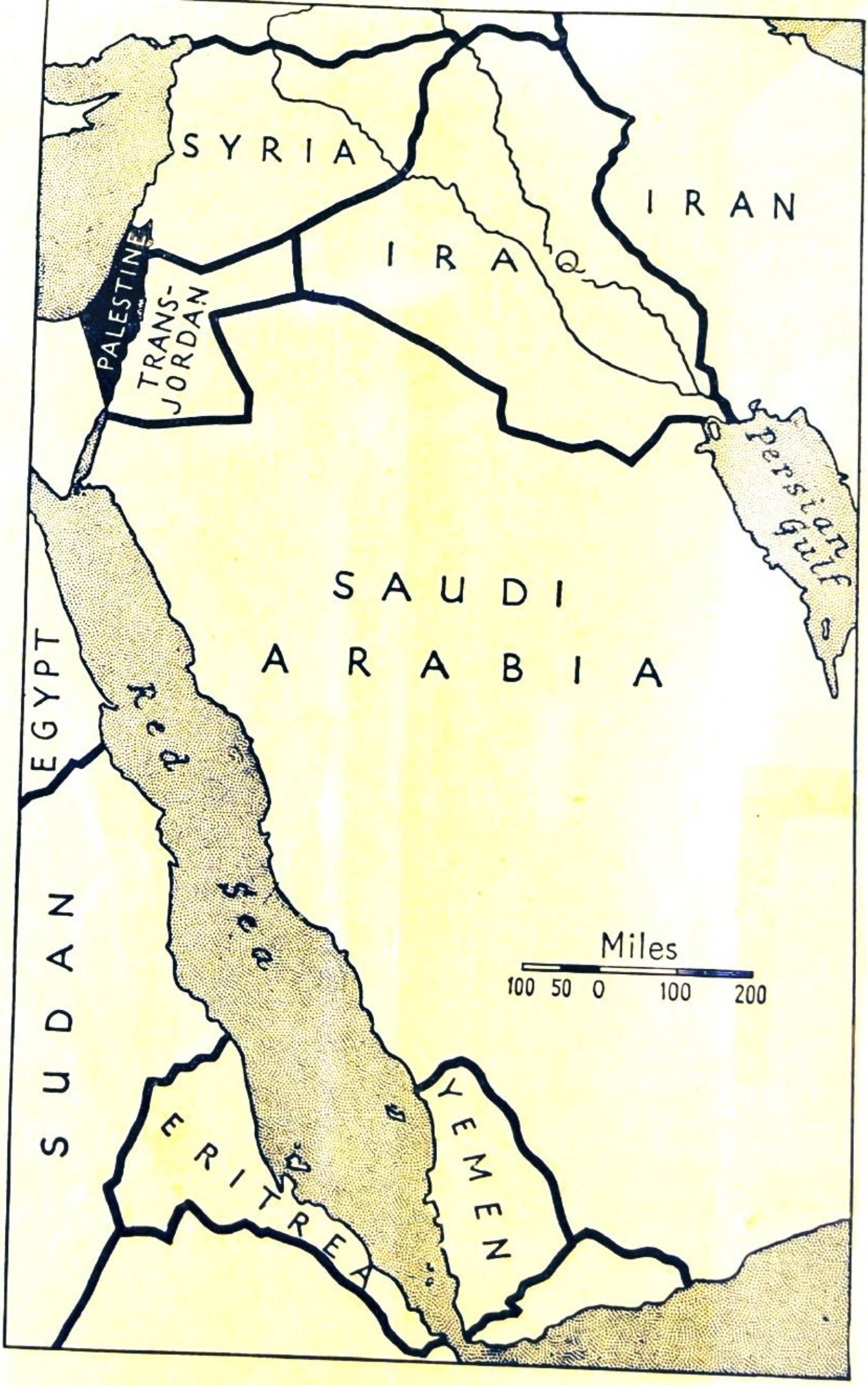
No. 31 Price 4d. net

PALESTINE

By JAMES PARKES

OXFORD PAMPHLETS
ON WORLD AFFAIRS



PALESTINE IN THE NEAR EAST

OXFORD PAMPHLETS ON WORLD AFFAIRS
No. 31

PALESTINE

BY

JAMES PARKES

OXFORD
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

The aim of this pamphlet is not to speculate on the future of Palestine, nor to provide a solution of the problem, but to describe the events leading up to the situation in Palestine to-day. Dr. Parkes gives an account of the position of the British, the Arabs, and the Jews in Palestine at the end of the last war, and traces the political history since that date, a melancholy story of the clash of apparently irreconcilable rights and of legitimate but incompatible interests. 'Palestine is still waiting for the Solomon, whether British, Jew, or Arab, who will produce a political solution.'

Fortunately there is another and brighter side to the picture. 'None of the paradoxes that the world can offer are as startling as the contrast between the barren stagnation of the political conflict, which suggests a country in which neither change nor progress can be expected, and the transformation of life wrought in the last twenty years, which would appear to have been possible only in a land of complete peace, harmony, and security.' The remainder of the pamphlet describes some of the important social, industrial, and economic experiments made in Palestine in the last twenty years and the large measure of success which has attended them.

The author is a leading authority on the Jewish question, and his latest work is his volume on *The Jewish Problem in the Modern World* published in the Home University Library in 1939.

FIRST PUBLISHED 30 MAY 1940
REPRINTED DEC. 1941

Printed in Great Britain and published by
THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS *Amen House, E.C.4*
LONDON EDINBURGH GLASGOW NEW YORK TORONTO
MELBOURNE CAPETOWN BOMBAY CALCUTTA MADRAS
HUMPHREY MILFORD *Publisher to the University*

PALESTINE

The Problem of Palestine

HOWEVER difficult the problem of Palestine may be to solve, it is easy to state. Palestine is a tiny country, until 1918 a portion of the Turkish Empire, with to-day not quite a million and a half inhabitants; but every occurrence, every project, in Palestine affects the interests of three completely separate peoples, each with world-wide connexions —the British, the Arabs, and the Jews. It is not surprising that in such circumstances it has proved extremely difficult, and often impossible, to find a formula or a plan which satisfies all the partners equally. The easiest way to get a clear picture is to consider first the separate position at the end of the last war of each element in the Palestinian situation in itself, without reference to the others.

The British in Palestine

The Near-Eastern campaign in the war of 1914–18 was an inevitable development of Allied strategy. It was impossible to allow the Turks, who were allied with the Germans, to threaten the vital communications of the British Empire by their control of the eastern bank of the Suez Canal and the eastern shores of the Red Sea. Hence Allenby advanced into Palestine in the autumn of 1917, entering Jerusalem in December of that year, while the desert Arabs, led by the Emir Feisal with the aid of Lawrence, pushed the Turks northwards and entered Damascus in the autumn of 1918.

After the war Palestine became even more important. British security still demanded the control of the east bank of the canal; the development of imperial air communications made Palestine a potential link in lines to India and the Far East; the motor road across the desert to Bagdad could be reached from the country, and one end of the oil pipe-line from the Iraqian wells at Kirkuk debouched at the Palestinian port of Haifa, which was also one of the best naval stations in the eastern Mediterranean.

Such is the basic British interest in the country, an interest analogous to those which, in the past, have led to the British control of Gibraltar, Malta, or Singapore. It is a vital link in the communications of a world-wide empire, and Britain cannot be indifferent to its fate. In old days she might simply have annexed the country after her conquest. In actual fact she obtained it after the war as a Mandate from the League of Nations.

From this point of view the one essential is that the country should be stable and prosperous, for a weak and divided country offers endless opportunities to intrigue, and there are several Powers only too willing to fish in its troubled waters.

The Arabs

In so far as its inhabitants were concerned, there was in 1919 no such thing as a Palestinian nationality, in the sense in which there is Portuguese nationality giving fairly clear indications of the natural areas of the Portuguese State. The present frontiers of Palestine, while they look more or less familiar to an Englishman or a Jew accustomed to

maps of Palestine in Bible days, were only fixed after the Versailles Conference. The country formed part of two Turkish provinces, and its inhabitants were just part of that vast Arab section of the Turkish Empire which stretched from the Mediterranean to Persia. They did not think of themselves as Palestinians, but as Syrians who were part of the Moslem world and part of the Arab people.

Hence, on the one hand, they identified their situation with that of other Arab States in the Near East, and, on the other, Moslems all over the world were interested in their circumstances, as Jerusalem is the third holiest city in the Moslem world.

In 1922, when the first census was taken of the present territory, the Arab population numbered some 664,000, of whom 73,000 were Christians. More than half the Moslem Arabs were peasants, cultivating about one-half of the soil of Palestine by methods which had altered little since Bible days. The main reasons for this situation lay in the poverty of the soil and the poverty of the peasant; and each reacted on the other, keeping the unfortunate inhabitants in an almost permanent state of indebtedness. The Arab was neither lazy nor improvident; his iron-shod wooden plough, his sickle for reaping, were the most effective instruments within his means. Improved cultivation and the extension of the area cultivated were only possible with artificial manures and irrigation, neither of which the cultivator could afford. A great deal of the land belonged to a small number of landlords, of whom some lived outside the country and were entirely uninterested in the condition of their tenants. Of what was left

much was held communally, but even where a village owned its own land there was no inducement to the individual to improve his soil, since after a couple of crops it passed into other hands.

A tenth of the Moslem Arabs were still wandering shepherds, living in tribes, and grazing their flocks over wide but vaguely defined areas. There was no really accurate land register, a situation which caused considerable difficulties in the early years of the British administration, and has not yet been entirely remedied.

The Christian Arabs lived more in the towns, and provided a high proportion of the professional, official, and artisan class. A rich Moslem was almost invariably a landowner, a rich Christian often a merchant or official. The urban proletariat was small, for large towns were few, and commercial or industrial life extremely backward.

The Jews

The Jews are at once the most ancient and the most recent of the settled inhabitants of Palestine; and, while it is true that the circumstances connected with their dramatic return to their 'National Home' are the cause of most of the present complications, it is also true that Jewish enterprise provides by far the most interesting part of the story of the last twenty years in Palestine.

Throughout the last two thousand years the country has never wholly lacked Jewish inhabitants. Sometimes they were to be numbered by hundreds, sometimes by tens of thousands. But some there always were. They came to 'the land of Israel' to

lament the fallen state of their nation, to bury themselves in its religious life and history, or to die there in its holy ground. It is only in the second half of the nineteenth century that vigorous young Jews began to return, not to die but to live, not to study on holy ground but to cultivate it. It was out of this return to Zion that the Zionist Movement was born. Persecution in Russia and even in western Europe stimulated it, and in 1914 there were already more than 10,000 Jewish settlers owning or cultivating 90,000 acres of Palestinian soil.

At the same time these colonists were a small minority of the actual Jewish population of the country in 1914. Jerusalem was already a city in which the majority of the population was Jewish, though most were of the old-fashioned and religious type who did nothing to cultivate the soil or to earn their living. Similar groups lived in Hebron and in the north, but side by side with them there was springing up an urban population of artisans and traders possessed by the same ideals which had created the colonies, the rebuilding of a national home in the ancestral country.

But life under Turkish rule was uncertain, their position was never really secure, and it was with relief that they hailed the coming of the British and the passing of the country into British control. From the area controlled by the British many colonists volunteered and took part in sweeping the Turks out of the country. It was typical of the idealism of their whole outlook that, within actual sound of the booming of the guns, the foundation stones of a Hebrew University were laid outside Jerusalem.

The War-time Promises: (a) to the Arabs

It is not as Palestinians but as Arabs that the inhabitants of Palestine claim to be included in the promises made by the British in the Near East at various stages of the war of 1914–18. They were part of the Arab world which the British incited to rebel against Turkey.

It was to secure this revolt that in 1915 Sir Henry McMahon, British High Commissioner in Egypt, approached Sherif Hussein, the accepted leader of Arab Nationalists, with an offer of help if he would raise a revolt against the Turks. He was willing to join forces with the British provided the Arab world was promised independence. The British excepted certain areas in the west, but otherwise agreed to his desires. Unfortunately these areas were very vaguely described, so that it is possible for the British to say quite sincerely that they certainly meant the whole of Palestine to be excluded from their promises, and for Arabs to claim the opposite. Meanwhile, the British, convinced that they had not promised Palestine to Hussein, proceeded to make various secret agreements with the French and Russians which involved Palestine, and Hussein, whose real interests were elsewhere, left the matter unsettled. For the full story of the promises to the Arabs other conversations would have to be related at length, but for our purpose it is enough that at the Peace Conference the Arab delegates, led by the son of Hussein, the Emir Feisal, later King of Iraq, agreed to the exclusion of Palestine from their hoped-for Arab State; and Feisal even negotiated an

agreement with Dr. Weizmann, the leader of the Zionists, on condition that the other Arab countries were given their independence. Thus the war-time tangle seemed satisfactorily smoothed out.

Unfortunately this was not to be. The Arab countries were not given their independence, for France claimed a mandate over Syria, and the British over Iraq. Thus Feisal's agreement with Dr. Weizmann fell to the ground. But a more serious misfortune was that all this time no representatives of the actual inhabitants of the country had been heard, since the Palestine of to-day was not a political unit at that time. The Arab authorities with whom Britain negotiated had come from Mecca or Syria. But as soon as an organization of Palestinian Arabs came into being, they not unnaturally claimed the same independence as had been offered to other Arab countries; and they absolutely refused to accept the validity of any promise which the Allied nations had made to the Jews without the actual population of Palestine being consulted. From this standpoint they have never wavered, and as all offers of a share in the government of the country have been made to them by the British with the preliminary condition that they should accept the National Home, all such offers have been rejected.

The War-time Promises: (b) to the Jews

What proportion of the commitments entered into to favour the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine was due to sympathy with, and insight into, the historic longing of the Jews for a return to Palestine, and what proportion was due to

political calculation as to the advantage which would be gained for the Allies by cultivating the friendship of the Jewish people, it will never be possible to decide, for human motives are nearly always mixed. But this much at least can be said, that it would be inaccurate to omit either completely. For nearly a century before the war British interest had been shown in the Jewish longing for a home of their own, so that it is idle to deny the idealistic side. On the other hand, Jewish opinion was of importance in America, and, where Jews were concerned, the Allies laboured under the disadvantage that they were fighting Germany, the cultural centre of European Jewry, with, as an ally, Russia, the ruler and persecutor of nearly one-half of the Jewish people. A gesture of goodwill to Jewry was a politic move.

After conversations lasting more than a year, the British Cabinet authorized Mr. Balfour, then Foreign Secretary, to write to the head of British Jewry the following letter, dated 2 November 1917:

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

This letter is universally referred to as the Balfour Declaration. But it was approved by President Wilson, and by the French and Italian Governments, and was subsequently officially embodied in

the Mandate for Palestine, the text of which was finally ratified by the League of Nations on 24 July 1922. While thus the Balfour Declaration is continually referred to as the foundation-stone of the National Home, it is impossible to keep a right proportion if it be forgotten that it only gave official and international countenance to an aspect of Jewish life which dated from the expulsion from Palestine two thousand years ago. This reality itself finds official acceptance in the preamble to the Mandate which speaks of *re*constituting the national home.

From the Jewish point of view the essential clauses of the Mandate are the 2nd, the 4th, and the 6th, which run as follows:

Article 2

'The Mandatory shall be responsible for placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home, as laid down in the preamble, and the development of self-governing institutions, and also for safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race and religion.'

Article 4

'An appropriate Jewish agency shall be recognized as a public body for the purpose of advising and co-operating with the Administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish national home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine, and subject always to the control of the Administration, to assist and take part in the development of the country.

'The Zionist organization, so long as its organization and constitution are in the opinion of the Mandatory appropriate, shall be recognized as such agency. It shall

take steps in consultation with His Britannic Majesty's Government to secure the co-operation of all Jews who are willing to assist in the establishment of the Jewish national home.'

Article 6

'The Administration of Palestine, while ensuring that the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced, shall facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions and shall encourage, in co-operation with the Jewish agency referred to in Article 4, close settlement by Jews on the land, including State lands and waste lands not required for public purposes.'

The Dilemma

It has always been a matter of philosophic speculation what would happen if an irresistible force met an immovable mass. In the political field at any rate, it is now possible to answer the question. For twenty years the irresistible force of Zionist enthusiasm has encountered the immovable mass of Arab opposition to the official foundation of its existence in the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate. And the result has been that the National Home has risen from less than a hundred thousand to half a million and is still rising; that over seventy million pounds have been invested in the country; that its total population has almost doubled; that wages are higher than anywhere in the Near East; that there have been two serious disturbances, and a period of civil war lasting nearly three years; that there has been no advance of any kind towards the creation of constitutional government; that the country has been visited by one Royal Commission, several other commissions, and experts on every subject

from land tenure to barbed-wire fencing; that the Balfour Declaration has been constantly reaffirmed by the Mandatory government, and the Mandate has proved unworkable in practice; that both Jews and Arabs have developed a technique of protest which should be the envy of the whole world; that the British Government, becoming more and more accustomed to the impossibility of pleasing everybody, has resigned itself to pleasing nobody; that Arabs and Jews have profited as considerably by the presence of each other as they are determined to deny it, and that it is, in consequence, almost impossible to describe the history of the country not merely in such a way as to please either side, but even in such a way as to be fair to them.

Such, in the political field at any rate, is the impact of an irresistible force on an immovable mass!

It is only by presenting the problem in this confused way that it is possible to convey the atmosphere of reaction and achievement, of paralysis and progress, which is modern Palestine.

The essential basis for understanding the situation is the realization of two points. The clash in Palestine is a single expression of the general clash between East and West. The Jewish settlers are Europeans, Jewish standards of life are Western, Jewish achievements are based on the technical skill and knowledge of American and European science. The Arabs are still Eastern; their development proceeds much more slowly; they can still be swayed by blind religious fanaticism; in free competition with the Jews they fear that they would have no

chance. Secondly, it must be realized that to a very large extent each of the three parties concerned has perfectly legitimate reasons for acting as it has done. It is futile to explain the behaviour of any entirely or even mainly in terms of malice or selfishness.

The Arabs formed 93 per cent. of the population at the time when the Mandate formally embodied the Balfour Declaration into the basic constitution of the country. But they were not consulted; their protests were completely neglected; they were flatly told that they could not be allowed even that measure of self-government allowed the other Arab States, because of the promises made to the Jews; British non-Jewish statesmen had publicly assumed that they would become ultimately a minority in a Jewish State; Jewish remarks constantly revived this fear even when British statesmen had altered their opinion; matters were made worse by their being told that, as Arabs, they ought to be satisfied with all the other Arab States created by the victorious arms of the Allies. It is difficult to see anything which was omitted which would ensure that their opposition should remain a model of unconstructive intransigence, and, considering their stage of civilization, it is regrettable but not surprising that they have expressed themselves with a violence from which, to their credit, the more disciplined Jews in the main have abstained.

The Jewish case is equally well founded. Their connexion with Palestine extends over a period of more than three thousand years; it has received the endorsement of the civilized world; every inch of Palestine which they own and cultivate they have

bought in the open market from its Arab owner or, in a few cases, leased from the Government; from top to bottom they have constructed the National Home at their own expense, and their contributions to the public revenue have been used more to help the backward Arabs than themselves; they have never asked for anything except the fulfilment of rights internationally guaranteed to them twenty years ago, but far more urgently necessary to them now than their original authors could possibly have imagined. For most of Europe has become impossible for them, and the rest of the world only reluctantly admits them.

They can point out, further, that much of the land which they have bought was waste; that much of the land now refused them will never be cultivated without the capital and knowledge they alone can supply; that the most obvious proofs that their presence is an advantage to the Arab are the facts that wages are highest and methods of cultivation most modern in the neighbourhood of Jewish settlement; that the Arab population has increased enormously; that many improvements in medicine, hygiene, and education have been due to Jewish initiative, or made possible by the taxes paid by Jews, while Arabs have benefited from them equally with Jews; that they provide a market for the products of the Arab peasant, and supply him with manufactured products in return.

And the British have to hold the scales between these two incompatible and equally justifiable claims! Any act which favours either side is immediately denounced as an injustice to the other. Two

communities live in Palestine, differing in language, standard of living, and interest; educated in separate schools, each emphasizing one of two totally different histories of the same country; each fearing to be a minority under the other; each legitimately determined to secure its own rights, and expecting the Government to see to the other side.

The description which has been given of the Jewish and Arab arguments reveals a striking difference between them. The strength of the Arab case is political. They were the overwhelming majority of the country; the Powers which made the promise of the National Home neither owned the country nor lived in it, and yet they did not consult its inhabitants. Consequently, in the political field, the Arab has unquestionably scored against the Jew, as the subsequent narrative will show. The strength of the Jewish case is legal. Consequently it has nearly always obtained the support of the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations which is charged with examining into the activities of the Mandatory Power, and with reporting to the Council of the League whether the latter is properly fulfilling the Mandate. Culturally, socially, and emotionally the Jewish case is exceedingly strong. Consequently the Government have persistently refused the Arab demand that the doors should be closed immediately to further Jewish entry.

Perpetually occupied with making the best of the difficulties created by one side or the other, it is not surprising if the Government of Palestine has frequently vacillated and has had less time and money available than it should have had for generally

assisting and developing the country. Too often the time of officials, both in Whitehall and Jerusalem, is spent in calming passions and listening to protests instead of getting on with the work of government.

The Political History of the Mandate

The Mandate was ratified by the League of Nations in 1922, and officially put into force in 1923, but decisive steps, based on the permanence of the Balfour Declaration, had been taken by all the parties concerned long before those years. The Declaration itself was issued in November 1917. By the spring of the following year an officially sponsored Zionist Commission, with representatives of the British, French, and Italian Governments attached, was actively surveying Jewish possibilities in the country, and planning the first steps to the establishment of the National Home. And already in April 1920 riots and looting in Jerusalem gave the first signs of Arab opposition to its establishment. In 1921 still more serious riots started from Jaffa and spread to various parts of the country. The Commission appointed to inquire into the riots found that one of the main causes was the Arab fear of 'a steady increase of Jewish immigration, which would ultimately tend to their political and economic subjection'—and yet Jewish immigration had amounted to less than 20,000 in three years.

In 1921 and 1922 delegations representing Arab opinion, both Moslem and Christian, visited London to put their grievances before the British Government. They were assured that the British did not contemplate their submergence in any sense—but

they were refused any constitutional freedom. They were offered a Legislative Council, but refused on the ground that the British would control the majority of seats, although the Arabs represented 90 per cent. of the population. Next they were offered an Arab Agency, to fulfil for the Arabs the function which the Zionist Commission, as a Jewish Agency, had been filling since 1918 for the Jews. They refused. After this refusal the Government gave up for the time being the attempt to develop constitutional institutions as required by the Mandate.

Meanwhile the National Home grew steadily. 7,400 immigrants entered in 1923, 12,800 in 1924, 33,800 in 1925, and the Arabs watched with growing sullenness. In 1926 there was a break in the flood, and in 1927 more Jews left Palestine than entered it. It seemed to the Arabs as though the danger was over. But in 1928 the tide turned and Arab indignation flared up again. In September there was an incident at the 'Wailing Wall',[1] and the same period of the following year saw riots and bloodshed all over the country. Religious fanaticism occasioned the sudden flare-up, but the Shaw Commission which examined into the riots found that the basic reason was the same—Arab fears of submergence at the rising tide of Jewish immigration—and in 1929 the Jewish population already amounted to nearly 150,000.

The Commission found that some estimate of the amount of land which was still available for the

[1] 'The Wailing Wall' is the western wall of the ancient Temple of Jerusalem, and thus the holiest spot for the Jews. But it is Moslem property, and forms also the western wall of the enclosure containing the Arab mosque on the site of the Temple.

settlement of new-comers was an urgent necessity, and Sir John Hope Simpson, who had had extensive experience on such questions in other countries, was sent to make a survey of the possibilities. His report proved a serious blow to Jewish hopes, and, though some of his figures have been challenged, his basic statement appeared incontestable: that Palestine could not contain such a population that a Jewish majority could ever become possible without the dispossession of Arab inhabitants. He insisted that immigration should be strictly limited, and the Government declared that it intended to adjust its policy to his recommendations. An immediate protest from the Zionists caused them to modify their policy to some extent, but at the same time the laws designed to secure the Arab tenant in the possession of the minimum needed for his subsistence were strengthened.

For three years there was an appearance of peace. Jewish immigration remained steady at about 5,000 until 1932, when it rose to nearly 10,000. But in 1933 the advent of Hitler to power led to the flight of thousands of Jews from Germany. Immigration rose to over 30,000 in 1933, to over 42,000 in 1934, and to nearly 62,000 in 1935. The Jews, who had been 7 per cent. of the population when the Balfour Declaration was given, amounted to nearly a third of the population twenty years later.

The Arab reaction to the increase of 1932 had been the foundation of a new and still more intransigent political party demanding immediate independence. In 1933 Arabs proclaimed a movement of complete non-co-operation with the British,

which very soon led to sporadic violence and bloodshed, and was followed in October 1933 by a general strike. In December 1935 the Government attempted to meet the demands of the Arabs by renewing the proposal to establish a legislative council, with a non-official majority and a neutral chairman who was to be neither from the British Administration nor a Palestinian. Although criticism of the Mandate and control of immigration were to be outside its scope, nevertheless the Arabs were disposed to consider it; but this time it was the Jews who refused any co-operation with it, and secured its decisive condemnation in Parliament.

More serious outbreaks began in April 1936, with the additional disturbing feature that Arab officials of the Mandatory Government declared their open support of the objects for which their fellows were in arms. To cope with the seriousness of the situation, it was announced that a Royal Commission would be sent to Palestine to examine into the whole situation, as soon as violence had ceased. Even so it was not until its final sessions that the Arabs consented to appear before it, and that only at the persuasion of neighbouring Arab kings and princes, who had already intervened to persuade the Arabs to cease their violence.

The Royal Commission reported in July 1937 after having made an exhaustive survey of the whole development of the situation since the beginning of the Mandate. On almost every page they declared their conviction that a radical solution alone offered any possibility of escaping from a recurrence of the disorders, and they finally proposed that the country

should be divided into three areas: a Jewish State, primarily on the sea coast, an Arab State, primarily in the hills and joined to the existing Arab State of Transjordan, and mandatory areas covering Jerusalem, Nazareth, and Bethlehem together with a corridor from Jerusalem to Jaffa. This proposal took the world completely by surprise. The Government published its acceptance of it in principle, but both Jews and Arabs protested vigorously against it, although some Jews were seriously tempted by the illusion of independence which it contained. On the one hand was a Jewish State without Jerusalem and little larger than the English county of Norfolk, and on the other hand an Arab State deprived of most of the best land and without real access to the sea. A further Commission was sent out to suggest boundaries for this multiplicity of States within a total area of the size of Wales, and drew maps of two new alternative schemes, neither of which had the support of all the members of the Commission, and neither of which they really believed to be workable.

All this time sporadic disturbances were taking place, and they were still continuing when the Partition Commission reported in October 1938. The lack of enthusiasm of the Commission itself revealed that such a solution was impossible, and in one final effort to discover a way out of the impasse, Jews and Arabs were summoned to confer with the British in London in February 1939. In the hope that they might exercise a restraining influence, representatives were also invited from other Arab States and Egypt. But the Arabs refused to meet the Jews, and both sides refused the proposals of the

British Government. The Conferences broke up without achieving anything, and the British Government was left in the unhappy position of having to declare its own policy, knowing that it would receive the support of neither side. This it did in the White Paper issued in May 1939 by Mr. Malcolm MacDonald as Colonial Secretary, and it is this document which is the present basis of British policy in Palestine.

There are four main points in this latest attempt to escape from the impasse created by the Balfour Declaration and by Arab resistance to it.

i. After a transitional period, estimated at ten years, it is hoped that an independent Palestine may be brought into existence. It is also hoped that representative institutions may be steadily developed in the intervening period.

ii. This independent State is to be in close treaty relations with Great Britain, and the Treaty is to ensure the safeguarding of the rights of the Jewish National Home.

iii. For the coming five years a Jewish immigration of 10,000 is to be permitted annually. In addition 25,000 refugees are to be admitted as soon as the High Commissioner is satisfied that they can be absorbed. After this number of 75,000 has been admitted, no further immigration will be allowed without the acquiescence of the Arabs. Thus, unless Arab agreement can be achieved, the obligation to further the National Home is to be considered as fulfilled when the Jewish population reaches a proportion of roughly one-third of the inhabitants of the country.

iv. As soon as they can be drawn up, regulations will be issued restricting Jewish rights to purchase land in certain areas of the country.

The regulations referred to in the last clause were issued in February 1940. They proved unexpectedly severe on Jewish hopes, and made it almost impossible for them to extend their purchases of land in by far the larger part of the country.

The White Paper and the subsequent land regulations have produced a storm of opposition within Jewry. In the tragic circumstances of to-day that storm is completely understandable. But it has also to be asked whether any alternative was possible, so long as the existing conflict continued. For the last ten years the British have constantly been repeating that a solution can only be found in Palestine through Jews and Arabs making peace with each other; that mere fulfilment of the Mandate, apart from the consent of the Arabs, can only mean permanent rule by force, a condition impossible for a British Government to impose, and ultimately as intolerable for Jews as it would be for Arabs to accept.

On the terrain of politics Arab claims are as strong as their conduct has been deplorable. In relation to them the Jewish claims, in spite of their *legal* strength, are as weak as their conduct under immense provocation has been admirable. Palestine is still waiting for the Solomon, whether British, Jew, or Arab, who will produce a political solution. Were this the whole story, one might well despair of any solution ever being discovered. But politics are not everything even in these days of nationalism. To

estimate the real future of Palestine, it is not only necessary, but much more encouraging, to consider what has been achieved in twenty years in spite of sporadic and sometimes continuous periods of strife and bloodshed.

From Shadow to Sunshine

It is a relief to turn from this tragic political history to the actual story of the country in the daily life and occupations of its inhabitants. For none of the paradoxes that the world can offer are as startling as the contrast between the barren stagnation of the political conflict, which suggests a country in which neither change nor progress can be expected, and the transformation of life wrought in the last twenty years, which would appear to have been possible only in a land of complete peace, harmony, and security.

The British Administration, which developed into the Mandatory Government, took over a country wasted by the retiring Turkish armies. Fields were uncultivated, live stock scarcely existed, the land registers themselves had been carried off, trade was stagnant. The Government has often been criticized for the smallness of the scope of its social programme. Yet the country is now covered with an increasing network of modern roads for motor traffic; education in the Arab villages is slowly progressing and is enthusiastically received by the villagers, although it is still far from universal; health services are gradually eliminating endemic disease and reducing the rate of infant mortality; above all, efforts are being made to improve the

quality and extent of Arab agriculture. In many villages permanent division of the holdings is giving the individual cultivator the security which he must have if he is to be encouraged to improve his land; laws have been passed lessening interest on debt and reducing tithe; teaching is given on rural co-operatives and a number have already been created. In the towns new Arab enterprises are appearing.

In the neighbourhood of Jewish settlements the Arab is learning even faster by example, and it is one of the encouraging features of the situation—even if it is not so recognized by Arab politicians—that the standards of Arab living and cultivation, as well as the level of wages for labourers, are rising all the time in the neighbourhood of the Jewish settlements and Jewish Agricultural Research Institutes.

But the real romance of Palestine is the work achieved by the Jews. It is of course still ragged, still full of improvisations and imperfections, still inevitably too self-centred and nationalistic. All sorts of criticisms may be levelled at it by its enemies and detractors, but the Zionist can legitimately reply: Considering the material at our disposal—a town-bred population from eastern Europe, middle-class, sometimes middle-aged refugees from Germany—has anyone ever done better, has any other large-scale pioneering produced such results in so short a time? Moreover, most pioneers received their land free, or paid very small prices for it. The Jews had to pay for every acre on which they settled at prices often much in excess of the real value of the land.

It was pure national idealism which drove the original settlers to cultivate the soil of Palestine with their own hands. In time many of the older colonists became middle-class farmers employing cheap Arab labour, but the stream of Jews determined to till their own soil with their own hands has been constantly renewed, and it is now backed by training schools for youthful refugees in England and many other countries. With the background of first-class Agricultural Institutes and Training Colleges, miracles have been performed. Deep ploughing, irrigation, and the proper use of manure is gradually making it possible to grow three or four crops in a year where only one could be grown previously, to produce a thousand bushels of corn where less than a quarter would, under the Arab system, be reckoned a splendid crop. The study of cattle-breeding is raising the possible annual yield of milk five and ten times; even hens are being persuaded by proper treatment to lay three times as many eggs!

Owing to the fact that much of the land belongs to Jewish public funds, which can plan ahead and on a broad basis, land can be set aside for planting forests. This is an extremely important item in a country which has been robbed of its trees for centuries. Irrigation has made thousands of acres of sand-dune and desert into excellent agricultural and fruit-growing land, and the draining of swamps has led to the disappearance of malaria, a disease which carried off hundreds of the earliest pioneers.

But the Movement is not merely a romantic 'back to the land' revival. Industry has also developed amazingly. The most famous works lie in the

Jordan Valley. In the north, near to the Sea of Galilee, is the Jordan Hydro-electric Power Station which supplies most of the inhabitants, Arab as well as Jewish, with power and light, so that pioneers establishing a new settlement can light their tents electrically their first night, and use electric power from the very beginning of their clearing, draining, and planting operations. In the south are the Dead Sea Chemical Works, which are gradually extracting potash and bromine from the world's largest reservoir of chemicals. The only British supply of potash comes from these works, which are capable of supplying all the world's needs of that article for 5,000 years at its present rate of consumption. And it is interesting that in both these enterprises, especially the latter, Jews and Arabs have worked side by side all through the troubles. In Tel-Aviv, Haifa, and elsewhere, over a thousand smaller industrial enterprises have been started, and the level of Palestinian exports has risen steadily every year, while more and more of the home market is supplied from home production.

As the basis of this agricultural and industrial development stand two social experiments of the greatest interest. Much of the agricultural work is run by villages which practise varieties of 'communism', not as a philosophy of life and class conflict but, as it should be, as a satisfactory economic basis of existence. In some, individuals have no money at all, except when they go on holiday; in others, more individual possessions are allowed. By the establishment of communal crèches and nurses, children can be given the attention usually only obtained by the

offspring of the wealthy. The community, both in its work and leisure, can afford what the individual labourer could never hope to possess in tools, in books, in lectures and concerts. Such communities have grown experimentally, not according to a preconceived theory, and suggest all kinds of possibilities to depressed areas in other countries.

The other movement behind this expansion is the Labour Organization, a movement containing the great majority of the adult Jews in the country, and much more than a Trade Union in that it also runs all kinds of co-operative organizations, loan-banks, medical services, its own hospitals and clinics, its own schools, and even a contracting department which competes for government and other contracts for roads, buildings, and other public services. The extent of its unconventional activities can be gathered from the fact that its health budget is almost as large as that of the Government itself.

Health is, in fact, one of the activities in which Zionists have performed the most valuable services to the country as a whole. Medical research is already making the Hebrew University a centre whose importance is recognized far beyond the frontiers of the country, and the modern equipment and method of the Jewish hospitals, clinics, infant welfare centres, and convalescent homes bring to both Jew and Arab services available in no other country of the Near East, and few countries of Europe and America. This work has been considerably aided by Germany's expulsion of hundreds of her ablest doctors. In fact, it is said that at

a certain moment a telegram was sent to the Jewish Emigration Office: 'Send no more doctors, send patients.'

As much thought has been given by the Zionists to education, both infant and adult, as to health. Illiteracy is unknown among the Jewish settlers, and in many of the colonies and settlements education on the most modern lines is given. The task undertaken was no light one. The returning Jews came from a multitude of backgrounds, and with many languages. Few of them knew Hebrew, which has become the Jewish language of the country; many were ignorant of Jewish history; many—and this was especially true of immigrants from Germany —came from necessity rather than choice. All had to be blended together into the National Home, and it is a tribute to its strength and flexibility that such a blending is in fact taking place. There is still one gap in the educational system, affecting both Jews and Arabs. With few exceptions they learn in the schools of each almost nothing of the life, the history, the language even, of the other. The schools are not yet building young Palestinians. They are building young Jews and Arabs, and it is certain that if a political change is to come an educational change along these lines will have to accompany it.

Beyond the ordinary Jewish school system, the greater part of which incidentally is supported by the Jews themselves and not by the Government, there are adequate technical and agricultural colleges and, at the crown of the whole, the Hebrew University on Mount Scopas outside Jerusalem. It is as

much a research centre as a teaching establishment. It is still developing its faculties, but it grows each year, and now has more than a thousand students. In times of peace it enrols already a few Arab students into its membership. And it stands as the symbol of the Jewish passion for education, realized in a community of less than half a million people (in Britain there are sixteen universities to 46,000,000 people).

The intellectual life of the community, however, is not confined merely to schools and university. There are first-class concerts, operatic and dramatic companies, and again the flight from Germany has brought blessing to Palestine. The Jewish Labour Organization even runs its own dramatic company; and world-famous conductors and musicians find working-class audiences in Palestine as enthusiastic and as critical as the most select audiences of London or Paris.

The National Home is still in its infancy. It is still living on the enthusiasm of novelty. But it has already been tested by economic crisis, by political conflict, and by disillusionment; it proved its stability and elasticity when it unexpectedly was called on to absorb in three years not ten, but over a hundred, thousand new immigrants. It has already its heroes and its martyrs. Doubtless severe conflicts and severe testing still lie before it, but there is every reason to be optimistic about its survival. Political wisdom is the slowest of all wisdoms to learn, and it is political mistakes which alone can imperil it. The same is true of the Arabs. For, if the romance of modern Palestine be Jewish, the slower progress of

the Arabs is an essential part of the picture, and Jewish–Arab co-operation and mutual influence cannot be permanently prevented by the political activities of either side.

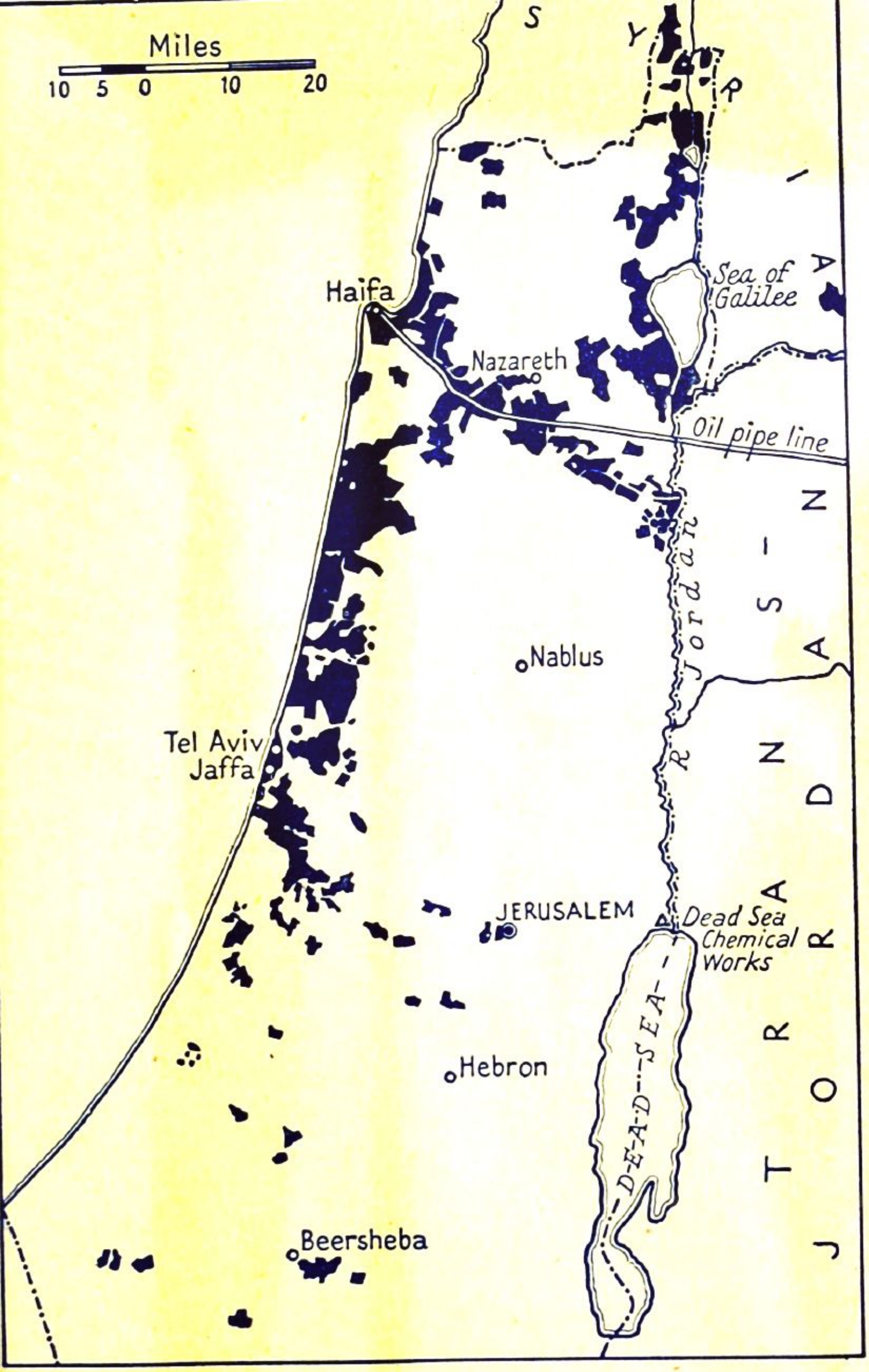
This consequence should be the more certain because of the situation of Palestine. Experiments in the deliberate construction of a new community have usually taken place in the remoter corners of the world. Groups of pioneers have gone off to distant spots to work out their ideals. But Palestine is inevitably in the centre of the world's movements, and is admirably placed to receive and transmit spiritual influence and material products to both East and West.

To-day it is British communications which make it an essential link in the British world empire. The link would be as essential if it were not British. Air routes and desert routes would still be the same. The pipe-line would still need to come to the sea coast. Haifa would still be an important port, a natural outlet and receiving port for the whole hinterland of northern and central Arabia.

In the same way, Kipling's saying that 'East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet', is inevitably breaking down, and in both directions; and in the growing need of East and West of each other, Palestine stands as a gate between the two, and the very conflict in Palestine is partly a miniature of the conflict between two standards of living, two conceptions of life, which is going on in many parts of the world. The interpenetration of the two cultures, the industries, and the agriculture of Palestine have their part to play in

this growth, for while agriculture of different kinds absorbs the bulk of the people of the East, experiments conducted in their own climate have a validity such as the experience of European or American agriculture could not have. Further, the one market for industry still unsaturated is the market south of the temperate zone, and Palestine is naturally placed to serve wide undeveloped areas of the Near or Middle Eastern world. And it is in the non-political atmosphere of daily relations that the beginnings of cultural understanding may take place.

How and when the political problem will be solved it is impossible to say. Until it is solved the future of Palestine is inevitably precarious. But its possibilities and its achievements are already so considerable that it is difficult to believe that a political solution will not be found.



JEWISH LAND IN PALESTINE

OXFORD PAMPHLETS ON WORLD AFFAIRS

1. THE PROSPECTS OF CIVILIZATION, by Sir Alfred Zimmern.
2. THE BRITISH EMPIRE, by H. V. Hodson.
3. *MEIN KAMPF*, by R. C. K. Ensor.
4. ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY, by A. G. B. Fisher.
5. 'RACE' IN EUROPE, by Julian Huxley.
6. THE FOURTEEN POINTS AND THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES, by G. M. Gathorne-Hardy.
7. COLONIES AND RAW MATERIALS, by H. D. Henderson.
8. 'LIVING-SPACE', by R. R. Kuczynski.
9. TURKEY, GREECE, AND THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN, by G. F. Hudson.
10. THE DANUBE BASIN, by C. A. Macartney.
12. ENCIRCLEMENT, by J. L. Brierly.
14. THE TREATY OF BREST-LITOVSK, by J. W. Wheeler-Bennett.
15. CZECHOSLOVAKIA, by R. Birley.
16. PROPAGANDA IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS, by E. H. Carr.
18. NATIONAL SOCIALISM AND CHRISTIANITY, by N. Micklem.
20. WHO HITLER IS, by R. C. K. Ensor.
21. THE NAZI CONCEPTION OF LAW, by J. Walter Jones.
22. AN ATLAS OF THE WAR.
23. THE SINEWS OF WAR, by Geoffrey Crowther.
25. PAYING FOR THE WAR, by Geoffrey Crowther.
26. THE NAVAL ROLE IN MODERN WARFARE, by Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond.
27. THE BALTIC, by J. Hampden Jackson.
29. LIFE & GROWTH OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE, by J. A. Williamson.
30. HOW BRITAIN'S RESOURCES ARE MOBILIZED, by Max Nicholson.
31. PALESTINE, by James Parkes.
32. INDIA, by L. F. Rushbrook Williams.
33. LABOUR UNDER NAZI RULE, by W. A. Robson.
34. RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY, by Barbara Ward.
35. WAS GERMANY DEFEATED IN 1918? by Cyril Falls.
36. THE GESTAPO, by O. C. Giles.
37. WAR AND TREATIES, by Arnold D. McNair.
38. BRITAIN'S BLOCKADE, by R. W. B. Clarke.
39. SOUTH AFRICA, by E. A. Walker.
40. THE ARABS, by H. A. R. Gibb.
41. THE ORIGINS OF THE WAR, by E. L. Woodward.
42. WHAT ACTS OF WAR ARE JUSTIFIABLE? by A. L. Goodhart.
43. LATIN AMERICA, by Robin A. Humphreys.
44. THE MILITARY AEROPLANE, by E. Colston Shepherd.
45. THE JEWISH QUESTION, by James Parkes.
46. GERMANY'S 'NEW ORDER', by Duncan Wilson.
47. CANADA, by Graham Spry.
48. ITALIAN FOREIGN POLICY, by Barbara Ward.
49. HOLLAND AND THE WAR, by G. N. Clark.
50. AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY, by D. W. Brogan.
51. NORWAY AND THE WAR, by G. M. Gathorne-Hardy.
52. BRITAIN'S FOOD IN WARTIME, by Sir John Russell.
53. THE ARSENAL OF DEMOCRACY, by A. J. Brown.
54. JAPAN, by Sir George Sansom.

Other Pamphlets are in active preparation

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, OXFORD
BY JOHN JOHNSON PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY