

societies was made public when Jamal Pasha, the Ottoman supreme military commander in charge of the Arab front, sent a number of Arab political leaders to the gallows on charges of conspiracy against the state. Salim 'Abdul-Hadi, 'Ali Omar Nashashibi and Muhammad al-Shanti were among those who were hanged. Hafez al-Sa'id and Sheikh Sa'id al-Karmi had their sentences commuted to imprisonment for life on account of their advanced years and Hasan Hammad had a miraculous escape. When the Sharif of Mecca, later King Hussein, declared the Arab Revolt against the Turks, a number of Palestinian officers joined his ranks.<sup>4</sup>

Before the Sharif declared his revolt, he reached an understanding with the British High Commissioner (H.Cr.) in Egypt, Sir Henry McMahon. In the correspondence between McMahon and Hussein, Britain pledged to recognise and support Arab independence within certain specified frontiers in the Syrian provinces of the Ottoman Empire in return for Hussein's declaration of war on Turkey.<sup>5</sup> The question whether Palestine was to be included within those frontiers or not became a controversial question after the end of the War. Whatever the British real intentions at that time, the Arabs were under the impression that Palestine was included in the proposed independent Arab state which Britain promised to recognise. It is certain<sup>6</sup> that Palestine was included in the Arab State which Britain would, through McMahon, be pledged to recognise. The cause of the controversy over this can only be understood in the light of other commitments to the Zionists and to the French during the war.

Simultaneously with the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, the British were secretly negotiating with their French allies the respective territorial desiderata in the Ottoman Empire. These negotiations culminated in the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 16 May 1916, according to which Palestine was to have

an international administration, the form of which is to be decided upon after consultation with Russia, and subsequently in consultation with the other Allies, and the representatives of the Sharif of Mecca.<sup>7</sup>

But before the end of the War Britain undertook another major commitment regarding the future of Palestine in the form of a letter dated 2 November 1917, from Lord Balfour, Britain's Foreign Secretary, to Lord Rothschild, the leading Jewish personality in Britain:

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 the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.<sup>8</sup>

'Aware of the nature of Arab feeling regarding the future of Palestine,<sup>9</sup> the British Government tried to prevent any discussion of the Zionist subject during the War. When the Sharif's newspaper *al-Qibla* published, in the latter part of 1916, an article about Zionism, General MacDonogh of British Intelligence directed General Clayton, Chief Political Officer, Egyptian Expeditionary Force and head of the Arab Bureau, to communicate a 'serious and personal warnings to the Sharif and to urge him 'to do his utmost to prevent discussions of this dangerous topic.<sup>10</sup>

These British efforts prevented the erosion of Arab goodwill and 'British troops were welcomed as liberators' and 'the attitude of the Arabs in Palestine, passive and active, contributed to their success,<sup>11</sup> General Allenby and his Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF) entered Jerusalem 11 December 1917, less than six weeks after Balfour's Declaration.

Days after Allenby's entry into Jerusalem, Colonel Deedes of the EEF reported the initial reactions to the Balfour Declaration as follows:

The news of Mr Balfour's declaration regarding Palestine is new to Jerusalem and had caused no little apprehension amongst other elements, the latter I am warned are trying to see me.<sup>12</sup>

During the same week Deedes reported exacerbation of relations between Arab and Jew in Palestine as a result of the Declaration. Jewish Colonists

profess to wish to be self-supporting without Arab labour. . . There is also occasionally noticeable an anti-Arab feeling which is reciprocated and recently rather accentuated, as you are aware, by the Balfour pronouncement. In a word friction is not absent.<sup>13</sup>

General Clayton of the Arab Bureau lost no time in drawing the attention of London to the ramifications and likely effects of the Declaration