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ISRAEL  
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A STATE



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## DEDICATION

To my Wife  
who has so faithfully laboured  
in the cause of Zion





## P R E F A C E

WHAT has been attempted in these pages is not a history of Zionism, nor a history of the Jewish National Home, but a study of one limited phase—the establishment of the Jewish State. The theme is the diplomatic and military events which brought Israel into being and secured its recognition as a sovereign, independent political entity. Some may think this theme too restricted, but there happens to be a considerable literature dealing with Zionism and the Jewish National Home, while much less attention has been given to the establishment of the State of Israel. There is, therefore, room for a book with a limited objective.

A weightier criticism may be that it is premature to attempt to explain with acceptance a sequence of events so recent as hardly to have emerged from the immediacy of news. The accessible documentation must be thin and incomplete, and speculation and interpretation correspondingly venturesome and treacherous. The archives of the States involved have certainly not been opened, and the public men engaged are observing the customary reticences. Still, the modern practice of broadcast diplomacy, particularly at the United Nations, whatever its graver defects, does draw aside the veil in part; and Parliamentary debates gave a most undiplomatic Foreign Secretary frequent occasion to blurt out his real thoughts. There is for the diplomatic (though less surely for the military) aspect enough material available to sustain an analysis of issues, of policies, and of manœuvres.

The problems associated with the establishment of the State of Israel, the solutions attempted, the theories and presuppositions consciously or subconsciously held, the misjudgments, are still alive in regard to the Middle East. The study of contemporary events may lack the dignity and the amplitude of history, but the criticism and explanation of action in progress, tentative though they may be, have their uses.

The establishment of the State of Israel signified a great victory, that of the Jewish people, and two defeats, those of Great Britain and of the Arab States. Mr. Bevin was the architect of the British

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defeat ; the responsibility for the Arab defeat is much more general. Mr. Bevin took over, and fortified by a pugnacious temperament, a policy deeply entrenched in the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office. It was motivated by concern neither for the Jews nor for the Arabs, and it rested upon illusions as to the character, the aims, and the necessities of both. It was Imperialism of the old school, and experience in other fields should have taught Mr. Bevin and his advisers that it was outmoded. It was natural for the Arab States, in the flush of independence and extreme nationalism, to resent what they regarded as the intrusion of an alien people into an Arab land and to seek to defeat it. But they overlooked the concrete interests of their brethren most directly concerned, the Arabs of Palestine, and it was these who paid the price of failure. If for Mr. Bevin the issue was political calculation, for Arabs pride and sentiment, for the Jews it was life or death. Not the blunders of British diplomacy, nor the rivalries and disunity of the Arab States turned the scale. It was the desperate necessity of the Jews. For them there was no alternative. Once again in human affairs the moral conquered the material.

Precisely because the conflict of Britain with Israel was on the ground of expediency and not of principle, reconciliation has been easier. The relations between the two States are vastly better than they were when Mr. Bevin passed from the scene. The British Government has usually been generous in handling financial and other matters, and has exercised the tactful gift of forgetting. The Israelis are increasingly conscious of what they owe to an administrative system and practice exemplary in the Middle East. Both peoples are willing to bury the dead past.

With the Arabs the way is infinitely harder because their pride and their sentiment are so deeply involved, and because what to the British was, at most, a political blunder for them was a tragedy. Hundreds of thousands of refugees are a constant reminder of their failure and disturb the balance of their judgment. The armistices have not been followed by peace, and the mirage of a second round tempts the agitator and deludes the ambitious. Stability will not be confirmed until substantial easement comes to the pitiful plight of the refugees, and they cease to be treated as political pawns.

Israel is a small land and its population numerically insignificant. It may be said *de minimis non curat lex*. Why should this world of

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mighty empires trouble itself over so petty a State? Lord Balfour expressed a conviction that the founding of the Jewish National Home was the most significant outcome of the First World War; Mr. Churchill has said that the establishment of the State of Israel must be viewed in the perspective of thousands of years. They were judging significance by quality, by creative achievement and creative potential. The union of the Jewish people with the Jewish land in the past produced one of the vital streams of civilisation. These illustrious men nourished the hope that the renewal of that union might replenish that stream. Whether their hope will be justified will depend upon the Jewish people. The miracle will have to be of their own making. The opportunity is theirs and it is for them to seize it.

For the moment tough economic problems, not distant spiritual aspirations, are the preoccupation of Israelis. But, unlike other peoples, they themselves have willed it so. The adventures which peoples deliberately undertake bespeak spiritual energy and heighten its potential. There are adventures enough in front of Israel.

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Hants.*



## CHAPTER I

### THE MANDATE

**Z**IONISM was born with the death of the Jewish State. The first Zionists were those captives who sat down by the rivers of Babylon and wept when they remembered Zion. During that long stretch of time it has found many expressions, but the essence has always been the ingathering of the exiles, the return of a free Jewish people to the free Jewish land. The first captivity had lasted less than fifty years when Artaxerxes, king of kings, authorised all who "are minded of their own free will to go up to Jerusalem" to go and restore it. And "the builders everyone had his sword girded by his side, and so builded." Six hundred years later Jerusalem and the Jewish State were overthrown, to lie desolate for nineteen centuries. But the memory did not fade, or the hope die, or the longing fail.

The Liturgy, the ritual, the feasts, and the fasts sustained them and the promise of God through the prophets—"Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land." Though the great mass of Jews were driven into exile, a remnant persisted in Palestine, and survived through Roman, Byzantine, and Moslem rule. Pilgrims visited the land, the pious came to end their days there. It was a community weak in numbers and dependent upon the support of Jews outside. A different element with other purposes began to come in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The Bilu, Russian students, believed that Jewish life must be built on labour, labour of every kind. Societies of "Lovers of Zion" sprang up all over the world for the settlement of Jews in Palestine, and notably on the land. Even some of the Jews of the Palestine ghettos took up agriculture, and Petach Tikva (the beginning of hope), the first of modern Jewish villages, was founded by Jerusalem Jews. Conditions were extremely hard. The climate was hot on the coast,

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and fever-laden, the Arabs were lawless and plundering, the settlers had little capital and little knowledge, and Jewish labour on Jewish farms had to compete with the miserably paid Arabs. When the movement was threatened with collapse the late Baron Edmond de Rothschild, of Paris, took on the responsibility of saving, maintaining, educating, and rejuvenating these Jewish villages. The service he rendered was beyond price, but his system of control was dictatorial and bureaucratic. Philanthropy, however generous, was not the formula for a democratic Jewish life. That came from another source.

Political designs, for very practical reasons, played very little part in the minds of these early pioneers. They concentrated on creating what they believed to be a Jewish life in a Jewish society. In 1897 Theodor Herzl, a Viennese man of letters, founded the Zionist Organisation. He was a newspaper correspondent in Paris during the Dreyfus episode, and witness to a fierce storm of anti-Semitism in France, the country which had been the first to give the Jews political equality. He came to the conclusion that the only refuge for the Jews from persecution and hatred was in a land of their own, and contact with Jews from Russia taught him that that land must be Palestine. "A publicly recognised, legally secured home in Palestine" was the programme of his organisation. He believed that by diplomacy and finance he could secure the sympathy and co-operation of the Great Powers, and that the Sultan could be persuaded, in his own interests, to give the Zionist Organisation a charter for the establishment of his Jewish Palestine.

Dr. Herzl's organisation secured the enthusiastic support of the Jewries of Eastern Europe, and established centres in every country where there was a Jewish community. His appeal and the various institutions he established, notably the Congress, transformed the spirit of the broad masses of Jewry, though few of the wealthier rallied to him. But with the Sultan his diplomacy made no progress. He found, however, sympathy in England. The British protectorate over Egypt included the Sinai peninsula, and Dr. Herzl thought that a Jewish settlement could be started here on the borders of Palestine under the British flag. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, was encouraging, but the land, on investigation, highly discouraging.

During his African travels, after the Boer War, Mr. Chamberlain

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had seen the highlands of Kenya. It occurred to him that here was an empty land which the Jews might settle, for the healing of their own wounds and for the strengthening of the British Empire. He made the suggestion to Dr. Herzl. Dr. Herzl had reached a complete deadlock with the Sultan; the pressure of persecution made action urgent; and, although his heart was in Palestine, he welcomed the suggestion, and put it before the Zionist Congress. There he came up against the opposition, mainly of East European Jewry, for whom it must be Palestine or nowhere. They felt in their very souls that only in Palestine could the Jewish people create the great Jewish society. They had faith, and they were prepared to suffer the ills of the day, as the Jewish people had borne the ills of many centuries, rather than jeopardise the hope of the ideal. Dr. Herzl died before the investigation of the "Uganda project," as it was called, was completed. An unhappy report was followed by the dropping of "Uganda," even at the cost of a split in the movement.

It belonged to the philosophy of Dr. Herzl that colonisation, settlement, without the charter would be but a repetition of a time-dishonoured futile process of building without roots and without security. With his passing, and with the sterility and the hopelessness of early political success, the Zionist Organisation turned once again to practical work in Palestine, to putting as many Jews as possible into the country, to establishing as many as possible on the land, in industry, and in the towns. Means were limited, the Turkish Government was unfriendly, conditions were bitter and stubborn. But progress was made, and one central problem was grappled with valiantly—Jewish labour was rooted in the Jewish land. On a modest but solid foundation the fabric of the Jewish society arose, and it was there and in the hearts of the Jews of the world when the hour of the political decision struck.

Great men are, in a measure, the servants of time. Dr. Herzl had created the organisation and stirred the minds of the Jewish people. He did not reap where he had sown, because the political shape of the world denied him the harvest. But without his labour there could have been no harvest. The First World War created the opportunity, and Dr. Weizmann and his colleagues and the Zionist movement were there to seize it. The germ which, in his intercourse with Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Lansdowne, and Lord Cromer, Dr. Herzl had planted in the thought of British statesmen

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had lain dormant, but it was not utterly alien. Dr. Weizmann took over the mission of reviving and developing it with a generation even more receptive. Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Balfour were men of imagination to whom a large idea of historic significance had a natural appeal. Though the stress of the immediate urgent needs of a fateful struggle stimulated decision, they never thought of it as a mere expedient of the passing hour. They set it in the perspective of human progress. They conceived it in the grand manner, and they remained faithful to it when with so many the tide of honour ebbed, and the day of little things and little men resumed its sway over affairs.

On the 2nd November, 1917, the British Government issued the Balfour Declaration, addressed in the form of a letter to Lord Rothschild by Mr. Balfour, the Foreign Secretary :

“I have much pleasure in conveying to you on behalf of His Majesty’s Government the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations, which has been submitted to and approved by the Cabinet :

‘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 Jews in any other country.’

“I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.”

The text of the Declaration had been approved in advance by President Wilson, and in February and May 1918 it was endorsed publicly by the French and Italian Governments. “The Zionist leaders,” so Mr. Lloyd George put on record, “gave a definite promise that if the Allies committed themselves to giving facilities for the establishment of a national home for the Jews in Palestine, they would do their best to rally Jewish sentiment throughout the world to the Allied cause. They kept their word.”

What was the purport and intent of the Balfour Declaration? Mr. Lloyd George, who was Prime Minister at the time, told the Peel Commission :



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“The idea was, and this was the interpretation put upon it at the time, that a Jewish State was not to be set up immediately by the Peace Treaty without reference to the wishes of the majority of the inhabitants. On the other hand, it was contemplated that when the time arrived for according representative institutions to Palestine, if the Jews had meanwhile responded to the opportunity afforded them by the idea of a national home and had become a definite majority of the inhabitants, then Palestine would thus become a Jewish Commonwealth.”

President Wilson said: “I am persuaded that the Allied Nations, with the fullest concurrence of our own Government and people, are agreed that in Palestine shall be laid the foundations of a Jewish Commonwealth.” Gen. Smuts, a member of the War Cabinet, foretold “in generations to come a great Jewish State rising there once more.” Lord Robert Cecil, Sir Herbert Samuel, and Mr. Churchill used terms that could only mean that they contemplated the eventual establishment of a Jewish State.

To the Arabs the British and French Governments had on the 7th November, 1917, issued a joint declaration that “the object aimed at by France and Great Britain in prosecuting in the East the war loosed by German ambition is the complete and definite emancipation of the peoples so long oppressed by the Turks, and the establishment of national governments and administrations deriving their authority from the initiative and free choice of their indigenous populations.” There had also been correspondence between Sir Harold McMahon, on behalf of the British Government, and the Sherif Hussein of Mecca and his son. Upon these and one or two other statements the Arab leaders later declared that Palestine was included in the promised area of Arab independence, although this has been consistently denied by the British authorities. The most authoritative judgment on the Arab side is that of the Emir Feisal, who represented the Arabs at the Peace Conference. There he signed an agreement with Dr. Weizmann, in which he said:

“In the establishment of the Constitution and Administration of Palestine, all such measures shall be adopted as will afford the fullest guarantees for carrying into effect the British Government’s Declaration of November 2nd, 1917.

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“All necessary measures shall be taken to encourage and stimulate immigration of Jews into Palestine on a large scale, and as quickly as possible to settle Jewish immigrants on the land through closer settlement and intensive cultivation of the soil. In taking such measures the Arab peasant and tenant farmers shall be protected in their rights, and shall be assisted in forwarding their economic development.”

About the same time the Emir Feisal wrote to Professor Frankfurter (now a justice of the American Supreme Court) :

“We Arabs, especially the educated among us, look with the deepest sympathy on the Zionist movement. Our deputation here in Paris is fully acquainted with the proposals submitted by the Zionist Organisation to the Peace Conference, and we regard them as moderate and proper. We will do our best, in so far as we are concerned, to help them through ; we will wish the Jews a most hearty welcome home.”

To his agreement with Dr. Weizmann the Emir added this reservation : “If changes are made, I cannot be answerable for failing to carry out this agreement.”

He was referring to the fulfilment of claims to Arab independence. The Emir was subsequently driven by the French out of Syria, but he was made King of Iraq and his brother Emir (now King) of Transjordan. In the judgment of Col. Lawrence, the friend and counsellor of Feisal, the settlement made by Mr. Churchill in Cairo in 1922 fulfilled “our promises in letter and spirit (where humanly possible) without sacrificing any interest of our Empire or any interest of the people concerned.” Indeed, since that date the settlement has become as complete as Feisal had demanded. Every Arab State in the Middle East is now independent.

On the 24th July, 1922, the Balfour Declaration was embodied in the Mandate for Palestine confirmed by the Council of the League of Nations. The Preamble recited *inter alia* that :

“Whereas the principal Allied Powers have also agreed that the Mandatory shall be responsible for putting into effect the declaration originally made on November 2nd 1917 by the Government of His Britannic Majesty, and adopted by the said Power, [which is quoted], and whereas recognition has

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thereby been given to the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and to the grounds for reconstituting their national home in that country, His Britannic Majesty has accepted the Mandate and undertaken to exercise it on behalf of the League of Nations."

The Mandate then defines the degree of authority, control, or administration to be exercised by the Mandatory.

It should be noted that the sole title in international law of the Mandatory to rule over Palestine was the Mandate, and the origin and purpose of the Mandate as set out in the preamble are the adoption and implementation of the Balfour Declaration. The right to reconstitute their National Home in Palestine is recognised and confirmed for the whole Jewish people, not for any section of the Jews in any land. The Mandate set out the means by which the Mandatory should carry out the will of the League and its own undertaking. Here are the most essential articles :

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

The Zionist Organisation, so long as its organisation and constitution are in the opinion of the Mandatory appropriate, shall be recognised as such agency. It shall take steps in consultation with His Britannic Majesty's Government to secure the co-operation of all Jews who are willing to assist in the establishment of the Jewish National Home.

6. The Administration of Palestine, while ensuring that the rights of position of other sections of the population are not

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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.

11. . . . The Administration may arrange with the Jewish Agency mentioned in Article 4 to construct or operate, upon fair and equitable terms, any public works, services and utilities, and to develop any of the natural resources of the country, in so far as these are not undertaken by the Administration. . . .

15. . . . No discrimination of any kind shall be made between the inhabitants of Palestine on the ground of race, religion or language. No person shall be excluded from Palestine on the sole ground of his religious belief.

The right of each community to maintain its own school for the education of its own members in its own language, . . . shall not be denied or impaired.

22. English, Arabic, and Hebrew shall be the official languages of Palestine. . . .

25. In the territories lying between the Jordan and the Eastern boundary of Palestine as ultimately determined, the Mandatory shall be entitled, with the consent of the Council of the League of Nations, to postpone or withhold application of such provisions of this Mandate as he may consider inapplicable to the local conditions.

[By virtue of this article Great Britain excluded Trans-jordan from the operation of the National Home, and it was constituted as a separate State under the Emir Abdullah, brother of King Feisal, though still under the supervision of the High Commissioner for Palestine.]

Sir Herbert Samuel was appointed the first High Commissioner. He held office from 1920 to 1925. As long ago as 1914 he had, on his own initiative, submitted to Mr. Asquith's Government a memorandum advocating the re-establishment of the Jews in Palestine. His zeal was of the highest, his administrative talents distinguished, and his Liberalism and public spirit of the purest. It was far from an easy task which he had undertaken; it was indeed without precedent. The local Arabs repudiated the Balfour

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Declaration, and as early as 1920 and 1921 they had made murderous attacks on the Jews. There was no tradition in the Colonial or Imperial Service of such an undertaking as the constitution of the Jewish National Home. His staff was largely inexperienced, and, with very few exceptions, did not understand Zionism, did not believe it practicable, and thought that it inflicted injustice on the Arab majority. In 1921, after the disturbances in May of that year, there had been the first of what was to be a long series of committees and commissions of investigation, and the committee's report had put the trouble down to the Jewish National Home.

Sir Herbert Samuel sought to dispel or qualify Arab discontent by measures political and social. He made Haj Amin Eff el Husseini, the most extreme anti-Jewish leader, Mufti of Jerusalem and President of the Moslem Supreme Council. If Sir Herbert anticipated that office would moderate him he was to reap only disappointment. The Mufti used his strategic post as head of the Moslem community to fortify himself against rivals, and to concentrate and consolidate opposition to the Jewish National Home and the Mandatory Government. This was quickly apparent when the High Commissioner proposed to establish a Legislative Council in which the Jews would be a small minority and the Arabs would be the predominant influence. It was rejected by the Jews and even more emphatically by the Arabs. The Mufti would be content with nothing less than the dropping of the Jewish National Home, and an independent Arab Palestine under his own control. For the like reason he would have nothing to do with an Arab Agency parallel with the Jewish Agency. Sir Herbert introduced many economic and social reforms—an improved fiscal system, roads, hospitals, schools, a health system. When he retired in 1925 Palestine was beyond question the most prosperous and the best governed Middle East State.

Meanwhile the Jewish National Home was developing steadily. By 1925 the Jewish population had risen from 55,000 to 108,000, and the immigrants were politically minded, progressive, energetic. About one-fourth lived in the agricultural villages and three-fourths in the towns. The authority of the Zionist Organisation was firmly established, and it was fortified by the financial resources of the Jewish National Fund, which bought land, and the Foundation Fund, which provided for settlement. A quarter of a million

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acres of land had been purchased, and one hundred villages established. On the sands of Tel Aviv a wholly Jewish town was arising. In Jerusalem and Haifa new Jewish quarters were being built. New industries had been created, a country-wide electrical system was in being, a powerful trade union organisation had developed. The Jews had their own educational organisation and their own health organisation, and their own cultural instruments. Hebrew had become a living language for books, newspapers, theatres, and the daily intercourse of men.

The Jewish National Home was assuredly on the march, though the qualitative progress was more impressive than the quantitative. There was, of course, criticism of this or that government measure, but, to a candid mind, during the years of Sir Herbert Samuel's administration the Jews were being given their chance of making their National Home. During his latter years there had been no violent disorders but no conversion of Arab mentality. Reforms are not necessarily welcome to a primitive society, and they are no substitute for independence. Sir Herbert Samuel was succeeded by Lord Plumer, who held office from 1925 to 1928. His term coincided with an economic crisis in Eastern Europe, which was reflected in a check to the growth of the National Home. Immigration declined, and unemployment swelled. In 1927 the emigration was double the immigration. There was much hardship and suffering, but there were no disturbances; perhaps because the Arabs inferred that the National Home was bankrupt, more probably because they had a wholesome respect for the High Commissioner.

In 1928 a revival began, and the economic crisis in the National Home was overcome. It had brought into being an enlarged Jewish Agency, embracing non-Zionists as well as Zionists. Lord Plumer had been succeeded by Sir John Chancellor, and in August 1929 came an outbreak of violence on a greater scale than ever before. It arose from an incident in connection with the Wailing Wall, and was fanned by religious fanaticism. The sequel was a Commission of Inquiry, the Shaw Commission. The Report summed up the cause thus: "A National Home for the Jews, in the sense in which it was widely understood, was inconsistent with the demands of Arab nationalists, while the claims of Arab nationalism, if admitted, would have rendered impossible the fulfilment of the pledge to the Jews." There was no doubt

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where their sympathies in this controversy lay. Their chief recommendations were :

(1) The issue of a clear statement of the policy the Government intend to pursue in Palestine, including a definition of the passages in the Mandate safeguarding the interests of "the non-Jewish communities."

(2) A revision of the methods of regulating immigration to prevent "a repetition of the excessive immigration of 1925 and 1926," and to provide for consultation with non-Jewish representatives.

(3) An inquiry into introducing improved methods of cultivation and a corresponding land policy.

(4) A reaffirmation that "the special position assigned to the Zionist Organisation in the Mandate does not entitle it to share in any degree in the government of Palestine."

The meaning was plain—the sterilisation of the Jewish National Home as it then stood. The Land Report was plainer still. Sir John Hope Simpson estimated that there were only 6,440,000 dunams of land available for expansion, as against 16,000,000 estimated by the Zionist Organisation and 10,592,000 by the Palestine Commissioner of Lands. He concluded that until further development had taken place "there is no room for a single additional settler if the standard of life of the fellaheen is to remain at its present level," and on State lands no room for Jewish settlers. Even with the fullest development he believed that there would be room for not more than 20,000 families from outside. It is not necessary to analyse this gentleman's estimates. His conception of development was not Jewish, and events have already relegated his report to the cemetery consecrated to experts.

The reaction against the Balfour Declaration was now in full swing, and the political assault on the Jewish National Home in full blast. The Shaw Report gave indications of an "interpretation" which might stand the Mandate on its head. What was the meaning of the phrase in Article 6: "while ensuring that the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced"? The argument began to be heard that anything which changed the *status quo* prejudiced the "rights and position" of the Arabs, and that the Mandate was in effect not an injunction to establish a National Home for the Jewish people, but an

injunction to preserve Palestine as a purely Arab country. These casuists were prepared to concede, as an unavoidable evil, that what had been done so far could not be undone ; but thus far and no farther. A rumour had reached some of them that a Jewish philosopher and Zionist had asked for "a spiritual home" for the Jewish people. Great Britain had by now fulfilled all her obligations—she had permitted the Zionists to create "a spiritual home" for the Jewish people.

The word was now with the Government. The Prime Minister was Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, who had (when out of office) been sympathetic to Zionism. The Colonial Secretary was Lord Passfield. In October 1930 the Government issued its declaration of policy—the White Paper. The Mandate had now become "a double undertaking." "Economic absorptive capacity" was to be the limiting factor in immigration, but it was to be measured by Sir John Hope Simpson's estimates, opinions, and recommendations, with two omissions: there was no suggestion of a policy of development, and no reference to the effect of Jewish capital. To make the pill still more bitter there was a strong attack on the labour organisation in Palestine—this from a Labour Government. The Zionist Organisation denounced the White Paper as a violation of the Mandate, a view sustained by prominent English public men. As a result Mr. MacDonald issued a letter qualifying the White Paper ; but, as the Peel Commission says, "the main recommendations of the Shaw Commission and of Sir John Hope Simpson were promptly adopted and put into effect."

In 1933 Hitler came to power, and the flight of Jews from Germany began. In October Arab violence broke out again, and spread from Jerusalem to Jaffa, Nablus, and Haifa. It was directed against the Government as well as against the Jews. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's policy, while undermining the confidence of the Jews, had aggravated the hostility of the Arabs. Meanwhile from Germany was coming a greatly accelerated Jewish immigration—in 1934 there were 42,359 authorised immigrants, in 1935 there were 61,854. "Two new points stood out," said the Peel Commission. Far more future immigrants were to be absorbed into industry, and "so far from reducing economic absorptive capacity, immigration increased it. Unless, therefore, the Government adopted a more restrictive policy, or unless there were some economic or financial set-backs, there seemed no reason why the



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rate of immigration should not go on climbing up and up." In short, while the Administration and the Government were becoming increasingly hostile to the National Home, the National Home was striking its roots deeper and expanding. The two phenomena were connected. If Hitler was making his contribution to the National Home, he was making his contribution to international anxieties. Idealism was withering and calculations of expediency and power politics were occupying the official mind. The success of the National Home was in the '30s becoming its condemnation, as its apparent failure had been in the middle '20s.

If the Jews were achieving and pressing for more immigration, the Government was moving in the opposite direction. In 1936 it resolved to introduce an Ordinance restricting the sale of land, and to check estimates of absorptive capacity by a new Statistical Bureau. In December 1935 it proposed to set up a Legislative Council of 28 members, 23 to be non-official: 11 Moslems, 7 Jews, 3 Christians and two representatives of commercial interests. This would give an Arab majority, and in spite of paper limitations of its powers, the Council would have constituted a powerful barrier to the development of the National Home. It was repudiated by the Jews, criticised by the Arabs, and condemned in both Houses of Parliament. It was still-born, and on the 17th April disturbances began in Jaffa which were prolonged for three years as a kind of sub-war. The British Government was in a dilemma. It was prepared to go a long way, but was not allowed to go the whole way, towards stultifying the Jewish National Home; and it was not prepared to surrender an important strategical post by giving the Arabs independence. It was bound, therefore, to come into conflict with both Jews and Arabs. Could another Inquiry help it out of the dilemma? Thus came into being the Peel Commission of 1937.

The members of the Peel Commission were of a very different weight and vision from the majority of the members of its predecessors. They had imagination; they sought to do justice to the causes of both protagonists; they avoided juridical casuistry; and they looked for a permanent solution free from the vice of temporary expediency. They saw in the issue between Jews and Arabs a conflict between right and right, and they decided that these could be reconciled by the division of Palestine into two States, in which both peoples might find a measure of satisfaction

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for their aspirations. The Jews, though cavilling at the restricted area allotted to the Jewish State, did not reject the principle, and were open to negotiation. The Arabs rejected partition out of hand. The British Government at first accepted the principle, and then appointed a Partition Commission (the Woodhead Commission) to suggest modifications of this plan. Its report successfully killed partition; the modifications which it suggested made it unacceptable to any rational mind. Mr. Malcolm MacDonald was now Colonial Secretary, and Mr. Neville Chamberlain Prime Minister. Appeasement of the Arabs was the order of the day, and Mr. Malcolm MacDonald was an apt instrument. It was the year 1939, a few months before war.

The Chamberlain-MacDonald-Halifax device was a conference to be attended by representatives of the Jews, of the Palestine Arab Higher Committee, and of the Arab States. The invitation to the Arab States was an innovation. Presumably it was hoped that they would moderate the intransigence of the Mufti; but the Mufti, though personally absent, dominated the Arab representation, and earned the deserved compliment from Mr. MacDonald that Mr. Chamberlain was his (Mr. MacDonald's) Mufti. It was not a round-table conference, because the Arabs would not sit with the Jews; and only by stretching terms could it be called two conferences. It was in reality no conference at all. Mr. MacDonald produced his own scheme (which was probably prepared in advance), and submitted it to Jews and Arabs for acceptance. It was the notorious White Paper of May 1939. This was declared to be "an alternative policy [to partition] which will, consistently with their obligations to Arabs and Jews, meet the needs of the situation in Palestine."

Their intentions with regard to the political future were thus stated :

(1) The establishment within ten years of an independent Palestine State in such treaty relations with the United Kingdom as will provide satisfactorily for the commercial and strategic requirements of both countries in the future.

(2) At the end of five years from the restoration of order a Conference was to meet to draft a constitution. The constitution must safeguard the Holy Places, the Jewish National Home, and British strategic interests.

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(3) If at the end of ten years the British Government thought postponement advisable, the setting up of the Palestine State would be postponed indefinitely.

As from the beginning of April 1939, subject to absorptive capacity, for the next five years the immigration should be 10,000 yearly, plus 25,000 refugees if the High Commissioner was satisfied that their maintenance was ensured. After the five years there was to be no Jewish immigration without the consent of the Palestine Arabs. The Government "are satisfied that, when the immigration over five years, which is now contemplated, has taken place, they will not be justified in facilitating, nor will they be under any obligation to facilitate, the further development of the Jewish National Home by immigration regardless of the wishes of the Arab population."

In regard to land the High Commissioner was given power to "regulate" transfers of land to Jews.

It was in the true tradition of Munich that the White Paper concluded with a genuflection to a country "revered by many millions of Moslems, Jews, and Christians throughout the world who pray for peace in Palestine and for the happiness of her people."

The British Government did not "hope to satisfy the partisans of one party or the other in such controversy as the Mandate has aroused," and they were not mistaken. The Jews saw the National Home sterilised, its gates shut upon all except a few thousands of their great host of persecuted refugees, their access to the land barred, their future to be a minority in an ever-increasing and hostile Arab society. The Arabs were offered, in place of immediate independence, a phantom State which could not assume flesh for at least ten years, which could be kept a phantom as long as the British Government so desired, and which, if it ever did become flesh, would be a satellite of Great Britain. There was clearly one party which the White Paper was designed to satisfy—the British Government, which was to have the ultimate decision, and was to ensure its commercial and strategical interests whatever happened. The Government was willing to give the Arabs the negative pleasure of depriving the Jews of their rights, but not to give them the positive pleasure of conceding to them what they claimed.

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Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. MacDonald managed to secure from the House of Commons a reluctant majority of 89—out of 413 Government supporters only 281 voted for them. But they had perforce to submit their Statement of Policy to the Permanent Mandates Commission, where no whips operated. This was the Commission's judgment: four of the members (the majority) "did not feel able to state that the policy of the White Paper was in conformity with the Mandate, any contrary conclusion appearing to them to be ruled out by the very terms of the Mandate and by the fundamental intentions of its authors."

Immigration and land—these were the heart of Zionist endeavour. The Jews, fortified by the judgment of the majority of the Permanent Mandates Commission and by the support of independent opinion in Parliament, treated the White Paper as an illegal document, and in contempt of it organised immigration. Mr. MacDonald retorted by suspending all legal immigration from the 1st October, 1939, to the 31st March, 1940. "Whether there will be a resumption of immigration quotas after that date," he said, "must depend upon the circumstances then prevailing regarding illegal immigration." Over land the Government could disregard protest and opposition. Lord Halifax was Foreign Secretary. He had been brought into the Palestine Conference to try to induce the Jews to accept the White Paper. His speech on that occasion had sounded more like a threat than an argument, and it was fitting that he should activate the "phoney war" by publishing the Land Transfer Regulations in February 1940. These Regulations divided the land of Palestine into three zones. The first included all municipal areas, the Haifa industrial area, and the maritime plain between Tanturah and the southern boundary of Ramleh sub-district. Here there were to be no restrictions on transfers. The second zone (Zone A) included the whole of the hill country together with certain areas in Gaza and Beersheba sub-districts. Here there was an absolute prohibition of any transfer of land to Jews. The third area (Zone B) included the plains of Esdraelon and Jezreel, Eastern Galilee, the maritime plain between Hajfa and Tanturah, and between the southern boundary of the Ramleh sub-district and Beer-Tuviya, and the southern portion of the Beersheba sub-district. Here transfers to Jews could take place only with the consent of the High Commissioner, which in no instance was ever given.

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Zone A embraced 4,104,000 acres, 63·1 per cent. of the total area of Palestine; Zone B embraced 2,067,840 acres, 31·8 per cent. of the total area; together 94·9 per cent. The free zone was 332,160 acres or 5·1 per cent. In that free zone Arabs held about one-half, and that 2·6 per cent. of the area of Palestine represented, under the Regulations, the only Palestine land the Jews would be permitted to buy. The rest of the country was to be closed to them for ever. In twenty years England had declined from Lloyd George and Balfour to Neville Chamberlain and MacDonald, and the struggle for the freedom of mankind had been inaugurated by the betrayal of the Jews in their hour of most bitter agony.

## CHAPTER II

### THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT ARRIVES

ON the 4th May, 1945, the German armies surrendered. On the 27th July the Labour Government took office. Great Britain was in complete military and political control of the Near East with all the prestige of overwhelming victory. What new order was to be established, and specifically what new order in Palestine?

The existing order in Palestine rested on the Chamberlain Government's White Paper of 1939. The Palestine State was to be "independent" but a satellite of the United Kingdom. The ten years' postponement was to be a minimum period. It could be deferred indefinitely.

But if the provisions for the establishment and the independence of the Palestine State were a classic of ambiguity, all was precise and clear-cut with regard to the crystallisation of the Jewish National Home. Future Jewish immigration was limited to 75,000, spread over five years. "Illegal" immigration was to be suppressed. Jewish settlement on the land was to be limited. In certain areas it was to be prohibited, in others "regulated." The Jewish National Home was sterilised, its development denied. If and when Palestine should become a State, it would have an overwhelming Arab majority, and be in substance and in spirit an Arab State. His Majesty's Government would, in the Treaty, require to be satisfied that adequate provision was made for the protection of "the special position in Palestine of the Jewish National Home." This was characteristically hypocritical, for everybody knew that that could only be a scrap of paper; and besides, what example had Mr. Chamberlain's Government set of fulfilling its obligations for the special position of the Jewish National Home? The one independent international body with authority and duty to pronounce, the Permanent Mandates Commission, had rendered judgment: unanimously it had declared that the White Paper

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was incompatible with the construction put on the Mandate in the past by the Mandatory itself. By a majority it declared that it was "ruled out by the very terms of the Mandate and by the fundamental intentions of its authors."

The Permanent Mandates Commission was in good company. Mr. Churchill, Mr. Amery, and others pronounced the White Paper "a plain breach of a solemn obligation," "a cynical breach of pledges given to the Jewish people and the world," "a repudiation of the Balfour Declaration," "a breach of faith and of British honour," "a petition in moral and physical bankruptcy." The indictment was irrefutable. The Mandate was the title-deed of British sovereignty over Palestine, from which alone it derived its rights. Article 6 of the Mandate laid it down that "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, close settlement by the Jews on the land, including State lands and waste lands not required for public purposes." How could the final limitation of Jewish immigration to 75,000 souls be reconciled with that? How could the denial of the right of Jews to acquire land in 95 per cent. of the area of Palestine be reconciled with that? Article 15 laid it down that "no discrimination of any kind shall be made between the inhabitants of Palestine on the grounds of race, religion, or language. No person shall be excluded from Palestine on the sole ground of his religious belief." Jews in Palestine were to be denied access to land because they were Jews. Jews were to be excluded from Palestine because they were Jews.

The time chosen for announcing and operating these draconic infidelities was the most tragic in eighteen centuries of Jewish history, and the High Commissioner the most apt to administer them in their extremest rigour. The Jews of Germany were draining the bitter draught of persecution, and in a few months war was to come, the whole Continent of Europe was to be embraced within the Terror, and the murdering of six million Jews was to commence. The betrayal in Palestine, and the closing of the gates of refuge went remorselessly on. In February 1940, amid all the cares of the conflict, Lord Halifax could write to the League of Nations that "the question of the sale of land in

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Palestine calls for urgent action," and the High Commissioner issued the Land Regulations. They left just 2·6 per cent. of non-Jewish land in Palestine available for purchase by Jews without legal restriction. In administration the High Commissioner went even beyond the Regulations, for whereas the Regulations provide that "nothing in these regulations shall be deemed . . . to apply to the transfer of any public lands by or on behalf of the High Commissioner," Sir Harold MacMichael ruled that public lands would "ordinarily" be subject to the general restrictions. "Ordinarily" proved in practice to be an euphemism. No grant or lease was ever offered, not even in favour of Jews who had fought during the war in the British forces.

When war was imminent the Jewish Agency asked for the immediate admission, out of the 75,000, of 20,000 children from Poland and 10,000 young Jews from the Balkans. It was refused. They died in the gas chambers. When Hitler occupied the Continent no Jews were admitted from occupied countries on the pretext that Nazi agents might infiltrate. The Jews died, but with Arab assistance Nazi agents did infiltrate. When Jews managed to escape to Palestine all permits were suspended from October 1939 to March 1940 and from October 1940 to March 1941. The Government, with equal callousness and blindness, advised the Jewish Agency to save up permits for after the war, "when they could be given to Jews from Germany, who were of a 'better type' than those from the Balkans." In November 1940 the Government declared that Jews coming from Europe without permits would be interned outside Palestine, and never be allowed into Palestine even after the war. Some 1,800 Jews were on the "Patria" in Haifa awaiting deportation; the ship blew up and 250 were killed. Another shipload of 1,700 were deported to Mauritius, where 100 died of disease. The coffin-ship "Salvador" sank in the Sea of Mamora and 230 refugees, many of them children, were drowned. The "Struma" lay off Istanbul for two months waiting for Palestine visas which did not come. She was sent to sea, and sank with 763 out of her complement of 764 pitiful souls. Istanbul was practically the only port of escape from Hitler, but it was not till the middle of July 1943, when the extermination of the Jews could no longer be discredited, that the Government agreed to admit Jewish refugees reaching Istanbul; but it delayed another nine months before so informing the



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Turkish Government. By that time there were not many left to be saved.

Such was the Chamberlain White Paper in practice. Who can calculate how many Jewish lives it cost? What did the British Government purchase with their blood? Its policy was dictated neither by hatred of Jews nor by love of Arabs. It was a speculation to gain the support of the Arabs in the war, and it was a speculation that failed. For the Arabs, as Mr. Churchill said, the White Paper was another Munich. They rejected it, confident that they could not get less and might, by opposition and continued aggression, get more. Before the war there were significant pro-Nazi groups in Syria, the Lebanon, and Iraq, and the Syrian youth organisation enjoyed the privilege of a visit from Baldur von Schirach, head of the German Hitler-Jugend. The Mufti and some of his colleagues had found a home in Baghdad, and acquired no little influence there. In Egypt there was an influential Fascist party, and the King made no secret of his anti-British sentiments.

Before Italy declared war every Italian embassy and consulate in the East was a centre of espionage. In 1941 the Egyptian Minister of Defence handed over to the Italian military intelligence Egypt's defence plans and confidential British military information. In February 1942 force had to be used to compel Egypt to change its government. An Egyptian Territorial Army was formed, which was the nucleus of an anti-British force. Much effort was required to get it dissolved. It was not until February 1945 that Egypt (along with Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Lebanon) declared war on Germany. By that time the end and victory was in full view, and these States were rushing to the help of the victors. But a dreadful crime revealed the true Egyptian temper. As the Egyptian Prime Minister, Ahmed Maher Pasha, was on his way to the Senate, to repeat there the announcement of the declaration of war just made in the Chamber of Deputies, he was shot dead.

In Syria the only pro-British public figure, Dr. Shabander, was murdered in 1940 by pro-Nazi Syrians. Under the Vichy régime Beirut became a centre of Nazi activity in Arab lands, notably Iraq, and Arab leaders offered General Dentz, the Vichy Commander, full aid in resisting the British invasion. Even after the British occupation the University of Beirut was a home of

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espionage. The *coup d'état* in Iraq under Rashid Ali had widespread support from all classes, and the head of the Supreme Moslem Theological Seminary in Kerbala issued a fetva calling on all Moslems to fight the British. Rashid Ali made a treaty with the Germans, handing over to them the oil of Mosul. King Farouk sent a telegram congratulating the rebels. The head of the Syrian national bloc, a former President of Syria, did likewise, as did the principal leaders in Libya. In Syria and Lebanon money and arms were being collected for Iraq, and the Beirut students started to form a fighting unit. The pro-Nazi elements hold office now in these States. In Palestine, attempts were made to rouse sympathy. In Transjordan there were demonstrations, and the Bedouin raided the workers on the pipe lines, which were cut. The Transjordan Frontier Force mutinied, and 500 officers and men resigned or were discharged because they would not fight against the rebel Iraqis. It was only the speedy suppression of the rising in Iraq which prevented these many movements from becoming formidable.

Considerable efforts were made to recruit Arabs for the British Army. The response in Palestine was so limited that recruits were drawn also from Transjordan, Syria, and Lebanon. But the total so enrolled was only 9,000 (as against 33,000 Palestine Jewish volunteers), and of these one-half deserted—usually with their rifles—or were discharged long before the war ended. Not a few Arab soldiers went over to the Germans, and some were taken prisoner in German uniforms. The Mufti took up residence in Germany, and broadcast to the Arabs to revolt. He recruited Moslems in Yugoslavia. With him were numerous Arab leaders who had taken part in the Palestine troubles from 1936 to 1939. They were joined by some Egyptians and by the leaders of the Iraq revolt. There were others who settled in Turkey and established an espionage service in the Arab countries for the Germans. With the termination of hostilities all these persons were allowed to return to their homelands, where many of them took up important posts. The one exception was the Mufti. He was detained in Paris, was suffered to escape, was welcomed by King Farouk in Egypt, and was active in launching the war against the Jews.

This bankruptcy of their confidence should not have surprised the British Government. The Arabs in their politics have two

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master passions : xenophobia and extreme nationalism. They have no feeling for democracy to unite them in sympathy with the Allies or alienate them from Hitler. Their governments are, in all cases, oligarchic, and they are naturally susceptible to fascist propaganda. They dislike all foreigners, but most of all those nearest to them, with whom they come into closest contact. These happened to be the British, and they worked for the defeat of the British, without troubling to think that the scorpions of the Germans might be more intolerable than the whips of the British. The astonishing feature is not the hostility of the Arabs, but the blind refusal of the British Government either to recognise facts or shed illusions. In February 1945 the Foreign Ministers of the Arab States met in Cairo to draw up the statutes of an Arab League. Mr. Eden, the British Foreign Secretary, greeted the meeting in these words : "The British Government will view with sympathy any movement among the Arabs to promote economic, cultural, and political unity, but clearly the initiative in any such scheme has to come from the Arabs themselves." There was excessive modesty in this statement, for the Arab League was a favourite child of the Foreign Office. None of the Arab States had, as yet, so much as declared war on the Axis, a formality, however, which was to be accomplished soon. They were more realistic than Mr. Eden. The Axis defeat was now assured, and there was neither risk nor cost in getting on to the bandwagon. On the contrary there was profit. The United Nations was forming. In April there was to be held the first plenary session. When the Charter was approved and signed on the 26th June, every one of the Middle East States except Transjordan and Yemen was there as a full member. Seldom in political history has so little been so much rewarded.

The contrast with the Jewish efforts and position was tragic. There could, of course, be no doubt and no hesitation as to the Jewish attitude. The Jews were the first and the most bitterly ravaged of Hitler's victims. In the Allied countries they played their part with their fellow citizens, and hundreds of thousands fought on the various fronts. Conscription did not exist in Palestine. On the declaration of war, Dr. Weizmann, the President of the Zionist Organisation, wrote to the British Prime Minister : "The Jewish Agency has recently had differences in the political field with the Mandatory Power. We would like these differences

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to give way before the greater and more pressing necessities of the time." Promptly Palestine Jewry registered 85,000 men and 54,000 women volunteers for war service. But there was a radical difference of approach between Palestine Jewry and the Palestine Administration. Palestine Jewry wished to be represented in the war as a national entity. The policy of the White Paper and the essential conception of the British Government rested upon the doctrine that the Jews in Palestine (and indeed anywhere) were not a national entity but inhabitants of a Palestine mandated territory. It was assumed that to admit a distinctively Jewish character to a Jewish contribution would be resented by the Arabs, and, in any case, would call in question the principle of the White Paper. The Government was pressed to form a Jewish Fighting Force, and in 1941 the Cabinet agreed in principle: but opposition in Cairo and Jerusalem made the decision abortive, until late in 1944 Mr. Churchill pushed it through, and the Jewish Brigade Group was at length constituted. It fought in Italy and was in the advance into Germany. Meanwhile in Palestine the Administration discouraged recruiting, and even when Jewish units were formed they were for long masked as Palestinian troops. There were sixty such units, engineering, transport, mechanical, and the like. They served in Palestine, Egypt, France, Sudan, Abyssinia, Libya, Greece, Crete, Syria, Iraq, Italy, Austria, and the Low Countries. Many Jewish civilians carried out secret raids in the Middle East or were parachuted into Hitler's Europe. Half lost their lives.

Jewish Palestine's economic contribution to the war was notable. The Yishuv was the most modern, technically efficient, and scientifically equipped people in the Middle East, in the fields both of agriculture and industry. Their spirit was in the war, and they did not need the spur of compulsion or direction. By the end of 1943, of 340,000 between the ages of fifteen and sixty, 70 per cent. were engaged in agriculture, industry, and the forces, a mobilisation, wholly voluntary, as high as England's at its most acute. Two hundred and thirty-one thousand workers were directly engaged in the war effort. There was lack of machinery and of materials: inventive minds produced machinery and substitute materials. A great variety of commodities for the Fifth Army—from razor blades to engines for tanks—poured from the factories and were dispatched straight to the troops. Guns,

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ships, and machinery were repaired, and small craft for the Navy built. Foodstuffs, fruit, beer, wine, jam went to all the fronts of the Middle East. The textile industry delivered tents and tarpaulins, uniforms, underwear, flying suits, rubber, and silk for parachutes, a million pairs of shoes, military books, and pamphlets. Precision instruments, hospital equipment, medical, and electrical instruments, cables, ambulances, and a host of other necessary supplies were made or repaired. The British Commercial Agent wrote:

“I wonder how many people know that every one of the millions of land mines used in the brilliant campaign which retrieved the situation at El Alamein from imminent complete disaster, and ended by ‘knocking Rommel for six,’ was manufactured in Palestine. . . . The list of goods supplied to the Army is long and impressive and cannot be quoted here in full, but some extracts from it may be given: 100,000 accumulators, six million dry battery cells, between eight and nine million yards of electrical cables, six million two-gallon containers.”

In all, Jewish Palestine supplied the Forces with goods to the value of £33,000,000. Jewish constructors and engineers built landing grounds, bridges, wireless installations, and they operated as far afield as Iran and Bahrein. Two thousand persons worked in Haifa on ship repairs, and they carried them out in record time. The Yishuv was fortunate in having two scientific institutes of high quality—the University and the Daniel Sieff Institute. They were placed at the disposal of the Forces. They made quartz plates for aeroplanes, tanks, and transmitters: they produced, repaired, and tested delicate equipment and apparatus in great variety. The Hadassah University Medical Centre instructed officers in the local diseases; they developed a method to hasten the healing of wounds; they prepared vaccines, vitamins, hormones.

Such, in brief, was the character of Jewish Palestine’s contribution to the Allied victory. It indicated the significance in modern war and in peace of a skilled, adaptable, scientific, and laborious people, a lesson which, if read and understood, was not without guidance for policy. The Yishuv and World Jewry counted their six million martyred dead; they saw hundreds of

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thousands of their brethren in refugee camps, the remnants of ancient communities now, with all their institutions, their traditions, and their culture, utterly devastated : they knew that the world had closed its gates, and that even in the agony of imminent death Palestine had been denied. What were the victors, masters of the world, with the fate of the Jewish people in their hands, to offer ?

Mr. Churchill was an unrepentant Zionist. He had set up a Cabinet Committee which had worked out a plan of partition for Palestine, more or less on the lines of the Peel Report. It was not published, still less was it brought into operation. He was heavily preoccupied with the multitudinous labours of the war, and he was deeply distressed by the murder of his friend Lord Moyne by Jewish terrorists from Palestine. The task was left for the Labour Government, some of whose members had shared in the deliberations of the Cabinet Committee, and all of whom were familiar with Mr. Churchill's views, and knew that a sympathetic approach would meet with his valiant support. Most of the leaders of the Labour Party now in office had put themselves on record, as had the Party as a whole at successive Conferences. It was the Labour Opposition which had moved and voted against the White Paper in 1939.

In 1935, on the eve of the General Election, Mr. Attlee, later to be Prime Minister, had said :

“The British Labour Party recalls with pride that in the dark days of the Great War they associated themselves with the ideal of a National Home in Palestine for the Jewish People, and that, ever since, the annual Conferences of the Party have repeatedly affirmed their enthusiastic support of the effort towards its realisation. They have never faltered, and will never falter, in their active and sympathetic co-operation with the work of political and economic reconstruction now going forward in Palestine. This work is all the more necessary—indeed it has become an imperious duty—when German Jews have to bear the burden of other people's sins, and the Press of the world reverberates with their unexpected and unmerited sorrow and suffering.”

What had been an imperious duty in 1935 had assuredly not ceased to be such in 1945.

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During the debate in 1939, Mr. Morrison, later the second minister in the Labour Government, had condemned the White Paper:

“We regard this White Paper and the policy in it as a cynical breach of pledges given to the Jews and the world, including the United States, where we need to be done good, and where we need the goodwill of the great American people. It comes at a time of tragedy and apprehension for the Jewish race throughout the world, and it ought not to be approved by the House today. . . . If we do this thing we shall have done a thing which is dishonourable to our good name, which is discreditable to our own capacity to govern, and which is dangerous to British security, to peace and to the economic interest of the world in general and of our own country. I do not know what Government will be in power in ten years' time, and it would certainly be wrong for me to indicate what such a Government would do in circumstances that we cannot foresee and cannot know, but I think it ought to be known by the House that this breach of faith, which we regret, this breach of British honour, with its policy with which we have no sympathy, is such that the least that can be said is that the Government must not expect that this is going to be automatically binding on their successors.”

Less than ten years had passed, and a Labour Government with a great majority was in power. The White Paper was, at least, not to be automatically binding on it.

In March 1940, when the Land Regulations came before the House, Mr. Noel-Baker, on behalf of the Labour Opposition, moved:

“That this House regrets that, disregarding the expressed opinion of the Permanent Mandates Commission that the policy contained in the White Paper on Palestine was inconsistent with the terms of the Mandate, and without the authority of the Council of the League of Nations, His Majesty's Government have authorised the issue of regulations controlling the transfer of land which discriminate unjustly against one section of the inhabitants of Palestine.”

Mr. Noel-Baker said:

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“The Land Regulations are not only indefensible on economic grounds. They are open to grave political objections as well. They bring to the Jews of Palestine the three evils of the dispersion which they chiefly hate—barred doors, legal discrimination on racial and religious grounds, and permanent minority status. It was to permit them to escape that we made the Mandate. Today the Jews are a weak and hunted race. Tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of them have already perished ; their property has been stolen and destroyed, and it is because, in the general holocaust of civilised standards, their influence has gone that we dare to do this shameful act, that we try to repudiate the moral contract which we made with them during the last Great War. Does he [the Colonial Secretary] still believe that he or any man can in future close the land of Palestine to homeless Jews? He knows, as we know, there is one indispensable solution—the Jewish National Home in Palestine—and whatever else there may be, there must be that as well.”

Mr. Noel-Baker was later a member of the Labour Government.

The Labour Party, at its Annual Conferences, gave clear direction. In 1939 it passed a resolution declaring that :

“The White Paper, by imposing minority status on the Jews, by departing from the principles of economic absorptive capacity governing Jewish immigration ; by making Jewish entry dependent upon Arab consent, and by restricting Jewish land settlement, violates the solemn pledges contained in the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate. . . . This Conference calls upon the Government to rescind the White Paper and re-open the gates of Palestine for Jewish immigration in accordance with the country’s economic absorptive capacity.”

In 1940 an even stronger resolution was passed :

“In order to remove the root cause of Jewish suffering and to ensure the existence and free development of the Jewish people, international assistance should be given for the continued growth of the Jewish National Home by immigration and settlement.”

The 1939 Resolution was reaffirmed, and the Parliamentary Labour Party was requested to continue its policy, with a view



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to rescinding the policy of the White Paper. In 1943 the Resolution went much further. Not only did it reaffirm the traditional policy of the Party, but it asked that the Jewish Agency should be given the fullest authority to make the fullest use of the economic capacity of the country to absorb immigrants and develop the country; and it demanded for the Jewish people "an equal status among the free nations of the world."

In 1944 the Conference dotted the "i's" and crossed the "t's." It declared that:

"Here we have halted half-way, irresolute between conflicting policies. But there is surely neither hope nor meaning in a 'Jewish National Home' unless we are prepared to let Jews, if they wish, enter this tiny land in such numbers as to become a majority. There was a strong case for this before the war. There is an irresistible case now, after the unspeakable atrocities of the cold and calculated German Nazi plan to kill all Jews in Europe. Here, too, in Palestine, surely is a case, on human grounds and to promote a settlement, for stable transfers of population. Indeed we should re-examine also the possibility of extending the present Palestinian boundaries, by agreement with Egypt, Syria or Transjordan."

At the Conference in 1945, Dr. Dalton, on behalf of the Executive, formulated the Party's policy:

"This Party has laid it down and repeated it so recently as last April that this time, having regard to the unspeakable horrors that have been perpetrated upon the Jews in Germany and other occupied countries in Europe, it is morally wrong and politically indefensible to impose obstacles to the entry into Palestine now of any Jews who desire to go there. We consider that Jewish immigration should be permitted without the present limitations which obstruct it, and we also have stated very clearly that it is indispensable that there should be close agreement and co-operation among the British, American and Soviet Governments. In my view steps should be taken in consultation with those two Governments to see whether we cannot get that common support for a policy which will give us a happy, a free and a prosperous Jewish State in Palestine."

The line of pledges was unbroken; they had become clearer,

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stronger, and more definite with every passing year. The policy of the White Paper had been condemned and repudiated. The Jews had been encouraged to believe that a new Government would adopt a new policy. In their desperate plight, a new policy was desperately needed. But a Government in office is not a party in opposition—there was a hint of that in Mr. Morrison's speech of 1939. The White Paper existed, and for six years it had been in operation. Around it an official doctrine, an official practice, and official reputations and interests had grown. There were those who meant to fight for it, and, if possible, to perpetuate it.

The Palestine Administration had become wedded to the White Paper. It was their solution of the Palestine problem; it was the victory of their realism over the idealism of Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Balfour, and Mr. Churchill. They had applied it with the enthusiasm of conviction and a ruthless rigour, which Downing Street did not check but did not always admire. The centre of gravity of policy-making had, in large measure, shifted to the Middle East. In Cairo there had been set up a Minister of State and a Supply Centre, and around them was a cohort of men who were persuaded that they were the experts, the statesmen with knowledge and vision. They did not disguise their contempt for the ignoramuses in London. Every war leaves such a deposit. After 1918 in every Middle East capital there were British officials or soldiers who dreamed dreams of a great Arab Empire, with themselves the powers behind the throne. In 1945 the dreams had changed in form but not so much in substance. The emphasis now was on Arab nationality, on Arab unity in diversity, on influence rather than control. But in their scheme of things one thing was plain—the White Paper represented the utmost limit of concession to the Jews, and even that at best a regrettable necessity. In their thought it was for the Arabs to determine the fate of the Jews in and in regard to Palestine.

We may gather their philosophy from a Memorandum on "the interests of the Commonwealth in the Middle East" prepared by a study group at Cairo, and submitted to Chatham House in February 1945. It begins with the "axiom" that "for a military conqueror possession of the Middle East is the key to world power," and deduces from it that for England its absolute importance is entirely strategic, to keep a strong Power out of it. It

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presents to British policy three alternatives of which it rejects the first two: conservation, occupation, the encouragement of friendly States strong enough to defend themselves with help but unlikely ever to become a serious danger. British policy should aim at creating a united group of independent Arab States, joined collectively or severally with Britain for mutual assistance to maintain their territorial integrity. This involves immediately two consequences—that the French should be expelled from Syria and the Lebanon, and that no attempt should be made to set up a Jewish State. The Arabs would suffer “a cultural and spiritual home” for the Jews, but not more. The authors’ appreciation of the Jewish problem, the Jewish quality, and the world situation was expressed in a phrase: “there seems good reason to suppose that the consequences of the restoration of a reasonable condition in other parts of the world would be a substantial re-emigration of Jews from Palestine.” Not immigration into but emigration from Palestine was their anticipation, their desire, and their hope.

Coming to political machinery, Great Britain should make a series of treaties analogous to the existing Anglo-Egyptian and Anglo-Iraqi treaties. Somewhat naively we are assured that “it is important that the degree of success obtained by the policy of which these treaties are an expression should not be lost sight of.” Arab nationalism seeks not only independence but unity. There is the interesting but somewhat disconcerting claim that the success of the Alexandria Conference of 1944 for the establishment of the Arab League “may be said to have originated as a result of the speech of February 1943.” A movement for Arab unity which springs from a speech of a British Foreign Secretary might appear to some to lack spontaneity. On Palestine the authors give the assurance that Arab nationalists would now be willing to accept the White Paper as a whole. Palestine must remain an Arab country. “The British Government [the Coalition Government] is trying to find a compromise, but in reality it has already found the only possible compromise. Jews must be satisfied with what they have, and look elsewhere for a solution of the problem of European Jewry. The Zionists would never accept the White Paper officially, but many of them would acquiesce if it were carried out firmly.”

The position of Great Britain is to be consolidated by treaties with the Arab States which will give over to her the use of strong

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points. There should be an instrument of control and co-ordination of British Policy in the Near East. For this purpose the Minister of State at Cairo should be perpetuated, and should have an independent position over against Whitehall. (Presumably he should take his directives from the local experts, authors of the Memorandum.) Finally it is emphasised once again that, unless the French are put out of Syria and the Jews denied a Jewish State, the Arabs would write off the possibility of friendship and alliance with Great Britain.

There are many features of this document which invite comment—the authors' convenient historical reticences, their arrogance as monopolists of knowledge, their implied claim not only to advise but to control policy, their misreading of Arab sentiment, their complete ignorance of and indifference to the Jewish problem, world Jewry, and the Yishuv, their bland ignoring of the United States. But, for present purposes, it is their attitude towards Palestine which concerns us. A memorandum is, of course, a piece of paper; but this document expressed the views of the men on the spot in actual charge of the machine of administration. The White Paper existed, and for six years they and their like had operated it. When questions arose they had proffered their advice. They were fighting not only for the White Paper but for their reputations—their principal asset—which were bound up with it. They were not without friends, at least on this issue, in that Whitehall which they derided, and we may assume that their Memorandum was duly circulated and its theses preached.

### CHAPTER III

## MR. BEVIN TAKES CHARGE

PALESTINE was within the jurisdiction of the Colonial Office. The first Colonial Secretary in the Labour Government was Mr. Hall, the Under-Secretary was Mr. Creech Jones, who succeeded Mr. Hall in October 1946. Mr. Hall's views on Palestine had not hitherto been publicly manifested, but he was not suspected of any independence or singularity. Mr. Creech Jones was known as an ardent friend of the Zionist cause, but his position was subordinate, and office is not the same as opposition. The personal views of the Colonial Secretary and Under-Secretary, though they could not escape being matters of conscience, were, as speedily became evident, of no significance in regard to policy. Mr. Ernest Bevin, the Foreign Secretary, took charge of the Palestine problem.

The Cairo group, in their very simplified view of things, had reduced the international aspect to minute dimensions. France (having been ejected in July by Great Britain from Syria) was to have only a cultural influence in the Middle East; the United States was to supply men and money for economic development. Political and military influence was to be the monopoly of Great Britain, who was herself to make the decisions. It was highly doubtful whether France was reconciled to this humble rôle. It was certain that the United States had no intention of being so self-effacing. Every President, from President Wilson in 1918 to President Truman, had put himself on record. President Roosevelt had said: "I know how long and ardently the Jewish people have worked and prayed for the establishment of Palestine as a free and democratic Jewish Commonwealth. I am convinced that the American people give their support to this aim, and if re-elected I shall help to bring about this resolution." On the 2nd November, 1942—the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Balfour Declaration—a majority of the Senators and Representatives had submitted to President Roosevelt a declaration of their "continued

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interest in and support of the purposes and principles which it embodies," and which they explained "was designed to open the gates of Palestine to homeless and harassed multitudes and to pave the way for the establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth." The Democratic Convention in July 1945 had inserted into its programme a Resolution that Palestine may be constituted as a free and democratic Jewish Commonwealth. If cynics might discount this (and a similar Republican declaration) as mere electioneering, on the 2nd July, 1945, when the war in Europe was over, a majority of the members of both Houses of Congress addressed a letter to President Truman, in which they said :

"We earnestly request you to use your influence with the Government of Great Britain, the Mandatory for Palestine, to open forthwith the doors of Palestine to unrestricted Jewish immigration and colonisation ; and we hope you will urge all interested governments to join with the United States towards the end of establishing Palestine as a free and democratic Jewish Commonwealth at the earliest possible moment."

This appeal to the President was fortified by a petition in the same sense from the Governors of forty-eight States of the Union.

President Truman did not hesitate. He sent Mr. Earl Harrison to inquire into the condition and future fate of those displaced persons in Germany who might prove stateless or non-repatriable. Mr. Harrison reported that most Jews wanted to leave Germany and Austria.

"They want to be evacuated to Palestine now. . . . Palestine is definitely and pre-eminently the first choice . . . only in Palestine will they be welcome and find peace and quiet and be given an opportunity to live and work. . . . The main solution, in many ways the only real solution, of the problem lies in the quick evacuation of all non-repatriable Jews in Germany and Austria, who wish it, to Palestine."

On the 31st August, 1945, after receiving this Report, President Truman wrote to Mr. Attlee, the British Prime Minister :

"It appears that the available certificates for immigration to Palestine will be exhausted in the near future. It is suggested

that the granting of an additional 100,000 of such certificates would contribute greatly to a sound solution for the future of Jews still in Germany and Austria, and for other Jewish refugees who did not wish to remain where they are. . . . The main solution [of future peace in Europe] appears to lie in the quick evacuation of as many as possible of the non-repatriable Jews who wish it to Palestine."

In the very first days, therefore, of the Labour Government, it was brought home to Mr. Attlee and to his Foreign Secretary that there was a long history of American interest in Palestine, and that the American Government meant to be active in the settlement of this as of the other major international questions which called for determination after the war. The only immediate public response by Mr. Attlee was in the colourless phrase, in his first broadcast as Prime Minister, that one of the Government's immediate responsibilities was to "fulfil their commitments in the Mediterranean and the Middle East." Mr. Bevin's response was to summon to London the British diplomatic representatives in the Middle East, and on the 20th September the Foreign Office announced that he had been examining with them "the financial, economic, and social problems presented in that area." The odd thing about this communiqué was the omission of the word "political." It is difficult to believe that, at this time and gathering, political problems did not enter into discussion, or indeed that they did not occupy the foremost place. Financial, economic, and social problems were obviously long-range issues, but political problems were immediate and urgent. So far as Palestine was concerned, the request from President Truman was not the only matter. The World Zionist Conference had met in London in August, and asked that the gates of Palestine be opened to Jewish immigrants; that the Jewish Agency be vested with control of immigration, and with the authority for upbuilding the country; and that Palestine be established as a Jewish Commonwealth. On the other side, on the 12th July the Regent of Iraq, then in London, had declared that "the position of all the Arab States was that they would oppose the demand for 100,000 certificates as being contrary to the White Paper to which they agreed. The Arabs are not prepared to make any further concessions." King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia had said that peace in

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the Middle East depended on a solution of the Palestine problem ; and the Egyptian Minister for Arab Affairs had told the Press that eighty million Arabs would have no more Jewish immigration. The question was posed sharply before Mr. Bevin and his Middle East representatives, and must have been in the forefront of their deliberations.

Nor was Palestine the only Middle East political problem which thrust itself forward. On the 6th August the Egyptian Prime Minister had demanded the "removal of the restrictions imposed on the Country's independence, and the withdrawal of foreign troops"; and on the 23rd September the Egyptian Elder Statesmen declared that they "unanimously consider that the national rights, as affirmed by the entire nation and proclaimed by the Government, are the withdrawal of the British Forces, and the realisation of the unity of Egypt and the Sudan according to the will of the inhabitants of the Nile Valley."

There need be no doubt as to the advice which the Middle East diplomatists gave to the new Foreign Secretary. It was along the lines of the memorandum of the Cairo Group—the White Paper for the Jews, and military and political treaties between Great Britain and the Arab States. In the light of American action and the action of the Egyptian Government, neither line seemed to be very promising. What was the reaction of Mr. Bevin? Mr. Bevin was not known to have made any public commitment in regard to Palestine. He had been a very successful trade union leader and Minister of Labour, and in that hard but narrow field had acquired great faith in the possibilities of negotiation, and supreme confidence in himself as negotiator. This experience and these qualities could be applied, he believed, with equal good fortune in the arena of world affairs. He had taken part in the Coalition Government's examination of the Palestine question, and was, therefore, not wholly uninformed on that issue. He was self-willed, tenacious of purpose, resentful of opposition. In his first speech in Parliament on foreign policy he had said that "the Mediterranean and the Middle East were vital areas for the Commonwealth and the Empire." The words were trite, jejune ; but they indicated an approach—that the dominating consideration was strategical. In that he found himself in harmony with his professional advisers. But that did not necessarily and inevitably involve his acceptance of their means as well as of their end. If



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idealism was to yield to realism, if pledges were to make way for hard-headed calculation, it was still open to the Foreign Secretary to assess for himself the factors and to come to his own independent conclusion. But there was the danger that, if the moral element were excluded, the whole estimate might prove sadly awry.

On the face of things there could be no question where, in this question of Palestine, the balance of forces in the Middle East lay. The White Paper of 1939 stood and had been operated for six years with ruthless rigour. It was not correct (as the Regent of Iraq had said) that the Arab States had accepted it; but at least it met part of their desires, and it had the merit of existing. All the Arab States, if they agreed on nothing else, were strongly anti-Zionist. There were seven of them, five already in the United Nations, one in the Security Council. Far away but vocal was Mr. Jinnah, who in October was writing to Mr. Attlee protesting against Jewish immigration into Palestine and any departure from the White Paper as a breach of faith. "Surrender to appease Jewry at the sacrifice of the Arabs would be deeply resented, and vehemently resisted by the Moslem world and by Moslem India. Its consequences will be most disastrous." In the Foreign Office tradition the voice of Moslem India was almost as the voice of God. Exclusive of the Arabian peninsula five Arab States had a population of twenty-five millions and an area of 1,750,000 square kilometres. The total area of Palestine was only 27,000 square kilometres, its population 1,750,000, of which only some 600,000 were Jews. The Arab States embraced the main communications between Europe and the Far East, and they formed a great glacis covering the approaches from Russia—a strategical consideration much in the minds of Western rulers even before the end of the war. They surrounded the Jewish positions in Palestine, and the Palestine Arabs held the hill country, all Jaffa, and much of Haifa, and interpenetrated the Jewish settlements—a formidable situation if things should ever come to a military decision. The Arab States could, free from disturbance, accumulate arms; indeed some had treaty arrangements under which Great Britain was supplying them with arms, and even training their forces. The Jews of Palestine could obtain arms only secretly, and against the prohibition of the Administration.

Politically, on the 22nd March, 1945, the seven Arab States

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(Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Transjordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen) had entered into a pact to constitute the Arab League—

“desirous of strengthening the close relations and numerous ties which link the Arab States, and anxious to support and stabilise those ties upon a basis of respect for the independence and sovereignty of those States, and to direct their efforts towards the common good of all the Arab countries, the improvement of their status, the security of their future, the realisation of their aspirations and hopes, and responding to the wishes of Arab public opinion in all Arab lands.”

Article 2 of the Pact defined the purpose of the League as the strengthening of the relations between the member States, the co-ordination of their policies, and concern with the affairs and interests of the Arab countries. Each State was to have a single vote in the Council. Resort to force in disputes between the member States was prohibited. Each State was to respect the systems of government established in the other member States. Each was free to enter into treaty with non-member States. Cairo was to be the permanent Seat of the League.

There was a special annex dealing with Palestine, which may (partly because its precise meaning is obscure) be quoted in full :

“Since the termination of the last great war the rule of the Ottoman Empire by the Arab countries, among them Palestine, which had become detached from that Empire, has come to an end. She has come to be autonomous, not subordinate to any other State. The Treaty of Lausanne proclaimed that her future was to be settled by the parties concerned. However, even though she was yet unable to control her own affairs, the Covenant of the League in 1919 made provision for a régime based upon recognition of her independence. Her international existence and independence in the legal sense cannot, therefore, be questioned, any more than could be the independence of the other Arab countries. Although the outward manifestations of this independence have remained obscured for reasons beyond her control, this should not be allowed to interfere with her participation in the work of the League.

“The nations signatory to the Pact of the Arab League are therefore of the opinion that, considering the special circum-

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stances of Palestine, and until that country can effectively exercise its independence, the Council of the League should take charge of the selection of an Arab representative from Palestine to take part in its work."

Mr. Eden was reported to be the *accoucheur* of the Arab League, and it was certainly a prime favourite of the Middle East experts. The significant references to Palestine were not calculated to disturb these gentlemen, with whose own reflections they harmonised perfectly. They knew, however, that the Pact masked serious strains and tensions. There was an unquestionable aspiration towards union in the Arab world, but it was sentimental rather than political. Centrifugal forces have prevailed since the generation succeeding Mohammed, and the tendency towards the formation and maintenance of separate and independent States is more marked today than at any time since the rise of the Ottoman Empire imposed an enforced union. There is the ambition of Egypt to be the dominant Arab power, due to her population, her wealth, and her lesser remoteness from modern civilisation. This brings her into opposition with the ambition of the Hashimite princes to combine Transjordan, Syria, and Iraq into a single State capable of competing with Egypt for pride of place. There is the dynastic blood feud between Ibn Saud and the Hashimites whom he drove out of the Hejaz. There is the desire of the Christians to maintain control of the Lebanon, and to resist drowning in a Moslem ocean. The Arab League might take the eye, but how would it stand up to the test?

The social structure of the Arab States did not make for strength. Egypt, throughout her history, has been a land with a few rich families and millions of miserably poor peasants, who today have few outlets in industry. The average income of the peasant is £5 a year, and "the vast majority have diseases which enervate their bodies and dull their minds and diminish their ambitions to a sufficient extent, so that they have no courage to face an adventure into some area where they might improve this condition." Of the conscripts only a fraction are found fit to serve. In Iraq the tribal chieftains have made themselves owners of the tribal lands, and the fellah has been reduced to servitude. Eighty per cent. of the population have an income of less than

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£12 a year. In Syria a similar process has operated ; it is a land of emigration, and even in good years life is bitterly hard. In Lebanon the average daily income in a number of villages was found in 1938 to be  $2\frac{1}{2}d$ .

The political structure corresponds to the economic. Mr. Haurani writes :

“The dominant social class is still that of the landowners who continue to possess a semi-feudal status. No other social class is strong or self-conscious enough to stand against them. The cultivators have little effective power of moving from one estate or region to another ; although intelligent, they are too unenlightened to have much effective sense of grievance or capacity for political or economic combination. . . . There does exist, it is true, a large commercial middle class in the towns, but it is not an autonomous class capable of challenging the social powers of the landowners.”

Elections were always “made,” and, as there were no political principles, parties were based on persons or cliques, whose aim is to enjoy and exploit the profits of office. Public life was corrupt, and, as personal antagonisms tend to be more embittered than ideological differences, assassination was a consecrated method of political controversy. The spread of communism in Asia and in Europe provoked anxiety in the masters of these socially maladjusted States. That might have made them incline towards Great Britain, but here they were faced with a dilemma. They had cultivated an extreme nationalism, in part as a counter-irritant to social evils, and that brought them into conflict with Great Britain as the Power claiming and seeking the maximum of influence. As has been noted, the war with Germany was no sooner ended than Egypt was demanding the withdrawal of British troops from Egypt and the union of the Sudan with Egypt. That problem and the similar problem of Iraq were occupying the mind of Mr. Bevin at the same time as the problem of Palestine, and it was to prove just as obstinate to formulas.

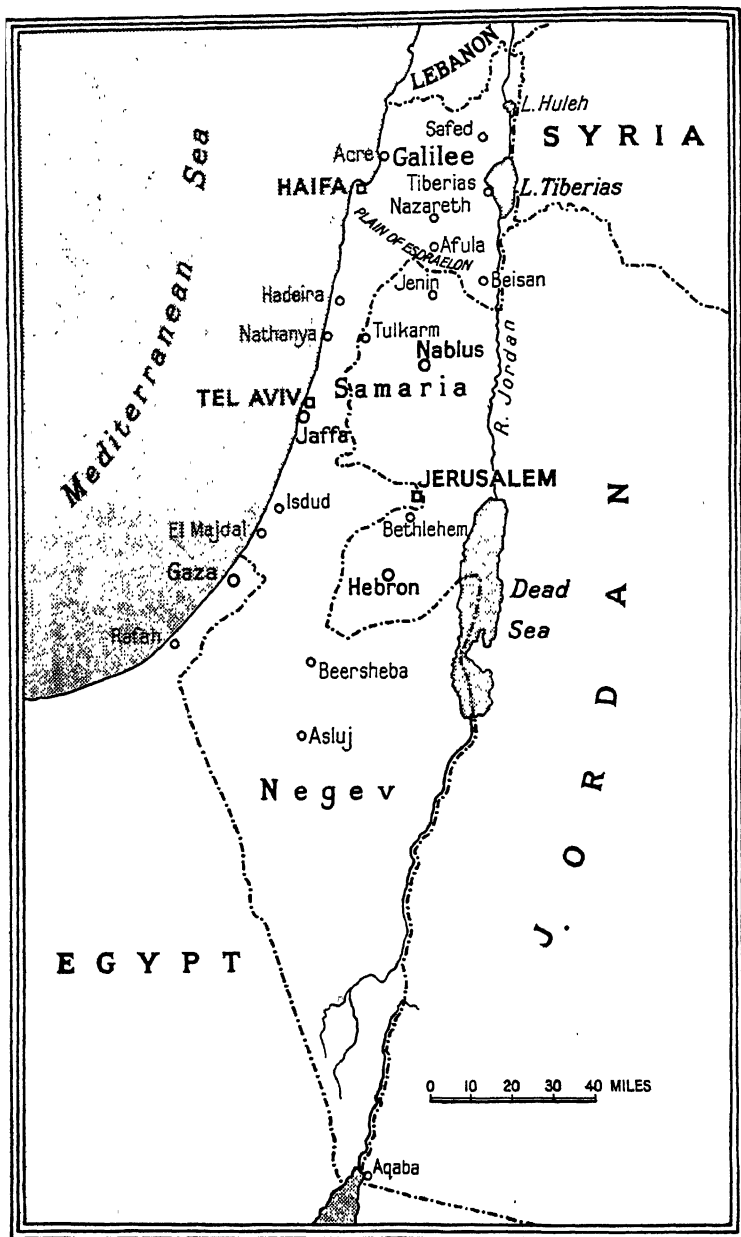
In all these Middle East manoeuvres there was a difficulty specially calculated to trouble the mind of a Labour Government. In the competition for power and influence the Foreign Office was driven to seek the support of the Arab feudal oligarchs. If they sought to gain Arab favour by resisting Jewish claims in

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Palestine, they would find themselves opposed to a community socially advanced, with its dominant element professing and practising doctrines not distinguishable from those of the Labour Party. Principles, a cynic has said, should find their place not in a policy but in a peroration. But the situation was at least awkward.

The Jewish community in Palestine contrasted notably with the Arab world. It was puny in numbers (some 600,000) and in the lands that it held. But it was educated, with an apparatus of instruction ranging from the elementary school to the university. It was applying to both agriculture and industry modern techniques. The number of its agricultural settlements had risen by 1945 to 265, and every month saw that number increase. In twenty years the number of Jews engaged in industry had multiplied nineteen times. From the beginning it had been the aim that in the Jewish society every form of labour, from the roughest toil to the highest scientific work should be undertaken by Jews, and the community had grown in fidelity to that ideal. Labour was probably the most organised (and possibly endowed with the largest vision) in the world. It was not only a trade union and a political party, it was by far the largest single industrial organisation in the country, with interests in cement, metals, construction, and many other enterprises.

Jewish Palestine was a complete democracy in spirit, and, so far as conditions permitted, in organisation. There was no Jewish State, but there was a Vaad Leumi, a National Assembly, for which every adult Jew, male or female, had a vote. Beyond that was the Jewish Agency, recognised under the Mandate "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 Jewish Agency was elected by the Zionists of the world. It was a common complaint of those who disliked it that it was a State within a State. There was truth in that statement. There was hardly a field of activity affecting the Jewish community in which it was not a driving force, and it enjoyed a loyalty and exercised an authority which could not be claimed by the Administration from any



1. General Map of Palestine

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section of the Palestine population. The fact that this loyalty and this authority were rendered and exercised voluntarily, without any of the State mechanism of compulsion, increased its prestige.

Apart from the network of economic, cultural, social, and political organisations which knit together the Jewish community, there was a military organisation, the Hagana, in close association with the Jewish Agency. In the early days of modern Jewish settlement land, cattle, life were always threatened by lawless men, and the settlers mobilised guards for their protection. In 1920 and 1921 there were Arab attacks in town and country, and as a measure of self-defence Hagana became an organisation in which Jews generally were invited to serve. In the settlements it was officially recognised, and the guards were allocated a modest equipment of useless shotguns. In the towns it was tolerated and ignored. More modern and adequate arms were imported, of course illegally. The Hagana received stimulation during the trouble of 1936-9 when it co-operated under General Wingate, the unorthodox but successful commander, against the Arab rebels and bandits. During the war the Jewish Agency undertook the task of recruiting Jewish men and women for service outside Palestine and in defence of Palestine. When Rommel stood at the gates of Alexandria and the evacuation of the British from Palestine seemed imminent, it was contemplated that the defence of Palestine would pass to the Jews. They would stand and die. British officers were, therefore, deputed to train and arm the Hagana. When peace came thousands of Jewish soldiers who had fought in the Allied armies returned to Palestine, and took their place in the national force. At the same time, in view of the anticipated emergency, the whole youth of the Yishuv was called up for training in one form or another.

There were divisions in the Yishuv. There were a small number of the extremest orthodox, who looked for salvation to God and his Messiah alone, and condemned human intervention as impious. There was a larger group, the Agudah, who denounced Zionists and the Jewish Agency as irreligious. There was the Ihud, who preached harmony and brotherhood to the Jews and Arabs, and who were not unfairly described as idealists with both feet firmly planted in mid-air. They enjoyed the admiration of similarly constituted Western Christians. There was a section of the Labour

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Party, the Hapoel Hatzair (the Young Guard), who had affinity with the Ihud but had their own peculiar panacea. All these groups might criticise the Jewish Agency, but none of them was disposed to cause the Mandatory Power any trouble or inconvenience. Very different in outlook and temper were the Irgun Zvei Leumi and the Sternists.

The Irgun was an offshoot of the Revisionists, with whom it continued to maintain contact. The Revisionists had broken from the Zionist Organisation under the leadership of Vladimir Jabotinsky. Jabotinsky's programme was a Jewish State on both sides of the Jordan : and he denounced what he believed to be the weak and temporising methods of the majority. He broke away and formed his own New Zionist Organisation. He had died, and out of his group there had emerged a militant body calling itself the Irgun Zvei Leumi (the Organisation of the National Army). It first became manifest towards the end of the 1936-9 troubles. Many Jews were being murdered by the Mufti's Arabs, but the Jewish Agency and the Hagana set their faces sternly against reprisals. The Irgun began to retaliate by indiscriminate outrages in spite of appeals and condemnation by the Agency and the Vaad Leumi. The White Paper was the signal for a recrudescence of violence by the Irgun, and in June 1939 the Army and the Administration began to take action. Collective punishment was inflicted on Jewish communities, traffic in and out of Tel Aviv was stopped for thirty-six hours, Jewish cafés and shops were closed to the forces, and a two days' curfew was imposed in Tel Aviv. Violence did not diminish, but took a second direction—against the Government. In June the post office and the railway station in Tel Aviv were bombed.

With the coming of war the Irgun suspended action, but it is the nature of splinter parties to generate splinters. In 1940 when the Government introduced the Land Regulations, when it announced that "illegal" immigrants would be interned outside Palestine and would not be admitted to Palestine even after the war, and when the tragedies of the "Patria" and "Salvador" occurred, a group under the leadership of Stern broke away and resumed violence.

Whatever other differences there might be, upon one issue all Jewish parties in Palestine were agreed—White Paper or no White Paper, war or no war, immigration should continue, and no effort



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should be spared to save some European Jews from extermination and to keep the gates of Palestine open. Even the pacific spokesman of the Ihud, Dr. Magnes, declared that he would go down to the beaches to help the refugees in. To the charge that these were "illegal immigrants" the answer came that the White Paper was illegal, a blatant breach of the Mandate. Promptly after the issue of the White Paper a large-scale scheme was developed. In the month of August 1939 some 1,200 "illegals" were landed, and after the "Struma" tragedy the Government was forced to admit them, though it interned them. When the tide of war turned the Irgun resumed violence. In February 1944 it bombed the Immigration Department offices at Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Haifa, and announced "we have started the battle to open the gates of Palestine to persecuted Jews." In March the C.I.D. offices at Haifa and Jaffa were blown up. In April the Government broadcasting station at Ramallah was seized. The Government replied by restoring the death penalty for carrying arms and bombs, and put into operation the apparatus of military courts and defence regulations which had originally been devised against the Arabs, with successive extensions and amplifications. The Agency denounced the outrages as "helping the enemies of the Jewish people," but they went on with increasing violence. In August an attempt was made to murder Sir Harold MacMichael, the High Commissioner, and in November two Stern youths murdered Lord Moyne, the Minister resident in Cairo, an appalling crime. One positive step to deal with the situation the Government had taken—they had at long last retired Sir Harold MacMichael and appointed Lord Gort. Sir Harold was associated in the Jewish mind with the tragedies of the "Struma," the "Salvador," and the whole policy of squeezing the last drop of rigour out of the White Paper. Lord Gort had no such trail behind him, and (though a terrorist attempt was made on his life) he soon won the respect of the mass of the Yishuv. Unhappily he was smitten with a mortal disease and his tenure of office was all too brief.

The authors of these deeds—and in the years to come they were to be followed by many even more peculiarly calculated to outrage public opinion in England—were denounced as Nazi gangsters, thugs, murderers, and the vocabulary of oburgation was ransacked for fitting terms. But it is as well to see how they looked to

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themselves when fate overtook them. Consider these words by Amnon Moscovitch before a British Military Court :

“We are sons of a certain family. In so far as it has been planted and grown in Eretz Israel, it is a Hebrew family. But it is not only Hebrew. It is, properly speaking, an universal family. Its age is eternity ; the region inhabited by it is the globe ; the secret of its existence is faith ; its fate is suffering ; its happiness is self-sacrifice ; its enemy is oppression ; its banner is liberty ; and its name, its name is *resistance*.

“Your administration deprives us of all ‘the inalienable rights bestowed by the creator upon all men.’ It deprives us, it deprives our nation, of the right to live. Through its fault, through its pretended legislation, which has closed the gates of our homeland to our brethren, millions of Jews have been slaughtered ; through its fault tens of thousands of Jews are still starving in concentration camps and refugee camps. And if your rule has become a rule of tyranny in its most appalling sense, then it is our right, our duty, to fight for the overthrow of that rule and the establishment of another rule, a Hebrew rule, which will protect the security and the future of the exterminated nation. We are not over-estimating our strength. It is inconsiderable in comparison with yours. But there is a great principle of history ; a big force aiming at despoiling and oppressing is inconsiderable ; a small force aiming at freedom and justice is powerful.

“I have already told you that we belong to the international and universal family of resistance. One tragic feature marks the way of that family. It is compelled to use force, but it despises physical force. It holds a rifle or a pistol, but its true desire is to work with a spade or a pen.”

These men of violence were mostly young. Some had fought in the resistance movements of Europe, some in the British forces. Hardly one but numbered kith and kin slaughtered by Hitler. They were not bandits seeking a selfish gain but men dedicated to a cause, who had become convinced that there was no other way than the way they had chosen. They denied any authority, moral or legal, in the administration against which they were warring, and they were absolutely immune to any arguments, appeals, or threats. Their courage and their fortitude shed death

of its terrors. They were fanatics, and fanatics are capable of terrible deeds, but they are difficult to overcome. During the war years the British Government had raised, sustained, and armed resistance movements in many countries, and these movements had produced many heroic and not a few terrible deeds. It was difficult for Englishmen to understand that in Palestine the rôles were reversed, and that resistance was being directed against themselves. But it was necessary, if only for a more correct appraisal of the problem, that the attempt should be made.

More constructive from the Jewish point of view, and not less embarrassing to the Government, was the resumption and the vast expansion, with the ending of the war, of "illegal" immigration. Through French, through Italian, through any practicable European ports the refugees passed into whatever craft the organisers could make available. The acute shortage of craft, the secrecy of the movement, meant desperate crowding into ships snatched for the purpose from the dump-yards. Not without truth did the Director-General of U.N.R.R.A. say "the Jews have a positive plan for a second exodus." It was upon the harsh conditions in which this exodus was perforce conducted, not upon its moral and political significance, that British public opinion was invited by the Foreign Office to concentrate. A significant effort of rescue and redemption was presented as a racket, its organisers as heartless speculators in human misery; and the governments of the world were invited to co-operate in suppressing it. But those refugees, who had been through Hitler's camps, knew better than these hypocritical patrons the true nature of privation and suffering. They went aboard the "coffin ships" gladly, in full knowledge and of their own free will, as men and women who, after years of tragedy, of despair, and of hope defeated, were at long last going free, upright, to their own home.

The appeals of the British Government for co-operation met with no sympathy. Plain men in the United States saw too close a parallel between the struggle of the Yishuv with a British administration and the struggle of their own founding fathers with a British administration. The French resented bitterly their summary expulsion by the British from Syria; and all the European governments approached had had their own resistance movements, and could not see through British eyes.

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To give a more or less adequate picture of the Palestine problem as it faced Mr. Bevin, something must be said of the shape the administration system had taken. During the Arab revolt in 1937 an Order in Council had been issued which authorised the High Commissioner to make such Defence Regulations "as appear to him in his unfettered discretion to be necessary or expedient" for securing the public safety. The Defence Regulations made under the Order gave power to the Commander-in-Chief (who was independent of the High Commissioner) to set up Military Courts, to appoint Military Commanders for various areas, to confirm sentences, to dispose of the police. The British Military Courts were given exclusive jurisdiction over crimes such as the use or possession of arms, and concurrent jurisdiction over other offences arising under the Regulations. In the areas which the Military Commander ruled, the Civilian District Officer was his adviser. The Military Commander could expel and restrict the movements of any person, or order his detention without trial and without limit of time. He could order the forfeiture or destruction of any building, control traffic, open or close any business. The members of a Military Court need have no legal knowledge, and were bound by no rule of procedure, and could admit any evidence. Their judgment was final. A condemned prisoner need not be informed of the date of his execution, or be given hospital treatment, or be visited, or have the services of a minister of religion. A censorship of correspondence and the press was set up, and any newspaper could be closed or press be confiscated. No act of the military authorities could be called in question before the Civil Courts.

These Regulations were not just a matter of theory. They were applied. They were the constitution, and they governed the conditions under which the inhabitants lived. To describe this Palestine as a "police State" is not strictly accurate, since, for practical purposes, unlimited authority had been transferred to the military, and was being fully exercised. But civil law and liberty had disappeared. Bismarck had said that you can do anything with bayonets except sit on them. The White Paper had driven the British Government to the experiment of sitting on bayonets, and in September the number of bayonets was increased by the dispatch of a Parachute Division.

That was not, from the Jewish point of view or from the general

point of view, an encouraging indication of how the mind of the Labour Government was working.

On the 13th November Mr. Bevin announced, not a new policy, but an old method. There was to be one more inquiry to be added to the long catalogue of inquiries, every one of which had hitherto proved abortive. This was to have one novel feature—it was to be a joint Anglo-American Committee. President Truman had asked for 100,000 certificates at once. Mr. Bevin was to get time, and Mr. Truman was to be made a party. Not a partner—that was to become evident later—or at best a junior partner. America was to share the burdens, but Mr. Bevin was to determine the policy. The design was not stated in such brutal terms, but Mr. Bevin (who had no great opinion of Mr. Truman's capacity and no small opinion of his own craft) had the things worked out in his own mind. Mr. Bevin's speech was notable for what he did not say as well as for what he did say. Not once did he mention the Jewish National Home or the Jewish nation or indicate his awareness that Zionism was a Jewish national movement. Indeed, when he referred to the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate he spoke merely of an undertaking to establish "a Jewish Home." The whole problem was just one "created by Nazi aggression." It was just the general problem of "the plight of the victims of Nazi persecution among whom were a large number of Jews." His first emphasis, when outlining a solution, was upon Europe. "We cannot accept the view that the Jews should be driven out of Europe, and should not be permitted to live again in these countries without discrimination, and contribute their ability and talent towards rebuilding the prosperity of Europe." The possibility—the fact—seems wholly to have escaped him that the remnant of the Jews who had escaped from Hitler, and who still groaned under his former satellites, might have no desire to stay among the graveyards of their dead or the ruins of their communities, or to dedicate themselves to rebuilding the prosperity of their murderers and oppressors.

When Mr. Bevin came to speak of Palestine he was equally disturbing. Palestine could make only a contribution. Palestine was a very difficult problem. There was a dual obligation under the Mandate. There was no clear definition of this dual obligation. All efforts had proved unavailing to devise some arrangement by which Arabs and Jews might live together in peace and harmony,

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but (somewhat inconsistently) the task that was to be accomplished was to find means to reconcile these divergences. "In dealing with Palestine parties have entered into commitments. These are the commitments imposed by the Mandate itself, and in addition the various statements of policy which have been made by His Majesty's Governments in the course of the last twenty-five years." What did this mean if it did not mean that the various declarations by the Labour Party (when it was not a Government) were not commitments? There must be no settlement by force; it must be settled by discussion and conciliation. "But I must emphasise that the problem is not one which can be dealt with only by relation to Palestine; it will need a united effort by the Powers to relieve the miseries of these suffering peoples."

It required no deep penetration to perceive that Mr. Bevin felt himself in no way bound by anything that his colleagues and his party had ever said about Palestine, that for him the Jewish problem as a national problem did not exist, and that his interpretation of the Mandate set him upon the broad road which had led others to the White Paper. The terms of reference of the Committee of Inquiry did not conflict with his philosophy. They were :

"1. To examine political, economic, and social conditions in Palestine as they bear upon the problem of Jewish immigration and settlement therein and the well-being of the peoples *now living therein*. [The words "now living therein" were significant, for the Balfour Declaration was a promise to all Jewry.]

"2. To examine the position of the Jews in those countries in Europe where they have been the victims of Nazi and Fascist persecution, and the practical measures taken or contemplated to be taken in those countries to enable them to live free from discrimination and oppression and to make estimates of those who wish or will be impelled by their conditions to migrate to Palestine or other countries outside Europe.

"3. To hear the view of competent witnesses and to consult representative Arabs and Jews on the problems of Palestine as such problems are affected by conditions subject to examination under paragraph (ii) above and by other relevant facts and circumstances, and to make recommendations to His Majesty's

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Government and the Government of the United States for *ad interim* handling of these problems as well as for their permanent solution.

“ 4. To make such other recommendations to His Majesty’s Government and the Government of the United States as may be necessary to meet the immediate needs arising from conditions subject to examination under paragraph (ii) above by remedial action in the European countries in question or by the provision of facilities for emigration to and settlement in countries outside Europe.”

Meanwhile the White Paper was in force, save for a trickle of “legal” immigration at the rate of 1,500 a month, and resistance was to be repressed. In answer to a question Mr. Bevin, departing from his manuscript, revealed his own mind unclouded by official terminology. With superb self-confidence he said that “I will stake my political future on solving this problem, but not in the limited sphere presented to me now.” “The Arabs are meeting me very well and I thank them for it. There is a great sense of responsibility, except for one small section among Jewry, and all the Jews are not Zionists.” Mr. Bevin was evidently looking forward to a solution of the Palestine problem without Zionism, and was hugging the delusion that he would find powerful allies in Jewry for that solution. He was to be doubly disappointed. The Arabs were to resist his charming, and the Jews were not to forget Jerusalem. The Arab Higher Committee promptly declared that the last word for the solution of the Palestine problem remains with the Arabs, who consider Britain’s present policy a violation of her pledges. They added the most unkindest cut of all—that Mr. Bevin’s only concern is to perpetuate the Mandate under the name of a trusteeship.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ANGLO-AMERICAN COMMITTEE

NOT improbably, Mr. Bevin shared the view of the Arab Higher Committee that the Anglo-American Committee would, like all its predecessors, prove abortive. He promised the Committee that, if they presented a unanimous report, he would carry out their recommendations, but he could hardly have anticipated unanimity. The Committee, however, to the general surprise, finished its work in the prescribed 120 days. It made enquiries in the United States, in England, on the Continent, in Palestine, and in the Arab States, and it presented a unanimous report, a report remarkable not only for unanimity but for brevity. These were its recommendations :

(1) We have to report that such information as we received about countries other than Palestine gave no hope of substantial assistance in finding homes for Jews wishing or impelled to leave Europe. But Palestine cannot meet the emigration needs of the Jewish victims of Nazi and Fascist persecution. The whole world shares responsibility for them and indeed for the resettlement of all "displaced persons." We therefore recommend that our Governments together, and in association with other countries, should endeavour immediately to find new homes for all such "displaced persons" irrespective of creed or nationality, whose ties with their former communities have been irreparably broken. Though immigration will solve the problems of some victims of persecution, the overwhelming majority, including a considerable number of Jews, will continue to live in Europe. We recommend therefore that our Governments endeavour to secure that immediate effect is given to the provision of the United Nations calling for "universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and



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fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.”

(2) We recommend (A) that 100,000 certificates be authorised immediately for the admission into Palestine of Jews who have been the victims of Nazi and Fascist persecution ; (B) that these certificates be awarded as far as possible in 1946 and that actual immigration be pushed forward as rapidly as conditions will permit.

(3) In order to dispose, once and for all, of the exclusive claims of Jews and Arabs to Palestine, we regard it as essential that a clear statement of the following principles should be made :

(i) That Jew shall not dominate Arab and Arab shall not dominate Jew in Palestine.

(ii) That Palestine shall be neither a Jewish State nor an Arab State.

(iii) That the form of Government ultimately to be established, shall, under International Guarantee, fully protect and preserve the interests in the Holy Land of Christendom and of the Moslem and Jewish faiths.

Thus Palestine must ultimately become a State which guards the rights and interests of Moslems, Jews, and Christians alike ; and accords to the inhabitants, as a whole, the fullest measure of self-government, consistent with the three paramount principles set forth above.

(4) We have reached the conclusion that the hostility between Jews and Arabs and, in particular, the determination of each to achieve domination, if necessary by violence, make it almost certain that, now and for some time to come, any attempt to establish either an independent Palestine State or independent Palestinian States would result in civil strife such as might threaten the peace of the world. We therefore recommend that, until this hostility disappears, the Government of Palestine be continued as at present under Mandate pending the execution of a Trusteeship Agreement under the United Nations.

(5) Looking towards a form of ultimate self-government, consistent with the three principles laid down in Recommendation No. 3, we recommend that the Mandatory or Trustee

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should proclaim the principle that Arab economic, educational, and political advancement in Palestine is of equal importance with that of the Jews, and should at once prepare measures designed to bridge the gap which now exists and raise the Arab standard of living to that of the Jews; and to bring the two peoples to a full appreciation of their common interest and common destiny in the land where they both belong.

(6) We recommend that pending the early reference to the United Nations and the execution of a Trusteeship Agreement the Mandatory should administer Palestine according to the Mandate which declares with regard to immigration that "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."

(7) (A) We recommend that the Land Transfer Regulations of 1940 be rescinded and replaced by regulations based on a policy of freedom in the sale, lease or use of land, irrespective of race, community, or creed; and providing adequate protection for the interests of small owners and tenant cultivators.

(B) We further recommend that steps be taken to render nugatory and prohibit provisions in conveyances, leases, and agreements relating to land which stipulate that only members of one race, community or creed may be employed on or about or in connection therewith. [This is directed primarily against Jewish National Fund Leases.]

(C) We recommend that the Government should exercise such close supervision over the Holy Places and localities such as the Sea of Galilee and its vicinity as will protect them from desecration and from uses which offend the conscience of religious people: and that such laws as are required for this purpose be enacted forthwith.

(8) Various plans for large-scale agricultural and industrial development have been presented for our consideration: these projects, if successfully carried into effect, could not only greatly enlarge the capacity of the country to support an increasing population, but also raise the living standards of Jew and Arab alike.

(9) We recommend that, in the interests of the conciliation

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of the two peoples and of general improvement of the Arab standard of living, the educational system of both Jews and Arabs be reformed including the introduction of compulsory education within a reasonable time.

(10) We recommend that, if this report be adopted, it should be made clear beyond all doubt to both Jews and Arabs that any attempt from either side, by threats of violence, by terrorism, or by the organisation or use of illegal armies to prevent its execution, will be resolutely suppressed. Furthermore, we express the view that the Jewish Agency should at once resume active co-operation with the Mandatory in the suppression of terrorism and illegal immigration, and in the maintenance of law and order throughout Palestine which is essential for the good of all, including the new immigrants.

How had the various parties concerned with the Report scored? President Truman had got his 100,000 certificates and nothing on the debit side. The Jews had got their 100,000 straightway, and a return to the Mandate for future immigration policy. They had got the Land Regulations condemned. The White Paper was gone. They had got this declaration: "We know of no country to which the great majority can go in the immediate future other than Palestine. Furthermore, that is where almost all of them want to go. There they are sure that they will receive a welcome denied them elsewhere. There they hope to enjoy peace and rebuild their lives. We believe it is essential that they should be given an opportunity to do so at the earliest possible time. Furthermore, we have the assurances of the leaders of the Jewish Agency that they will be supported and cared for. . . . Taking into account the possibility that an improvement in the economic and political conditions in Europe may affect the attitudes of those who now see no hope of re-establishing themselves in their countries, we estimate that as many as 500,000 may wish or be impelled to emigrate from Europe." Further, the intervention of the Arab States in the affairs of Palestine was impliedly negated. They had been introduced by Mr. MacDonald in 1939, and Mr. Bevin had retained them, and even coupled with them the Moslems of India. On the debit side there was not to be a Jewish State, but who could determine the effects of immigration? Above all, there was not to be an Arab State. The National Fund leases were

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condemned, but that was of theoretical, not of practical importance. The Jewish Agency was called upon to co-operate with the Government in the suppression of terrorism and illegal immigration. But if the Report were adopted, if the 100,000 certificates were given, if immigration policy returned to the Mandate, if the Land Regulations were swept away, in all probability terrorism would die away, and would certainly lose the support of Jewish public opinion. The Arabs lost at all points. There was to be no White Paper, no Arab State, and no intervention from Arab States.

The British Government gained one significant point—the British control of Palestine was to be continued indefinitely. But the White Paper was gone, development towards an Arab State was gone, the Arab States were excluded. Their whole philosophical approach was undermined. Mr. Bevin's order of priority for the displaced was Europe, the rest of the world, and—a dubious, unwelcome third—Palestine. The Committee found that the re-establishment of the Jews in Europe (except possibly in Czechoslovakia) was neither practical nor desired; that immigration laws and restrictions barred their entry in most countries, and much time must pass before such laws and restrictions could be altered and effect given to the alterations; and that the vast majority of the Jewish displaced persons and migrants believe that the only place which offered a prospect was Palestine.

The reactions of the interested parties to the Report call for recording. On the 30th April, 1946, President Truman declared :

“I am very happy that the request which I made for the immediate admission of 100,000 Jews into Palestine has been endorsed by the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry. The transference of these unfortunate people should now be accomplished with the greatest dispatch. The protection and safeguarding of the holy places in Palestine, sacred to Moslem, Christian and Jew, is adequately provided in the report. One of the significant features in the report is that it aims to ensure complete protection to the Arab population in Palestine by guaranteeing their civilian and religious rights, and by recommending measures for the constant improvement in their cultural, educational, and economic position.

“I am also pleased that the Committee recommends in effect the abrogation of the White Paper of 1939, including

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existing restrictions on immigration and land acquisition, to permit the further development of the Jewish National Home. It is also gratifying that the report also envisages the carrying out of large-scale economic development projects in Palestine which would facilitate further immigration and be of benefit to the entire population.

“In addition to these immediate objectives, the report deals with many other questions of long-range political policies and questions of international law which require careful study and which I will take under advisement.”

The Jewish Agency welcomed the 100,000 certificates and the repeal of the Land Regulations, but declared the firm conviction of Jews throughout the world that the National Home could not really be secured save within the framework of the Jewish State. This might be interpreted broadly as neither full acceptance nor intransigence. The Jews, it might be inferred, were ready to discuss. The Secretary of the Arab League said that they opposed the Report absolutely, and in any case had never recognised the Committee's authority. (The latter observation hardly accorded with Mr. Bevin's "the Arabs are meeting me very well" of the 13th November.) The Arab Higher Committee said the Report doomed Palestine to be "a land of bloodshed and misery," and called for a general strike on the 3rd May in Palestine and the Arab States.

But the crucial question was what was to be the reaction of the British Government? Mr. Bevin had promised the Committee to carry out their recommendations if they were unanimous. But the Report was not the solution upon which he had staked his political future, nor in anticipation of which he had given his promise. On the 1st May, Mr. Attlee made a statement on the Report. No summary can do it justice and it is brief:

“The Report must be considered as a whole in all its implications. The execution would entail very heavy immediate and long term commitments. His Majesty's Government wish to be satisfied that they will not be called upon to implement a policy which would involve them single-handed in such commitments, and in the course of joint examination they will wish to ascertain to what extent the Government of the United States would be prepared to share in the resulting additional

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military and financial responsibilities. The Report recommends that 100,000 certificates for the admission of Jews to Palestine should be authorised immediately, and awarded as far as possible in 1946, and that actual immigration should be pushed forward as rapidly as conditions permit. The practical difficulties involved in the immediate reception and absorption of so large a number would obviously be very great. It is clear from the facts presented in the Report regarding the illegal armies in Palestine and their recent activities, that it would not be possible for the Government of Palestine to admit so large a body of immigrants unless and until these formations have been disbanded and their arms surrendered. As the Report points out, private armies constitute a danger to the peace of the world and ought not to exist. Jews and Arabs in Palestine alike must disarm immediately. The Committee have drawn attention to the failure of the Jewish Agency to co-operate in dealing with the mandatory power. His Majesty's Government regard it as essential that the Agency should take a positive part in the suppression of these activities. They hope that both Jewish and Arab leaders will give counsels of patience and restraint. His Majesty's Government recognise that decisions must be taken as soon as possible but meanwhile the House will understand that I am unable to make any further statement."

Stripped of verbiage this statement meant : (i) That the British Government would not consider the Report as a whole unless the United States Government offered *military* and financial co-operation. *Military* co-operation was something entirely new, and it was plain that the United States would never offer it. With that condition the Report was rejected by the British Government. (ii) That the British Government would give no undertaking whatsoever with regard to the 100,000 certificates. (iii) That, before it would so much as consider the 100,000 certificates, the Jewish Agency must disband and disarm the Hagana, and suppress the Irgun and the Stern Gang. Mr. Attlee tried to create the impression that this was in accordance with the Report. Two American members of the Committee revealed that the Committee had very anxiously considered whether they should make disbandment and disarmament a precondition of the 100,000 certificates, and had rejected the suggestion because it was

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impracticable, and would lead to bloodshed. What in fact the Committee said was that *if the report were adopted* and if violence, terrorism, or illegal armies were used to *prevent its execution* they should be resolutely suppressed. But the Government did not adopt the Report, and, so far from threatening force, the Jewish Agency, through its radio, declared that the resistance movement would keep the peace if 100,000 Jews were allowed to enter Palestine. The Stern Group and the Irgun both declared that they would not surrender their arms.

There were obvious reasons why the Jewish Agency could not and would not disband or disarm the Hagana. If it did, two consequences would follow inevitably: that the control of the Yishuv would pass to the terrorist organisations; and that Jewish Palestine would lie helpless before the forces of the Arab States, which, of course, would be neither disbanded nor disarmed. It was equally obvious that the Agency, while willing to act independently, could not co-operate with the Government unless and until it changed its policy. Political agreement was the necessary precondition to co-operation. All this must have been very plain to Mr. Bevin. The Government's line upon line of conditions before it would so much as consider the Report had a simple explanation: it rejected the Report and sought to throw the responsibility for its own decision upon Mr. Truman and the Jewish Agency. Mr. Attlee and Mr. Bevin were to say on more than one occasion that Mr. Truman had accepted only one recommendation and they had accepted all ten. They illustrate the never-ending audacity of elected persons. Mr. Truman in effect accepted Recommendation 2, part of 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and took the others under advisement. The British Government accepted not one single recommendation.

The British Government could hardly have expected Mr. Attlee's statement to have a pacifying effect. In May some 3,000 more "illegal" immigrants arrived, and numerous Jews were sentenced for the possession of arms. Mr. Bevin's speech at the Bournemouth Labour Conference was not calculated to ease matters. He said that the mere wiping out of the White Paper did not take things very far, which was interpreted as meaning that he stood by the White Paper. He added that the admission of another 100,000 Jews into Palestine would not touch the fringe of the problem, and that if he agreed to their admission into

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Palestine, he would have to put another British division there, and this he was not prepared to do. That was interpreted as meaning that there were to be no 100,000 certificates. The tide of violence and resistance mounted. "Illegal" immigrants rolled in, trains were blown up, a Jewish settlement was searched. The climax was reached when three Jews were sentenced to death. It was followed by the organised blowing up of many bridges, in which the Hagana took the lead, and then by the kidnapping of five British officers by the Irgun as hostages for the Jews sentenced to death. The Agency denounced this last act, and, although the officers escaped or were released and the death sentences were commuted, there was no easement. The Government decided on repression, and on repression directed in the forefront against the Agency, the Hagana, and its associates. Mr. Bevin had persuaded himself that these were the real obstacle, and that, if he could break them, more pliable instruments would arise in the Yishuv and outside.

There was prepared a plan according to which most accessible members of the Agency were to be arrested along with 5,000 of the leaders, trade unionists, and the like, and the Jewish settlements were to be searched and forcibly disarmed. On the 29th June the blow was struck. A curfew was imposed in Jerusalem. The Agency building was occupied by troops. Five members of the Executive, along with some 2,600 others, were arrested and put in concentration camps. (It was a Sabbath day and one of the members forced to violate the Sabbath was the very orthodox Rabbi Fishman.) The offices of the Histadruth (the Trade Union), the Agricultural Workers' Society, and the Women's International Organisation were searched (the latter two after entrance was forced by explosives; they were, of course, shut and unoccupied on the Sabbath). Yagour settlement was searched. The High Commissioner broadcast that His Majesty's Government was determined to maintain law and order, and to root out terrorism and violence, and the operations were undertaken with that purpose. It was not the intention to proscribe or close the Agency.

It was unfortunate for Mr. Bevin that the terrorists of the Irgun and the Stern Gang were not affected: they knew how to evade police and soldiers. It was the moderate element who were struck, the persons and the organisation which most corresponded to the Labour Government and the trade unions. The reaction was prompt. The Jewish Agency Executive in London condemned the



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Government's measures as "a clear act of aggression against the Jewish people," a violation of mandatory obligations, designed to destroy the achievements and aspirations of the Jewish people in Palestine. The Yishuv would not give up its right to self-defence, and its leaders would continue the struggle "for the right of Jews to enter their homeland and live as a free and independent nation in the Jewish State."

On the 1st July Mr. Attlee made a statement to the House of Commons. He not unfairly distinguished between the Hagana and the terrorists. Since the 16th December, sixteen British soldiers and five police had been killed, and £4,000,000 of damage caused. There was evidence of a close connection between the Agency and the Hagana (this was undoubtedly true). He admitted that the United States Government had been informed but not consulted as to what was being done by the British Government. He insisted that the British were not in Palestine as partners with the Jewish Agency in the creation of a Jewish State; that the Government had never stood for the White Paper policy; that "the last thing in the world we want to do is to destroy the Jewish Agency." These last declarations were strong stuff to swallow in the light of Mr. Bevin's public statements and his acts. In any case, the plans he was to submit later left no doubt that these were precisely his policy. A few days later the Government published the evidence on which it claimed to have acted—a White Paper giving a list of acts of violence, some telegrams indicating that the Hagana had taken resistance action (in connection with the immigration of "illegals"), that its leader had tried to come to "a working arrangement" with the dissident organisations by which they should submit to its control, and that the widespread attacks on road and rail had been carried out by the Hagana. It is sufficient to say that no serious effort was made by the Agency to refute this evidence. But the telegrams themselves showed that the renewal of the resistance movement was "a result of the delaying policy of the British Government, the recent Bevin speech, and the known announcement of Attlee." Policy was the root of the matter, and repression was not going to dispose of it. Nor were the efforts successful of the High Commissioner to find some persons to supersede the Agency, to fall in with the Government's views. Nobody came forward, nobody wanted to, and nobody with authority or influence existed who

might have done so. The Yishuv was united, and Mr. Bevin's delusion that he could dispense with the Agency merely created a void.

On the 9th July, Dr. Weizmann, the President of the Zionist Organisation, made a statement which insisted upon the root cause of the situation—the “shifts, shufflings, and procrastinations” of the Government. If the Government had immediately implemented the Palestine Report, peace and quiet would have reigned there; but Mr. Attlee had attached impossible conditions so that the Jews had verged on despair. He appealed to the Government to act quickly. There was a natural affinity between Britain and the Jews. Perhaps as a result of this appeal, the Government began to retreat. Military searches of settlements were ended. The Agency building was handed back, 645 detainees and Rabbi Fishman were released. But the Yishuv began to prepare for non-co-operation to begin on the 25th July. On the 22nd the terrorists, who had in no way been scotched by the Government's measures, blew up the Government offices in the King David Hotel, Jerusalem. Nearly a hundred persons were killed, including some of the highest officials, Jewish and non-Jewish, and some private persons casually present. The Jewish Agency and the Jewish National Council condemned this abominable outrage, and expressed horror at the “dastardly crime perpetrated by a gang of desperadoes.” A return, however futile, to repression was inevitable. A price of £2,000 was put on the head of the Irgun leader. Tel Aviv was sealed off for three days, and 120,000 persons interrogated, but the 787 persons arrested did not in fact include any terrorist leader. The temper, in this time of stress and strain, of the military authorities, who were the real rulers of Palestine, was revealed in a letter from General Barker, the Commander of the forces, to his officers :

“The Jewish Community of Palestine cannot be absolved from responsibility for the long series of outrages culminating in the blowing up of a large part of the Government offices in the King David Hotel causing grievous loss of life. Without the support, actual or passive, of the general Jewish public the terrorist gangs who actually carried out these criminal acts would soon be unearthed, and in this measure the Jews in this country are accomplices and bear a share of the guilt.

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“I am determined that they shall suffer punishment and be made aware of the contempt and loathing with which we regard their conduct. We must not allow ourselves to be deceived by the hypocritical sympathy shown by their leaders and representative bodies, or by their protests that they are in no way responsible for these acts. I repeat that if the Jewish public really wanted to stop these crimes, they could do so by acting in co-operation with us.

“Consequently I have decided that with effect on receipt of this letter you will put out of bounds to all ranks all Jewish establishments, restaurants, shops, and private dwellings. No British soldier is to have any social intercourse with any Jew, and any intercourse in the way of duty should be as brief as possible and kept strictly to the business in hand.

“I appreciate that these measures will inflict some hardship on the troops, yet I am certain that if my reasons are fully explained to them they will understand their propriety and will be punishing the Jews in a way the race dislikes as much as any, by striking at their pockets and showing our contempt for them.”

Nobody need be surprised that General Barker did not appreciate the character of the Palestine problem, or that he moved from condemnation of the terrorists to condemnation of the whole Yishuv and then to an expression of general anti-Semitism. But as a soldier with a military problem he should not have utterly misconceived the temper and the quality of his enemy. There is no doubt that his bitterness was largely shared by the troops under his command and by wide circles in England. Attacks on British troops, the presentation of England as an oppressor—these were calculated to injure the pride and stir the anger of the average Englishman, and most of the Press did its best to stimulate hatred.

It is curious to contrast the attitude towards the Yishuv with the attitude towards Egypt. During the war Egyptian sentiment had been unfriendly, and troops serving there had acquired no perceptible affection for the Egyptians. With the coming of peace, the Egyptian Government had immediately claimed the evacuation of British troops from Egypt and the union of the Sudan with Egypt. The British Government initiated negotiations for a new

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treaty to replace that of 1936, but, when agreement seemed to have been reached, it was repudiated under the pressure of popular agitation in Egypt, and the negotiations were broken off. In Cairo British troops were attacked by the mob, and Great Britain was stigmatised as the national enemy. But all this was played down by the Foreign Office and the Press in England, which were so active in stimulating hatred of Palestine Jewry. Official policy rested upon the White Paper for the Jews and a ring of satellite Arab States united with England by appropriate treaties. Neither the Jews nor the Arabs showed any disposition to accept the parts allotted to them in this scheme, but the Foreign Office chose to believe that the Jews could be forced and the Arabs cajoled into submission.

Things could not remain at a dead point. Mr. Bevin was putting off a public announcement on the Anglo-American Report until he had heard the views of the Jews and the Arabs, and had had those joint consultations with the American Government which Mr. Attlee had forecast. He had known the views of the Jews for some time. In June the Arab League had met at Bludan in Syria, and on the 8th July the memorandum it had sent to Great Britain was published. It invited the British Government to enter into negotiations with the Arab States in order to reach an agreement before the September Assembly of U.N. In the meantime nothing was to be done contrary to the White Paper. The Anglo-American Committee's declaration that Palestine should be neither a Jewish nor an Arab State would violate the rights of a majority.

All this did not get Mr. Bevin any further. With America he was more successful. Mr. Truman had proved disappointingly persistent. The State Department might be more malleable. The State Department would take a broad view of the Middle East, and indeed look at it through British eyes; and the oil interests, not without influence, were disposed to urge the cause of the Arabs, among whom their very large investments lay. The State Department sent to London a group of officials to confer with British officials on the Report. The results of these discussions were made public on the 31st August in the House of Commons. They came to be known as the Morrison Plan because Mr. Morrison was put up to expound them.

It was proposed that :

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(i) Palestine shall be divided into four areas, an Arab Province, a Jewish Province, a District of Jerusalem and a District of the Negev.

(ii) The provincial boundaries would be purely administrative defining the area of the local legislature, and would have no significance as regards defence, customs or communications, but could not be changed except by agreement between Jews and Arabs.

(iii) The provincial governments would have power to limit the number of settlers and determine the qualifications for permanent residence in the province.

(iv) The Central Government would have exclusive authority as to defence, foreign relations, customs and excise, and all powers not expressly granted to the provinces. The High Commissioner could veto bills passed by a provincial assembly, and would have emergency power to intervene if dissatisfied with a provincial government.

(v) The Arab Province could prohibit Jewish immigration; the Jewish Province could admit up to the economic absorptive capacity of the province.

(vi) There was to be a Development Planning Board, the Jewish Province through the Central Government was to make good the anticipated deficit in the Arab budget, and the American Government was asked to make a substantial grant.

(vii) As soon as it was decided to put into effect the scheme as a whole, the immediate admission of 100,000 Jews from Europe would begin.

The Morrison Plan was put forward as the ripe wisdom of the British and American "experts." Its true history was very different. The plan had been in the pigeon-holes of the Colonial Office under the Coalition Government, and there was reason to believe that it owed much to Nuri Pasha, the British favourite in Iraq. It had been submitted to the Anglo-American Committee and rejected by them out of hand. It found few friends and many authoritative critics in Parliament. It was rejected by Arabs and Jews. On the 4th October President Truman rejected it. In the course of his statement he said :

"The British Government presented to the Conference the so-called Morrison plan for provincial autonomy and stated

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that the Conference was open to other proposals. Meanwhile, the Jewish Agency proposed a solution of the Palestine problem by means of the creation of a viable Jewish State in control of its own immigration and economic policies in an adequate area of Palestine instead of in the whole of Palestine. It proposed further the immediate issuance of certificates for 100,000 Jewish immigrants. This proposal received widespread attention in the United States, both in the press and in public forums. From the discussion which has ensued it is my belief that a solution along these lines would command the support of public opinion in the United States. I cannot believe that the gap between the proposals which have been put forward is too great to be bridged by men of reason and goodwill. To such a solution our Government could give its support."

It will be noted that whereas, hitherto, President Truman had gone no further than to ask for 100,000 certificates, now, in addition, he was lending his support to the Zionist plan of a viable Jewish State in a partitioned Palestine. Mr. Bevin had made no progress there; and President Truman was presenting not merely a personal view, but the consensus of opinion "among members of the major political parties in the United States both in Congress and throughout the country."

The Arabs rejected the Morrison Plan because, while it maintained the essentials of the White Paper, it maintained indefinitely the rule of Great Britain, and held out a prospect (even though faint and distant) of the possibility of partition or federation, and rejected the conception of the Arab unitary State. Mr. Ben-Gurion, the Chairman of the Executive of the Jewish Agency, gave the Zionist reasons for rejection at the Zionist Congress at Bâle in December:

The Morrison Plan was fundamentally opposed to the recommendations of the Anglo-American Committee, and was opposed by all the six American members of that Committee and the two British members who sat in the Commons. The Plan denied Jewish immigration into the greater part of Palestine and maintained the prohibition of land purchase by Jews there. Economic absorptive capacity would be determined by the High Commissioner, who would control not only its determination but its creation through the Development Board. The régime proposed

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for the Jerusalem District would tear out of the Jewish homeland its very heart, and deprive the Jewish majority of Jerusalem of its existing political rights. It would condemn the Negev to everlasting desolation.

An important British official summed up the matter :— “It is a beautiful scheme. It treats the Arabs and the Jews on a footing of complete equality in that it gives nothing to either party, while it leaves us a free run over the whole of Palestine.” Unfortunately for the scheme, none of the interested parties was quite so simple as it presupposed.

Meanwhile there was no easing in Palestine. In August the Government began interning “illegal” immigrants in Cyprus, not without the use of force. Attempts were made to bomb the Cyprus transports, and this led to military searches of Jewish settlements and arrests. Violence followed repression, and repression followed violence. The roads were placed under curfew, and that led to mining. On both sides bitterness and ruthlessness were growing apace.

The Zionist leaders had met in Paris. They rejected the Morrison Plan, but were prepared to discuss the establishment of a viable Jewish State in an adequate area of Palestine. They demanded: the immediate grant of 100,000 immigration permits, and the immediate beginning of the transportation of the 100,000 to Palestine; the grant of immediate full autonomy to the area of Palestine to become a Jewish State; and full control of immigration by the administration of that area.

These proposals represented a retreat from the Biltmore programme, which in 1942 had demanded that the whole of Palestine should be recognised as a Jewish Commonwealth. The Biltmore programme had never been officially adopted by the Zionist movement, and even the resolutions of Paris were not the movement’s final word.

Mr. Bevin, not abashed by the chill reception of the Morrison Plan, decided to submit it to a Conference of Arabs and Jews to meet in London in September. Invitations were extended to and accepted by the Arab States and the Arab Higher Committee. Pursuing his delusion that in the Jewish world there were factors opposed to and outweighing the Zionists, he extended invitations not only to the Jewish Agency but also to various organisations inside and outside Palestine. So long as their colleagues were

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imprisoned at Latrun the remaining members of the Jewish Agency Executive would obviously refuse to attend. They also required that any invitations to Jewish representatives should issue from them, as had been the case in 1939. But there was a more fundamental difficulty. All the members rejected the Morrison Plan, and were unwilling to discuss it, but a majority insisted that they would enter the Conference only if the Paris proposal of a viable Jewish State in an adequate area were made the basis of discussion. In these circumstances no Jewish representatives appeared. The Conference opened on the 10th September. Besides the British Government representatives only representatives of the seven Arab States and the Secretary-General of the Arab League attended. Mr. Attlee in opening the Conference said that the Morrison Plan would be the first item on the agenda, but any other proposals could be considered. The Syrian delegate replied that there was no solution of the Jewish problem in Palestine. No part of Palestine should be cut off to make a home or a State for immigrants belonging to different nationalities. The Conference then went into secret session, out of which there emerged nothing concrete, and on the 2nd October it was adjourned to the 16th December. Two days later Mr. Creech Jones became Colonial Secretary.

The plan which the Arab delegation had submitted to the Conference was thus conceived: Within two years Palestine was to be an independent State whose constitution would prohibit Jewish immigration. The High Commissioner was to set up at once a Provisional Government of seven Arabs and three Jews with full legislative and executive authority. Citizenship would be restricted to those with ten years' residence. A Constitutional Assembly of sixty members would draft the constitution. The head of the State would take over not later than the 31st December 1948. The new State would make a treaty of alliance with Great Britain.

There was nothing in this to satisfy a Jew, but it was drafted with an eye to Mr. Bevin's tastes.

Meanwhile violence in Palestine continued unchecked. Whatever relations had existed between Hagana and the dissident organisations were publicly broken. The Hagana distributed a pamphlet attacking Irgun and Stern. "These organisations gain their livelihood by gangsterism, smuggling, large-scale drug



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traffic, armed robbery, organising the black market and thefts." Hagana stated that it was determined to root out terrorism. To this Irgun replied that it would shoot any member of the Hagana who betrayed a terrorist. The breach was complete. The Hagana continued to concentrate on its task of bringing in "illegal" immigrants, with such resistance activities as it involved or implied, and the counter-action of the Government led to violence on the immigrant ships.

President Truman's declaration about Palestine was very strongly resented by the British Government, which issued a statement that it had asked him to delay it until Mr. Bevin had been consulted, but Mr. Truman had refused. With excessive or simulated optimism it went on to say that "the discussions have not been broken off. Consultations with the Jews are actually in progress at this moment. It is, in the British Government's view, most unfortunate that a statement of this kind should have been made. It may well jeopardise a settlement of this difficult problem." Such language might be criticised as doubtful diplomacy, but Mr. Bevin at a later date went much further :

"At that stage [2nd Oct.] things looked more hopeful. There was a feeling—I do not think I over-estimate it—when they [the Jews] left me in the Foreign Office that day, that I had the right approach at last. Next day the Prime Minister telephoned me [at Paris] at midnight, and told me that the President of the United States was going to issue another statement on the 100,000.

"I went next morning to the Secretary of State, Mr. Byrnes, and told him how far I had got the day before. I believed we were on the road if only they would leave us alone. I begged that the statement be not issued, but I was told that if it was not issued by Mr. Truman, a competitive statement would be issued by Mr. Dewey. I am not saying anything to cause bad feeling with the United States, but I feel so intensely about this. A vexed problem like this, with a thousand years of religious differences, has to be handled with great care. . . . I was dealing with Jewish representatives at the time, and I had to call it off because the whole thing was spoilt."

Mr. Bevin omitted to tell the House that as long ago as the beginning of August he was fully informed that President Truman

favoured the Jewish proposals, and had urged their acceptance upon the British Government. These proposals and their relation to the American Government were discussed between Mr. Bevin and Mr. Hall and the representatives of the Jewish Agency in August in a series of meetings, during which Mr. Bevin had said that he had always thought of Partition as a possible solution, though apparently subject to acceptance by the Arabs.

Earlier in the same speech Mr. Bevin referred to a report by "a person named Earl Harrison" (Mr. Truman's commissioner) and said, "I must say it really destroyed the basis of good feeling that we—the Colonial Secretary and I—were endeavouring to produce in the Arab States, and it set the whole thing back." Whether Mr. Bevin was giving a full and faithful report of his conversation with Mr. Byrnes, or whether Mr. Byrnes had given Mr. Bevin permission to repeat in the House of Commons a private conversation—these things history does not record. But the British Foreign Secretary was publicly charging the American President with the responsibility for failure with both Jews and Arabs. A critic might say that he was labouring to add President Truman to his Jewish and Arab opponents. Mr. Truman's reply to Mr. Bevin was prompt: "The impression that has arisen from yesterday's debate in the British Parliament that America's interest in Palestine . . . is motivated by partisan and local politics is most unfortunate and misleading." In October he had merely reaffirmed America's attitude publicly declared in 1945, "which was already fully known to all parties to the Palestine negotiations." Mr. Bevin was not preparing a favourable atmosphere at Lake Success by grossly insulting the American President. Before examining his claim to have had the cup dashed from his lips, note should be taken of the new twist which Mr. Bevin gave to the Jewish and the Palestine problem. The first phase of his speculation was that the Jewish problem was wholly a question of philanthropy, the succouring of certain displaced persons, and that Palestine could not even touch the fringe of this problem. The second was that the Jews were perverting the plain meaning of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate by claiming that they had been promised in Palestine a Jewish *National* Home instead of a merely Jewish Home, and a Jewish National Home with the potentiality of evolving into a Jewish State. Such a claim flew in the face of democracy and explained and justified Arab

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resistance. Now the Palestine problem had become one of "a thousand years of religious differences." This was not casual rhetoric, it was a theme to which he returned. It must have astonished his Arab protégés.

As a historian Mr. Bevin was highly subjective. There is no evidence that at any moment the Arabs moved perceptibly towards common ground with the Jews, and the proposals which he himself made were rejected by them without ceremony. The appointment of Mr. Creech Jones as Colonial Secretary had introduced some flexibility, and very informal talks had taken place, although the interned members of the Executive were not released until the 5th November. But these were in the most preliminary stages. There was as yet neither a cup nor any liquor for a cup.

There could in fact be nothing of substance until the will was known of the Zionist Congress which met in Bâle on the 9th December. There Dr. Weizmann urged that they could not have a Jewish State of the whole of Palestine, but should work for a viable Jewish State in an adequate area of Palestine. He begged the Congress not to abandon Britain; no change of orientation would help. But the majority of the Congress had lost confidence in Britain. This became an issue with Dr. Weizmann, which expressed itself in the question—should the Executive participate in the resumed London Conference? By a small majority participation was negatived, and Dr. Weizmann retired from the Presidency. Mr. Bevin had succeeded in removing from the Jewish Agency the most faithful friend of association and co-operation with Great Britain. The Congress condemned the Morrison Plan and any Trusteeship in substitution for the Mandate, and it formulated these political demands:

- (i) that Palestine be re-established as a Jewish Commonwealth;
- (ii) that its gates be opened to Jewish immigration;
- (iii) that the Jewish Agency be vested with the control of immigration and with authority for the upbuilding of Palestine.

The temper of the Congress and of the new Executive was, however, far less rigid than these resolutions indicated; and during January and February 1947 a series of conferences were held at the Colonial Office between British representatives, headed by Mr. Bevin and Mr. Creech Jones, and representatives of the

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Agency headed by Mr. Ben-Gurion and Mr. Shertok. The discussions were frank and free, but often confused and repetitive. The Government stood for a unitary State with cantonisation and an early development into self-government. The Jews saw in these proposals a restriction of immigration and settlement, and the permanent subjection of a Jewish minority to an Arab majority. Finally, the Jewish representatives submitted three alternatives :

- (i) That the whole of Palestine should be a Jewish State.
- (ii) Alternatively that the Mandate should be administered as it was prior to 1939.
- (iii) If offered a viable Jewish State in an adequate area of Palestine they would be willing to discuss it.

The rejection of the first was inevitable. As to the third Mr. Bevin was opposed to partition. Mr. Bevin had made it plain that, if agreement was not reached he would submit the whole Palestine question to the United Nations. This was a course which the Jewish delegates desired to avoid. They would have much preferred to come to terms directly with the Government. Mr. Ben-Gurion, at the beginning of the talks, had defined their two purposes : to secure Jewish national revival, safety, and independence in Palestine ; and to re-establish British-Jewish friendship. The second alternative, the execution of the Mandate in its true spirit and intent, seemed to him the best hope. He was even willing to forgo mention of a Jewish State as the goal, and to leave the outcome to time. But this was not acceptable to the Government. They made the acquiescence of the Arabs a necessary condition, and to the Mandate in this sense the Arabs would not assent. But Mr. Bevin could not resist gilding refined gold. He told Parliament that the House was committed to the White Paper, that it was an international document, and that neither Parliament nor the Government could dispose of it without the consent of the Arabs. This was strange constitutional doctrine and strange international law, but Mr. Bevin seemed to draw from it moral sustenance.

Before reaching a final decision to submit Palestine to the United Nations, and before announcing it to Parliament, Mr. Bevin had put before both Jews and Arabs an outline of his proposed solution. It was rejected by both Jews and Arabs, but it is well to see the Foreign Secretary's ripest thoughts. The objective

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of these proposals was to establish forms of government which "offer a prospect of full independence." There was therefore suggested a British Trusteeship to be followed after four years by independence. The Trusteeship Agreement would provide for the following:

(i) Areas of local administration to include in each substantial Jewish and Arab majorities.

(ii) The local administration would have legislative, administrative, and financial powers, including some share in police.

(iii) Minority safeguards.

(iv) Jewish immigration at a rate of 4,000 monthly for two years. During the rest of the trusteeship it was to be determined, "with due regard to the principle of economic absorptive capacity," by the High Commissioner in consultation with the Advisory Committee, and in the event of disagreement by an arbitration tribunal appointed by the United Nations.

(v) The local authorities would control land transfers.

(vi) The High Commissioner would exercise supreme legislative and executive authority, but would try to form an Advisory Committee representing local authorities and organised interests. The Jewish members of the Committee would supersede the Jewish Agency.

(vii) At the end of four years a Constitutional Assembly would be elected, and if a majority of both the Jews and Arabs agreed, would establish an independent State. If not, the Trusteeship Council would be asked to advise upon future procedure.

From the British point of view these proposals had the merit of maintaining British control of Palestine for an indefinite period; of abolishing the Mandate with its obligations in respect of the Jewish National Home; of maintaining in effect the essential provisions of the White Paper; of getting rid of the Jewish Agency and of the whole conception that the Jewish people throughout the world had any claims in respect of Palestine; and of guaranteeing a permanent Arab majority and a permanent Jewish minority in Palestine. It was a minor vice that the 100,000 certificates were spread over two years, and in any case were to be dependent on the whole scheme going into effect. As there was never the slightest chance of its acceptance by the Jews, and it was rejected for their own reasons by the Arabs, things stood as

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they were when on the 15th February, 1947, Mr. Bevin announced to Parliament that he would present the Palestine problem to the United Nations, in all the aggravated starkness it had assumed under his administration.

This decision, though assented to by all parties in Parliament, represented, possibly with the exception of Ireland and the American colonies, the greatest political failure in the history of the British Empire. It arose, not from the impracticability of the ideal of a Jewish Commonwealth, nor from alleged dubieties or contradictions in the Mandate, but from the conflict of that ideal and that Mandate with an anæmic conception of power politics. Though officialdom in the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office was at best lukewarm, the Jewish National Home developed apace and marched onwards until the rise of Hitler injected fear as the dominant motive in British policy. This fear led the British Government to interpret into the Mandate the negation of its true intent, in the hope that, by sacrificing the future of the Jewish National Home, they would gain allies in the Middle East. The White Paper was the expression of this policy. The policy which the Government had accepted in fear was dear to the experts for its own sake. They had a vision of Britain commanding the whole Middle East through a ring of satellite Arab States. The sacrifice of the Jewish National Home and its future would have been in their eyes a very modest price to pay, even if they had not disliked the Jewish National Home anyhow.

Mr. Bevin took over this policy, qualified slightly by occasional faint twinges of conscience as the representative of the Labour Party. It was vitiated by two radical errors : neither the Arabs nor the Jews would accept the parts allotted to them. The Arab States were determined to be independent and not satellites, and, as a corollary, not to make even that minute figleaf of concession in regard to Palestine which Mr. Bevin needed to cover the nakedness of his betrayal of the Jews. The Yishuv had become too strong to be disregarded, and the terrible tragedy of Jewry in the war had made the National Home the ultimate hope of the mass of world Jewry. To open the gates, to free the land, were urgent, passionate demands which could not be reduced or deferred. Mr. Bevin inherited two fundamental principles : that there could be no change of policy without the assent of the Arabs, and that no policy could be imposed by force upon the Arabs. The first of these

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principles was bound to lead to a deadlock. Mr. Bevin was in reality trying to impose by force a solution—a solution against the Jews. In doing so he made plain that the last word was with force. The lesson was learnt, and Mr. Bevin was to discover, in due course, that his advisers were gravely mistaken as to the relative weights of the opposing forces.

## CHAPTER V

# THE UNITED NATIONS

MR. BEVIN told Parliament that the British Government would not recommend any solution to the United Nations. They would limit themselves to making a report explaining that the Mandate had proved unworkable in practice, and describing the various proposals which had been put forward for dealing with the situation. It was quite legitimate to leave the problem free for decision by U.N., but the trouble was that Mr. Bevin was psychologically incapable of neutrality in regard to Palestine. He had his likes—for the Arabs. He had his dislikes—for the Jews. He had his anticipations—that when things came to a showdown the Arabs would win. History or summary was certain to be coloured by his personality. But subjective affections were of much less significance than the fact that in actual administration he had both feet firmly planted on unneutrality. He had committed himself to the doctrine that the White Paper was domestic law and international law, that Parliament could not revoke or amend it, and that only U.N. could abolish it. His conscience thus armoured and his passions led him along the road of enforcement and repression, where much discredit and no laurels were to be gathered.

What did the Government mean by going to the United Nations? It did not give up its control of Palestine. Mr. Creech Jones made that perfectly clear: "We are not going to the United Nations to surrender the Mandate. We are going to the United Nations setting out the problems and asking for their advice as to how the Mandate can be administered. If the Mandate cannot be administered in its present form we are asking how it can be amended." What the Government was seeking was a new Mandate, which could, if necessary, be empowered with the authority of world opinion. It is not doing it any injustice to suppose that it hoped for the elimination of the clauses relating to the Jewish



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National Home, or, what was equivalent, a declaration explicit or implied that the Jewish Home was established, and the Mandatory could go ahead freed from what the Government regarded as the incubus of the Balfour Declaration. It was only under the pressure of events in Palestine and of the rising tide of public opinion, and after the United Nations had evolved a solution which it rejected and condemned, that, slowly and reluctantly, the Government was forced into surrender and evacuation.

Let us look at what, meanwhile, was the position in Palestine, and among the Arabs. On the very day the London Conference reassembled the Egyptian Prime Minister announced that the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations had finally broken down, and Egypt was going to the Security Council. That same day a British judge was kidnapped in open court at Tel Aviv, and the following day a riot broke out in the Jerusalem prison and a Jewish orderly was killed. The High Commissioner announced that "the suppression of terrorism demands the active participation of the whole Jewish community and also a direct co-operation of the Jewish Agency, which I regret has not been forthcoming." He foreshadowed "the placing of the country under full military control with all that implies." On the 31st January 1947, women and children and certain other civilians were to be evacuated from Palestine, and the police and troops were ordered to take the offensive. On the 3rd February the Government demanded of the Jewish Agency "to state categorically at once whether the Agency and the Vaad Leumi are prepared within seven days to lend their aid to the Government by co-operating with the police and armed forces in locating and bringing to justice members of terrorist groups. . . ." On the 5th February the Vaad Leumi replied, "We will . . . never accept the demand to hand over the terrorists to the authorities." On the 10th February the Jewish Agency replied that it was taking steps "to break the power of the terrorist movement by preventing any aid being rendered to it, and by ensuring effective assistance to those resisting coercion and intimidation," but it could not do what the Government demanded. The tide of "illegal" immigration rolled on. Outrages multiplied, arrests were made, death sentences were passed and executed, officials were concentrated behind barbed wire for their security. Jerusalem was rapidly turning into Bevingrad, a city in

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which the administration was self-besieged. On the 1st March the Officers' Club in Jerusalem was blown up, and there were attacks in Haifa, Hidera, Rehovoth, Ras el Ain. Martial law was declared in Tel Aviv and numerous other Jewish centres, where all shops were closed, the post was stopped, wheeled traffic was suspended, and searches were made. Martial law was withdrawn on the 15th, with nothing gained. On the last day of the month the oil tanks at Haifa were fired and £250,000 damage caused. The Hagana began to use force against the terrorists, but there was no abatement of violence. Two Jews sentenced to death blew themselves up rather than be hanged. The tale of outrages was endless. In April Acre prison was bombed and 33 Jews and 183 Arab prisoners escaped. The Government deported some 50 suspects to Kenya, but plainly the task of defeating terrorism by counter-measures was impracticable. Terrorism was the child of policy and only policy could end it.

Policy was being sought at Lake Success. At the request of the British Government, a special session of U.N. opened on the 28th April. The Government asked the assembly to appoint a special committee to make recommendations on Palestine to the Autumn Session. Lord Hall, the First Lord of the Admiralty, had somewhat troubled the waters by saying in the Lords that he could not imagine the Government carrying out a policy of which it disapproved. This was explained away at the Assembly as meaning that Great Britain would not single-handed carry out a policy which she could not reconcile with her conscience. The Political Committee was instructed to hear the Jewish Agency, and that Committee decided that it would also hear the Arab Higher Committee. On the 12th May after prolonged discussion, in which the directly interested parties, Jews and Arabs, put forward their opposing theories and demands, and the Soviet representative urged either a binational State or partition, a study committee of eleven was proposed by the Political Committee and on the 15th May approved by the Assembly. None of the Great Powers was represented on this committee, which was to be composed of representatives of Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, India, the Netherlands, Persia, Sweden, Uruguay, and Yugoslavia. It was instructed to report by the 1st September to the Assembly "on the question of Palestine," to make proposals for its solution, and to seek evidence in

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Palestine and wherever it thought fit, and it was instructed to give special attention to the interests of the three religions.

Mr. Bevin in a speech to the Labour Conference on the 29th May, 1947, revealed both his idiosyncratic conception of neutrality and the reserve with which he regarded the United Nations. Nor did he omit to be offensive to President Truman. His observations on the Balfour Declaration, the Mandate, and Zionism were emphatically pro-Arab and anti-Jewish. On the Anglo-American Report he said, "America only accepted one point of that report and the other nine were discarded. I was willing to go on with the ten in the hope of a solution"—a gross perversion of the facts. Before he would accept the decision of the United Nations he would want to know whether the matter was finally settled and whether all the other United Nations agreed. Apparently he was to be the final arbiter, and in any case there must be unanimity—a condition which everybody knew could not be met. Did this indicate a policy of obstruction, or was it merely the loose language of an imprecise mind? Meanwhile violence extended to England, where some prominent persons were being made the mark of letter-bombs sent by the Stern Gang. The "illegals" continued to pour in, unperturbed by Lord Hall's condemnation of the crowding and insecurity as criminal; and an appeal to the European governments to collaborate in preventing their embarkation fell on polite but deaf ears. The United Nations had urged a cessation of violence while its committee was inquiring, but the Stern Gang laid down as conditions that there should be no deportations of "illegals," that the Military Courts should be abolished, and that there should be no searches or operations against the "underground fighters."

From the 16th June till the 3rd July the U.N. Committee was pursuing its inquiries in Palestine. The Palestine Administration submitted to it a Memorandum, which is singularly revealing of the official approach to its task. That the Administration should seek to show that it was itself at all times free from error, and that the responsibility for the troubles rested wholly elsewhere, might have been excused if it had not driven this thesis to unconvincing excess. It does not seem to have been conscious that the Committee, which had been appointed because of an admission of failure, and which was operating in a country ridden with anarchy and violence, might see in these facts some

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evidence of human fallibility. More significant were its conception of its own function, its censures on the Mandate which was its own charter, and its hostility to the Jewish Agency. It conceived its function to be to hold the balance between Jews and Arabs so that the positive injunction to further the establishment of the Jewish National Home was negated by its assumed responsibilities towards other elements in the population. Among the "defects" of the Mandate it singled out the setting up of a Jewish Agency; the instruction to encourage close settlement of the Jews on the lands in co-operation with the Jewish Agency; the grant to each community of the right to maintain its own schools for the education of its own members in its own language; the recognition of Arabic and Hebrew as official languages. All these conditions were condemned as making for "differentiation between the Jewish community and the rest of the population." Clearly the Administration regarded the establishment of a Jewish National Home, as distinct from what Mr. Bevin called a Jewish Home, as the rock of offence. Quite logically it was against Hebrew schools and the Hebrew language. Apparently its own preference was the orthodox colonial one—English schools and the English language.

The Jewish Agency had sinned by winning the allegiance of the overwhelming body of Jews, by collecting large sums and by expending them on a great variety of constructive enterprises, instead of being a tactful servant of the Administration. It was even expected, after a polite protest, to co-operate in applying the White Paper, which every Jew regarded as a betrayal of the Mandate, and the Administration regarded as its crowning act of statesmanship. There was this to be said for the Government's Memorandum—the mask had dropped. But there would hardly have been so much self-revelation had not the Government expected the Committee to report according to its desires. Here once more it was to be disappointed.

The following alternatives were presented to the Committee :

- (1) Continuation of the British Mandate.
- (2) Joint Trusteeship.
- (3) Cantonisation.
- (4) Arab State.
- (5) Binational parity.
- (6) Jewish State.

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The first had been proposed to the British Government by the Jewish Agency before the problem was handed to U.N. It had been rejected by the British Government, which did not desire to administer the Mandate, with the provisions relating to the Jewish National Home, according to their letter and their spirit. The Jewish Agency now told the Committee that it dropped the proposal, because it no longer had confidence in the British Mandate, and the Jews felt ripe for statehood. The second—Joint Trusteeship—was rejected by the Agency because it would sacrifice the Jewish National Home to power politics, to such interests as oil, strategic bases, and lines of communication. As Professor Rappard (who had been a member of the Permanent Mandates Commission) wrote, "it would in any case be a real international tragedy if, in the settlement of this delicate question, the interests of the wards were to be sacrificed to the jealousies of the guardians."

The third—cantonisation—was represented by the Morrison and the Bevin plans. It was rejected by the Jews because underlying it were the principles of the White Paper: the limitation of Jewish immigration and land purchase, the maintenance of an unfriendly British authority, and the inevitable, if deferred, end, an Arab State. The fourth alternative, an Arab State, was offered as a democratic solution. In the form proposed by the Arab States at the London Conference it prohibited Jewish immigration and land purchase, did not recognise the Jews as a national entity, placed their schools under the strict control of the Arab Government, and permitted the use of Hebrew as a secondary official language only in districts where Jews were an absolute majority. The Agency did not exaggerate that, in such an Arab State, the Yishuv would be reduced to the same subjection as their brethren in Iraq. More fair-seeming variations suggested by the British Government invited the Jewish minority to put its trust in the loyalty of an Arab majority to paper safeguards dictated by an external authority which was most unlikely ever to intervene with effect to maintain them.

The fifth alternative—binational parity—was advocated by two small groups of Palestine Jews, and attractive to some foreigners who had no desire to penetrate beyond words to realities. As the Jewish Agency put it, "it assumes, to begin with, political co-operation between a national group, whose highest purpose

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is to promote Jewish immigration, and a national group whose firmest resolve is to prevent it." One of the two Jewish groups—Hashomer Hazair—sought to escape this difficulty by putting the control of immigration permanently in the hands of the Jewish Agency, while calling into existence an International Development Board charged with the constructive task of creating absorptive capacity. It is obvious that all this was fanciful. In Palestinian conditions equality of political authority must mean deadlock, sterility, and strife.

The final alternative—the Jewish State—was offered in the variants, Palestine as a Jewish State or a viable Jewish State in an adequate area of Palestine. The first variant was faced with the difficulty that the Jews were in a minority in the whole of Palestine. The Jews recognised that a Jewish State was impracticable without a Jewish majority. Could Palestine be put under Jewish control while Jews were still a minority? If not, who was to take over control with the mission of creating a Jewish majority? Difficult questions to which the Jewish Agency did not attempt an answer. The Agency expressed its readiness to consider partition as a compromise. It professed to regard it as only a *pis aller*, and said any such solution would be judged by the measure in which it secured large-scale immigration and settlement, and led without delay to the establishment of the Jewish State. It was evident that, whatever the pen might write, the Agency looked to partition as the only practical way.

While the U.N. Committee was mediating on these problems, violence, lawlessness, and repression were growing more active. In July the Irgun kidnapped two British sergeants as hostages. This provoked anti-Semitic demonstrations in London, Liverpool, and Manchester. When three terrorists were executed, the sergeants were hanged as a reprisal. The essential barbarism of this act was aggravated by attaching decoy bombs to the bodies. No single outrage provoked such intense and widespread emotion in England. Some troops ran riot in Tel Aviv and killed a number of Jews. The squalid warfare (as Mr. Churchill termed it) in which the British garrison was engaged, could not fail to have a demoralising effect upon some members. There came into being a counter-terrorist section which was guilty of indiscriminate violence, but on the whole notable restraint was exercised. No body of troops from any other country would, in the

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circumstances, have conducted itself better, and probably none as well.

Much more unhappy, because the expression, not of natural human instincts, but of blind political insensitiveness, was Mr. Bevin's handling of the "illegal" immigrants. In July the "Exodus" with 4,000 "illegals" was intercepted off Rafa and brought to Haifa. There they were transported to three ships, and it was announced that they would be taken back to France, where they had embarked. Hitherto, "illegal" immigrants had been sent to Cyprus, which at least was in the Near East, and where they took their places in the queue for Palestine. Sending back to France was meant as an indication that, so far as the Government could contrive it, they would never go to Palestine. But even this was not the limit of Mr. Bevin's ruthlessness. When the three ships arrived off Port du Bouc the passengers refused to disembark, and the French authorities refused to exert force. For weeks the ships lay offshore in sub-tropical heat with the immigrants battened down below in stifling cages. Finally it was announced that they were to go to Germany. They were landed by force at Hamburg and interned at Lübeck. Back to a concentration camp in Germany—that was Mr. Bevin's alternative to Palestine. No single incident during the Palestine struggle did so much injury to Great Britain's good name as this act of brutal callousness. It was too shameful to be repeated, and in the future the "illegals" took their way once more from Haifa to Cyprus; but nothing checked the flood of immigration. There was, indeed, one slight relaxation when in August 985 orphans from Cyprus were admitted to Palestine, in addition to the usual quota. It had been preceded by the pointless arrest of forty persons including the mayors of Tel Aviv and Nathanya.

On the 31st August, 1947, the report of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine was published. There were eleven unanimous recommendations in addition to a Majority Report and a Minority Report. The eleven unanimous recommendations were :

- (1) The Mandate to terminate at the earliest possible date.
- (2) The independence of Palestine to be achieved at the earliest possible date.

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(3) The transition period to be as short as possible consistent with the conditions essential to independence.

(4) During the transition period the authority entrusted with the administration of Palestine and preparing it for independence shall be responsible to the United Nations.

(5) With regard to religious interests and the Holy Places :

(a) In whatever solution may be adopted the sacred character of the Holy Places shall be preserved, and access to the Holy Places shall be ensured in accordance with existing rights.

(b) The present rights of the several religious communities shall not be impaired or denied.

(c) An adequate system for impartial settlement of religious disputes shall be devised.

Special stipulations regarding these matters shall be inserted in the constitution or conditions of any Palestinian State which may be devised.

(6) The General Assembly shall undertake immediately the initiation and execution of an international arrangement whereby the problems of distressed European Jews, of whom approximately 250,000 are in assembly centres, will be dealt with as a matter of extreme urgency for alleviation of their plight and of the Palestinian problem.

(7) It shall be a prior condition to the granting of independence that the political structure of the new States shall be basically democratic—that is, representative in character. The constitution shall contain democratic safeguards to protect the rights and interests of minorities.

(8) A prior condition of independence shall be the interpretation into the constitution of the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

(9) It shall be accepted as a cardinal principle that the preservation of the economic unity of Palestine is indispensable to the life and development of the country and its people.

(10) A State whose nationals have in the past enjoyed in Palestine the privileges and immunities of foreigners, including consular jurisdiction by capitulations, shall be invited by the United Nations to renounce any rights pertaining to them in the re-establishment of such privileges and immunities in an independent Palestine.



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(11) The General Assembly shall call on the peoples of Palestine to exert every effort to bring to an early end the acts of violence which have far too long beset the country.

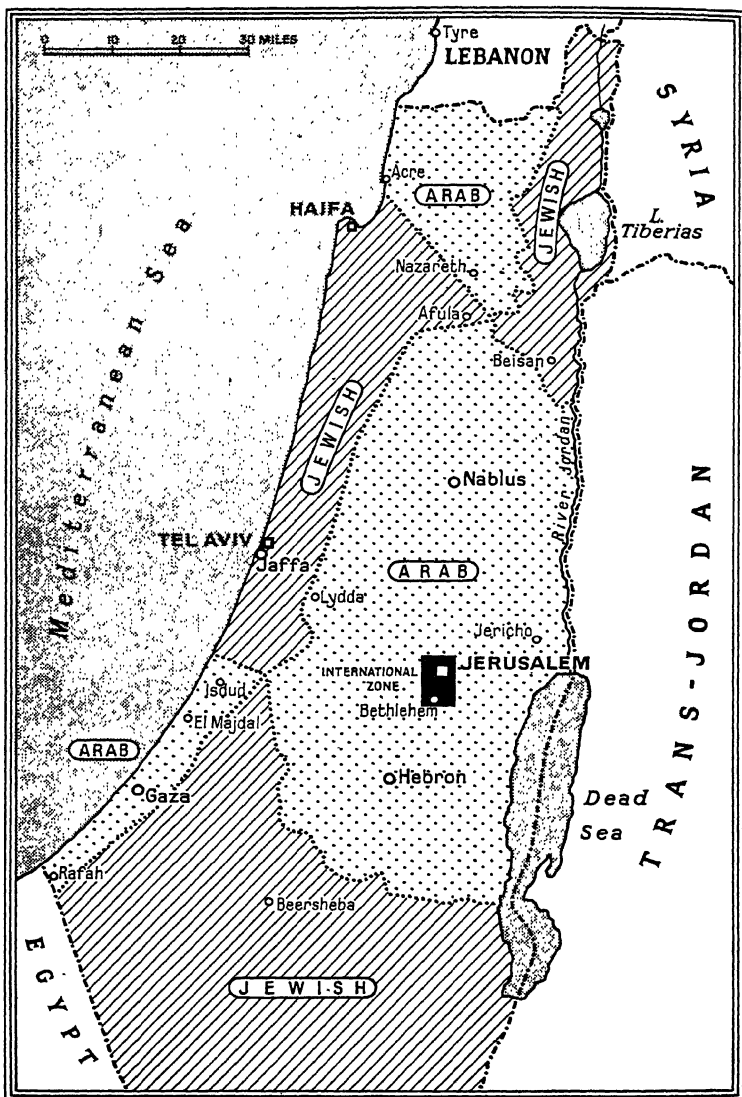
The Committee agreed, with two dissenting voices, to a twelfth recommendation as follows :

In the appraisal of the Palestine question it should be accepted as incontrovertible that any solution for Palestine cannot be considered as a solution for the Jewish problem in general.

All the members of the Committee were then agreed on the termination of the Mandate as early as possible ; on the shortest possible transition to independence ; on the immediate transfer to U.N. of responsibility ; and on the maintenance of the economic unity of Palestine. A majority of seven members (Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, the Netherlands, Peru, Sweden, and Uruguay) voted in favour of partition with economic union. The composition of that majority is significant. It included one British Dominion and some of the most liberal States of Europe and Latin America. A minority of three members (Iran, India, and Yugoslavia) put forward a report in favour of a Federal State of Palestine.

The majority partition scheme proposed an independent Arab State, an independent Jewish State, and a *corpus separatum* of the City of Jerusalem under U.N., all of which should come into being after a transitional period of two years from the 1st September, 1947. During the transitional period Great Britain, as Mandatory, was to carry on the Administration under the auspices of the United Nations, to admit 150,000 Jewish immigrants (and after September 1949 at the rate of 60,000 a year), and to abolish the land regulations within the borders of the Jewish State. During the transitional period no Jew was to establish residence in the Arab State and no Arab in the Jewish State. The Governments were to be elected by universal suffrage on the basis of proportional representation, and freedom of transit and visit was to be guaranteed. Protection of Holy Places and freedom of conscience, language, and education were to be provided for.

Economic union was to be secured by a Treaty between the two States, and was to embrace customs, currency, transport, and



II. The United Nations Commission's plan for partition

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joint economic development. There was to be a Joint Economic Board with three members representing each of the two States and also U.N. The surplus revenue of the common customs and other services was to go as to 5 per cent. and not more than 10 per cent. to Jerusalem, and the residue to be divided equally between the Jewish and Arab States. This Treaty was to operate for a minimum period of ten years.

The City of Jerusalem was to be placed under an international trusteeship. It was to be demilitarised and neutralised. All residents were to participate in local elections. A Governor was to be appointed who was to decide disputes as to the Holy Places and have a special police force to protect them. Neither he nor they were to be Jews or Arabs.

The plan envisaged the territorial division of Palestine into three parts: an Arab State, a Jewish State, and the City of Jerusalem. The proposed Arab State was to include Western Galilee, the hill country of Samaria and Judea with the exclusion of the City of Jerusalem, and the coastal plain from Isdud to the Egyptian frontier. The proposed Jewish State was to include Eastern Galilee, the Esdraelon plain, most of the coastal plain, and the whole of the Beersheba sub-district, which includes the Negev.

The three sections of the Arab State and the three sections of the Jewish State were to be linked together by two points in the sub-district of Nazareth and a third north-east of El Majdal in the sub-district of Gaza.

The Arab section of the coastal plain was to run from a point a few miles north of Isdud to the Egyptian frontier, extending inland approximately eight kilometres.

The north-eastern sector of the proposed Jewish State (Eastern Galilee) was to have frontiers with the Lebanon on the north and west, and with Syria and Transjordan on the east, and include the whole of the Huleh basin, Lake Tiberias, and the whole of the Beisan sub-district.

The Jewish sector on the coastal plain was to extend from a point south of Acre to just north of Isdud in the Gaza sub-district and include the towns of Haifa, Tel-Aviv, and Jaffa.

The Beersheba area was to include the whole of the Beersheba sub-district, which embraced the Negev and the eastern part of the Gaza sub-district.

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The Committee gave the following figures of the distribution of the settled population in the two proposed States, based upon official figures at the end of 1946 :

	<i>Jews</i>	<i>Arabs and others</i>	<i>Total</i>
The Jewish State .. ..	500,000	416,000	916,000
The Arab State .. ..	8,000	715,000	723,000
City of Jerusalem .. ..	100,000	106,000	206,000

In addition there would be in the Jewish State about 90,000 Bedouins, cultivators and stock owners who seek grazing further afield in dry seasons.

The proposed Jewish State (they argued) left considerable room for further development and land settlement. A very substantial majority of Arabs was included in the Arab State. It provided some areas for further development and land settlement and also gave an outlet to the sea at the town of Acre. An outlet to the sea was also provided in the south by the inclusion of Gaza in the Arab State.

Nearly all previous attempts to draw partition maps for Palestine had been faced with the separation of the solid Arab population in Judea and Samaria from the Arab population in Galilee. The Committee argued that to include the whole of Galilee in a Jewish State would provide contiguous frontiers but also result in the inclusion of the large Arab population in Western Galilee in the Jewish State, and weaken the Arab State economically and politically by denying to it a developed Arab area. In the proposed partition scheme these problems were solved by a definition of boundaries which provided two important links, one between Western Galilee and Samaria and one in the south near Gaza. These links would be at suitable meeting places of the frontiers and would consist of a small unbuilt area which would be a condominium. By this means it was thought possible to include Western Galilee in the Arab State, without the disadvantage of its being separated at all points from Samaria by the territory of the Jewish State.

The inclusion of the whole of Beersheba sub-district in the Jewish State gave to it a large area, parts of which are very sparsely populated and capable of development, if they can be provided with water for irrigation. The experiments already carried out

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in this area by the Jews suggested that further development should be possible by heavy investment of capital and labour, and without impairing the future or prejudicing the rights of the existing Bedouin population. The Negev south of latitude 31°, though included in the Jewish State, is desert land of little agricultural value, but is naturally linked with the northern part of the sub-district of Beersheba.

Jaffa, which has an Arab population of about 70,000, was entirely Arab except for two Jewish quarters. It is contiguous with Tel Aviv and would either have to be treated as an enclave or else be included in the Jewish State. On balance, and having in mind the difficulties which an enclave involves, not least from the economic point of view, it was thought better to suggest that Jaffa be included in the Jewish State, on the assumption that it would have a large measure of local autonomy and that the port would be under the administration of the economic union.

The Committee dealt with the problems of the viability of the proposed partition States. It came to the conclusion that the Jewish State would show a revenue of £4,878,000 (apart from customs) and an expenditure of £8,418,000, making a deficit of £3,540,000. The Arab State (likewise apart from customs) would show a revenue of £1,560,000, an expenditure of £9,324,000 and a deficit of £7,764,000. The City of Jerusalem would show a revenue of £1,098,000 (apart from customs), an expenditure of £3,004,000, and a deficit of £1,906,000. With the addition of the revenue from customs and the certain reductions in police expenditure, it was thought that all three might possibly balance.

The Minority Report proposed that an independent Federal State of Palestine should be created in a transitional period not exceeding three years: and during those three years responsibility should be entrusted to an authority set up by U.N. It should embrace a Jewish and an Arab State. The organs of the Federal State should include a head of the State, an executive, a representative legislative body (consisting of two chambers), and a Federal Court. One chamber was to be elected by proportional representation, the other should have equal representation of Jews and Arabs. The head of the State was to be elected by both chambers in joint session. The Federal Court was to have four Arab and three Jewish members elected by a joint session, and should decide all constitutional questions. Arabic and Hebrew

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were to be official languages. Each State should be competent in local affairs. The Holy Places should be supervised by an international body appointed by U.N.

Jerusalem was to be the capital of the Federal State, with two separate municipalities for local administration. On the crucial question of Jewish immigration the Minority Report proposed that during the transitional period immigration should be permitted into the Jewish State "in such numbers as not to exceed the absorptive capacity of that State, having due regard for the rights of the population then present within that State and for their anticipated rate of increase." Absorptive capacity was to be decided by an International Commission of three Arabs, three Jews, and three representatives of U.N.

The Majority Report, it will be observed, had the support of seven members of the Committee, the Minority of three. One Dominion, Canada, voted with the majority ; Australia, the second Dominion member, abstained from voting for either report. The differences between the two reports may be thus summarised :

(1) The majority scheme was partition with economic union ; the minority was a federation of Jewish and Arab "States" with a common citizenship, and a federal authority controlling national defence, foreign relations, immigration, currency, taxation for federal purposes, waterways, transport, communications, copyrights, and patents.

(2) Under the majority scheme there was to be a transitional period of two years from the 1st September, 1947, during which the United Kingdom was to carry on the administration, if desired, with the assistance of one or more of the United Nations. Under the minority scheme the transitional period was not to exceed three years, during which the administration was to be conducted by an authority appointed by U.N.

(3) Under the majority scheme during the transitional period 150,000 Jews were to be admitted in two years, and thereafter (if the transition continued) at the rate of 60,000 a year. The Jewish Agency was to select immigrants and organise immigration. Under the minority scheme during the transitional period Jewish immigration into the Jewish "State" was to be governed by absorptive capacity as determined by an International Commission, and having due regard to the rights

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of the existing population and its natural increase. Thereafter it was to be determined by an International Commission.

(4) Under the majority scheme the Jewish "State" was to include Jaffa and the Negev. Under the minority scheme Jaffa and most of the Negev were to be in the Arab "State."

(5) Under the majority scheme the Jerusalem area was to be internationalised. Under the minority scheme it was to be included in the Arab area and to be the federal capital.

The minority scheme was in substance a form of cantonisation, and it placed Jewish immigration at first under international and finally under Federal control. It therefore corresponded not inadequately with Mr. Bevin's views. But for these very reasons it did not meet the views of the Jews, and it did not face up to the inevitable deadlock in the Federal Government. The majority plan was highly distasteful to Mr. Bevin. It was partition; it thrust upon the United Kingdom the duty of accepting a large Jewish immigration; it abolished the Land Regulations in the Jewish area; it gave the Jewish State the Negev. The Zionist General Council gave conditional approval to the Majority Report; the exclusion of Western Galilee and of New Jerusalem from the Jewish State was criticised. The Arab League met at Beirut, and declared that the proposals of the U.N. Committee were flagrantly prejudicial to Arab rights and violated all the promises given to the Arabs. They would be resisted by all Arab States, which demanded Palestine's independence as an Arab State. What was meant by an independent Arab State of Palestine was made clear by the Mufti: "an independent constitutional government composed of representatives of the original population who lived in the country before 1918, as in the case of other Arab countries." He threatened the wrath of 70 million Arabs and 400 million Moslems.

The General Assembly of U.N. was convened on the 22nd September, and three days later the Palestine Committee met. It elected Dr. Evatt of Australia Chairman, and agreed that the Jewish Agency and the Arab Higher Committee should be represented. The next day Mr. Creech Jones, the Colonial Secretary, announced the British Government's attitude. The British Government agreed that the Mandate should be ended.

"They have consequently decided that, in the absence of a

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settlement, they must plan for the early withdrawal of the British forces and British Administration from Palestine. His Majesty's Government are ready to assume responsibility for giving effect to any plan on which agreement is reached between the Arabs and the Jews. If the Assembly should recommend a policy which is not acceptable to the Jews and the Arabs His Majesty's Government would not feel able to implement it. . . . In considering any proposal that His Majesty's Government should participate with others in the enforcement of a settlement, they must take into account both the inherent justice of the settlement and the extent to which force would be required to give it effect."

As the Majority Report was the only one which specifically required Great Britain to implement it (during the transition period) this declaration implied the rejection of that report by the British Government. Whether it might collaborate with others in implementing the Minority Report was left uncertain. Less than reassuring was the statement that the Government could not easily imagine circumstances wherein they would wish to implement the application of the settlement recommended by the Assembly. Did not this imply the right to sabotage?

For the Palestine Arabs Jamal Husseini said that in resistance to either report they would drench the soil with the last drop of their blood. For the Zionists Dr. Silver accepted partition, but criticised the exclusion of Western Galilee from the Jewish State. The Jewish people in Palestine would maintain security in their territory. He welcomed the British decision to withdraw from Palestine, and rejected the Minority Report. In October the Arab League asked the Arab States to mobilise their forces on the frontiers of Palestine "to safeguard the territorial integrity of Palestine and the right of its inhabitants to self-determination."

In the prolonged debates in the Palestine Committee the Arab members, while maintaining their demand for an independent unitary Arab State, pressed for a case to be sent to the International Court of Justice as to whether U.N. was competent to resolve upon partition. The United States and Russia both supported the Majority Report, with possible modifications to be examined by a sub-committee. Great Britain insisted that she would wind up the Mandate and withdraw within a limited period,



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and that she would not accept responsibility for enforcement either alone or in a major rôle. With these repeated declarations by the British Government the problem of enforcement, whichever solution was adopted, became urgent and ineluctable, and to that the Committee directed itself, however hesitantly and inadequately. Two sub-committees were appointed, one to prepare a detailed scheme based upon the Majority Report, the second to prepare a detailed scheme based on the Arab proposals. In the first sub-committee America proposed :

(1) That the Jewish and Arab States should come into existence on the 1st July, 1948.

(2) That a three-man Commission should be appointed to supervise the transition.

(3) That both Arab and Jewish States should form provisional governments during the transition period with power to recruit and arm security forces.

(4) That the Commission should organise a trustee administration for Jerusalem.

The Russian delegate proposed :

(1) That the Mandate should end on the 1st January, 1948.

(2) That authority should then pass to the Security Council, which should forthwith send a Commission to Palestine.

(3) That the Commission should delimit frontiers and elect provisional government councils, to act under the general supervision of the Commission.

(4) That the Council should form militia in each State.

On the 11th November the Russians and Americans agreed on a plan to implement partition :

(1) The Mandate was to end on the 1st May, 1948, when the British Administration and military forces should have left.

(2) The Jewish and Arab States were to become independent not later than the 1st July.

(3) A Commission of three to five members, drawn from the small Powers favourable to partition, should be appointed by the Assembly.

The date, 1st May, had to be altered to the 1st August because Great Britain said that she would require till the 1st August to

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evacuate. The civil administration would disappear earlier, and thereafter the British forces would be restricted to maintaining law and order "in the limited area of which they would necessarily remain in occupation during the process of withdrawal." When the report of the partition sub-committee came before the full Palestine Committee, Sir Alexander Cadogan, the British delegate, submitted five objections :

(1) Britain refused to give any authority to the proposed United Nations Commission until the Mandate was surrendered.

(2) Britain would end the Mandate when she thought proper, and not in agreement with the Commission.

(3) She would yield authority only to the Commission and only at one stroke, and not gradually to provisional councils created by the Commission.

(4) She would not allow the Commission to recruit militia or form governments in any area in which British troops still remained.

(5) Britain would not seek the Security Council's approval of the date for final evacuation, but would give fair notice of the ending of the Mandate, and would forward a timetable of evacuation.

Mr. Herschel Johnson, the American delegate, said that the declared policy of Britain was not "entirely helpful." That was a very polite understatement. The threat which had lurked obscurely in Mr. Creech Jones's early declaration was now in the open. Great Britain, not having got from U.N. the solution which Mr. Bevin desired, had decided to sabotage the solution favoured by U.N. The conditions now announced rendered it certain (so far as Great Britain could ensure it) that chaos should follow the surrender of the Mandate and accompany the evacuation, and that every obstacle should be put in the way of establishing efficient successor governments. Nevertheless the Palestine Committee adopted the partition report and rejected the minority report. On the 29th November the Assembly acted likewise. The plan for partition was carried by 33 votes to 13 with 10 abstentions. Votes in the affirmative included those of Australia, Canada, South Africa, and New Zealand, four of the old Dominions; in the negative was India. Britain abstained. The division between the Dominions and Britain was not the least significant feature of the

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voting. Mr. Bevin had created the first public conflict in the Commonwealth on a primary issue of foreign policy.

The Resolution is a document of some length, but its essential provisions must be set out. It began by authorising the Security Council to take the necessary measures for the implementation of the plan, and called upon the Security Council to "determine on a threat to the peace and act of aggression," in accordance with Article 39 of the Charter, if any attempt were made to alter by force the settlement envisaged by this Resolution.

### 1. *Termination of the Mandate.*

(1) The Mandate for Palestine shall terminate as soon as possible but in any case not later than the 1st August, 1948.

(2) The armed forces of the Mandatory Power shall be progressively withdrawn from Palestine, the withdrawal to be completed as soon as possible but in any case not later than the 1st August, 1948.

(3) The Mandatory Power shall use its best endeavours to ensure that an area situated in the territory of the Jewish State, including a seaport and hinterland adequate to provide facilities for a substantial immigration, shall be evacuated at the earliest possible date and in any event not later than the 1st February, 1948.

(4) Independent Arab and Jewish States and the special International Régime for Jerusalem shall come into existence in Palestine two months after the evacuation of the armed forces of the Mandatory Power has been completed, but in any case not later than the 1st October, 1948.

### 2. *Steps preparatory to Independence.*

(1) A Commission shall be set up consisting of one representative of each of five Member States.

(2) The Administration of Palestine shall, as the Mandatory Power withdraws its armed forces, be progressively turned over to the Commission. The Mandatory Power shall to the fullest possible extent co-ordinate its plans for withdrawal with the plans of the Commission to take over and administer areas which have been evacuated. The Mandatory Power shall not take any action to prevent, obstruct or delay the implementation by the Commission of the measures recommended by the General Assembly.

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(3) On its arrival in Palestine the Commission shall establish the frontiers of the States and Jerusalem.

(4) The Commission after consultation with the democratic parties and other public organisations shall establish in each State as rapidly as possible a Provisional Council of Government, to act under the general direction of the Commission. If, by the 1st April, 1948, such a Council could not be appointed in any State, or could not carry out its functions, the Commission should report to the Security Council.

(5) During the transitional period the Provisional Councils shall have full authority in their areas, including authority over immigration and land regulation.

(6) The Provisional Councils shall recruit an armed militia from the residents in their area to maintain internal order and prevent frontier clashes, to be under the command of Jewish and Arab officers respectively.

(7) Elections in each State shall be held, not more than two months after evacuation, to a Constituent Assembly.

(8) Arabs and Jews in Jerusalem can opt for citizenship in the Arab and Jewish States.

### 3. *Economic Union and Transit.*

(1) The Provisional Councils shall enter into an undertaking with respect to Economic Union and Transit to be drafted by the Commission.

(2) The undertaking shall be directed to a Customs Union, a joint currency, common operation of communications, posts, ports and airports, joint economic development, access to water and power facilities.

(3) There shall be a Joint Economic Board of three representatives of each State and three foreign members appointed by U.N., whose decisions shall be binding on the States.

(4) There shall be a Common Customs Tariff, of the net revenue of which 5 to 10 per cent. shall go to Jerusalem.

### 4. *Boundaries.*

(1) The Arab State shall include Western Galilee and embrace Beersheba, Jaffa, the coast line from a point north of Majdal to the Egyptian frontier, and part of the Southern Negev. [This reduced the Negev area allotted to the Jewish State in the Majority Report.]

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(2) The Jewish State shall include Eastern Galilee, bounded on the north and west by Lebanon and on the east by Syria and Transjordan, the Huleh Basin, Lake Tiberias, the Beisan sub-district, Haifa, part of the western coast of the Dead Sea, and the Aqaba strip.

(3) The Jerusalem area shall include the Municipality, Southern Bethlehem, Ain Karim, and Motza.

There were provisions for the Holy Places, the protection of religious and minority rights, and financial adjustments. Very significant was a declaration that "When the independence of either the Arab or the Jewish State as envisaged in this plan has become effective and the declaration and undertaking, as envisaged in this plan, have been signed by either of them, sympathetic consideration should be given to its application for admission to membership in the United Nations in accordance with Article 4 of the Charter of the United Nations."

It was estimated that the area of the Jewish State would be 5,500 sq. miles, with a population (including 100,000 in international Jerusalem) of 658,000 Jews and 405,000 non-Jews; and that the area of the Arab State would be 4,500 sq. miles, with a population of 909,000 (including 105,000 in Jerusalem) and 10,000 Jews. All these figures of population are conjectural. The Jewish area was reduced to a narrow neck near Isdud and in the Vale of Jezreel. As the plan provided for common customs and communications and free access, these distributions seemed to have minor significance, but, should the plan break down in this respect, formidable strategical problems would inevitably arise.

The recommendations with regard to Jerusalem provided for a trusteeship agreement, in respect of the Holy Places and minorities, demilitarisation, a Governor approved by the Trusteeship Council, freedom of transit and visit.

As the plan of partition with economic union was not destined to become operative, it is not necessary to describe in detail the financial, human, and constitutional provisions. The boundaries were exceedingly artificial, however impressive the reasons adduced. In effect they divided both the Jewish and the Arab States into three sections with trifling links near Isdud and in the Vale of Jezreel. The provisions for economic union evaded the problem of development, upon which the hopes of Jewish

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immigration and expansion must largely depend. The *corpus separatum* of Jerusalem was engulfed in Arab territory and had no communications under its own control with the sea. In brief, the whole arrangement assumed that there would be cordial cooperation between Jews and Arabs in a common association. That was precisely the element which did not exist, and which, if it had existed, might have made the intervention of U.N. unnecessary. Would it be evoked by the will of U.N.? Events were soon to show that it would not.

## CHAPTER VI

### PARTITION

SUPPORT from the Jews, opposition from the Arabs to the U.N. plan of partition—these were announced and expected. How effective that opposition would be could not be anticipated with precision until the attitude of the Arab States was clearly defined. There was little doubt that the Jews of Palestine could both organise and defend their State in the face of the Palestine Arabs. But what if the Arab States should intervene? The Arab League had adopted a high tone, but would their acts correspond? Would they limit themselves to supporting with arms, money, and volunteers the Palestine Arabs, or would they develop an all-out attack upon the Yishuv, involving their full strength? Before committing themselves utterly the Arab States would measure the determination and the capacity of U.N. to implement its resolutions, and in any such calculation not a little would turn upon the attitude assumed by the Mandatory Power.

On the 17th December, 1947, the Arab League issued a statement condemning the decision of the Assembly, and declaring that Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Transjordan, and Lebanon had agreed to take decisive measures to stop the division of Palestine into Arab and Jewish States. The words were strong, but the nature of the action was left vague. As late as the 14th January, 1948, Azzam Pasha was saying that there was no truth in reports that regular Arab forces would intervene in Palestine. This indicated at least hesitation and indecision. From Syria and Iraq bands were drifting into Palestine, but the Arab States were still a long way from mobilising their armies and invading. They were, indeed, not without their own internal troubles. In the Yemen the Imam was murdered and civil war threatened. In Iraq very soon the projected Anglo-Iraq treaty was to provoke riot, bloodshed, a change of government, and repudiation. The draft treaty was signed on 15th January. Rioting broke out on 27th February: and a new

government rejected the treaty on 4th February, There was much violence in Palestine from north to south, but if direct action by the Arab States was held off, resolute handling by the Mandatory Power could get anarchy more or less under control while the Jewish State was organising in conjunction with the agency of U.N. The outlook was far from bright, but with goodwill it could be prevented from getting desperate.

The Resolution of the 29th November, 1947, made a general appeal "to all governments and all peoples to refrain from taking any action which might hamper or delay the carrying out" of its plan. But upon the Mandatory Power, so long as its Mandate endured, certain additional obligations were placed. They were (i) not later than the 1st February, 1948, to evacuate and provide a seaport and hinterland adequate to substantial Jewish immigration; (ii) to turn over to the Palestine Commission the administration parallel with evacuation; (iii) not to take any action to prevent or delay implementation. Sir Alexander Cadogan's statement before the Assembly voted its resolution was not very promising, but in the House of Commons on the 11th and 12th December, Mr. Creech Jones and Mr. Bevin removed all doubt. The Mandate would end on the 15th May and evacuation be completed by the 1st August. The mandate would not be relinquished piecemeal, but only as a whole on an appointed day. The Palestine Commission must not arrive until shortly before the termination of the Mandate—later this period was defined as fourteen days. Once the Mandate was terminated British troops would maintain order only in the areas they occupied, and only in order to cover their own withdrawal. The immigration quota would not be increased. Great Britain would not participate in collective enforcement. Mr. Bevin, exercising his peculiar gift for pouring oil on troubled fires, had unpleasant things to say about the Jews and sympathetic things about the Arabs. Briefly every obligation U.N. sought to impose upon Great Britain was repudiated.

But at least Mr. Creech Jones had said that the Palestine Government was responsible for law and order until the Mandate was finally surrendered. The U.N. resolution was the signal for arson, looting, and murder in Jerusalem under the eyes of the police, and the disorders rapidly spread to Jaffa, and Haifa, Safed, and Lydda, and the Negev. Jewish convoys taking supplies to settlements south of Jerusalem were attacked, and the Arab



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Legion (part of the Government's security forces) took a hand and killed 14 Jews. There were counter-outrages by Jews. By the 20th December the casualties since the U.N. resolution amounted to 177 Jewish and Arab civilians and 12 members of the security forces killed, while the wounded numbered 523. By the 18th January, 1948, these figures had risen to 720 killed and 1,552 wounded. In this welter of violence two episodes stood out—the blowing up of the offices of the *Palestine Post* newspaper and the blowing up of part of Ben Yehuda Street, one of the busiest of Jerusalem thoroughfares. In both cases Jews claimed that they were the work of members of the security forces, a charge which was denied by the Administration. Not very happily the Administration thought fit to say that such a charge has “the serious consequence that it must henceforth be clearly more difficult for British troops to look upon members of the Jewish community as persons entitled, as they are, to protection.”

There were bitter complaints from the Jews that the troops were disarming them and not disarming the Arabs. In one tragic case British troops disarmed four Jews in Jerusalem and turned them over to Arabs who murdered and mutilated them.

Whatever the balance of truth in these charges and counter-charges, a lack of cordiality or even common sympathy between the Administration and the Yishuv was manifest to all. It was certainly not lost on the Arabs. The High Commissioner himself said later, “At first the Arabs were firmly convinced that our armed forces were on their side.” It was contrasted by a sorely tried Palestine Jewry with the contemporary attitude towards the Arabs. Some 600 or 800 Arabs penetrated from Syria and attacked Jewish settlements. The local troops took action, but an abortive enquiry at Damascus was the only response from Whitehall. An equal number of well-armed Arabs from Transjordan crossed the river and settled down in Samaria. There, with their headquarters at Nablus, they instituted a local administration. It might have been thought that, with British authority in Transjordan, the incursion should have been prevented, that with British troops in earshot it should have been stopped, that in any case the invaders should have been ejected. But nothing was done. Not less disturbing was an announcement in London that an embargo was placed on the supply of arms to Palestine Jews or Arabs, but that arms would continue to go to the Arab States in

fulfilment of treaty obligations. What this meant, in effect, was that, so far as Great Britain could achieve it, the Jewish militia contemplated under the Assembly plan should have no weapons, and the Arab States could arm the Palestine Arabs, and themselves be equipped for invasion by Great Britain if and when they should decide upon it. Mr. Creech Jones made it plain that Great Britain would not permit the establishment of a Jewish militia. Meanwhile Mr. Bevin was signing a treaty with Iraq, the essential feature of which was the provision of military aid to Iraq. It is true that Iraq was promptly to disavow the treaty, but the fact that it was signed at a time when Iraq was infiltrating armed bands into Palestine was not calculated to discourage Arab aggression.

One of the provisions of the Resolution of the 29th November, 1947, was that :

“During the period between the appointment of the United Nations Commission and the termination of the Mandate, the Mandatory Power shall, except in respect of ordinary operations, consult with the Commission on any measures which it may contemplate involving the liquidation, disposal, or encumbering of the assets of the Palestine Government, such as the accumulated treasury surplus, the proceeds of Government bond issues, State lands or any other asset.”

Without any consultation with the Commission, the Palestine Government set about disposing of Palestine assets. It even offered for auction the Palestine Government's lands in Haifa harbour. On the 21st February, the British Treasury announced that Palestine sterling balances were blocked except for authorised sums to be released, and that Palestine was excluded from the sterling area. This was a measure likely to produce financial and economic chaos in Palestine—special arrangements were indicated for the return of Transjordan (which had the same currency as Palestine) to the sterling area. All these problems were approached in the spirit of the coolest cynicism. The decisions were taken without consulting the U.N. Commission precisely because it was anticipated that the Commission's views might be different. The Custodian of Enemy Property in Palestine had German assets of nearly £9,000,000 besides an interest in perhaps another £17,000,000. The British Government tried to liquidate these and bring the proceeds to England, in part to defeat a special claim

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upon them by Palestine Jews as compensation for Nazi crimes and spoliation. It was also sought to induce the Commission to restrict the economic liberty of the successor States for a year or two in the interests of the Mandatory Government.

It was plain that in every way the British Government was seeking to sabotage U.N.'s partition plan, and in particular, the formation of a Jewish State. Mr. Bevin could hardly have been surprised when thirty Congressmen addressed to the Secretary of State the following four questions :

(i) Is it true that Great Britain is permitting arms to continue to be shipped to Arab nations, and if so does this interfere with the carrying out of the U.N. decision ?

(ii) Do the activities of the Arab nations with respect to support of the Arab Higher Committee for Palestine and the Arab League or otherwise in their announced violent resistance to the U.N. decision endanger the maintenance of international peace and security in terms of the U.N. charter ?

(iii) What will be the instructions of the U.S.A. to its delegate on questions referred by the Palestine Commission to the Security Council regarding the means of making effective the General Assembly's decision ?

(iv) What is the U.S.A. prepared to do to help in the implementation of the U.N. decision ?

Mr. Marshall's reply was diplomatic—he would await the report of the Palestine Commission. Let us turn, then, and see how these events were being mirrored in U.N.

The U.N. plan provided for the appointment by the Assembly of a Commission of five to implement the plan. On the 30th December, 1947, this Commission was set up, composed of representatives of Czechoslovakia, Bolivia, Denmark, Panama, and the Philippines. Three weeks later Sir Alexander Cadogan told the Commission that until the end of the Mandate only 1,500 Jews a month would be admitted, and there would be no evacuation of a Jewish port or hinterland. Therewith gone was one not unimportant element of the partition proposal, which might at least have put an end to Jewish terrorism. On the 27th January, Mr. Shertok, of the Jewish Agency, told the Commission that there was extreme reluctance in the Middle East to undertake hazardous military adventures, and the reluctance would be still

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greater if U.N. showed it meant business. Thereupon the Commission agreed to assist in forming militias for the Jewish and Arab States, and approached the Mandatory Power for facilities. Sir Alexander Cadogan promptly replied that Great Britain would not allow the formation of the militias before the end of the Mandate, that the Commission would not be allowed into Palestine earlier than a fortnight before that end, and that after the end British forces would give it no protection. Therewith went more fundamental provisions of the plan, and the plainest of warnings that the Commission, if it ever went to Palestine, would only go at its peril, being denied British protection and local protection.

On the 2nd February the Palestine Commission made its first report to the Security Council. It was a grave indictment of the Mandatory Power. Progressive transfer of authority to the Commission, a port for Jewish immigration, reasonable time to enter Palestine before the transfer of authority—all were refused. In spite of the pledge to maintain law and order, Sir Alexander Cadogan had told the Commission that there had been a very severe diminution of the functions and authority of government; violent conflicts between the two communities had been intensified; the courts and essential government services were unable to operate or were crippled; the collection of public revenue was dropping sharply; the Arabs would attack the members of the Commission. But Sir Alexander insinuated that the Arabs must not be blamed over much; they were not going to submit tamely to the United Nations plan of partition. That, he left no doubt, was in his view the real rock of offence. As for the infiltration of bands, the British could now do nothing effective, because the bands were split into small groups. The Commission thereupon decided that it would not go to Palestine until the indispensable prerequisites were supplied, but would send an advance party of officials. With that decision, forced by the British Government, the implementation of the U.N. plan by U.N. agency was as good as defeated. One may contrast the British attitude in the case of Libya. When in December 1949 the Assembly elected Mr. Pelt U.N. Commissioner to assist Libya to independence, Great Britain made no objection to his taking office many months before the date of independence.

On the 16th February, 1948, the Palestine Commission made a second and a despairing report to the Security Council. They

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could do nothing until the termination of the Mandate. A dangerous and tragic precedent would have been established if force or the threat of force should defeat the will of the United Nations. There must be an adequate non-Palestinian force to take the place of the British. They would not be able to define the frontiers, or set up a provisional government in the Arab State, and this would prevent economic union, and would jeopardise the Jewish State and the international régime for Jerusalem. There would be an intensified struggle between the communities in Jerusalem. "The whole of mankind is interested in the peace of Jerusalem. The United Nations would be dealt a severe blow, if its efforts to maintain the sacred character of the city and preserve it as a possible centre of peace and harmony should end in a sanguinary struggle." This moving appeal drew from Mr. Creech Jones the observation that the British Government was being as helpful to the Palestine Commission as the physical facts of the situation permitted, and from the British Treasury the blocking of Palestine sterling and the expulsion of Palestine from the Sterling Bloc. It was not without irony that a special committee had meanwhile completed a draft constitution for Jerusalem, a city the Commission was not permitted to see, still less preserve.

When the Security Council met on the 24th February, there were clear indications of a retreat. The American delegate made the disturbing assertion that the Security Council were not bound by the recommendations of the Assembly, although they should give great weight to them. The Council had no power to enforce a political settlement, and he suggested setting up a committee of the five permanent members to "consult the Palestine Commission, the Mandatory, and representatives of the principal parties concerned to endeavour to get an agreement on the basis of the General Assembly's resolution." This was paying lip service to the resolution of 29th November, but clearly preparing the way for abandoning it. The Canadian delegate moved along the same road, and Mr. Creech Jones dotted the "i's" and crossed the "t's" by saying that Great Britain could not support that part of the resolution which committed the Council to carrying out the partition scheme or giving guidance to the Palestine Commission. It is not surprising that Mr. Shertok felt impelled to tell the Council that the Jews of Palestine would defend their own country, and that "no reduction of Jewish rights under the plan, either

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in territory or in sovereignty, can be accepted by the Jewish people.”

Great Britain refused to be represented on the Five-Power Committee of permanent members, and the third report of the Palestine Commission was in effect an indictment of her conduct. It said that the partitioning of Palestine had broken down because of Arab resistance and the attitude of the Mandatory Power. Her refusal of co-operation meant that co-ordination was impossible. The Mandatory Power would not allow the formation of State militias, and security was impracticable. The response was an attempt by the American delegate to abandon partition, and Mr. Warren Austin proposed a temporary trusteeship for the whole of Palestine. He offered two resolutions: (i) for a truce in Palestine, (ii) for a special session of the Assembly to reconsider the future government of Palestine. It is difficult to believe that this change of front was not the result of discussion behind the scenes between the State Department and the Foreign Office. The State Department was notoriously not in harmony with the President, and there was point in Mr. Gromyko's bitter retort that the American Government was putting oil and strategic interests before U.N. interests. The Foreign Office could be trusted to put the strategic argument. The oil interests were not slow to make their influence felt. An agent of the Arabian American Oil Co. (Aramco) reported to his chief that, within a fortnight of the decision of the 29th November, he had seen the principal leaders of the Arab League, and told them that the American Government experts on Middle Eastern affairs were opposed to partition, and that the decision to support it had been made by the President without understanding the consequences. He assured them that he believed partition would be cancelled. He undertook to convey to the State Department a proposal from the Secretary of the Arab League of a compromise solution in the form of a Vatican State for the Jews. In return he was promised that American oil concessions would be maintained.

It is characteristic of the “experts” who moved the statesmen, that this gentleman reported that all good Jews were leaving Palestine, that the Red flag was flying in Palestine side by side with the Star of David, and that Israel would be organised as a Communistic State.

Mr. Austin's ideas were admittedly half-baked when on the

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5th April he outlined them to the Security Council. The Trusteeship was to end when the Arabs and Jews agreed on the future government of Palestine—in other words at the Greek Kalends. The United Nations should act through a Trusteeship Council, which should operate through a Governor-General, a Cabinet, and a democratically elected council. There would have to be volunteer forces and a local police, with the aid if necessary of certain States. The British administrative and military forces might continue to function after the 15th May. It was obvious that all this was mere paper. The essential problems were not faced, and the one certain effect was to negate partition and substitute nothing concrete. Precisely for that reason it received warm support from Mr. Creech Jones (who presumably had been at its birth). It was received coldly and critically by most of the other members; nor was British support of much assistance when on the 13th April the Palestine Commission made a fourth report, putting the principal blame on Great Britain for refusing to let the Commission go to Palestine earlier than the 1st May; refusing the progressive transfer of authority; preventing the formation of militias; and taking financial and economic steps without consulting the Commission. The unreality of the American proposal was manifest when the head of the Commission's advance party announced (29th April) that partition was an accomplished fact in Palestine, and the Jews were able to defend what they considered theirs. When on the 28th April President Truman appointed Mr. Hilldring special assistant to Mr. Marshall in charge of Palestine affairs, it was recognised that the President had taken hold again, and that the manœuvre of the State Department in conjunction with the Foreign Office to destroy partition had failed. Even a motion for a Trusteeship limited to Jerusalem was rejected on the 14th May.

Assuming, as one may not too venturesomely assume, that Mr. Austin's Trusteeship proposal was inspired by the Foreign Office, we may ask what in the eyes of the Foreign Office could have been its merits? Trusteeship was rejected by Jews and Arabs alike, if for different reasons, and Mr. Bevin could not have been naive enough to suppose that it could have been imposed upon both Jews and Arabs by U.N., which at all times had shrunk from invoking a force which it did not possess. Mr. Creech Jones gave the key—it reversed the resolution of the 29th November. As long

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as that resolution stood, partition had behind it the moral force and authority of U.N., and the Jewish State in process of formation was a fulfilment of international law. Any attack on the Jewish State created by virtue of that resolution would be a violation of international law, and might draw down the penalties imposed by the Charter. The Arab States had for some time been supplying arms and volunteers to the Palestine Arabs. That was not without its risks, but the risk would be greatly increased should those States launch their armies. The League Council had met in Cairo on the 11th April. On the 22nd April Jamil Mardam, the Syrian Prime Minister, announced that the Arab League would "fight on land, at sea, and in the air until we achieve victory." On the same day King Abdullah of Transjordan declared that the Arab world must take action against Zionism. "Our peace and liberty are at stake. I call on all Arab countries to join my army in a movement to Palestine to retain the Arab character of that country when the British end their mandatory rule on the 15th May." The Arab Legion "will not take part in the battle for Palestine until the British leave. But then they will, and they are now in process of preparing and training for that date." Three days later military consultations took place at Amman, at which Abdullah, the Regent of Iraq, the Lebanese Prime Minister, the Arab Commander in Palestine, and other Arab leaders took part, and it was announced at Baghdad that full agreement had been reached on co-operation between the armies of the League, and that Abdullah's plans were accepted unconditionally.

Thus the decision to make formal war was taken while the Austin motion to drop partition was under discussion. There had been prolonged hesitation before this fateful step, and it can hardly be doubted that that motion vanquished the last doubts, and induced the Arab States to cross the Rubicon. The responsibility of its authors is therefore very grave. We need not discuss how much they foresaw, what they desired, what they calculated. If they acted in ignorance or in innocent bewilderment their offence as statesmen is not diminished. As it happened the Trusteeship manœuvre failed, and the Arab States were left committed to and unable to withdraw from a decision which quite possibly they would not have taken but for that manœuvre. Thereafter it became a primary objective of British tactics to avert from them the consequences of defying U.N. and making war.



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Mr. Austin was more happily inspired if not immediately fortunate with his proposal for a truce in Palestine. On the 17th April the Council adopted a resolution calling on Jews and Arabs to suspend fighting and violence; to stop bringing in bands of fighting personnel or arms; to suspend political activity; to help Britain maintain order; and to respect the Holy Places. On the 23rd April the French, Belgian, and American Consuls in Jerusalem were appointed a Truce Commission. A week later they gave their report:

“The general situation in Palestine is deteriorating rapidly. Government departments are closing down daily. Normal activities of the country are coming to a standstill. The Jewish Agency is acting as a general organising body for the Jewish areas and attempting to replace suspended Government activities. Arab areas are depending on municipal authorities without central authority. Telegraph facilities have ceased in most areas, as have telephone trunk lines. Intensity of the fighting is increasing steadily. Camps and other important areas vacated by British forces immediately become battle grounds. Operations on a larger and more important scale than Haifa are expected shortly. Rumours are tending to increase nervous tension in the country.”

Palestine was degenerating into chaos, save in so far as the Jewish Agency was establishing its authority in the areas assigned to the Jewish State. It had been one of the arguments of the Colonial Secretary when introducing the Palestine Bill that the possibility of grave disturbance would be indefinitely increased if the Commission were allowed to start immediately to establish a purely Jewish militia for the Jewish State with full training facilities and equipment. Anarchy prevailed where the British still professed to rule, order was crystallising in the Jewish State in spite of all the obstacles the Mandatory Government had multiplied. Anarchy was foreseen and designed. The Palestine Bill provided for the termination of the Mandate, but deliberately refrained from contemplating the transfer of authority to any successor government. On the 15th May the Mandate was to end. Before that date the whole machine of administration was to be dismantled or disintegrated. Thereafter, in the contemplation of the British Government, there was to be, in the most literal sense,

anarchy. *Après nous le déluge* was Great Britain's farewell to Palestine.

The British record in Palestine deserved a worthier epitaph. During thirty years, if errors not a few had been committed, much had been created. From a derelict Turkish province Palestine had grown into a country which, in regard to justice, social legislation, and integrity of administration, was a model to the Middle East. Under the shelter of the Mandate there had been built up a Jewish National Home which was already flowering into the Jewish State. All this was deliberately, wilfully hurled into chaos.

While U.N. was tossing between expedient and expedient and deciding nothing, while the Mandatory Power was preparing anarchy, the Yishuv knew its own mind and was marking out its course. On the 23rd March the Jewish Agency Executive and the Jewish National Council issued the following statement :

“(i) The Jewish people and Yishuv will oppose any proposal designed to prevent or postpone the establishment of a Jewish State.

“(ii) We categorically reject any plan to set up a trusteeship régime for Palestine, even for a short time. Trusteeship would necessarily entail denial of Jewish rights to national independence. It would leave Palestine under a foreign military régime.

“(iii) The failure and disintegration of the Mandatory Administration, the continuation of which was unanimously rejected by the United Nations, necessitate the early arrival in Palestine of the United Nations Commission. A Jewish Provisional Council of Government should be recognised without delay by the Commission, so that authority may be transferred to it as envisaged in the United Nations' decision.

“(iv) Upon the termination of the Mandatory Administration, and not later than the 16th May, a Provisional Jewish Government will commence to function in co-operation with the representatives of the United Nations then in Palestine. In the meantime, we shall do our utmost to minimise the chaos created by the present Government, and we shall maintain, so far as lies in our power, public services neglected by it.

“(v) The Jewish people extend the hand of peace to the Arab people. The Jewish State will be glad to co-operate with neighbouring Arab States, and to enter into permanent treaty

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relations with them, to strengthen world peace and advance the development of all the countries of the Near East."

As long ago as October 1947, even before the Assembly had given its approval to the Commission's report, the leaders of the Yishuv were preparing to take over when the day came. Some doubted whether the British would really leave Palestine, but all felt the need to make ready. The responsibilities were heavy, the difficulties great, the resources material and human limited. The Jewish Agency had long been described as a State within a State, but that was exaggerated. Its control and its machinery were most highly developed in precisely those regions of administration where contraction is least difficult in times of acute crisis, and even here there was a measure of financial and other dependence upon the State. There was a well-developed educational system, but when the Administration departed the State subsidy would go with it, and the crown, the University, would be left in a desperately exposed position. Public Health was better situated; the Kupat Holim or Sick Fund embraced all the workers, and there was no lack of doctors, but the principal hospital was exposed on the Mount of Olives to the hazards of war. The whole food supply and much of the control of materials were in the hands of the Administration, and expulsion from the sterling area and the blocking of sterling made purchases very difficult. Communications were an anxious problem. The trunk telephone line ran through Ramleh, an Arab town; the telegraph lines were exposed along every road; many of the operators and service staff were Arab. In every department the personnel was mixed, and there had been little opportunity for either Jews or Arabs to attain to the highest and most responsible posts in the cadre. The whole apparatus of public finance would disintegrate with the Administration.

But the worst of all headaches was security. The Jewish settlements were far-flung, and the whole area allocated to the Jewish State was inter-penetrated with Arabs. It was the Jewish belief, probably well founded, that the majority of Palestine Arabs were in no mood for war, but in crises majorities count far less than minorities. The Mufti had numerous adherents, and there was no measure to which he would not resort, either to bend dissident Arabs to his will or to injure Jews. With him there were, as apt

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instruments, the infiltrators, ruffians from every Arab land eager for loot and outrage. Day by day as the fateful 15th May approached some part of the administrative machine dropped away; day by day the zeal and the interests of officials in a dying régime ebbed; day by day irresponsibility, violence, bloodshed, apathy, and partisanship became the routine of what had once been a proud and conscientious State. The spectacle of a State deliquescing is wretched, shameful, and fortunately rare in history. But it was the vision which the Mandatory Government offered to the world during those long months until the last British soldier took ship at Haifa, and the last vestige of a Trust was dropped into the sea. Perhaps for a precedent one would have to go back to the retreat of the Romans from Britain or the evacuation of Dacia, though in those cases abandonment of duty sprang from failing strength, not failing will.

In their approaches to the High Commissioner the Jewish leaders expressed their anxiety that the parting from Britain, in spite of the recent past, might be without bitterness, and in such conditions as might preface a cordial future. Would he allow the preparation of personnel, would he suffer a shadow re-organisation of departments, would he raise the strength of the Jewish supernumerary police and give them adequate weapons? Whatever may have been Sir Alan Cunningham's personal sentiments, he had his orders. There was to be no co-operation in the setting up of a Jewish State. How, in any case, could a Jewish State survive the cancer of terrorism? Let Jews and Arabs come to terms. How, on what basis, through what mediation? Of this no hint. It was words which did not mask utter bankruptcy. The railways ceased to run, the post ceased gradually to function. The files were burnt in bonfires outside the offices. The assets of the State were transferred to England or offered for auction, or with the paralysis of authority looted or corruptly sold. Not a penny was left in the Treasury for a successor State. The one financial provision made for the period after the termination of the Mandate was the appropriation in the middle of February to the Moslem Supreme Council of £300,000 as commutation for tithe arrears and payments due in the future. As the Council and the Mufti's Arab Higher Committee were for practical purposes hardly distinguishable—this was equivalent to an indirect subsidy from the Palestine Exchequer to the Arab war effort.

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The Jewish leaders were left to their own devices. They set about laying the foundations of their State with the sea of anarchy rising ever higher about them, until the exit of the Administration, if it opened the gates of Palestine to the Arab armies, gave the Jews a larger measure of freedom in action. They needed men, they needed money, they needed arms, they needed organisation, and as the machine of British authority fell to pieces a shadow administration came into being to take its place. A representative committee was formed, presided over by Mr. Ben-Gurion, the Chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive, and sub-committees were constituted to deal with various administrative departments. On the 25th March a formal letter was addressed to the Chairman of the United Nations Palestine Commission requesting, on behalf of the Jewish Agency and the Vaad Leumi, the appointment of a Provisional Council of Government for the Jewish State, the members of which were named. They included all the Palestinian members of the Executive of the Agency and all the members of the Vaad Leumi, together with representatives of the Palestine Labour Party, the General Zionists, the Mizrachi, Mizrachi Labour, the Mapam, the Aliya Hadasha (German immigrants), Wizo (Women), and the Yemenites. It was proposed to co-opt additional members representing groups both Jewish and Arab, and it was requested that the United Nations Palestine Commission should instruct the Provisional Council to constitute a central administrative organ of government. The Assembly, being busied with the abortive American Trusteeship manœuvre, made no response, but the Yishuv went on with its task of unifying all Jewish sections in the common task of founding the Jewish State.

On the 6-12th April, the Zionist General Council met at Tel Aviv and set up a National Council, composed of the elected representatives of the World Zionist Movement resident in Palestine, of the executives of the Vaad Leumi, and of representatives of other public bodies. Representation was to be given to Arabs in the area of the Jewish State who should recognise that State. The Council numbered 37 members and a National Administration of 13 was to be formed to be answerable to the National Council. It was decided to authorise the raising of a National Loan, and as a first step to raise an internal loan of £1,000,000. A manpower and a supplies organisation was set up, and it was resolved to bring the terrorist organisations under

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Jewish national discipline. On the 27th April the Hagana and the Irgun signed an agreement for full co-operation in military operations throughout Palestine. The Yishuv was united, and ready to take over when the Mandatory Government ended.

Meanwhile at Lake Success U.N. went through the motions of dealing with a situation which (principally through the policy of the Mandatory Power) was beyond its control. The only instrument it had in Palestine was the Consular Truce Commission, composed of the French, Belgian, and American Consuls. A Norwegian motion for a temporary United Nations Agency to take charge of Palestine assets and run public services faded out—it implied a military force. An American resolution on the 13th May proposed to appoint a Commissioner to arrange common services, protect the Holy Places, and promote agreement for the future government of Palestine. On the very eve of invasion, with storm over Jerusalem, with a Jewish State in being—all this was fatuous. The next day the Assembly touched reality when it rejected a Trusteeship for Jerusalem, but adopted a mediator for Palestine, an office to which, on the 20th May, Count Bernadotte, the head of the Swedish Red Cross, was appointed. By that date the Mandate was a thing of the past. At midnight on the 14th May the High Commissioner with the last of his staff left Haifa. At the same moment the State of Israel was formally proclaimed. Within a few minutes it was recognised *de facto* by the United States, quickly followed by Russia, Poland, and in due course other States. The Jewish National Council issued the following Declaration of Independence :

“The Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and national identity was formed. Here they achieved independence and created a culture of national and universal significance. Here they wrote and gave the Bible to the world.

“Exiled from the Land of Israel, the Jewish people remained faithful to it in all the countries of their dispersion, never ceasing to pray and hope for their return and the restoration of their national freedom.

“Impelled by this historic association, Jews strove throughout the centuries to go back to the land of their fathers and regain their statehood. In recent decades they returned in their masses

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They reclaimed the wilderness, revived their language, built cities and villages, and established a vigorous and ever-growing community with its own economic and cultural life. They sought peace, yet were prepared to defend themselves. They brought the blessings of progress to all inhabitants of the country, and looked forward to sovereign independence.

“In the year 1897 the First Zionist Congress, inspired by Theodor Herzl’s vision of the Jewish State, proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to national revival in their own country.

“This right was acknowledged by the Balfour Declaration of November 2nd, 1917, and reaffirmed by the Mandate of the League of Nations, which gave explicit international recognition to the historic connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and their right to reconstitute their National Home.

“The recent holocaust, which engulfed millions of Jews in Europe, proved anew the need to solve the problem of the homelessness and lack of independence of the Jewish people by means of the re-establishment of the Jewish State, which would open the gates to all Jews and endow the Jewish people with equality of status among the family of nations.

“The survivors of the disastrous slaughter in Europe, and also Jews from other lands, have not desisted from their efforts to reach Eretz Israel in face of difficulties, obstacles and perils; and have not ceased to urge their right to a life of dignity, freedom and honest toil in their ancestral land.

“In the Second World War the Jewish people in Palestine made their full contribution to the struggle of the freedom-loving nations against the Nazi evil. The sacrifices of their soldiers and their war effort gained them the right to rank with the nations which founded the United Nations.

“On November 29th, 1947, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a Resolution requiring the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine. The General Assembly called upon the inhabitants of the country to take all the necessary steps on their part to put the plan into effect. This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their independent State is unassailable.

“It is the natural right of the Jewish people to lead, as do all other nations, an independent existence in its sovereign State.

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“ACCORDINGLY, WE, the members of the National Council, representing the Jewish people in Palestine and the World Zionist Movement, are met together in solemn assembly today, the day of the termination of the British Mandate for Palestine; and by virtue of the natural and historic right of the Jewish people and of the Resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations,

“WE HEREBY PROCLAIM the establishment of the Jewish State in Palestine, to be called *Medinath Yisrael* (The State of Israel).

“WE HEREBY DECLARE that, as from the termination of the Mandate at midnight, the 14th-15th May, 1948, and pending the setting up of the duly elected bodies of the State in accordance with a Constitution to be drawn up by the Constituent Assembly not later than the 1st October, 1948, the National Council shall act as the Provisional State Council, and that the National Administration shall constitute the Provisional Government of the Jewish State, which shall be known as Israel.

“THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open to the immigration of Jews from all countries of their dispersion; will promote the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; will be based on the principles of liberty, justice, and peace as conceived by the Prophets of Israel; will uphold the full social and political equality of all its citizens, without distinction of religion, race or sex; will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, education and culture; will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and will loyally uphold the principles of the United Nations Charter.

“THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be ready to co-operate with the organs and representatives of the United Nations in the implementation of the Resolution of the Assembly of November 29th, 1947, and will take steps to bring about the Economic Union over the whole of Palestine.

“We appeal to the United Nations to assist the Jewish people in the building of its State, and to admit Israel into the family of nations.

“In the midst of wanton aggression, we yet call upon the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve the ways of peace and play their part in the development of the State, on



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the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its bodies and institutions, provisional and permanent.

“We extend our hand in peace and neighbourliness to all the neighbouring states and their peoples, and invite them to co-operate with the independent Jewish nation for the common good of all. The State of Israel is prepared to make its contribution to the progress of the Middle East as a whole.

“Our call goes out to the Jewish people all over the world to rally to our side in the task of immigration and development, and to stand by us in the great struggle for the fulfilment of the dream of generations for the redemption of Israel.

“With trust in Almighty God, we set our hand to this Declaration, at this Session of the Provisional State Council, on the soil of the Homeland, in the city of Tel-Aviv, on this Sabbath Eve, the fifth of Iyar, 5708, the fourteenth day of May, 1948.”

## CHAPTER VII

### ISRAEL

ON the eve of the ending of the Mandate the British Government issued its defence, which consisted of an attack on the United Nations and the Jews, a sympathetic reference to the Arabs, and a characteristically futile offer to give every assistance to a compromise, short of imposing by force a solution not acceptable to both parties. At dawn on the 15th May the Egyptian forces crossed the Palestine frontier, and within a few hours all the Arab States were at war with Israel. At the same time they proclaimed martial law within their own territories. In a note handed to the diplomatic representatives the Egyptian Foreign Minister said that the Egyptian Government was intervening "to re-establish respect for universal morality and the principles recognised by the United Nations." The Lebanon Home Minister said that the Jewish State was intended to include Lebanon, Syria, and Transjordan. The Arabs were now defending the world against Communism, which was being introduced to the Middle East under the cover of Zionism. On this crescendo of hypocrisy the struggle opened, but not without some searching of heart. For six months Palestine irregulars with bands and arms from the Arab States had been operating—with what results? Azzam Pasha, the Secretary-General of the Arab League, said "the Palestine Arab struggle against the Zionists since the recommendation of partition had been a fiasco, and the Arab Higher Executive had been ineffective." A Lebanese minister said "the Arab States were to be blamed for their military unpreparedness and the Palestinians for their lack of organisation."

If the Arab States were unprepared they could hardly blame the British Government. There was a British military mission in Iraq of 18 officers and 10 other ranks, to advise on supply, training, and equipment. The Arab Legion of Transjordan was raised, armed, trained, and led by British officers, and paid with British

money, at a cost of £2,500,000 a year. Thirty-seven British officers were attached to it in an executive capacity, and many other British military personnel in the technical services. As recently as January 1947 a British military mission of 9 officers and 36 other ranks had been set up in Saudi Arabia. The Egyptians had dismissed the British military mission, but between May 1945 and June 1947 Great Britain had delivered to Egypt 40 military aircraft, 38 scout cars, 298 carriers, and small arms; and on the Canal there was a considerable British force, which, as events were to show, was not without significance in the Arab-Jewish war. With all these countries Great Britain had treaties to supply arms, and, in spite of threats of and preparations for armed defiance of the United Nations, the supplies continued, although details were denied to Parliament. As recently as the 18th February, 1948, the British Defence Minister said that arms deliveries would continue to Iraq—"aircraft, small quantities of 25-pounders, and anti-tank guns, A.A. guns, and armoured cars." The fact that Iraq had torn up the draft new treaty weighed as little with Mr. Bevin as the fact that the arms were to be used to defy the United Nations. On the 16th February the British Minister of State told Parliament, "I have no evidence to suggest that arms supplied to Middle East Governments in virtue of these treaties . . . are being made available for warfare in Palestine." It is difficult to realise that Mr. McNeill came from Scotland, not Missouri. Mr. Bevin made no pretence of innocence. After the Arab armies had invaded Palestine and the Arab Legion had bombarded Jerusalem he continued to send them arms, and to maintain British officers with the Legion. This, in his view, was not inconsistent with Britain's obligations to the United Nations. It was not until the 3rd June that he issued an order revoking all export licences for war material to any destination in Palestine or the Arab States. By that time, world opinion was so outraged that the scandal stank to high heaven.

Two interrelated questions now faced the United Nations—the violation by the Arab States of their obligations under the Charter, and the smothering of the war in Palestine. The first was crucial to the life of U.N., the second was an issue of humanity. On the 17th May, Mr. Austin, the American delegate moved in the Security Council for a declaration that a breach within the meaning of Article 39 of the Charter existed in Palestine

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Article 39 opened up the possibility of sanctions, whether by the use of armed force or "complete or partial interruption of economic relations, and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations." The next step would be to name the aggressor. As Mr. Austin said, the Arab States were aggressors. On their own admission they had gone into Palestine to make war on a community which was at least claiming to be a State. The advantage of invoking Article 39 was that every nation would be bound by it, and every nation would be bound to help "keep Abdullah where he belongs."

That was precisely what a government which was paying Abdullah and arming Jordan and the other Arab States did not want. Sir Alexander Cadogan was instructed to tell the Council that the British Government could not agree to invoking Article 39, because it doubted whether there was a threat to or a breach of international peace, and there would be an interminable wrangle as to who was the aggressor. Thereupon the resolution was defeated, and the Council turned to the second question—the smothering of the war. A questionnaire had been sent to the Arab States, the Arab Higher Committee and the Provisional Government of Israel (Sir Alexander insisted on them being called "the Jewish authorities in Palestine") asking what their military forces in Palestine were doing. Israel was further to say whether she had forces operating outside the area of the Jewish State or Palestine, and whether she was arranging for men of military age to come from outside Palestine and in what numbers. The point of this last question (which was inspired by Sir Alexander Cadogan) was that Jews of military age in the European camps were being enrolled. The Governments of Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria replied that they were operating in Palestine considered as one State. The Israel Government replied that it exercised control over the entire area of the Jewish State, together with Jaffa, North-Western Galilee, the Jewish settlements up to the Lebanese frontier, almost all New Jerusalem, and the Jewish quarter of the Old City; and that military operations had been carried out in areas outside the State of Israel to protect the Jewish population, traffic, and economic life. Thereupon the Russian delegation took up again the proposal that the Palestinian situation was a threat to peace within the meaning of Article 39, and again it was rejected.

Having reached a deadlock on the question of sanctions and enforcement, the Security Council took up again the question of a truce. On the 22nd May it called on all governments and authorities, without prejudice to rights, claims, or position, to abstain from military operations and order a cease-fire within thirty-six hours. The Israel Government promptly agreed, if the Arabs did likewise. But the Arab States refused. Sir Alexander Cadogan then proposed a cease-fire on the basis of terms for a truce. He desired to introduce into these terms an instruction to the Mediator to make recommendations about an eventual settlement for Palestine—which implied calling into question the settlement of the 29th November, 1947. The resolution carried on the 30th May omitted this clause. It ordered a cease-fire for four weeks, under the supervision of Count Bernadotte, who was to have the assistance of military observers. Very significant was a world-wide embargo on the export of war materials to Palestine or the Arab States. Public opinion in England and in the world was forcing Mr. Bevin to suspend the arming of the Arab States, and even to consider withholding the subsidy to Transjordan. The American Senate was threatening an enquiry whether American financial aid was being used by Britain to finance the Arab armies. Both the Jews and the Arabs agreed to the cease-fire in principle, but on one clause they disagreed. The Council's resolution required both parties not to introduce during the truce "fighting personnel" into Palestine or the Arab States, and that any man of military age who might be introduced into Palestine should not be mobilised or given military training. This the Arabs chose to interpret as forbidding the introduction into Palestine of any men of military age, whether to be mobilised or trained or not; and Mr. Bevin adopted this interpretation. He stopped the departure from Cyprus of Jewish internees of military age.

Count Bernadotte brought things to a head by detailing the conditions: no fighting personnel were to be introduced into Palestine or the Arab States; he would decide whether men of military age were represented among the immigrants in such numbers as to constitute a military advantage; men of military age should be kept in camps, not mobilised and not trained; he would place observers on immigrant ships; movements of troops and war material from country to country or close to the borders of Palestine should be prohibited, along with the

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importation of war material. These terms were finally accepted by all parties, and the truce became operative as from 6 a.m. on the 11th June. It was to be supervised by a staff of 5 Swedish colonels and 60 or 70 observers (American, French, and Belgian), from membership of which Russians, against the protest of the Russian delegate, were in fact excluded.

On the 30th June the last British soldier left Palestine. Meanwhile Count Bernadotte had taken up quarters in Rhodes and proceeded to work out proposals for a settlement. The State Department and the Foreign Office had been getting together. Mr. Marshall had said that Britain and the United States should start from the basis of a common ground and work out a common solution. British and American representatives discussed the problem at Rhodes with the Mediator, and it may be presumed that these discussions left their mark on the plan which, on the 28th and 29th June, Count Bernadotte submitted to Israel and the Arab States, and on the 4th July revealed to U.N. When on the 15th June he met the Political Committee of the Arab League in Cairo he said (according to the Secretary-General, and not denied by Count Bernadotte) that he had accepted the task of Mediator "unbound by any previous decision" and that his suggestions "would in no way be based on the *status quo* in Palestine." It will be seen how far he departed both from the Assembly's Resolution of the 29th November and from the realities of a situation created by the war launched most unsuccessfully by the Arab States. The general suggestions were :

(i) That, subject to the willingness of the directly interested parties to consider such an arrangement, Palestine, as defined in the original Mandate entrusted to the United Kingdom in 1922, that is, including Transjordan, might form a Union comprising two members, one Arab and one Jewish.

(ii) That the boundaries of the two members be determined in the first instance by negotiation with the assistance of the Mediator and on the basis of the suggestions to be made by him. When agreement is reached on the main outlines of the boundaries, they will be definitely fixed by a boundaries commission.

(iii) That the purposes and functions of the Union should be to promote common economic interests, to operate and maintain common services, including customs and excise, to

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undertake development projects, and to co-ordinate foreign policy and measures for common defence.

(iv) That the functions and authority of the Union might be exercised through a Central Council and such other organs as the members of the Union may determine.

(v) That, subject to the provisions of the Instrument of Union, each member of the Union may exercise full control over its own affairs, including its foreign relations.

(vi) That immigration within its borders should be within the competence of each member, provided that following a period of two years from the establishment of the Union, either member would be entitled to request the Council of the Union to review the immigration policy of the other member and to render a ruling thereon in terms of the common interests of the Union. In the event of the inability of the Council to reach a decision on the matter, the issue could be referred by either member to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, whose decision, taking into account the principle of economic absorptive capacity, would be binding on the member whose policy is at issue.

(vii) That religious and minority rights be fully protected by each member of the Union and guaranteed by the United Nations.

(viii) That Holy Places, religious buildings, and sites be preserved and that existing rights in respect of the same be fully guaranteed by each member of the Union.

(ix) That recognition be accorded to the right of residents of Palestine who, because of conditions created by the conflict, have left their normal places of abode, to return to their homes without restriction and to regain possession of their property.

Suggestions regarding territorial matters, presented in an annex were as follows :

With regard to paragraph (ii) of the suggestions, it is considered that certain territorial arrangements might be worthy of consideration. These might be along the following lines :

(i) Inclusion of the whole or part of the Negev in Arab territory.

(ii) Inclusion of the whole or part of Western Galilee in Jewish territory.

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(iii) Inclusion of the City of Jerusalem in Arab territory, with municipal autonomy for the Jewish community and special arrangements for the protection of the Holy Places.

(iv) Consideration of the status of Jaffa.

(v) Establishment of a free port at Haifa, the area of the free port to include refineries and terminals.

(vi) Establishment of a free airport at Lydda.

Count Bernadotte protested that his suggestions were only tentative ideas, but he hardly realised how explosive they were. The conception of a union of a far-reaching character, not excluding foreign relations and defence, was signally distasteful to Israel, which had won its independence at heavy cost in life and treasure, and which had been recognised by many States. The proposed restriction on its freedom in the matter of immigration was directed at its most vital and sensitive centre. Deprivation of the Negev would deny Israel its one great area for peaceful expansion. The transfer of Jerusalem to an Arab State would be a moral as well as a political disaster. Marriage with Transjordan was neither desired nor desirable. This particular suggestion was even more disliked by the Arab States. It meant the annexation of Arab Palestine to Abdullah's kingdom, the loss of contemplated loot to the other Arab States, and a possible linking of Transjordan with Israel against them.

King Abdullah's representative was induced to make the following somewhat ambiguous declaration :

"I believe it is incumbent upon me to say a word about Count Bernadotte's suggestion, because it exceeds his terms of reference to involve the Hashimite Kingdom of Transjordan in the Palestine problem, on the ground that it lay within the boundaries of the Mandate as defined in 1922—a false claim upheld by the Zionists, and loudly proclaimed by them on every occasion, despite the fact that our country has become an independent sovereign State, whose independence has been recognised by many a Power, and that it is an original member of the League of Arab States.

"The problem now at issue is the problem of Palestine and of finding a solution thereto. The Hashimite Kingdom of Transjordan should never be implicated in that problem, nor should Transjordan be forced into a union with a Jewish State.



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“Our position is clear, and has been proclaimed on every occasion. It is never to allow the creation of a Jewish State in Palestine, and to exclude partition. And our objective is to co-operate with other Arab States in her deliverance. Once this aim is attained, the determination of her future status is the right and concern of her own people. Theirs alone is the last word. We have no other object or aim in view. This is our attitude, which is an interpretation of the opinion of His Hashimite Majesty and that of his Government and people.”

It should be noted that this declaration denied to the Arab League and its members any right to determine the future of Arab Palestine. It was known that the annexation of Arab Palestine was an important objective of Transjordan's policy. This was in no way renounced; and as Abdullah had the major area of Arab Palestine under his control, he was in a position to shape “the determination . . . of her own people.” Only a few days before he had visited Ibn Saud at Riyadh, their first meeting for twenty-five years. Ever since Ibn Saud had driven Abdullah's father out of the Hejaz the enmity between the two houses was the deepest rift in the Arab world, and this meeting was intended to heal it. It resulted in the issue of the following joint statement :

“The first reason for our meeting was the sincere desire to strengthen brotherly and friendly relations between our two persons and peoples. The present circumstances require agreement and unity, and the bearing in mind of two fundamental principles—faith in God and loyalty in defence of our existence. We realised through the discussions complete agreement on our points of view regarding private and public affairs and complete understanding on patriotic and national objectives. Therefore, we declare that we are in agreement in our thoughts, our opinions, and our objectives, and that we are particularly in agreement in our support of the Arab League in all the decisions within the frame of the League's charter and in the limits of its responsibility, especially in regard to Palestine, where we are doing our best to ensure for the Arabs complete independence and sovereignty and to rescue the country. We place our full trust in the Arab League and its political committee and make known our belief that it will study the present situation fully and recommend the suitable attitude to be taken

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in favour of the Arab cause and guaranteeing Arab interests. We are sure the Arab League strives towards the establishment of peace in the Middle East. Such peace will not be realised except by preserving Arab rights and guaranteeing the independence of their countries. We are sure if the League is forced to take up arms it will be in defence of fundamental Arab interests—honour, liberty and peace.”

Behind the Oriental hyperbole there yawned a vacuum. Abdullah's real sentiments were expressed on the 6th August in a proclamation to the Arab Legion : “Your army has preserved the holiness of Jerusalem. We and the others went into this fight jointly. Here we are. Where are the others? We have fought and progressed, but we have not seen the progress made by others.” Count Bernadotte had succeeded in stimulating friction and rivalry in the Arab League. For the rest the League reiterated its demand for a unified, sovereign, Arab State of Palestine.

From the Israel Government's reply, however, two significant changes emerged :

(i) “. . . the conviction of the Provisional Government that the territorial provisions affecting the Jewish State now stand in need of improvement, in view both of the perils revealed by Arab aggression for the safety and integrity of Israel and of the results achieved by Israel in repelling this aggression ;

(ii) “the Provisional Government would be ready to accept the provisions of the Economic Union as formulated in the Assembly's Resolution [of the 29th November 1947] if all their basic premises were to materialise. . . . It must now be left to the free and unfettered discretion of the Government of Israel, in the exercise of its sovereign rights, to determine what arrangements should govern Israel's relations with her neighbour or neighbours in the field of economic co-operation.”

War had been levied on Israel to destroy the Assembly's plan : that war had been won by Israel ; Israel was not going to be bound territorially by that plan. An Arab State in Palestine had not come into being : Israel was not to be bound by economic union with a non-existent phantom. Not without point the Mediator indicated that Israel was clinging to the Assembly's Resolution as its title deed while repudiating some of its terms. But much blood had

flowed in Palestine since the 29th November, and that was one of the inexorable facts of the situation.

It was not until the 1st August that the Israeli Government dealt with Count Bernadotte's proposal regarding the return of the refugees. That proposal had been made on the assumption that the war was over, that peace had been established, and that henceforth the lion and the lamb would lie down together. In fact there was a truce punctuated by breaches, "a gap," as the Arab League declared, "in an honourable Jihad which can only terminate in victory." Mr. Shertok brought the Mediator sharply back to the realities :

"But for the intervention of the Arab States, there would have been an overwhelming measure of local Arab acquiescence in the establishment of the State of Israel. If the war had brought in its wake a mass exodus, mostly spontaneous, and the exodus had resulted in great suffering, the responsibility for it rests on those who fomented and have carried on the war, as well as on those who aided and abetted them. Any measure of repatriation undertaken solely on humanitarian grounds, in disregard of the military, political, and economic aspects of the problem, would defeat its purpose and result in graver complications than those which already exist. It would relieve the aggressor States of a large part of the pressure exerted on them by the refugee problem, while on the other hand, it would most seriously handicap the war effort and war readiness of Israel by bringing into its territory a politically explosive and economically destitute element. When the Arab States are ready to conclude a peace treaty with Israel, this question will come up for constructive solution as part of the general settlement and with due regard to our counter-claim in respect of the destruction of Jewish life and property."

The war had transformed the demographic aspect of the Palestine problem. In the Jewish State, as conceived by the resolution of the 29th November, 1947, there were estimated to be 500,000 Jews and 416,000 non-Jews (apart from 100,000 Jews and 106,000 non-Jews in Jerusalem). This massive minority was a natural ground of criticism and a real weakness. The exodus had reduced this minority to less than 100,000, and at the same time large-scale immigration had greatly swollen the Jewish

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majority. Thereby the political foundations of the Jewish State were very notably consolidated, and it was inconceivable that any Israeli Government present or future would seek to undo this welcome if undesigned consequence of the war. Any radical solution of the Arab refugee problem would have to be found outside Israel.

When the Mediator's proposals reached Lake Success they were received much as the news was received in Heaven that the myopic saint had baptised the penguins—there was neither joy nor sorrow but a great surprise. The irreverent delegate from the Ukraine said that some sort of funny business was being cooked up, and Count Bernadotte had exceeded his competence by proposing a reconsideration of the Assembly's scheme of partition. The Russian delegate wanted Count Bernadotte to be dismissed. The British delegate said that he was sent to Palestine to get away from the proved impossibility of enforcing the Assembly's partition scheme. For Mr. Bevin Count Bernadotte's scheme had obvious merits. Transjordan was a satellite under British control. Through a union Great Britain might hope to extend that control to embrace Israel. With Transjordan in possession of the Negev Israel would be almost completely surrounded by Transjordan and therefore by Great Britain. The exclusion of Israel from the Negev had throughout been an aim of Mr. Bevin's policy. In the conversations with the Jewish leaders before his final decision to submit Palestine to U.N. he had said that the Jews would do better to exclude it for the time being from consideration, without prejudice to the future. There were other things in view in the Negev. What were those other things—oil, uranium, airfields, a strategic base, a canal? Mr. Bevin never threw any light, but to the end he struggled to deny the Negev to the Jews and to keep it under British control.

The Mediator's initiative having proved abortive, the issue of a peace and a definitive settlement faded out of practical politics, and Count Bernadotte concentrated his energies on preventing the resumption or limiting the ravages of war. The month's truce was due to end on the 9th July, and in advance of that date the Mediator asked for an extension. The League replied that it was "imperative for the Arab States not to agree to a prolongation of the truce under present conditions." The Jews were ready to prolong the truce for thirty days on the original

conditions. Count Bernadotte appeared before the Security Council to defend his action in putting forward his suggestions for a settlement, and to urge a continuation of the truce. Heavy fighting had broken out, and the Jews had scored notable victories. They had occupied Lydda airport, Lydda, Ramleh, Ras el Ain, and were to take Nazareth on the 16th July. On the 15th July the Security Council passed a resolution declaring that the situation in Palestine constituted a threat to peace under Article 39, and ordering the governments and authorities concerned, pursuant to Article 40 of the Charter of the United Nations, to desist from further military action and to this end to issue cease-fire orders. The Mediator was instructed "to continue his efforts to bring about the demilitarisation of the City of Jerusalem, without prejudice to the future political status of Jerusalem, and to assure the protection of and access to the Holy Places, religious buildings and sites in Palestine."

Two new features of this resolution are to be noted. By declaring a threat to peace it held out the threat of sanctions in the event of disobedience, and it ordered a truce of indefinite duration. The Mediator fixed the 18th July as the general truce date. The Israeli Government, having achieved significant military successes, promptly obeyed. The Arab States, having suffered defeat, and fearing sanctions, also submitted.

The supervision of the truce called for a large body of observers and much equipment. There were 10 Swedish officers, 300 American, French, and Belgian, and nearly 100 technical personnel, radio equipment, 18 aircraft, 4 naval ships and many motor vehicles. Observers were stationed in Haifa, Aqir, Nathanya, Ramat David, Tiberias, and Jerusalem; in Hebron, Gaza, Nablus, and Ramallah; in Beirut, Damascus, Amman, Aqaba, Baghdad, Basra, Alexandria, Cairo, El Arish, and Port Said. By the 8th September 350 out of 400 kilometres of front line had been mapped. The situation in Jerusalem deteriorated, and it needed a special resolution of the Security Council on the 19th August to check the demoralisation. With some difficulty a neutral zone was established there, but demilitarisation was impracticable. The worst breach of the truce was the blowing up, by Legionaries, of the pumping station at Latrun. This cut off the normal water supply of Jerusalem. Egyptian troops murdered two observers at Gaza. The Mediator was entitled to say "a sense of

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profound satisfaction may be derived from the knowledge that a cessation of hostilities has unquestionably prevented a great deal of destruction, ruin, and bloodshed, and has resulted in the saving of many lives."

A truce is, in the nature of things, a most imperfect foundation for order, and Count Bernadotte felt compelled to resume his talks with the protagonists for a definitive settlement. He saw "no prospect of voluntary agreement between the disputants, nor any willingness on the part of the Arabs to negotiate with the Jews either directly or through the Mediator." So he turned to U.N. and urged that if the General Assembly should reach firm and equitable decisions on the principal political issues, he was confident that they would receive at least tacit acceptance. In his final report, dated from Rhodes on the 16th September, he urged that :

" . . . the instant question is not whether it may be advisable to review and revise the resolution of the 29th November, 1947. It has already been outrun and inevitably revised by the actual facts of recent Palestine history. . . . The most significant development in the Palestine scene since last November is the fact that the Jewish State is a living, solidly entrenched and vigorous reality. The Provisional Government of Israel is today exercising, without restrictions on its authority and power, all the attributes of full sovereignty. . . . In establishing their State, within a semicircle of gun-fire, the Jews have given a convincing demonstration of their skill and tenacity. . . . Time runs in its favour. . . . Above all the Jewish State needs peace. . . . The Arab States must resign themselves to the presence of the Jewish State, or pursue the reckless course of defying the United Nations, and thereby incurring liabilities, the full burden and danger of which cannot be calculated in advance. . . . The Jews, however, in the interest of promoting friendly relations with their Arab neighbours, would do well in defining their immigration policy, to take carefully into account the basis of Arab fears, and to consider measures and policies designed to allay them. . . . The right of the [Arab] refugees to return to their homes if they so desire must be safeguarded."

Specifically Count Bernadotte modified his original suggestions. He dropped the idea of a political and economic union. He

advised that Jerusalem should not be Arab, but be put "under effective United Nations control with maximum feasible local autonomy for its Arab and Jewish communities." He made the whole Negev Arab territory. He took from the Jews Ramleh and Lydda which they had captured, and he handed all this land to Transjordan. Mr. Marshall, the American Secretary of State, promptly endorsed the Report and urged the parties and the General Assembly to accept it in its entirety. Mr. Bevin hastened to inform the House of Commons that "the recommendations of Count Bernadotte have the whole-hearted and unqualified support of the Government. . . . It would be best for all concerned if Count Bernadotte's plan were put into operation in its entirety." Evidently the Foreign Office once again had the State Department in tow. The Mediator's proposals fitted very aptly into their strategic scheme, but found no approval among the protagonists. On the 22nd September the formation of an Arab Government of Palestine was announced. It was a mere phantom, but it was at least a demonstration against the absorption of Arab Palestine by Transjordan. As such King Abdullah pronounced it strange and serious. In Paris, where the Assembly was meeting, the Israeli delegation condemned Count Bernadotte's proposals :

"The territorial changes proposed in the Mediator's Report result in an entirely inequitable apportionment of land between Israel and the Arab States. They would cut off about two-thirds of Israel's territory, deprive her of the only land reserves available for development, cripple existing and potential prospects for the scientific utilisation of natural resources, and stunt Israel's progress and growth for generations to come. The beneficiary of these changes, which according to the plan is to be an enlarged State of Transjordan, emerges from the proposed arrangement with an area more than nineteen times that of the State of Israel."

The Arab delegations from their standpoint were equally emphatic in their rejection. They demanded once again a unitary Arab Palestine. They were opposed to Israel and to Transjordan. Meanwhile on the 17th September Count Bernadotte was murdered by a splinter group of the Stern Gang in a quarter of Jerusalem under Jewish military control, which the Israeli Government had formally declared occupied territory. This

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tragic crime reflected very gravely on the Israeli Government, which was responsible for the protection of the Mediator. It compelled the Government to deal more resolutely with the anarchic elements and to reduce them to control. On the 28th April, in anticipation of the ending of the Mandate and an Arab invasion, the Hagana and the Irgun had signed an agreement for full co-operation in military operations throughout Palestine. This, however, left each force an independent organisation. On the 22nd June the Irgun sought to land at Tel Aviv from the ship "Altalena" men and arms. This was an open defiance of the Israeli Government, which issued a decree declaring civil disobedience treason. Fighting began and the "Altalena" was wrecked by gun-fire. The Irgun headquarters were raided, arrests made, and a curfew imposed. The Government now decided that it could no longer permit Irgun and Stern to fight under their own commanders, and a committee was set up to reorganise the army on a unified basis. Some 400 arrests were made. On the 2nd September the Irgun announced that its own military forces would be disbanded within a month and be absorbed in the Hagana. The murder of Count Bernadotte demanded more resolute action. Irgun was ordered to disband immediately and hand its weapons over to the Israeli Army. Some 200 members of the Stern Gang, including its leaders and military commander, were arrested. Most of them soon escaped from Jaffa gaol; they "just wanted to prove that there are no walls which can hold us." This incident did not add to the prestige of the Government, but it was soon forgotten when military operations were resumed on a large scale, ending in signal victories by the Israeli forces.

The truce was intended to be of indefinite duration, but the murder of Count Bernadotte precipitated a breach and the resumption of fighting. The Mediator's proposal to hand the Negev over to the Arabs (promptly approved by Great Britain and the U.S.A.) stimulated the Arabs to endeavour to take effective occupation of the area. For the Jews it was an inducement to take possession, and so face the world with a *fait accompli*. The situation in the Negev furnished a pretext to both sides. There the Jewish settlements were beleaguered and supplies were difficult. The Egyptian supply lines from Gaza to Jerusalem cut across the Jewish supply lines from Tel Aviv to the Negev. The



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Central Truce Supervisory Board decided that the Jews and the Egyptians could each use the road exclusively for six hours daily, and that the Israeli forces should not send supplies by air except to settlements inaccessible by road. On the 25th September the Egyptians shelled the Tel Aviv road, and compelled the suspension of the Jewish convoys. At the same time the Arab Legion attacked a Jewish convoy near Latrun. On the 15th October the Jewish forces advanced in the Negev and by the 21st October had occupied Beersheba. The whole of the Negev north of a line sixteen miles south of Beersheba, except for Gaza and a few pockets of resistance, was in Jewish hands, and the Egyptian army was completely demoralised. On the 30th October the Arab forces under Fawzi Kaukji were routed and driven into Lebanon.

The truce having been broken, Dr. Bunche the Acting Mediator concentrated on effecting a cease-fire. He proposed that all parties should retire to the original truce line, a suggestion ardently supported by the British delegate. It would have meant negating the recent Israeli victories. On the 4th November the Security Council appointed a Committee to advise the Acting Mediator, and ordered withdrawal to the truce line in the south. The unreality of all this was exposed by General Riley, the U.N. Chief of Staff in Haifa. In his opinion the truce had outlived its usefulness, and the Council's resolution would be extremely difficult to enforce. The military situation was now completely dominated by Israeli forces, who could take all Palestine if they chose. General Riley repeated this to the delegates of four Arab States, and said that it was hopeless to try to restore the 14th October position, and that peace could be reached only by direct negotiations. Nevertheless the British delegate (who had always opposed any suggestion of sanctions against the Arab States) now offered a resolution ordering return to the old truce lines under penalty of non-military sanctions, under Article 41 of the Charter. On the 4th November the Security Council adopted a resolution omitting the reference to Article 41, appointing a Committee of five to advise the Acting Mediator, and instructing the Committee to study appropriate measures under Chapter VII of the Charter should either party disobey. The 19th November was the date fixed for withdrawal. It was accepted by the Israeli Government, with the interpretation that regular mobile forces had been maintained

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in the Negev since the 15th May and were exempt from the Council's Order.

This left little substance in the Order, but the decisive test was Beersheba. The Israeli Government refused to evacuate it, and Mr. Ben-Gurion celebrated the anniversary of the Resolution of the 29th November 1947 by declaring that Israel was no longer bound by the letter of the Resolution, and there could be no peace and security until the Negev and Galilee were settled by Jews. On the 1st December Palestine Arabs met in Jericho and proclaimed Abdullah King of all Palestine. The Transjordan Parliament instructed the Government to take the necessary measures for uniting the two countries. U.N. was thus faced with facts which were too obstinate for mere words without the backing of deeds. The Arab armies had been routed, and the Israeli Government had no intention of surrendering the fruits of victory. The Arab States were at loggerheads amongst themselves, and King Abdullah, in pursuit of his own ambitions, had broken with his allies.

Against this hard background of reality the British Government, faithful to its illusions and its prejudices, introduced into the Political Committee a resolution to accept and apply the Bernadotte proposals. Mr. Shertok, the Israeli Foreign Minister, had already told the Committee that Israel could not consider the Bernadotte Report even as a basis of discussion. In 1917 the Jews had been offered a National Home of 44,740 sq. miles; in 1922 it had been reduced to 10,000 sq. miles; and now Count Bernadotte proposed to reduce it to 2,124 sq. miles. The Negev, the Dead Sea, a port on the Gulf of Aqaba were vital to Israel, as was the New Jerusalem. President Truman had already announced that he stood by the U.N. partition plan, which involved the rejection of the Bernadotte scheme; and now (20th November) the State Department beat a retreat. The American delegate formulated American policy in these words: "The United States approves the claims of the State of Israel to the boundaries set forth in the U.N. Resolution of 29th November, 1947, and considers that modification thereof should be made only if fully acceptable to the State of Israel. This means that reductions in such territory should be agreed by Israel. If Israel desires additions it must offer an appropriate exchange through negotiations." It was not for U.N. to devise a blue-print for Palestine, but for the two parties by

peaceful adjustment. This was not a declaration accepting fully the situation created by Israel's victories, but it was an emphatic rejection of the British policy. The join painfully effected by Mr. Bevin and Mr. Marshall had once more come unstuck.

For days discussion went on in the Political Committee over the British resolution. Under pressure the British delegation modified it in many respects, but persisted in fighting for three principles: that the Negev should go to the Arabs; that Arab Palestine should be incorporated with Transjordan; that a Conciliation Commission should mediate. In the end, on the 5th December, the Committee eliminated all the specifically British elements, and the resolution adopted went no further than to set up a Conciliation Commission of three without terms of reference except to assist the parties to achieve a final settlement of all outstanding questions. The Bernadotte Report was dead, the territorial limitations of the 29th November were tacitly dropped, direct negotiations between Jews and Arabs were substituted for active intervention or decision by U.N. or its agents. The diplomatic victory of Israel was as signal as the diplomatic defeat of Britain, a defeat all the graver because she found opposed to her not only the United States but the Dominions and all the Arab States except Transjordan.

Israel, however, had to suffer one check at this Paris meeting of the Assembly. On the 29th November, the Secretary-General of U.N. had received a letter applying for the admission of Israel to the United Nations, with a formal declaration that Israel accepted all the obligations stipulated in the Charter. On the 2nd December, Dr. Jessup for America and Mr. Malik for Russia moved in the Security Council the admission of Israel as a matter of urgency. Sir Alexander Cadogan objected that it was premature and doubtful. He moved indefinite postponement, and the French delegate postponement for a month. Both resolutions were defeated, but the application was rejected on the 17th December by 5 votes to 1 with 5 abstentions. It was renewed when the Security Council resumed at Lake Success, and approved by 9 votes to 1 (Egypt) with Britain abstaining. Once again Great Britain had indulged in a sterile manifestation of ill-will.

Parallel with the discussions at U.N., the Arab League had been meeting in Cairo. On the 16th November it announced its decisions:

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(i) The Arabs would never agree to partition, would never recognise Israel or have any relations with it. And

(ii) Israel would continue to blackmail Britain and the U.S.A. with the threat of a swing to the Left and help from Russia. The Israelis were all anti-British, half pro-Russian, and could not depend on American support.

(iii) An all-Palestine Government should be the symbol of Palestinian Arab independence to be supported by other Arabs.

The "should" in this last declaration was significant, for the breach in the Arab ranks revealed by the Jericho Conference continued to widen.

On the 10th December, Ibrahim Abdul Hadi Pasha, Chief of the Egyptian Royal Cabinet, received the Ministers of all the Arab States, except Transjordan, and gave them a message from King Farouk. This stated that no Arab country had territorial ambitions in Palestine; that those who attended the Jericho Congress were a minority; that the Egyptian army had not shed its blood to place the destinies of Palestine in their hands; and that the Arab States must co-operate to persuade King Abdullah to ignore the Jericho resolutions, which imperilled Arab unity. The next day the Grand Ulema of Al Azhar University denounced Transjordan for "nefarious interference threatening to destroy Arab unity." The Jericho Congress had paved the way for the destruction of Palestine Arabism. On the 13th December, Ibn Saud told Abdullah that "the alleged Jericho resolution" was invalid, and recalled that at their last meeting "their unity, and singleness of purpose was irrevocably declared." Abdullah went on his way unperturbed. On the 10th December he toured Arab Palestine and was acclaimed "Hail, King of Palestine and Transjordan." He replied, "Myself and my army are at your disposal." On the 13th December, the Transjordan Parliament approved the Cabinet's decision to unite Arab Palestine with Transjordan under Abdullah. Not omitting the inevitable dose of hypocrisy, the Prime Minister said that the union would be executed by constitutional methods in accordance with the principle of self-determination.

On the 15th December the Arab League delivered a note to the Transjordan Legation at Cairo criticising the decisions taken at Jericho and by the Transjordan Cabinet for the union of Arab Palestine and Transjordan, as contrary to previous agreement

between member States to oppose partition. Undeterred, Abdullah proceeded to exercise sovereign rights in Arab Palestine by appointing Sheikh Hassan Meddin Jarallah to be Mufti of Jerusalem in place of Haj Amin el Husseini, whose career as Arab leader therewith received its quietus. The so-called Arab Government at Gaza broke up.

The Egyptian Government chose this unhappy moment to launch on the 10th December a heavy attack on the Jewish settlement Nirim in the Negev, and on the 22nd December cancelled its acceptance of the U.N. armistice resolution, and declared that armistice negotiations would not begin until all Israeli troops were withdrawn from the Negev. This was the signal for an Israeli offensive in the south, which broke the Egyptian army and brought the Israeli forces as far as the airfield at El Arish. The Egyptian Government appealed for help to Syria, Saudi Arabia, the Yemen, and Lebanon, but they were impotent, and no aid could be expected from Transjordan. Gaza and the beaten Egyptian army were saved by a cease-fire order from the Security Council. The Egyptian Government, through the Mediator, requested from Israel a cease-fire in the Negev, to be followed by troop withdrawals and armistice negotiations. This was accepted by Israel, and therewith for practical purposes the Arab-Israel shooting war ended. It left Israel in complete control of the Negev (except for the narrow Gaza strip) from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, of the New City of Jerusalem, of Lydda and Ramleh, of all Galilee, and of the Vale of Jezreel through to the Jordan valley, as well as the coastal plain and the Shephelah. The Arab armies (except the Legion) were broken and incapable of serious military effort, and the Arab League was on the point of disruption.

Mr. Bevin was faced with results the opposite of what he had desired and, so far as in him lay, had sought to secure. His Middle Eastern policy had met with disaster. It has been devised on two assumptions—an Arab State embracing all Palestine, and a ring of satellite Arab States in cordial co-operation with Great Britain. There was no Arab Palestine State but a Jewish State embracing most of Palestine, its population increasing by tens of thousands of immigrants every month, and its military force greater than that of the combined Arab States. In Israel Mr. Bevin's persistent hostility had generated deep resentment in a people which had desired to establish friendly relations with

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Great Britain. The Arab States (except Transjordan, which was dependent on Great Britain) blamed their disasters on Great Britain. Their failures and their losses aggravated their pride and their resistance to tutelage. It might have been thought that the British Foreign Secretary would see in the termination of the fighting the occasion for a review of his policy and a change of direction which took account of realities. Mr. Bevin chose a last desperate gamble, in which the threat or the reality of British power might reverse the fortunes of war.

In accordance with the Resolution of U.N., Great Britain had undertaken to send neither arms nor troops to Palestine or the Arab States. By the Treaty of the 22nd March, 1946, between Great Britain and Transjordan, Great Britain recognised Transjordan as "a fully independent State" and there was "established . . . a close alliance in consecration of their friendship, their cordial understanding and their good relations, and there shall be a full and frank consultation between them in all matters of foreign policy which may affect their common interests." Each party undertook "not to adopt in foreign countries an attitude which is inconsistent with the alliance or might create difficulties for the other party." Article 5 provided that "Should either High Contracting Party . . . become involved in hostilities, as a result of armed attack by a third party, the other High Contracting Party will . . . immediately come to his aid as a measure of collective self-defence. In the event of an imminent menace of hostilities the High Contracting Parties will immediately concert together the necessary measures of defence." An annex provided :

(i) that Great Britain "may station armed forces in Transjordan in places where they are stationed at the date of signature of the present Treaty, and in such other places as may be agreed upon."

(ii) that "Transjordan will grant facilities at all times for the movement of the armed forces of His Majesty the King, and for the transport of the supplies of fuel, ordnance, ammunition and other materials."

(iii) that Great Britain "will reimburse to His Majesty the Amir all expenditure in connection with the provision of the facilities mentioned."

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(iv) that Great Britain "will afford financial assistance to His Majesty the Amir in meeting the costs of the military units which are required to ensure the purposes of Article 5 of the Treaty. The strength of such units will be agreed upon annually."

(v) that Great Britain "will provide any British officers whose services are required to ensure the efficiency of the military units of the Amir's forces."

In accordance with this treaty, the Arab Legion in its operations against Israel, and notably in the fighting in Jerusalem, had been under the command of British officers—command, not merely training, though (apart from other objections) it is questionable whether this did not conflict with the Foreign Enlistments Act. On the outbreak of the war the Arab League, presumably in order to exercise control, had announced that it would take over the cost of this force, but this does not appear to have been done. King Abdullah, one may suppose, preferred a British paymaster as giving him greater freedom of action *vis-à-vis* the League. At one stage during the war the British Government had announced that it would consider whether it would not suspend payment of its subsidy, but this does not appear to have been done. On the 21st March, 1949, the British Government increased this subsidy from £2,500,000 annually to £3,500,000 annually. The British Government also claimed that by virtue of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 (which Egypt no longer acknowledged as valid) it was bound on request by the Egyptian Government to defend Egyptian territory.

An indication of the direction in which Mr. Bevin's mind was moving was given when the Assembly at Paris was discussing Israel's application for admission to the United Nations. A British delegate told the Negev Committee that there had been "two small Jewish incursions over the Transjordan frontier" at the end of November. There was no foundation for this charge, but it probably helped to secure the rejection of Israel's application. On the 16th December, Parliament was told that on the 20th November an R.A.F. aircraft had been shot down by an Israeli fighter. The Israeli Government admitted that on that date a Mosquito, believed to be an enemy aircraft, had been shot down over Israeli territory. It later became known that, regularly after

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evacuation, British aircraft had been flying over Israeli territory in breach of international law. There had been twenty such flights in the months of November and December. On the 29th December the British delegate told the Security Council that Jewish forces had advanced six miles across the Egyptian frontier. On the 30th December, when heavy fighting was in progress on the Egyptian frontier, Mr. Bevin had ordered a series of reconnaissances over the battle area. On the last two flights the British planes were accompanied by Egyptian aircraft. There were further flights on the 2nd, 4th, 6th, and 7th January.

On the 4th January the British Government had been told through the State Department that all the Israeli troops had been withdrawn from Egyptian territory, and that there had been no intention of occupying Egyptian territory. That same day the British Consul-General in Haifa told the Israeli Government that Great Britain had no intention of declaring war on Israel. The assurance was not calculated to still anxiety, especially as events were moving rapidly to a prepared crisis. On the 6th January, 1949, the Foreign Office began to prepare the ground for intervention under the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty, by issuing a report that Israeli forces had crossed the Egyptian frontier, had not been withdrawn, and were manning defences there. On the 7th January two formations of R.A.F. aircraft, one of four Spitfires and one of a Mosquito escorted by four Tempests, were attacked by Jewish fighters, and the four Spitfires failed to return; of a later flight, one Tempest was reported missing. There was some dispute as to whether the attack took place on the Israeli or the Egyptian side of the frontier, and one of the aircraft may have been shot down by Egyptian guns. But at a later date certain facts were established: that in the earlier reconnaissances the R.A.F. had been accompanied by Egyptian planes; that it was difficult to distinguish between them; that the reconnaissance orders had come not from the Air Minister but direct from the Minister of Defence under instructions from Mr. Bevin. The Foreign Office circulated a report that the reconnaissances had been made at the instigation of the American Government, but an emphatic denial from Washington compelled that assertion to be withdrawn.

Meanwhile Mr. Bevin believed that he had his pretext, and that he would be supported by British public opinion. On the 8th January he announced that in response to a request from the



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Transjordan Government, under the terms of the Treaty of March 1946, a British force had been sent to Aqaba, due to the grave concern felt over the Palestine situation. The Jews, it was charged, had made "unprovoked aggressions" against Egyptian positions, and had established forces in Egyptian territory. So far, it was added, there had been no movement of British troops from the Canal Zone towards the Egypt-Palestine frontier. It was not suggested that the Transjordan frontier had been crossed by Jewish forces, and it was generally understood that Mr. Bevin had instigated King Abdullah to make the request. It was also perfectly well known that the only reason why troops had not been sent to the Egypt-Palestine frontier was because the Egyptian Government refused to invoke a treaty the validity of which they denied. It was also known that orders had been given to get together a force of commandos for a projected landing at Gaza. All this when there were no longer any Israeli forces across the Egyptian frontier. Such movements must obviously have required considerable preparation, and were not provoked by the shooting down of R.A.F. aircraft on the 7th January. They were also in violation of the U.N. resolution of the 30th May, 1948 (proposed by Great Britain), which bound member States not to introduce fighting personnel into Palestine or any of the Arab States. Clearly Mr. Bevin was not shrinking from war against Israel in order to save his bankrupt policy. On the 11th January the Foreign Office was saying that the Government took "an extremely serious" view, that the peace of the whole Middle East was threatened, that the crisis was entirely due to the Jews, and that it was natural to suspect that while they were negotiating at Rhodes with the Egyptians they might attack the Iraqis or the Arab Legion.

The "crisis" was an utterly artificial creation of the Foreign Office. As early as the 7th January, 1949, the Egyptian Government had accepted a United States offer to mediate in bringing about an immediate cessation of hostilities. By the 9th the last Israeli troops had left Egypt. That same day M. Vigier, of the Mediator's staff, had invited both the Israeli and Egyptian Governments to begin armistice negotiations at Rhodes on the 12th, on which day delegations from both States arrived empowered to "negotiate, conclude and initial" an armistice. On the 14th these two delegations gave mutual assurances that they

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would not embark on military offensives against each other, and undertook to respect each other's territory. Two days later the Israeli and Lebanese Governments started negotiations, and contacts were made between the Israeli and Transjordan Governments. The Israeli Government repudiated any expansionist policy, and, while insisting that it was determined on an outlet in the Gulf of Aqaba, rejected all suggestion of encroachment on Transjordan territory. On the 17th the Israeli Government agreed to the evacuation of Egyptian sick and wounded from Faluja, and met the Syrian authorities with a view to a truce. The Conciliation Commission set up by the U.N. General Assembly in December, consisting of American, French, and Turkish representatives, met that day in Geneva. Two days later the American Government agreed to a loan to Israel of 35 million dollars, and the French Government decided to recognise Israel.

The "crisis" was over, and once again Mr. Bevin had completely miscalculated. Israel had not been coerced; the Arab States had not been impressed; America, France, and world opinion had dissociated themselves; in England there was a general revolt against a policy which had brought isolation and humiliation. Mr. Bevin was forced to retreat. On the 18th he told Parliament that he was using all his influence to promote an armistice between Jews and Arabs, and that same day he announced the release from Cyprus of Jews of military age, whom he had detained for months without legal warrant. Questioned in the House of Commons on the affair of the R.A.F. planes, the official replies were incoherent, unconvincing, and damaging, and when, on the 26th January, a formal debate took place Mr. Bevin was on the defensive. He denied (a denial which his whole course of conduct disproved) that the Government were opposed to the establishment of a Jewish State; he admitted that the Jewish State was now a fact; he declared that he was discussing *de facto* recognition with the Dominions, and conceded that recognition might help the armistice talks. Mr. Churchill, in reply, condemned the "blunders" and "misjudgments" and the anti-Jewish bias of the Foreign Secretary, and insisted that the Jews must have an outlet on the Gulf of Aqaba. Although he approved of the sending of troops to Aqaba, he pressed for *de facto* recognition. The final result of Mr. Bevin's manoeuvres was that the recognition of Israel had become urgent and ineluctable, and on the

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29th January this was conceded. It had been preceded by Italian, Australian, and Swiss recognition, and was accompanied by recognition from Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Norway, and New Zealand. On the 31st January America extended *de jure* recognition. On the previous day Dr. Bunche, the Mediator, had invited Syria, Transjordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the Lebanon, and the Yemen to join Egypt in armistice negotiations with Israel at Rhodes.

On the 25th January elections to the Constituent Assembly had been held in Israel, elections in which the Arabs participated on an equal footing with the Jews. They resulted in the formation of a Coalition Government under Mr. Ben-Gurion, who announced his programme to be: (i) collective responsibility for the Government's policy of all parties represented in the Government; (ii) a foreign policy aiming at friendship and co-operation with the United States and Russia, a Jewish-Arab alliance, support of the United Nations; (iii) complete civic equality for Jews, Christians, and Muslims, and full equality for all citizens; (iv) a planned economy directed to implementation of the Zionist socialist ideal. The establishment of the Jewish State of Israel was now an accomplished fact. The State was recognised by the most important governments, and was soon to be admitted to membership of U.N. Armistices had still to be made; peace was yet to be concluded; boundaries had to be defined; the future of Jerusalem had to be determined. Above all the vast tasks of social reconstruction all lay ahead. But the clash of arms was over, and the Government of Israel could face its problems in relative freedom. To confirm internal order a general amnesty was proclaimed, and all political prisoners were released. On the 16th February Dr. Weizmann was elected President of Israel.

Armistice negotiations with Egypt were the first to begin and the first to end. On the 24th February the terms were announced. They were purely military and came into force on the day they were signed. The line of demarcation was to run from Nebi Yunis on the Mediterranean, twenty miles south of Tel Aviv, *via* Isdud and Faluja and east of Beersheba to the Gulf of Aqaba. Israel was to keep troops in the Eastern Negev pending a settlement with Transjordan. Egypt was to hold the coastal strip from Gaza to Rafa, and to keep three battalions there and in a zone stretching along the Egyptian frontier from El Arish to the Gulf

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of Aqaba. Other troops in the area were to be reduced by either side to three battalions. The Asluj-El Auja area was to be demilitarised. The Egyptian garrison at Faluja was to be withdrawn, and an exchange of prisoners to start within ten days. As the Israel Foreign Minister said, the agreement gave "unimpaired control over its entire territory in the Negev, and in particular, complete freedom of movement in its eastern part."

Meanwhile progress was being made with both Transjordan and Syria. Both Iraq and Saudi Arabia were willing to accept any armistice agreements acceptable to the other Arab States. On the 21st February, in announcing the sending of a delegation to Rhodes, King Abdullah referred to a final peace settlement. On two points there could be no compromise: they must keep the Old City of Jerusalem and the adjacent areas in Arab occupation; and the refugee question. He went on to make what, to the Arab League, must have been a disturbing and even provocative reference to Middle East policy generally—he favoured a reconstituted Arab alliance stretching from Aqaba to Basra. If this had any precise meaning at all it meant the break-up of the Arab League and its substitution by an Iraq-Transjordan alliance. In any case it was Abdullah's way of answering the charge in the Egyptian press that he was plotting to annex Syria by smuggling arms to the Jebel Druze for an organised revolt against the Syrian Government. Like a dutiful satellite he emphasised his friendship with Great Britain.

On the 2nd March the armistice negotiations between Israel and Transjordan opened at Rhodes. In pursuance of their announced policy, and in accord with the Israel-Egypt armistice, the Israeli Government was sending troops to occupy its territory in the Eastern Negev, including a six-mile strip of coast in the Gulf of Aqaba. These movements were the signal for a crop of false reports that the Israeli forces had crossed the Transjordan frontier and clashed with the Arab Legion. They were promptly taken up by the Foreign Office, which sent a strong note to Israel. Mr. Sharett (formerly Shertok) pointed out that no Israeli troops had entered Transjordan, and that there was no question of any military initiative against the British positions there. There had been no clashes between Israeli troops and the Arab Legion. Except for a trivial incident when a small Arab Legion patrol, trespassing on Israel territory, let off a few shots and hurried back

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across the border, Israel and Transjordan forces had not met, and there were no Arab Legion troops in the Israeli part of the Eastern Negev. Nevertheless, on the 12th March the British Government landed reinforcements at Aqaba, which the Transjordan Prime Minister said had not been asked for by his Government. This was the last splutter of Mr. Bevin's sterile and ridiculous belligerence; for, on the 14th March, Brigadier Glubb, the British commander of the Arab Legion, stated that he had few forces in the Eastern Negev, because King Abdullah, the Government, and the Arab Legion believed that Israel's assurances of its peaceful intentions were sincere. The Transjordan Prime Minister added that "the Jews had not crossed the frontier intentionally." King Abdullah had no desire to be dragged into another "crisis" manufactured by the Foreign Office.

On the 23rd March, under the auspices of M. Vigier, an armistice was concluded between Israel and Lebanon. The demarcation line ran along the old international frontier, and Israeli troops were withdrawn from Lebanese territory. On the 3rd April the armistice agreement (the conclusion of which had been delayed by Mr. Bevin's splutterings of belligerence) was signed between Israel and Transjordan. Transjordan took over control of the Iraqi-held triangle in Eastern Palestine; Israel obtained control of the Hedera-Afulah road and the Lydda-Haifa railway, but Tulkarm remained in Arab hands; a demilitarised zone was established on the demarcation line between Aqaba and the Dead Sea, and the armistice line from the Beisan Valley to the Dead Sea, in which each party was limited to three battalions. In Jerusalem the existing military line was accepted, and neither party was to have more than two battalions.

Armistice negotiations with Syria were delayed, because the Syrians persisted in occupying some Israeli territory which they should have evacuated when Israel evacuated Lebanon villages. On the 30th March Colonel Husni Zaim had effected a *coup d'état*, which was to be the first of three in nine months. On the 12th April armistice discussions began. A cease-fire agreement was signed, but the negotiations hung fire for a long time, largely because of the uncertain situation of the new Syrian régime. On the 17th May they were suspended awaiting proposals from Dr. Bunche. On the 14th June, Syria broke off the negotiations. An armistice was finally concluded on the 20th July. All Syrian troops

west of the frontier were to be withdrawn within twelve weeks. A small area to be demilitarised was to be under Israeli civil administration, and in this case the return was to be allowed of former Jewish and Arab settlers. Three days earlier the withdrawals, under the Israeli-Transjordan agreement, had been completed. An armistice now governed all the frontiers.

Meanwhile negotiations had been attempted to convert the armistice into a peace settlement. The Conciliation Commission appointed by U.N., consisting of an American, a French, and a Turkish member, had been having talks with the Arabs at Beyrout and with Mr. Ben-Gurion at Tel Aviv. It was agreed in April to have meetings in Lausanne under the auspices of the Commission, and they began on the 27th. The farce of separate conversations was maintained. The Arabs would not meet the Jews officially, and proceedings were extremely dilatory. There were two fundamental issues: boundaries and refugees. The Arabs would not discuss other matters until the refugee question was disposed of, and on this the parties were poles apart. The Arabs wished to establish the right of all refugees to return. On the 25th March the Israeli Government had informed the Commission that there was virtually no Arab economy left in Palestine, and the refugees must be settled in neighbouring Arab countries, and not become a grave minority problem in Israel. Some categories might be admitted, but any solution must be part of a general peace, and not a condition prior to peace negotiations. Many tens of thousands of Jewish immigrants had arrived, and every former Arab village and city under Israeli rule either had been or was being occupied by them. On the 26th April the Prime Minister had told the Constituent Assembly that the Government was faced with grave economic problems as a result of the influx of immigrants, and many were living in camps under frightful overcrowding. But the policy of unrestricted immigration must be continued, for it was the *raison d'être* of the establishment of the State, while the maximum increase of the Jewish population was vital to the security of Israel.

It was against this background, and amid Arab threats of a renewal of the war, that the negotiations at Lausanne were conducted. It was not likely that they should prove very speedy or very fruitful. The Arab delegates offered to accept the boundaries defined in the U.N. partition plan of the 29th November, 1947.

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This involved the surrender by Israel of Eastern and Central Galilee, of Lydda, Ramleh, and Beersheba, and the immediate return of the refugees from these districts. This was obviously unacceptable. In May and June the U.S. Government intervened with abortive suggestions. It intimated that President Truman stood by his pre-election declaration that if Israel wished to hold Western Galilee she must make other territorial concessions to the Arabs. This was not welcome to Israel. Then the American member of the Commission suggested that Israel might take over the Gaza strip (which contained 150,000 refugees) if she would accept 500,000 refugees. The Gaza strip was a heavy burden on Egypt, but on the condition suggested it would have been a heavy burden on Israel. Then, on the 9th June, the American Government sent a note to Israel urging her to admit a large number of refugees and make territorial concessions, in order to save the Lausanne Conference from failure. These requests were rejected.

On the 15th June Mr. Sharett told the Israeli Parliament that the Lausanne Conference was deadlocked, because the Arabs were "determined to negotiate solely on the question of refugees and not to discuss peace." The Israeli view was clear: A wholesale return of refugees would be a fifth column, a form of suicide while there was no peace between Israel and her neighbours and the Arab States were threatening a renewal of the war. The Government would help in resettling displaced Arabs and in reuniting families torn apart by the exodus, and would consider paying compensation. Israel's frontiers must be based on the U.N. resolution of the 5th December, 1948, not of the 29th November, 1947. The Government would ensure full supervision of the Holy Places under U.N. authority and give all necessary guarantees. But existence outside the State of Israel was impossible for Jewish citizens in Jerusalem, and Israel was inconceivable without Jerusalem. Israel would remain faithful to the United Nations, of which she had been a member since the 11th May. She would not be identified with any world bloc against any other, and she desired peace with the Arab States and co-operation in the development of the Middle East.

That same day the Commission decided to grapple with realities, and set up a technical committee of an American, a Frenchman, and a Turk to make investigations in Palestine and the Arab States into the refugee problem, and on the 25th June

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adjourned the Conference until the 18th July. Meanwhile on the 7th July the Israeli Government announced that its scheme for the return of dependent Arab refugees would be limited for the present to wives and children. When the Conference resumed at Lausanne the Israeli delegation offered to take back 100,000 refugees, including 25,000 already in Israel. This was their last possible word, and was not subject to bargaining. The Arabs agreed to discuss repatriation on the basis of resettlement in the Arab countries as well as in Palestine and as part of a final peace settlement. This indicated some, but not excessive, melting of the icecap. The situation at this time in Palestine was that 252,000 immigrants had now raised the Jewish population by 38 per cent. Including the Arabs the total population was over a million. Of the immigrants 67,000 were still in camps, 9,000 were unemployed, and the remainder only partially employed. The opposition in the Israeli Parliament was against the Government's Lausanne offer, and in defending it the ministers admitted that they had yielded to American pressure, but this was their last concession. The Conciliation Commission had asked for the views of Israel and the Arab States on boundaries, Jerusalem, refugees, and the proposed economic survey. The Arabs demanded North and Western Galilee, the Gaza strip, and the Negev; they approved the Commission's Jerusalem scheme, and agreed to co-operate with the survey group, but would not agree to accept its findings. Israel insisted on the frontier lines of the armistice, would welcome the economic survey but not be bound by it, and wanted the refugees settled outside Palestine. This indicated no visible progress towards agreement, and while the survey group went off to the Middle East, the talks at Lausanne were suspended, and the Conciliation Commission decided to resume them in New York in October. By the time it foregathered again the number of Jewish immigrants into Palestine had risen in seventeen months to 329,000 from fifty countries, and, in spite of forecasts to the contrary, the tide was not destined to abate soon. This was one of the tough realities determining any practical solution of the refugee problem.

The Arab refugee problem was a bitter product of the war, in which the civil population were made the victims of rival political ambitions. Had it been possible for the Arabs to admit the claims of the Jews to convert their National Home into a State, in par-



ticular had the U.N. partition scheme of the 29th November, 1947, been accepted by them, it would either not have arisen or have been restricted to modest proportions. The Jews, bound by their principles and their immediate interests alike, would have retained their large Arab minority, and extended to them equality of rights and citizenship. That would have involved formidable political and social difficulties, but there would have been no practicable alternative. Left to themselves, the bulk of the Arabs in Jewish Palestine would have submitted—they had no enthusiasm for a struggle and for sacrifices of which they would have to carry the major burden. But their leaders were determined to fight, were convinced that they would win the fight, and persuaded themselves that the sufferings would be temporary, and would be compensated in no long time by the expulsion and the spoliation of the Jews under a unified Arab sovereign State. In the early days of the trouble, therefore, when the forces employed were still mainly irregulars, the Arab commandants ordered the Arabs on the fringes to evacuate their villages so as to clear the ground for military operations which were expected to sweep the Jews into the sea. These operations were unsuccessful, and for strategic purposes the Jews began to blow up the Arab villages, which they occupied. It was the foolish and short-sighted policy of the Arab leaders to represent the Jews as terrorists and murderers under whom there could be no security for life, liberty, or property, and so to spread terror through the Arab countryside. The massacre at Deir Yassin by the Irgun on the 9th April, 1948, was a turning point. By the psychological exploitation of this event the Arab leaders converted a stream of flight into a flood. It became the rule that, when the Jewish forces advanced, the Arab inhabitants of the occupied territory fled; nor was the flight always without stimulation or encouragement from the Jews.

The termination of the Mandate and the invasion by the Arab armies opened a new phase. The Jewish authorities adopted the principle of unlimited immigration, and every month saw tens of thousands gathered in from many countries of exile. They had to be found homes and prospects of settlement and absorption. On the other hand the danger of a large Arab fifth column during war and after war was acutely apprehended. In the eyes of the Jewish Government refusal to suffer the return of more than a fraction of the refugees became a principle of policy. The Arab

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States became increasingly reckless of immediate evacuation and suffering, which they asserted and believed would be corrected at no distant date by complete victory. The area of military operations widened out as they assumed the shape of regular warfare on all fronts; and, as successive campaigns put new regions under Israeli control, every advance of the Jewish forces started a new wave of flight.

The exact number of refugees will never be known, for Arab propaganda tended to exaggerate and Jewish propaganda to underrate. Nor can the number of rations supplied be a precise measure, for there was much corruption. Many persons received them who were not entitled, and many took more than was their due, so that a regular traffic developed. It is certain that they rose to at least half a million, and that they constituted a mass of misery and destitution. They were exiles and unwelcome exiles in their lands of refuge. However responsive to large political slogans, the Arabs have little sense of social brotherhood. The Arab States are economically primitive, and have only an embryonic administrative mechanism ill adapted to dealing with so burdensome a problem. The philanthropy of U.N. averted starvation, and happily the worst anticipations of pestilence were avoided. But charity must be succeeded by construction.

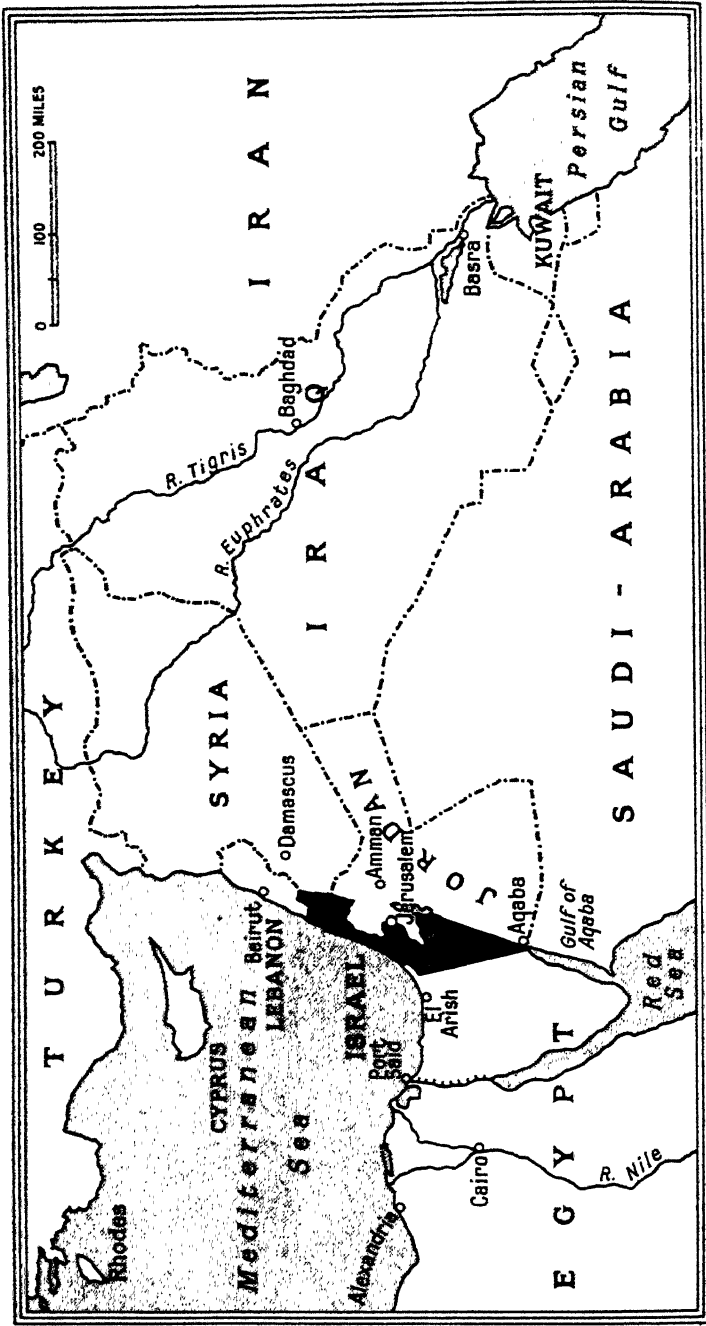
Throughout the sterile discussions at Lausanne, a permanent solution of the refugee problem was bogged down in politics. Count Bernadotte had tried to get established the right of the refugees to return to Israel. It was a principle naturally espoused by the Arab States, for it would relieve them of difficulties and embarrass Israel. It was, for the solidest reasons, rejected by the Israeli Government. And it was eminently unreal. The Palestine which the refugees had left no longer existed. The villages, the cities, the lands they had occupied were gone or were in occupation by others. It was to escape from this deadlock that the Conciliation Commission appointed an Economic Survey Group for the Middle East, and this body limited itself perforce to the hard facts. It submitted a Report to the General Assembly of the United Nations on the 18th November, 1949, which was accepted by that body. The Chairman of the Group was Mr. Gordon Clapp, head of the Tennessee Valley Authority, and it had the help of Sir Desmond Morton, Sir Herbert Stewart, and Dr. John Murray of the British Middle East Office, and Mr. Van Court Hare of the

T.V.A. Its immediate task was to prepare the transition from idleness to work, not to settle the refugees but to suggest relief projects. Therefore it proposed that relief should continue till the end of 1951, but that some twenty relief work projects should be put in hand, which could be started immediately in Jordan, Arab Palestine, Syria, the Lebanon, and the Gaza strip. These include the development of the catchment basin of the Wadi Zerka in Jordan, the irrigation and drainage of South Bekaa in the Lebanon, and drainage of the Madkh swamp in Syria. Terracing, protecting soil from erosion, improving crops, irrigation, and water conservation are the objectives.

In further reports the Group contemplates a much wider approach—the general economic development of the Middle East, a problem which would exist even if there had been no refugees. The Group excludes large-scale industry, but believes in agricultural development. It calculates that the Middle East has enough land and water for forty-eight million people, and that the problem is to bring the water to the land. The toughest immediate problems were offered by the Gaza strip, which now has 200,000 refugees and very limited possibilities of employment.

About the same time there was being held at Karachi an Islamic Economic Conference, at which were represented Pakistan, Iraq, Egypt, Persia, Turkey, Afghanistan, North Africa, Saudi Arabia, Muscat, Oman, the Maldives, Spanish Morocco, the Transvaal, and the Arab League. The panorama was extensive, but concrete results could hardly be proportionate. Economics are not an affair of religion. The Conference decided to meet annually and to organise associations in each State to foster economic co-operation, agricultural improvement, and industrialisation—worthy objects, but one may venture the guess that the achievements of the Economic Survey Group will prove greater and more beneficial.

In August U.N. decided to declare an official end to the Jewish-Arab war. On the 11th it passed a resolution welcoming the armistice agreements, and declaring that the truce had been superseded. Dr. Bunche, the Acting Mediator, was relieved of further responsibility, and a skeleton staff was left to watch over the cease-fire, and help the mixed armistice commissions. The embargo on arms was lifted, unwisely. Great Britain promised to send arms to the Arab States for purely internal needs, a somewhat strange purpose. This was interpreted to cover the sale of



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over sixty aircraft, some of the most modern type, to Egypt. Extreme elements began more loudly to threaten a second round with Israel, but this was certainly not desired or intended by the British Government. British and American strategy was still hugging the hope that the Arab States could be made into a bulwark against Russia, but it was beginning to be recognised that the only foundation for a stable Middle East must be peaceful, orderly, and well-organised States. At the end of 1949 the only States which could claim such titles were Israel and Turkey. Syria had just had its third *coup d'état* in nine months. In Iraq, governments were vanishing like shadows. The fundamental conflicts inside the League were not resolved, and were fomenting disorder in the member States. On the 2nd June Transjordan had become the Hashimite Kingdom of the Jordan, an almost formal annexation of most of Arab Palestine. Syria was become an arena in which Egyptian and Hashimite ambitions were fighting out their battles. The Egyptian elections in January 1950 brought the Wafd into power. Would that introduce the much desired element of stability? Would 1950 establish peace in place of armistices? It was reasonably certain to improve relations between Great Britain and Israel. The dinner in London on the 22nd November, 1949, in honour of the seventy-fifth birthday of Dr. Weizmann, the Israel President, at which General Smuts was the chief speaker, was a striking manifestation that recognition was growing of the historic significance of the birth of Israel. When General Smuts said that the resurrection of Israel and the Battle of Britain were the highlights of an epoch, and that there was being witnessed a miracle of history, he was translating for the common man a memorable lesson.

## CHAPTER VIII

### JERUSALEM

**I**N the political dialect of the day Jerusalem is described as a city dear to three great religions, and from that "axiom" wide-spreading inferences are drawn. The phrase assumes that the ecclesiastical organisations representing these religions and their adherents do now desire and have for long desired to live in harmony and tolerance, each recognising and anxious to respect the rights or claims of the others in regard to the Holy Places. If such a sentiment does in fact exist it is of very recent growth. When the Christian Empire succeeded the Pagan Empire it inherited and maintained for religious reasons the ban on Jewish residence which, after the fall of the Jewish State, was imposed for political reasons. The Crusaders, when they occupied Jerusalem, drove all the Jewish inhabitants into the Synagogue and burnt it and them; and they prohibited any Jews from living in Jerusalem. Very similar was their treatment of the Moslems.\* The attitude of the Moslems during their many centuries of rule towards Jews and Christians alike was one of tolerance mingled with contempt. The principles of Islam relegated all other religions to an inferior status, and their adherents were seldom free from anxiety. The riots of 1929 showed how religious fanaticism could be called upon to give edge to political antagonism. Indeed in the Orient, where for so long political rights derived from religious professions, and for administrative purposes peoples were organised by confessions, the concept of religious equality and brotherhood could not arise.

The number "three" in this connection is itself an artificial construction: it implies the internal unity of each of the religious bodies. This is sufficiently true of the Jews and the Moslems, but

\* In 1311 Clement V issued a decree prohibiting Moslem religious services in countries under Christian rulers and Moslem pilgrimages to Mecca.

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it is not true of the Christians. All the Christian Churches which came into being before the Moslem Conquest are represented in Jerusalem, and have very ancient claims in respect of the Holy Places, claims which have been frequently disputed between them. Conflicts between these Churches have on many occasions led to bloodshed: a pretext for the Crimean War was a dispute between the Latins (Catholics) and the Orthodox as to rights and privileges in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Nor must it be assumed that this antagonism belongs to the past. The present writer was, during the Mandatory régime, professionally engaged in a case arising from a clash between Latins and Abyssinians during the Friday procession along the Via Dolorosa. Not less significant was another case in which the Terra Sancta, the Franciscan Order in Palestine, was disrupted by the rival national loyalties of its members. The *odium theologicum* still flourishes in Jerusalem, and there is free play for national rivalries.

It is important to remember that, although the States organised in U.N. have been invoked to solve problems of ecclesiastical derivation in Jerusalem, the representation of Christian sects and churches in Jerusalem has no correspondence with political representation in U.N. For historical reasons the Protestant Churches have no rights in the Holy Places—they came into existence too late, and their doctrines and spiritual approach do not cultivate interest in such claims. Thus the United States and Great Britain as Protestant Powers have no direct concern. The Latin States have many more votes in U.N. than the Orthodox (if, indeed, the Communist State can be said to be the guardians of Orthodoxy). But the rights of the Orthodox in the Holy Places are much more extensive than those of the Latins, again for historical reasons. On the other hand, some churches which have established rights—Armenians, Copts, Abyssinians, Syrians—have no political mouthpiece in U.N. A decision of U.N., therefore, may misrepresent the diverse Christian Churches. It may go further. It may derange the whole delicate, precarious balance of rights and claims, through the exercise of political voting power at U.N. There the Latins (Catholics) have a number of votes which has no relation to the actual Latin position in the Holy Places, and the striving to extend and strengthen that position has persisted for centuries. With this situation may, perhaps, be connected a report that the Franciscan Order has,

with the approval of the Vatican, prepared a plan for the complete reconstruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. This, if true, would be equivalent to claiming a Catholic supremacy in regard to the Holy Places, which has no historical or juridical foundation, and which would be resisted strenuously by all the other interested Churches.

All Christians venerate the Holy Places as the scene of the birth, the culminating mission, and the death of Jesus ; but the attitude of Rome (and much the same is true of the Orthodox Church) towards Jerusalem is, consciously or unconsciously, ambivalent. Rome is supreme in the Catholic system, but Jerusalem has a unique place in the history of Christianity, and is therefore a potential, if normally a silent, rival. Were it not for a series of political accidents, Jerusalem would have been the centre of Christendom as Mecca is of Islam. It would have been a very different Christendom, a Hebraic, not a Gentile Christianity, and quite conceivably it would never have had the world-wide extension which it owes to Rome and Constantinople. Titus, in destroying Jerusalem, deprived it of its natural evolution as the capital of Christianity, the supreme Holy City. During the formative years of Christianity it was desolate, and even the relatively minor see of Cæsarea exercised ecclesiastical jurisdiction over it. During those fateful years Rome (and in its sphere Constantinople) had and seized her chance. Rome was the political capital of the Empire, and, in the prostration of Jerusalem, religious authority swung naturally towards political authority. Tradition fortified the influence of politics. Before the end of the second century the tradition grew up that the two chief apostles had suffered martyrdom and were buried in Rome—Peter, the prince of the Apostles, and Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles. Upon these triple foundations—the desolation of Jerusalem, politics, and tradition—the vast superstructure of Papal supremacy was built. But there is an ineradicable potentiality in the spiritual history of Jerusalem, as the scene of the most vital origins of Christianity, which cannot be ignored. The tree may have been cut down, but the roots survive, and what may grow from them? Rome has never entirely conquered the feeling that she has usurped the place which rightfully belongs to Jerusalem.

Rome is under a psychological urge to control Jerusalem. The first Christian Emperor, Constantine, founded the New Rome,



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Constantinople, and the Christian Emperors had powerful political motives to keep Jerusalem in subordination to Rome, the New or the Old. After the Moslem Conquest the problem was dormant: it was inconceivable that a city under Moslem rule could aspire to be or be regarded as the spiritual centre of Christianity. But the sleeper awoke with the Crusaders. When Urban II launched the First Crusade it was his intention that Jerusalem should become part of the patrimony of St. Peter, it should become part of the Papal dominion and come directly under Papal control.

The Crusaders' Patriarch described the Jerusalem see as "this Church which is the mother of all the other churches." The French historian of the Crusades calls this "somewhat heterodox, having regard to the primacy of the Roman Church." It was the genius of Jerusalem asserting itself.

Godfrey's successor, Baldwin, the first to call himself King, and the true founder of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, steadily pressed the claims of the Jerusalem see *vis-d-vis* its neighbours, and sought to aggrandise its authority. On a humbler level it was again the genius of Jerusalem asserting itself. It is not too rash a speculation that if the Kingdom of Jerusalem had been freed from perpetual threat by the Moslem rulers, and had established itself firmly and for a much longer period, Jerusalem would have competed for primacy with Rome and Constantinople. The possibility was not to be excluded, the necessity for control not to be evaded. The reconquest of Jerusalem by the Moslems disposed of the issue which the Crusades had made manifest. It revived, and in a more challenging form, when sovereignty passed once again to a Christian State charged with the establishment of a Jewish National Home and then to a Jewish State.

It was a Christian doctrine that, with the advent of Jesus and his rejection by the Jews, the Christians had become the true Israel, and the Jews had lost their title and the benefits from their Covenant with God. One proof of their disinheritance was that they had been driven out of Palestine, and made for all time exiles and wanderers over the face of the earth. All this teaching was manifestly threatened even by a National Home. What would be left if the exiles returned, if a Jewish State was restored, and if the capital of that State was in Jerusalem? Jerusalem with its mysterious spell had! given the world two great religions and something

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of a third. Rome could not believe that the spell had utterly lost its potency. What might it work through this miraculously restored Jewish people? The historical instinct of the Papacy would not suffer it to be indifferent to the fate of Jerusalem. There was something much more at issue than the peace of Jerusalem, or access to the Holy Places, or a proper distribution of rights and privileges. The fountains of the great deep might be breaking up.

Secure in their possession of the Haram area, disinterested in the Christian Holy Places, and contemptuous of the contending claimants, the Moslems maintained, with few lapses, an admirable balance of equity and a tolerable measure of security. The Mandatory Government inherited the dual responsibility of the Turks—the preservation of the Holy Places, and the adjudication of conflicting claims. Article 13 of the Mandate provided that :

“All responsibility in connection with the Holy Places and religious buildings and sites in Palestine, including that of preserving existing rights and of securing free access to the Holy Places, religious buildings and sites and the free exercise of worship while ensuring the requirements of public order and decorum, is assumed by the Mandatory, who shall be responsible solely to the League of Nations . . . provided also that nothing in this Mandate shall be construed as conferring upon the Mandatory authority to interfere with the fabric or the management of purely Moslem sacred shrines, the immunities of which are agreed.”

Article 14 provided that :

“A Special Commission shall be appointed by the Mandatory to study, define and determine the rights and claims in connection with the Holy Places, and the rights and claims relating to the different religious communities in Palestine. The method of nomination, the composition and the functions of this Commission shall be submitted to the Council of the League for its approval, and the Commission shall not be appointed or enter upon its functions without the approval of the Council.”

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Article 28 provided that :

“In the event of the termination of the Mandate, hereby conferred upon the Mandatory, the Council of the League of Nations shall make such arrangements as may be deemed necessary for safeguarding in perpetuity, under guarantee of the League, the rights secured by Articles 13 and 14.”

It should be noted that, for practical purposes, Moslem Holy Places were excluded from these provisions. They were left to the exclusive jurisdiction of Moslem authorities. The only Jewish Holy Place, the Wailing Wall, gave rise to a conflict which was determined by an International Commission appointed by the British Government. In effect only Christian Holy Places came under consideration, and it was for them that the “Special Commission” was really intended. It was never appointed because the parties interested, which means the ecclesiastical authorities, could not agree on the manner of nomination, the composition, or the functions. The tasks it should have performed devolved on the Mandatory Power, which performed them as well as they could have been performed in the circumstances. Free access, free exercise of worship, public order, and decorum were secured, and “claims in regard to disputed Holy Places were investigated in a judicial manner.” The distinction between political sovereignty and ecclesiastical privilege was maintained, and, if international determination even of conflicting ecclesiastical claims was dispensed with, it was because the ecclesiastical interests could not agree to call the Commission into being.

The authority of the Mandatory in respect of the Holy Places, though in a sense theoretically imperfect in the absence of the Special Commission, had been effective and accepted. The Mandatory Government issued the Palestine (Holy Places) Order in Council, 1924, which took from the Palestine courts “any cause or matter in connection with the Holy Places or religious buildings or sites in Palestine or the rights or claims relating to the different religious communities of Palestine.” Jurisdiction was vested in the High Commissioner, whose decision was final and binding on all parties.

It was inevitable that when violence broke out in Palestine, and still more when Great Britain surrendered the Mandate, the

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question of the Holy Places should become active. Violence interrupted access, and in Jerusalem itself there was open war for the first time since many centuries.

With the departure of the Mandatory a real as well as legal vacuum was created. It was the aspect of violence—the scandal of siege and bloodshed and destruction in Jerusalem—which made the first and most dramatic impact upon world opinion. When the Anglo-American Committee reported, the Mandate was still in force and Jerusalem held by British forces. Their proposals contemplated the continuation of the Mandate. The problem of the Holy Places was therefore not touched upon, and there was merely a perfunctory reference to “places sacred to the followers of three great religions,” and a condemnation of “dancing and swing music on the shores of the Sea of Galilee as offensive to the sensibilities of many Christian people.”

Under the Morrison Plan, the Jerusalem area was to be placed under the direct rule of the High Commissioner, and “the High Commissioner would continue to exercise supreme executive and legislative authority.” He contemplated a Trusteeship Agreement which would have to issue from U.N., but it seems to have been assumed, perhaps too confidently, that the question of the Holy Places, which was bound to arise, would not excite controversy. When he spoke in the House during the debate on the decision to go to U.N., Mr. Morrison made no mention of Jerusalem and the Holy Places, but, as he favoured the evolution of Palestine into a unitary State with an Arab majority, the implication was that that Arab majority would embrace and control the Holy Places. Presumably the problem of the Holy Places either had no place in his thoughts or no place of significance.

It was the official anticipation that, when the evacuation of Jerusalem took place, the Arabs would take the whole of the city. It may therefore be said that, in Mr. Bevin's conception, in so far as he gave thought to the matter, the surrender of the Mandate would involve Arab sovereignty over the Holy Places. It was the Arab failure at this point which raised the problem for him and for U.N. Had the Arabs succeeded, that problem, as a problem of sovereignty, would not have existed. There would have been tacit acquiescence in Arab sovereignty. The sensitive conscience of the world, so acute when the Jews held the New City and controlled the western approaches to Jerusalem, would have raised the issue

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of traditional pledges of access and freedom of worship, but would hardly have been more exacting than it had been under the Turks or the Mandatory.

During the discussions in the special session of the General Assembly which set up, at the request of the British Government, the Special Committee on Palestine, the question of the Holy Places received practically no consideration. Nevertheless the Committee's terms of reference, while giving "the widest powers to ascertain and record facts, and to investigate all questions and issues relevant to the problem of Palestine," had this special reference to the religious issue: "the Special Committee shall give most careful consideration to the religious interests in Palestine of Islam, Judaism and Christianity." As the original Mandate prescribed, with the termination of that Mandate U.N. was bound to deal with the Holy Places.

It will be remembered that the Special Committee presented a Minority and a Majority Report. The Minority Report recommended the establishment of what it called an "independent Federal State of Palestine," in effect an Arab-controlled sovereign Palestine. It proposed to embody in the Constitution recognition of the sacred character of the Holy Places, and the obligation to preserve them and ensure access for the purposes of worship and pilgrimage. The independent Palestine was to exercise the necessary authority to achieve this and determine rights and claims. "In the interests of preserving, protecting, and caring for Holy Places, buildings, or sites in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth and elsewhere in Palestine, a permanent international body" was recommended to be created by U.N., with power to make recommendations to the Government and report to U.N. The authority of this body was, as defined, very vague and shadowy. It had no political powers; all such were reserved to the State. This was logical, once the idea of a sovereign State or States in Palestine was accepted.

The Majority Report recommended that "the City of Jerusalem shall be placed under an International Trusteeship system by means of a Trusteeship Agreement which shall designate the United Nations as the administering authority." The trusteeship was to appoint a Governor who should be neither Arab nor Jew nor a citizen of the Palestine States, and who should be assisted by appropriate executive, legislative, and judicial organs.

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“With relation to the Holy Places, religious buildings and sites in any part of Palestine, other than the City of Jerusalem, he shall determine whether the provisions of the constitutions of the Arab and Jewish States in Palestine dealing therewith, and the religious rights appertaining thereto, are being properly applied and respected. The protection of all such places, buildings and sites located in the City of Jerusalem shall be a special concern of his office. He shall also be empowered to make decisions on the basis of existing rights which may arise between the different communities in respect of such Holy Places, religious buildings, and sites in any part of Palestine.”

The protection of the Holy Places, buildings, and sites was to be entrusted to a special police force, the members to be recruited outside Palestine, and to be neither Jews nor Arabs.

This was a revolutionary proposal in principle, and in detail not practicable. It sought to create a State which should owe its existence purely to ecclesiastical considerations. The Vatican State could not be cited as a precedent for various reasons. The Vatican City was the last relic of the Papal State, which had many centuries of history behind it, which embodied one single Church, and which had one single sovereign and not a hydra-headed United Nations. It was remarkable that the revolutionary character of such a scheme in a system of secular States attracted so little notice. Turning to the details, it was evident that the authors, although they made the conventional obeisance to Jerusalem as a Holy City for three faiths, were really thinking only of its Christian aspect, for the Governor was by implication to be a Christian, and his police to be recruited from Christians. It could not be seriously maintained that these Christian authorities represented neutrality. Again to a single individual was to be entrusted, not only administrative responsibility, but also the judicial function of determining conflicting claims. The nature of the issues he might have to decide between competing Churches may be gathered from the report of an International Commission :

“As apportioned between the three principal Christian Rites, viz. the Orthodox Greek Rite, the Latin (Roman Catholic) Rite, and the Armenian Orthodox Rite, the Holy Places and their component parts may be classified into the following categories :

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(a) Certain parts which are recognised as property common to the three Rites in equal shares.

(b) Other parts as to which one Rite claims exclusive jurisdiction, while other Rites claim joint proprietorship.

(c) Parts as to which the ownership is in dispute between two Rites.

(d) Finally, parts the use or ownership of which belongs exclusively to one Rite, but within which other Rites are entitled to cense or to carry out ritual services up to a limited extent in other ways. . . .”

“Certain strict principles are adhered to in the administration of a *status quo*. . . . Thus . . . a right granted to hang up a lamp or a picture or to change the position of any such object when hung is regarded as a recognition of exclusive possession of the pillar or the wall in question.

“It is easy to understand that the application of ‘rights’ of this nature must lead to great difficulties and often to litigation, especially as such alteration *de facto* in the prevailing practice might serve as a proof that the legal position has been altered. Therefore, the Administration has had a difficult task both in ascertaining and in maintaining the *status quo*. In controverted cases the objects in dispute have been sometimes allowed to fall into decay rather than risk the possibility that any alteration of the balance of power between the contestant Rites should be permitted to ensue. Hence, if the carrying out of repairs becomes urgent, it devolves upon the Administration to have them attended to, supposing it proves not to be possible in the individual case for the parties concerned to come to an amicable agreement.”

When it is remembered that the Churches and the Powers could not agree on “the method of nomination, the composition, and the functions” of the Special Commission envisaged by the Mandate as determining precisely these rights and claims, it is hard to believe that U.N. could, on reflection, agree that the determination should be entrusted to a single individual or who that individual should be.

Again, the Jerusalem City would have taken in a hundred thousand Jews and as many Arabs, and denied them the benefits of rule by their own authorities. They certainly would not have

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accepted the Committee's confident assertion that such a régime "affords a convenient and effective means of ensuring . . . the political, economic, and social well-being of the population of Jerusalem." History suggests that, of all forms of government, government with ecclesiastical roots is the least progressive, and the genius of this State of Jerusalem would be the spirit of *status quo*. The circumstance that control of Jerusalem was at the time being fought out between Jews and Arabs gave the Committee the opportunity to make its extraordinary proposals. Once control had been stabilised, the formidable difficulties of the scheme would present themselves. Meanwhile the Arabs, demanding a unitary Arab Palestine, rejected it. The Jews felt that Jewish Jerusalem, excluding the Old City and the Holy Places, should be part of the Jewish State, but in fact (as Mr. Sharett said in April 1948) the Jews had in deference to U.N. accepted an international régime for Jerusalem.

By the 9th of February, 1948, the Special Committee of the Trusteeship Council had finished a draft statute for the City of Jerusalem, a draft to which the Jews suggested numerous amendments. But the problem of Jerusalem was past this stage. Under the eyes of the Mandatory Administration and troops, anarchy and violence were advancing apace, and the end of the Mandate was in sight. On the 9th February the Palestine Commission was reporting that without an adequate non-Palestinian force, to replace the British troops, the Commission would not be able to maintain law, and order, and the carrying out of the scheme of partition, including an international régime for Jerusalem, would be jeopardised :

"The city of Jerusalem, conceived as a demilitarised enclave in the proposed Arab State, would be incapable of defending itself against attack, if the British security forces were not replaced by another non-Palestinian force. To invite even a regularly constituted and controlled militia of either the Jewish or the Arab State to defend or succour the City would be not only contrary to the plan of the General Assembly, but would inflame passions, and might provoke a religious war."

The bitter truth was that the plan for Jerusalem could not be executed without the co-operation of the Mandatory Power, which was denied, or armed force from U.N., which U.N. never



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made an attempt to produce. The spontaneous efforts and sacrifices of the Jews could establish the Jewish State. But in Jerusalem there were neither the will nor the resources to create spontaneously the *corpus separatum* of Jerusalem. Against it the dominant forces were united.

On the 24th February, 1948, Dr. Lisicky, the Chairman of the Palestine Commission, told the Security Council that, even if a Governor with sufficient police to protect the Holy Places could be installed by the 15th May, Jerusalem would still be doomed unless guaranteed free communication with the outside world. That meant effective control by U.N. over a large part of the Arab State. The reply he got was the movement in retreat from partition, led by the United States. Meanwhile violence and outrage in Jerusalem, as elsewhere, rose to a higher pitch, and the Mandatory's Palestine Bill was introduced to give a legal definition to the planned anarchy. On the 16th March the Palestine Commission reported that the partition scheme had broken down, because of Arab resistance and the conduct of the Mandatory Power; and three days later the American delegate announced that U.S. support for partition was withdrawn; he proposed to substitute a temporary trusteeship for the whole of the country. This would have involved dropping the *corpus separatum* of Jerusalem. The crux of the matter was still enforcement and security. The U.S.A. had discussed this aspect with others but without result, and was not prepared to act alone. At this stage King Abdullah intervened to demand that the protection of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nazareth must be placed in Arab hands. This was not precisely a contribution. On the 26th April the Assembly resolved to study with the Mandatory, Jews, and Arabs suitable measures for the protection of Jerusalem and its inhabitants, and to submit proposals as speedily as possible. In the Trusteeship Council France proposed an international force of one thousand volunteers to guard the Holy Places and Jerusalem. On the 30th April the American delegate proposed a temporary trusteeship for Jerusalem, with a view to insulating Jerusalem, its inhabitants, and the Holy Places from the conflict, and securing the minimal administrative services. Both Jews and Arabs were willing to accept from U.N. a neutral commission to carry on the functions of the municipal commission.

At Lake Success all this may have seemed to have substance,

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but, so long as war was actually raging in Jerusalem and Palestine, it could have no meaning unless U.N. was prepared to back up words with force. Of that there was never a sign. The Mandate ended, and the Arab invasions began, and the State of Israel was proclaimed; and Jerusalem Old and New was a battlefield. The day before, the General Assembly rejected a trusteeship for Jerusalem. Having itself failed to master the problem of Jerusalem U.N. turned the task over to Count Bernadotte. By the 28th May the Arabs had occupied all the Old City. Almost all New Jerusalem was in Jewish hands. In a note to the Vatican and the representatives in Italy of the Christian Powers, the Franciscans declared that they were forming a Holy Land militia composed of the faithful of the Christian denominations to protect the Christian sanctuaries and religious institutions. This was the first and the last news of this militia. Were the Franciscans pegging out a claim to represent all the Christians in Palestine?

On the 11th June the first truce—to run for four weeks—came into operation and Count Bernadotte could settle down to his larger task of mediating a settlement. He started out from three axioms: the Jewish State was a living, solidly entrenched, and vigorous reality; the Arab State could not come into being; the unitary Arab State of Palestine was impracticable. As these axioms involved the conclusion that the general scheme of the 29th November, 1947, could not be carried out, the Mediator took the further step of deciding that the particular settlement, a *corpus separatum* for Jerusalem, must be abandoned. He proposed to substitute “inclusion of the City of Jerusalem in Arab territory, with municipal rights for the Jewish community and special arrangements for the protection of the Holy Places . . . that Holy Places, religious buildings and sites be preserved, and that existing rights in respect of the same be fully guaranteed.” The Arab territory was the Kingdom of Jordan, which under the Bernadotte proposal was to absorb Arab Palestine. The Arab League rejected the whole scheme put forward by the Mediator, without troubling to discuss the Jerusalem section. The Israeli Government was

“deeply wounded by your suggestion concerning the future of the City of Jerusalem, which it regards as disastrous. The idea that the relegation of Jerusalem to Arab rule might form part

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of a peaceful settlement could be conceived only in utter disregard of history and of the fundamental facts of the problem: the historic associations of Judaism with the Holy City; the unique place occupied by Jerusalem in Jewish history and present-day Jewish life; the Jewish inhabitants' two-thirds majority in the City before the commencement of Arab aggression—a majority greatly increased since then as a result of Arab evacuation; the fact that the whole of Jerusalem, with only a few minor exceptions, is now in Jewish hands; and not least, the fact that, after an exhaustive study of the problem and as a result of an overwhelming consensus of Christian opinion in their midst, the General Assembly resolved that Jerusalem be placed under an international régime. . . . The State of Israel and the Jews of Jerusalem will never acquiesce in the imposition of Arab domination over Jerusalem . . . they will resist any such imposition with all the force at their command."

Count Bernadotte's argument for his proposal was that "Jerusalem stands in the heart of what must be Arab territory in any partition of Palestine. To attempt to isolate this area politically and otherwise from surrounding territory presents enormous difficulties." The situation soon to be created by the war would transform this argument. For the rest it is significant that he tried to get rid of the strategical absurdity of a *corpus separatum*, deprived of all communications with the world, and the political perplexities of a State at the mercy of a complex of conflicting Churches. The solution he propounded was impracticable, and, when it was rejected by the interested parties, he fell back on the *corpus separatum*:

"The City of Jerusalem, which should be understood as covering the area defined in the resolution of the General Assembly of the 29th November, should be treated separately, and should be placed under effective United Nations control, with maximum feasible local autonomy for its Arab and Jewish communities, with full safeguards for the protection of the Holy Places and sites and free access to them, and for religious freedom."

The first truce was due to end on the 9th July and Count

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Bernadotte proposed to demilitarise the City. The Israeli Government was prepared to discuss the proposal, the Arabs rejected it. On the 15th July the Security Council as a matter of especial and urgent necessity ordered an immediate and unconditional cease-fire in the City of Jerusalem. This was accepted, and the Mediator continued his efforts at demilitarisation. They made no real progress. His suggestion that Jerusalem should be part of Arab territory had made the Jews sensitive and distrustful. But as Count Bernadotte concluded that "even if both parties were to agree on the issue, demilitarisation could not be put into effect without a strong and adequately armed United Nations force to be provided immediately," the whole idea was condemned to sterility. The one certain fact was that U.N. would not provide such a force. On the 29th July the Trusteeship Council decided to postpone indefinitely the discussion of a statute for Jerusalem. The question of Jerusalem was once again open. That same day Mr. Sharett, the Israeli Foreign Minister, said that the Israeli Government was no longer bound by the U.N. resolution of the 29th November because of Arab aggression. It might demand the inclusion of Jerusalem in the Jewish State. The truth was that the Arabs had put the issue to the arbitrament of war, and the result of that war would inevitably shape the final settlement. At this stage the war had gone heavily in favour of the Jews.

On the 18th August Count Bernadotte reported that "not only has firing [in Jerusalem] practically never ceased but the situation is gradually getting out of hand." In truth his own unfortunate proposal was largely responsible. It had made Jerusalem a pivotal point, by stimulating Abdullah's hopes and stiffening Jewish resolve. It did not prevent sporadic shelling. Jewish opinion was hardening. On the 6th October Mr. Sharett told the Press that Israel could not accept international control of the whole of Jerusalem. The walled city might be put under the United Nations, but the modern city should be under Israel, "as it is today in effect. Only Jewish armed forces can be relied upon to ensure the lives of the Jews in Jerusalem." This last consideration was the fruit of experience. During the troubles and the war, over a thousand Jewish lives had been lost in Jerusalem. The city had been besieged, its water supply cut off, its people reduced to the sternest rationing, and shelling had been their portion day and night. The British when there had failed to protect them.

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U.N., except for inaugurating the cease-fire, had done nothing, and world opinion, in spite of rhetoric about the Holy City, had contemplated the tragic situation with singular equanimity. The fate of 100,000 Jews could be entrusted as little to a U.N. parchment as to Arab mercy.

On the 17th September Count Bernadotte was murdered in Jerusalem—the abominable comment of terrorism on his proposals. In October war flared up again, and there was fighting in Jerusalem as elsewhere. Dr. Bunche told the Political Committee of U.N. that the General Assembly must, among other things, define the future status of Jerusalem. On the 11th November Mr. Ben-Gurion, as the result of the new and far-reaching Israeli victories, said that a new reality had been created in Palestine, and his Government was no longer bound by the resolution of the 29th November, 1947. This, of course, applied to Jerusalem as to other areas. On the 15th November Mr. Sharett told the Political Committee that, in regard to Jerusalem, Israel would accept international custody for the Holy Places, but would include in Israel modern Jewish Jerusalem, outside the walls, and a strip connecting it with the Jewish State. Count Bernadotte's theory that any conceivable partition would leave Jerusalem in Arab territory had been demolished by victory. Mr. McNeill, however, insisted on demanding that a Conciliation Commission should be set up, which should *inter alia* present to the next General Assembly detailed proposals for an international régime for Jerusalem, including the protection of the Holy Places, take steps to facilitate the administration of Jerusalem, which should be placed under U.N. control, and report to the Security Council any attempt to prevent access to Jerusalem. The resolution as finally passed gave the Conciliation Commission no terms of reference except to assist in securing a final settlement.

Meanwhile on the 1st December President Weizmann visited Jerusalem and stated the Jewish thesis in a speech: for the Jews Jerusalem was the quintessence of the Palestine idea, and its restoration symbolised the redemption of Israel. Their defence had created a new link, and gave them the right to claim it. Special arrangements should be made for the Old City, but it was unthinkable that the New City should come under foreign rule. Transjordan a few days later decided to absorb Arab Palestine, and on the 21st December King Abdullah, by appoint-

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ing a new Mufti of Jerusalem, asserted his sovereignty over the Old City. U.N. was now clearly faced with the determination of both the Powers in occupation of Jerusalem to reject internationalisation.

The affair of the R.A.F. planes, and the despatch of British troops to Aqaba, for a time distracted attention from Jerusalem, and the *de facto* recognition of Israel by Great Britain on the 29th January, 1949, prepared the way for the conclusion of armistices on the various fronts in February, March, and April. On the 20th March King Abdullah said he would be adamant in claiming the Old City. Presumably not unconnected with this determination was a change in the British attitude. On the 14th April Mr. Mayhew, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, told the Commons that, although the Government had originally sponsored the idea of internationalising Jerusalem, it now appeared doubtful whether such a scheme was practicable. But six weeks later the Lord Chancellor was telling the Lords that the Government were in favour of the internationalisation of the whole area of Jerusalem as laid down by the United Nations, and could not support any proposal that the Old City alone should be internationalised. Evidently there were divided counsels, although the door was not closed on a partition of Jerusalem.

Meanwhile the Conciliation Commission had been at work in the Middle East and at Lausanne, and the failure of the Lausanne talks to lead to anything concrete produced from Mr. Sharet on the 15th June, 1949, another declaration: the Government would ensure full supervision of the Holy Places under U.N. authority, but existence outside the State of Israel would be impossible for Jewish citizens in Jerusalem, just as Israel was inconceivable without Jerusalem. On the 29th August the Arab delegates told the Commission that they approved in principle the internationalisation of Jerusalem. That did not indicate any change on the part of Abdullah, who was the bad boy of the Arab League; and on the 12th September Dr. Weizmann reiterated the Israeli claim. A day later the Conciliation Commission published its plan for Jerusalem.

The draft in a preamble says that U.N. "hereby establishes, in the exercise of its full and permanent authority over the Jerusalem area, a permanent international régime for the Jerusalem area." This claim to sovereignty was not accepted by either the

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Israeli or the Jordan Governments. The British Government had merely terminated its jurisdiction in Palestine, without handing over to a successor. The original mandate made no provision for the automatic reversion of sovereignty in such a case to the League of Nations. What was the position of U.N. in that case? What was the effect of its taking no action to exercise authority when the Mandatory Government departed and war broke out? Nice questions these for the international lawyer, but not of great practical significance.

The proposed Jerusalem area was identical with that set out in the Resolution of the 29th November, 1947, and included the municipal area "together with the surrounding villages and towns, the most western of which is Ain Karim (including also the built-up area of Motsa); the most northern Shafal; the most eastern Abu Dis; and the most southern Bethlehem." It was to be divided into a Jewish and an Arab zone; and all matters not reserved to the competence of the U.N. Commission and organs were delegated to the respective competence of "the responsible authorities of the two zones." These "responsible authorities" were to maintain in their respective zones only such agents and officials, and establish such administrative organs and public services as "are normally necessary for the administration of municipal affairs." "The responsible authorities must take no steps in matters of immigration which might alter the present demographic equilibrium of the area of Jerusalem."

The United Nations was to appoint a Commissioner and a Deputy Commissioner for five years, who must not be a Jewish or Arab resident of Jerusalem or an Israeli or Arab national. There was to be a General Council of fourteen members under the presidency of the Commissioner or his deputy. Four were to be appointed by "the responsible authorities" of the Jewish zone and five by "the responsible authorities" of the Arab zone, the other four by the Commissioner, two from each zone. The General Council was to have the following functions :

(i) To prescribe rules for the co-ordination and operation of the main public services and to plan and supervise matters of municipal concern.

(ii) To prescribe rules for the protection of sites and antiquities and for town planning.

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(iii) To allocate contributions.

(iv) To recommend to "the responsible authorities" economic arrangements for promoting the economic development of the area and facilitating trade between the zones and with the world outside.

The United Nations was to set up an International Tribunal with jurisdiction to hear cases submitted by the Commissioner, or between the responsible authorities themselves, or with the Commissioner, or on appeal from the Mixed Tribunal, or disputes regarding the Holy Places. The Mixed Tribunal was to hear civil cases in which (a) all the parties are residents but not residents of the same zone, (b) one party is not a resident but an Arab or Israeli national temporarily staying in the area.

The Holy Places and the routes giving immediate access to them were to be under the exclusive control of the Commissioner. He was to have guards and auxiliary administrative personnel, and his and their expenses were to be paid by U.N. The rights as at the 14th May, 1948, with regard to the Holy Places were to be in force, and the Commissioner was to offer suggestions in cases of dispute, and, if not accepted, refer the matter to the International Tribunal. He was to supervise the implementation of undertakings made by the States regarding Holy Places outside Jerusalem. Jerusalem was to be demilitarised, but "the responsible authorities" could maintain a police force not exceeding 500 in each zone. The official languages for Jerusalem were to be English, French, Hebrew, and Arabic.

This scheme differed significantly from that outlined in the Resolution of the 29th November, 1947. That Resolution set up a *corpus separatum* (a term carefully avoided by the Conciliation Commission), an independent State, the residents of which should have no other nationality. The Commission's scheme, under the euphemism "the responsible authorities," kept alive the sovereignty of the Israel and Jordan States in the Jewish and Arab zones, and the residents in these zones were to retain their Israel or Jordan nationality. This sovereignty or authority was, however, to be limited in exercise to purely municipal administration. It followed, with a certain logic, that no provision was made for municipal government, still less for democratic municipal government. The General Council was a nominated body of an



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advisory, not an administrative character; the Commissioner's functions were limited to the Holy Places and human rights. There was, however, a thick haze covering vital elements in the Constitution, and the provisions with regard to the Courts invited conflict at every point. The authors seem to have had in their minds a picture of Egypt before the abolition of the Capitulations and the Mixed Courts, and what they proposed could not fail to produce a welter of confusion.

The Conciliation Commission would have been wise to bear in mind what the Empress Catherine said to d'Alembert: "You write on paper, I write on the skins of men." It harked back to November 1947, but much water had flowed down the Jordan and much blood in the streets of Jerusalem in two years. For all the high claims of the United Nations, it had failed in the decisive hour to accept and assert its responsibilities or to fulfil its undertakings. Before the Mandatory had passed away it had rejected a proposal to establish a "specific link" between the United Nations and Jerusalem "to ensure the protection of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the preservation of the Holy Places." On the 14th May, 1948, the very eve of the termination of the Mandate, it had appointed a Municipal Commissioner, who neither came nor saw nor acted. On the 29th July it had refused even to discuss a statute for Jerusalem. The city was besieged, it was denied food and water, it was subjected to cannonade by night and by day. One thousand Jewish men and women and children were slain. Jewish Jerusalem was saved after bitter tribulation, by the valour and the fortitude of the Jews. They owed nothing to the United Nations. Tested in the furnace of war the United Nations had failed utterly and disastrously. That experience was burnt into the souls of the Jews. They could not and would not entrust their lives to an international régime under which they would be deprived of arms and means of self-defence, and have to rely on the protection of an authority equally unequipped. They had achieved union with Israel and nothing would separate them. The proposed ban on immigration into Jerusalem was as intolerable to their pride as it was menacing to their security. The administrative system was the negation of democracy. The economic and financial proposals condemned development to sterility. The judicial arrangements deprived them in large measure of the protection of their own courts, and opened out a vista of

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infinite conflict. The pretext for imposing all this on Jewish Jerusalem was the existence of Holy Places, which are concentrated in the Old City and outside the area under Jewish control.

The assumption that religious interests require an international political régime was baseless. On the 15th July, 1947, Father Bonaventura, the Custos of the Terra Santa, wrote to the U.N. Special Committee in Palestine :

“Should there be a non-Christian State we recommend that measures—international guarantees—be embodied in any arrangement with the new State that may possibly be set up.”

Monsignor McMahon had written about the same time to the Secretary-General :

“We are completely indifferent to the form of the régime which your esteemed Committee may recommend, provided that the interests of Christendom, Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox, will be weighed and safeguarded in your final recommendations. Primarily, all our sanctuaries should be respected, not only with cold jurisdiction but with total reverence, and they should be continuously and unconditionally accessible not only to local inhabitants but also to the Christians of the entire world.”

At that time there was no desire on the part of the Catholic authorities to tie up the question of the Holy Places with a political international régime for Jerusalem. All the international guarantees considered necessary from the Christian point of view were freely offered by Israel. Why, then, the change in the attitude of the Vatican? Was it because the only “non-Christian State” envisaged in the summer of 1947 was a Moslem Power, and in 1949 Jerusalem was divided between a Jewish and a Moslem Power?

The guarantees offered by Israel were submitted in the form of a draft agreement with the United Nations. It was limited to that part of Jerusalem under Israeli control. It proposed to establish by agreement a list of Holy Places; to guarantee all forms of worship the rights in force on the 14th May, 1948; to preserve the Holy Places, and permit no act to impair their sacred character; to secure the rights of visit and access; to authorise U.N. to exercise its rights through a representative in Jerusalem; to refer to the Israeli Government any dispute between communities with

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an appeal to the General Assembly. The laws of Israel and the Israeli courts were to apply.

The Conciliation Commission followed up its draft statute for Jerusalem by submitting to the Israeli and Arab Governments a draft declaration embodying formal guarantees respecting protection of and free access to Holy Places, religious buildings, and sites of Palestine outside the Jerusalem area. The critical provisions of this draft (1) bound the governments to give special consideration to recommendations by the U.N. Commissioner envisaged in the Jerusalem statute; (2) provided for setting up a permanent council with representation of the Commissioner, to study measures to ensure the preservation of the Holy Places; (3) gave the Commissioner "effective supervision"; (4) disputes as to the interpretation and implementation of the declaration were to be decided by the International Tribunal envisaged by the Jerusalem statute.

Obviously this declaration implied and required acceptance of the Conciliation Commission's draft statute for Jerusalem. The Israeli Government had no intention of yielding such acceptance. While, therefore, reiterating its readiness solemnly to give formal guarantees covering all the religious issues, it pointed out that "the character of U.N. representation in regard to the Holy Places, and the method of settlement of disputes are still undecided" and that formulation of a Declaration should await the settlement of these and the like questions. The Arab delegations were in something of a quandary. All the Arab States had, in the months following November 1947, opposed the internationalisation of Jerusalem, and sought to make the City part of an Arab State. The *de facto* division of the City between Israel and Jordan converted all the Arab governments, except King Abdullah, into ardent advocates of internationalisation. That device was doubly grateful to them as offering a means of defeating both Israel and Jordan. The policy of Jordan was to leave the Holy Places entirely to the care and responsibility of the Jordan Government, without inviting U.N. to exercise any direct control over them. As Mr. Eban, the Israeli delegate, put it, "those Arab States which have not a single Holy Place under their control generously offer them all to the international community. The one Arab State which has all the Holy Places of Jerusalem—the Jewish, Christian and Moslem Holy Places—under its control refuses the United Nations the slightest vestige of control or

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supervision." The Arab delegations emerged from this dilemma by offering, in place of the Commission's draft declaration, a declaration of their own in which they guaranteed protection of and freedom of access to the Holy Places, but pointedly omitted any and every reference to any sharing of this responsibility with U.N. or its representatives.

In U.N. there were two main forces pressing for the fullest measure of internationalisation—the Arab States and the Catholic States. The Arab States embraced internationalisation as a means of inflicting defeat on both Israel and Jordan. They used, naturally, the appropriate religious cant, but it neither deceived nor interested anybody. The Catholic States were under the influence of the Vatican. The Vatican, which had been indifferent to the political régime in Jerusalem, so long as Jerusalem appeared destined to be merged in a Moslem State, identified itself with internationalisation when the New Jerusalem became part and the future capital of a Jewish State. In every Catholic country and in every country where Catholics were a force, it sought to influence the votes of the governments. At the same time a violent propaganda was launched throughout the Catholic world against Israel. In this campaign (it is instructive to note) Jordan was ignored, although Jordan contains practically all the Holy Sites of Jerusalem, and the Jordan Government rejected any vestige of international supervision. This was, doubtless, partly due to the circumstance that the weight of Israel in U.N. much exceeded that of Jordan (which was not even a member), but the passionate adoption of internationalisation had much deeper roots—apprehension as to what the mystical genius of Jerusalem might evolve in association with the miraculous State of Israel.

The Conciliation Commission's draft statute, with its vague retention of Israeli and Jordan sovereignty in the Jewish and Arab zones, did not satisfy the most extreme internationalisers or the Vatican. The Australian delegate expressed their view in a resolution to the following effect :

### A. In relation to Jerusalem,

Believing that the principles underlying its previous resolutions concerning this matter, and in particular, its resolution of 29th November, 1947, represent a just and equitable settlement of the question,

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1. To restate, therefore, its intention that Jerusalem should be placed under a permanent international régime, which should envisage appropriate guarantees for the protection of the Holy Places, both within and outside Jerusalem.

2. To commend the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine for its reports . . . but to instruct it to give urgent reconsideration to this matter with a view to bringing its proposals for an international régime into closer harmony with the proposals set out in the resolution of 29th November, 1947.

3. To instruct the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine to report, with a detailed plan, to the fifth session of the General Assembly. . . .

### B.

3. That the powers and functions of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine conferred upon it by the resolution of 11th December, 1948, shall remain unimpaired, and that, in addition, the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine shall have the powers and functions set out in sub-paragraphs 4 and 5 below:

4. That the headquarters shall be in Jerusalem, and that the Commission shall, in relation to Jerusalem, have full power to give effect, on an interim basis, to the principles set out in this resolution.

5. To authorise the Commission, in pursuance of paragraphs 3 and 4 above, to set up such interim administrative machinery for Jerusalem as it thinks fit, pending confirmation by the fifth session of the General Assembly. . . .

### C. Calls upon the States concerned,

1. To render to the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine all assistance possible in the carrying out of its functions.

2. To give formal undertakings, at an early date and in the light of their obligations as Members of the United Nations, that they will approach these matters with good will, and be guided by the terms of this resolution.

Here was a proposal drastic and far-reaching—to drop the Conciliation Commission's more moderate scheme, and to return to the full *corpus separatum* of the partition plan of the 29th

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November, 1947; to begin forthwith to set up the machinery of government and administration envisaged by that plan; and to require the States of Israel and Jordan to surrender their own standpoint, and to participate actively in establishing a scheme which they had publicly and formally rejected. The Israeli delegation replied with a draft resolution presenting their own solution embodied in a draft agreement between Israel and the United Nations. The Jordan Government, not being a member, made no counter-proposal, but showed no disposition to change its standpoint. The clash between two extreme views raised the issue—if neither yielded, there would have to be either surrender or enforcement. Was either surrender or enforcement practicable?

Internationalisation had implications wider than a conflict between the Catholic-Arab bloc and the Israeli and Jordan Governments. At this stage in ardent support of internationalisation was the Soviet group. It was hardly to be supposed that this group was impelled by religious motives. It might profess to speak for the Orthodox Church, but privately the Orthodox Church was not concealing its profound anxiety. The very ardour with which the Vatican was urging internationalisation aroused apprehension. In the Holy Places the Orthodox Church enjoyed greater rights and privileges than any other community. In an international authority constituted by U.N. would not the much more heavily represented Catholic Church come to exercise predominant influence, which, in process of time, would be reflected in the Holy Places? For the Western Powers the question took on a political complexion. Was not the real aim of the Soviet bloc to win, through a *corpus separatum*, a political position in Jerusalem from which to extend its influence through the Middle East? Palestine, the Middle East, are extremely sensitive spots. Great Britain and the United States began to hesitate, to express doubts, to look more closely to the tough realities of the situation. So there emerged, under the auspices of the Netherlands and Sweden, what was intended to be a compromise draft resolution :

(i) To invite the Governments of the States in Palestine to pledge themselves to observe freedom of worship and education, guarantee free access to the Holy Places, and maintain existing rights and privileges.

(ii) To demilitarise the Jerusalem area by progressive stages

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and completely not less than three months after a peace settlement between the States in Palestine.

(iii) To establish an international régime for the Jerusalem area, by virtue of which an International Commission should supervise the protection of and free access to the Holy Places, and decide what was a Holy Place.

(iv) The jurisdiction and control of each part of the Jerusalem area to be exercised by the State concerned subject to the powers of the Commissioner.

(v) The States concerned should not establish or maintain any central political or administrative organs in the Jerusalem area.

(vi) The Commissioner should be empowered to employ guards, to suspend the application of laws and regulations which in his opinion impair the rights, immunities, and privileges of the Holy Places or prejudice the interests of the international community, and, if the appropriate authorities fail to do so, issue regulations to protect free access to and protection of Holy Places.

(vii) To establish a special Consular Court to settle any dispute between the Commissioner and either or both governments.

(viii) To review the resolution after three years.

This proposal was, from the standpoint of the Israeli and Jordan Governments, much less unacceptable than the Commission's draft or the original partition plan. It dropped the *corpus separatum* clearly and unequivocally; it respected the sovereignty of Israel and Jordan in their respective areas; it limited the functions of the international representative to strictly religious purposes. On the other hand it gave an unwelcome suspensive power to the Commissioner; it imposed demilitarisation without any guarantee of security; and it forbade either State to establish its capital in Jerusalem. Because of their bitter experience the Jews were reluctant to accept demilitarisation, and the denial of Jerusalem as their capital conflicted with their deepest sentiments. On the 5th December, Mr. Ben-Gurion declared once again that "Israel will not give up Jerusalem of its own free will," that Jerusalem was an organic and inseparable part of the State, and that "Jews will sacrifice themselves for

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Jerusalem no less than Englishmen for London, Russians for Moscow, or Americans for Washington." The Jordan Government reiterated its categorical opposition to internationalisation, and its refusal to accept any decision contrary to its wishes. In the drafting committee the Conciliation Commission's draft was rejected and the Australian resolution approved. On the 7th December the *ad hoc* committee adopted the Australian proposal, and on the 9th December it was adopted by the General Assembly, despite the opposition of Great Britain, Canada, and the United States. Unfortunately the Dutch-Swedish compromise resolution never came to a vote.

The reply of Israel was a declaration of the Prime Minister to Parliament that on the 26th December the Government would be transferred to Jerusalem. The inaugural meeting of the Knesseth had in fact been held in Jerusalem on the 14th February, 1949. The next day he moved his office to Jerusalem. King Abdullah broadcast from Ramallah that "the holy places will never be in any danger . . . the Jews will never harm them." The Knesseth duly met in Jerusalem on the 26th December, and on the 23rd January formally proclaimed Jerusalem the capital of Israel. Abdullah, without formally annexing Arab Palestine, offered Jordanian nationality to Arabs in Palestine areas occupied by him, and announced elections for the 11th April at which twenty members would be chosen from Transjordan and twenty from Palestine. The Trusteeship Council had been directed by the Australian resolution to draw up a more "democratic" instrument than that of 1947, and not to allow "any actions taken by any interested Governments to divert it." The Council was to meet in Geneva on the 19th January, 1950, but before doing so, requested the Israeli Government to revoke the moving of Government departments to Jerusalem, and "abstain from any actions liable to hinder implementation." The request met with no response.



## CHAPTER IX

### AGENCY AND IRGUN

THE differences between the Jewish Agency and the Irgun, before the establishment of the Jewish State and during the Jewish-Arab war, engendered more heat than light; but it should now not be impossible to disentangle them to some extent and to make an attempt to do justice to both parties.

Throughout the Mandatory period there had been friction between the Agency and the Administration. They differed as to the pace of Jewish development and as to the goal. But co-operation could exist so long as neither put itself formally on record, and both were content to work in the present, and leave the future to a process of evolution. That phase came to an end with the White Paper. In that document the British Government set a precise limit to the growth of the Yishuv, and defined the future of Palestine. The Jews in Palestine were never to be more than one-third of the population (the limit set to immigration would in course of time make them much less), and Palestine (apart from paper safeguards of no practical significance) was to become an Arab State. The Agency rejected the White Paper. It did not reject the Mandate, and it did not reject the Mandatory Power. What course of conduct was involved?

The war intervened and postponed a decision. Jews in Palestine, as throughout the world, had to rally to Great Britain against Hitler. But the war presented the central problem of the Yishuv in its acutest form—the massacre and the rescue of Continental Jewry. Palestine as a refuge—that was a right and a duty which the Agency would not and could not surrender. There was no more urgent, no higher responsibility, and it must be discharged here and now. To discharge it meant not merely to reject but to defy the White Paper so long as the White Paper stood as the summation of British policy in Palestine. Unhappily British administration in Palestine was in the hands of men to whom the

White Paper was verbally inspired, and who were wholly deaf to the appeal to save the remnants of Continental Jewry from Hitler's gas chambers.

The Jewish Agency was compelled to organise so far as it could, and in defiance of the Mandatory Power and its agents, the work of rescue. From that it was led inevitably to a much larger programme, when hostilities ceased. The refugee camps of Europe were filled with hundreds of thousands of homeless Jews—brands plucked from the burning. Such remnants of the Jewish communities as survived had, for the most part, lost all faith and hope in the countries which had co-operated with Hitler. For most of these Jews Palestine had become the only hope. But immigration was the heart of the Palestine problem. The White Paper had established British policy in the principle of limitation. At any other point compromise between the British Government and the Jewish Agency was conceivable. On immigration it was excluded.

A double attack was developed by the Agency—diplomatic and practical. The Government of the United States was persuaded to demand for the refugee camps the immediate grant of 100,000 certificates of immigration into Palestine; and the systematic transport of "illegal" immigrants was organised. In denying the one and resisting the other the British Government was gravely embarrassed. It sought to reduce to a purely political level an issue which civilised opinion regarded as primarily humanitarian. The American Government would not withdraw its demand, and no Continental government would co-operate in checking the flow of "illicit" immigration. The moral prestige of the British Government was heavily impaired.

It should be noted that at this stage the Jewish Agency was still at war with the White Paper, not with the Mandatory Power. The measures it took inside Palestine, like those it took outside Palestine, were directed to negating the central principle of limited immigration. The Hagana did not attack the British armed forces. It sought to neutralise such of their instrumentalities as were being employed directly in preventing immigration, and it did its utmost to avoid bloodshed in carrying out these operations. The political ideas of the Agency were very fluid. There were slogans rather than a policy, and this indecision was encouraged by the White Paper. All schools of opinion could combine in attacking it, and put off to the future the decision as

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to what should take its place if and when the White Paper was abolished.

For the Irgun and other extremists that question had been settled from the beginning. Most of the Irgun leaders were fairly recent arrivals from Eastern Europe. In that bitter school they had acquired hatred for a hostile government and a savage law, and a belief in force as the supreme argument in politics. Hitler's massacres, the callous indifference of the British authorities, the obstacles they set in the way of rescue, the barriers maintained against immigration engendered a passion of hatred and revolt. They declared war not simply against the White Paper but against the Mandatory Power. For them Great Britain was the enemy. She was holding down by force and fraud a country which she had invaded and in which she had no rights. She was denying to Jews and Arabs alike freedom and independence. Her authority was without legal or moral warrant, and the duty of every good citizen was to take up arms against her in a holy war. In waging that war they were not "terrorists," they were an army entitled to use all the devices and arts of warfare and entitled to be treated as belligerents.

Nothing could be simpler, until one looked below the surface. The leaders of the Irgun had never given a moment's honest thought to the political problems whose heads they sought to cut off. In their first proclamation early in 1944 (before the end of the war), after an indictment of the British Government, they demanded the immediate transfer of the government of Israel to a provisional Jewish administration. Shortly after they issued a declaration to "our Arab neighbours" in which they said:

"Our war is not against you. We do not see in you enemies. We wish to look on you as good neighbours. We have not come to destroy you and drive you from the land in which you now live. In Palestine there is plenty of land for you and your children and your children's children and for millions of Jews who cannot live but in this land. The Jewish Government will accord complete equality of rights. Arabic and Hebrew will be the official languages; there will be no discrimination between Arab and Jew in the grant of public posts or commercial work. The Jewish Government will offer education to your masses, and there will be no illiterates in the land of the Bible. There

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will be no epidemics in your villages and cities. Wages will be raised to the European level. Your agriculture will be developed. You will have houses in place of tents. Every one of your settlements will have electricity and water. The Jewish State will be a joint dwelling for us, and peace and good neighbourliness will reign between her and the independent Arab States."

An alluring picture! But was there really land for the Arabs and their remote descendants and also for millions of Jews? And how was full equality, political and economic, for the Arabs to be reconciled with a Jewish Government and a Jewish State? Obviously the Irgun had never thought out these problems, and hoped that rhetoric would suffice until the battle was won and power could decide. The Arabs were not deceived.

The politics of the Irgun were childish or dishonest. That did not weaken their appeal to a following which was disproportionately constituted of youthful oriental Jews without political experience or critical temper. The tasks they set themselves were as narrow as their political vision. They had not to educate, they had only to excite the Yishuv. They had not to administer the Yishuv. They had not to meet the Administration or negotiate with the Mandatory Government. They were not charged with the burdens of the D.P.'s in the camps or the ruined communities of the Continent. It was not their responsibility to organise and finance immigration, to cultivate world opinion, conduct the delicate labours of negotiation, or pick a difficult path through a political minefield. The Irgun had only to step out of the underground and raid at times and against points chosen by itself. It could be dramatic and romantic, and let the Agency take more than its share of the consequences.

Conflict between Agency and Irgun could not be avoided. The Agency could not turn war against the White Paper into war against the Mandatory Power. It was responsible for the life of the Yishuv, and could not dismiss the impact upon it of a policy of violence. It could not assume that, because an organisation was small, its destiny must be that of David, or that, because a power was great, its fate must be the fate of Goliath. It could not ignore world opinion or dismiss British opinion. It could not substitute rhetoric for reality or recklessness for reason. In brief the conflict was between responsibility and irresponsibility, and in

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every such conflict irresponsibility has certain advantages. In Palestine these were multiplied by the maladroitness of the authorities, more anxious to discredit the Jewish Agency than competent to suppress the Irgun. The Irgun was an annoyance, the Agency was a political force. The Irgun could not wreck British rule, the Agency might destroy the White Paper. The Agency was the enemy, and the Irgun could have its uses in weakening the Agency. There were individuals near the Irgun and not far from the C.I.D.

The Irgun created a moral problem for the Agency. Its activities (so the leaders were convinced) were gravely injurious to the interests of the Yishuv and the Jewish cause; and the Administration was summoning the Agency every day to co-operate in suppressing them. A long tradition has made the informer the most loathsome of creatures; and how could the Agency enter into political partnership with the Government of the White Paper? The moral problem was complicated by a temperamental problem. There were differences of opinion within the Agency itself. There were members who sympathised with the Irgun, and there were Hagana leaders who had intimate contacts with the Irgun. There was again the practical difficulty of keeping a clear line between the Agency's operations in furtherance of "illegal" immigration and the Irgun's operations in pursuit of its "war." When does an attack upon a radar post or patrol boat merge into an attack upon the armed forces of the British Government?

Inevitably the attitude of the Agency towards the Irgun changed with time and circumstances. In the earliest phase, while the war was still on, there was a measure of co-operation with the Administration against the Irgun. Then, when that became impossible, the Hagana attempted to check and discipline the Irgun by its own efforts. From that the Hagana passed to co-operation with the Irgun for specific operations. This was followed by a general agreement that the Irgun would consult and secure the approval of the Hagana. The degree of association was determined by the largely independent action of the member of the Agency immediately responsible for the Hagana, and he was not too communicative to his colleagues.

In the books published by the Irgun leaders stress is laid upon these aspects of this fluid and evolving relation. It is sought to magnify the measure of co-operation of Hagana with the

Government and against the Irgun. This in fact belonged to the period of the war and to the time before the British Government had fully revealed its negative attitude. For the Jewish Agency the defeat of Hitler was the primary duty until the war was over. For the Irgun by 1943 the war against the British Government was the primary duty. The Irgun felt itself at liberty to give free vent to its emotions without regard to other considerations. The Jewish Agency had to consider the impact of its actions upon the Allied Powers—upon Great Britain from whom it hoped much, upon America which must have great influence in deciding the future of Palestine. Even when the fighting ended the Agency was bound to give the Labour Party a reasonable chance to make good in office what it had promised in opposition. The Irgun's policy of violence was not merely inexpedient or inopportune; it was, in the view of the Agency, a grave embarrassment in the pursuit of its own policy and a serious threat to the Jewish future in Palestine. Resistance to the Irgun was judged to be necessary.

Meetings had taken place in 1944 between Dr. Sneh, on behalf of Mr. Ben-Gurion, and Mr. Beguin for the Irgun, and later between Golomb (the head of the Hagana) and Beguin, to induce the Irgun to abandon violence and submit to the authority of the Agency. They came to nothing—the Irgun would not agree unless the Agency declared “war” on the Mandatory Power. The World War was, of course, still on, and the Agency expected great things from Mr. Churchill or from a Labour Government. In July Lord Gort had replaced Sir Harold MacMichael as High Commissioner.

In September 1944 the Jewish Brigade Group was formed, and on the 15th October President Roosevelt had declared, “We favour the opening of Palestine to unrestricted Jewish immigration and colonisation, and such a policy as to result in the establishment there of a free and democratic Jewish Commonwealth.”

The policy of the Agency seemed to be justified, and that of the Irgun condemned by the march of events. The Irgun suffered a heavy blow when 251 persons were removed from Latrun prison and sent to Eritrea. On the 5th November, 1944, members of the Stern Gang murdered Lord Moyne in Cairo. The Irgun was in alliance with the Stern Gang, though its leaders deny foreknowledge of this outrage. Lord Moyne was an intimate friend of

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Mr. Churchill, and Mr. Churchill's reaction was to defer indefinitely his Palestine plans. "If," he said, "there was to be any hope of a peaceful and successful future for Zionism, these wicked activities must cease and those responsible be destroyed root and branch." It was under the stress of these events that the Agency decided on active measures against the Irgun and the Stern Gang. On the proposition of Ben-Gurion it was decided in December 1944: (1) to drive terrorists out of work; (2) to deny them shelter; (3) to resist threats; and (4) to co-operate with the Government. There were strong divisions in the Agency, and co-operation with the Government was particularly resisted, but the new policy was adopted. Within ten months Dr. Sneh, the head of the Hagana, had already formed an alliance with the Stern organisation and was completely at one with the Irgun. How did this revolution come about?

One factor was the consolidation of Arab and Moslem forces, and their growing concentration against any concessions to the Jews in regard to Palestine. On the 3rd March, 1945, the Pact of the Arab League was signed. In June and July the French were driven out of Syria. In July the Regent of Iraq declared that "the position of all the Arab States is that they would oppose this demand [for 100,000 certificates] as being contrary to the White Paper to which they had agreed. The Arabs are not prepared to make any further concessions." In August the Saudi Arabian Government said that peace in the Middle East depended on the solution of the Palestine problem. In October Mr. Jinnah of Pakistan joined in with a declaration: "Surrender to appease Jewry at the sacrifice of the Arabs would be deeply resented and vehemently resisted by the Moslem world and by Moslem India. Its consequences will be most disastrous." All the Arab States (except Transjordan) were invited to be original members of U.N. In October the Palestine Arabs were demanding that Jewish immigration and any sales of land to Jews should be suspended, and that Palestine should be declared an independent State.

Meanwhile the Jewish request for the establishment, with international aid, of Palestine as a Jewish State was meeting with no response from the Labour Government. Mr. Attlee was speaking, with extreme vagueness, of the Government's responsibility to fulfil their commitments in the Mediterranean and the

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Middle East. Mr. Bevin had been conferring with British diplomats from that region on financial, economic, and social problems in the Middle East—there was no reference in the official communiqué to political problems. To set against all this there was in July the letter from a majority of members of Congress and a petition from forty-eight governors to President Truman on behalf of the Jewish case, and in August Mr. Truman's request to Mr. Attlee for the grant of 100,000 certificates. It was necessary, if possible, to rally all Jewish forces, if a favourable decision was to come from the British Government.

Inside the Jewish Agency there were divided counsels as to the tactics to be pursued. The more responsible leaders wished to bring the violent organisations under control ; others were disposed to adopt, with modifications, some of their methods. As it happened Dr. Sneh, who was the member in charge of Hagana, belonged to the latter group. He believed that a demonstration of force, directed not against military personnel or establishments, but designed to make manifest Jewish power and determination would crystallise the mind of the British Government in a favourable decision. By the end of October Dr. Sneh, with the approval of some of his colleagues, could report, "We have come to a working arrangement with the dissident organisations, according to which we shall assign certain tasks to them under our command." On the night of the 31st October—1st November wide-ranging attacks by all three organisations were carried out against communications in Palestine, Lydda station, and the oil refinery at Haifa—this last operation against the wishes of the Agency. The agreement had not yet been adopted by the Agency executive, a fact which Dr. Sneh pronounced "a crime." The Agency's action had become officially "The Jewish Resistance Movement."

During these critical weeks Ben-Gurion and Shertok were in London, and Dr. Sneh and his group were free from the restraints which their actual presence might have exercised. The forward policy was advocated as necessary to back their political effort in London. On the 13th November Mr. Bevin announced the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry. There was an end to Agency co-operation with the Government against the dissident organisations. The policy of co-operation with them against the Government had taken its place. In February 1946 there was a week of raids on various posts in which Hagana, Irgun, and Stern



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joined to attack the instrumentalities employed against "illegal" immigration.

It should be noted that such united action as had come about was limited to tactics and did not embrace policy. Nor did it cover the whole area of tactics. The Agency was putting forth most of its energies in developing a large-scale scheme of "illegal" immigration. Its operations in Palestine were a part of that scheme and were a cover to it; and the Agency was scrupulous to avoid jeopardising the British lives there. "It is not our object to cause the loss of life of any Briton in this country; we have nothing against them, because we realise that they are but the instruments of a policy, and in many cases unwilling instruments." Much of the effort of the Irgun was directed to capturing British arms, and any loss of British lives involved was regarded as incidental. The Irgun was against the occupying Power. Its policy was to drive out the British, and establish a Jewish State embracing a Palestine including Transjordan. The Agency was sensitive to world opinion, especially American opinion. It believed that a Jewish State could be achieved by diplomacy. It was prepared to accept a "viable" Jewish State. The policy of the Irgun was clear-cut, uncompromising, impossibilist. The policy of the Agency was cautious, temporising, and flexible.

On the 20th April, 1946, came the publication of the Report of the Anglo-American Committee and with it a test for both Agency and Irgun. Had it been accepted by the British Government it would have faced both organisations with the necessity of a decision. It did not give the Agency a Jewish State, but it abolished the White Paper against which the Agency was warring, and it opened out possibilities of unlimited immigration and development. The Agency would have put its political demand on record, but would have accepted the Report in practice. The Irgun would have been denied its Jewish Empire, but the springs of resentment and frustration within the Yishuv and the Diaspora would have dried up, and the policy of violence would have withered away. The British Government saved both organisations by rejecting the Committee's Report. Therewith it spared the faces of both, and kept alive the fretful alliance between them.

On the 1st May Mr. Attlee pronounced judgment on the Report. The American Government must share military and financial responsibilities, the Jewish private armies must be dis-

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banded, and then the British Government would consider what, if anything, could be done. This statement drove the Jewish Agency on to a road which hitherto it had carefully avoided. In a broadcast in Palestine authorised by Mr. Shertok the following passage occurred: "We would warn publicly His Majesty's Government that if it does not fulfil its responsibilities under the Mandate—above all with regard to the question of immigration—the Jewish people will feel obliged to lay before the nations of the world the request that the British leave Palestine." The declaration was put in a semi-official form; the Mandate in its original spirit and letter was still preferred; but the possible necessity of excluding Great Britain from Palestine was, for the first time, envisaged. On the 12th June, at the Labour Party Conference in Bournemouth, Mr. Bevin made a speech which implied the rejection of the Report. Four days later the Hagana carried out a series of attacks on vital communications, and the following day on the railway workshops. On the 29th June the Government retaliated by arresting several thousand communal leaders, including the members of the Executive of the Jewish Agency, and by searching various settlements for arms.

Inevitably these acts and the whole British attitude brought Agency and Irgun closer officially and still more unofficially. The kidnapping of British officers by the Irgun was condemned by the Agency. Then came on the 22nd July the blowing up of the King David Hotel with the slaughter of some hundred persons. It was condemned publicly by the Agency, but full light has not been thrown upon this dreadful episode. The fullest account has been given by Beguin, the Irgun leader. According to him, in the spring of 1946 he broached to Sneh and Galili (who were in charge of the Resistance Movement) the idea of blowing up the Administration H.Q. in the King David Hotel. At that time it was rejected as premature, but it came up for discussion on several occasions. On the 1st July the plan was approved by the two Hagana leaders. It was agreed that the explosion should be timed to go off in half an hour, that a warning should be given, and that those in the building should be enabled to escape. The date fixed was the 19th July, but on that day Sneh sent a letter to postpone it for a few days. Finally the 22nd July was fixed. The operation began a few minutes after midday, 12.10 or 12.11. Immediately a warning was telephoned by the Irgun to the King David and also to

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the *Palestine Post*. A third warning was sent to the French Consul. The explosion took place at 12.37. There was no evacuation. Again, according to Beguin, the Chief Secretary, Sir John Shaw had received the warning from an officer on guard, but answered "I am here not to take orders from the Jews: I give them orders." There had, in fact, previously been several false warnings in other offices.

Such, in brief, is the Irgun story. Beguin is not an accurate chronicler, and his omissions are often as significant as his assertions. In this instance, as in others, he is anxious to impose upon the Jewish Agency at least a share of the responsibility for a tragical crime. He omits the essential fact that the Hagana insisted and was promised that the explosion should take place after office hours so as to avoid loss of life. This promise was not kept. It should be noted that, so far as the Hagana is concerned, only two persons are implicated by name: Dr. Sneh and Galili. Most of the members of the Agency Executive were abroad or interned in Latrun, and there is no indication or suggestion that Sneh sought contact with his colleagues. For months he was becoming increasingly independent. It was because of this tragedy that Mr. Ben-Gurion, who was then in Paris, removed Dr. Sneh from control of the Hagana.

Whatever its secret history, the King David crime made a deep impression on the Yishuv, and generated strong tension between the Agency and the Irgun. The position of the Agency was very difficult with a fight on two fronts. On the 12th August the Government thought fit to declare intensified war on "illegal" immigration. "Illegals" were henceforth to be interned in Cyprus. Free immigration was the kernel of the Agency's claim, and the organisation of "illegal" immigration was its principal activity, and (as the Government put it) its "chosen weapon" to force their hand in framing a new policy in Palestine. Simultaneously the Military Courts in Palestine were passing death sentences wholesale on terrorists. The Irgun replied by threatening reprisals against British personnel; and the Sternists announced that "Civil officials, members of the police and the C.I.D. and the British forces will be killed wherever they may be if the sentences are carried out." This was in marked opposition to the Agency's policy, whose attacks were directed against posts, not persons, and designed to avoid bloodshed. The Irgun was

developing other tactics which were condemned by the Agency. It was securing funds by robbing banks and Government institutions and by levying on the Jewish population. On the 15th September the Agency condemned these activities, and on the 18th September the Hagana circulated a pamphlet in which it said of Irgun and Stern "these organisations gain their livelihood by gangsterism, smuggling, large-scale drug traffic, armed robbery, organising the black market, and thefts"; and announced all possible measures to root out terrorism. The Irgun replied that it would shoot any Hagana member who betrayed them. (The Hagana had no intention of handing Jewish terrorists over to the Government.)

The decision of the United Nations on the 29th November, which partitioned Palestine, lifted the debate to a higher level. The decision was accepted by the Agency, it was rejected by the Irgun, which declared: "Renunciation of [any part of] the Motherland is illegal and can never be accepted. The signature of the [Jewish] institutions and individuals is without authority. It does not bind the Jewish people. Jerusalem was and always will be our capital. The land of Israel will return to the people of Israel, the whole of it, and for ever." The Irgun began to organise its partisans as a military force with camps at Petah Tikvah and Ramat Gan. They began openly to levy funds from the populace. The problem of unity and control in face of the State to be and the threatening perils had to be faced.

Negotiations began in December 1947 and lasted some months. In April 1948 an agreement was reached between the Agency and the Irgun which Begin thus describes :

(1) Posts held by Irgun are to be under the authority of the regional commander of the Hagana, who is to convey his views through the local Irgun commander.

(2) Plans for attack in the Arab area and reprisal attacks in the British area must receive prior approval. The details as to objective and time must be determined by representatives and experts. The Irgun must carry out tasks entrusted to it.

(3) The Irgun will resist every attempt to deprive them of their arms. In individual cases the Irgun will have regard to the neighbouring Hagana posts.

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(4) No robberies of money are to be carried out in areas under Jewish protection, but the Irgun is free to collect funds, and the Agency is to inform Jews in Palestine or abroad that the Irgun is not in receipt of money from the General Defence Fund.

(5) Plans to seize arms shall be made jointly and be executed with joint approval.

In addition the Irgun gave an oral assurance that in a Jewish State there would be no armed underground.

In May 1948 the Irgun declared that if the official Jewish leaders set up the Jewish State they would back it with all their strength; but if they yielded to threats and listened to "charmers," the underground would proclaim the State and declare war. This was not without its menace. On the 25th April, without the previous consent of the Hagana and with the ink hardly dry on the agreement, the Irgun had attacked Jaffa. This attack had a limited success, but was hung up. It required the intervention of Hagana to carry the operation through, and it was not till the 13th May that Jaffa surrendered.

The military efficiency during the war of the Irgun has been a subject of controversy. Their courage is not involved, but the training of officers and men and the organisation for guerilla purposes are very different from those demanded by regular military operations. The Irgun for long insisted upon its separate command, and its subordination to a general scheme was far from adequate. Behind all was an antagonism of policy and aspirations. Beguin is always insisting in his book upon the determination of the Irgun never to indulge in civil war, but it came near to it in the affair of the "Altalena." The Irgun wished to dispose of the arms in this boat—which it had imported—primarily for its own forces. When the Government vetoed this attempt and took strong measures, the Irgun issued a call to revolt, which met with no response. The Irgun leaders in fact conceived themselves a government within a government, and had ambitions to be the Government. Until a single national army was constituted dangerous friction existed, and that friction did not disappear until the Irgun was compelled to reduce itself to the status of one party among many.

In conclusion it may be said that much is still obscure as to the relations between the Hagana or the Government and the

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Irgun. For comprehensible reasons the Government does not think the time yet come to tell its story fully and frankly; and for equally comprehensible reasons Beguin has seized the opportunity to tell a story which is involved, inadequate and distorted, and indeed to a careful reader largely unintelligible.

## CHAPTER X

### GENERAL CONDITIONS

THE distribution of population in Palestine largely governed the strategy and the tactics of the combatants. In the ancient Jewish State the Jews had invaded from the East, and had settled themselves primarily in Gilhead (Transjordan) and in the hill country. It was at a relatively late stage that they occupied Galilee, and for a brief period came down to the sea. The modern settlement was in reverse. There had been for many centuries a Jewish community in Jerusalem, and it received a steady reinforcement throughout the Return, so that when the Mandate ended the Jewish population numbered 100,000. But the Jewish immigration came from the West, and it concentrated in the coastal towns, Tel Aviv (which it wholly created) and Haifa, in the Maritime Plain, and in the vale of Esdraclon.

In the year 1947 the total Jewish population of Palestine was something over 600,000. There were 100,000 in Jerusalem, 150,000 in Tel Aviv, 80,000 in Haifa. About one-fifth were settled in rural communities. Of these there were 150 in the coastal plain, 40 in the hill country, 35 in the valley of Esdraclon, 49 in the northern region of the Jordan Valley, one at the northern end of the Dead Sea, and 17 in the Negev. Whether in towns or in the country, the Jews lived for the most part together in wholly Jewish communities. Tel Aviv was a wholly Jewish town; in Haifa the Jews concentrated in the new quarters they had built at Hadar Hakarmel between the harbour and Carmel. In Tiberias they lived in the new quarter. The rural settlements were wholly Jewish. For this there were many reasons, historical, social, economic, political, strategic. For centuries it had been the practice for different races or faiths to live together in homogeneous communities, maintaining their own way of life, and enjoying a measure of local autonomy. Under the Turks, when social security was precarious, self-defence was necessary, and

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under the Mandate, marked by periodic outbursts of violence, that necessity did not disappear. The cultural life of the Jews was distinctive, they had their own language, their own schools, their own health standards, all of which precluded any mingling of populations. Two epochs and two worlds faced one another, the twentieth century and the Middle Ages, the West and the Orient. In size these Jewish groupings varied greatly. Tel Aviv was a large urban centre ; Petah Takvah had 15,000 inhabitants and was a small town rather than a village ; and in the Negev a pioneer settlement might count forty souls.

As the numbers indicated, the Jewish settlements were most thickly sown along the Maritime Plain ; Sharon, Jezreel, and the Jordan valley were the next strongest grouping. In the hill country they were scattered thinly along the road to Jerusalem and north and south of that city. In the vast area of the Negev they were few and isolated. The original settlements in the Maritime Plain and the towns had been mostly instinctive. For urban dwellers the towns were attractive, for agriculturalists the well-watered plains offered obvious advantages. These social and economic factors were fortified by political considerations. In the north the valley of Esdraelon was the natural communication between the sea and the Jordan. In the centre the road to Jerusalem was vital. Up on the Lebanon frontier to the north and down in the Negev to the south, settlement was experimental and symbolic. It represented a claim to all Galilee and to the empty half of all Palestine, whenever a Jewish State might come into existence.

There were Arab villages all along the plain. The Arab town of Jaffa was across the street from Tel Aviv. In Jerusalem the Arabs were as numerous as the Jews. Along the road to Jerusalem most of the villages were Arab. Ramleh, blocking that road, was fanatically Arab. Lydda on the coastal road was Arab. Nazareth on the road from Haifa to Tiberias and the Jordan was wholly Arab. Half the Haifa population was Arab, and in Safed and Tiberias the Arabs outnumbered the Jews. The hill country was almost wholly Arab. In all there were said to be twice as many Arabs as Jews. They interpenetrated the Jewish sector, they divided or controlled the towns, and their solid hill block from Nazareth to the Egyptian border was like a fortress threatening the length and the breadth of Jewish Palestine. The core of Jewish Palestine was a narrow band a few kilometres in width.



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If such was the internal alignment, the external was still more displeasing from the Jewish standpoint. Four Arab States—Lebanon, Syria, Transjordan, and Egypt—encompassed Palestine north, east, and south. They were in direct and immediate contact with Arab Palestine, and with a fifth Arab State, Iraq. Together with Saudi Arabia, they represented some twenty-five millions. On the Lebanon frontier, the country was high and rugged, and the roads ran east and west, which was more favourable to Jewish defence than to Arab invasion. On the Syrian frontier the country was equally difficult for an invader, and the Jewish defence had the advantage of a good road connecting all their settlements from Metullah in the north to the Jordan Valley. But they constituted a narrow neck which might be cut. Transjordan had the service of two or three bridges across the Jordan, and nothing to prevent it joining up with the central mass of Arab Palestine.

For food supply the Jews had been largely dependent on their Arab neighbours; the Arabs, on the other hand, were in greater measure self-sufficient. Once the frontiers were closed, all supplies had to come to Israel by sea, and Egypt and Syria proclaimed and for a time maintained a naval blockade. On the industrial and scientific side the advantage was emphatically with the Jews. During the World War they had developed war industries, and in the Hebrew University and the Rehovoth Institute they had a valuable reserve of scientists and scientific equipment. In one or two other respects the Jews were more favoured than the Arabs. They occupied a central position, they were united in their determination to defend their State, and they had no alternative but to fight or to die. The various Arab fronts were largely discontinuous, and the Jewish forces could, in favourable circumstances, concentrate to strike against each of them in turn. Such opportunities were created not only by geography but also by politics. There was no single command, no single plan, no single ambition, and no single spirit among the Arabs. They were fighting each for his own hand, and the defeat of any one was not an occasion for unqualified distress to the others. The Palestine Arabs had no great enthusiasm for a contest in which their villages and lands must inevitably be the stricken field, and they tended to resist the undisciplined mastery of their "liberators." As between Hagana and the irregular Jewish organisations there were differences which, on critical occasions, led to serious military

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failure, but one and all knew that defeat spelt death. If they ever felt doubt the Arab leaders did not fail to remove it. Azam Pasha, the Secretary-General of the Arab League, said, "This war will be a war of extermination and a momentous massacre which will be spoken of like the Mongol massacres and the Crusades"; and he described its three characteristics as the belief in glorious death as a road to Paradise, the opportunities of loot, and the Beduin love of slaughter for its own sake.

One other factor must not be omitted—the attitude of the British authorities in and outside Palestine. In September 1947 the Political Committee of the Arab League declared :

"The Committee will regard the implementation of these recommendations [the U.N.S.C.O.P. recommendations of both majority and minority] as a certain danger menacing security in Palestine, and security and peace all over the Arab countries. Therefore, it has determined by all practical and effective means to resist the implementation of these recommendations. They—the Palestine Arabs—will launch a relentless war to repel this attack on their country, especially so as they know that all the Arab countries will back and assist them, supplying them with men, funds and ammunition."

At this time and for months afterwards the British Government was supplying these same States with arms under treaty, and Mr. Hector McNeill told the House of Commons, "I have no evidence to suggest that arms supplied to Middle East governments by virtue of these treaties . . . are being made available for warfare in Palestine." In January 1948, Mr. Bevin signed with Iraq the abortive treaty of defence and alliance.

Sir Alan Cunningham, the last High Commissioner of Palestine, has put it on record that "at first the Arabs were firmly convinced that our armed forces were on their side, a conviction which placed the soldiers in many embarrassing situations." The conviction was natural and fortified by facts. The British Government, the Palestine administration, and the armed forces were engaged in enforcing a policy which, if it did not give immediate and full satisfaction to the Arabs, was designed to sterilise the growth of the Yishuv, and to reduce the Jews to a permanent minority under the heel of an Arab majority. To these ends the R.A.F., the Navy, the Army, and the police were dedicated, and

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they were performing hardly any other visible function. That inevitably gave a bias to the simple soldier's meditations on a situation which did not interest him, except as keeping him far from home. This bias became natural and passionate as the Yishuv reacted against the Government's policy. The Yishuv to a man fought the White Paper and the war on the "illegal immigrants." That involved clashes with the security forces. The terrorists put the lives of the individual soldier and policeman in peril from an enemy whose attack could not be foreseen. It would have been strange if, in these circumstances, a bitter antagonism had not developed. The plain duty of the Administration was to maintain law and order, but it would have required a special energy of conviction to secure that its servants acted impartially.

On the 31st July, 1947, the day after the Irgun had murdered two British sergeants, troops and police killed five Jews and did extensive damage in Tel Aviv. British H.Q. a week later announced that no British troops were involved, an announcement which converted a riot into a mystery. On the 2nd December, writes Mr. Graves, the Mayor of Jerusalem :

"This morning we had demonstrations which reminded me of Cairo twenty-eight years ago. The demonstrations, without which political strikes are no fun, started harmlessly with a small crowd, mainly consisting of youths and street boys, trailing up the Jaffa road. Their numbers gradually increased, and they soon started breaking into Jewish shops and setting them on fire. For a long time the police did not interfere with this little mob, which could have been dispersed, not with 'a whiff of grape-shot' but with a swish of canes, and it was heart-breaking to see these young hooligans being given a free hand to destroy the products of man's labour at a time when we are short of everything. I remonstrated with the police, of whom there were a fair number in Allenby Square. They told me that they had orders not to interfere till they were reinforced. If they had fired a few shots at the beginning, even over the heads of the mob, or gone into them with their staves, the crowd would have melted away. . . . The apathy of the police gave the impression of approval. . . . The O.C. Fire Brigade came to see me in the morning. He and his men had been working like Trojans for twenty-four hours putting out

fires, but they were very disheartened at the attitude of the police, who in many cases had refused to interfere with the hooligans, who cut the hose-pipes with impunity. Moreover, police and army cars drove over the pipes and the couplings without noticing or caring what they were doing."

On the 13th December Arab Legionaries killed fourteen Jews in a convoy near Lydda. Nobody was punished. On the same day Arabs raided a police depot at Ramleh and took without resistance 300 rifles, other arms, and much ammunition. On the 25th January, 1948, 700 well-armed Arabs came unhindered through Transjordan to Nablus. Three days later the Government closed all the bridges except the Allenby Bridge from Transjordan. On the 1st February the *Palestine Post* was blown up, the Government said by Arabs, the Jews by security personnel. On the 13th February a British sergeant-major took four Jews to an Arab quarter, where they were murdered and mutilated.

The Palestine Commission learnt in February that the Mandatory Power "had been establishing local Arab and Jewish police forces in Arab and Jewish localities respectively, *of which the former were being armed in part with arms of the Palestine Government.*" The Commission reported that it "is fully aware that these armed Arab municipal forces may prove to be hostile to the Commission and in opposition to the implementation of the Assembly's recommendations."

On the 22nd February, 1948, the Ben Yehuda Street was blown up, some fifty Jews were killed and seventy wounded. The Jews said the crime was the work of security personnel. The Government replied :

"The Jewish Agency has attempted to excuse itself by resort to calculated innuendoes, falsehood, and propaganda directed against British members of the security forces, who are, in fact, every day protecting Jewish property and saving hundreds of Jewish lives, even at the risk of their own. This propaganda has already discredited its authors, and not only among those acquainted with the facts. It has also the serious consequence that it must henceforth be clearly more difficult for British troops to look upon members of the Jewish community as persons entitled, as they are, to protection."

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Nobody, it continued, outside Jewish circles believed the Agency's assertion that a British Army convoy was responsible for the Ben Yehuda Street outrage, and there could be no other purpose in repeating it than to stir up racial hatred.

“The Government, mindful of the duty of the security forces to maintain law and order, and confronted with the deliberate policy of the Agency to render their task as difficult as possible, desires to bring once more to the serious attention of the Jewish community that a continuance of indiscriminate murder and condoned terrorism can lead only to the forfeiture by the community of all right in the eyes of the world to be numbered among civilised peoples.”

On the Ben Yehuda Street outrage Mr. Graves writes :

“The Government have issued a statement to the effect that it is unbelievable that such a crime had been committed by British service men. I wonder if the authorities responsible for the Government statement know what bitter feeling there is against the Jews among many British policemen and a few British soldiers. I have read poems and letters written by policemen, which would have made me chary of using the word ‘unbelievable’ in this context. Some members of the police force openly approve of the policy of Hitler, who, after all, tried to destroy the whole Jewish race, and thought nothing of several thousand slaughtered in a single day. If you spread five million over five years you get about three thousand a day as an average. Sympathisers of this policy might have lowered themselves to commit the Ben Yehuda Street outrage, but we may never know the truth. I feel that a representative of the Jewish Agency should have been invited to attend the police inquiry from the start. The gesture would have been appreciated, and, more than that, if no evidence is forthcoming against the police, or the army, beyond the identity of the vehicles, which were possibly stolen, the Jews might believe, however reluctantly, that the crime was not the work of British hands and brains.”

Whatever else might be said of the Government's statement it was not calculated to improve the relations between the security forces and the Jews. Nor did it carry conviction of an impartial government solely concerned to maintain law and order in its

dying days. For the Arabs were at this time guilty of many outrages, chiefly against the Jews but not rarely against the British, which drew no such public indictment from the Administration. It was the constant complaint of the Jews that, while zealous in disarming Jews the Government was notably indifferent to Arab arms. Be that as it may, one thing was certain—the Government was not maintaining order. As Mr. Graves puts it, “The statement that we are not only responsible for security but that we are effectively preserving it has been made so often recently at Westminster and Lake Success, that truth-loving Britons in Palestine—of whom there are more than a handful—have become absolutely disgusted with the discrepancy between the claim and facts.” And he tells the story of the Arab boy who jumped on the footboard of his car and shouted gleefully, “Don’t worry, there are no law courts now.” It was, indeed, the law courts that ceased first to function. By shutting the one entrance through which a Jew might enter without passing through the Arab quarters, the Administration closed the courts at Jerusalem to the Jews.

It is convenient to draw a line between the fighting preceding and the fighting following the termination of the Mandate. In the first period there existed a British Administration, backed by large British forces, responsible for the government of Palestine. On the other hand there was no Israel State authority with a regular army at its command, while the Arab forces were irregulars recruited partly in Palestine but also from the Arab States. After the 15th May the British Army in Palestine repudiated any responsibility for law and order, and concentrated on protecting itself and its lines of communication with the port of evacuation. The State of Israel had been proclaimed, and the task of defeating it was taken over by the Arab States and their regular armies.

The first phase began with the Resolution of the 29th November, 1947, to which the Arab Higher Committee replied by proclaiming a general strike for three days. On the 2nd December the riots broke out in Jerusalem. On the 9th they extended to Haifa. On the 11th a Jewish convoy to the Kfar Etzion settlements on the Hebron road was attacked. A day later five Jewish settlers were killed near Beersheba. On the 12th another convoy to Kfar Etzion was attacked and nine Jews were killed, and the next day the Legion killed fourteen Jews near Lydda. At this stage outrages were sporadic, and, so far as a strategic design could be perceived, it

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aimed at making communication between Jerudalem and Tel Aviv and Jerusalem and Kfar Etzion difficult and dangerous. These were the obvious weak points in the Yishuv. Kfar Etzion was completely surrounded by Arab territory, and all along the road from Jerusalem to the sea there were Arab villages. The operations were under the command of Palestinian Arabs, and the men in part villagers who could devote a few hours to murder and loot, and then retire to their homes. The effect intended was political rather than military: to demonstrate to U.N. that partition could not be enforced, and must breed slaughter and civil war. The Jewish terrorists retaliated outrage with outrage, but the Hagana was limited to defensive action.

On the 9th January, 1948, a strong force of Arab volunteers in uniform, equipped with modern rifles and led by Syrian officers, attacked two Jewish settlements in Northern Palestine from Syria. They were held in check by the settlers until British troops drove them off. On the 25th, 700 well-armed Arabs came through Transjordan and made their centre at Nablus. Here the British administration disappeared, and the area passed for all effective purposes under the control of the invaders.

How all this appeared to the Jews may be gathered from an official Jewish record:

“In Palestine no effective action was taken to quell the disturbances. When the troubles first began with the Arab outbreak in the Jerusalem Commercial Centre, the British police maintained marked inactivity. There can be little doubt that a show of force during the early stages might have put an effective end to the rioting. The police however watched the shooting, looting and arson with utter indifference, which was inevitably interpreted by the Arab mob as indicating that the Government had given orders to the police not to interfere. The impression was deepened by the arrest and disarming of Jewish Hagana personnel by the British police. When the Arab attack spread to Tel Aviv and other places the same indifference towards the aggressors was displayed by the British security forces. In many instances such aloofness very soon gave place to overt partisanship. Time and again after the Jews had warded off an attack by Arab gunmen, the British police appeared on the scene and disarmed the defenders. Jewish defenders, men

and women, were charged before the Military Courts and given savage sentences, in marked contrast to the failures of the authorities to bring the Arab gunmen to trial. The same attitude of hostile indifference was evident in the failure of the authorities to protect traffic on the highways, in particular the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road, which is the main supply line for the capital. Day after day Jewish motor traffic was attacked in Ramleh, but nothing could induce the authorities to proclaim a curfew even for a few hours a day to ensure safe passage for travellers and essential supplies. Instead of extending protection to highway traffic it became the practice of the British police to search Jewish cars and lorries for arms, sometimes after they had been attacked by Arab terrorists or prior to their being attacked. They refused to permit the Jewish Supernumerary Police to use the armoured cars, which had been agreed during the pre-war disturbance. As a result, time and again Jewish Supernumerary Police going out on duty in open tenders were fired on and killed by Arab gunmen. No effective protection was given to Jewish buses plying between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, constantly subjected to murderous attacks by Arab bands. Nothing was done to prevent the constant railway hold-ups which yielded a rich harvest of loot to the gunmen in the hill country. More than once defensive arms, confiscated by the British police from Jewish defence units, were found a few days later on dead Arab gunmen. The Arab police in the towns and in the countryside began in increasing measure to desert with their guns in order to join the bands.

“Before the year was out, as far as defence of the Jews was concerned, the Palestine Police had practically ceased to exist. The hostile attitude of the British authorities was also evident in the retention in Jewish areas of units of the Transjordan Frontier Force and of the Arab Legion. Time and again members of these forces attacked individual Jews, Jewish quarters and Jewish highway traffic, with fatal results. As the British troops were in the process of withdrawing from the country it became the practice of the security authorities to station Arab Legionnaires in the key positions formerly occupied by them.”

Until shortly before the end of the Mandate and the completion of the evacuation (apart from the political purpose which has been



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mentioned) the "war" was largely manœuvring for positions. Each of the protagonists was preparing for the situation which would come into being when there were no longer any British troops available. In this setting certain factors were significant. The breakdown of the Administration told more heavily against the Jews and demanded greater efforts at organisation. The Jews were dependent for food supplies, and for raw materials, and for war equipment upon foreign imports. Their land frontiers were closed by the Arab States. Their settlements were much more widely scattered, they were interpenetrated by Arab villages and towns, and their whole economy was modern. They were, therefore, much more affected by the collapse of government and by the interruption of communications than the Arab community, which was primitive, which had large homogeneous areas, which grew its own supplies, and could import its requirements from the neighbouring lands. The maintenance of order was a necessity to the Jews, the spread of anarchy was an advantage to the Arabs. This can be illustrated from transport. The roads, from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, or from Tel Aviv to the Negev settlements, or from Haifa to the northern frontier and the Jordan Valley, were literally life-lines. If they were cut for a prolonged period, still more tragically if permanently, these settlements were doomed, and with them the whole Yishuv must collapse.

During the troublous years 1936-39 the British Administration had built at important strategic points on the roads and commanding the towns police posts which were in fact fortresses. They were massively built, and could resist any local attack. In Jerusalem extensive barracks had been built, and with the spread of terrorism, security personnel and British citizens had been concentrated in a series of strong points. In the north near Haifa, in the south near Gaza, and at other places, there were vast camps, airfields, and supply parks, fruits of an expenditure and a policy which contemplated a long-term occupation of Palestine. It was the desire of the Government to salve this equipment, it was the plan of the Government to retire gradually and to evacuate area by area, and it was the avowed design of the Government to practise a neutral anarchy and not transfer anything to the successor State or States that might arise. To obtain possession of these posts and camps and airfields was of the highest importance to Jews and Arabs, and particularly in areas of mixed population. What might

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be resolved in Whitehall or even at G.H.Q. Jerusalem would not necessarily translate faithfully at the local point. There human prejudice and human frailty might operate. If the prejudice was against the Jews an effort might be made to facilitate possession by the Arabs; corruption in a disintegrating régime might combat prejudice. In this contest the Jews had some advantages. They had a central authority which could take decisions and organise plans, whereas the Arabs were merely sporadic groupings of local gunmen or infiltrators.

In December 1947 the Arab governments, as distinct from the Palestine Higher Committee and its gunmen, began to take the more significant part. Syria seems to have been entrusted with the chief responsibility for organising the training and arming of volunteers. In the Quatana barracks at Damascus there were some hundreds, and thirty-eight senior officers "resigned" from the Syrian Army to train the recruits. Syrians, Palestinians, Lebanese, Moslems, Iraqis, and Egyptians were included, and the total was said to be 1,500, a figure which was exaggerated. There was also a recruiting centre at Beirut, and recruiting offices were opened in Egypt and Baghdad. The commander of all these volunteers (called the Army of Liberation) was Fawzi al Kaukji, who had won a reputation in the 1936-39 troubles which was to disappear in this new war. Let us consider the history and the strength of the Arab national armies when they took the field against Israel.

With Transjordan British relations were on a very special footing. The army of that State was the Arab Legion. It was a purely British creation. It originated with a desert patrol of 100 men, formed by British officers in 1920 before Transjordan came into existence as a separate entity, and it was always under British command. Its strength in 1939 was approximately 1,600; during the war years it was expanded, and by the end of 1947 numbered some thousand more. It embraced not only native Transjordanians but mercenaries from all over the Middle East, including Beduin, Circassians, Palestinians, Druses, and Armenians. The treaty of alliance renewed and strengthened British control. It provided for mutual assistance in case of hostilities, British bases in Transjordan, a joint defence board, the provision of British arms, ammunition, equipment, aircraft, and other war material, financial assistance, and "any British service personnel

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whose services are required to ensure the efficiency of the military units" of the Transjordan forces.

The financial subsidy to the Arab Legion was £2,500,000 (now £3,500,000) yearly. The total population was only 400,000, mostly nomads and semi-nomads, and Transjordan's contribution to the defence budget in 1947-8 was less than £290,000. Before the end of the Mandate British personnel serving with the Legion numbered some 225—forty officers in key positions of command, the rest mainly N.C.O.'s in the technical services, such as signals and repair. Most of these officers and N.C.O.'s were seconded from the British Regular Army. As late as February 1948 an Army Circular was issued inviting British officers and other ranks to volunteer for service with the Legion. The Commander-in-Chief, Glubb Pasha, was a captain on the British Army reserve list. He was listed till the very end of the Mandate on the staff list of the Palestine Government as Assistant Inspector-General of Police. His Number 2, Colonel R. S. C. Broadhurst, enjoyed the double distinction of being listed by the Palestine Government as Superintendent of Police and of being Military Counsel to King Abdullah.

In May 1948 the Arab Legion had the following organisation :

(a) A mechanised brigade consisting of three battalions, each 450 strong.

(b) Some fifteen infantry garrison companies and two security companies, each 180-200 strong.

(c) A training centre near Amman, the recruits in which were about 20-25 per cent. of the total strength. Additional reserves were being called up and trained by British officers recently arrived from the Army in Palestine.

The mechanised brigade was equipped with heavy armoured cars, Bren carriers, 25-pounder and 6-pounder guns, 3·7-in. pack howitzers, Piat anti-tank guns, and 3-in. mortars, all of standard British pattern. The total numerical strength of the Legion was 6,500 to 7,500. When war began it was distributed over too long a front, and the lack of manpower was felt. To ease matters the garrison units were gradually attached to the mechanised battalions, men from the disbanded Transjordan Frontier Force were recruited, and new recruits drawn from Transjordan. By August 1948 the Legion forces had grown to seven infantry battalions,

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each of four rifle companies, one support company, and one H.Q. company, a total of 800 to a battalion. The battalions were organised in two brigades. After the capture by the Jews of Lydda and Ramleh (August 1948) the Legion shortened its line, mainly by withdrawing from the Bethlehem-Hebron sector. The line then extended from Budrun to the High Commissioner's house in Jerusalem. Between August 1948 and the end of November 1948 the Legion raised three additional battalions—the total was then ten battalions. After the Iraqis left Palestine in March 1949 the Legion raised two battalions of Palestine Arabs.

During the last three months of the Mandate special efforts were made by the British Army to build up the arms, equipment, and military supplies of the Legion. In March 1948 a quantity of mines, artillery stores, anti-tank rifles, and mortars were specially brought over for them from the Canal Zone in Egypt, as sufficient quantities could not be spared by the British forces in Palestine. On the 14th April the Jewish Agency informed the Palestine Commission that the following supplies were to be transferred to the Legion from the British Army in Palestine: 60 armoured cars, 8,000 mortar bombs, 100,000 rounds, 900,000 gallons of petrol. A general directive was issued by G.H.Q. Jerusalem to build up the Legion's military supplies for a minimum period of eight months; and in the very last days of the Mandate Oerlikon guns, ammunition, and petrol were shipped from Suez to Aqaba. On the 6th December, 1947, the Transjordan Prime Minister had said, "My country's force will be allied with the rest of the Arab world to fight for Palestine." So the British authorities knew exactly the purpose of these arms. Mr. Bevin had pledged his word that the Arab Legion would be entirely withdrawn from Palestine before the end of the Mandate. The pledge was not kept. During the last weeks the Legion was carrying out preliminary moves, particularly in the Ramallah and Jericho-Hebron area, and Glubb Pasha was visiting the notables of Hebron, Beersheba, and Gaza. Even before Great Britain hauled down the flag, the Arab Legion was responsible for the capture of the Jewish settlement Kfar Etzion near Jerusalem.

The beginnings of the Iraqi Army went back to the British conquest in 1915-16, when guards were raised to the number of 2,000. In 1918-19 these were given military formation as Levies. After the revolt, in 1921, they were reorganised. The Arab element

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tribal, racial, urban, rural were very heterogeneous, and national and patriotic sentiment was absent or very feeble. Most of the soldiers could neither read nor write, and acquired their education in the army. The time of service was too short to give them skill in handling modern weapons or to inculcate a military spirit. The officers came from the wealthier classes, and the army was used as an instrument for making and unmaking governments. The national income per head was \$85 as against \$100 for Syria and \$125 for Lebanon, and the peasant is burdened by taxes and an inequitable sharing scheme. Poor as the Arab masses are in general, they are poorest in Iraq.

Before the 15th May, 1948, Iraqis had intervened in Palestine as volunteers in irregular units, and before the Mandate ended the Iraqi Deputy Chief of Staff was sent to Palestine to report on the Jewish forces and to recommend the strength of the Arab armies to be used in the invasion. He advised that the Arab States should send all their forces to Palestine and appoint a combined High Command; if not they would be prudent to start negotiations with the Jews at once. Before the end of the Mandate the Iraqis were concentrating regular troops in Transjordan. The strength with which they invaded Palestine was four brigades of infantry together with armour, two mechanised police battalions, and three aircraft squadrons. The total was 15,000. Four battalions of Palestine Arabs were recruited and raised the total to 17,000. This was about one-third of the entire Iraqi armed forces of every kind.

The origins of the Syrian Army go back to the First World War. In 1916 the French raised in Cyprus an Oriental Legion composed principally of Armenians, which fought against the Turks in Palestine and Syria. In 1919 they raised a parallel Syrian Legion, which was worthless in a military sense, although composed of volunteers. In 1920 they raised a gendarmerie, partly of Turks, partly of ex-Feisal soldiers, which did well against the Alouites. There were also a militia and some auxiliary companies, and by 1921 the total force was 8,000 men. After the Druse revolt in 1925-26 the Army of the Orient was built up. Its strength was intended to be 10,000-12,000, but it was not more than 8,000 when war broke out in 1939. Weygand increased it to 12,000-15,000. When the British took over they raised a Druse regiment. When Syria became independent, the government was anxious

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to increase the Arab element, especially in the higher ranks, till then composed mostly of Circassians and Armenians. In 1945 a British military mission was sent to train the army and air force, and officers were sent to Egypt and Acre for training. In 1947 the Syrian Army numbered 10,300, with a desert force of 1,500, in all 11,800. A flying school was set up in 1947 and twenty bombers were ordered. On the 15th May, 1948, the strength of the Syrian Army was 15,000. It was organised in brigades, each brigade composed of two infantry battalions, one regiment of artillery, and one battalion of armour. In addition, units belonging to five cavalry regiments and five desert companies took part in the fighting. After the failure of the attack on Daganaya the army was reorganised and the High Command changed. Each brigade was raised to three infantry battalions.

The Lebanon has a population of some 1,200,000, approximately 50 per cent. Christians and 50 per cent. Moslems. The natural rate of increase is very high, and the Moslems are multiplying faster than the Christians. The Lebanese Army originated with the militia formed by the French after the massacre of the 1860s. The French think the Christians of the mountains are the best fighting men in the country. The urban element, whether Christian or Moslem, is poor material; the Alouites, Druses, and Armenians good. Until Syria and Lebanon became independent, they had a common army. At the beginning of the war with Israel the Lebanese Army numbered 3,500, composed of:

- 5 battalions of infantry, each 450 strong;
- 1 battalion of armour, including 1 company of tanks and 1 company of armoured cars;
- 1 regiment of artillery of five batteries;
- 1 regiment of cavalry, 200 strong.

There were, in addition, about 2,500 gendarmerie.

The Lebanese Army was active in the operation against Malhia, where it employed one battalion of infantry. Lebanon served as a base for Kaukji's "Liberation" Army and the Syrian Army, and provided air bases for Syria and Iraq. At Beirut was an ordnance depot for the "Liberation" Army and for the Syrian Army.

As a result of the Anglo-Egyptian treaty of 1936 the Egyptian Army was freed from limitations, but lack of money and the lack of healthy manpower prevented full use of this freedom. A year or two before the war there was a plan to raise the army to 100,000

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and the air force to 1,000 planes; but the plan was cut down 50 per cent. When war came the five- or seven-year plans to this end were postponed. Eighty per cent. of the recruits were normally rejected as physically unfit. In 1943 the rejects, for one reason or another, amounted to 90 per cent. Conscription exists in theory rather than in practice. A British military mission was appointed in 1936, but the Egyptian Government decided that it should leave at the end of 1947. The equipment is British. The reserves may have numbered 50,000, but whether there was equipment on order for this force was doubtful.

On the 15th May the Egyptian Army of Invasion, with its reserves, embraced :

- 5 battalions of infantry ;
- 1 machine-gun battalion ;
- 1 armoured unit ;
- 1 25-pounder artillery regiment ;
- 1 unit of 6-pounder anti-tank artillery ;
- 1 unit of anti-aircraft artillery ;
- 15 fighter planes ;
- 5 transport planes, converted to bombers ; reconnaissance and spotting planes.

Attached were services and transport. The force numbered 10,000, organised in brigades.

In October 1948 the force included :

- 8 battalions of infantry ;
- 9 reserve battalions ;
- 2 garrison battalions ;
- 3 regiments of field artillery ;
- 2 machine-gun battalions ;
- 1 armoured unit including light tanks ;
- 8 Sudanese companies ;
- 6 companies of Saudi Arabians ;
- 2 squadrons of fighter aircraft ;
- 1 transport and bombing squadron ;
- reconnaissance and spotting planes ;
- torpedo boats, minesweepers, supply and guard vessels ;
- corvettes and landing craft.

On the 1st January, 1949, the force included :

- 4 regular brigades ;
- 4 reserve brigades ;

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- 1 brigade of garrison troops ;
- 2 battalions of Saudi Arabians ;
- 8 companies of Sudanese ;
- 3 regiments of field artillery ;
- 1 regiment of anti-aircraft artillery ;
- 1 armoured unit including 2 squadrons of tanks ;
- 4 fighter squadrons ;
- 2 transport squadrons ;
- the usual services.

The combined forces with which the Arab States invaded Palestine totalled 50,000 and during the operations this number was significantly increased. They were equipped with modern arms, modern transport, heavy and light artillery, tanks, airplanes. They represented many million people spread over an area (much of it indeed "light soil") of perhaps two million square kilometres. The Arab States had organised governments with Budgets running into scores of millions. They had treaties under which Great Britain supplied them with arms and trained their armies. They controlled the sea and had ports at their disposal. They were members of the United Nations and were represented in the Security Council. The Israeli territory was a few thousand kilometres spread in a thin belt between the sea and the hills, at many points practically under the guns of the enemy. A break-through was an immediate danger and must prove fatal. The population was 600,000, with such volunteers as might come from the Jewries overseas. A government and administration were still in process of creation ; budget and revenues had to be conjured out of the void, and what could thus be gathered would have to be compensated by the free gifts of the Jews of the Diaspora. Food, petrol, materials, vital arms and equipment might fail at any moment and enforce collapse. Even the most optimistic assessment by British officers had not gone further than that the Hagana could master the Palestine Arabs if it came to a struggle. They did not contemplate war with all the Arab armies in addition. In the judgment of the British Government's military advisers on the spot and at home, the issue of that conflict was beyond doubt—a few weeks would see the Jews driven into surrender or the sea. This conviction was shared by the Arabs. The Iraqis, in particular, saw before them a victorious march.



These anticipations missed one element which is always of high and sometimes of supreme importance—spirit. The Arab troops might be roused to hate the Jews, and might be stirred by the slogans of Arab unity, but the war had no deep root in their emotions. Only in the Transjordan Army was this defect of passion and morale compensated in a measure by the discipline of the professional soldier. For the Jews there was literally no choice but to fight and win or fail and die.

What were the resources with which the Jews could meet the invasion by the Arab armies? There were three distinct military organisations of very unequal weight. The Sternists numbered a few hundred, the Irgun perhaps 2,000. Only a fraction took an active part in terrorist enterprises or had weapons; they had no combined training, no staff directed to large-scale operations, no skill in offence and no tenacity in defence. They had agreed on a common strategy with the Hagana, but they had their own independent organisation and commanders, and they felt themselves free to take whatever course they preferred. The Irgun was responsible for the hideous massacre at Deir Yassin and for attacks on the British which provoked reactions and created difficulties. The Hagana believed that it hampered them in their task, and that its members were inferior in morale.

The backbone of Jewish military strength was the Hagana. The germ of Hagana was the guards appointed to protect Jewish villages against raiding Beduin and thievish Arab neighbours in the lawless days of Turkish rule. They were reinforced by Jews who came from Russia after the pogroms of 1905, and had there taken part in self-defence organisations. In 1907 there was constituted the organisation of Shomerim, guards, who were pioneers and who defended Jewish villages in the most dangerous areas. Men like Ben-Gurion, the present Israeli Prime Minister, had their training in Hashomer, and many members, like Ben-Gurion, joined the British forces in the 1914-18 war. After the Balfour Declaration Hashomer was transformed into a Palestine defence organisation open to every able-bodied Jew. It became Hagana. The English authorities, declaring themselves responsible for public security, frowned on Hagana and called upon it to surrender its arms. But the troubles of 1920-21 made it clear that a centralised slow-moving British force was not adequate to protect scattered villages against sudden attacks. The Government

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allowed the villages to have a few useless shotguns in a sealed case, but the Jews preferred to rely upon their own strength in an emergency. In 1929, despite the presence in the country of a British garrison, 150 Jews were murdered in Jerusalem, Hebron, Safad, Jaffa, Haifa, Hulda, and Beer Tubia. Where the Jews had weapons they fought and fought successfully.

After 1929 the Hagana was developed in numbers and armament and training. During the years 1936-39 many Jewish villages were attacked by Arabs. All defended themselves successfully, and none was evacuated. The Government allowed the whole of the Yishuv for its defence thirty rifles and twelve light machine-guns, and the Hagana had to continue as an underground force. But the Government, though refusing formal recognition or official aid, needed its help and co-operated with it. Many of its members were recognised as supernumerary police for the protection of the settlements; and when Wingate introduced his new offensive tactics against the Mufti's rebels his night squads were composed of British and Hagana men.

During the Second World War many members of Hagana went into the British forces. Hagana men set up an illegal propaganda organisation in Vichy Syria. At the request of the British military authorities they entered Syria before the Allied Forces, and prepared plans and gathered information of great strategic value. This party was led by Moshe Dayan, subsequently the chief of the Israeli Army, who in November 1939 had been sentenced by a Palestine court to ten years' imprisonment for engaging in Hagana military training. When in 1941 an invasion of Palestine by the Germans was anticipated, the British planned to evacuate the country, and to leave to Hagana the burden of such action against the invaders as might be practicable. A special mission was set up by the military to train the Jews, and a school was opened at Mishmar Haemek, in the heart of Galilee, where picked members of Hagana received training for a year. This body was the nucleus of Palmach. After Alamein the crisis passed, and the Administration returned to its normal policy of hostility to Hagana.

At this stage the Hagana was not an army. It had neither the staff, nor the equipment, nor the schooled officers, nor the trained personnel indispensable. How it became an army was described to the present writer in May 1949 by Aluf Ygal Yadin, who was chief of operations of the Israel Army during the war :

“My military education is typical of the military education of many officers now in the army and who had been in Hagana. There was no definite limited course, but a prolonged process of self-education, which in my own case lasted fifteen years; and I learnt much in teaching others. During 1936-39 it did not go beyond N.C.O. training in a mere three or four weeks, but that experience taught us two things—that officers must have longer and more specialised training, and that we must develop tactics suitable to the country. We got together all the military books—British, American, Russian, even German—we could; and we decided that officers, after their N.C.O. course, must have at least two months’ special training. Then once a year they were to have tactical training without troops. It was then that we made the discovery that administration is 90 per cent. of an army, and we had no administration. It was our officers in the British Army who taught us this, and who in the war supported this vital element.

“Our officers in the British Army used to send us all the literature they could, but they all said one thing: ‘You have nothing to learn from the British Army. They teach us drill, they teach us weapons, but they do not teach us tactics.’ So we decided that these officers, when on leave, should be put through a finishing course. About thirty at a time were gathered at Hulda for a week’s training. Each Hagana officer had his own military bible, and out of this mixture we evolved later special books devised for our own needs. We insisted on flexibility and on independent initiative, and this stood us in good stead when commanders were cut off from their seniors and had to act on their own responsibility.

“In 1941 I had been A.D.C. to the Hagana Chief. In 1942 we expected a German invasion, and it was then that we studied fighting tanks. Most important, we faced up to the possibility of having to meet a regular army. Hitherto we had contemplated local forces, stiffened by irregulars or foreign officers, but still guerillas. I was chief instructor in several courses and in 1945 I became director. I was in that year posted Chief of the Hagana General Staff Branch, and directed much attention to the organisation of the British forces in Palestine. I was away from the Hagana for two years, during which I completed my thesis on ‘Warfare in Palestine,’ an archæological study not

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without practical value. In September 1947 I was called back to resume supervision of training, intelligence, operations, and planning. The hour of decision was come. Even then we were thinking mainly of a guerilla war. We had a plan to deal with them—offensive—defensive, to strike at the enemy. We knew that to defend Jerusalem we should not rely on convoys, but take the strategic hills—we had made an intelligence survey. We went through every village in Palestine, and estimated its character, whether it meant trouble or not; and we had a map in which the strategic characters of every Arab village and the quality of its inhabitants were indicated. We had a library of files with the details. We made an air-photographic survey of most of the country; we used to hire a plane at £4 an hour. We knew in the early months of trouble that the Palestine Arabs had nobody to organise them properly, but we had not taken account of the British. The moment we brought up a platoon the British would come and arrest our men. We could have taken Jaffa easily, but the British stopped us. If not for the British we could have quelled the Arab riots in one month.

“We had in November 1947 30,000 members of the Hagana and about 3,000 in the Palmach. The Palmach had to work half a month to earn their living and train during the other half; we could not afford a standing army. Very few were mobile. Our arms were rifles, sten-guns, light machine guns, and two or three mortars. We had no artillery. We trained 150 men as gunners, without artillery. In the Air Force we had six or seven obsolete reconnaissance planes. We bought the remains of twenty Austers from the British. We used them as bombers. There were two men in each plane. One man carried on his knees home-made bombs weighing 50 kilos, and dropped them over the target. They had a good moral effect, because before the 15th May the Arabs had no planes. They also supplied the colonies from the air. With them we supplied Yechiam and Kfar Etzion, and even rushed mortars and shells to Jerusalem. When later the first three Messerschmidts came they were difficult to handle. One fell, one crash-landed. I was not surprised when the Egyptian Commander at Rhodes read me an extract from his diary: ‘The Jewish Air Force seems to be harmless. They do not know how to use their planes, and so have no effect on us!’ ”

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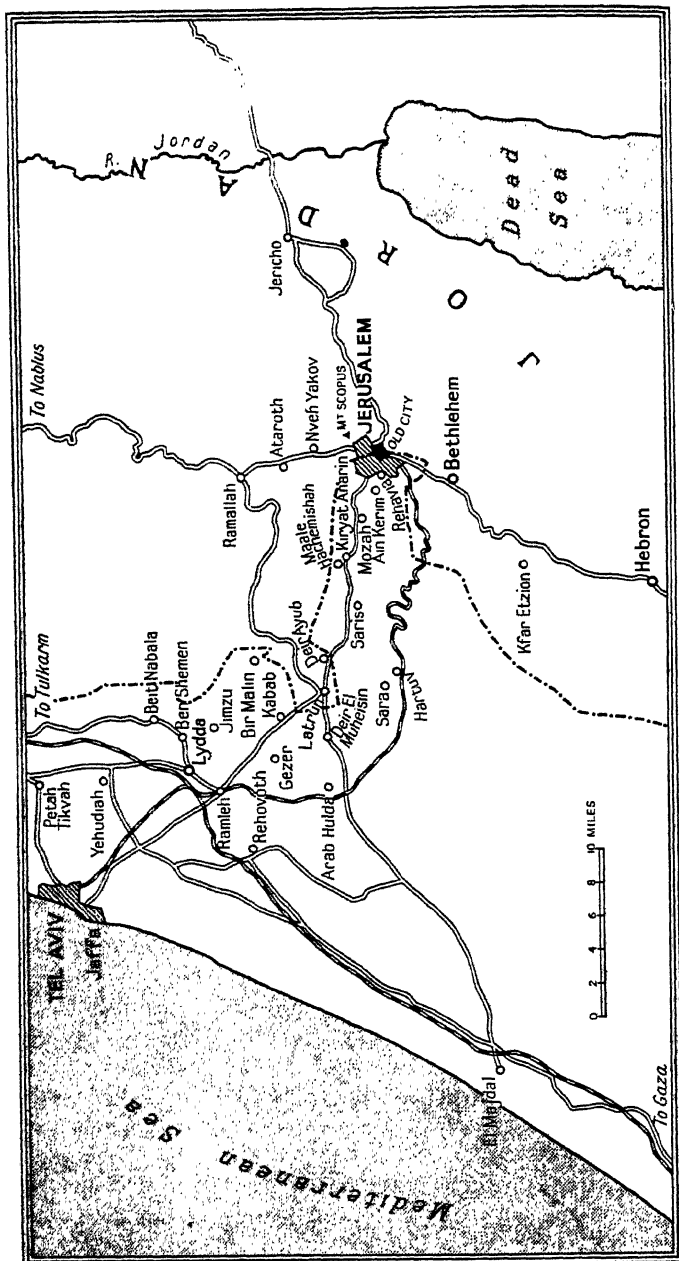
The first three months of fighting—December, January, and February—were times of purely defensive operations on the Jewish side, and though the sporadic offensives of the Arabs in the mixed urban areas, against the settlements, in Jerusalem, and on the roads met with no marked success, they inflicted loss and suffering. Defensive operations do not stimulate, and the outlook appeared gloomy. In March and April the struggle became more bitter, the Jews took to the offensive and scored some notable successes. But in Jerusalem the situation was least satisfactory, and Jerusalem was vital.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE JERUSALEM FRONT

THE Jerusalem Command stretched from the Dead Sea on the east to Bab el Wad (where the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road emerged from the Shephelah into the mountains) in the west. The distance to Tel Aviv was 45 miles, and along that road all supplies must come, food, water, military equipment, ammunition, and reinforcements. To the northern works of the Palestine Potash Company on the Dead Sea a road some 20 miles long ran through mountainous, desolate country, without a single Jewish settlement between Jerusalem and the works. On the north of the city lay the University-Hadassah hospital complex on Mount Scopus, and two small Jewish villages, Nveh Yakov and Ataroth, a few kilometres along the Ramallah road. On the south, halfway to Hebron, was the Kfar Etzion complex of Jewish settlements with a thousand inhabitants. On the west, between Jerusalem and Bab el Wad, were the Jewish villages Motza, Kiryat Anavim, and Maale Hachemishah on the road, and a few others south of the road in the neighbourhood of the railway. Within Jerusalem there were about 100,000 Jews and as many Arabs. Within the Old City there were a few hundred Jews in the Jewish quarter; the rest of the inhabitants were Arabs. With the exception of the Jewish settlements mentioned, the whole area north, south, east, and west was Arab, and Arabs could at will intercept all communications by road. The pumping station at Ras el Ain, from which Jerusalem drew its water, had been allowed to be occupied by 600 Iraqis, who could at any moment cut off the water supply. Besides the villagers and some thousands of infiltrees into the city, the Arab Legion was in the immediate neighbourhood.

On the 1st May, 1948, Colonel Lund, Military Adviser to the U.N. advance party, gave the following appreciation of the plight of Jewish Jerusalem, should fighting break out on a large scale after the British evacuation:



IV. Jerusalem - Tel Aviv area

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“The situation in several respects is different from elsewhere in Palestine, and particularly as affecting a large part of the population, the 100,000 Jews in the city. These Jews are completely surrounded by Arab country. The distance by road to the Jewish base in Tel Aviv along the convoy route is about 45 miles. The Jewish population occupies the N.W. and W. parts of Jerusalem. This area has a perimeter of about 10 miles. There are some Jewish settlements around outside the entirely Jewish area, but these settlements are more likely to be a responsibility than any asset to the Jews in Jerusalem.

“The Jewish forces available to defend this part of Jerusalem will probably be less than 10,000 men. Contrary to the situation in the rest of Palestine, the percentage of young male population in Jerusalem is relatively small. To defend the perimeter alone will probably need about 6,000 men, and the available reserves for operations will not be considerable. The Arabs, apart from the population in the town, which is practically equal to the Jews, and the estimated 2,000 volunteers that have arrived from outside, can draw reinforcements from the countryside around. The Arabs also have a considerable advantage in the possession of the Old City with its formidable walls. These walls, though valueless in modern warfare on a large scale, have a considerable value in fighting where few heavy weapons are available. The small Jewish colony in the Old City has, of course, no fighting chance whatsoever, if no sort of truce can be arranged.

“An evacuation of the population is impossible because of the magnitude of the task, and also for prestige reasons. The convoy situation between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv is even now too difficult for any evacuation on a scale worth while mentioning of old people and children. To get convoys through from Tel Aviv after the 15th May will be extremely difficult. If the Jews get reinforcements from abroad to this base, it may be possible for them to open up and hold permanently a channel between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, but this in any case is a military operation that will take time. It must, therefore, be foreseen that the Jews of Jerusalem will be cut off from their base at least for a considerable time. The Jews of Jerusalem usually buy their food from the surrounding Arab countryside. This source stopped some time ago, and the Jews are strictly rationed. Being cut off, the situation will deteriorate quickly.



“The water question will be particularly difficult for the Jews. The main source of water for Jerusalem is Ras el Ain, about 12 miles east of Tel Aviv, and the pipeline and pumping station from here to Jerusalem can easily be cut by the Arabs. In the Arab part of Jerusalem the houses have old cisterns for storing rain water. They have repaired all these old cisterns and the rather abundant rain this spring has filled them, so that the Arabs are relatively independent of water from outside for a considerable time. Lack of water and lack of facilities to remove refuse (lack of petrol for transport) may add serious epidemics to all other miseries for the Jews of Jerusalem in case of fighting.

“It is quite obvious that the capture of Jerusalem would be regarded by either side as a most important objective. The Mufti, with his great influence on the Arab part of Jerusalem and surroundings, would spare no effort to reach this target. It is also obvious that the Arabs in the difficult situation of the Jews in Jerusalem have a weapon that they will use as pressure on the political front. Significant in this connection is the fact that, while the Jews are willing to have a truce in Jerusalem, the Arabs are not. Attacking in the built-up area of a town, however, is a very difficult task, particularly where bombing from the air and heavy artillery cannot be used by the attacker.

“The Jews have probably little interest in any large-scale attack on the Arab part of Jerusalem bearing in mind the inevitable bloodshed. They will probably restrict themselves to small-scale operations to gain tactical points, or as counter-measures in reply to Arab operations. They will not improve their situation by capturing Arab parts of the town. They are more likely to fight for and try to hold areas along the convoy road to the west, to improve transport. Even if no large-scale fighting should take place in Jerusalem, the Jews there will within a short time be in a very difficult position, without water and with very small supplies of food, a position from which it is difficult to see any escape without international intervention.”

Food and water—these were indispensable. The Jews tackled this hard problem without waiting for international intervention. In the beginning of February 1948 the Jewish Agency and the Vaad Leumi elected a committee of which Dr. Joseph was chair-

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man. It got nowhere, and was replaced by a committee of four with Dr. Joseph as chairman. This set about repairing and filling the cisterns, but it did not get much further, until in April Mr. Ben-Gurion appointed a Jerusalem Committee with Dr. Joseph as Chairman. This got resolutely to work. Mr. Ben-Gurion agreed to advance £100,000, and to give Dr. Joseph dictatorial powers. All the foodstuffs in the city were requisitioned, and large convoys of 200 trucks were organised. The first two convoys got through safely; the third was ambushed; six persons were killed and a number of trucks were burned. Strict rationing was introduced. The cisterns were filled, and a water supply, on a very meagre scale, was prepared for eight months. The bakeries were taken over. All the fuel was requisitioned. The electricity works were taken over, and a two hours' supply provided, until all the current was needed for the bakeries and the hospitals. People lost weight, but their health was good. There were no epidemics. But it was a period of extreme privation, and it was touch and go. When the first truce came there were only two days' rations left in Jerusalem. But by that time the future was clearer; three days before, the "Burma Road" had been opened, and supplies could come through.

The military problem was only less urgent than food and water. The Jerusalem commander had been instructed (Plan D) to hold every point in the area in Jewish possession, and to occupy the whole or as much as possible of the town. Colonel Shaltiel took over the post at the beginning of February, and this was the appreciation of the situation at that time submitted by his Chief of Staff:

"The sudden change in the political situation demands a reconsideration of the military situation in this district. The task is to find ways to economise manpower and armaments, and to put them to a more effective and concentrated use, without basically altering the operational context of Plan D. A strong increase in the numerical strength and armament of the enemy is to be expected, and concurrently an improvement of his technical skill and manoeuvre. The relationship between his manpower and ours will by the 1st December, 1948, be five to one, and the same will apply to armament. No marked increase in trained manpower can be expected by us in the

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near future. Infantry weapons and mortars cannot be expected before the 1st June. The increase in manpower will be adversely affected by the proportionate reduction in arms available to existing units. Supply and maintenance to cut-off settlements will be beyond our means. A big convoy would require 25-30 armoured cars and at least two infantry companies, and would suffer 30 per cent. to 50 per cent. loss. Our only course, therefore, is to concentrate our limited resources, so as to obtain the maximum effect on a more limited basis, and free ourselves of supply and maintenance problems beyond our technical means."

He concluded by making the following specific recommendations: complete evacuation of Kfar Etzion, which would add 400 men with their arms to the forces available in Jerusalem; complete evacuation of Hartuv, which would strengthen the position on the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv road; complete evacuation of the Old City; evacuation of non-combatants from Ataroth; evacuation of the north of the Dead Sea, the garrison to be transferred to the south. The military adviser insisted that political considerations should not be taken into account, as they conflicted with military necessities. Of the military situation he took a gloomy view—insufficient supplies, bad training, lack of experience, poor leadership, heavy losses in fighting, continuous increase of enemy strength.

Colonel Shaltiel gave to the present writer his own view of this situation. There were special difficulties in mobilising Jerusalem Jewry: the average age was high; the large percentage of poor meant inferior physique; many of the orthodox refused service; the Irgun and the Stern group were independent of Hagana. The total manpower under his command was several hundred members of the Hagana, and some youth units, with 117 rifles and two Bren guns. The Irgun had several hundred men unarmed and three armed platoons. Together with the Sternists they had 200 armed men "weak in fighting power, but strong as a disruptive force." He proposed, until the British left, to maintain the *status quo*, to store up arms, and to mobilise and train men. He would evacuate all the points proposed by his military advisers except (for prestige reasons) the Old City. With the forces then freed he was confident that, when the time came, he could easily

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hold Jerusalem and capture Bethlehem and Beit Jalah. The evacuation plan was rejected by the High Command. Events showed that Colonel Shaltiel's estimation (except in regard to the Old City) was sound. Heavy losses were suffered in attempting to supply and hold the outlying settlements north and south of Jerusalem, and in the end they were either captured by or abandoned to the enemy. It is interesting, however, to see the reasons which weighed with the High Command. Every one of the settlements was looked upon as a strong point, and evacuation would be fatal to morale. There was no limit to retreat, if once begun; all defence would collapse. Kfar Etzion had successfully fought off attacks by 2,000 men, and could be expected to hold out, as did other places.

The Jerusalem command had two defensive tasks and one offensive task; defensive, to hold the Jewish quarters and keep open the roads north, south, and west; offensive, to seize as much Arab territory as possible. The operations went through three phases—from the 29th November, 1947, to the end of the British Mandate on the 15th May, 1948; from the 15th May, 1948, to the first truce on the 11th June, 1948; from the 9th July to the second truce, 18th July. During the first phase they were conducted against a background of outrage and murder, which had no military significance, but was accompanied by a very serious cutting of communications with the coast. After the departure of the British the background is a siege, acute shortage of food, water, and supplies, and the continuous shelling of a civilian population, which caused much loss of life but achieved no decisive military result.

In Colonel Shaltiel's judgment the first phase—the period of British occupation—was the worst. It was marked, apart from minor incidents, by the blowing up of the *Palestine Post*, of the Ben Yehuda Street, and of a section of the Jewish Agency building, and by the destruction of the Hadassah convoy. In a military sense much more serious than spasmodic outrage was the grip which the Arabs secured upon the roads immediately after the 29th November, 1947. As early as the 4th December Jewish convoys on the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv road were attacked. A week later a Jewish convoy to Kfar Etzion was attacked and ten Jews were killed. The next day another convoy to Kfar Etzion was attacked and nine Jews were killed. On the 14th December the

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Arab Legion killed fourteen Jews in a convoy near Lydda. Throughout December and January it was a similar story. In January the Arabs tried to take Kfar Etzion but were beaten off. In March three Jewish convoys between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem were attacked with heavy loss, and one between Jerusalem and Kfar Etzion was saved from complete annihilation only by British intervention. Supplies, as a result, had become so short that on the 28th March bread rationing was introduced in Jerusalem. In April the blockade continued, and the road to Tel Aviv was made impassable by a heavy explosion.

Obviously convoys were no answer to the problem. The roads must be made secure by occupying strong points along them. The key to the northern area, the University and Hadassah Hospital and the adjacent settlements, was the Sheikh Jarrah quarter. It was occupied by Arab irregulars who, on the 13th April, had been responsible for a tragedy. Acting on the assurance of the Government that the road was safe, a convoy of doctors and nurses set out for the Hadassah Hospital. At Sheikh Jarrah it was attacked and immobilised for seven hours, during which seventy-seven professors, physicians, nurses, and students were massacred. It was only after six and a half hours that British troops, who throughout that time were in the immediate neighbourhood, intervened. On the 24th April, Jewish forces took Sheikh Jarrah, but were driven out by the British who suffered Arabs to reoccupy it. In April and May, Ataroth and Neveh Yacov were attacked.

Meanwhile things had gone badly inside Jerusalem. Within the walls of the Old City the Jews were practically besieged. On occasions a convoy of food would be passed through by the British, and the British authorities urged that the Jews should be evacuated. Many of them were extreme orthodox, who had little heart or interest in the struggle, and were not ideal military material. But for a host of historical, sentimental, and political reasons the Jewish leaders were determined to hold on, and the kernel of the garrison was a small body of Hagana.

The Jerusalem situation, and in particular the loss of Kfar Etzion, made a deep impression on Colonel Yadin, the Chief of Operations. On the eve of the ending of the Mandate he was summoned to meet the National Council, and to give a professional and objective military opinion as to whether the Provisional Government should proclaim the State of Israel. He answered :

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“If our strength remains as it is today our chances are bad. But if our situation improves, so far as artillery and tanks, we have a fair chance.” The answer was not quite so depressing as it sounded, because he and they knew that the first shipment of heavy machine-guns had arrived, and other armament ships were at sea waiting for the British naval blockade to be lifted.

Plainly the greatest success inside Jerusalem would not avert disaster if the blockade of the city could not be broken. Without food, without water, without munitions Jerusalem must fall; and the shortage of all three was becoming desperate. The attempts to open the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road passed through several phases. First the supply lorries were accompanied by guards and improvised armoured cars made by plating lorries with steel. This was costly in lives and material, for the villages along the road were held by Arabs, who blocked passage and laid ambushes. At the end of March, when a convoy from Kfar Etzion was attacked, Jerusalem lost all its armoured vehicles. This intensified the difficulties of simple conveying. In April the second phase came—the attempt to seize strategic points on the road, and so free it for traffic. This was Operation Nachshon.

At this time the key was the hill post at Kastel. Regular Arab armies had not yet taken the field, and the Arab Legion was not yet in Latrun. The Arab forces were Iraqi irregulars and villagers. Their leader was Abdul Khader el Husseini, who had courage and enterprise, and enjoyed considerable authority throughout the whole Jerusalem area. These irregulars were well supplied with light weapons. Operation Nachshon operated from both ends, from west and from east. On the 3rd April, Kastel was taken and two days later lost. Kastel dominated the Jewish village of Motza on the road, and linked up Arab villages north and south of the road. On the 6th, moving from the west, Arab Hulda and Deir el Muheisin were taken. From the latter Jews were ordered out after two days by the British. On the 9th, after confused fighting, in which Abdul Khader was killed, Kastel was recaptured from the east and thereafter permanently held. Two days later Colonia was occupied and demolished. On the 16th, Saris was likewise taken and demolished, but repeated assaults on Zuba failed. On the 20th, a convoy of 300 vehicles was attacked at Deir Ayub, and the road was again blocked. Nachshon involved, for the first time, operations on an army scale, with tasks of supply, administration,

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communications, discipline, with ranks and insignia. A brigade was formed of three battalions—one, mostly of raw recruits, for the western sector, one of Palmach veterans for the eastern, a third in reserve. The diversion of Irgun forces against Deir Yassin, in the teeth of Hagana demands, was in part responsible for the temporary loss of Kastel. The Jewish forces achieved what they did because the first big consignment of arms had arrived; great administrative ability was revealed, and the officers trained in the Jewish Brigade Group did fine work. By scraping all fronts 1,500 men had been got together. But there was much delay in using the breathing space gained for pushing through convoys to Jerusalem, and the weight of force was on the western sector, although the eastern had the heavier task. It was probably for prestige reasons that the Arabs concentrated on Kastel, and they fought with devotion and enthusiasm and had fine leadership. It was, indeed, the loss of Abdul Khader which turned the event against them. On the Jewish side the Nachshon operation was recognised as a desperate gamble, justified only by the critical situation in Jerusalem.

On the 29th April an attempt was made to free the University-Hadassah area from the other side. Had it succeeded the road to Jericho would have been dominated. It did not succeed. More fortunate was the assault on Katamon on the 30th April. Katamon is a modern quarter, at that time a favourite abode of Jewish, British, and Arabs of the wealthier class. It was important because from it the Arabs threatened the Jewish quarters Kyriat Shmuel and part of Rehavia; in Jewish hands it would cut Arab communications with Malyha and Ain Karim from which they drew food supplies. The key to Katamon was a monastery, strongly held by Arabs. This point was attacked and taken, but heavy counter-attacks were made, which would have succeeded, had not the Arabs suddenly lost heart. Battles are not so much won by the victors as lost by the vanquished. The way was prepared for the capture of the whole south of Jerusalem.

The Jewish capture of Katamon anticipated a forward Arab advance which might well have resulted in the taking of Rehavia, the Jewish centre, and of the whole of Jewish Jerusalem. It was, therefore, a turning point in the Jerusalem campaign, and it initiated a big Arab exodus from the city to Amman—"a road of Arab despair," as one observer called it. But the Jewish quarters

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were being heavily shelled, the Arab Legion was attacking Etzion, food and water were reduced to meagre rations. All this—the blockade, the fighting, the bombardment, the massacre of the hospital convoy—was taking place while there was an appreciable British garrison in Jerusalem. Indeed on the 4th May a regiment of tanks had been brought into the city from the Canal Zone, not to maintain order but to cover the evacuation. The British commander professed to believe that the Irgun was preparing an all-out attack on the British forces; he seems to have had little idea of the real strength of the terrorists, and none at all of the plans or the powers of the Jewish command. The British authorities expected and believed in an Arab victory. As one officer said, "It's you who will be sorry that we left. You think that you can keep your toe-hold in Asia? You'll soon find how precarious it is." They suspended food convoys to the Old City for eight days until two rifles and three pistols alleged to have been stolen by "unidentified Jews" were returned. On the 12th May the British guards left Ras el Ain, the springhead of the Jerusalem water supply, and Iraqis walked in. If the Jewish administration had not filled the cisterns and introduced rationing, reduction by thirst would have been inevitable. On the 2nd May an order had been issued calling to the colours all members of the Hagana.

On the 13th May, two days before the British evacuation, the Kfar Etzion bloc was finally stormed by the Arab Legion, which, according to Mr. Bevin's pledge, should have been in Transjordan. They attacked with 25-pounder guns, Sherman tanks, gun carriers, mortars. In 1924 some Jews had bought land fourteen miles south of Jerusalem on the Hebron road, but it was not settled till 1936, and then only by thirty labourers who leased a house and other buildings from the Russian Church. They began to clear the stony land, and to plant vines and fruit trees, and they gave their settlement the name Kfar Etzion. During the Arab rising of 1936-39 the labourers left and Arabs uprooted the plantations. In 1940 the Jewish National Fund took over the land, and later increased its area. They bought a farm and buildings from a German missionary society in Jerusalem, and in August 1943 settled there a group of Mizrachi (orthodox) workers. By 1946 there was a thriving village. Over 100,000 trees had been planted, vegetables were being raised, field crops sown, and cattle and poultry raised, and a rest house was established for religious



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Jews. The next step was to establish a sister-settlement (Massuot Yitzhak) hard by in 1946. In the autumn of 1946 a third settlement was founded, and then in 1947 a fourth, which was occupied by Hashomer Hazair, Left Wing Labour men and women, all of whom belonged to the Palmach, the crack section of Hagana. The first three villages constituted a triangular group within a mile or a mile and a half from one another. The fourth, Ein Tsarim, was rather farther away.

When the U.N. Assembly passed the Partition Resolution of the 29th November, 1947, it soon became apparent that Kfar Etzion's Arab neighbours of Hebron, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem would take the offensive. The settlers began to prepare defences, but their villages were dispersed, they were a long way from Jerusalem, they were surrounded by Arabs, and they were dependent on supplies brought by convoy through a dangerous country. Prudence might have dictated evacuation, but the maintenance of frontier posts had been adopted as a general policy. Soon a convoy was ambushed with the loss of ten men. A troop of thirty-five men who tried to reach the blockaded settlement was destroyed to a man. In April 1948 a convoy with two companies of Hagana was ambushed near Bethlehem on its way back from Kfar Etzion, and the remnant was saved by the intervention of British troops. From that moment Kfar Etzion was completely isolated. The siege had lasted four months before Etzion fell to the Arab Legion on the 13th May. One by one the settlements were taken after desperate resistance. It was the Legion's artillery and tanks which won the victory. The total garrison numbered 400 men and 100 women. If evacuation had been adopted all these and those who had been lost in the convoys would have been available for operations in Jerusalem, and it is probable that they would have sufficed to enable the Jews to take the whole of that city. Strategic considerations were sacrificed to ideological.

## CHAPTER XII

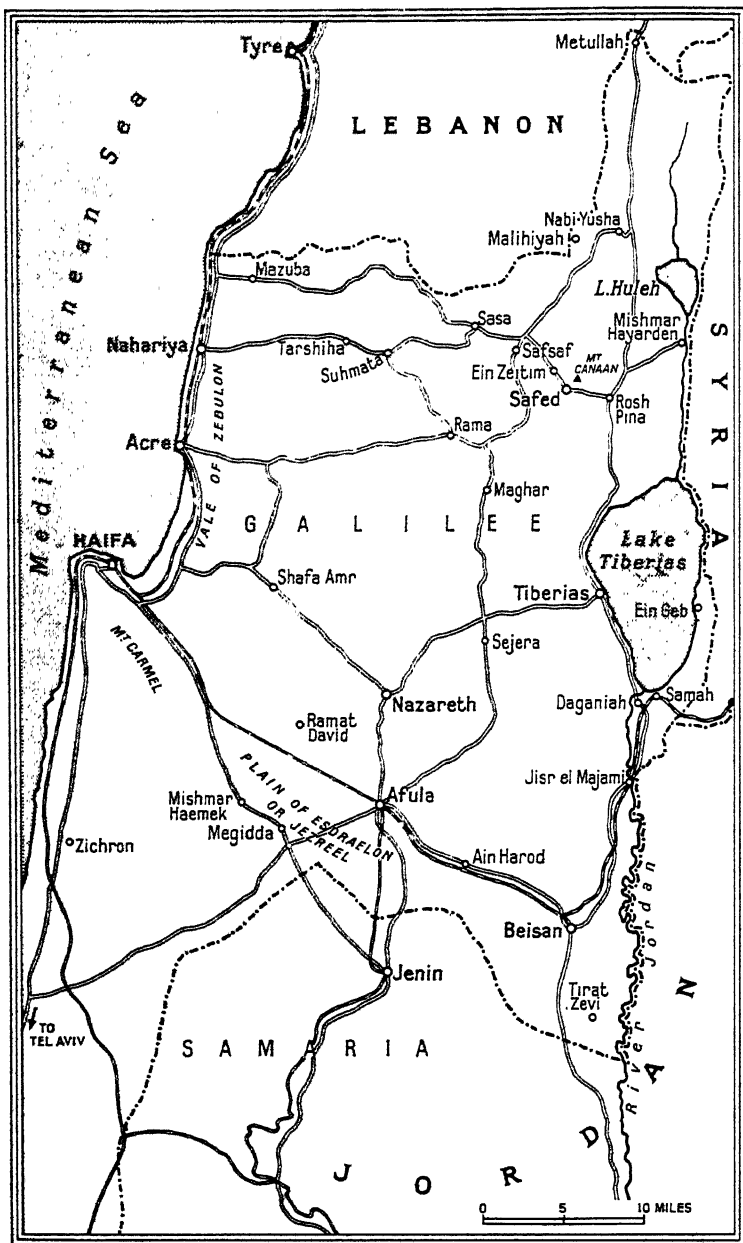
### HAIFA

SIR GEORGE ADAM SMITH'S description of Galilee is familiar to all students of Palestine :

“The province falls into four divisions. There is the Jordan Valley with its two lakes ; that singular chasm, which runs along the East to Galilee, sinking from Hermon's base to more than 700 ft. below the level of the ocean. From this valley, and corresponding mightily to its three divisions below the Lake of Tiberias, the Lake itself, and above the Lake—three belts in strips run Westward : First the Plain of Esdraelon ; second the so-called Lower Galilee, a series of long parallel ranges, all below 1,850 ft., which, with broad valleys between them, cross from the plateau above Tiberias to the maritime plains of Haifa and Acre ; and third, Upper Galilee, a series of plateaux, with a double water-parting, and surrounded by hills from 2,000 to 4,000 ft. As you gaze North from the Samaritan border, these three zones rise in steps to the beginnings of Lebanon ; and from the North-East, over the Gulf of Jordan, the snowy head of Hermon looks down athwart them.”

Three valleys distinguish Galilee. The Vale of Zebulon along the coast of the Bay of Acre and on the south-east extending to Harosheth where the hills close in. A short distance further east, the great plain of Jezreel, emphatically the Emek (valley), opens out and reaches as far as Ain Harod, where the Vale of Jezreel runs into the Jordan Valley at Beisan. The Vale of Zebulon and the Emek are both at sea-level, the Vale of Jezreel some 500 ft. below, and the Jordan Valley between 1,000 and 500 ft. below. Along the whole length of these valleys from Haifa-Acre to Beisan runs a railway, but it did not function during the war. It was the roads which mattered.

The roads run from west to east and down the Jordan Valley.



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The chief west-to-east roads are: (1) from Mazuba on the Mediterranean, parallel with the Lebanese frontier until it reaches Sasa. There it divides; one branch continues north along the Lebanese frontier and joins the Jordan Valley road at the strong post of Nabi Yusha; a second forks south-east *via* Safsaf, Ein Zeitim, and Rosh Pina, and continues along the western shore of Lake Tiberias past the town of Tiberias to join the Jordan Valley road at Daganya, at the southern end of the Lake. (2) From Nahariya on the Mediterranean *via* Tarshiha to Suhmata. Here it divides; one branch joins road (1) at Sasa, the other turns south to Rama. Road (3) runs from Acre to Rama; there it divides. One branch runs north to Safed and joins road (2) at Safsaf; the other runs due south to Maghar, where it divides again, one fork running due south to Beisan and the other south-east to Tiberias. Road (4) runs from Haifa south-east to Nazareth, where it turns north and east to Tiberias. From Haifa a road runs south round the foot of Mt. Carmel along the sea-coast to the plain of Sharon and Tel Aviv, with a northern prolongation round the Bay of Acre to Acre. The Jordan Valley road runs from Metulla on the Lebanese frontier, the most northerly Jewish settlement, to Tirat Zvi, the most southerly in this region.

A number of bridges span the Jordan. Between Lake Huleh and Lake Tiberias there is the Bridge of the Daughters of Jacob, hard by the Jewish settlement Mishmar Hayarden. South of Lake Tiberias there is Jisr El Majami, close to the Rutenberg Electricity Works, where the railway crosses the river.

Politically, the whole northern frontier of Galilee, from Ras El Nakurah on the Mediterranean to Metulla at the northern end of the Jordan Valley, ran with Lebanon. From the neighbourhood of Metulla, along a line a little to the east of Lakes Huleh and Tiberias, as far as the southern end of Lake Tiberias, ran the Syrian frontier, which there joined up with the frontier of Trans-jordan. When Samaria was occupied by Arabs through Trans-jordan Galilee was surrounded on three sides—north, east, and south. All these Arab States and territories were in communication with one another by land, and were in a situation which permitted of combined operations against the Jewish settlements in Galilee, if the Arab command was capable of such combination.

The lines of communication were not in fact altogether favourable to the attack. As the roads across Galilee ran west and east

and not from north to south, an advance from Lebanon was handicapped. The Jewish-held road down the Jordan Valley was at right angles to a Syrian or Transjordan invasion, and if it were cut the Jewish position in that region would be threatened, but there were other roads in the rear by which support could come. The Syrian and Transjordan supply bases were distant; the two bridges available were not very adequate; and the terrain was difficult. In practice the various Arab forces in this region were not co-operative, and preferred to act each on its own.

All the towns of any size in Galilee—Haifa, Acre, Nazareth, Tiberias, Samakh, Beisan—were either predominantly or largely Arab. Haifa had a population of 146,000 (38,000 Moslems, 28,000 Christians, 80,000 Jews); Acre had 8,000, all Arabs; Nazareth 9,000, all Arabs; Safed had only 2,200 Jews in a population of 10,000; Tiberias with 12,000 inhabitants had a majority of Jews; Samakh held 2,000 Arabs. Some of the Arab villages had considerable populations: Sappuria 3,500, Belad Esh Sheikh 1,000.

These towns and villages lay athwart the roads which were Jewish life-lines. The road from Haifa to Tel Aviv was blocked at two points by four Arab villages; traffic had to be diverted at Zichron over the Carmel range, and reach Haifa by the back-door. The road to the valley of Jezreel from Haifa was blocked by Belad Esh Sheikh, necessitating a diversion. The road from Haifa to Nahariya and the settlements on the Lebanon frontier was blocked by Acre. Communication with Nahariya was maintained by sea; Hanita, Eilon and above all Yehiam were practically besieged, and a convoy returning from Yehiam was destroyed to a man in March 1948. Shafa Amr barred the main road to Nazareth, and Nazareth itself was at a complex of roads leading to the whole line from Daganya (on Lake Tiberias) to the Beisan area. Tarshiha blocked road (2) in the north and Safad road (3). Beisan itself cut the line from Lake Tiberias to Tirat Zvi. By December 1947 Jewish traffic in Galilee had been reduced to convoys.

Broadly speaking, the Arabs occupied the hills as well as vital points on the roads. They looked down upon the Jewish villages in the plains, upon which they made swift raids, and their fire rendered work in the fields difficult and hazardous. As early as the 9th January, 1948, some 600 Syrians attacked Jewish villages in the north-east. On the 11th February some 1,400 Arabs from

Syria crossed Transjordan, moved over the Jamiah bridge south of Tirat Zvi, and occupied the "Samarian Triangle"—Jenin, Tulkeram, Nablus. They were under the command of Fawzi Kaukji, who established, without any hindrance or remonstrance from the British authorities, an administration of his own. He had won a considerable reputation as a guerilla leader in the troubles of 1936-39 and he called his present force the Army of Liberation. The invasion by the regular armies of the Arab States was still three months away, and until then the task of harrying the Jews and preparing the way for greater things was entrusted to irregulars—Arab villagers and volunteers or mercenaries from the neighbouring countries. They were a motley collection. In March 1948 it was estimated that the infiltrates in arms included 2,500 Syrians, 2,500 Iraqis, several hundred Lebanese, as many Egyptians, and 150 Yugoslav Moslems. There were also a few Germans and British deserters. Most but not all of these operated in the Galilee area. They drew their weapons from three sources—Syria, where the French had left a goodly stock, the Arab States (who also supplied officers), and the Western Desert, where they abounded.

Two other factors counted from the first. For the maintenance of order the Mandatory Power had built posts in the towns and at important cross-roads, and they had established military camps, such as those south and north of Haifa. These were objects of great desire on both sides. The police posts were veritable fortresses, the camps were store-houses of supplies. They were, of course, under British military control, but the army was steadily withdrawing and evacuating. Into whose hands would they fall? That depended partly on general directives, and partly on the will of the local officer. A timely hint would give one or the other side the opportunity to seize a strategic post before its rivals. The British Army, until the last days before in June the flag was hauled down, was a third element in the situation, though in an ever-diminishing area. The Jews claimed that they threw their weight on the Arab side, that they designed to hand over to the Arabs posts and camps, that they supplied them with arms, that they closed their eyes to Arab operations, and came down sharply on Jewish. There was exaggeration in this impression, but it was not without truth. On several occasions in Galilee British troops intervened to protect Jewish settlements, but their principal concern was to keep their line of evacuation open and undisturbed.

This, in practice, told against the Jews. A curfew meant that they could not move along the roads by night. Disarming meant that weapons even on convoys had to be concealed. And weapons, until the Mandate ended and the sea and air were at last open, were desperately scarce. At best they consisted, in this phase, of a few home-made mortars, rifles, sten guns, and machine-guns. There were so few weapons that they had to be passed from hand to hand. Ammunition and explosives were equally scanty, and in the close, irregular fighting of the towns explosives counted heavily.

From the beginning of December 1947 sporadic trouble in the towns and the villages and on the roads blazed up all over Galilee, raids and counter-raids, outrages and counter-outrages, but no attempt to capture and hold until on the 16th February Fawzi Kaukji made his first serious venture from the Samaritan Triangle, against Tirat Zvi in the Beisan valley. In the Beisan valley there were, apart from the settled population, some 3,000 semi-nomads, who shifted their tents from there to the mountains with the seasons. They combined, as is their wont, parenthetic brigandage with cultivation, and in harvesting their crops made no fine distinction between their own and those of their Jewish neighbours. It was a congenial atmosphere for Fawzi, who hoped, starting from Tirat Zvi, to roll up the whole line of Jewish villages in the valley, and clear the way for an advance along the vale of Jezreel, and, in due course, to Haifa. The attack on Tirat Zvi failed, because (as so often happens in war) at the critical moment the Arabs believed themselves defeated. They lost many dead, and left much spoil behind in the fields, which heavy rain had turned to mud and swamp. This check did not damp the spirit of Kaukji. On the 24th March he was issuing orders of the day from "The Military Headquarters of the Arab Army of Liberation in Northern Palestine," demanding free access to the Arab villages and threatening headmen and villagers that they would be responsible if admittance were refused or dissidents admitted. In truth the Army of Liberation was not popular with the villagers, who knew a scallywag or a bandit, however fine the name.

A few days later, on the 4th April, Fawzi made a strategic move of importance. With 1,000 men he came up from the Triangle and attacked Mishmar Haemek. The name, "Guardian of the valley," indicates its significance. It is one of the keys of the Vale of Jezreel. Hard by, to the south-east, is Megiddo, Armageddon,

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which has seen so many conquerors and so much history; to the north was the point where all the Jewish traffic from Tel Aviv to Haifa must pass. If he could take Mishmar Haemek, he could isolate Haifa from Tel Aviv and from the plain of Jezreel, and he could hope to link up with the Arabs of Haifa and play his part in deciding the fate of that city and port. The stakes were high, and he had the men and the guns. His men surrounded Mishmar, and entrenched in the hills and villages around. All the evening and throughout the night he bombarded Mishmar. The next day a British officer arrived and advised the Jews to evacuate. They refused, but were glad to evacuate their children. They received reinforcements, and the Arabs dared not make an assault. The struggle lasted six days, and on the 10th Fawzi retreated. The Jews took up the offensive. They seized the hills and villages the Arabs had occupied, and moved further, to hold firmly a line from Megiddo south-east towards Jenin, the gateway to the Triangle. The prestige of Kaukji and of the Army of Liberation dropped like lead with this resounding defeat.

On the 16th April, British troops had evacuated Safed, leaving the two police stations in Arab hands. On the 28th they evacuated the whole of Eastern Galilee, and lifted the curfew on the roads. At last, in this area, the hands of the Hagana were freed, and an offensive was in full swing. That same day the Jews occupied Rosh Pina, between Lake Huleh and Lake Tiberias, with its police post, its military camp, and its customs house, and Samakh at the southern end of Lake Tiberias. They then turned against Safed.

Safed, some 2,600 ft. high, bars the road from Haifa-Acre across Central Galilee to Northern Galilee. To the north-east is Mt. Canaan, 300 ft. higher, on which was a Jewish settlement, and due east Rosh Pina, another Jewish settlement. The centre of Safed is a fortress hill. It looks down 150 ft. below on the Jewish quarter, which constituted the western half of the town. The Arab quarter filled the eastern and southern positions, and where the southern met the Jewish quarter there was a police post. A little to the east, on the road to Mt. Canaan, there was a specially stout police post. The only road into Safed passed through the Arab quarter. The Jewish quarter was practically besieged, and reinforcements and supplies had to come over rough mountain tracks. Of Safed's 2,200 Jews most were old or children, and the



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youth were theological students with little military spirit. All told they raised 150 fighting men; but, because of the strategical importance of the town, 60 men of the Hagana were infiltrated when the British left on the 16th April. The Arab force in the town numbered 2,700, 2,000 men of Safed and 700 Lebanese, Iraqis, and others.

Trouble had begun in Safed in December 1947, but until April was limited to attacks on transport and sniping. On the 7th February, 1948, Arabs tried to take Ein Zeitin, a Jewish settlement to the north of the town. British troops intervened, and the attackers were driven off. The Jews replied by raiding Sasa a week later, which had the effect of compelling the Arabs to keep men to guard their villages in what had been considered a safe area. In April they occupied a dominating hill near by, which put Arab Safed in a state of blockade, a counter to the Arab blockade. When the British left on the 16th April, they allowed the Arabs to take over all the three strong points which have been mentioned—the hill and the two police posts. Sniping was intensified. A Jew who was in Safed at the time has described the situation :

“We are doing a job, which, had I seen it in the pictures, would have impressed me with the heroism of the participants. We are doing guard or rather ambush duties, singly or in pairs throughout the night among the ruins of the demolished houses. Along the boundary of the Jewish and Arab quarters the distance between us and the Arabs' positions is ten to twenty yards. To get into an ambush position we have to cross the narrow streets in no man's land every evening, expecting to be ambushed at any corner; and when we have reached it we wait for morning. I always imagined that Stalingrad must have been like this, with the difference that we have not had the training or the psychological preparation. Every night we hear the Arabs chatting in their positions. Sometimes they even shout to us in Hebrew. As Jews and Arabs had been neighbours in this town for years many of the combatants knew one another personally. The psychological effect of being shot at from a range of twenty yards is something you have to get used to.”

Such was life in Safed, until Operation Jephtha (the first Jewish offensive of some scale except Operation Nachshon on the

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Jerusalem road) was launched to capture key positions in Eastern Galilee before the impending invasion by the armies of the Arab States. Its aims were to open the Tiberias-Rosh Pina road, and to clear up the Safed situation. Tiberias fell on the 18th April, and the whole Arab population fled. On the 1st May two Arab villages north of Safed were stormed, and a whole battalion of Hagana was thrown into Safed the next day. The fate of the town depended on the possession of the three strong points now held by Arabs. On the 6th May an assault was made on the fortified hill and failed. A second assault on the 9th May captured the fortified hill and the near-by police station. In heavy fighting throughout the night and until the next morning at 7 they were taken. The Mt. Canaan post followed, and by the 11th May all Safed was in Jewish hands and the Arab population had fled.

In the north-east of Galilee, a little to the west of Lake Huleh, the British Army on evacuation had left the very strong police post of Nabi Yusha on the Lebanon frontier to the Arabs. On the 20th April, 1948, the Hagana had attacked it, but was beaten off. The assault was repeated, but successfully, on the 17th May, and then Malakiya hard by was taken. North-eastern Galilee was cleared (though Malakiya was later to be lost for a short time to the Lebanese invaders—their solitary success). It is worth noting that the leader of the Syrian volunteers in this area was Adib Esh-Shishagli, who since has been Syrian Prime Minister and Syrian Chief of Staff.

Meanwhile events of not less significance were happening in Western Galilee. It will be remembered that Jewish traffic from Tel Aviv to Haifa had been compelled to diverge from the road at Zichron, cross the Carmel range, and enter Haifa from the east *via* Yagur and Kfar Atta. Hard by Kfar Atta was Ramat Yohanan. This route was vital not only to Haifa's communications with the south but also with the north, and most immediately with the Vale of Zebulon along Haifa Bay, in which were the oil refinery and numerous Jewish industrial and residential settlements. To all these Ramat Yohanan was a bulwark. For some time there had been concentrating at Shafa Amr, a few miles to the east and an important Arab base, a band of Druses 100 strong from the Jebel Druse. The Druses have a reputation for valour and no marked distaste for loot. On the 12th April they occupied two Arab villages over against Ramat Yohanan, and drove out the

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inhabitants. From there they shelled Ramat Yohanan, and threatened to take it, and cut the important north-south road, break into the Haifa Bay zone, and lend a hand to the Arabs of Haifa, a city of which the hour of decision was manifestly at hand. The Jews decided to anticipate by taking the offensive. At dawn on the 16th April they occupied the two villages and two heights overlooking them. The Druses counter-attacked the hill positions, and the Jews fell back to the villages. Both sides received reinforcements. The Jews were driven out of one village and were on the point of evacuating the other, when the Druses retreated. Once again a battle was lost by the side whose heart failed first. But the Druses had fought stoutly. Later the Jews were to raise a force of Druses against the Arabs, and that force included some of the men who had attacked Ramat Yohanan. The Arab villages remained in Jewish hands and were a check on Arab Shafa Amr.

Every circumstance combined to make Haifa a centre of friction between Jews and Arabs, and of anxiety to the British authorities. Next to Jerusalem it held the largest concentration of Arabs, and the United Nations had decided that it should belong to the Jewish State. It was the greatest port (practically the only modern port) in the country, and therefore its possession was a matter of the highest political and strategical importance to Jews and Arabs alike. Ports everywhere are inclined to lawlessness. The recent development of the port, the oil refineries, the war, the great military camps south and north of Haifa, had drawn labourers from their villages, detached them from their ancient homes and ways, and plunged them into the temptations and the opportunities of the city. Propaganda against the Jews was intense, and the visible if gradual transformation of the Haifa zone into the future industrial belt of Jewish Palestine did not discourage it. For the British Haifa must be the last point which they would hold in the country. From there they must take their final departure, and there they must concentrate their men and their vast stores of equipment. Their primary need was security, that the operation should be carried through without interruption. Now that powers above them had decided that the British flag should be hauled down and had fixed the day, the struggle of Jews and Arabs no longer deeply concerned them politically. There might be an emotional preference for this side, or an emotional distaste for that, but the great thing was not to throw away life

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in a conflict which was no longer theirs, and when all these contentions were soon to be left far behind. To disarm a city of 150,000 inhabitants would have been as impractical and dangerous as it was essentially useless. It was enough to establish a line of demarcation between the protagonists—a line which every night was disarranged by them—to fire occasional meaningless volleys, and to hope that things would hold sufficiently till release came, and Haifa could be left and forgotten.

Very different was the temper of Jews and Arabs. Haifa was a great prize, and if, while the British were still there, they could do little more than manœuvre and raid and push here and there, they knew that the decisive battle must come, and that it would be stern and hard and bloody. The Jewish commander in Haifa and Galilee was Colonel Moshe Carmel (who incidentally has written an account of the Galilee campaign which is one of the best books the war has produced). As early as January 1948 the Arabs appointed Mohammed Bek the commander of their forces in Haifa. He had been a captain in the Arab Legion, and was an energetic officer, who subdued the various irregular units to his authority, and co-operated harmoniously with the religious and political leaders. Before the final combat three incidents stand out. On the 30th December, 1947, Arab workers at the oil refinery killed forty-one Jewish workers. On the 17th March a big convoy, bringing arms to the Arabs from Lebanon, was intercepted at Kiryat Motzkin and wiped out. On this occasion Mohammed Bek, the Arab commander, was killed with several of his lieutenants, and for a time there was depression and disorder in the Arab ranks in Haifa. But early in April Amin Azaddin took his place. He came with a good many men. He had been a captain in the Transjordan military college, and he soon reorganised the Arab forces. The third incident came, as a reprisal, on the 28th March. A convoy from Haifa had brought desperately needed supplies to the Jewish settlements on the Lebanon frontier, but was ambushed and wiped out to a man on its return.

On the morning of the 21st April, 1948, General Stockwell, the British commander, informed Jews and Arabs that he had evacuated Haifa except for the port; that he was no longer interested in the internal affairs of the city; that his sole concern was the safe evacuation of the British forces, which, he trusted, the Jews and the Arabs would not disturb. The hour had come,

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and no time was to be lost if the great prize was to be won. In Haifa, as in other Palestine towns of diverse nationalities, Jews and Arabs dwelt apart, each community in its own quarter. The principal Jewish quarter was Hadar Hakarmel, higher than the rest of the town, but well below Mt. Carmel. A secondary Jewish quarter was the Commercial Centre hard by the port; and there were Jewish communities—Tel Amal and Nve Shanan—on the slopes of Carmel itself. Between Hadar Hakarmel and the Commercial Centre lay the Arab area, crossed by the main streets, the Burj and Stanton roads, which linked Hadar Hakarmel and the Commercial Centre. Between the eastern end of Hadar Hakarmel and the Jewish settlements on Mt. Carmel ran the deep wadi Rushmiyah, traversed by a bridge across which passed the road from Haifa, east to the plain of Jezreel and north to Haifa Bay, Acre, and beyond. This bridge and road, of the highest strategical importance, were dominated by three points in the immediate neighbourhood:

- (1) On the Hadar Hakarmel side by a factory, which the British had requisitioned, but which was now in Jewish hands.
- (2) A big concrete building, commonly called the Nejidah House, containing the offices of the Arab quarters.
- (3) The neighbouring Arab quarter of Halesa.

In the centre of Haifa were two buildings of tactical importance—the Telephone Exchange in the Burj Street and the Huri House, which was the railway headquarters. The Arab H.Q. was in the Old City, the Jewish H.Q. on Hadar Hakarmel.

Colonel Carmel's plan of operations was simple. His forces were to be divided into four sections. One was to move from Hadar Hakarmel and occupy the Arab house covering the Rushmiyah bridge, and so keep open Jewish communications east and north, and prevent Arab reinforcements coming by the same route. A second was to move from the exactly opposite end, the Commercial Centre, and push up the Stanton road from the west. Two other parties were to move from Hadar Hakarmel: one striking west and north was to take the Huri House and advance to the Stanton road; the other was to move down the Burj road, take the Telephone Exchange, and join its companion on the Stanton road, and the combined parties were to strike along the Stanton road until they joined up with the party advancing from

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the Commercial Centre. If all these operations proved successful the Arab city would be cut into three parts without possibility of intercommunication, all the strong points would be in Jewish hands, and no reinforcements could reach the Arabs. Briefly Haifa would be won.

Sundown on the 21st April was zero hour, but the urgency of action at the Rushmiyah bridge to anticipate the Arabs brooked no delay. A force of thirty was sent at once to take the Nejidah building. It was taken after a bitter fight from floor to floor, but then the troubles of the Jewish force began. They had neither food nor water nor bandages, and ammunition was very scant. The building was dilapidated, without doors or windows; it was surrounded by Arab houses and dominated by Arab Halesa. It was besieged and under ceaseless Arab fire, and most of the garrison were killed or wounded. Attempts to relieve it were made throughout the day and night, but without success. A force from the Carmel tried to take Halesa, but progress was slow, desperately slow. It was not until the morning of the 22nd that Halesa was taken and the survivors relieved.

Much more fortunate was the main offensive against the Arab quarters. For the first time the Jews used artillery, the Little David mortars invented and made locally. They caused much terror and some destruction. Throughout the night the columns advanced to their objectives, often breaking through from house to house. The bitterest fighting was for the Huri building. In the end the Jews had to burn it before the last of the Arab defenders retreated. By 7 o'clock on the morning of the 22nd April the two columns had reached the Stanton road, and could signal to the column advancing from the Commercial Centre, though it was not till the afternoon that they actually linked up. At 11 a.m. a shell from Little David struck the Arab H.Q. The commander and his staff fled, and were never again seen in Haifa. This desertion completely demoralised the Arab forces, who till then had resisted stoutly. The fate of Haifa was decided.

In the early hours of the morning, when the issue of the struggle was to him fairly clear, General Stockwell had got into touch with the Jewish commander to ask on what conditions he would accept the surrender of the town. The fighting was still going on, and the decision not so plain to Colonel Carmel as to General Stockwell. However, he set out his conditions :

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(1) The Arab forces to surrender and to hand over arms, ammunition, explosives, all instruments of war, and armoured cars.

(2) All foreign soldiers, including Germans, English, and Yugoslavs in the city to be handed over and made prisoners.

(3) The Hagana to have complete control of the city and the inhabitants to obey their orders.

(4) All inhabitants, Jews and Arabs alike, to have equal rights and duties.

(5) Immediate curfew in all Arab quarters; the Arabs to surrender all weapons.

General Stockwell suggested only one change—that any British soldiers serving with the Arabs should be handed over to the British. This was accepted. All the other conditions he agreed were entirely proper. A meeting with the Arabs was arranged at 4 p.m. When they heard the terms the Arabs asked for an hour and a half to consider them. They used the interval to get into touch with the Arab Higher Committee, and to take the Mufti's instructions. They returned and said that they could not accept the terms, but that the whole Arab population would abandon the town. The Mufti, it appears, had assured them that the Arab invasion was at hand, and very soon Haifa would be Arab once again. General Stockwell told them that this was madness, and they would regret it. But they followed the Mufti's instructions and abandoned the city. A joint British and Jewish post took their arms, which were deposited with the British Army but, as promised, handed over to the Jews when the Army left.

Acre still held out and blocked the main road to the north. Hard by was a big British camp, and the British kept Acre under their guardianship until they evacuated it. The Jews could not attack, but they placed it under siege. It was reduced to hard straits, but, when the British took away their sheltering hand, an assault was determined. The 16th May was the appointed day. The Jews had held Napoleon's Hill to the east, and from here the whole city was in range. Acre is girt round by the sea on three sides, and the Old City is surrounded by an old but strong wall. Within the Old City is an old fortress, at this time used as a prison. Outside the wall is the New City, with a strong police post on the seashore. These two buildings were the keys, and so formidable

did the assault appear that, just as the troops were setting out, Colonel Carmel received the following signal from H.Q. :

“Weigh carefully if the assault on Acre is necessary, having regard to our scanty resources. Perhaps it is more advisable to intensify the siege. Weigh carefully and decide.”

Colonel Carmel put the signal in his pocket and began the operation. From Napoleon Hill and from little Jewish ships outside the harbour fire was poured on the city, and the infantry went in. They were held up by the police post, and psychological warfare was brought to bear. A loudspeaker told the citizens of Acre that they were cut off, no help could come, and they were throwing away their lives uselessly. A prisoner took in to the city a letter demanding surrender. Meanwhile the attack was renewed on the police post, and it was found abandoned and empty. From this vantage point the assault could be pressed against the Old City. Later that night a priest emerged from the Old City, and asked what were the conditions. He received them, and within a few hours returned from the Old City with the acceptance of the Arab leaders. Acre was Jewish, and the inhabitants fled to the Lebanon. Five days later Jewish troops pushed up to Ras El Nakura, the frontier post on the sea with Lebanon, and that possible route of invasion was blocked.

The situation in Western Galilee when the invasion by the Arab States was launched was this. The Jews held the whole coast to the Lebanon frontier, and thrust narrow tongues out on the Lebanese frontier as far as Hanita, and from Nahariya on the coast due east to Yehiam. In Eastern Galilee the thin line of posts strung from the Lebanese-Syrian frontiers to Lake Tiberias had widened into a broadish belt embracing all the important towns—Safed, Tiberias, Samakh. The neck across from the Mediterranean to the Jordan, constituted by the vales of Zebulon and Jezreel, had been thickened slightly until the Beisan area was reached. The Beisan area was wholly in Jewish hands. All the rest of Galilee was under Arab control. Strategically the Jewish position had been much improved and notable victories had been won. Western Galilee, be it noted, had been allotted by U.N. to the Arab State. Vital elements were now held by the Jews. They had been won at the price of skill and courage and blood, and in the judgments of history these have often been title deeds.



## CHAPTER XIII

### INVASION

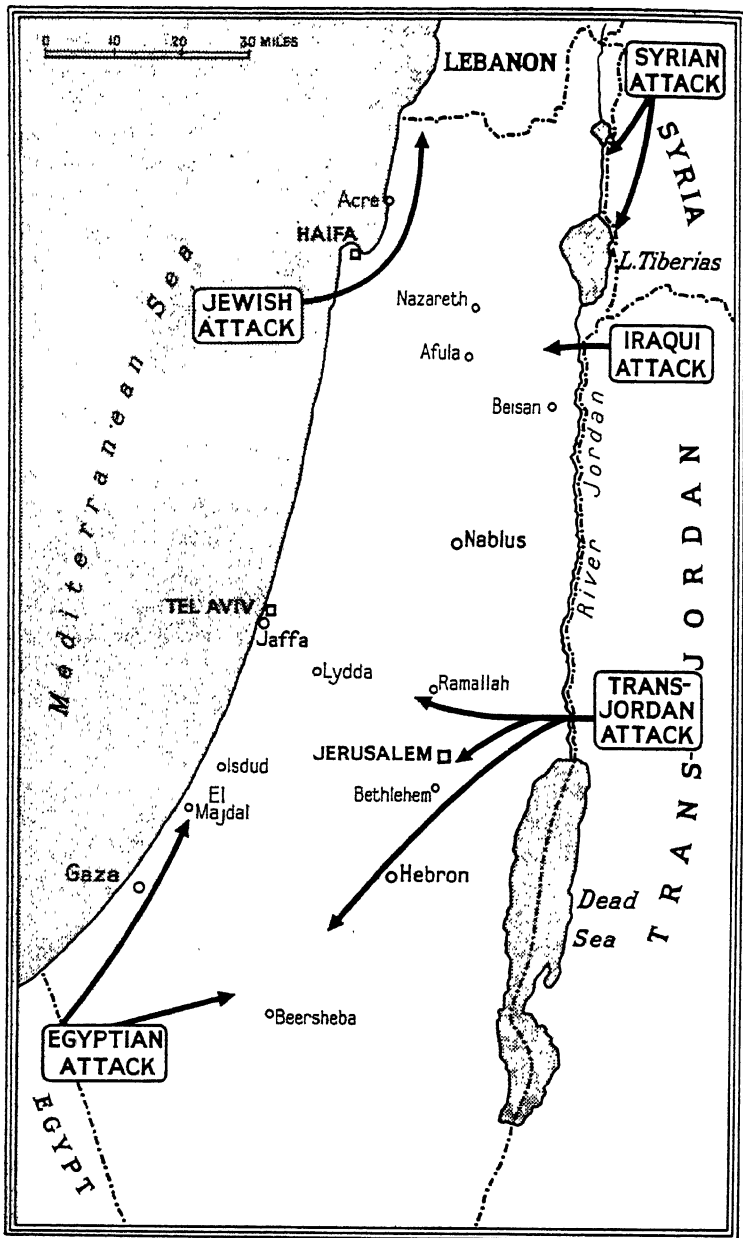
ON the 15th May the Arab States opened their war against Israel, and their offensive began north, east, and south. The sea was under temporary blockade by the Egyptian navy. The Lebanon, Syria, Transjordan, and Egypt, which had common frontiers with Israel, put into the field their own armies under their own command. Iraq co-operated with Transjordan; distant Saudi Arabia added her modest contingent to Transjordan; and volunteers from the Sudan and North Africa threw in their lot with the Egyptians. The Arab armies had tanks, armoured cars, artillery, aircraft, machine-guns, and plentiful ammunition. Their operative forces outnumbered the Israelis many times, and in Palestine could call upon the local population. Behind them were such reserves as might be drawn from a population of thirty million—the Israeli population was 650,000. They had established State organisations, budgets, free diplomatic and commercial contacts with the greater world, all of which Israel had to improvise in the stress of war. In Palestine itself Arabs held the hill country, from which they could harry the Jewish villages in the plains, and few of the vital lines of Jewish communications but were threatened. The Arab leaders were confident of swift victory. Mr. Ben-Gurion told the Israeli State Council that, according to intercepted plans, the occupation of Haifa was to take place on the 20th May; Tel Aviv was to be captured on the 25th May, and on that day Abdullah was to enter Jerusalem. This optimistic view the Arabs shared with most British military experts.

A closer study and a more penetrating psychology might have tempered this excessive optimism. Since the decision of U.N. the Israelis had gone through six months of war against the local Arabs and irregulars from without, and had won a decisive victory over them. In the south they had tamed the raiding Beduin and cleared the roads. In Jerusalem they had won all the New City,

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and had defeated the effort to starve out the city. In the Sharon they had taken Jaffa. The Beisan valley was entirely theirs. Haifa had been won, Acre was at their mercy, and most of Western Galilee was Jewish. The belt between Western and Eastern Galilee, a veritable life-line, had been widened. Eastern Galilee had been fortified by the capture of Safed, Tiberias, and Samakh, and the narrow valley of the Jordan north of Lake Galilee had been broadened. The Arabs had developed the practice of fleeing from their threatened towns and villages, with important military and political consequences. In the areas the Jews held they had no longer to fear and to guard against a hostile element in the testing time of war, and the original weakness of their State—a very large unfriendly minority—was being dissipated.

The best military school is war itself, and in these months the Jews had learnt much. They knew that in their situation the only fruitful strategy was offensive; to stand and wait would be fatal. The convoy had given place to the capture and control of tactical positions commanding the roads. The employment of troops on a relatively large scale in combined operations had begun, and its problems of supply, administration, and manœuvre had become known and were being grappled with. The Hagana was on the way to becoming an army in numbers, training, and organisation, though still in an early stage. Weapons were still desperately scarce, but local manufacture was developing, and they were on their way from abroad. An air force was in the making from Jews and some non-Jews who had learnt their art in the world war. Even the nucleus of a navy was visible, small but capable in a few months of defeating the best the Egyptians could put out, and even of assisting land and air in combined operations. From the internment camps in Cyprus reinforcements were near at hand; and a call had gone out to the refugees on the Continent and to Jews throughout the world which was being answered with men and money. Not least of all, the British as a military and political factor in Palestine were gone. Their blockade of men and arms was at an end, their curfews, their discriminations, their arms searches were over. It was the opinion of every Jewish field commander that the first phase of the struggle, the phase before the 15th May, was the worst, because of the presence of the "third factor." Now, at last, the Jews were free to move and to act as they designed, and as their means permitted, without thought of the



VI. Main Lines of the Arab Invasion

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intervention of the British Army. The two protagonists were face to face.

In the assessment of strength, numbers, weapons, strategical and tactical positions are of high importance, but there is something which is necessary to move them to victory—spirit. The war was popular with the Arabs but it was rooted, not in love of the Palestine people or the Palestine soil, but in hatred of the Jews as foreigners and interlopers, by Islamic tradition of a lower order. In the early phase the passion for loot was stronger than patriotism. The Arabs of Palestine were less enthusiastic than their allies from without; their cities and villages were the field of battle, and upon them must fall the brunt of loss, suffering, and destruction; in the end they were to lose all. The Arab armies reflected the social structure of their countries—poverty and subjection in the ranks, wealth and tyranny in the officers. Dr. Weizmann, when asked why the Egyptian army fared so ill, replied, "The men were too lean and the officers too fat." The intelligence and the training were below the level of modern war and modern weapons, and they were to be exposed to the gruelling of a war of swift movement calling for mobility of mind even more than mobility of machines. At the highest level there was a lack of cohesion and unity. There were ancient enmities between the rulers of the Arab States, fortified by new appetites. They were fighting not so much in a common cause as each for his own hand. If victory could be achieved swiftly the troubles would come after the victory; but if victory was delayed the rifts would widen and the prospects of victory might wither.

In this region of spirit the superiority of the Jews was massive, and might outweigh material advantages. The Israelis were a democratic community. This might express itself in a pullulation of political groups, but in a life or death struggle these differences were, for the most part, suspended. What remained was a sense of individual worth and individual responsibility, which was mirrored in the army. In the early months of the war there were no badges of rank to distinguish officers from one another or from the rank and file, and Jews are a critical and sceptical folk. In such an atmosphere merit, competence, achievement were the test for command, for discipline, and for devoted service. The commanders were youthful, nearly all in the thirties. They had not gone through the dull orthodoxy of slow routine promotion,

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and in their preparation for arms had been extremely eclectic. In the forces were men who had fought as partisans in Eastern Europe, or in the Maquis in France, or in the armies of Great Britain, the United States, and Russia. Many practical experiences were exchanged and many doctrines distilled. The level of intelligence throughout was high, and the capacity to absorb teaching nimble. The Israeli army in this early phase was the best educated and the most socially cohesive in the world; the most conscious of the cause in which it was engaged, and the most desperately resolved to see it through to the end.

An alien ground had quaked and swallowed up six million of their kin. To the contemptuous soldiers of a far-flung empire Israel might be a toe-hold. To the Jews it was their ultimate hope, their all. The fields, the farms, the houses, the schools, the factories, the shops they had themselves fashioned. This society mirrored their own minds, and was their first political creation for two thousand years. Wherever they marched their feet woke echoes of prophets and sages who had corrected and taught and sustained them through bitter ages of exile, and of heroes whose names were trumpet calls. Here the fathers had tended their herds. Here Elijah had wrestled with the priests of Baal, the eternal conflict. Here Micah had prophesied that the law would come forth from Zion, and that they should sit every man under his own vine and under his own fig tree. Here Isaiah had his vision of the earth full of the knowledge of the Lord, who would assemble the outcasts of Israel and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. Here the sages had set up their schools and saved the soul of a conquered people. Here Joshua had summoned sun and moon to lengthen the day of battle. Here Samson had fought and been betrayed to the Philistines. Here Gideon had tested his men. Here Deborah sang her song of victory and praise. Here Saul sought his father's asses and found a kingdom. Here David smote Goliath, and mourned for Saul and Jonathan, and established the royal house. Here Solomon built the Temple, distilled his wisdom, and launched his fleets across the seas. Here they had been defeated and exiled by mighty empires; the mighty empires had gone and they were back again. Before them was the enemy and behind the sea. There could be no retreat. There was no choice. Here they must stand and fight. But at long last they would fight in their own

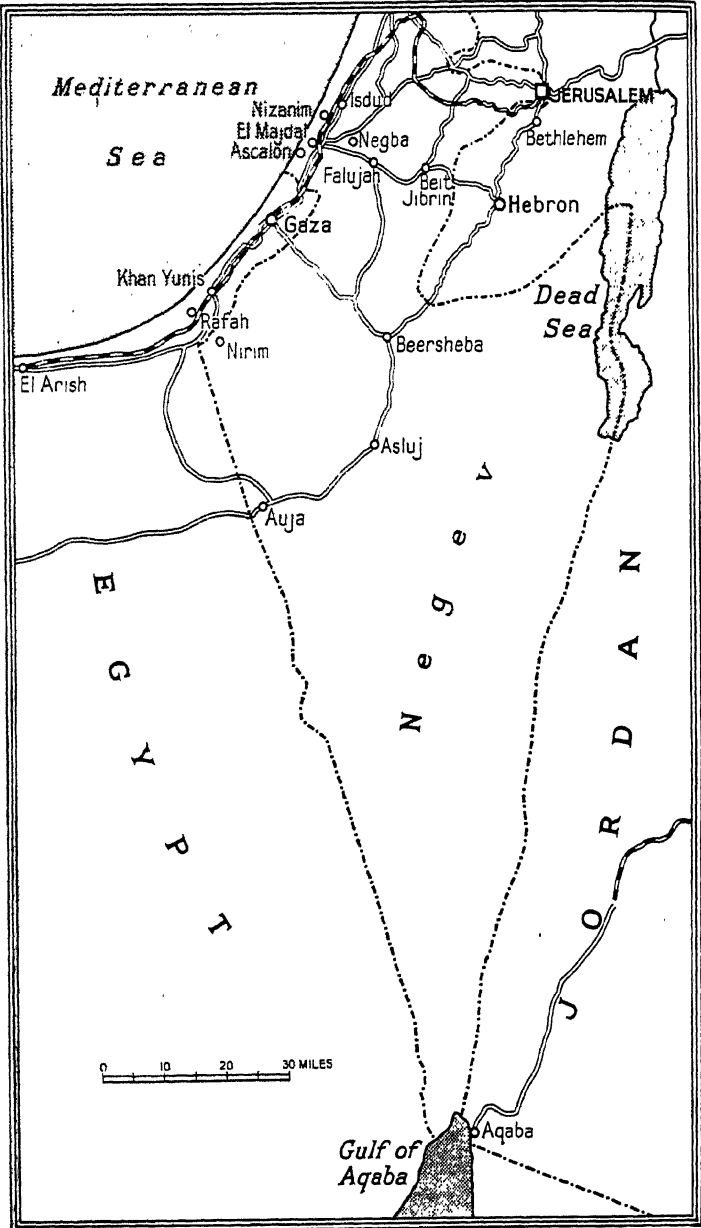
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cause, and from their own land draw courage and fortitude and hope.

### THE NEGEV

The Negev, conceived comprehensively, extends from the road Majdal-Faluja-Beit Jibrin on the north to the borders of Egypt on the south. Its northern line stretches from the Mediterranean to a few miles from Hebron; its southern from the Mediterranean at Rafah to the Red Sea at Aqaba, some 150 miles. In the northern sector of the Negev (what the Israelis call the South Country) there were six Jewish settlements, the oldest founded in 1941 and the youngest in 1947. Their total population was 1,200. In the southern sector, the Negev proper, there were seventeen Jewish settlements, with a total population of less than 1,000; the oldest was founded in 1942 and the youngest as recently as November 1947. Their youth, their tiny manpower, indicated that they were experimental and strategic. The experiment was to discover how and how far the waste lands could be regenerated and converted to man's use; the strategy was to establish claims to a vast area against the day of decision. The strategy was successful—U.N. had ratified Israel's title to nearly the whole vast area of the Negev. The experiment was yielding much promise. It is a healthy, bracing region, and all that the soil needs to make it fruitful is water. The Jews had linked many of the Negev settlements by a system of pipes bringing water from further north, a system which is now being greatly extended.

Communications are vital in such an extensive region still in the earliest phases of development. The Jewish settlements, therefore, were strung along the roads or hard by the roads, but many were connected with one another only by rough tracks. The principal roads were: (1) the coastal road, perhaps the oldest in recorded history, which came up from Egypt, and ran parallel to the railway to Gaza, Majdal, and beyond to Tel Aviv. Here was the only section of the Palestine railways which was significant in the war; it carried troops and supplies for the Egyptian army. (2) The cross road Majdal-Faluja-Beit Jibrin-Bethlehem covered the whole northern front of the Egyptian army at its fullest extension. (3) From Gaza a road ran south-east to Beersheba, and joined together two of the main Egyptian bases in the Negev.



VII. The Negev

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At Beersheba it divided, one branch going north-east to Hebron, the other south-west to Auja Hafir on the Egyptian frontier, and ultimately to Ismailia on the Suez Canal. The Arab population of the Negev outside the towns consisted mostly of Beduin, with no special political zeal but a natural taste for plunder. Majdal had a population of 7,000, largely weavers; Gaza had 18,000; Beersheba 3,000.

Very soon after the 29th November, 1947, the Negev had its share of disorders. From across the border Egyptians infiltrated and stirred up the Beduin. Two Jewish settlements were attacked, and seventeen settlers killed. The Beduin began to cut the water pipes and raid the convoys. In December a delegation from the Negev asked Mr. Ben-Gurion for reinforcements, materials, armoured cars, and equipment. The Negev Committee, of five members, was set up, and was in continuous session in Tel Aviv. It asked for £200,000 as a first instalment. That sum was scraped together, but was utterly inadequate. The programme included reinforcements of several battalions with arms, food, and clothing for a long period should the Negev be completely cut off from the rest of the country. It was estimated that to do this, to maintain the settlements (whose whole population was under arms), and to raise the defence force to 2,000 would cost £2,100,000. This budget was accepted, and somehow or other the money was got together. Between the 25th and 27th February, 1948, a plan was worked out with the brigade commander: a common H.Q. with transit stations for the mobile brigade; supplies, medical service, a garage with workshop; fortifications; self-sufficiency in food. The military position was to be strengthened before the 15th March, the number of civilian settlers was to be increased, the water pipeline was to be prolonged. The plan was begun but not completed. Neither the defence forces nor the civilian settlers could be increased. They were just not available, and when the Egyptian army invaded the road to the Negev was cut.

As the 15th May approached the Egyptians began to concentrate troops with El Arish as a base. On the 15th May they crossed the frontier from El Arish to Rafah. One column moved east to Auja Hafir and occupied the police post. The main body moved north to Khan Yunis and occupied the airfield, and then pushed on to Majdal. All this was Arab territory under the U.N. disposition. As they advanced their planes dropped bombs and leaflets in



Hebrew upon the settlements. They were not ideal propaganda, but the text is worth recording :

“In the name of Allah, the merciful, Allah says if your enemies ask for peace, grant it to them. Allah hears and knows. With these holy words of the Koran I turn to the inhabitants of the settlements and promise to abide by them. Our aim is to bring order among you, if you act peacefully, and save your lives, your possessions and your children. It is not our desire to open war. Resistance is vain and will not last, and will involve the destruction of your stores and your food. Therefore I demand that you surrender your arms quietly, raise the white flag and surrender all your ammunition, your mines, and all instruments of war. Gather them in one place and do not destroy them. Obey all these instructions within an hour from receiving this order. After an hour everybody who has not obeyed will be judged to have decided to fight. Allah says if anybody attacks you attack him, and know that Allah is on the side of the good. Great is Allah and speaks truth.”

Nirim was the southernmost Jewish settlement, a few kilometres off the sea road to the east of Rafah. It was held by forty settlers and a few Jewish “regulars.” The Jewish plan of defence was to rely upon the local garrisons and a small mobile force. The Egyptians shelled Nirim on the 15th May and then their infantry advanced. Some buildings were destroyed by the fire, but the garrison was dug in, and after suffering losses the attackers withdrew. The Egyptians advanced north, and found Kfar Drom just by the road and the railway station. For seven weeks they attacked this tiny village with thirty settlers and a small reinforcement of regulars. On the 8th July the garrison evacuated Kfar Drom and made their way out. Meanwhile the main Egyptian force pushed on. They occupied Gaza and then attacked Yad Mordekhai, some dozen kilometres north and on the sea road, with artillery, tanks, and infantry. On the 23rd May Yad Mordekhai fell. The Egyptians occupied Majdal and Ascalon and made their way to Isdud, the extreme point they were to reach. On the road from Isdud to Majdal was Nizanim. Hard by is the road which runs east to Bethlehem. After a hard struggle the Egyptians took Nizanim on the 8th June, and thus cleared their communications with their right wing in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem.

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It was vital to stop their further progress, and an Israeli force had moved out from Rehovoth and taken a number of Arab villages and a commanding hill. They lost the hill to the Egyptians on the 7th June, but they held the villages, and the road north from Isdud was barred. Though this advance was stopped, the Egyptians threatened and harried with their fire the Jewish villages in their neighbourhood. On the 15th July a column of 1,400 attacked Birat Yitzhak near Gaza with a garrison of seventy settlers and a small section of "regulars." After heavy fighting they were driven off.

In the early stages of their advance the Egyptians had pushed east from Majdal along the Faluja—Beit Jibrin—Beit Jala—Bethlehem road. Near this road is Negba, and close by is one of the strongest of police posts, Arik es Suweidan, which the English on evacuating had handed over to the Arabs. On the 2nd June the Egyptians made repeated assaults on Negba. They destroyed every building in the place, but the defenders were dug in and held their post.

The Egyptian offensive against Tel Aviv had been decisively halted. They had taken three small villages, they had harried a number of others, they had carried their line across country to Bethlehem, they had occupied Beersheba. The Negev, except for the Jewish settlements, was in their hands. But their progress had been in Arab territory; their line was dangerously extended, and the unconquered Jewish villages were so many thorns in their sides, along the sea road, along their northern front, and along the roads leading to Beersheba. The Jewish villages were cut off from Tel Aviv by road, and had to be supplied by air, but their mobile force was still in the field. Such was the situation in the Negev when the first truce became operative.

## THE LEGION

It will be remembered that the Jewish settlements forming the complex Kfar Etzion, on the Hebron road, had been in a state of siege very soon after the U.N. decision; that on the 27th March a convoy sent to its relief had been held up at Nebi Daniel and lost its arms and its vehicles—the greater part of the arms and vehicles belonging to the Jerusalem command; that between the

2nd April and the 11th May the first large-scale operation—for the relief of Jerusalem by opening the road—had taken place; and that on the 14th May the Arab Legion had taken Kfar Etzion, an operation in which all told 232 Jews fell and 268 were taken prisoners. Israeli military writers call Nachshon a turning point in the war. It was so—in a limited sense. It was the first occasion on which the Israelis had employed a force as big as a brigade, and had faced and to some extent met the associated organisational problems. It was the first occasion on which they changed their tactics from the ambulatory convoy to the temporary or permanent occupation or destruction of enemy villages dominating the road from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem; and they succeeded in pushing into Jerusalem enough supplies to enable the city to hold out until major relief came. All this was significant, but the siege of Jerusalem was not broken, Kfar Etzion was lost, and the road was not cleared. A section round Latrun was in Arab hands, and at that point the Arabs could block convoys and cut off the city's supply. There had been some confusion as to the jurisdictions of the various commanders, and the independence of the Irgun and the Sternists had proved a serious military embarrassment. At the very moment when the Hagana was engaged in the vital struggle for Kastel the Irgun had refused to co-operate and had chosen, against the wishes of the commander and in violation of their agreement, to attack Deir Yassin.

On the departure of the British the situation in Jerusalem might thus well cause anxiety. The Hagana, what was called the field army, the local garrison, numbered two battalions, each 300 strong, with an inadequate supply of rifles, a few machine-guns, and two mortars. There was a small territorial force of older men to guard the posts with just two rifles for each post. The Irgun numbered 120 fighters, the Sternists another 30. They were without any military training; they had their independent organisations, and were indisposed to obey the Hagana commander. Among the Jewish population they enjoyed considerable sympathy. Jerusalem under the U.N. disposition was not to be part of the Jewish State. This arrangement had been perforce accepted, for the time being, by the Israeli Government, but was deeply resented by the Jewish populace, and repudiated by the Irgun. Some of the Irgun leaders nourished the idea of

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proclaiming Jerusalem an independent Judean State to prevent it becoming a *corpus separatum* under U.N., a revival in reverse of the ancient division between Judah and Israel. Political as well as military and organisational problems embarrassed the command in Jerusalem during these weeks of siege.

Before the British had left, as early as the 2nd May, 1948, the Jews had taken the Arab quarter of Katamon. On the 15th May three Jewish columns set out to occupy Jerusalem without the walls. They first advanced up the Jaffa Road and occupied Bevingrad (including the Russian compound), took some buildings near the Jaffa Gate, and seized the great French Hospice Notre Dame which commanded the road to Nablus and Ramallah. The second seized the Italian Hospital and the Police School overlooking the Nablus and Ramallah roads and Sheikh Jarrah. The third moving from Katamon occupied the Greek colony, the German colony, the Railway Station, and the three big barracks. Nearly the whole of Jerusalem outside the Old City was now in Jewish hands, and the Arabs had fled. Up to this point the Jewish forces had to deal only with bands of irregulars, mostly Iraqis and Syrians. But now the Legion from the north and the Egyptians from the south were entering on the scene.

On the 16th May the Legion took the Police School and Sheikh Jarrah. Sheikh Jarrah was the key to the Old City and the University-Hadassah Hospital area to the north of Jerusalem. Had it been held the Legion position at Ramallah and ultimately in the Triangle could not have been sustained. The Hagana had taken it, and then the lamentable error was made of handing it over to the Irgun to hold. Its strategic importance was impressed upon the Irgun, but instead of entrenching themselves they wasted their time, and when the attack came withdrew with practically no resistance. The Legion then made an attempt to capture all Jerusalem. On the 17th May a column coming from the Police School attacked Beit Yisrael. After heavy fighting near the Mandelbaum Gate it was defeated and fell back. On the 18th May a second column with tanks advanced from Sheikh Jarrah towards Notre Dame, but retreated when several tanks were knocked out. With these defeats the Legion made no further serious assaults on New Jerusalem, though it continued to shell it by day and night 10,000 shells in twenty-eight days. But the loss of Sheikh Jarrah involved the evacuation of the two Jewish settlements in the north

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Nveh Yakov and Ataroth, and the complete isolation of the University-Hadassah Hospital complex.

Meanwhile the Egyptians were joining in the battle for Jerusalem. They had advanced to Beit Jala and the outskirts of Bethlehem, where they made contact with the Legion. Near by was the small Jewish settlement Ramat Rahel. This they attacked and after heavy fighting forced the settlers to withdraw. These on their way met with reinforcements from Jerusalem, and immediately returned and recovered the village (22nd May). Both the Legion and the Egyptians made repeated attempts to take it again, but failed. Therewith the Arab offensive against the New City (except for shelling, which cost hundreds of civilian lives) petered out.

Very different was the story of the Old City. The Jewish quarter was in the south, and shut off from the Jewish areas outside by a length of some 400 yards of the southern wall. At its eastern end was the Dung Gate, which, however, offered no means of access. On the west of the Jewish quarter was the Armenian quarter, into which the Zion Gate opened. Facing the Zion Gate and outside the wall was Mt. Zion. From north to south the Jewish quarter had a depth of less than 300 yards, and in this direction it was penetrated by two parallel streets—the Jews' Street and Abad Street. After the troubles of 1936 the Jews' Street was closed at the north end by an iron gate. There were about 1,700 Jews in the quarter, and after the U.N. decision of the 29th November they were besieged. There were Jewish posts guarding the perimeter, and there was a garrison of 150 British soldiers holding similar posts. From time to time the British protected convoys of supplies, but they pressed upon the Jews to evacuate the Old City. Therefore they did not attempt to break the Arab investment, and they would not allow Hagana men or weapons or munitions to enter the Jewish quarter, in so far as they could prevent it. At this stage the Arab forces in the Old City consisted of local bands, Iraqi soldiers and other volunteers, and some deserters from the British army and police.

On the evening of the 13th May, 1948, the British evacuated the Old City. The Jews promptly took over their posts, and occupied also the post in the tower of the Greek church in the Armenian quarter. At the request of the Armenian Patriarch and on his promise not to suffer the Arabs to take possession, the Jews left this position. Shortly after the Arabs seized the tower, and

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this post was a serious embarrassment to the Jewish defence. The Arabs attacked chiefly from the north-west and west, and the Jews were forced to abandon all the western sector and fall back to the Jews' Street. On the 19th May an attempt was made to relieve the situation. The plan was to take Mt. Zion, and then for two platoons of the Palmach to break through the Zion Gate. The Jews were to be transferred from their own quarter to the Armenian quarter, to which access by the Zion Gate would be direct, and defence much simplified. It may be doubted whether if it had been carried out fully this scheme would have given the Jews permanent possession of a section of the Old City from which they could join in a general effort to capture the whole of it. But the plan was not fully carried out. The Palmach took Mt. Zion, breached the Zion Gate, and introduced a reinforcement of eighty men with some ammunition into the Jewish quarter. The Palmach then withdrew, but the expected reinforcing battalion did not come, there was no transfer to the Armenian quarter, and the Arabs recovered control of the Zion Gate.

The siege of the Jewish quarter continued, and when the Legion entered the Old City took an acute form. The Legion bombarded the quarter from the Mount of Olives, and attacked with infantry and tanks. These concentrated against the north-east angle, and pushed on house by house, alley by alley. The Jews abandoned the whole of the northern section, and were reduced to an area 100 yards by 200 yards. Of the civilians 800 were in four rooms of the Yochanan ben Zakkai synagogue and 700 in another building, against which the Legion concentrated its shelling and its attacks without cessation. Neither men nor munitions nor supplies could come from without, and on the 28th May the survivors surrendered. It was a heroic incident, but in a military sense an error.

The intervention of the Legion had its echo at the Dead Sea. Here the Palestine Potash Company had works at the north end and the south end, and at the north end was a small Jewish settlement. The north was now completely cut off from the rest of Israel, and it could not be defended. On the 19th May all the inhabitants were evacuated by boats to the south end. The Arabs entered and looted and destroyed the northern works. The nearest Jewish settlement to the southern end (Sodom) was 60 kilometres by foot and 115 by car. It was isolated, and could be supplied only

by air. Near by was a Legion post, and there was a certain amount of bickering across the frontier, but nothing serious.

After the fall of the Jewish quarter of the Old City and the failure of the Legion's attempt to capture the New City, there was little danger from a direct military offensive in Jerusalem itself. That came from the road. It was necessary to render secure the central Israeli base, Tel Aviv, and to open communications, on a permanent footing, between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. On the 13th May Jaffa had been conquered, and practically the whole Arab population had fled. Before that neighbouring Arab villages which blocked the roads around had been attacked—Yazur and Beit Djan on the road leading to Jerusalem and the south and Salamah and Yehudieh on the road to the airfield of Lydda. On the 1st May the Hagana took Salamah and Yazur; their inhabitants fled and the inhabitants of Beth Djan, Kfar Aana, and Seferia near by began to fly. On the 19th May the great camp at Sarafand was taken along with the Arab village and Yehudieh and Kfar Aana. The roads were thus cleared, and by the 11th June in the area of Tel Aviv a firm front was established running on a line east of Sarafand, to Yehudieh and then to Petah Tikva. Tel Aviv was secure on the east and the north. The road to Jerusalem had now to be dealt with.

From Tel Aviv to Jerusalem the road is 63 kilometres (40 miles) long. North of the road where it emerges from the mountains into the Shephela is the Vale of Ajalon, where Joshua found victory in a long day's battle; south is the Vale of Sorek, the scene of many of Samson's achievements. On the north was a string of Arab villages with one or two Jewish.

South of the road were a number of Arab villages again with two or three Jewish villages. Some of the Arab villages were large. Lifta, for instance, at the very gates of Jerusalem, had some 4,000 inhabitants, Colonia 1,000, Saba 500, Saris 1,000, Beit Mahsir 2,500. From the beginning of the troubles all these Arab villages took part in raiding the road and distressing their Jewish neighbours. The pressure on Hartuv was so heavy that it was evacuated.

It will be recalled that before the invasion Operation Nachshon had gone some way towards securing the road. By the 9th April it had resulted in the capture of Lifta, Kastel, and Colonia, and given the Jews control of 18 kilometres of the road from Jerusalem

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westward to Nve Alon. On the 16th April the Hagana took and destroyed Saris. Saris had one of the pumping stations supplying water to Jerusalem, and it was convenient for an advance against Deir Amar, a height commanding the road, and the important village of Beit Mahsir. On the 11th May, Beit Mahsir was taken with the high ground around, and Bab el Wad, the gate of the valley, where the road passes from the mountains into the Shephela. The Jews now controlled 24 kilometres westward, including the section in which road blocks had been set up and so many convoys had been attacked that it was called the graveyard of cars.

At the same time efforts were being made from the west to clear the road. From Tel Aviv to Bab el Wad by the road is 39 kilometres. The section from Ramleh to Latrun was in Arab hands, and Jewish traffic from Tel Aviv therefore was compelled to make a detour *via* Hulda. Hulda was the base for the Jewish operations to clear the road. In April Deir Muheisin was taken, a great convoy was pushed into Jerusalem, and the way was prepared for an attack on Latrun. Latrun was the key: it blocked the Jerusalem road, it was at cross-roads running north to the Legion base at Ramallah, south-west to Gaza, and west to Tel Aviv, and it possessed the one pumping station of the Jerusalem water-supply system still in Arab hands, and therefore cut off Jerusalem's water. Latrun was held by the Legion. In the last week of June the Hagana tried to take Latrun. There were some "regulars," but many of the troops had come straight from the immigrant ships, and had had only two days' military training. The plan was bad—a frontal attack from the road by night; the possibility of a counter-attack on the right flank was ignored; the operation was late in starting. It was a complete failure involving heavy loss. The Legion remained firmly fixed at Latrun. It was necessary to solve the problem of the Road in another way.

The situation in Jerusalem was getting grave. It was decided to create an alternative route from Deir Muheisin to Bab el Wad. It was done secretly in the first week of June, and to protect it the villages of Beit Jiz and Beit Susin were taken. This, the "Burma Road" was opened to traffic on the 6th June. It was rough and too near Latrun, so later a good road—the Road of Courage—further south was built, which was formally inaugurated on the 1st December. From Hulda to Bab el Wad it is 15 kilometres long.



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Parallel with the route a water pipe was laid. Danger of thirst as of hunger was removed from Jerusalem, full freedom of communication between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem was restored. The problem of the Road was solved. The Legion remained at Latrun, but Latrun was sterilised.

For practical purposes the Jerusalem operations were over with the coming of the first truce. The siege of the city was broken, the attempt to reduce it by hunger and thirst had been defeated, and the New Jerusalem was finally and definitely Jewish. These were great achievements; but to set against them were losses not insignificant. Latrun remained in Arab hands, and broke communications along the old Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road; the Jewish quarter in the Old City had been destroyed, and not a Jew was left within the walls; the complex of settlements on the Hebron road had been destroyed; the University, with its library, and the great Hadassah Hospital on Mt. Scopus had been cut off and could not be used; the only two settlements to the north of the city had been evacuated. These were heavier losses than were suffered as the result of the fighting on any other of the fronts. They were not inevitable, but when all allowances are made, were due to strategical and tactical errors.

The operation against Latrun was badly conceived and badly executed. The frontal attack was a mistake. Latrun could have been taken from the rear, as later were Ramleh and Lydda. The troops used were largely utterly raw recruits, who were given a task to test stout veterans. Kfar Etzion had no strategic significance at all. It was isolated and completely surrounded by Arab territory. In the vain attempt to hold it hundreds of men were lost, killed, wounded, prisoners, together with all the armoured cars of the Jerusalem front and much invaluable arms. Had these men and equipment been conserved, they could have played a decisive part in the north of the city. Equally mistaken, in a military sense, was the vain attempt to hold the Jewish quarter of the Old City. The enterprise had to be conducted under the most unfavourable conditions and with little hope of success. Even had it succeeded it would have had no strategic significance. It could not have served as a base for the storming of the Old City; no prudent commander would have sent his men against the Legion through that rabbit-warren of narrow streets, where every house might become a fort. The Old City could be taken in one way only,

by severing its communications with the Arab forces. It is in this connection that the failure in the north became so significant. Had the resources wasted on Kfar Etzion and the Old City been economised and concentrated against the Legion's northern position, the whole of Jerusalem, old and new, could have been taken. Therewith it would have been possible, after the capture of Lydda and Ramleh, to have compressed the Legion's positions in the Triangle between pincers. An attack from the north alone on Jenin nearly succeeded. Combined with an attack from the south it should have proved irresistible, and the whole of Palestine west of the Jordan would have fallen to the Jewish army. It is worth recording that, at a later stage, when the final campaign against the Egyptian army was being prepared, Mr. Ben-Gurion desired to combine it with an attack on the Legion's positions around Ramallah, and to advance the Jewish line to the Jordan a few miles north of the Dead Sea. He was overruled by his colleagues in the Government.

The general conclusion is that on the Jerusalem front the strategical significance of the north as against the south was missed. It was not the fault of the regional commanders, who appreciated the situation accurately. It was imposed upon them by the Government, which suffered strategic considerations to be overborne by sentimental. The determination to yield no ground whatever the cost could be justified strategically on other fronts, where even small settlements barred the enemy advance against vital lines or embarrassed materially his operations. But neither Kfar Etzion nor the Jewish quarter of the Old City served any such purposes, and the vain efforts to defend them consumed men and equipment which could have achieved decisive results elsewhere. It should be noted, however, that it was in the earliest phase of the struggle that these errors were committed. The Commander-in-Chief did not fail to learn from them.

In Jerusalem and at Latrun the Legion had reached stalemate. There no advance, still less a strategical offensive with the goal or even the illusion of victory could be conceived. But what of the Triangle? Even before the 15th May the Legion had had troops in the Triangle. After that date it took over, with some Iraqis, the whole area. Kaukji was sent north to command all the Arab forces, regular and irregular, in the Arab part of Galilee. From Nablus, the chief city of the Triangle, three main roads led to the Sharon,

the Jewish area *par excellence*: (1) From Tulkarm to Natanya on the coast only 15 kilometres away—the capture of Natanya would cut off the northern part of the Sharon, Haifa, and all Galilee from Tel Aviv; (2) from Qalqilya, about 15 kilometres to Herzliya on the coast; (3) further south *via* Antipatris to Petah Tikva and Tel Aviv. The road of the sea, running up the Sharon north and south, was some way inland, and was in fact under Arab gunfire from the hills at certain points. The task, therefore, of disrupting the Sharon, of crossing the narrow belt, and of forcing a decision looked very tempting, and on paper the reverse of formidable. But the Jews had not waited for the development of an offensive, should the Legion project one.

On the 9th May, moving from Givat Ada in the north, they took the neighbouring Arab villages, and strengthened communications with the Vale of Jezreel. The Arabs made repeated attacks on Narbata, several miles south of Givat Ada, but were beaten off. Further south, before the English left, the Arabs (Iraqis and local bands) attacked Geulim and Kfar Joneh and prepared to break through from Tulkarm. With the invasion the whole Sharon front was assaulted from Ramat Hakosheh, Kfar Javetz, Kfar Jonah, and Geulim, but the Jews took the offensive, towards Tulkarm, and on the 5th June occupied Kakun and converted it into a base against Tulkarm. The Arab offensive in this area was broken, as also in the area of Tel Mond. In the Qalqilya area the Arabs were thrown back into the mountains and the Arab village of Kfar Saba was taken. The Arab offensive from the Triangle was defeated. It had not been of a very serious nature, because of a very simple reason. The Legion had committed itself so heavily in Jerusalem and Latrun that it had not sufficient men for a real invasion from the Triangle. The necessity for conserving its limited resources crippled the Legion's invasion plans.

#### GALILEE

On the 15th May the Jews held a belt of country across Southern Galilee from the sea to the Jordan Valley. It was widest at both ends. On the west it was continuous from the Sharon to the outskirts of Acre, except for an island of Arab territory in the Carmel range. On the east it included the whole Jordan Valley from Tirat Zvi to Lake Tiberias. It was narrowest where the road from

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Nazareth (still in Arab hands) ran due south through Afuleh to Jenin in the Triangle. North of Acre the coast as far as the Lebanon frontier was in Jewish hands, with three tongues projecting a short distance eastwards. In the Jordan Valley from Lake Tiberias to Metulla the Jews had broadened and strengthened the barrier they opposed to the invading Syrians and the Legion. All the rest of Galilee was Arab, but the Arab forces under Kaukji had no contact with the invading armies except those of Lebanon, and these numbered only a few hundred and had no effective point of entry except in the east in the neighbourhood of Malkiya and Nabi Yusha. The real danger must come from the east, the line of the Jordan from Metulla in the north to the southern region of Lake Tiberias, where the Syrian army and the Legion would operate. A Jewish offensive towards Jenin would attract enemy forces and help to ease the pressure on the Jordan front.

On the 15th May the Syrians moved down from the heights of Jaulan in three columns—one towards Samakh, a second against the two Daganyas a little to the west, the third towards the road leading from Samakh to Beisan, with a point directed towards the Jewish villages of Shaar Hagulat, Masada, and Afikim. All these points lay a little to the east of the Jordan, in Palestine territory. On the 16th and 17th May the Syrians bombarded Samakh with artillery and with tanks and aircraft. A single Israeli plane intervened with no particular effect. On the morning of the 18th May Samakh fell to the Arabs, and in evacuating the town the Israelis suffered considerable losses. That same day the Syrians took Masada and Shaar Hagulat. On the 19th May they began to attack the Daganyas. Jewish planes intervened to some effect, but on the 20th May the attack was developed with armoured cars. These penetrated the outer defences of Daganya A, but, when some cars were destroyed by Molotov cocktails, the rest, followed by the infantry, withdrew. The Syrian offensive in this section of the front was defeated and halted definitely.

The Yarmak river is the boundary between Syria and Transjordan. Hard by the point where the Yarmak and the Jordan meet is Naharaim, the site of the Rutenberg hydro-electric works. A little to the west of the works and on the east bank of the Jordan is a police post in Transjordan territory. Just across the river was the Jewish village of Gesher (Bridge), where a bridge crosses the Jordan, and a little to the south of Gesher a police post in Palestine

territory. On the 14th May the Jews occupied this second police post. The Legion occupied the other police post. On the 15th May the Legion attacked both Gesher and the police post, but were repulsed from both. The invasion on this section of the Jordan front had been defeated finally.

On the eastern shore of Lake Tiberias was the Jewish village of En Geb, in the Syrian field of operations. The coast line south of En Geb was occupied by the Syrians. En Geb was completely isolated; its only communication with Israel was by boat across the Lake at night. The hills all around were held by the Syrians, who shelled it for weeks but could not take it. All the buildings were destroyed, but the settlers were dug in and held out heroically underground. To anticipate—on the night of the 17th–18th July the men of En Geb took the offensive and seized the height of Sustria, which gave them some protection; their troubles were ended with the armistice when the Syrians withdrew.

The Jordan flows out of Lake Huleh southwards for a dozen miles into Lake Tiberias. A short distance south of Lake Huleh is the Bridge of the Daughters of Jacob. Here there was a Jewish village, Mishmar Hayarden, the guard on the Jordan. The main road from Palestine to Damascus, 45 miles from Mishmar, crosses this bridge, and it has therefore considerable strategic significance. The Syrians planned to take Mishmar, push their forces across the bridge, and cut the road between Metulla and Rosh Pinah. If they succeeded, the northernmost Jewish settlements would be isolated, and the way would be opened to Safed and a junction with both Kaukji's forces and the Lebanese. On the 11th June they suddenly made a crossing of the Jordan and stormed Mishmar Hayarden. They then attempted to advance westward, in co-operation with Lebanese attacks from the neighbourhood of Malkiya: There was heavy and almost continuous fighting, but the Jewish line held, and the Arabs could make no progress. The Syrian invasion at this point was definitely halted.

North-west of Lake Huleh, where the Lebanese frontier with Israel turns north, are the strong police post of Nabi Yusha and near by Malkiya. These points cover the Jordan Valley road and the road encircling the southern frontier of Lebanon with Israel. When Nabi Yusha was evacuated by the British, it was handed over to the Arabs. Because of its strategic importance the Hagana attacked it on the 20th April, but was driven back with heavy loss.

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On the 17th May the assault was repeated, and Nabi Yusha was taken without the loss of a single man. Malkiya followed, but later was retaken by the Lebanese. Nabi Yusha, however, was held, and barred the way to a junction between the Lebanese and the Syrians at Mishmar Hayarden. The Syrians made some further attempts, of a not very serious character, in this northernmost part of the Jordan Valley without success.

Meanwhile things had been moving at the other end of Galilee, and in the south towards the Triangle. There the Jews had taken the offensive. On the 17th May they had taken Acre. On the 23rd they had pushed up the coast to Ras el Nakura on the Lebanese frontier and barred that possible road of invasion. As has been said, a narrow band of Jewish territory—the Vale of Jezreel—connected Haifa and the area in the west with the Beisan valley in the east, and it was narrowest where the road from Nazareth runs through Afuleh to Jenin in the Triangle. Here the hills of Gilboa were in Arab hands, and they had advanced posts at Zirin, at (Arab) Nuris, at Mazar, at Sandala, at Mugeilia, and at Jalama covering Jenin. It was necessary to protect this Jewish front and widen the band. When on the 12th May Beisan was taken, the Arabs fled from the neighbouring villages, and the left flank of the Jews facing Gilboa and Samaria was cleared. On the 28th an advance down the Jenin road was commenced with the capture of Zarain, which was on the road to Beisan. The next day Mazar on Mount Gilboa was taken, and the Arabs fled from Nuris. This pushed the Jewish front two miles forward and gave added security to the Jewish villages in Jezreel. On the 2nd June the Hagana began to break the Arab front covering Jenin, by capturing Sandala, Arrana, Jalama and Mugeilia. On the 3rd June began the advance on Jenin itself. At the same time, to divert enemy forces, a column from the east moved against Arana, Ghazzala, and Faqqua.

Jenin itself was found empty except for the police post, which was strongly held. One column had seized a hill in the south-east and another in the south-west. The Iraqis opened a heavy fire on the south-west position. The troops could not dig in because of the rocky ground and suffered severely. The south-east column suffered less and some of its men entered the town. In the afternoon a thousand reinforcements from Nablus came up, and, supported by aircraft, began a counter-attack. The Jews began

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to retire with loss, and some of them, thinking the police post had been taken, ran into heavy fire from its garrison. Later in the afternoon some Jewish armoured cars arrived in support, and an unsuccessful attempt was made to storm the police post. A retreat was then ordered. This was a bad failure, comparable to that at Latrun, and due to similar tactical mistakes. It was a frontal attack, and no care had been taken to guard the flank by which Arab reinforcements could come upon Nablus.

On the 29th May the Security Council of U.N. passed a resolution ordering a cease-fire. The Truce, the first truce, came into operation on the 11th June and was to last four weeks, till the 9th July. For twenty-four days invasions by the Arab States had been in progress. What had they achieved against the Jews? In the south the Egyptians had taken three small villages, been repelled from others, and halted at Isdud. In the centre the Legion had taken the Old City, and cut off the University-Hadassah Hospital complex from Jewish Jerusalem. It still blocked the Road at Latrun, but the Jews had created an alternative route, and firmly secured the communications between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. The attempts to break through into the Sharon had been defeated, and the Legion's invasion had been definitely stopped. In Galilee on the whole line of the Jordan the Jewish front had held firm, very little ground had been yielded, and the invasion had been brought to a standstill within a few days of its inception. The northern exits from the Triangle had been stopped, and an Arab offensive from that quarter was precluded. As against this the Jews had suffered three serious defeats—Sheikh Jarrah, Latrun, and Jenin.

Territorial changes since the 15th May had not been extensive but they were of military significance. The Egyptians held the coastal strip up to Isdud which the U.N. partition had allotted to the Arab States, and the Negev, most of which it had allotted to the Jewish State. The Jews had widened and strengthened the band of territory connecting Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, and the band connecting Haifa through the Vale of Jezreel with Beisan and the Jordan Valley. Their frontiers and their essential communications were secure, and they were in a position to pass from the defensive to the offensive. Compared with the partition map approved by U.N. the territorial changes were much more important. Jerusalem, which had been appointed a *corpus separatum*, was

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divided between Jews and Arabs. The Jews had driven a broad belt through the area of the Road which had been allotted to the Arab State. Jaffa, also allotted to the Arabs, was in Jewish hands. All Western Galilee, allotted to the Arab State, had been conquered by the Jews. The U.N. map had indicated two points of intersection—in the south near Isdud and in Galilee near Afuleh—which would have divided the Jewish State into four parts, a strategic absurdity. These had gone, and now at both fronts there was a fairly broad belt of Jewish territory giving communication throughout the Jewish State.

Of high importance was the demographic change. The gravest weakness of the Jewish State as designed by U.N.O. was that it embraced 405,000 Arabs (exclusive of 105,000 Beduin) as against 499,000 Jews. These estimates excluded the *corpus separatum* of Jerusalem. Now the Arab population had fled in masses from the towns and villages occupied by the Jews and had been reduced to 60,000. The Jews had no need to fear a fifth column in their rear when undertaking extensive military operations.

The Jews had been ready to accept the Truce, the Arabs very reluctant. This was not surprising. Although the invasion had been halted, they had suffered no disaster, and they had had no convincing proof that it could not be brought to a successful issue. Delay was disadvantageous to them, just as it gave breathing space to the Jews. Unity and co-operation between the Arab allies were certain to erode with time. The Truce was welcome to the Jews. Men and arms were coming in, the soldiers needed time for training, a National Army must be constituted to take the place of the separate organisations of Hagana, Palmach, Irgun, and Sternists.



## CHAPTER XIV

### THE TEN DAYS' OFFENSIVE

**D**URING the four weeks' Truce the development of the administration, the consolidation of the Israeli Government's authority, and above all the constitution of a National Army were making much progress. The seas were open—the Egyptian naval blockade was ineffectual. (The first sea fight of the war had taken place off Tel Aviv on the 16th June, and the Egyptian ships had been put to flight.) Ban or no ban, from one source or another arms and equipment were coming in; and men were not lacking. On the 12th May a promise had been given by the British Government that "illegal" immigrants in Cyprus would be released—a promise that, in respect of men of military age, was a few days later broken. On the 20th May a state of emergency was declared throughout Israel. On the 25th May the Jews in the concentration camps of Austria and Germany were called to the colours. On the 28th May the Israeli Defence Army Order No. 1 was promulgated, and an Israeli National Army was established. The changes it made can be gathered from a description of the character of the Jewish armed forces, on the 29th November, 1947.

At this date the Jewish defence forces were still an underground organisation. They came into the open as the British evacuation progressed stage by stage. This gradual evacuation, the steps of which were known in advance by the Jewish intelligence, might have been of advantage to the Jews, who were not in a position to take over their whole territory at once. The key points were the strong police posts, the camps, and the airfields, which, in so far as they were not actually in Jewish towns and villages, were passed over to the Arabs. Presumably there were general directives from headquarters to this effect, but something turned upon the preferences of the local commanders.

In the "underground" period the Jewish defence forces consisted of four elements: (1) the Palmach, a mobile standing army,

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the *corps d'élite*. Its numbers were about 2,000 of whom 15 per cent. were women. It was composed of volunteers, the pick of the youth of the towns and villages. It had its own command, its own headquarters and organisation, and attached to it were air and naval sections. The air section had a few light planes (*primus* was their nickname) and it numbered only thirty or forty. The naval section numbered a few hundred. Its principal function at this stage was to facilitate immigration; it included sailors, marines, and sappers. The air section passed over to the National Army as soon as that was constituted, when the air arm was considerably developed, largely by airmen who had served in the British, American, South African, and Australian forces. The naval section was transferred to the National Defence Force in May. A Naval Academy was inaugurated on the 1st June, 1948. (2) Behind the Palmach was the Field Army, between 6,000 and 10,000 in strength. It consisted of young personnel who had had training for a few weeks a year. It could be called up in an emergency. Unlike the mobile Palmach it was tied down to particular districts. (3) Behind this again was the Home Guard. It was composed of every able-bodied person, men, women, and children, with a few volunteers from neighbouring towns and villages. It numbered a good many thousands. Its function was to defend its own particular locale—homes, factories, fields—so that everyone in his prime could be released for general service. (4) The Youth Battalions of persons under seventeen years of age.

Besides these four constituents of the Hagana under the control of the Jewish Agency there were the dissident organisations, the Irgun and the Sternists. The Irgun included about 500 members who were trained in terrorist methods, but had no army organisation and had no knowledge of field tactics or strategy. They were accustomed to operate in small numbers, but were of little value—as experience proved—in regular military actions. The Sternists had about 100 fighting members of the same character as the Irgun, but with a trifle more military training. Both bodies together may have had some 2,000 to 3,000 fellow-travellers. The strength of the Irgun was greatest in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, so long as it was destined to be a *corpus separatum*, the Irgun enjoyed much popular sympathy, from perhaps a third of the population. It was here that they gave the Israeli Government most trouble, and contributed to the worst military failures.

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The arms of the defence forces at this stage were scanty and inadequate. There were before the 15th May 10,000 rifles, 450 light machine-guns, 180 heavier machine-guns, 670 two-inch mortars, 96 three-inch mortars, a fair supply of sten guns. There was no artillery, and only a handful of light planes. Preparations had been made to get in more arms, but the lack of dollars and of official governmental status and the British blockade were grave handicaps. Before the 15th May only one shipload of arms had arrived. It brought 4,500 rifles, 200 machine-guns, and 20 anti-aircraft guns. This was the whole armament ready to meet the invasion.

Organisation in the "underground" phase was somewhat complicated. At the head was a small committee of civilians, representing the Jewish Agency and the political parties, excluding the Communists on the extreme left and the Revisionists on the extreme right. The chairman was Mr. Ben-Gurion, the Chairman of the Agency. This committee did not give orders to the Hagana, but laid down the general lines of policy. Below it was a committee which included both civilian and military membership. The military head was Israel Galili; Yacov Dori was the Chief of Staff. Galili had behind him an active committee of civilians, and he was responsible to Mr. Ben-Gurion and his committee. At the military H.Q. there was the Deputy Chief of Staff, Zvi Ayalon; and under him an Operations Planning Section under Ygal Ya'afin; a Q.M.G.—Josef Avidon; a Manpower Department under Moshe Zadok; a Training Department under Eliahu Ben Hur. There were sub-departments for Supply, Education, Intelligence, and the like.

The whole country was divided into areas. Each area was under a brigade commander, who was responsible for all the forces in his area, including the settlements. In this early phase each commander was tied to his own area and could not move from it. All were under the direct command of the Chief of Staff. There were two forces not organised in areas—the Youth Battalions and the Palmach. The Palmach was the only mobilised force of the Hagana. It consisted of four battalions with a fifth in reserve. It was well trained in commando and guerilla warfare; all its members were well educated, and their morale was high. The head of Palmach at its H.Q. was Ygal Alon. He was responsible to the Chief of Staff, and took his orders from the Supreme

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H.Q. The whole of the reserve of Palmach was called up on the 15th May, and the Field Army gradually. Week by week the battalions expanded into brigades. The battalions as such first came into action in March 1948, when they defeated Kaukji at Mishmar Haemek. In Operation Nachshon in April two Palmach battalions and two Field Army battalions were employed.

So long as the British were in occupation but evacuation was their programme, it was the policy of the Hagana to avoid coming into conflict with them. They were going, let them go quietly, let nothing be done to invite their hostile intervention or delay their departure. When they were gone action would be free. Meanwhile an active defensive against the Arabs was imposed. The enemy was to be exhausted, made to suffer heavy losses, alarmed at as many points as possible, and compelled to tie down his forces for self-defence and so be inhibited from aggression. These were essentially guerilla tactics, but even when large forces were employed and pitched battles were the order of the day, distracting, harassing guerilla tactics continued to be employed to supplement and facilitate the larger operations.

With the invasion every resource of manpower had to be called upon. This was achieved by three measures: the Defence Army Order, 1948 (26th May); the establishment of an auxiliary women's force; and the Control of Man Power Ordinance. From early days women were members of Hagana. Now they were attached to the land, air, and naval forces or worked as land girls. They were trained to defend themselves by officers of Hagana and Palmach. The Defence Army Order introduced conscription in times of emergency. The Army was composed of land, sea, and air forces. All were to take an oath of loyalty to the State. The creation or maintenance of any armed force other than the Defence Army was prohibited. The Control of Man Power Ordinance authorised the mobilisation of all manpower between the ages of seventeen and fifty-five. Immediately all males between eighteen and thirty-six in certain settlements were mobilised for agricultural work unless serving in the Army. All persons seventeen years old were called up for two months' military training in the summer, and soon the thirty-six to forty-two age groups were to be called up for labour. These measures were obviously adapted from similar measures enforced in England during the war. But Israel had a problem with which England was never faced—the

existence of private or independent forces, the Irgun and the Sternists.

It will be observed that the Army Order prohibited the formation or maintenance of any other armed force. On the 27th April an agreement had been ratified between the Hagana and the Irgun, according to which the Irgun was to constitute a separate brigade within the Hagana, submit to its discipline, and before taking action obtain the approval of the Hagana. How did such an arrangement fit in with general conscription and a National Army? The test came during the Truce. On the 6th June a government spokesman referred to appeals to financial donors abroad in support of the Irgun or the Sternists. He said that since both organisations had voluntarily dissolved, and their members had joined or were about to join the Israel Defence Army, those purporting to raise funds for them as fighting organisations were guilty of common fraud. All parts of the Defence Army were financed from central funds, and none could claim separate financial assistance. The continued existence or creation of separate military organisations was illegal. These were brave words. The Irgun answered that it had not dissolved, but merely promised not to continue as an underground movement in areas under Jewish control. It would continue there as a political movement. In Jerusalem it would continue as an armed organisation until the city was ruled by Jews. For these and other purposes it would collect money. The reference to Jerusalem was specially bodeful.

This was a fairly blunt defiance; nor did the Government's attitude convince when it became known that in the National Army the Irgun were to serve "temporarily" in special battalions with their own N.C.O.'s and battalion commanders under general army brigade command. Both the Irgun and the Stern protested against the Truce as a "shameful, unconditional surrender"; which drew from Mr. Ben-Gurion the declaration that "the Government will not suffer any attempt to be made by anyone in our midst to break the Truce, and bring to nought the undertaking given by the Government of Israel to the United Nations." Within a few days there was no possibility of evading the problem.

The Irgun had collected abroad arms and a certain number of recruits, and informed the Government that they were being brought in on a ship called the "Altalena." The Government ordered the arms to be handed over to the Government. The Irgun

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(according to Beigin) demanded that 50 per cent. of the arms should go to the Irgun in Jerusalem, and the remainder be divided equally between the Army and the Irgun. This was equivalent to setting up an independent army, with independent finance, independent armament, and an independent policy. The Orthodox members of the Government had created a Cabinet crisis because of the vigorous measures taken; but public opinion was overwhelmingly with Mr. Ben-Gurion. On 28th June the Army took the oath of allegiance to the State. Most of the Irgun took it, and for practical purposes, outside Jerusalem, it ceased to be a separate military organisation. In Jerusalem it survived as such for some months, but after the murder of Count Bernadotte it was dissolved there on the 21st September. Henceforth it was only a political party. In the interval the Government had made it fairly clear that it considered Jewish Jerusalem part of the Jewish State, and that it no longer accepted a *corpus separatum* as a solution of the Jerusalem question. The Palmach, however, still retained for a little longer its separate headquarters. On the 1st November this was dissolved, and the Defence Army became a simple, uniform National Israeli Army.

On the same day as the Army took the oath the veil of secrecy was in part lifted, and the names of the various Army leaders were published: The Chief of Staff was Jacob Galili, who had long been chief of staff of the Hagana. The Chief of Military Operations was Ygal Yadin, an archæologist who had written a thesis on the wars in Ancient Palestine. Two other members of the General Staff were Ygal Alon and Michael Ben Gal, who had been a major in the Jewish Brigade of the British Army. They and practically all the area commanders were young men. In June a new Army unit larger than a brigade began to be set up. It was called a Front. The First Front was the northern; it embraced Western, Eastern, and Northern and Lower Galilee and the northern border of the Triangle. The Second Front extended from Zichron Yacob to Petah Tikva and included the western border of the Triangle. The Third Front included Tel Aviv and Jerusalem and the Road. The Fourth Front extended from Nes Ziona south and east and included the remainder of Israeli territory from the Mediterranean to the Gulf of Aqaba.

When the separate Palmach H.Q. was dissolved, that force was sent to the south under Colonel Alon. It had grown from battalions

into a brigade, and finally became a division of three brigades. It was given its complement of men from the conscription, but all were volunteers subject to acceptance by the commander. It therefore retained the quality of a *corps d'élite*. From the first the Army had khaki uniforms, but for a time there were no badges of rank and distinguishing insignia. It was thought that in so democratic a force they would be resented. Their lack told against discipline and authority, but the necessity was taught by experience, and when they were introduced in August and September, they were welcomed by the rank and file.

It is worth recording that 18 per cent. of the Army was composed of volunteers from fifty-two different countries: from Europe, from America North, Central and South, from Asia, from South Africa, from Australia and New Zealand. Especially significant was the part played in building up the Air Force by volunteers from England, Canada, the U.S.A., and South Africa, who had seen service in the World War. As Mr. Ben-Gurion said, it would have been impossible without them to improvise an air force in so short a time. Never before, perhaps, had an army been constituted from people from so many different lands. They had not a language in common for instruction and operations. Nevertheless the difficulty was overcome by the zeal and the spirit of devotion and sacrifice which had brought them together. Now that so many immigrants of different cultural backgrounds have flowed into the country the Army is the greatest single unifying force. It is executing an educational task of the highest value.

During the Truce Count Bernadotte had, in accord with the U.N. resolution, been attempting "to promote a peaceful adjustment of the future situation of Palestine." The Count had excellent sentiments but exiguous political understanding, and on the 28th and 29th June he submitted to the protagonists his "suggestions for a possible approach to the peaceful adjustment of the future situation of Palestine." They were of an astonishing character, utterly regardless of the realities of the situation.

Both the Arabs and the Israelis rejected this strange scheme. It would not be surprising if in both camps there arose a suspicion that the hand might be the hand of Bernadotte but the voice the voice of Bevin. In his naiveté Count Bernadotte did not appreciate that he had thrown a bombshell into both camps. Suspicion in the

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Arab League of Transjordan was deeply rooted. Now it was suggested that Transjordan should get all the loot, and the other members be content with the glory of having helped her to it. The appetites and the rivalries which had hitherto been masked were now revealed to the world, with an impact upon the conduct of the war. Military facts generate political facts, and political facts can generate military facts. Count Bernadotte's clumsy diplomacy made certain the resumption of war instead of the prolongation of the Truce, and drove home the conviction that the most persuasive of diplomatic arguments was the conquest of territory.

The Truce was due to end on the 9th July. Neither side was very anxious to prolong it. The Arabs believed that victory would be theirs, and that delay told against them. The Israeli Government had during the Truce established its authority firmly, increased and reorganised its forces, and secured considerable supplies of arms. The Israelis in the first phase had been on the defensive. They had now taken the measure of the Arabs, they were determined to take the offensive, and their plans were ready. Three offensives had been decided upon: against the Legion in the centre; against the Syrians in the Upper Jordan Valley; and against Kaukji in Nazareth and Lower Galilee. The two first both opened on the 9th July, promptly on the termination of the Truce, the third five days later.

### LYDDA-RAMLEH

The Lydda-Ramleh offensive—Operation Dani, as it was called—had two phases and two rather different objectives. The first in time and importance was directed to the conquest of the Lydda-Ramleh area, positions held by the Legion and its semi-regular associates; the second to widening the belt of territory south of and covering the communications between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. This was aimed primarily against the Egyptians. The Lydda-Ramleh area projected towards and threatened Tel Aviv-Jaffa. Here if anywhere the invaders could strike the decisive blow. It was surrounded by a long trench with good fire positions and protection against mechanised attack. The roads leading to Tel Aviv were blocked. It was backed by a number of villages



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strongly defended, and communicating by good roads with the main bases Ramallah in the east and Tulkarm in the north. The defending force consisted mainly of semi-regulars and villagers. The country was rolling hills where mechanised vehicles could operate and infantry move rapidly. Lydda had a population of 12,000, Ramleh of 13,000.

Ramleh was on the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road (west of Latrun, in the hands of the Legion), but that road was blocked by Gezer and Kabab, both in Jewish hands. A secondary parallel road, a little to the north, connected Ramleh with Lydda, and *via* Lydda with Latrun on the east and Tulkarm on the north. It was covered by the villages Jimzu, Barfiliah, and Bir Malin (all in Arab lands). At Lydda was a road centre; to the north there was one branch which ran to Petah Tikva and another straight to Tulkarm with an easterly branch to Ramallah. The road to Petah Tikva was covered by the airfield, Yehudieh and Wilhelmina, all in Arab hands; the roads to Tulkarm and Ramallah were covered by a string of Arab villages running north—Beit Nabala, Kula, Migdal Zadek, Ras el Ain. Between Lydda and Beit Nabala was the Jewish village Ben Shemen, which, surrounded by Arab centres, had been in a state of siege for a long time.

The Jewish bases were around Tel Aviv. The Jewish force consisted of armoured cars, infantry, and artillery, and had air support. The plan was to envelop Lydda and Ramleh by a pincer movement, which, through the capture of the Arab villages to the north, east, and south, would cut off those towns from their bases, and to break or distract the front by a series of wedge-shaped penetrations. The outflanking movements were the real offensive. There were in effect two Arab lines to be broken or turned: the more westerly along the Lydda-Petah Tikva road, the more easterly along the Lydda-Ramleh and Lydda-Tulkarm roads. The attack was made by two columns, one moving from the north and striking south and east, the other moving from the south and striking north and east. The offensive began on the 9th July as soon as the First Truce ended. On the 10th the airfield of Lydda was seized, and at the same time a detachment took Yehudiah. Therewith the first line, the Lydda-Petah Tikva road was broken, and the way was open for a swift advance east to the second line. The front was pushed forward five miles, and the string of villages constituting that line—Wilhelmina, Rantis, Tirah, and

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(later) Deir Tarif—was taken by a series of outflanking encircling movements. The operations were so swift, the concentration of artillery fire and bombing so heavy, and the infantry attacks by day and night so unexpected, that the Arab resistance broke quickly and the Arabs took to flight.

Meanwhile the column moving up from the south from Gezer had crossed the Jerusalem road, moved north-east, and by the 10th July taken Innabah, Jimzu, and Danileh, and so cut every road leading from the east direct to Ramleh. Ramleh was completely surrounded except for its link with Lydda. That too was soon gone. The column moved north, relieved Ben Shemen, and joined the other column at Hadita. Lydda and Ramleh were now completely cut off from their bases. The next day, the 11th July, a combined assault was made on Lydda. The police post resisted stoutly, but in the night the garrison fled, and Lydda surrendered.

Ramleh was now untenable, but the situation there was strange. On the 10th Israeli armoured cars had broken into the town firing right and left, and pushed on halfway to Lydda before halting. They could not hold the town, but they broke the spirit of resistance, and most of the population took refuge in the mosque and the church. The infantry followed the armour, but their position was highly insecure. There were 2,000 armed Arabs, the police post had a garrison of 150, and some Legion armour intervened suddenly, though it retired after about an hour. Orders to surrender arms brought no result, and it was evident that the negotiations for a capitulation were being prolonged in the expectation that, between the police post and the Legion outside and the armed men within, the Israelis would be driven out. That night, however, the garrison of the police post decamped, and the town capitulated (12th July). All the inhabitants of both Lydda and Ramleh, as of all the captured villages, chose evacuation, and took the road to Ramallah, carrying with them such belongings as they could.

Meanwhile in the area which had been seized by the northern column heavy fighting was in progress. The greater part of this force had gone south to join the other column, and the Legion and their associates made strong and repeated efforts to recover the lost villages. The Arabs fought well and with much skill. Between Beit Nabala and Deir Tarif they threw in armour as well as infantry in a desperate effort to open the road to Lydda. They

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gained some temporary local advantages, but in the end were repulsed and driven off at every point. The Israelis pushed south-east from Lydda and Ramleh and moved towards the Latrun-Ramallah road, taking several villages. By the 18th July they were almost astride that road, and the fate of Latrun was about to be sealed. But the Second Truce put an end to operations. It saved the Legion in Latrun and probably in Ramallah. Ramallah was the pivot of the whole Arab position in Central Palestine. Had it fallen, the Triangle would have gone, Jerusalem would have gone, and Hebron would have gone—there were practically no troops in the Hebron area. It was political pressure at Lake Success which induced the Israeli Government to accede to a truce at such a critical moment, and a heavy price was paid for political expediency.

Having disposed of Lydda and Ramleh, the Israeli commander dispatched a column for his second task, the strengthening of the defences of the communications with Jerusalem. The Egyptians were dug in on a line through the Vale of Sorek, north of the Lydda-Jerusalem railway line. At one point Israelis and Egyptians were so near to one another that they held opposite sides of the same hill. The belt between the "Burma Road", by which all supplies went to Jerusalem, and the Egyptians was too narrow for security. It had to be widened, especially as the Israelis contemplated building a better road further to the south, a road which was to be formally inaugurated in December as the Road of Valour. On the 13th July Sara and Suba were taken; on the 17th Deir Umur; on the 19th Iswa and Deir Rafa. Hartuv was recovered, and the police post nearby stormed. By the time the Second Truce came into operation the Egyptians had been pushed south of the railway line, and bases gained for an offensive against the whole Egyptian front from Beit Jibrin to Jerusalem should the occasion arise.

This campaign of the centre had been a swift and brilliant success. It had lasted ten days. In three days the Lydda-Ramleh area had been conquered; the Latrun-Ramleh road was on the point of being cut, with all the consequences implicit; Tel Aviv had been rendered impregnable; the offensive potential of the Legion had been sterilised; the Burma Road to Jerusalem had been strengthened and secured; the Egyptians had been hit. The one disappointment was that few Legion prisoners had been

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taken. They had escaped betimes when encirclement threatened. Abdullah's most precious possession was his soldiers, and they had to be economised. All this success was due to the reorganisation of the Army, the confirmation of the Israeli Government's authority, a single command, co-operation between land and air, infantry, artillery, and armour, above all to new strategy, and new tactics. The frontal attacks of the first period of the war had been abandoned, and enveloping movements had taken their place. It was the first large-scale offensive; the defensive phase was over for good and all. The initiative was with the Israelis. It had been used and it would continue to be used.

### GALILEE

On the 9th July began Operation Barosh—its objective to clear the bridgehead which the Syrians had established by occupying the Bridge of the Daughters of Jacob and capturing Mishmar Hayarden between Lake Huleh and Lake Tiberias. During the Truce both sides had been digging in and preparing, and it was believed by the Israelis that the Syrians would make an offensive, and try to break through to the Road and cut off the narrow northern finger of the Jordan Valley, only five miles wide. The Israeli strong points in the hills west of the Valley were Safad, Ramat Naftali, Manara, and Givat Am (running south to north). They were isolated points rather than a strong line, and were not considered to offer sufficient security. In any case a strategy of defence offered the enemy the choice of time and place and concentration should he desire to attack. Every argument told in favour of an offensive, but the conditions were difficult. The bridgehead was heavily fortified; the Arabs held all the high ground east of the Jordan, which must be won if the bridgehead was to be cleared; they had tanks, many armoured cars, artillery which outranged the guns of the Israelis, and a great superiority in infantry; and the road was under fire from both sides, from the Syrians on the east and the Lebanese on the west. The new strategy was adopted—a pincer attack from the flanks and a holding attack on the front of Mishmar Hayarden. It involved, among other things, a double water crossing, across Lake Huleh and across the Jordan.

On the west shores of Lake Huleh the Israelis had a base in

Hulata, on the east in Dardara. On the south they had, during the Truce, established an advanced post at Mansurah, and on the west they held Yarda. It was from these four directions that the offensive moved, on the night of the 9th July. The plan was that a column should be carried across the Lake from Hulata to Dardara, that from there it should seize the heights near Dabura, and from there march south-east and cut the road from Mishmar Hayarden to Kuneitra, the Syrian base. Another column was to move from Hulata along the shore of the Lake to the Jordan—here 100 feet wide—cross the river by boats and a boat bridge to be erected, occupy some hills east of Jordan to cover the advance, and moving south-east cut the road between Mishmar Hayarden and the point at which the first column was to cut it. At the same time columns from Mansurah and Yarda were to seize some hills west of the Jordan, open a direct holding attack on Mishmar, and cover the column crossing the Jordan. If all went well Mishmar would be isolated and must surrender. All these operations were to be begun and if possible completed during the hours of the night and to have the advantage of surprise.

The first column had no difficulty in crossing Lake Huleh to Dardara, and seizing the heights of Dabura. There it halted and did not reach the road. The second column marched from Hulata to the Jordan, and began crossing the Jordan in boats and building the boat bridge. But the boats were too few, and the sappers engaged on the bridge came under heavy fire, of which this was their first experience. By daylight only half the force had made the crossing; they halted, and never reached the road. The main strategy, the flank attack, had thus failed. The other two columns reached their objectives. With daylight the Syrians opened a heavy counter-attack. Six planes, refuelling and replenishing their munitions, bombed and shot at every Israeli concentration and every movement on the road. Only once, in the morning, did a single Israeli plane intervene. Preparatory to an advance the Syrians turned their artillery against the hills the Israelis had captured. The Israelis were outranged and could not reply, and they had had no time to dig in. After the artillery, Syrian tanks advanced and fired well out of range of the Israeli anti-tank weapons. Then they attacked the Israeli-held hill positions with tanks, artillery, and infantry, a battalion of infantry against each position. All the positions were taken except Hill 243 near Yarda.

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Meanwhile another Syrian force attacked the Israelis who had crossed the Jordan. The situation was very perilous and a retreat was ordered. Some wounded and weapons were left behind, but were recovered by a party crossing the Jordan the following night. The Arabs pressed on and threatened to take Hulata and Yesod Hamaleh, but after a desperate struggle were checked and held in front of Pardes Huri on the shore of Lake Huleh.

In the afternoon of the next day (11th July) the Syrians opened an attack on Dardara, first with artillery and then with a battalion of infantry. By nightfall it was beaten off. Throughout the ten days between the Truces the fighting went on, with heavy losses to both sides, particularly to the Arabs. At the end the position was unchanged from the position at the beginning, and on the face of things much blood and much effort had been spent to no purpose. Tactically, as the Israelis had taken the offensive and been repulsed, they had suffered a defeat. The battle might be criticised as neither well planned nor well executed. The attack was on one flank instead of a pincer movement on both. The movement across the lake to Dardara was most venturesome; it left that column's communications in the air and exposed it to the most serious danger of destruction in the event of a counter-attack. It would have been better to have thrown this column against the southern flank and make a pincer attack; or if there were not boats enough for a second Jordan crossing, to land it on the east shore of the Lake just behind the Jordan, where it could link up by land with the other column. The inadequacy of the boat transport across the Jordan should have been foreseen and prepared against.

The detachments from Yarda and Mansurah served no useful purpose and were quite ineffective. The Israeli commander, in describing the battle, stresses the weakness of his corps in numbers and equipment; but the disposition he made of his forces by dividing them into four columns rendered two-thirds of them ineffective. Speed was vital to success; it was thrown away by congestion at the Jordan crossing, which could have been avoided if more troops had been landed across the lake east of the Jordan and fewer attempted to be transported across the Jordan itself. This was the only Israeli offensive in which water—a lake and a river—played a significant part in the actual battle. Perhaps lack of experience of this kind of warfare accounts for the error made.

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The counter-attacks of the Syrians were prompt, vigorous, and successful. They were highly creditable to the courage of the troops and to the skill of the commander in combining land and air operations. Doubtless they had the advantage in numbers and equipment, but they made good use of it. It was a tactical victory for the Syrians. The Israeli commander claims that it was a strategical defeat for the Syrians, because it averted an offensive. Such an offensive must have been in the contemplation of the Arabs, for to stay inactive in the bridgehead indefinitely could serve no useful purpose. In fact after the Truce of July the Syrians made no offensive. Up in the north the Israelis recaptured two settlements from the Arabs, but the Arabs recovered one of them.

### CENTRAL GALILEE

Central Galilee was under the command of Kaukji. His force included semi-regulars and bands, and he had armour and artillery. Adventurers from Europe had gathered round him ; one of these was a German who had got into Palestine under the guise of a Jewish "illegal" immigrant, had spent six months in a Jewish settlement, and had left it to join Kaukji and plan many of his operations. When the First Truce came into operation the Israelis held a narrow band of the coastal plain, and a wider but too narrow band through the Vale of Jezreel from Haifa to the Beisan Valley. The coastal band was dominated from the hills held by the Arabs, and being narrow was threatened by interruption and penetration. The weak link in the other band was at Sejera. This was on the road from Jezreel to Tiberias, and protected this important communication. On the other hand it interrupted communications between Nazareth (in Arab hands) and the direct road to the Lebanon.

Throughout the ten days' campaign Kaukji could not make up his mind as to whether in his strategy the offensive or the defensive should predominate, and if the defensive from which direction the danger would come. The character of his force made it necessary for any offensive by it to co-operate with a regular army: That, as well as other circumstances, pointed to Sejera as its objective, because an attack here might be made in conjunction with a Legion advance from the Triangle or a Syrian advance

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from the east. In the event the feeble attempt from the Triangle fizzled out, and the Syrian advance from the east was stopped dead.

The Israeli commander had from the first a clear idea and a plan for putting it into operation. He meant to take the offensive—an offensive-defensive in the west, and the major offensive against Nazareth, which was Kaukji's headquarters and the key to all the southern area of Galilee in Arab possession. He was resolutely determined not to be diverted from these purposes. If Sejera (as he anticipated) was to be attacked, it must hold out as best it could with its own resources. Its relief must come from the success of the general offensive. Such success would abolish Sejera's troubles. Kaukji started an offensive against Sejera on the 9th July.

Sejera had had neither peace nor rest since the end of 1947. It was surrounded on three sides by Arab villages—Labiya, Kfar Kana, Turan, and Ein Mahal—and its supply road to the south was under fire. The Arab villagers and Kaukji's men had the support of a Beduin tribe. Sejera, even before the First Truce, tried to clear the air by taking Labiya, which barred the road to Tiberias, but Kaukji brought down reinforcements from the north and Labiya was saved. On the first day of the Truce, Kaukji attacked Sejera and inflicted heavy casualties; the Israelis had neglected to entrench. The weeks of the Truce were spent in defensive preparations on both sides. Kaukji's villages were given stone walls on the roads and an intricate system of internal communications. Sejera received the reinforcement of an unit, and an anti-tank ditch was made; but otherwise the fortifications were inadequate.

When the Arab attack opened on the 9th July the protagonists were only 150-300 yards apart. The Jews anticipated the Arab attack by an offensive on the preceding night against two hills in the rear of the Arab lines. Only one was taken, and from this the Israelis were driven out in the afternoon. The Arab offensive continued by day and night, till the 15th July, when it showed signs of abating. By the 16th the Arab offensive had become a rearguard action. On the 17th the Israelis started an offensive from Sejera. On that day they took Daburia on the Nazareth road, and shelled Labiya. On the 18th they took Turan and Labiya. The mopping up of the road to Tiberias was completed, and on the 19th Nimrin and Ein Mahal were taken. The successful resistance of Sejera was due to the fortitude of the garrison. The break-up of the Arab offensive was due to the success of the



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Jewish offensive in the west and against Nazareth, and was a prompt reaction to it. The strategical resolution of the Israeli commander was thus completely vindicated, and his doctrine that a major operation must not be interrupted or diverted by minor distractions. In war the lesser is a by-product of the greater. Let us see how this greater enterprise was carried out.

It was called Operation Dekel. For the first time the regional commander had at his disposal real armoured cars, real half-tracks, and real anti-tank guns. His force consisted of a brigade, which included a battalion with much experience in the field of operations and familiar with the terrain, units of the Field Army furnished by the local settlements, and at a later stage a newly raised battalion whose first experience of active service this was. The Arabs were connected by a road running from the Vale of Zebulun in the south to Kuweikat in the north. From this road there ran a series of roads into the heart of Central Galilee, occupied by Kaukji—one *via* Shafa Amr south-east to Nazareth; a second from Birwa with two branches (the first *via* Sukhnin to Tiberias; the other *via* Rama to Safad); a third *via* Tarshia to Safed.

The first move was against Tel Kissan, a hill dominating the Vale of Zebulun and only three and a half miles from the Haifa-Acre road. On the night of the 9th July this was attacked by infantry, artillery, and armour from the rear. The surprise was complete and success immediate. This opened the road *via* Sukhnin to Nazareth. The brigade then moved north and took Kuweikat and the complex of nearby villages—Kfar Josef, Abu Seinan, Gudeida, and Elmakr, not far from the road to Tarshia. The next line of attack was along the Birwa-Rama road. There were heavy counter-attacks against both these advances, and positions changed hands several times. But the Israelis kept up the offensive and tied down enemy forces by continuous patrols and raids all along the line. Meanwhile a battalion was pushing along the Tarshia road and opening a direct approach to Yehiam, a Jewish village south of that road.

The western front was thus secured, and the brigade moved south for the main offensive against Nazareth. Shafa Amr, a village of 3,000 inhabitants, was the first important obstacle on the direct road to Nazareth. It was taken in a night attack on the 13th July, and the way was open for the advance on Nazareth. On the 14th July Ibilin to the north of Shafa Amr was seized. Kaukji was

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expecting the attack on Nazareth to come from the south, the Vale of Jezreel, and the defences of the town were strongest on that side and weaker on the north side. The main attack, however, was planned to come from the north, through Safuria, with a lesser attack on Iltit south of the Road and a little to the east of Nazareth. On the 16th July, after disposing of an ambush, the troops took Safuria. The attack on Iltit was held up for some time, and this caused anxiety, for speed, speed, speed was the order of the commander. Kaukji expected the Israelis to halt in Safuria, but Colonel Carmel meant to push on to Nazareth that same day. At 3 p.m. they advanced from the north on Nazareth three miles distant. There was a short engagement on the road with enemy armour: six out of the nine cars were knocked out; the town was entered and the key positions occupied—the monastery, the orphanage and the police station, which had been Kaukji's headquarters. Kaukji and his staff lay hidden in the town contemplating a counter-attack, but in the night they slipped off over the hills and made their way north. Nazareth was taken, Sejera was relieved, and its garrison released to take the villages north and east.

Before the attack on Nazareth Colonel Carmel had issued a proclamation containing this instruction:

“Nazareth is a Christian sanctuary, a city holy to many millions. The eyes of Christians throughout the world are upon it. It holds Churches, monasteries, and holy places. Our soldiers when they enter will fight with determination against the invaders and the bands if they resist, but will forbear with the utmost forbearance from injuring any holy place. They will not enter any Churches, or fight from them, nor fortify them, unless under the most specific orders from their leaders. No soldier shall lay his hand on any property. The leaders have received strict instruction to punish immediately any breach of these orders. Our soldiers are civilised and will respect other faiths. If any soldier offends, he will be tried immediately and without indulgence, and will be punished severely.”

As soon as the brigade was relieved in Nazareth it moved north. On the 18th July it replied to enemy counter-attacks by capturing the villages dominating the road from Birwa *via* Rama and the road from Shafa Amr north to Birwa, while further advances were

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made on the road to Tarshia. The army of Kaukji had been routed, the western band had been widened and rendered impregnable, and the whole of the southern part of Galilee had been conquered. The Second Truce came just in time to permit Kaukji to escape, and to prevent the complete conquest of Central Galilee.

Thus ended perhaps the most brilliant Israeli offensive to date. It was due to the skilled co-operation of all arms, to careful planning, to concentration on the main objectives disregarding all distractions, to precise timing and to speed, surprise, and mobility. The strain upon the troops had been heavy and almost exhausting, but they stood up to it, they knew that to reap the fruits of victory there must be no let-up, and they responded valiantly to the most exacting demands.

On the 15th July the Security Council passed a Resolution ordering the governments and authorities concerned to issue cease-fire orders to their military and paramilitary forces, to take effect at a time to be determined by the Mediator, but in any event not later than three days from the date of the Resolution. As a matter of special and urgent necessity it ordered an immediate and unconditional cease-fire in Jerusalem, to take effect within twenty-four hours. The Truce was to last until a peaceful adjustment of the future situation of Palestine was reached; and the parties were exhorted to continue conversations with the Mediator in order that all points in dispute might be settled peacefully. The Mediator fixed the commencement of the Second Truce at 3 p.m. on the 18th July, 1948. The Second Truce differed from the first in two major particulars: it was ordered, not negotiated; it was to be of indefinite duration, not for a limited period. The Israeli Government gave unequivocal acceptance. When the question came before the Arab States, two—Iraq and Syria—voted against acceptance, and the majority qualified their acceptance by requesting that the duration of the Truce should be fixed, as an unlimited term was of advantage to the Jews. In the following proclamation to the Arab world they gave expression to their emotions:

“The Political Committee of the Arab States has received the decision of the Security Council of the 15th July imposing a cease-fire in Jerusalem and all Palestine until a peaceful solution is reached. This Committee had already responded to

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the Council's call for a four weeks' cease-fire at a time when the Arab armies were masters of the situation in all fields. The Arabs respected the cease-fire, completely honouring their word, in spite of Jewish violations of the Truce. The Arabs believe that peace, for which the Security Council was founded, cannot exist except on the basis of right and justice.

"The Arab Governments consider the liberation of Palestine a national question that merits all sacrifices and pains, no matter how long it lasts or how much it costs through the imposition of any decision taken by any institution. However, the Arab Governments, being members of the institution that has taken upon itself the responsibility for preserving world peace, have found it necessary to cease fire to disprove the charges of the Security Council. They are fully aware of the bitterness and distress caused to the Arab nations, but are confident that it will be the price of final victory.

"In the meantime they declare their pride in the solidarity shown by the Arabs, believing that this unjust international pressure will conduce to an increase of this solidarity and readiness for sacrifice to the utmost.

"The Arab forces retain their positions in Palestine, ready to resume the struggle when necessary until the objectives are reached. They have studied and taken all military and political steps to realise those objectives, and to do their duty during the cease-fire. All Arabs are urged to be alert and energetic, regarding the cease-fire as a gap in an honourable *jihad* (holy war) which can only terminate in victory."

For his part the Egyptian Prime Minister telegraphed to the Mediator at Rhodes that the Egyptian army in Palestine had been ordered to cease fire; but that the Truce could not continue unless (1) there were complete stoppage of Jewish immigration pending U.N. attempts to solve the problem; (2) the 300,000 Palestine Arab refugees be allowed to return home; and (3) the period of the Truce was fixed. Doubtless in all this, with their eyes on their somewhat disillusioned subjects, the Arab governments were protesting overmuch. But they were publicly censuring U.N., they were condemning to sterility any pacific efforts of the Mediator, and they were inviting the Israelis to make every preparation for another round.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE SOUTH AND GALILEE

**D**ENIED immediate resort to arms both parties became active in the political field. It was largely in reaction to Count Bernadotte's unfortunate proposals. On the 26th July the Israeli Government declared the New City of Jerusalem Israeli-occupied territory. This foreshadowed a claim to permanent possession. Three days later Mr. Sharett, the Israeli Foreign Minister, dotted the "i's" and crossed the "t's." The Israeli Government, he said, no longer regarded the Partition Resolution of U.N. of the 29th November, 1947, as binding in view of Arab aggression. It might demand the inclusion of Jerusalem in the Jewish State, and in the final peace settlement it would ask for a redrafting of boundaries. He indicated lack of confidence in Count Bernadotte by saying that he would prefer direct negotiation with the Arab States to any mediation. A little later he told the Count that Arab refugees would not be readmitted at present in Israeli-controlled areas, because of overriding considerations of public security, the outcome of the war, and the stability of the future peace settlement. On the occasion of reported violations of the Truce by the Egyptians he announced that his government viewed with alarm an indefinite prolongation of the Truce. It could not maintain a large army indefinitely, nor as a sovereign nation submit to the authority of U.N. mediating and supervising staff. Co-operation would be continued with the Mediator during his absence in Sweden only if progress was made towards peace and the Arab States agreed to negotiate. On the 9th August the Israeli Government took a still more decisive step by announcing a programme for the mass immigration of 600,000 Jews from Europe, of whom 30,000 had arrived since the 15th May. It hoped that eventually another 800,000 Jews would come from Moslem countries.

These declarations were precipitated—though the policy they expressed was inherent in the situation and the genius of the

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Israeli State—by events in the Arab camp. On the 6th August, King Abdullah, in a proclamation to the Legion, declared, “Your army has preserved the holiness of Jerusalem. We and others went into this fight jointly. Here we are. Where are the others? We have fought and progressed, but we have not seen this progress made by others.” The taunt was unfair as well as ungenerous, and the boast exaggerated. For months the Legion had made no progress, and in the most recent fighting it had suffered heavy defeats. But the ill-temper reflected the disharmony which Count Bernadotte’s “tentative proposals” had injected into the Arab Alliance. A retort was to come from the other allies a few weeks later.

Nothing daunted by the chilling reception of those proposals and the manifest increase of tension, the Mediator, as enjoined by the Security Council, resumed his discussion with the protagonists. Two problems occupied him—the immediate one of the state of Jerusalem, the more distant a general peace. In Jerusalem there was continuous armed bickering, not on a serious scale but painful to the sensitive Christian conscience; and the Legion was refusing to allow water and food supplies to reach Jerusalem.

The U.N. Resolution of the 15th July had instructed the Mediator “to continue his efforts to bring about the demilitarisation of the City of Jerusalem, without prejudice to the future political status of Jerusalem.” That status, however, was grievously suspect after the Mediator’s proposals in June. He could not have been greatly surprised when he was informed that “the attitude of the Provisional Government to any plan of demilitarisation emanating from the Mediator cannot but be influenced by the fact that the Mediator has proposed to place Jerusalem ultimately under Arab rule and that he has not withdrawn that proposal.” However, Mr. Sharett later explained that demilitarisation was not “excluded.” The Arabs, while carefully avoiding the word “demilitarisation,” agreed that there should be a permanent cease-fire. The bickering went on in Jerusalem; and on the 12th August the Legion blew up the Latrun pumping station, and cut, so far as lay within its power, the supply of water to Jerusalem. The blow was probably felt more heavily by Arab Jerusalem than by Jewish Jerusalem, for the Israelis had ready an alternative pipeline. But it did not make for a conciliatory atmosphere. Nor did the Mediator’s demand that immigration of all males of military age should cease by the 2nd September. Upon the policy of mass

immigration there could be no going back. There was, however, a deeper reason for the sterility of Count Bernadotte's demilitarisation suggestion. Peace and security could not be evoked merely by creating a vacuum: there must be a substitute for Israeli and Transjordan forces. The Mediator was fully conscious of this and he told the Security Council on the 18th August that, "Even if both parties were to agree on the issue, demilitarisation could not be put into effect without a strong and adequately armed United Nations force to be provided immediately. Under these conditions, I wish to inform you that I have serious doubts whether demilitarisation can be attained in the near future." He thought a U.N. force of not less than 2,000 would be necessary. Of that or any force there was not the slightest prospect. The purposeless shooting and harassing went on until on the 2nd September the Israeli and Transjordan Governments agreed to a cease-fire in Jerusalem.

On the 16th September the Mediator signed at Rhodes what was to prove to be his final progress report. In this he formulated his proposals for a definitive peace settlement, which he was optimistic enough to believe, "if approved and strongly backed by the General Assembly, would not be forcibly resisted by either side." Territorially they differed only slightly from his scheme of June: the Israelis were to be offered all Galilee and lose all the Negev and Ramleh and Lydda; Jerusalem was to be a *corpus separatum* under U.N., instead of going to Transjordan; Transjordan was to get all Arab Palestine, including the Negev, Lydda, and Ramleh. Haifa and Lydda airport were to be free ports (with a corresponding diminution of Israeli sovereignty over them). The refugee problem was to be settled against Israel in the most drastic fashion: "The right of the Arab refugees to return to their homes in Jewish-controlled territory at the earliest possible date should be reaffirmed by the United Nations, and their repatriation, resettlement and economic and social rehabilitation, and payment of adequate compensation for the property of those choosing not to return, should be supervised and assisted by the United Nations conciliation commission."

What in June had been tentative suggestions for consideration by the belligerents had in September become a definite programme to be imposed by U.N. Israel was to surrender her latest conquests, and many older settlements, to abandon her prospects

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of expansion in the south, to close (for that was what was implied) her gates to the harassed and oppressed Jews of the world, to take back in their place hundreds of thousands of enemies, and to burden her economy with their restoration. For all this her compensation was to be a scrap of territory upon which she could at any moment lay her hands without the aid of U.N. Nor was the sacrifice demanded of most of the Arab States more attractive. For the blood and the money they had poured out, for their hopes and their ambitions, they were to get nothing. All the gains were to go to Transjordan, in their eyes the most hated, the most disloyal, and the least independent of the Arab kingdoms.

Such was the political testament of Count Bernadotte, and like many another political testament it was a sowing of dragon's teeth. Its first victim was the testator himself. On the 17th September Count Bernadotte was murdered. Five days later Mr. Bevin (presumably thinking that the blood of Count Bernadotte sanctified his proposals) adopted the dead man's testament as something verbally inspired: "It would be best for all concerned if Count Bernadotte's plan were put into operation in its entirety." Mr. Marshall echoed Mr. Bevin. But the parties most concerned thought otherwise. On the 22nd September there was set up in the Gaza strip an Arab government for all Palestine. It was a phantom, but the phantom was promptly recognised by Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Lebanon. Abdullah might well say: "This is strange and serious." The rift in the Arab Alliance was naked to the world. On the 3rd October Mr. Sharett emphatically rejected the plan.

The Arab delegations, from their point of view, pronounced an equally emphatic condemnation. The only solution, they declared was a single sovereign State of Palestine without any partition, which could only lead the Middle East into a painful, bloody, and interminable conflict. The partition plan would create two still-born States; it must be abandoned in the light of reason and life. "The United Nations could not talk about the right of self-determination and at the same time deliberately foster in Palestine a new Munich." The defiance was complete. Mr. Bevin might, vainly, as events were to show, pin his faith to the court of diplomats. Those to whom the issue was as one of life or death appealed to a sterner and more ancient court, the grim court of Mars. The dragon's teeth were to spring up as arms, and in the dread conflict



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Israel was to face a divided and shattered Arab Alliance. On the 10th October fighting broke out in the Negev.

There were obvious reasons why it must begin in the Negev. There was the shadow Arab government, there were the Jewish settlements which were to be cut off from the mother country, there was the territorial future of Israel. Egypt, not less than Israel, was conscious that here the die must be cast. If the Egyptians could hold their line, they would remain in permanent possession of all Southern Palestine, from Isdud through Beit Jibrin to Bethlehem. The Jewish settlements enclosed within the area would be starved into surrender, and from Bethlehem the Egyptians might hope to put in a claim to Jerusalem. At any rate their gains in area and in value would exceed those of Transjordan, and the shadow government under their wing at Gaza might acquire some substance and give them political supremacy in Arab Palestine, with the prospect of renewing successfully the attempt to destroy the State of Israel. All these were excellent reasons for an Israeli offensive.

The Egyptian front was long, dogleg-shaped, and shallow in depth. It ran along the coast from Isdud to El Arish on the Egyptian side of the frontier and west to east *via* Majdal, Faluja, and Beit Jibrin to Bethlehem. It was served along the coast by a road and railway, which were in dangerous proximity to Jewish centres, and all along its west-east sector ran another road. From Faluja other roads ran to Hebron and to Beersheba. Both these roads were exposed to attack from Jewish settlements, and behind all sections of the front were Jewish settlements which in previous fighting had proved their toughness and now as before had the support of mobile forces of the Israeli army. From Karatiya ran the supply road for the whole Jewish Negev. It passed, *via* Haleiqat and Bureir, through territory in Egyptian hands, and could be used only with Egyptian sanction. The Egyptian front, from a point to the west of Beit Jibrin, had been particularly strongly fortified, with wire, trenches, and well-disposed zones of fire. It was narrow, but the Egyptians were confident that they could defend it. Their troops fought stoutly on the defensive, as the Israelis had learnt to their cost on previous occasions. But it had the defects and, of course, not the strength of the Maginot Line: it imposed the defensive on the Egyptians and left the initiative to the Israelis. The Israelis could choose the time and

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the point of attack, and penetration at one or more points threatened the whole front with collapse. At the cross-roads near Faluja the Jewish communications with the Negev and the Egyptian communications between Gaza and Jerusalem met. Neither party would allow the other to use these cross-roads, and the Israelis were compelled to supply the Negev settlements by air by night.

The Israelis were determined to breach the Egyptian front, and acquire a passage through to the Negev under their own control. The question who started the offensive is rather academic. Conflict was inherent in a situation in which so much was at stake, and each side manœuvred to throw the blame of commencing on the other side. A fair appraisal is that the Egyptians by blundering managed to shoulder most of the blame. As early as the 8th September the Israelis occupied a series of hills covering the road from Faluja to Beersheba, so as to secure their airstrips to the west of this area, and to anticipate the Egyptians. On the 29th September they occupied Mahaz. The Egyptians thought that this was the prelude to opening a way for convoys east of Faluja to the south. They therefore fought desperately to recover this post, and it was not till the 5th October that it remained finally in Israel hands. Meanwhile the U.N. Supervision Board had gone into the question of supplies, and had decreed that each side should use the cross-roads for periods of six hours each day, but that the Israelis should not supply by air any settlements except those which could not be reached by road. The Israelis were completing their plans, and, in preparation, were infiltrating men and equipment through gaps in the Egyptian lines, and sending others by air to the Negev. On the 15th October, in agreement with the United Nations officials, an Israeli convoy was sent to the south; it was attacked by the Egyptians, and at the same time Egyptian aeroplanes indulged in desultory attacks. This was the signal for a full-scale Israeli offensive.

The key to the Egyptian front, from the point of view of opening the road to the Negev, was the cross-roads near Faluja, and the Israeli plan was to isolate that area both west and east as a preliminary to an assault upon it. The offensive began with an air attack. At 6 p.m. on the 15th October the Israeli air force bombed the airfields at El Arish, the principal Egyptian base across the Egyptian border, Gaza, Majdal, and Beit Hanun, as well as

centres of communication and concentration at Faluja, Deir Suneid, and Isdud. The air attack was resumed the next morning. Meanwhile on the night of the 15th-16th October ground detachments from the Negev raided the Egyptian border between Rafah and El Arish, mined the road from Rafah to Khan Yunis, and shot up Egyptian camps and airfields. The aim was to establish air supremacy, which was achieved ; to interrupt movement on the ground, which was partially achieved ; and to tie down the enemy by the fear of sudden attack at any point, which was also largely achieved.

That same night, the 15th-16th October, large-scale land operations were commenced on both flanks of the Faluja cross-roads. Over to the east the road to Beit Jibrin was cut, and this position was held firmly and extended against counter-attacks. An alternative convoy route to the Negev and Beersheba could have been driven through at this point, but it was not at the moment exploited. Over to the west, a string of Jewish settlements constituted a blunt wedge in the Egyptian front along the coast. This was given point and penetration by seizing a number of posts, chosen for mutual defence and for taking the transport between Majdal and Gaza under fire. At the same time road and rail bridges were blown up. The way was now prepared for an attack on the village of Irak Manshiya, a little to the east of the cross-roads and on the Beit Jibrin road.

At 5 a.m. on the 16th October the advance began, but by 10.30 the attack had failed and had to be abandoned with appreciable loss in men and armour. Late that night, however, an attack was made on the hills covering the cross-roads both from the south and the north, while the road from Majdal a mile to the west of the cross-roads was blocked, as well as the road from the east. The southern hill was taken. The force from the north, having failed to take the northern hill, joined the southern force. This position was heavily counter-attacked during the night, and orders were given by H.Q. to evacuate it. But evacuation was too difficult, and the garrison decided to hang on. Throughout the next day, the 17th October, the Egyptians continued to attack here, and tried to distract the Israelis by assaulting their northern base at Julis, north of the cross-roads. They were beaten off, as were reinforcements which tried to reach the northern Egyptian post at the cross-roads from Kaukaba in the south. During the night

of the 17th-18th October the Egyptians evacuated this northern post. They had fought very stubbornly, because they knew that this cross-road was the key. During the same night the Egyptians tried by heavy shelling to break up the Israeli wedge which harassed sorely their movements along the coastal road.

After the Egyptian failure to recover the cross-roads the Israelis, during the night of October 17th-18th, had pushed south and occupied Kaukaba. But the road to the south was still not open; it was blocked by Huleiqat, which was strongly fortified. That same night it was attacked from the south, but the first assault failed, because the Egyptians were continually being reinforced from Beit Tima in the west. But at noon on the 18th Beit Tima was taken, and Huleiqat was completely isolated. The next day was spent in reconnaissance, and on the night of the 19th-20th October Huleiqat was taken after a valiant defence by the Egyptians. The main road to the Negev was now open.

Meanwhile efforts were made to open a secondary road more to the west. Here the Egyptians held the very strong police post of Irak Suweidan, which also covered the emergency "Burma Road" to Faluja, which the Egyptians had constructed when the main road was blocked. Between the 18th-19th October and the 22nd no less than six attacks were made without success on Irak Suweidan, and attacks on the "Burma Road" also failed.

The capture of Beersheba was part of the original plan. The direct road from Gaza *via* Beit Jibrin to Hebron had already been cut. The use by the Egyptians of the Faluja-Beersheba road had been blocked weeks before by the occupation of Tel-el-Kuneitra and Mahaz. The only link remaining connecting the Gaza front of the Egyptians with their Bethlehem front was the road which ran through Beersheba and Hebron. If this was taken, the two fronts would be severed. After the capture of Huleiqat on the 19th-20th October strong forces were sent south with this objective. On the 19th and 20th heavy air raids on Beersheba preceded the advance on the town from Mishmar Hanegev a few miles to the north. Beersheba had a garrison of 300 regulars and 150 local volunteers. It had anti-tank guns and howitzers and an anti-tank ditch. The main attack was made from the north, with a subsidiary attack from the south. By 5 a.m. on the 21st the town surrendered after a weak defence. The Egyptians had anticipated that the Israel plan would be limited to breaching a road, and

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would not aim at the complete destruction of their front, and there were no reinforcements available for the defence of Beer-sheba either from Hebron in the north or from Asluj in the south.

The next day an Israeli force took Beit Hanun on the coastal road, and cut this line of communication between Majdal and Gaza. These two bases could now be connected only by the sands and by the sea. The Israeli navy then took a hand and bombarded traffic from the sea. When the Egyptian navy intervened, the Israeli navy engaged it and sank the flagship, the "Farouk," and two other vessels. Meanwhile the whole west-east front was being ruptured. Beit Jibrin, controlling cross-roads to Hebron, to Bethlehem, and due north to the railway and Bab-el-Wad (on the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway), had fallen to a column from the Negev. Now a column from Hartuv in the hill country south of the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road joined in. Its object was twofold: to widen the belt of Israel territory along that road, and to seize the hill country as a bulwark to the territory just gained in the south and the Negev. Pushing south from Hartuv, this column occupied all the villages as far as Beit Jibrin, and so won the desired bulwark. It then pushed east as far as the Pools of Solomon and the road from Bethlehem to Hebron. Its further progress was halted by the Truce. By then its main strategic purposes had been achieved: the Egyptian front from Beit Jibrin to Bethlehem had disappeared; the Jewish Negev had been given a solid hill defence on the east; the belt of Israeli territory from Tel Aviv had been given strategic width. There was room now to supersede the original "Burma Road" with a better road some miles to the south, the Road of Valour, which was formally opened early in December. As a consequence of these advances the whole stretch of railway from Tel Aviv to Bittir, just outside Jerusalem, was in Israeli hands.

With its west-east front destroyed and its principal line of communication, the coast road, cut, the Egyptian army was compelled to draw in. On October the 27th it evacuated Isdud and on November 5th Majdal. The limit of its line was established at Beit Lahiya, a little to the north of Gaza. General Riley, the U.N. Chief of Staff in Haifa, summed up the position: the military situation was completely dominated by Israeli forces, who could take all Palestine if they wished. In a week's campaign the Israelis had destroyed the Egyptian front from Gaza to Bethlehem; they had occupied the whole Negev except a strip

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along the Egyptian frontier; and they had made the Isdud-Majdal positions untenable. Only the Truce prevented them making a clean sweep of the Egyptian army. All that was left of the shattered west-east front was the Faluja pocket. From Irak Suweidan on the west to Irak Manshiya on the east it was seven kilometres long and one kilometre broad. When Irak Suweidan surrendered on the 9th November its length was reduced to four kilometres. It was garrisoned by 2,000-3,000 Sudanese under a Sudanese commander, who resisted assault and held fast with the utmost resolution. The commander rejected every invitation to surrender, although he knew that his position was hopeless. He was determined to save the honour of the Egyptian army.

The disastrous defeat of the Egyptians was not due to any lack of courage on the part of the soldiers; they fought well. The strategy of their chiefs was at fault. They committed themselves to the static defence of a very long line, which, if it does not succeed, almost inevitably involves the rolling up of the whole line. The central command did not exercise control over the parts, and the officers in one sector knew very little of what was happening in another. Nor in their distress did they get any help from their associates, except Kaukji, who was very far away and very late. Abdullah, who was nearest and could have intervened quickly, had, for political reasons, no objection to seeing the Egyptians hammered. The Israeli preparations were complete and their strategy skilfully conceived. Colonel Alon had at his disposal a war-hardened army, transport, armour, weapons, air force, and navy. He had mobility and striking power and surprise. The enemy line, at no place more than five miles deep, was sandwiched between two Israeli forces, which could hit either at the back or the belly. Colonel Alon, opposed to an immobile army stretched out along many kilometres, could choose his time for surprise, and strike at any number of points he might select, while the enemy could only wait, wonder, and fear. He could shift the weight of his blows from place to place according to the measure of resistance and the corresponding opportunity of a decision. All these possibilities were open, but that he seized them and exploited them to the full, and that he conducted the great orchestra of battle with mastery over instruments and men and leaders—that is the measure of his military quality. The code name of the battle was Joab; the popular name "The Ten Plagues."

Fawzi Kaukji, after his defeats in the July campaign, still held the central portion of Upper Galilee. He received from Lebanon supplies and maintenance, and Lebanon hoped that when the divide-up took place she would get this territory or more as her share. Nominally a Lebanese officer, Colonel Shukr, was in command, and there were a number of other Lebanese officers with the Army of Liberation ; but the effective command remained with Kaukji. He had three small brigades, called Yarmuk brigades, and he had divided his territory in three regions, each with its brigade. The first had its base in Tarshia and guarded the road running from Nahariya to Tarshia. The second was in Eastern Galilee facing Safad ; its bases were Sasa and Jish. The third was in the south below the Acre-Safad road over against the Israeli posts at Birwa and Miak in the west and Lubiya and Nimrin in the east. Kaukji, in spite of his many failures, still dreamed that he would recover all Galilee and Haifa. Being an irregular he did not regard himself as bound by such irrelevancies as a truce, and he carried on after the July truce a continuous bickering with the Israelis. He had guns and tanks and transport, but he had no idea of preserving them and concentrating them for a major enterprise. He chose to raid all over his ground, and to hurry men and equipment from point to point. The Israelis had laid upon them a firm command—no matter what the stress and the strain no post was to be abandoned.

Somewhat late—perhaps the details of the Egyptian disaster had not reached him—Kaukji determined to strike a blow in relief or support of his ally. On the 22nd October he marched against Manara. Manara is a Jewish settlement on the very frontier with Lebanon, and right up in the north of the Jordan Valley. He took a hill overlooking, but Manara held firm. He then cut the Jordan Valley road, and when a force of foot and armour marched against him he defeated it. Flushed by these victories he dreamed of conquering the whole area and then the rest of Galilee. The Israeli commander, Colonel Carmel, had no intention of hurrying and no intention of meeting Kaukji on ground Kaukji himself had chosen. He knew that all the Jewish settlements in the vicinity could hold out comfortably, and he took the necessary time to prepare a comprehensive plan. On the 28th October he launched Operation Hiram. Its objectives—the destruction of Kaukji's army and the conquest of all Galilee.

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Three roads ran west to east in Kaukji's area :

(1) Along the Lebanon border, with Tarbiha and Igrit, his western bases, to Malakiya (once again in Arab hands), his eastern base.

(2) South of the first from Nahariya and Kabiri (both in Jewish hands) *via* Tarshia to Sasa, where it joined the first. Tarshia was the most important centre in Kaukji's territory. It was strongly fortified and it held Kaukji's headquarters. Sasa was the most important cross-roads, for here met roads (1), (2), and (3) and a road running *via* Safsaf south to Safad and to Lower Galilee.

(3) A road still further south running from Birwa (in Jewish hands) *via* Majd el Kurum and Rama to meet the north-south road from Safsaf. Majd el Kurum was Kaukji's western base and Rama his eastern on this third road.

Colonel Carmel's plan was a comprehensive simultaneous offensive, along all three roads from the west, from Sejera in the south, from Safad in the east, and from the Upper Jordan Valley in the north. The main force advanced from Kabiri against Tarshia. It had with it a detachment of Druses, who were to take the neighbouring Druse village of Yanuh, at the same time as the assault on Tarshia. The night attack on the 28th October on Tarshia failed; the Israeli troops who had been brought up from the Negev were weary after their heavy fighting there. The Druses in Yanuh had welcomed the Israeli Druses, but when, on the failure of the Tarshia attack, Kaukji's men moved against Yanuh, the Druses turned against their brethren and drove them out with loss. The next day a heavy bombardment was directed against Tarshia, and the following dawn the town surrendered. Much equipment was found. Without delay the column pushed along the road towards Sasa. At Hurfeish it met a big enemy convoy escaping to the north. Many vehicles were destroyed, and the rest were pursued across the Lebanese frontier.

Meanwhile a column from Safad advanced north along the road to Safsaf and Jish. At Meirun the enemy put up a tough resistance, and the village was not taken before 8.30 a.m. on the 29th October. The road was cleared of mines and then the armour pushed forward to Safsaf. The village was taken, and a counter-attack from Jish repulsed. The Arabs at Jish called in a Syrian battalion. The



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Israelis attacked before it could settle down, killed 200, and drove the rest in disorder northward. Jish fell.

Kaukji's force had prepared for a grim defence at Sasa, which was topographically favoured by its lofty mountain site. But when, after artillery bombardment, tanks and infantry advanced they found Sasa empty. At noon the column from Tarshia linked up at Sasa with the Safad column, and this ended the first phase of the operation. The Kaukji area had become a pocket. His forces there were surrounded, and his villages hastened to put out white flags.

At Sasa the Israelis divided. One column turned east along road (1), which it cleared by taking Igrit and Tarshia. The other turned east along the same frontier road, and cleared it, taking Saliha and Malakiya. Simultaneously Israeli forces in the Upper Jordan Valley were moving westward. Kaukji's captures round Manara fell, without a struggle, and these forces joining those from the west at Malakiya advanced into Lebanon. A strip of Lebanese territory from the Litany river in the north to Malakiya was occupied. The Lebanese offered no resistance. Within sixty hours the operation was completed. All Galilee was cleared, the Lebanon had been invaded, Kaukji's army had been destroyed. It had lost most of its equipment, hundreds were dead, hundreds were prisoners, and the rest were escaping, throwing away their arms, by nameless tracks over the mountains into Lebanon. Kaukji had lost his last battle and passed from publicity.

## CHAPTER XVI

### FROM EL ARISH TO AQABA

THE 22nd October had been fixed by the Security Council, through the Mediator, as the date of the cease-fire in the south. It was an artificial date, and the terms of the decree were vague. The Israelis were gathering the late fruits of their victory—Isdud, Majdal, Irak Suweidan. The Security Council's Resolution had not mentioned the withdrawal of forces to the lines they had held on the 14th October, before Operation Ten Plagues had started. Now Dr. Bunche, the Mediator, was demanding this withdrawal, and getting a blunt refusal. Dr. Bunche wanted the Jewish forces to withdraw to south of a line running east from Isdud to Beit Jibrin. Beersheba was to be evacuated, demilitarised, and restored to Arab administration. An Israeli spokesman called it a shameful document. Obedience meant surrendering all the conquests of the fateful seven days. Mr. Sharett, the Israeli Foreign Minister, told the U.N. Assembly that Israel would not give up any part of the Negev, or Lydda, or Ramleh, or consider the Bernadotte report as a basis of discussion. In the Assembly, at Paris, Great Britain was going through the farce of trying to revive the Bernadotte report, which had been killed stone-dead by events. Israel was trying to be elected to membership of U.N., but British opposition, while it defeated the application, deprived U.N. of its one powerful means of imposing its influence upon Israel. On the 19th November the Israeli Government (not without casuistry) informed the Security Council that all the Israeli forces which had entered the Negev after the 14th October had been withdrawn. Before that date there had been in the Negev a mobile force, which remained. In fact nothing was changed in the military situation. The Israeli forces held all their conquests, including Beersheba. They would not allow supplies to go through to the Egyptian garrison in the Faluja pocket (the Egyptians had tried to smuggle arms through in a convoy); and they would not allow

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U.N. check posts to be set up. Mr. Ben-Gurion was telling the world that the 29th November, 1947, scheme no longer applied, and there could be no security until the Negev and Galilee had been settled by Jews.

With Transjordan some progress was made. On the 30th November a "complete and sincere" cease-fire was agreed to, with freedom of movement behind the lines in Jerusalem, and a "regular service" of convoys to Mt. Scopus. A fourteen days' cease-fire was also agreed between Israeli and Syrian forces. Abdullah had his own plans, which the Egyptian defeats made urgent and practicable. On the 1st December a gathering of the faithful met at Jericho and proclaimed him King of all Palestine and Transjordan.

On the 13th the Transjordan Parliament approved the union of Transjordan and Arab Palestine. This aroused protests from other Arab States. The Arab League told Abdullah that it was contrary to earlier agreements to oppose partition. The Egyptian Government declared that the Egyptian army had not shed its blood to place the destiny of Palestine in the hands of those who had attended the Jericho Congress. It begged the other Arab governments to persuade Abdullah to ignore the Jericho resolutions, and not impair Arab unity. Ibn Saud declared the union invalid. The Grand Ulema of Al Azhar, the celebrated Moslem theological school at Cairo, denounced Transjordan for "nefarious interference threatening Arab unity." Abdullah went on his way heedless. Arab unity was, for practical purposes dead, yet the Egyptian army chose this moment to stir up a renewal of the conflict in the Negev.

Between the 19th and 21st November the Egyptians began to advance from their positions between Gaza and Khan Yunis eastward, with a view to relieving the pressure on the Faluja pocket. They occupied Tel Jamma and then Tel Fara. From these hills they shelled the Jewish villages of Imara and Mivtahim, and cut the water pipeline. The U.N. supervisors were impotent, and on the 7th December the Egyptians advanced to Maon with sixteen tanks and infantry. Here they were met by Israeli forces, who put five tanks out of action and killed a hundred men. The rest retired. The Israelis, who examined the crippled tanks, discovered that they were of American manufacture of the Locust type, and declared that they had been passed by the English to

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the Egyptians during the Truce. The Egyptians had now established a series of posts cutting direct communication between the Jewish colonies Berot Yitschak and Nirim. On the 10th December a column of sixteen tanks advanced from Rafah and began shelling Nirim. It was driven off. The Israeli forces thereupon began a counter-attack, and recovered all the posts established by the Egyptians. The Israelis now threatened from these positions the coastal road, the life-line of the Egyptian army.

In November the Security Council had ordered the belligerents to enter into armistice negotiations and Israel and Egypt had consented, though no progress was made. On the 22nd December the Israeli Government was officially informed that the Egyptian Government had reversed its acceptance, and would not open armistice negotiations until the Israeli forces had been withdrawn from the Negev. The Israeli Government thereupon declared that it reserved its freedom of action with a view to defending its territory. The next day, the 23rd December, the Israeli forces began by land, sea, and air an offensive against the Egyptian positions in the Negev. The Egyptian Government called upon its allies for help, and Syria, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Lebanon promised to intervene (it will be observed that Transjordan made no response). The only help actually given was a little futile shelling of one Jewish village by Iraqis.

The Egyptian front in Palestine after the Ten Plagues was nearly 90 miles long and indefensible. One sector stretched along the coast road from north of Gaza to Rafah. Its length was 25 miles, its breadth only some 3 miles. From Rafah another sector stretched like a bow east to the vicinity of Asluj, on the road to Beersheba, about 20 miles south of that town. From Rafah a road swings round south-east, partly in Egyptian and partly in Palestine territory, to Auja Hafir, where it joins the Asluj-Beersheba road. This road is about 38 miles long and Auja Hafir is an important road centre. Apart from the roads to Beersheba, Rafah, and El Arish, it is linked by another road to Aqaba and by another which crosses the desert to Ismailia on the Suez Canal 150 miles distant.

In the angle between Asluj and Auja Hafir there are two Jewish settlements, Revirim and Halutza. Asluj had been captured by the Israelis in July, but the Egyptians had blocked the Beersheba-Asluj-Auja Hafir road by fortifying two hills, Bir Tmela near

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Asluj and Masrafa midway between Asluj and Auja Hafir. The country to the east of this road is hilly and roadless, and the Egyptians believed it to be impassable, especially to wheeled traffic. To the west there existed in Byzantine days, and probably very much earlier, a road from Beersheba through Halutza to Auja Hafir. It had for many generations been covered with shifting sands, and was likewise believed to be impassable. The Israeli engineers had in both cases prepared rough but useful tracks for the offensive that had been planned. The plan was to strike simultaneously from five points at the whole coastal front, and from two points at the Asluj-Auja Hafir front.

The offensive began on the 26th December, and, as customary, with heavy bombing on all significant points. From Beersheba a column swung round east of Asluj and took after a short and sharp engagement Masrafa hill, 1,500 ft. high, and then pushed on to Auja Hafir. At the same time two columns set out from Halutza. One took Bir Tmela hill, and then moved along the road to Auja Hafir. The other struck along the sandy track for Auja Hafir. The Beersheba and Halutza columns united here. The Egyptian forces in this area were utterly broken. One Israeli column pushed along the road to Rafah and joined up with Israeli forces operating at that point against the coastal front. A second column struck into the Sinai Desert along the road *via* Abu Ajila to El Arish. Abu Ajila is 25 miles from Auja Hafir. From Abu Ajila a road runs across the desert to Ismailia on the Suez Canal, and another to Aqaba. Abu Ajila was occupied on the 29th December. A detachment then advanced along the Ismailia road to the airfield at Bir Lahma and beyond. Another detachment advanced to Abu Lahma, 10 miles from El Arish. They did much damage to airfields, bridges, and camps. They received orders from the Israeli Government to withdraw from Egyptian territory and returned on the 2nd January, 1949, to their bases.

Meanwhile on the coast the Egyptian front had been divided into separated parts by deep penetrations, which cut off Gaza, Khan Yunis, and Rafah, the principal bases, from one another. Complete ruin faced the Egyptian army if hostilities continued. It was this prospect which made the Egyptian Government amenable, stirred the Security Council to action, and provoked Mr. Bevin to threats of direct intervention.

On the 29th December the Security Council, on the initiative

of Great Britain, passed a Resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire and the withdrawal of troops in the Negev. On the 31st December the British Ambassador at Washington told the American Government that serious consequences under the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty might follow the crossing of the frontier by Israeli forces. It would appear that the British Government was desirous of invoking the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty on the ground that Egyptian territory had been invaded; but the Egyptian Government was unresponsive. It preferred to have to resort to U.N. rather than to acknowledge the validity of a treaty which it was determined not to recognise. On the 3rd January, 1949, the Israeli Foreign Office declared that Great Britain was trying to save Egypt from military defeat on the basis of the Treaty. The next day the British Consul-General at Haifa told the Israeli Government that Great Britain had no intention of declaring war on Israel, but had asked the U.S.A. to use its influence with Israel to avert a direct dispute. This was confirmed by the State Department, which sent a Note to the Israeli Government asking it to avoid any action which might aggravate the situation, to comply with the cease-fire resolution, and to open negotiations for an armistice. The Israeli Government replied that it had withdrawn all Israeli troops from Egypt, and had no intention of occupying Egyptian territory. The next day (5th January, 1949) the Israeli Government received and accepted through the Mediator a proposal from the Egyptian Government for a cease-fire, a withdrawal of forces, and negotiations for an armistice. An armistice went beyond a cease-fire and is the normal preliminary to a peace.

Mr. Bevin had failed to secure Egypt's consent to co-operation with British intervention, but he had not exhausted all his weapons. Transjordan was more malleable, and on the 8th January the Foreign Office announced that in accordance with the Anglo-Transjordan Treaty a British force had been sent to Aqaba, at the request of King Abdullah. The situation in Palestine, it was said, caused grave concern. Obviously one purpose was the hope of shutting Israel off from the Gulf of Aqaba, where she had inherited and asserted the rights of the Mandatory authority. The same day the public learnt that, on the 7th January, five British planes had been shot down by the Israeli Air Force on the Egyptian frontier, whether on one side or the other is not clear (possibly on both sides) but certain accompanying circumstances

are beyond dispute. The Air Ministry issued the following explanation :

“During the last few days R.A.F. aircraft from the Canal Zone have been carrying out reconnaissances to ascertain the depth and scale of Jewish incursion into Egyptian territory. These reconnaissances have been strictly confined to the Egyptian side of the frontier. On the morning of the 7th January two formations, one of four R.A.F. Spitfires and one of a single Mosquito escorted by four Tempests, which were on reconnaissance inside the Egyptian frontiers, were attacked by Jewish fighters and the four Spitfires failed to return from the mission. A few hours later a further air reconnaissance force dispatched to obtain information of the fate of the missing Spitfires was also attacked by Jewish aircraft and one Tempest has been reported missing. . . . In view of these unprovoked attacks, our aircraft have now been instructed to regard as hostile any Jewish aircraft encountered over Egyptian territory.”

The Air Ministry prudently omitted to mention that on these flights the British planes had been accompanied by Egyptian planes. The Foreign Office did not clear the air by suggesting that they had been made at the request of the American Government—a suggestion which was promptly repudiated at Washington. The menace in the last sentence of the Air Ministry communiqué revealed Mr. Bevin’s temper and purpose. On the 11th January the Foreign Office was telling the world that the peace of the whole Middle East was threatened; that the Jews were the villains; and that the Security Council had lost control over events. Evidently Mr. Bevin thought that it was now up to him to take control of events; that he could turn the wrath of the world against Israel; and that the British public, angered by the shooting-down of the five R.A.F. planes, would back him in any drastic action.

It was a complete miscalculation at every point. On the 28th the debate on Palestine in the House of Commons was very damaging to Mr. Bevin. Three days later he announced the *de facto* recognition of Israel. Mr. Sharett interpreted it as a sign of the bankruptcy of British policy in Palestine. The shooting was over and soon after the armistice was signed.

## FROM EL ARISH TO AQABA

Elections had taken place in Israel for the Constituent Assembly, and confirmed Mr. Ben-Gurion's Ministry. It decided to end military governorship of the Jewish areas and rule them from the centre.

In conjunction with the operations in the west against the Egyptians the Israeli forces had begun the occupation of the Eastern Negev. The first objective was Sodom at the southern extremity of the Dead Sea. When the northern post had been evacuated the men were transported to Sodom. Here they were entirely cut off by land from the rest of Israel. Their only communications and their only means of supply were by air. On the 2nd June they had raided across the frontier and destroyed the Legion post at Asafia. In October a column from the west forced its way over wild country and made contact with the garrison at Sodom. In November it was decided to open communication by motor transport, and a rough track was made *via* Kurnub and the Wadi Araba. Sodom was reached on the 24th; and then Massada and Ein Gedi on the western shore of the Dead Sea were occupied. There remained the advance to the Gulf of Aqaba. It was effected by the 10th March, 1949, by a column from Beersheba. It was a trek of nearly 200 miles over some of the roughest country. The operation excited much official clamour in England that Transjordan was being invaded and Legion troops attacked. But in fact the column kept strictly to Israeli territory, and the only contact with Transjordan forces was when a Transjordan patrol, which had crossed the border, fired a few shots and then hastened away. Not an inch of Israeli territory was now in enemy hands, and the Israeli State was fully established within its boundaries.



CHAPTER XVII  
THE FUTURE

**I**N January 1949 a general election was held throughout Israel to the Constituent Assembly. Every adult Jew (or Arab) no matter how brief his residence or how complete his ignorance of Hebrew and of Israeli affairs was entitled to vote, and the elections were based on the principle of proportional representation, a principle grateful to the mathematical mind and a reasonable guarantee that government shall be by coalition and emphasise the weight of minorities. Twelve parties participated and secured one or more seats. Between them the two Socialist groups received just over 50 per cent. of the votes (Mapai 35·82 per cent., Mapam 14·77 per cent.). The United Religious Front received 12·35 per cent. Next came the Herut (the political successor of the Irgun) with 11·52 per cent., the General Zionists with 5·2 per cent., and the Progressives with 4·14 per cent.

Though this legislature was elected as a Constituent Assembly, it made no attempt to draft a constitution. The Prime Minister, Mr. Ben-Gurion, having had experience of the British system, inclined towards an unwritten constitution. But there were other reasons, the most formidable—what was to be the relation between the State and religion?

Closing one's eyes to problems does not abolish them, but it does postpone action until time has softened them. Israel has sufficient urgent, ineluctable problems, and need not apologise for concentrating so far as possible on them, and leaving to the future what can be deferred. The constitution, if it ever does come to be put on paper, can wait. Meanwhile the effective working constitution is very like the English, with a President in place of a king and a single chamber in place of two. The President is respected, but any influence he enjoys is wholly dependent on his personality and prestige. The Cabinet governs and is responsible to the Knesseth or Parliament. The stability of the Cabinet and

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the continuity of policy, therefore, turn upon the composition of the majority upon which it relies. That majority has hitherto been a coalition, and there seems little prospect of proportional representation permitting any one party to become a majority. Just as slight is the prospect that proportional representation will be dropped. It is the sheet anchor of the lesser groups, who will always unite to preserve it, while the larger groups will not unite to abolish it.

Some of the Israeli parties have no future. The Heruth and the Sternists, for instance, are mere relics of the struggle for the State, and have neither policy nor ideas relevant to the existing situation. The like is true of parties like the Sefardim and the Yemenites, who express origins, not destinies. For practical purposes there are three permanent groupings: Socialists, Bourgeois, and Clerical; but all three are split. The division among the Socialists, between Mapai and Mapam, is primarily on foreign policy. The Mapai, though protesting independence as between the West and the Soviets, is in sympathy with the West. It has the Western philosophy of political and individual freedom, and it looks to the West for the economic aid necessary for the absorption of the masses of immigrants. The Mapam professes an extremer socialism, but its real quarrel with Mapai arises from its own orientation towards the Soviet system. Some of its leaders sincerely think that Russia represents peace and progress, and that her economic system can be adopted without its apparatus of terror and tyranny. Others take the more cynical view that Russia is bound to occupy the Middle East, and therefore it is plain prudence to win her sympathy in advance. Hitherto the Mapam has been in opposition to a Cabinet led by Mapai, and has embarrassed it by the customary over-bidding of possible voters. But this may change. If the international situation diminished either fear of or affection for Russia, the principal barrier between Mapai and Mapam would crumble; and the need for union against the other parties is likely to grow stronger. Both the Bourgeois and the Clerical Groups present Socialists, whatever their precise hue, with real problems.

The Bourgeois Group has its Liberal and its Right Wings. They are at one in foreign policy, but the Liberal section is closer to Mapai in regard to economic and social policy. The economic structure of Israel has certain peculiarities. While there is no

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really large private industrial enterprise, the biggest economic factor in the country is Histadrut, the trade union organisation. This controls the largest industrial and agricultural concerns and the largest distributive organisations, and it has its own bank. Through its political organisation it influences government and administration. The economic frontier between trade unionism and private enterprise is not determined simply by efficiency in a country where foreign currency and the import of machinery materials and capital are under strict official control. It is a complaint of the Bourgeois Group, and especially of the Right Wing, that the influence of government is thrown on the side of the Histadrut, which, in any case, controls the labour employed by its competitors. The issue goes beyond a conflict between trade unionism and private enterprise. The economic development of Israel, without which it cannot assimilate the many immigrants, is dependent on the investment in Israel of foreign capital and skill, which is not likely to be stimulated by discrimination.

The Clerical Party is itself a coalition of groups ; it has a Labour Wing, and cannot therefore as an entity be committed to a reactionary social policy. Its *raison d'être* is religion, but even in this aspect there are shades. There are those who demand that the State of Israel should be based on Torah, the Jewish religious law. There are others who insist that what they consider due respect should be paid to the religious law—the observance of the Sabbath and holy days, Kashrut (ritual food) in the public services, religious education, the maintenance of the jurisdiction in personal law of the rabbinical courts, and the like. To avoid misunderstanding it should be said that the Orthodox parties are concerned only with the religious problems in the Jewish community. The non-Jewish communities enjoy now as before perfect autonomy in religious matters.

Every system of religious law presumes that its origin is divine and that the supreme legislator is God. But every such system is faced with the need to adapt itself to the developing intellectual, emotional, and social needs of its adherents, and this need is all the greater as the area of human activity which it seeks to embrace is wider. Its principles, however, debar it from bluntly abolishing old and enacting new law ; and it is therefore compelled to resort to interpretation and legal fictions, methods which have their

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limitations and are not too grateful to the modern mind. The Torah is specially handicapped in this way. Its roots lie deep in the past. After the fall of the Jewish State the ecclesiastical authorities were the only Jewish political authorities, whether in Palestine or in Babylon, and practically took all human affairs under their wing. The Torah thus covered the whole field of secular as well as of religious activity, if indeed such a distinction can be maintained in regard to a religion which was a way of life in the broadest sense. In the Diaspora, for many centuries, the Jewish communities were largely isolated from one another, and in self-defence imposed upon their members a rigorous discipline and control, compared with which the Talmud and its makers were relatively flexible. As a result, the Torah, as it now stands, is less "modern" than it was in the past, when it fully met the needs and the sentiments of its time. This constitutes a problem in Palestine, where the elements of society range from the extreme left to the extreme right in thought.

Faced with a similar necessity of adaptation the Christian churches have evolved an infallible pope or an ecclesiastical assembly with legislative authority. In the days of the Sanhedrin the Jews had the benefit of an institution which discussed openly and resolved with authority. But it was succeeded in the Diaspora by the rabbinate. Theoretically any rabbi can confer a diploma, and in that sense the rabbinate is a self-perpetuating body. Again, theoretically, no rabbi has authority over any other rabbi. All are, by virtue of their office, equally competent to interpret the law; and the generality or universality of acceptance of any interpretation is governed by the prestige which the particular rabbi enjoys. Obviously such a system does not lend itself to the systematic adaptation of the ancient to the modern. So the idea has arisen to revive in Israel the Sanhedrin. Realisation is not easy. Rabbis, like other human beings, are loath to surrender dignity and power, and in a Jewish world containing much variety of religious approach, a revived Sanhedrin could not claim the acquiescence and the obedience which were rendered spontaneously to its illustrious predecessor. And there exists in Israel, as there did not in the days of the ancient Sanhedrin, a secular State, with which clashes would be certain.

One may venture the prediction that the Sanhedrin will not come into being, if at all, for many years, and that if and when it

comes it will bear the name but will not occupy the position of the ancient Sanhedrin. It will speak for and be recognised by its own particular body of adherents, and it will confine itself to religious activities. It will not be the mirror of a theocratic State but the assembly of a sect. It will influence but not impose. The ultimate solution of the religious issue in Palestine will be a free Church in a free State. It will take time to convert the Orthodox rabbi, but he is not wholly unprepared for it. Under the Romans and during the Middle Ages Jews were faced with the problem of a political State which, so far as they were concerned, was wholly secular, and they evolved the doctrine "the law of the State is law." It will be the interest of the State to avoid aggravating the issue or presenting it in a philosophical or theoretical form. It will occupy the ground in dispute step by step as practical needs compel.

Much will turn upon the new immigrants. Before the war immigration came predominantly from the West, and these immigrants had neither desire nor intention to accept the authority of the rabbi in secular matters. The immigrants from the Orient and North Africa, who constitute the bulk of the post-war immigrants, have lived for the most part in closed communities in Moslem States which organise their subjects on a religious or ecclesiastical principle. It cannot be excluded that this element may become the majority of the citizens and the voters in Israel, with the power to make and unmake Parliament and Cabinet. The Clericals will spare no effort to gether them under their banner. Will they rally to the Clerical cause? It is doubtful, even on the short view, for they owe their redemption to the secular and not to the religious leaders. On the longer view one may reasonably hope that they will absorb the general culture and civilisation of Israel, the tone of which is given by the citizens of Western training and outlook.

A coalition government under proportional representation is apt to be less stable than a party government under a dual party system, and the first Israeli Government had its crises, which were precipitated by the Clericals. They have usually been associated with education. The Israeli school system is peculiar. The Government is financially responsible for the schools, and exercises supervision over the educational standards, but there is in effect no State system, but four systems—Socialist, Mizrachi, Aguda, and General. In May 1951, out of a total of 220,000

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schoolchildren, 72,000 were attending general schools, 82,000 Socialist schools, 40,700 Mizrachi schools, and 14,650 Aguda schools. The religious schools thus embraced 55,000 or only 25 per cent. of the total. But not less significant is the rate of growth. Since May 1948 the general schools have increased by 28.9 per cent., the Socialist by 121 per cent., the Mizrachi by 53.9 per cent., and the Aguda by 11 per cent. However, in spite of the great immigration from the Orient, the percentage of pupils in the religious schools has dropped. The chief gain has been by the Socialist schools. If this trend continues two consequences will follow: the building of a single State system will become impracticable, and the assimilation of the immigrants towards the Western pattern will be accelerated. The authorities controlling the general or bourgeois schools would prefer one single State system with provision for religious education, and they deplore the splitting into four systems. The Socialists seek to mould the youth by their own economic and social philosophy, to make the pupils from infancy up into Socialists. They are not opposed to religious teaching in their schools when desired. The Orthodox wish through the instrumentality of their schools to breed a race of pious Orthodox Jews, and they go so far as to claim a monopoly of religious education, so that all children of Orthodox parents should go to their schools alone.

In the West we are familiar with the rivalry between the secular school and the religious school, but not with the rivalry between a Socialist school system and a religious school system. It is argued that the threefold division in Israel makes for disunity, strengthens party feeling, and obstructs the assimilation of the immigrants. There is some truth and some exaggeration in this indictment. The division is older than the Israel State, it is a heritage from the Mandatory period, and it did not prevent united effort in the war or the growth of a powerful national society. Nor is the moulding of school children always as successful as is claimed or regretted: the men who prepared the French Revolution were educated by the Jesuits. In Israel there are four, not one, educational systems to choose from and to influence society, and the crown of all is an independent university, which will make for freedom of thought and breadth of outlook. Whether one conceives the school problem more or less significant, no Israeli government will seek to overthrow it, if at all, before public opinion is ripe for

the change. There will be squabbles but no fundamental issue till then.

It is a common complaint that the civil service is excessive in numbers and too bureaucratic, and part of the blame is attributed to the coalition system. Each minister represents his party, and (so it is said) fills his office with men of his own party. The criticism is not without basis, but it should be qualified by the reflection that time is needed to develop a civil service spirit which makes an official a servant of the State, loyal to the minister whatever the minister's politics or the official's personal politics. Civil servants who in Mandatory days were on the staff of the Jewish Agency were apt to insist on their party approach and required disciplining. Those who were formerly in the Mandatory Government's service had, when the official policy was hostile to the Jewish National Home, a divided loyalty. More numerous than both these sections are the new recruits to a vastly expanded administrative apparatus. These have had little time to develop a tradition. Ministers have to learn the wisdom of devolving responsibility. They are disposed to concentrate in their own hands all authority, and to reserve to themselves all decisions of any weight. This makes for delays, it weakens the independence and responsibility of officials, and it exhausts the physical strength of ministers. The men who went to spy out Palestine reported that it was a land that devours its inhabitants. That is true of the leaders of Israel, upon whom excessive burdens are laid, and who do not reject them.

A State which has to be built up from the foundations, which has assumed the duty of settling within its borders millions of immigrants, and which aims at giving its citizens all the social services of the welfare State and all the cultural advantages of the highest contemporary civilisation, needs all the talent and all the devotion it can attract. The Jews of the Diaspora are a reserve upon which Israel might draw, and there is much ability in the land itself. But there is one formidable obstacle to recruitment—the high cost of living, and the relatively low salaries. In Israel a taxi driver may earn thrice as much as a university professor, and twice as much as the equivalent of the permanent secretary of a ministry. Every civil servant lives barely, and even then has much difficulty in avoiding debt. It might be argued that in a healthy society the mechanic should be as well paid as the member of a

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liberal profession, but hardly that he should be twice or three times as well paid. But it is not a question of theory. So long as the economic conditions are so unfavourable, the Government of Israel will be heavily handicapped in recruiting the best talent.

Another circumstance, of a different character, has similar tendencies. If it is difficult to recruit good officials, it is difficult to dismiss either inefficient or superfluous officials. The Histadrut attaches supreme importance to security of tenure, and as practically all employees including civil servants are enrolled in its organisation, it can dictate in this matter to the Government. In a developing, creative society such as Israel, where adventure is in the air and opportunity beckons, the enterprising spirits will value security of tenure much less than will the dull and uninspired. The problem is not unknown in other countries, but in Israel the good civil servant has not the modest compensation of prestige.

The international problems of Israel are of a much more immediate urgency. In the Chamberlain-Bevin phase with most Israelis anti-British sentiment was strong and bitter, and it might well have been thought that many years must pass before it could abate. Already a great change has come, not a little due to the personality of Great Britain's first Minister to Israel. Mr. Ben-Gurion knows England well, and has always desired cordial relations; and it was not his fault or the fault of Mr. Sharett, the Israeli Foreign Minister, that the establishment of the Jewish State was not effected with goodwill on both sides. They would, indeed, at an earlier stage have maintained the British Mandate, if it were administered in what they believed to be its true spirit. When, therefore, the hostility of the British Government towards Israel began to thaw, it met with a ready response from the Israeli Government and large sections of the Israeli people. The laws under which they were living and the political and administrative institutions were in the main British in origin. The British had been their teachers in the art of government, and the British atmosphere and social system were nearer to them than those of any other land. At Lake Success the British and the Israeli delegations found themselves working in harmony to common purposes, and acquired mutual respect and confidence. We may believe that, with mutual good will, this cordiality will strengthen and the memory of past errors and differences will fade.

Young Israelis come to Great Britain to complete their higher



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education, and the number would be much larger but for financial difficulties. No people are more disposed to travel and study the ways of other lands, but Israel's currency difficulties set and must for years continue to set a formidable obstacle. The older generation came from Europe and had its schooling there; but the new generation, if Sabras (native born), know only Israel, and if Oriental immigrants, bring with them no modern cultural baggage. This, though unavoidable for the present, is regrettable. No people can measure its own achievements justly unless it can set them against those of other peoples. Nationalism is not enough, particularly in the case of Israel, a country which aspires to be the spiritual mentor of the Jewish people in the Diaspora.

With the United States Israel's relations are and must be of the warmest. The debt which Israel owes to President Truman and the American people is immeasurable. Without them the Jewish State might never have come into being; and the American Government has already given significant financial aid and will probably give more. The Jewish community in the United States is the largest and wealthiest in the world. It provided the major part of the Yishuv's financial resources during the Mandatory period of growth and during the war. Israel looks to American Jewry to carry her through the heroic adventure of the ingathering of the exiles. Gratitude and necessity tie Israel to the United States, and they must determine her international policy. The formula of independence of West and East is a conventional mask, and America needs Israel, if in less measure than Israel needs America.

Whether the Third World War will come and if so when is beyond prediction, but stability in the Middle East is highly desired and desirable. Three elements constitute political stability in a State: a settled government, a well-adjusted social system, and a steady policy. All three elements are present in Israel, and in no other Middle Eastern country except Turkey. Democracy in Israel is real, firmly established, and universally accepted as part of life. There is no military element to make *coups d'état*, and no party which would resort to violence to further its aims. The rule of law governs the relations between State and citizen and citizen and citizen, and the courts function in complete independence of Government control. There are no extremes of wealth and poverty; there is a deep sense of personal dignity and equality;

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and education, employment, and office are open to all according to ability. Upon this political and social foundation policy can be and is anchored. There need be no stirring of violent passions, and no diversion to foreign adventures from domestic duties.

Ideally, the rôle Israel would prefer would be that of a mediator between the Eastern and Western groupings, but this is not the age of little States or greater wisdom. The mighty Powers choose their own orbits, and the lesser must yield to their attraction. Every choice carries with it risks: if and when the decision must be taken there will be neither doubt nor hesitation.

The Jewish-Arab war has this singularity, that it has ended not in a peace but in an armistice. The frontiers have not been finally delimited, a blockade persists, there is no diplomatic intercourse. Israel has to maintain an army which is a heavy drain on her finances, and incidents are created which are designed to sustain hatred and suspicion. All the members of the Arab League are pledged not to make a separate peace, but there is nothing in that pledge (even if all were loyal to it) to prevent such local adjustments and improvements of the armistice situation as would effectually if not formally put an end to the state of war.

In their declaration of independence the founding fathers proclaimed that "The State of Israel will be open to the immigration of Jews from all countries of their dispersion." This was no empty formula. From the beginning of the Mandate immigration had been the principal objective, and as soon as the Mandatory departed and his blockade was lifted, the gates were thrown wide open. By May 1951 the number of immigrants had reached 603,600; of these just over 50 per cent. came from Europe and the Western lands, and just under 50 per cent. from the Orient and North Africa. The balance between Jews who have lived in Moslem States and Jews who have lived in Christian States has been transformed, and is not likely to be reversed again, unless the Jews of Soviet Russia are given permission to settle in Israel. In a few years practically all the Jews of North Africa, Syria, Iraq, Persia, and India will have transferred to Israel; and only slight remnants will remain in these lands where Jews have lived since the earliest ages of the Diaspora. In the first three years of the State the Jewish Agency has spent £100 millions on transporting and settling immigrants. The financial cost of transporting and still more of absorbing these millions is a burden beyond the

resources of the Israel people, will tax very severely the means of the Jews of the Diaspora, and cannot be adequately met in the limited time set itself by the Israeli Government without the assistance of the Powers. The United States has already helped by a loan, and doubtless will help still more.

But the whole economic system needs to acquire much greater flexibility. The Israelis bear very heavy taxation, and make large contributions to the national funds which are devoted to settling the immigrants. In these respects they contribute, proportionately, much more generously than other Jews. But the rate of wages fixed by the Histadrut is high, without a corresponding rate of production; and the Histadrut insists upon identical rates for the immigrants, even though they are inferior in physique and in technique. Israeli labour wishes to enjoy all the material and cultural advantages of the highest civilisation, but has not yet reconciled itself to the simple truth that, other things being equal, what a nation produces governs what it can consume. The pressure of economic circumstances will, in its own harsh way, teach. With much stress and strain, hardship, austerity, evil, and sacrifice over a period of years, the ingathering of the exiles will be achieved. Their social absorption will be more difficult than their material.

The immigrants comprise many grades of civilisation, from the primitive Oriental to the most advanced Western. Israel is perforce a melting pot, and the Western element will prevail in spite of probable numerical inferiority. The existing institutions in Israel are set in Western paths, the leaders are now and during the critical generation will be men of Western habit, and the Orientalised Jews will desire to assimilate to Western life. The older men and women will find it hard, and will only very imperfectly adjust themselves; the younger will be receptive. Three powerful educational forces operate upon them. The trade unions introduce them to Western social ideas. The schools introduce them to Western learning. The army introduces them to Western discipline and Western manners. They have no loyalty to the Moslem civilisations in which they decayed. There is no conflict of ideals, but only a skin of tradition and habit to be sloughed off.

The Jewish people throughout the world look to Israel for inspiration. They do not know what law will come from Zion, but they expect with confidence a rebirth of Judaism. Neither the

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petrified Orthodoxy bred in the ages of persecution nor the borrowed "Liberalism" of the age of assimilation is a satisfying expression of the Jewish spirit. That must come from the normal experience of the free Jewish people in the free Jewish land. Will it have a wider message for the world? One can only say with the rabbis—Israel is not a widower.

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