SERENDIPITOUS ADVENTURES WITH

*B*RITANNIA

Personalities, Politics and Culture in Britain

Edited by Wm. Roger Louis

The destruction of the King David Hotel, Jerusalem, by Irgun terrorists, 22 July 1946. The attack on the hotel, which housed offices of the British civil and military authorities, helped confirm the British view of Palestine as a "troublesome, expensive, and useless burden."

How the British Left Palestine

BERNARD WASSERSTEIN

Nothing in his life became him like the leaving it. The death of the Thane of Cawdor is thus reported by Malcolm to Duncan in act one, scene four of *Macbeth*. The poor thane, who never even gets to appear in person in the play, enters literary memory solely via this brief posthumous encomium.

The British Empire is sometimes eulogized in like manner. No doubt, empires after 1945 were pernicious and doomed; nevertheless, we are told, nothing became the British like the way they left theirs. The relatively nonviolent British end of empire (so this line of thinking goes) was a model of imperial abnegation almost without parallel, contrasting with other imperial endings, such as those of the Dutch in the East Indies, the French in Algeria, or the Portuguese in Angola and Mozambique. Of course, the reality was different—as the cases of Kenya, Cyprus, and Aden, among many others, testify. Nevertheless, those of us who grew up in Britain in the post-war decades recall the newsreel footage of the British flag being lowered and a new one raised in peaceful transfers of sovereignty in one after another colony, from the Gold Coast in 1957 right through to those epic scenes in Hong Kong in 1997.

The British mandate in Palestine was unique in many ways, in particular in the manner of its ending on 15 May 1948. As has often been noted, this was the only dependent territory from which Britain ever withdrew without handing over authority to any successor government. Refusing to commit to implement the United Nations

partition resolution of 29 November 1947, the British government embraced an apparent policy toward Palestine of *après nous le déluge*. This accusation is voiced in several accounts of the end of the mandate. Arthur Koestler dubbed the British withdrawal "Operation Deluge."[1] Zeev Sharef, secretary of the Provisional Government of Israel at its inception and the official chiefly responsible for construction of the state's administrative machine in 1947–48, wrote: "Chaos was implicit in the British Government's decision . . . The British departure plan ruled out any transfer of government institutions and public services to the trustworthy charge of the successor authority and this inimical official attitude could not but have a provocative effect on the individuals carrying out the plan."[2] The Palestinian historian Issa Khalaf agrees, complaining that the withdrawal was "confused and disorderly, having taken place under conditions of almost complete anarchy."[3]

I recall an interview in 1970 with one of the mandatory governmental officials involved, John Sheringham. Even twenty-two years after the event, he felt the shame of this policy of scuttle. So far as he was concerned, nothing *less* became the mandate than Britain's manner of leaving it. Was he right?

There can be little argument that at the level of high policy making in London, the end of the mandate was marked by a despairing anxiety on the part of the British government to be rid of Palestine, seen as a troublesome, expensive, and useless burden. Britain was unwilling to be seen by the Arab states, on which its strategic and economic dominance in the Middle East depended, as aiding and abetting the establishment of a Jewish state. It therefore abstained in the UN vote on partition and forbade the UN Palestine Commission even to set foot in the country until 1 May 1948. In fact, apart from a small advance party in March, the commission never arrived in Palestine and on 14 May was formally disbanded.

If we turn our attention from London to Jerusalem, does a different picture emerge? In an article published in 1988, Wm. Roger Louis analyzed the role of the head of the government of Palestine, the High Commissioner, Sir Alan Cunningham. On the basis of a scrutiny of his papers, Louis to some extent salvaged Cunningham's reputation, concluding that, whatever his other failings, he "presided over a well-organized and carefully planned withdrawal that took place entirely according to plan." [4]

Cunningham, Louis concluded, was primarily concerned with trying to preserve some semblance of peace and to minimize bloodshed. "He saw his job," Louis noted, "principally as holding the ring while the civil administration closed down and British troops evacu-

ated." From the Olympian heights of Government House, he largely delegated handling of the withdrawal to his officials.

Let us descend to those lower levels and survey what happened in the government offices and in the towns and villages of Palestine between November 1947 and May 1948 as the struggle for the succession to the mandate intensified. Three contextual points should be borne in mind. First, in spite of its long experience of imperial acquisition, Britain in the spring of 1948 had relatively little of imperial de-accession. Among the few notable instances were Iraq in 1932 and the more recent end of the Raj in India. Both were followed by terrible bloodshed. Neither offered a promising model for emulation. Secondly, the withdrawal was a colossal logistic exercise. It involved the transshipment of 55,000 military personnel (as of 1 December 1947), 6,000 British policemen and officials, the disposal of huge quantities of governmental assets of all kinds, and the removal or destruction of 250,000 tons of military stores. Thirdly, the withdrawal took place against the background of civil war between the Arabs and Jews, and of Jewish attacks against British military targets. The carnage was horrific, and the British were powerless to contain it. By early 1948, the government of Palestine was clearly, as the American consul in Jerusalem reported on 9 February, "in a state of disintegration."[5]

The managing director of the mandatory administration's withdrawal was Eric Mills, an official who had served continuously in Palestine since the start of British rule in December 1917. As "Commissioner on Special Duty," Mills was charged with advising on and, in effect, overseeing the liquidation of the mandatory government. Isaiah Berlin, who had met him in 1934 on his first visit to Palestine, called him "a clever, disillusioned, cynical person"—but like some of Berlin's snap judgments, this was perhaps unfair.[6] Mills, who had been controller of the 1931 census of Palestine and director of manpower during the Second World War, was an able and conscientious administrator. Whatever degree of success the operation enjoyed must be attributed in large measure to him.

Immediately upon the UN partition vote, Mills issued a draft "general scheme" for withdrawal. This provided for the transfer of governmental fixed assets such as post offices, schools, telephone exchanges, and hospitals, as well as vehicles, machinery, records, and stores, as far as possible to local authorities, pending the emergence of successor governments.[7]

Mills went into detail on every conceivable aspect of the withdrawal. For example, special care was to be taken in regard to the security of the "large quantities of dangerous cultures and vaccines

in the bacteriological laboratories." It would be "very serious," Mills pointed out, if looting took place" in those places.[8] In accordance with his guidance, the Public Works Department prepared voluminous "handing over notes" on public utilities and infrastructure such as water and sewage works, roads and bridges, machinery, and surveying instruments.

A crucial aspect of the scheme was the future of governmental records. In early 1948, instructions were issued for the selective destruction of records. The guiding principle was "to destroy as much as possible that does not involve frustration of a successor administration."[9] Fortunately for historians, there was a raft of exceptions. Among records designated to be spared were those concerning births, marriages, and deaths, nationality and citizenship. Although most "Secret Registry" files were to be destroyed, a critical exception was made for papers "whose destruction would frustrate a successor government, provided that their publication would not embarrass HMG [His Majesty's Government] or injure an individual." And the instruction to officials added: "In doubtful cases the degrees of frustration or embarrassment must be weighed against each other." All files in the "top secret" registry were to be destroyed or downgraded before "Z-Day" (the last day of British rule). Others were to be stored and then handed over to the UN Commission. Mills suggested that "plans and field records" of the Surveys Department, which alone weighed six tons, might be shipped to England.[10]

The process of destruction and preservation, however, turned out to be haphazard. Many papers scheduled for destruction were preserved. None appear to have been transferred to the UN. Some were shipped to Cyprus. Others were sent to England and opened to researchers at points after 1966, some as late as 2013. Those remaining in Palestine for the most part ended in archives in Israel (or under Israeli control after 1967), and much of what I report here is drawn from them. Many documents bearing on security that were supposed to be destroyed in fact survived. Bank vaults in Jerusalem with a capacity of 135 cubic meters were set aside for the secure storage of governmental files. But the fighting in Jerusalem was particularly severe around Barclay's Bank (the government of Palestine's banker), which ended up just on the Israeli side of the final demarcation line in the city. Any files stored there were probably among those captured by a "SWAT" team of Israeli archivists specially commissioned to locate and scoop up such files while the war was still raging. Overall, a surprising amount of important documentation survived.

One British bureaucratic legacy that proved to be of critical importance to both Jews and Arabs was the accumulation of land rec-

ords, particularly thousands of maps, deeds, and registers of owner-
ship, which British officials made considerable efforts to preserve.
Some had been destroyed in a Jewish bombing of the Land Registry
office in Jerusalem in 1944. The incident heightened British con-
cern about the security of the rest. Mills emphasized that the land
registers were "of vital importance to the whole country."[11] He or-
dered microfilm copies to be made, and records were assembled for
photography.

What was to be done with prisoners? In the absence of assured
continuity of service by prison guards, they could hardly be left be-
hind under lock and key. Serious British offenders could be moved
to England. But what of Palestinians? A partial amnesty was granted
in less serious cases, reducing the prison population. This had al-
ready been substantially diminished by the escape of 251 prisoners
from the Acre jail in May 1947 and of a further 18 in December. As
of 17 March 1948, 2,177 prisoners remained in custody, including
407 political detainees and 110 criminal lunatics. It was decided to
release nearly all the detainees. Further releases of ordinary prison-
ers over the next few weeks reduced the total to 1,200. The remain-
ing Jewish and Arab convicts were redistributed to prisons within
the territory of their respective proposed states, and confidential
contacts were established with the Jewish Agency and the Arab
Higher Committee; each agreed to take responsibility for prisoners
of their nationality after 15 May.

Then there was the problem of the railways. Even had the British
been ready to hand them over to successor states, they could not
be partitioned, since there was a unified system for the country as
a whole. So what would be done with the buildings, rolling stock,
and personnel? In a memo dated 12 April 1948, the general man-
ager despaired of any easy solution. Noting that the system had al-
ready suffered severely from looting and destruction, he feared that
the entire organization would soon disintegrate. By the end of the
mandate, hardly any trains were running. Nevertheless, on 13 May
the last chief accountant of the Palestine Railways transferred to
his Jewish successor in Haifa the keys to the head office and safes
there, as well as "two spare motors for the accounting machines, sev-
eral sporting trophies . . . also an automatic pistol my own personal
property which please hand over to the proper authorities." He
concluded, almost as if he were speaking at a retirement party and
handing over a gold watch, "I take this opportunity of thanking you
most sincerely for your long and valuable service with the Palestine
railways and wishing you a happy and prosperous future."[12]

While men and goods could be withdrawn, the same did not apply
so easily to beasts. What about the 257 horses and 27 camels of the

Palestine Police? Mills noted that the animals represented an asset that should, strictly speaking, be transferred to the United Nations at the end of the mandate. But he expressed concern that "there is every reason for supposing that the animals cannot be tended and fed after the administration ends."[13] The inspector-general of police declared himself "most anxious that no horses should be left ownerless on the termination of the Mandate."[14] He proposed, "as a humane measure," that horses above the age of twelve years be destroyed.[15] Some were sent to the knacker's yard—though given food taboos, there was probably little market for horsemeat in Palestine. The remaining horses were offered for sale at £P30 each. It was a bargain price, but there were few takers. In the end, it was decided to reduce the price to P£15 per horse and to divide them, as it were, by nationality: those in Jewish areas might be sold to Jewish buyers, those in Arab areas to Arabs. As for the police camels, they were to be offered to Bedouin sheikhs in Beersheba.

IN MANY RESPECTS THE WITHDRAWAL did not proceed as smoothly in real life as in Mills's scheme. Not all local authorities were able or willing to take responsibility for institutions that were to be transferred to them. In Nablus, for example, the municipality declared itself unable to afford the expense of maintaining the governmental hospital after 15 May. The government rejected an appeal for transition funding, and the district commissioner advised the mayor to "take up the matter with whatever Arab authority or body he thinks fit in order to obtain assistance."[16]

Here we reach a critical point: the government's superficially nonpolitical policy of handing over to local authorities obscured an underlying reality of acquiescence in the partition of Palestine. That is because nearly all local authorities in Palestine were controlled either by Jews or by Arabs. In the later stages of the mandate, indeed, local authority boundaries had been deliberately delineated so as to be mainly Jewish or Arab—in effect, a form of proto-partition. Moreover, Arab and Jewish district officers were appointed largely in accordance with the ethnic composition of each district. In the case of the municipalities, most were wholly or largely mono-ethnic: Tel Aviv and Netanya, for example, were Jewish; Nablus and Hebron, Arab. The two most important exceptions were Jerusalem and Haifa.

In Jerusalem, owing to the inability of Arabs and Jews to agree on the choice of a mayor, the municipality had been controlled since 1945 by an unelected commission. Its head in the final months of the mandate was a retired Palestine government official, Richard

Figure 22.1. British soldiers enforcing a curfew in Tel Aviv, July 1946. Photograph by Haim Fain. National Library of Israel.

Graves (brother of the poet Robert Graves). A bomb attack in December 1947 led all Jewish officials to leave the municipality building and move to a separate office in a Jewish district. Graves tried unavailingly to persuade them to return. On 25 April, he recorded: "Government have instructed me to recognize—unofficially so to speak—the new Jewish municipal committee appointed to look after the Jewish area." In the very last days of the mandate, the remaining municipal funds were split: a check for £30,000 was issued to the head of the Jewish municipal committee, and one for £27,500 was handed to a representative of the Arab section.[17]

As for Haifa, uniquely in Palestine, it was designated a reserved enclave where the British military occupation would persist for several weeks after 15 May while the army completed its withdrawal through Palestine's most important port. But by 21 April, the Haganah (the Jewish underground army) had won control of the city except for the British-controlled harbor area, the main road, and the airport. Over the next few days, most of Haifa's Arab population fled in British army and navy convoys. Here the British not only acquiesced in

partition; they colluded in what we would now call ethnic cleansing. At any rate, that is one way of looking at their actions.

The government and the Haifa municipality agreed that as of 15 May, the municipality would take over "control and management" of the Port Authority, with the proviso that it would provide full facilities for completion of the withdrawal of British forces. At a meeting on 12 May, most of the authority's files and accounts were transferred to representatives of the municipality "in the capacity of a trustee pending the establishment of a settled form of government in Palestine."[18]

In some cases, the government machine was not so much bequeathed to successors as disemboweled from within. By the end of March, the thirty thousand Palestinian civil servants were being supervised by not more than two hundred remaining British officials. In these circumstances, Jewish and Arab officials of the mandatory government, who, of course, had little to look forward to from the British, scrambled to seize control of what remained of the administrative apparatus. The fate of the government-run Palestine Broadcasting Service illustrates this process.

The PBS, founded in 1936, broadcast in English, Arabic, and Hebrew from its transmitter in Ramallah, ten miles north of Jerusalem. Its director from 1945 to 1948 was Edwin Samuel, a British Jew and long-serving government official who was the eldest son of the first High Commissioner under the mandate, Sir Herbert Samuel. In his scheme for withdrawal, Mills proposed that the PBS should continue to transmit a news service "up to the last." He recommended that when that was no longer possible, consideration should be given to "removing vital parts to immobilize [the] transmitter to prevent mischief makers misusing it."[19] By late 1947, the broadcasting studios in Jerusalem had perforce been split: the Hebrew service employees, fearful of attacks, had moved with their files, records, and equipment to studios in Rehavia, a Jewish district, while the Arabic service remained in Broadcasting House in Musrara, an Arab district. In January 1948, PBS program planning was decentralized, so the Arabic and Hebrew services became completely separate, except that all broadcasts went out through the Ramallah transmitter. Each service operated with a separate bank account.

By the time Samuel was evacuated from the country on 20 April, Jerusalem was in a state of siege. The division of the service was almost complete, though broadcasting continued until the last day of the mandate. (The High Commissioner's farewell address was its swan song.) When the Ramallah transmitter was damaged in the fighting, transmissions were divided, too: Arabic ones went

out from reserve equipment in Ramallah, Hebrew ones on a low-powered emergency transmitter in the General Post Office in west Jerusalem.

The war left the Ramallah transmitter station in Jordanian hands and the Jerusalem headquarters building under Israeli control. But the broadcasting service had already been partitioned. As the assistant director, Rex Keating, later recalled: "The PBS example was quickly followed by other Departments, despite all the efforts of Government to stop them. The split became total. In effect, the incipient Israeli government was being realized."[20]

Much of the rest of the administration was bifurcated in like manner. But this worked overwhelmingly to the advantage of the Jews, even leaving aside their military victory. The Zionists, with their pre-existing institutional apparatus, a state in the making, succeeded in establishing a far-reaching organization in the last months of British rule with the objective of taking over as smoothly as possible key functions of government upon the conclusion of the mandate. They co-opted most of the Jewish mandatory officials as civil servants of the new state—though not Samuel, who, somewhat to his chagrin, was not offered a job by the Israeli government.

Meanwhile, the Arab Higher Committee, headed from exile by the former Mufti of Jerusalem, proved itself toothless and internally divided. It had no significant institutional foundations. Palestinian Arab society, unlike Jewish, depended heavily on governmental services in such matters as education, health, and social welfare. Unlike the Zionists, the Palestinian Arabs had no effective military organization, merely scattered bands of volunteers, barely trained and poorly armed. By early May, all but one of the members of the Arab Higher Committee had fled the country. The committee requested that Arab officials take charge of governmental departments. Where they could, they did so. But the irruption from across the Jordan of forces loyal to King Abdullah led them to see him and not the committee as their most likely future employer. Quite apart from his military power, which rested on the British-officered Arab Legion, Abdullah had other advantages: he ruled an existing state that had close links with sections of the Palestinian notable elite, and he enjoyed continuing British military, diplomatic, and economic support. An attempt by the Mufti, in September 1948, to set up an "All-Palestine Government" in Egyptian-occupied Gaza soon collapsed. Abdullah swept aside any ambitions of the Palestinian Arabs to a separatist nationalism and, with the private blessing of both the British and the Israelis, united the two banks of the Jordan under his autocratic rule.

Mills's scheme did not, of course, make provision for the armed forces, which operated under a separate withdrawal plan. Both Jews and Arabs protested bitterly that British military actions in Palestine in 1948 favored the other side. The military withdrawal plan required the army to abstain from involvement in fighting between Jews and Arabs. It was to concentrate on holding open the lines of communication for withdrawal. But as Benny Morris writes, "The guideline of impartiality . . . translated . . . into a policy of quietly assisting each side in the takeover of areas in which that side was dominant."[21] At the same time there was large-scale looting of arms and military stores and a flourishing black market in military equipment.

A FASCINATING PICTURE OF THE UNDERSIDE of the British withdrawal is provided in a source that has hardly been noticed by historians of Palestine: the memoir and diary of Ivor Wilks, who in 1948 was a twenty-year-old second lieutenant in the British Army in Palestine. As a satire of army life, Wilks's narrative bears comparison with Evelyn Waugh's *Sword of Honour* trilogy. Wilks was not only a gifted writer, but also a socialist and an intellectual who later became a professional historian, ending his career as a professor of African history at Northwestern University. His faux-naïf memoir is an extraordinary literary, historical, and human document.

From 23 December 1947, Wilks was stationed at an army base near Haifa where petroleum was stored for the army. The base was situated between two villages, Nesher (Jewish) and Balad al-Shaykh (Arab). One of Wilks's responsibilities was to measure each night the amount of petrol in storage tanks on the base. After a time, he noticed discrepancies in the reported and actual amounts of petrol. He discovered that a diversionary pipe had been opened and large amounts of fuel were being siphoned off for use by foreign Arab forces that had infiltrated Balad al-Shaykh. He also learned that his commanding officer, Captain Webster, was illicitly permitting a Haganah unit in Nesher to steal empty jerry cans.

Webster was a closet homosexual with a batman as flamboyant in his sexual orientation as his master was secretive in his. One day Wilks learned that Webster was supplying the Haganah not only with old cans from the camp but also with arms that were "surplus to requirements." Wilks protested:

> I decided to press him on the nature of his arrangement with Nesher's Haganah unit. His answer took me completely by surprise. "Praff [Webster's Haganah contact]," he said, "talked the

matter over and suggested that a handgun should be valued at £(Palestinian) 15 and ammunition at around P£1 for 10,000 rounds." I was taken aback. I had been brought up to think of arms trading as reprehensible. I said something to that effect to Webster. His reply took me by surprise and I can recollect only the gist of it. "I am," he said, or words to that effect, "a businessman by profession and I was doing business with Praff. I was giving him a good deal because they would rather get a bargain from a businessman than receive a free gift from a do-gooder." I was more than a little impressed by this gem of capitalistic wisdom.[22]

Webster was undoubtedly an outlier in his political outlook, as he was in his sexuality. There is ample evidence that some British troops, prompted by anti-Semitism that was stoked by Jewish terrorism and profiteering, transferred large quantities of military equipment to Arabs. But for the most part, the actions of British soldiers were dictated neither mainly by political partisanship nor by greed. Wilks makes clear that Webster had one passionate desire that he shared with nearly all his fellow soldiers in Palestine and that in large measure dictated his—and their—actions: to get home as soon as possible. These mixed motives sometimes led to apparently contradictory behavior. Wilks, although drawn to socialist Zionism, participated, almost without realizing what was going on, in a delivery of British arms from Haifa to the Egyptian army at the border south of Gaza.

Wilks was attracted to the Zionists by more than ideology. A sexual innocent, he was suborned by "Valentina," a young Jewish woman in Haifa who introduced him to "friends" who turned out to be Haganah agents. He relates how, at the request of one of Valentina's "friends," Dan Laner, later an Israeli major general, he helped spirit a consignment of Czechoslovak arms through Haifa's port for the Palmach (the Haganah's elite strike force).

In the last days of the mandate, Wilks was ordered by Webster to mediate between the *mukhtar* (village head) of Balad al-Shaykh and the Haganah unit in Nesher. The latter demanded the surrender of arms left behind by the infiltrators. Little was produced, and the Haganah announced that it would conduct a search of Balad al-Shaykh. The villagers could recall a massacre by the Haganah in the village and another one nearby on the previous New Year's Eve: seventy people, including women and children, had been killed. (That was the latest episode in a cycle of tit-for-tat violence by Jews and Arabs in the Haifa district over the previous few months.) The villagers were no doubt also mindful of the slaughter two weeks earlier of over a hundred Arab civilians by Jewish terrorists in the village

of Deir Yassin near Jerusalem. They did not wait to see how such a Haganah search would turn out. At midnight on 24 April, Wilks recorded in his diary:

> The Arabs have gone, carrying what they could with them. The rest has been looted, the few belongings they had to leave, and the horses, goats and fowl. I don't know what would have happened had the Arabs allowed an immediate search of the town. . . . I believe that even the Haganah commander would have left them in the town once sure that it was neutralized. But the Arabs, by and large, believed that their lives were in danger, and fled.[23]

Wilks was troubled about his role in this miserable affair. His mind was not eased when, at their last meeting, Laner gave him a Swiss watch as a gift for his help in "avoiding a heavy loss of life in Balad esh-Sheikh."[24]

In his tedious, lonely life on the army base, Wilks fantasized about taking Valentina back to England as his bride. Only at the end, in a bitter disclosure scene, did he find out that she was a Haganah agent who had bedded him, as she had other British soldiers, as a matter more of duty than love.

On 14 May the High Commissioner departed, the State of Israel was declared, and the Palestinian Arab *nakba* (catastrophe) took shape. Although the mandate terminated at midnight, some British forces remained in the Haifa enclave, which was gradually reduced in size until 30 June. Wilks was among those who left on the very last day.

WHAT EMERGES FROM ALL THIS? Recent historians have shattered the picture of the end of the British Empire as a process of peaceful and consensual retraction. Pankaj Mishra, for example, has written of "the British Empire's ruinous exit strategy." He denounces the "masters of disaster from Cyprus to Malaysia, Palestine to South Africa."[25] The end of the Raj, he reminds us, condemned up to a million people to death and created the world's largest refugee population. By including Palestine in his philippic, he insists that Britain could not shirk its share of responsibility for what occurred in the wake of the British departure.

At the time, most British commentators tended to adopt a view that mingled self-pity with self-congratulation. They complained bitterly that the rest of the world refused to offer anything other than advice in Palestine and had left Britain holding the baby. At the same time, Cunningham asserted that "we left with dignity, using all our efforts to the last for the good of Palestine."[26]

Neither post-imperial polemics nor self-interested apologetics provide a satisfactory framework for understanding what happened in Palestine in 1948. But one conclusion, at any rate, emerges clearly from the evidence: the proposition that the British simply washed their hands of Palestine can no longer be sustained, at any rate as regards the men on the spot. Jon and David Kimche (echoed by others cited earlier) were far from accurate in their claim of unadulterated scuttle: "There had been no attempt to transfer Government and administrative matters to the Jews and the Arabs. The British officials burnt their files, destroyed their records and departed."[27] Notwithstanding the British government's ostensible stance of noninvolvement, the mandatory administration did not pursue a scorched-earth policy. Nor did the British limit themselves to seeking an even balance between the warring parties. It would be more correct to conclude that in the final weeks of the mandate, the mandatory government participated directly in the implementation of partition—though not in the form envisaged by the UN. In doing so, the British helped pave the way for the establishment of Israel and for Abdullah's takeover of the West Bank.

The last word, fittingly, goes to Eric Mills, who, writing with some foresight as early as 1936, penned this "epitaph," which he appended to a letter to Edwin Samuel:

Epitaph

Here lies Palestine Aleph Yod!
Have mercy on her soul, Lord God!
Unwanted child of Arab and Jew
She needs no love
So let your tears be few.[28]

Spring Semester 2018

1. Arthur Koestler, *Promise and Fulfilment: Palestine, 1947–1949* (London, 1949), p. 162.

2. Zeev Sharef, *Three Days* (London, 1962), p. 22.

3. Issa Khalaf, *Politics in Palestine: Arab Factionalism and Social Disintegration, 1939–1948* (Albany, N.Y., 1991), p. 202.

4. Wm. Roger Louis, "Sir Alan Cunningham and the End of British Rule in Palestine," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 16, 3 (1988), pp. 128–47.

5. Robert B. Macatee (Jerusalem) to State Dept., 9 Feb. 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948,* vol. V, pt. 2 (Washington, 1976), p. 606.

6. Isaiah Berlin to Mendel and Marie Berlin, [24 Sept. 1934], in Isaiah Berlin, *Letters,* vol. 1, *1928–1946* (New York, 2004), p. 101.

7. Mills to all heads of departments and district commissioners, "Secret and Personal," 2 Dec. 1947, Israel State Archives (henceforth ISA) 401/34 - מ.

8. Ibid.

9. Office Order No. 1, Chief Secretary's Office, 23 Jan. 1948, ISA 401/34 - מ.

10. Mills to all heads of departments and district commissioners, "Secret and Personal," 2 Dec. 1947.

11. Ibid.

12. W. D. Charlton to J. Beliavsky, 11 May 1948, quoted in A. J. Sherman, *Mandate Days: British Lives in Palestine, 1918–1948* (London, 1997), p. 240.

13. Mills to Financial Secretary, 2 Feb. 1948, ISA 401/35 - מ.

14. H. R. F. Butterfield for Inspector-General, Palestine Police, to Chief Secretary, 16 Mar. 1948, ibid.

15. Butterfield for Inspector-General to Chief Secretary, 1 Jan. 1948, ibid.

16. Director of Medical Services to District Commissioner, Samaria District, 3 Apr. 1948, ISA 6616/20 - מ.

17. For more details, see my *Divided Jerusalem: The Struggle for the Holy City* (3rd ed., New Haven, 2008), pp. 143–44.

18. General Manager, Palestine Railways & Ports Authority, to Mayor of Haifa, 6 May 1948, ISA 929/12 - פ, and related documents in this file.

19. Mills to all heads of departments and district commissioners, "Secret and Personal," 2 Dec. 1947.

20. R. Keating, quoted in Andrea L. Stanton, *This Is Jerusalem Calling: State Radio in Mandate Palestine* (Austin, Tex., 2013), pp. 193–94.

21. Benny Morris, *1948: A History of the First Arab-Israeli War* (New Haven, 2008), p. 80.

22. Ivor Wilks, *A Once and Past Love: Palestine 1947, Israel 1948: A Memoir,* Program of African Studies, Special Papers Series, ISSN 1949-0283 (Evanston, Ill., 2011), p. 73.

23. Ibid., p. 99.

24. Ibid., p. 101.

25. Pankaj Mishra, "The Malign Incompetence of the British Ruling Class," *New York Times* (intl. ed.), 19–20 Jan. 2019.

26. Address by Cunningham at Chatham House, 22 July 1948, *International Affairs,* 24, 4 (1948), pp. 481–90.

27. Jon and David Kimche, *Both Sides of the Hill: Britain and the Palestine War* (London, 1960), p. 145.

28. Mills to Samuel, 17 Aug. 1936, ISA 655/63 - פ.