim Council, with Hajj Amin al-Husyani as its President. By gradually dominating the Muslim Arab religious community, the Mufti accumulated enormous political power. Though he derived his legitimacy for his position as Mufti of Jerusalem from the British, he and his peers chose non-engagement and non-participation with any official political activity that sanctioned British rule and, therefore, Zionism. The goal of appointing him to be a willing contact with the British proved unsuccessful. Already in 1918-1919, Arab leaders in Palestine had opposed the Balfour Declaration and its intentions; the Mufti embraced that outlook and became more anti-British and anti-Zionist as the Mandate moved from the 1920s-1940s. By taking control over revenues and taxes from Waqf property through patronage of making appointments and dismissing judges and officers to local religious councils and by controlling newspapers and a publishing house, he gradually asserted an extreme voice in Palestinian Arab politics.⁶ That voice grew louder, more radical, vitriolic, and uncompromising as his opponents died or were replaced through his patronage or by a younger group of nationalists coming of age. In the early 1930s, he was vehement in his opposition to Jewish immigration and threatened any Muslim who sold land to Jews would be denied all Muslim burial rights. He willingly used violence to have political opponents killed. In 1937, he fled Palestine for refuge in Lebanon, where he persisted to call for continued violence against the British and Zionists. For the Mufti, there simply was no compromise with anyone who wanted to wrest power from him and no place for Jews or Zionists in Palestine, even if they were relegated to a distinct minority status. In the 1940s, the Mufti supported Hitler's final solution for eradicating Jews in Europe, because dead Jews, he reasoned, could not immigrate to Palestine. As for the Arab Executive which tended to be somewhat more moderate than the Mufti, its leadership became his organizational rival, which added to the tension and fragmentation among an already small Arab elite who in one way or other opposed Zionism. By the early 1940s, the Palestinian Arab's political and social fragmentation was so cavernous, it caused the Arab political elite to be irrevocably dysfunctional, incapable of meeting the challenges of Zionism in the 1930s-1940s.⁷ In the 1940s, its fragmented nature and incredibly weak political institutions made the Palestinian cause an easy take-over target for Arab leaders, like Jordan's King Abdullah, Egypt's King Farouk, Azzam Pasha and the Arab League; they easily usurped Palestinian representation and spoke for Palestinian opposition to Zionism.

In 1937, Tannous also vigorously opposed the development of a Jewish state in Palestine. Like many among the Palestinian political elite at the mid-way point of the

Mandate, he staunchly opposed the newly articulated British policy of promoting Palestine's geographic division into separate Arab and Jewish states. In 1938, after looking closely at the idea of how the partitioning of the land of Palestine would be carried out, the British deemed the idea unworkable, primarily because the proposed Arab state would not have been economically viable and, therefore, a likely dependent upon British tax-payer largesse.

In 1939, in search of an alternative policy for Palestine that would be more amenable to the Arab community, particularly after three years of Arab riots and civilian unrest directed against British administrative control, Zionism's physical presence and Arab collaborators who helped the Zionists,⁸ Britain proposed a radically different departure from their previous policy of facilitating a Jewish national home. The 1939 British White Paper, a policy statement for Palestine's political path forward, dramatically aimed to truncate Zionist growth. The White Paper, applied until the end of the Mandate in May 1948, drastically limited legal Jewish immigration and legal Jewish land purchase. In 1939, Britain also proposed the establishment of a unitary state in Palestine that would come into existence ten years hence. In such a federal state, the Arab population would have become a majority and the Jews a minority. After the British proposed the federal state idea, Tannous and fourteen members of the Arab Higher Committee met in March 1939 to discuss the vast change in British policy. They deliberated every day for nearly three weeks at Hajj Amin al Husayni's residence in Jouneh, a suburb of Beirut. This is what Tannous wrote in his diary about those meetings:⁹

"The discussion was in a family like manner at first, sitting in a circle and all taking part. The morale was high and the expectation for a brighter future was higher. This went on for a time, dreaming of a Palestinian Arab as the head of a department, as a Minister or a Prime Minister or even at Government House, and why not? But this sweet dream did not last long. The discussion became more strained as some of us began to realize that Haj Amin was not in favor of accepting the White Paper. This negative stand, which gradually became more pronounced, made the atmosphere extremely tense. The arguments between Haj Amin and the rest of the members became acute and after a fortnight of discussion it became quite clear that the only person who was against accepting the White Paper was Haj Amin Al-Husayni. The remaining fourteen members were not only strongly in its favor, but were determined to put an end to the negative policy Arab leadership had been adopting heretofore. 'Take and demand the rest' was now their new motto. If there were excuses for our negative stands in the past, and there were, they were gone.

"At this stage of the discussion, an atmosphere of resentment and dismay prevailed over the meetings and there was reason for it. The fourteen members knew very well that the acquiescence of Haj Amin Al-Husayni was a very essential requisite and that without his blessing because of his magic influence on the Palestinian masses, the White Paper would not be implemented, a

goal which the Zionists were madly seeking to score. Consequently, the sole concern of the Committee was now concentrated on convincing Haj Amin that his negative stand was extremely detrimental to the Arab cause and was serving, unintentionally, the Zionist cause, and that he was doing exactly what the Zionists wanted him to do.

“It is true that none of us could claim that the White Paper was a perfect political instrument without blemish; but at the same time, none of us could deny that it effected drastic changes in the despotic policy which had, so far, governed Palestine and that it had marked a decisive turning point in the history of Palestine. The fourteen members felt that they could not possibly discard a policy which had put an end to the Jewish national home policy in Palestine; nor could they conscientiously refuse a policy which had cancelled the establishment of a Zionist state recommended by the Royal Commission and adopted by the British Government.

“And what right do we have to discard a policy which stipulated that, ‘After the elapse of five years and the contemplated 75,000 immigrants have been admitted, HMG will not be justified in facilitating, nor will they be under obligation to facilitate, further development of the Jewish ‘national home by immigration.’ Did not this statement put an end to the development of the Jewish national home and an end to the Balfour Declaration? And what gain do we, the Arabs of Palestine, expect to procure from discarding such a policy.

“Another week of heated argumentation took place within the Committee with no tangible result. Haj Amin kept repeating his arguments that the White Paper contained too many loopholes and ambiguities to be of any benefit; the ‘transitional period of ten years’ was too long and the ‘special status of the Jewish national home’ was too much of an ambiguity to be accepted. There were other objections he raised which space will not permit me to record; but, all in all, they were not important enough to permit the total discard of policy which gives us our major demands, puts an end to our fears for the future and which our enemies simply crave to abolish!”

1920s: Emerging Palestinian Arab Choice: Boycott, Non-participation, No Compromise

In 1939, the Mufti did not consent to the British proposal to establish a Palestinian Arab state with an Arab majority within ten years. It was a promise attached to British imposed legislation to severely limit Jewish physical and demographic growth. What the Mufti insisted upon in 1939, Arab elites in Palestine had regularly employed as a normative political tactic since 1920. Each time boycott or walking away from the table was chosen, however, it provided the Zionists with

one less obstacle standing in their way of building their state. Not being a political obstacle to Zionism in the early 1920s provided the Zionists with time; time to organize, raise funds from the diaspora, create an infrastructure of departments, and establish small industries and companies that met the needs of a very slow growing Jewish population. Not being at the decision-making table as British governance in Palestine unfolded allowed Zionists to establish a regular rapport with British officials, learn about policy changes in a timely manner, and help draft laws on immigration, land issues and matters of self-government. In the early 1920s, there were relatively few Jews in Palestine, perhaps 10-15 percent of the total population, and the Jewish community had not yet successfully rallied diaspora Jewish support for the Zionist cause. The reservoir of potential European immigrants chose North America, South Africa or South America, rather than going to the economic and political uncertainty that their ancestral home offered. Reluctance characterized Jewish embrace of Zionism. There is little doubt that had the Palestinian Arab “clerical-feudal”¹⁰ political elite chosen to participate in the working of the Mandate, they would have slowed Zionism’s development. There is every reason to believe that Zionism’s growth, at least in the 1920s, would have been suppressed by active Arab engagement with the British in governing Palestine. Certainly, Arab political participation, even in political institutions that did not provide them absolute majority rule, would have been eagerly supported by many British officials who were either neutral toward Zionism or opposed to Jewish nationalism. There is no doubt that the British would not have given up strategic control of Palestine, which was geographically proximate to the Suez Canal. British presence in Palestine also provided a land bridge across the Jordan to Iraq, the Gulf and beyond. The growing importance of Haifa as a port for the British fleets was evident when London built the oil pipeline from Mosul to Haifa, opening in 1935.

In 1923, the British Government reaffirmed the view that it was “essential to maintain British arms in Palestine for the defense of the Canal in case a withdrawal from Egypt became necessary at any time... the Mandate must continue to be administered by Great Britain, that it could not be administered unless the principle of the Balfour Declaration was maintained.”¹¹ But the principle of the Balfour Declaration was the protection of the civil and religious rights of the non-Jewish population. Had the Arab elites chosen to participate in self-government or self-governing institutions, if not yet achieving full independence, there was every reason to believe that British officials well disposed toward the Arab community in Palestine would have given meaning to that part of the Balfour Declaration that said, “...nothing shall be done which shall prejudice the civil and religious rights of the non-Jewish communities.”

In July 1920, the British military regime was replaced by a civil administration headed by High Commissioner Herbert Samuel, who soon established a small appointed Executive Council and Advisory Council. The Advisory Council consisted of ten British officials and ten nominated non-officials, of whom four were Muslim Arabs, three Christian Arabs and three Jews. It created a rudimentary constitution which was to provide for an elected Legislative Council. In 1923, seven of the nine Arabs withdrew participation under pressure from the Arab Executive, leaving the Advisory Council for the duration of the Mandate to be staffed by only British officials.¹²

By the end of the summer of 1921, British High Commissioner Sir Herbert Samuel (office - 1920-1925) had tried to establish a Legislative Council in Palestine, but neither its representation nor its powers were sufficiently attractive to induce engaged Arab participation. The British Government told an Arab Delegation to London that it meant to carry out the Balfour Declaration and *that it would concede* to a national government. Colonial Office Secretary Winston Churchill hoped that the Arabs would try the Council for two or three years and, if proved not a success, they could put forward their case.¹³ The Legislative Council never became a reality, because Palestine Arab nationalist leaders refused to participate in the British-sponsored Arab self-government. A leading authority on early Jewish immigration to Palestine, Moshe Mosek, wrote about this Arab decision, "...their unconditional rejection of the British proposals to set up representative bodies which could give them, if not control, a certain influence over policy, closed for them the door to even token participation in the making of (immigration) policy."¹⁴ In 1923, the Arab political elite was asked if it wanted to establish an Arab Agency that would. Samuel dearly wanted an Arab Agency with nominated members to provide a constitutional legitimation for British rule in Palestine. The Arab political elite said no because it gave legitimacy to the Jewish Agency, the Zionist representative to the British Administration in Palestine; it said no because the Arab Agency would not evolve into something more than an advisory body. And it said no, because there was division within the Arab political elite about whether to offer a compromise to the British that would tacitly sanction British presence and control over the Mandate. During these first three years, the British in London and in Palestine made successive but unsuccessful overtures to the Arab elite to participate in some fashion with British governance. It was terribly frustrating for British officials who dearly wanted the Arabs to participate in some official way in running the Mandate, even if the institutions that were developed lacked many political teeth. In 1923, Colonial Office Official Sir John Shuckburgh, a London bureaucrat who would deal with Palestine for at least another fifteen years, said, "We shall clearly make ourselves ridiculous if we go on making offers to a people who persistently refuse them."¹⁵

1930s: Snubbing Pro-Arab British Officials - Missed Opportunities Had Dire Consequences

At the end of the 1920s, High Commissioner Sir John Chancellor (office - 1928-1931), unlike any of his two predecessors in that position of having full executive, legislative, and judicial authority, adopted a profoundly forceful anti-Zionist outlook. Chancellor provided the Arab population an incredibly savory opportunity to embrace his views and ride his uncompromising pro-Arab zeal against Zionism. Taking advantage of the view expressed by Chancellor would never again be matched by another High Commissioner for the remainder of the Mandate. After arriving in Palestine, without any real political view of either Arabs or Zionists, Chancellor's Administration witnessed severe riots and disturbances in August 1929. The following year, the British dispatched inquiry commissions to look into the causes of the unrest and the economic causes that undergirded them. Chancellor gradually adopted a deep disdain for Zionism. His political views of how to limit Zionism heavily penetrated the findings of the Shaw Report (March 1930), the Hope-Simpson Report

(October 1930), and issuance of Britain's new policy for Palestine in the Passfield White Paper (October 1930). He had written a 90-page dispatch to the Colonial Office in January 1930 advocating a dramatic turn in the Mandate in favor of the Arab community.¹⁶ Chancellor sought a total suspension of Jewish immigration. He wanted all land sales stopped between Arab and Jew, or at least fully controlled by the High Commissioner. He told his Colonial Office superiors that all cultivable land in Palestine was occupied, no further land could be sold without creating a class of landless Arabs, and suggested implementing immediate legislation to protect tenants/cultivators so they could not be asked to leave lands they were working prior to or after a land sale between an Arab and Jew. If Arab tenants left the lands they were working during a land transfer, he wanted them to have lands guaranteed to them for their future use. Chancellor feared that if Arab agriculturists did not remain on lands that they worked they would become brigands.¹⁷ In seeking a prohibition of land sales, where an Arab could not sell to a Jew, Chancellor sought a clear legal distinction between Jew and Arab; he wanted to give overwhelmingly positive effect to the phrase in the Articles of the Mandate and in the Balfour Declaration, "...that nothing shall be done which shall prejudice the civil and religious rights of the non-Jewish population."

Though Chancellor was the Arab's champion, or more precisely a vigorous opponent of Zionism, few Arabs in the country knew about the depth of his dislike for Zionism. But members of the Arab Executive and the Mufti knew that Chancellor wanted to change the Mandate; they knew that he like no one before him disliked Zionism, perhaps as much as many of them did. And yet they did not reach out in a politically significant fashion to take advantage of his ideas and influence. In March 1930, an Arab Delegation came to London to negotiate the possibilities of constitutional talks and self-rule, ideas that Chancellor proposed. Chancellor sought to convince the Arab elite to change their extremely negative policy, ending immigration, ending land sales, but most importantly establishing a national government in treaty relationship with Great Britain. He wanted them to make a compromise on being absolute in their outlooks. The biggest sticking point for the British was giving over full policy control to the Arab majority or to the League of Nations. The Palestinian Arab Delegation returned to Palestine without a promise for a national government. The Arab Executive and the Mufti would not meet the British half way and no change in the Mandate occurred that steered it away from promoting the Jewish national home.

Many in the British Palestine Administration, whether British or Arab officials, enthusiastically supported Chancellor's attempt to turn the Mandate against the Zionists. Some London Colonial Office and Foreign Office staffers were eagerly supportive of Chancellor's views. At that time, there were "...strong forces in the British Government which were more than ready to justify Arab opposition to the Jewish claims."¹⁸ Some of the British antagonism articulated against Zionism bordered on anti-Semitism. Sir John Hope-Simpson, who reflected Chancellor's anti-Zionist views and who wrote a critically important report in October 1930 scolding Zionists development in Palestine, noted that "All British officials tend to become pro-Arab, or perhaps more accurately anti-Jew...Personally I can quite well understand this trait. The helplessness of the Fella (peasant) appeals to the British official whom he comes in touch. The offensive self-assertion of the Jewish immigrant is, on the other hand,

repellant.”¹⁹ Not surprisingly, Zionists reared that Chancellor’s ideas and those of his peers, if made into policy, would be the “death knell” for Zionist growth. In the fall of 1930, after the Passfield White Paper was issued, the British invited Zionist and Arab leaders to a round table conference in London to discuss the possible provisions of the White Paper, and specifically a proposal to establish a limited representative government under a constitution. Debate about the new policy shifted to the House of Commons in November 1930. Thereupon, the British Cabinet sought opinions of the Arab Executive and members of the London Zionist Executive. Zionist leaders, though hesitant at the prospect of a representative Palestinian government where Jews would be greatly outnumbered by Arabs, agreed to participate in the discussions. However, Palestinian Arab leaders refused the British invitation to attend an exchange of views in London.

In November 1930, intense discussions occurred in London with only the Zionists engaged about the Passfield White Papers’ contents. The British capitulated to the Zionists and left Chancellor disheartened and his ideas discredited. Gradually and forcefully, Zionists in London persuaded the British Government to write a letter of explanation decidedly abandoning the White Paper’s contents. The first draft of a letter to Chaim Weizmann, the head of the London Zionist Executive, was written by the British with little Zionist input. After noting that the Jewish national home would continue, paragraph 11 of the first draft, dated November 29, 1930, said, “It is desirable to make it clear that the landless Arabs were *those Arabs who have been displaced from their lands in consequence of the lands passing into Jewish hands*. It will scarcely be contended that His Majesty’s Government have no obligation towards the Arabs so displaced.” In reply to this draft, the London Zionist Executive, working in absolute harmony with the Jewish Agency in Palestine, pointed out that HMG did not have in its possession definite evidence as to the number of persons falling within that category. Furthermore, the Zionists noted to their British colleagues that it would be found that the number of landless Arabs was quite small. Finally, the British accepted the Zionist definition of “landless” to read as those “*Arab cultivators as can be shown to have been directly displaced from their lands in consequence of the lands passing into Jewish hands, and who have been unable to obtain other holdings on which they can establish themselves*.” Passfield himself was completely bypassed in the discussions with the Zionists. The Cabinet Committee accepted this correction in its second draft issued on January 7, 1931.²⁰ Thus, from 1931-1936, when the British Administration in Palestine investigated the number of Arabs who were landless, it was determined that the number of Arabs displaced because of Jewish land purchase who were not able to obtain other holdings was about 800. Many Arabs who were displaced by Jewish land purchase and who did not find alternative holdings did not submit claims to be classified as homeless because they found alternative jobs either working for Zionists or the British in the building trades, or in the citrus industry. Consequently, the Jewish Agency consistently claimed that Jewish land purchase had displaced only a relatively few number of Arabs. That was, of course, not true; Jewish land purchase had displaced a considerable number of Arab tenants and small Arab owners. The Zionists were correct that the number was small, *but only if* the limited definition used to determine landlessness was applied. When discussions with the Zionists concluded in London, British Prime Minister Ramsey MacDonald sent

a letter to Weizmann, virtually apologizing for the threat posed to Zionism's growth that had appeared in the Passfield White Paper. On February 12, in the House of Commons, MacDonald affirmed that there had been no change in British policy toward the Balfour Declaration. The purpose of his letter to Weizmann was “to remove misunderstandings but not to make changes of policy.” The Prime Minister said that “the obligation to facilitate Jewish immigration and make possible dense settlement of Jews on the land is still a positive obligation of the Mandate, and it can be fulfilled without jeopardizing the rights and conditions of the other part of the Palestine population.”

What an enormous victory for the Zionists. For them not to have the Passfield White Paper die before implementation was crucial. Discrediting any notion that their land acquisitions and Jewish immigration were responsible for Arab landlessness was critical. By withdrawing from discussions with the British, the Zionists were able to obliterate Chancellor’s intentions to protect the Arab population. Chancellor had suggested no less than six different initiatives to help the Palestinian peasant. Among them were pieces of legislation that dealt with mortgage debt forfeiture, usurious loans, agricultural tenants’ protection, resettling so-called landless Arabs, and establishment of a development department. Because of boycott, few if any Arabs participated in shaping these laws and initiatives; however, input into drafts of these and other initiatives routinely passed to Zionist lawyers and experts for review. In the decade after Chancellor, Jewish economic strength, demographic size, and physical presence grew in unprecedented numbers. From 1928-1939, Jewish owned industrial activity, which provided the major stimulus for the overall Palestinian economy, grew from 44% of total output to 70% in 1939.²¹ From 1930-1940, the Jewish population grew from 150,000 to 450,000; by comparison, there were 650,000 Jews in Palestine when the state was established in 1948. In the decade of the 1930s, Jewish land purchases increased from 979,000 dunams to 1,360,000 dunams, a 30% increase. By comparison, when Israel was established, Jews had purchased 2 million dunams of land out of the 7 million dunams of registered land in Palestine that would not be later taken by Israel, Jordan or Egypt.²²

Arab boycott had other ramifications for the Zionist leadership. After 1930, the Zionists were extraordinarily more careful about making strategic land purchases, sharing information with British officials, and buying lands that were contiguous to existing Jewish land holdings. Collection of data about Arabs who had sold lands to Zionists previously, while never published, was shared quietly with British officials in Palestine and London. While Zionists won another decade of virtually unimpeded growth in developing a state, the Arab elite stayed on the distant periphery of influencing British policy, except in angering and frustrating British officials. The Arab elite’s use of boycott was political, not personal. It has been well established that throughout the Mandate, Arab land sales were frequent, not overwhelming, but in sufficient quantities often greater than Zionists had the wherewithal to purchase.²³ Moreover, it has been well established the frequent efforts by the Arab landowning, cum political elites’ demands to limit Jewish land purchase possibilities, whether in 1930, 1933 or 1939, were a deliberate ruse to make land sales more difficult and thereby drive up land prices.²⁴ A close reading of the Jewish National Fund Minutes for the period of 1924-1948 confirms that conclusion. What did the Palestinian Arab press

say about their leaders and land sales? In 1932, one editorial noted that “...because the Jews are alert, and our leaders are asleep, the Jews are buying the lands.”²⁵ Another attacked landowners/effendis as self-interested property owners and characterized them as “a calamity upon nationalism humanity and right.”²⁶ Said another in November 1934, “...those who adopted this profession [land brokers] aim at becoming rich and at collecting money even if they take it from the lives of the country... Is it human that the covetous should store capital to evict the peasant from his land and make him homeless or even sometimes a criminal? The frightened Arab who fears for his future today melts from fear when he imagines his offspring as homeless and as criminals who cannot look at the lands of their fathers.”²⁷ In January 1936, an Arab editorial noted that “...it is on our leader’s shoulders that our calamity of land sales lays. They themselves as well their relatives were guilty of selling lands to the Jews.”²⁸ In June 1940, when Chancellor’s proposed and transfer prohibitions were finally applied, British Colonial Office Official Sir John Shuckburgh remarked, “... the Arab landowner [needed] to be protected against himself.”²⁹ In November 1945, a British committee looking into how the land sale restrictions to Jews laws were being circumvented noted that “... the remedy lies in the hands of the Arabs themselves. Unless they enter into collusion with the Jews to defeat the spirit of the White Paper, Jews will not be able to enter improperly into possession of the land within a restricted area. If the parties whom the law is designed to defend conspire to evade the law, then it is indeed difficult for the authorities to enforce it and to defend them.”³⁰

Palestine’s fourth High Commissioner, Sir Arthur Wauchope was less stridently pro-Arab in his sympathies than was his predecessor. Yet during his 1931-1938 tenure, he reached out to the Arab elite in a sincere and serious fashion to seek their participation in governmental operations. Wauchope wanted to establish a Legislative Council. In 1934-1935, he had a series of meetings with members of various Palestinian Arab political parties and with Jewish leaders. There were to be 28 members, five British officials, eleven Muslims, seven Jews, three Christians and two defined as “commercial.” Knowing that any community might reject participation in the Council’s formation, the High Commissioner kept to himself the prerogative to fill seats on the Council as he saw fit. Selection to the Council was to be by direct election with other requirements. In Lucerne in August 1935, the Zionist Congress rejected the idea of a Legislative Council uncompromisingly and refrained from any participation where the Arabs along with the British High Commissioner would dominate decision-making. Why? A Legislative Council could have voted to stop Jewish immigration and Jewish development in general. In January 1936, the Arab parties, among other reasons, did not accept the Council idea because it did not provide for the establishment of a National Government bound to Great Britain by treaty. It was evident that any direct election might remove from office the self-appointed members of the elite, so they criticized the idea for not giving them enough power. In April 1936, the British Colonial Office invited the Palestinian Arabs to send a delegation to London to discuss a Legislative Council again. During this time, Palestine was a hotbed of propaganda and political agitation. On April 25, the six main Arab political parties joined together to form the ten-man Arab Higher Committee, presided over by the Jerusalem Mufti, Hajj Amin al-Husyani.

Although the Arab spokesman accepted the Colonial Office's invitation to London, soon after the new Arab Higher Committee instituted a general Arab strike. The purpose of the strike was to end Jewish immigration to Palestine, to forbid the transfer of Arab land to Jews, and to end the British Mandate, instituting in its place a national representative government. Rather than go the route of a Legislative Council to obtain their objectives, even in a Council that did not have full powers, the Mufti and others in the Arab elite organized the general strike. Then on May 5, 1936, the Arab Higher Committee refused to attend the London conference. According to British sources, though Arab public opinion in Palestine had some strong reservations against the Council proposal, "a strong section of the population" were inclined to accept the British offer of moving toward self-government, and "only a small minority of Arabs rejected the offer unreservedly."³¹ What if the Arab leadership had not called for the general strike and had joined helping to form the Legislative Council? Arabs (Christians and Muslims) would have controlled immigration to Palestine, particularly if the Zionists did not participate in the Council. There is reason to believe that the leaders of the Arab parties and the Arab Executive, while wanting a national government, were absolutely not interested in having elections where the elite might not have been voted to the Council, and others who would vie for leadership status in the Arab community.

In the three years before the Mufti and his colleagues met in Jouneh, Lebanon and rejected the idea of an independent state in ten years, the Arab Higher Committee and the Arab political parties had rejected giving testimony before the Peel Commissioners, until the last moment when they were urged to do so by the Kings of Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Consistent, the Arab elite would have nothing to do with the prospect of the British once again making a decision about Palestine's future; this time [in 1937] the British suggested the partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states. By the assessment of Glubb Pasha, the British advisor to Emir Abdullah of Jordan, "...the boycott of the Royal Commission...the Arab struggle in Palestine was haunted by this passion for boycott, which was ultimately to bring them utter ruin."³²

1940s and Beyond

Palestinian Arab boycott and non-participation in critical decision-making about Palestine's future continued unabated into the 1940s. There were at least seven additional occasions when the Palestinian Arab elite chose boycott; they all occurred at the conclusion of World War II when the British and the UN made key decisions about Palestine's future. Several main ideas about Palestine's political future evolved at the end of the War:

- 1) Should the British admit to Palestine 100,000 Jewish immigrants from Europe?
- 2) Should Palestine remain a British Mandate or trusteeship?
- 3) Should the future of Palestine be determined by the newly formed United Nations?
- 4) Should a federal state or two states be established in Palestine as a political solution, to answer the political claims of Palestinian Arabs and Zionists?

In April 1946, the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, assigned to examine whether conditions in Palestine should permit the immediate admission of 100,000

Jews, decided in the affirmative, with Arabs and Zionists providing evidence before the Commissioners. After the findings were published, the Arabs rejected the idea and stuck to their demand for an immediate halt of all Jewish immigration to Palestine.³³ In August 1946, the British invited Zionist and Arab delegates to London. Palestinian Arabs boycotted the conference because the British intention was to strengthen British presence in Palestine with the High Commissioner retaining control over the entire Mandate in fields of defense, foreign affairs, immigration and customs.³⁴ In December 1946, the newly formed Arab League urged Palestinian Arabs to participate in another London meeting. The Arab Higher Committee put forth its own plan for Palestine's future which included abrogation of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate, ending Jewish immigration, and establishment of a Palestinian state on the same footing as other Arab states. Meeting in Basle, the Zionist Congress rejected the notion of provincial autonomy. The Zionists wanted an independent state, free immigration and land settlement. In February 1947, the British presented the notion that a five-year British trusteeship be declared for the purpose of preparing the country for independence.³⁵ British advocacy of delay "kicked the can down the road." London could avoid support for a Jewish state, curry favor with Arab leaders, and obtain a renewed commitment from the international community to remain in Palestine at least for a while. British Foreign Secretary Bevin made the case privately and then months later in public that the British Government needed to maintain its economic, financial, and strategic interests in the Middle East. Arabs and Zionists rejected the February 1947 British proposal. With the London Conference unable to reach an equitable solution for Palestine, the British turned Palestine's future over to the newly formed United Nations. When the UN Special Committee on Palestine reviewed Palestine's political future, the Arab Higher Committee boycotted the inquiry, refusing to abide by the notion that Palestine's future could be determined by the UN or any other organization or country. On November 29, 1947, the UN accepted the Committee's finding that the Mandate should be terminated in favor of independence immediately, voting to partition Palestine into Arab and Jewish states, with an economic union between them, and a special political status established for Jerusalem. The Zionists rejoiced, while Arab states and the Arab Higher Committee told the UN they would refuse to consider any plan that entailed the loss of Arab sovereignty over any part of Palestine.³⁶ The next day, civil war unfolded in Palestine; the first large wave of Palestinian Arabs refugees left the unfolding war zone. Quite expectedly, the Arab Higher Committee refused to participate in the UN's Palestinian Conciliation Commission that was charged with implementing partition, the solution that they deeply despised. Israel declared its independence on May 14, 1948, and after three truce periods with Arab states and Palestinians, the final armistice agreements halted the fighting in 1949. No peace treaties were signed between Israel and its neighbors.

The rejection of the UN partition plan by Arab states and the Palestinian Arab Higher Committee was consistent with a thirty year policy of not compromising with Zionism. Vigorously refusing to adjust or suspend their ideology for the pragmatic needs of the moment, particularly in 1947 and 1948, had disastrous consequences for the Palestinian people for the remainder of the century. Not only did the Palestinian Arabs and Arab states lose the 1947- 1949 War with Israel, a war that could have been

avoided if partition into two states was accepted, the War created an Arab refugee problem of vast dimensions and unfolded a second unexpected consequence - massive numbers of Jews fleeing from Arab states to Israel over the following five years. What if partition had been accepted? Perhaps the Zionists would have gone to war anyway to establish an independent Jewish state. By rejecting the 1947 partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states, then going to war and losing, Arab states and the Palestinians lost land to the Zionists that would otherwise have been allocated to the Arab state. By the partition plan, 14,700 sq km were to be allotted to the proposed Jewish state, a bit more than half of all of Palestine. By the end of the 1947-1949 War, Israel controlled 20,500 sq km.³⁷ (permission to use these maps granted by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Comparison of the 1947 Palestine Partition Plan and Israel's 1949 armistice lines

According to the UN's November 1947 partition plan to create Arab and Jewish states in Palestine, 14,700 sq km were allotted to the proposed Jewish state, about half of all of Palestine. Arab states and the Palestinians rejected any partition of Palestine. However, by the end of the 1948-1949 war, Israel, the Jewish state controlled 20,500 sq km, an increase of 37%. The rest, 5600 sq km was controlled by Jordan (the West Bank, and 160 sq km controlled by Egypt (the Gaza Strip).

1947 UN Partition Plan

1949 Armistice lines

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Conclusion: What Ifs?

Let's return to the World War I period and the Mandate years. Two events, more than any others, seem locked in the historical memory and the historiography of the conflict: issuance of the Balfour Declaration and the Holocaust. What if neither happened? What if a declaration for Palestine's future had not been written to Lord Rothschild but instead was penned to Sharif Husayn of Mecca on November 2, 1917,

the same Arab leader who was squired by the British during the War. Supposing that declaration hypothetically said,

“My Dear Sharif Husayn. I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with the aspiration of the Arab people which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet. His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Arab people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Arab communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Arabs in any other country that might be established.”

How would the Saudis and Rashidis (the two powerful tribal families in the Arabian Peninsula) have replied to a declaration, while they themselves were struggling with the Hashemites for control over Mecca and portions of the peninsula? By issuing a declaration to one Arab family, the British would have inevitably played favorites, something they had reasoned was not politically sound. Had they done so, it would have created mild havoc in the Arabian peninsula, up the Palestine coast, into Syria and Iraq. It would have been contrary to British strategic objectives of ruling through elites, rather than trying to change an existing, reasonably tranquil status quo. Gertrud Bell in Iraq certainly advocated maintaining the status quo as she counselled Sir Percy Cox in ruling Iraq in the early 1920s. Such a declaration to one family would have caused unwanted political ripples in British controlled Egypt. Moreover, such a declaration would not have been enthusiastically embraced if at all by the French, who had their own imperial designs over Greater Syria at the time. In 1918, the French-British Declaration was announced and promised Arab independence. Would that declaration of its own force have kept the Zionists from continuing to immigrate and buy land in Palestine, something they had done since the 1880s? I suspect not.

Would a promise to an Arab leader for the French-British Declaration for Arab Independence stimulated or snuffed out the early emergence of Palestinian national feeling, negated the local growth of Muslim-Christian Associations, the Arab Executive in Palestine, and maybe the appointment of Hajj Amin al-Husyani as Mufti of Jerusalem? Without the Balfour Declaration and the promise to establish a national home there, would Palestinian Arab nationalism gotten off the ground in 1918-1919? There is little question that Hajj Amin al-Husyani's appointment as Mufti would not have occurred if Sharif Husayn had gladly received the British appointment and passed it on to one of his sons, Abdullah, Ali, Feisal or Zeid, to head the newly established Arab province or state in Jerusalem. Would any of the Hashemites have been even more antagonistic toward Zionism than the Mufti's progressively radical and uncompromising policies?

An explicit British promise to Sharif Husayn to include Palestine as part of an Arab kingdom, province or state would not have erased Zionist intentions to reestablish an historic Jewish presence in an ancient homeland. It would not have made the Palestinian economy any stronger than the depressed state it was during and after World War I. Crystallization of Jewish focus toward Eretz Yisrael, the Holy Land or Palestine was centuries old. Modern Zionism as a national movement for the

restoration of a Jewish homeland, a term which Herzl used, was more than half-a-century old before World War I. No promise to Sharif Husayn or another Arab notable would have erased concepts, notions and plans that emerged from the eastern and western European writings of Herzl's precursors, such as Alkalai, Pinsker, Hess, Ahad Ha'am, Syrkin, Gordon, and others. The first Zionist Congress in 1897 took place two decades before the actual Balfour Declaration was issued; Herzl, Ussischkin, Nordau, Weizmann and hundreds of others caught the Zionist bug before World War I. In 1882, there were 25,000 Jews in Palestine; by 1918, there were 60,000-plus Jews/ Zionists in Palestine. And critically, in the period before World War I, Zionist institutions for nation-building were already in their infancy, including the World Zionist Organization, Jewish National Fund, Palestine Office of the Zionist Organization, and settlement activities by significant private individuals. Mayir Verite argues cogently in a 1970 article that the Balfour Declaration was *not* the start of Zionism but a confirmation of what had transpired since immigrating European Jews trickled into Palestine from the 1880s forward.³⁸ Jewish nation-building certainly began half-a-century before Rothschild received the declaration from Balfour. Zionism was not going to be suppressed simply because a promise was made to establish an Arab state in Palestine. Would Zionists have not immigrated to Palestine in the 1920s anyway, even if illegally? Would they not have brought their personal capital to invest and those funds been as equally attractive to Arab sellers of land? We know from the 1940s that land transfer regulations against Jewish land purchase in Palestine did not stop, it only reduced the pace of Zionist land acquisition. British imposed laws did not deter Arabs from selling land to Jewish buyers, often with the eager help of Arab land brokers. And the claim that it was only or a majority of Arab landowners living in Beirut or Damascus, Cairo, absentee or outside of mandated Palestine sold land in Palestine to Jewish buyers was completely refuted by the overwhelming documentary evidence I provided in my *Land Question in Palestine, 1917-1939* (1984).

And then, the Holocaust, one of the most tragic periods in all of Jewish history. But assume the hypothetical again. What if Hitler had never been elected in 1933, but even if that were a reality, his election would not have removed the bristling racial anti-Semitism that was favored and growing by a majority of Germans after World War I. Scalding anti-Jewish attitudes were present in Germany well before the rise of the National Socialist Party. By 1933, when Hitler was elected, Arabs in Palestine had already chosen boycott; they had chosen to refuse any compromise with the Zionists, except in selling their patrimony and in collaborating with Zionists in other ways. The Arab elite refused to take Chancellor's friendly outstretched hand in the 1930s; the Mufti rejected Prime Minister Chamberlain's offer made through the 1939 White Paper. The Zionists did not need the results of the Holocaust to seek and build a state.

Crystallization of Jewish peoplehood and anti-Semitism drove their identity. What the 18th and 19th centuries taught European Jews was not going to be erased by a British promise to an Arab leader. What the Holocaust once again confirmed for Jews was that virulent anti-Semitism demanded more than negotiating their a short term civil status agreement or living as a minority by the whim of a czar, duke, king, caliph, sultan, Christian religious leader, and others: merely obtaining one more temporary agreement to secure Jewish life and property was wholly inadequate in assuring secure control over their own destiny. Admittedly Zionism was only one

solution to an uncertain and precarious existence. Another was immigration to far off lands that provided a measure of freedom, liberty, and protected rights.

If Zionism was growing by World War I, even in a tiny fashion, could the idea of creating a territory of their own have been suppressed? Or perhaps only temporarily delayed? This begs the original question posed for this essay, if the Palestinian Arab political elite had not collaborated in land sales to Jews, had not boycotted the British and the UN, and had they not been selfish and fragmented, would those different realities have been sufficient to curb or stop the development of a Jewish state?

The repeated refusal by the Palestinian Arab elites to engage officially in shaping the Mandate provided Zionists with opportunities to continue to build a skeleton infrastructure for a state, to buy land, to immigrate people, to engage in writing laws, and to galvanize Jewish and non-Jewish opinion throughout the world. Zionists fiercely lobbied for their cause of statehood often to world leaders, who were staunchly anti-Zionist or significantly predisposed to give the Arab population an opportunity to run their own affairs, even if not all at once grant them complete independence.³⁹ Decidedly, the choice of the Palestinian Arab political leadership to boycott British overtures in running the Mandate, allowed leaders in surrounding Arab states, and then the Arab League to speak for the Palestinian Arab cause. Removing any possibility of Palestinian Arab bilateral negotiations with the Zionists in sharing Palestine in a two-state solution as suggested in the 1947 UN partition plan, reinforced a total Arab League opposition to Zionism.

Azzam Pasha, the head of the Arab League told Zionist emissaries in September 1947, “The Arab world is not in a compromising mood. It’s likely, Mr. Horowitz, that your plan is rational and logical, but the fate of nations is not decided by rational logic. Nations never concede; they fight. You won’t get anything by peaceful means or compromise. You can, perhaps, get something, but only by the force of arms. We shall try to defeat you. I’m not sure we’ll succeed, but we’ll try. We were able to drive out the Crusaders, but on the other hand we lost Spain and Persia. It may be that we shall lose Palestine. But it’s too late to talk of peaceful solutions.”⁴⁰

In 1988, when Yasir Arafat’s PLO first recognized Israel, Palestinian Arab refusal to accept a Zionist/Israeli state in part of Palestine ended. The previous seventy years of staying unyieldingly steadfast had dire if not calamitous consequences for the Palestinian people. Since then, the Palestinian Arab elite’s continued refusal to end their conflict with Zionism and Israel once and for all, has enabled consecutive Israeli governments to have their way in the territories gained in the 1967 war. For the last hundred years, Palestinian Arab leaders have shown that boycott as a political option has consequences.

¹ Taysir Nashif, “Palestinian Arab and Jewish Leadership in the Mandate Period,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Summer 1977), pp. 113-121.

² See Kenneth W. Stein, "Palestine's Rural Economy, 1917-1939," *Journal of Israeli History*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1987), pp. 25-49, and Kenneth W. Stein, "Rural Change and Peasant Destitution: Contributing Causes to the Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936-1939," in John Waterbury and Farhad Kazemi (eds.) *Peasants and Politics in the Modern Middle East*, Florida International University Press, 1989, pp. 143-170.

³ *Sepher Toldot HaHaganah (History of the Haganah)*, Israel Ministry of Defense, Tel Aviv, 1971, Vol, Part I, pp. 446-447.

⁴ For more information, see Malcolm MacDonald's "Discussion on Palestine," (August 21, 1938), which details Tannous's meetings with MacDonald in August 1938. Great Britain, Public Record Office London, British Cabinet Papers 190 (1938) and Foreign Office Record Group 371/file 21863.

⁵ Chaim Arlosoroff, *Yoman Yerushalaim (Jerusalem Diary)* entry for January 27, 1932, Jerusalem, 1933, pp. 192-195.

⁶ See Uri Kupferschmidt, *The Supreme Muslim Council: Islam Under the British Mandate*, Leiden, 1987.

⁷ See Issa Khalaf, *Arab Factionalism and Social Disintegration, 1939-1948*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991.

⁸ See Hillel Cohen, *Army of Shadows: Palestinian Collaboration with Zionism, 1917-1948*, University of California, 2008.

⁹ Izzat Tannous, *The Palestinians Eyewitness History of Palestine*, NY: Igt Co, 1988, pp. 309-310.

¹⁰ See Ghassan Kanafani, *The 1936-39 Revolt in Palestine*, NY: Committee for Democratic Palestine, 1972.

¹¹ Christopher Sykes, *Crossroads to Israel, 1917-1948*, Indiana University Press, 1973, p. 73.

¹² *A Survey of Palestine Prepared in December 1945 and January 1946 for the information of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry*, Palestine, Government Printer, Vol. 1, p. 22.

¹³ Bernard Wasserstein, *The British in Palestine*, London: Royal Historical Society, 1978, pp. 113-115.

¹⁴ Moshe Mossek, *Palestine Immigration Policy Under Sir Herbert Samuel British Zionist and Arab Attitudes*, Cass, 1978, p. 155.

¹⁵ Minute by Sir John Shuckburgh, October 15, 1923, Public Record Office London, CO 733/50/92.

¹⁶ Sir John Chancellor to Secretary of State for the Colonies, January 17, 1930, Cabinet Papers 108 (1930)/file 20835; also found in Great Britain, Colonial Office files, CO 733/183/77050, Part 1.

¹⁷ Sir John Chancellor to his son, Christopher, January 15, 1930, The Chancellor Papers, CP Box 16/3, Rhodes House, Oxford, England.

¹⁸ Esco Foundation for Palestine, *Palestine A Study of Jewish, Arab, and British Policies*, Vol. 2, New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 660.

¹⁹ Remarks by Sir John Hope Simpson to Lord Passfield, August 18, 1930, London. Public Record Office, Cabinet Papers 24/215.

²⁰ See Jewish Agency Memorandum, "Definition of Arab Landlessness," November /December 1930, Central Zionist Archives, Record Group S25/File 7587.

²¹ Jacob Metzger and Oded Kaplan, "Jointly but Severally: Arab/Jewish Dualism and Economic Growth in Mandatory Palestine," *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (January 1985), p. 11.

²² It is a total misrepresentation that the remaining area of Palestine under the Mandate was owned by Arabs; more than half of Palestine reflected no ownership by anyone (the Negev and Dead Sea area wilderness and large portions of the Galilee). Key for the Zionists was their ability to acquire land for strategic needs to create demographic contiguity; Arab sellers repeatedly gave the Zionists options which were chosen to purchase because they suited strategic requirements, like the Upper Galilee to be adjacent to the Jordan River's sources, around Acre and Haifa because of their importance to the Haifa port and the outlet of the pipeline from Mosul on the Jaffa-Jerusalem road, so that there would be a Jewish land connection between Jerusalem and the bulk of Jewish purchased land along the coastal plain. In their willingness to sell lands to Jews, the Arabs did not boycott the Zionists; rather in this realm, they engaged Jews willingly, and not merely large landowners, but peasant owners with smaller parcels to sell, particularly in the early 1930s. See Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine*, pp. 173-192.

²³ See Kenneth W. Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine, 1917-1939*, University of North Carolina Press, 1982 and 2003; Yossi Katz, *The Battle for the Land: the History of the Jewish National Fund (KKL) before the establishment of the State of Israel*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2005; Hillel Cohen, *Army of Shadows, Palestinian Collaboration with Zionism, 1917-1948*, University of California Press, 2008; and Kenneth W. Stein, "The Jewish National Fund: Land Purchase Methods and Priorities, 1924-1939," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (April 1984), pp. 190-205.

²⁴ See Jacob Metzger, *The Divided Economy of Palestine*, Cambridge, 1988.

²⁵ *AlJami'ah al-Islamiyyah*, August 21, 1932.

²⁶ *Filastin*, June 3, 1932.

²⁷ *AlDifa'*, November 5, 1934.

²⁸ "*Al-Jam'iah al-Islammiyah*, January 22, 1936.

²⁹ Remarks by Sir John Shuckburgh, June 14, 1940, CO 733/425/75872, Part 2.

³⁰ The Palestine Administration, *Land Transfer Inquiry Committee*, November 1945. The original draft reports are housed at the Israeli State Archives in files SF/215/1/40 and LS 249/file 4.

³¹ Palestine Royal Commission, *Memoranda Prepared by the Government of Palestine*,” Memorandum No. 23, “Brief Account of Recent Legislative Council Proposals and of the Reception, including reference to the Various ‘Pledges’ and Statements,” London, 1936, pp. 84-93. See also, J.C. Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine*, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1950, pp. 67-68.

³² Glubb Pasha, *Britain and the Arabs: a Study of Fifty Years, 1808-1958*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1959, p. 151.

³³ Christopher Sykes, *Crossroads to Israel 1917-1948*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1973, pp. 283, 288-294, and J.C. Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine*, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1950, pp. 236-245.

³⁴ J.C. Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine*, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1950, pp. 262-263.

³⁵ Haim Levenberg, *The Military Preparations of the Arab Community in Palestine 1945-1948*, London, Cass, 1993, pp. 76-81.

³⁶ Christopher Sykes, *Crossroads to Israel 1917-1948*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1973, pp. 318, 323-325; JC Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1950, pp. 285-290.

³⁷ Shalom Reichman, “Partition and Transfer: Crystallization of the Settlement Map of Israel Following the War of Independence,” in Ruth Kark (ed.) *The Land That Became Israel, Studies in Historical Geography*, Magness Press, 1990, p. 320.

³⁸ Mayir Verete, “The Balfour Declaration and Its Makers,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 4, 1970, pp. 48-76.

³⁹ The list of pro-Arab and anti-Zionist British officials in London, Palestine, or elsewhere in the Middle East, is long starting with the British officials who were not enamored with political Zionism starting with Lord Curzon and Edwin Montagu in the World War I period and the generals who ran the British military administration from 1918 to 1920, such as General Arthur Money. A brief list of the more notable personalities who opposed Zionism includes Gertrude Bell, Ernest Richmond, Sydney Moody, Walter Shaw, John Hope Simpson, John Chancellor, Sidney Webb (Lord Passfield), Lewis French, George Rendel, Sir Miles Lampson, Howard Beeley, and Ernest Bevin. Then there were the overwhelming number of British officials who were not rabid in their antagonism toward Zionism but certainly held either pro-Arab viewpoints or middle ground positions about the legitimacy of both nationalisms, including John Shuckburgh, Ormsby-Gore and all of Palestine's High Commissioners: Herbert Samuel, Herbert Plumer, Arthur Wauchope, Harold MacMichael, John Vereker and Alan Cunningham. The list of anti-Zionist officials in the US State Department in the 1930s forward was equally large and vociferous and included Dean Acheson, Loy Henderson, Cordell Hull, George Kennan, George Marshall, Sumner Welles and others.

⁴⁰Conversation with Azzam Pasha as quoted in David Horowitz, *State in the Making*, New York: Alfred Knopf, 1953, pp. 233-235, <https://israeled.org/abdulrahman-azzam-pasha-rejects-compromise-zionists/>