CHAPTER I.

THE Balfour Declaration.

The world plunged into a colossal and devastating war in 1914 which shook every nook and corner of the world. The Zionist organisation adopted the policy which favoured the Allied Powers. And the organisation set up its central bureau in Copenhagen. In Palestine, however, Zionism became more intense and began to be suspected by the Turkish Government. Jamal Pasha, the Turkish Commander, soon issued special instructions for combating the activity of the seditious movement which is endeavouring, under the name of Zionism, to erect a Jewish Government in the Palestine on portion of the Ottoman Empire. The Jews attempted to separate themselves from the rest of the inhabitants in Palestine. Zionist were being deported from Russia and other parts of the world and they sought refuge in Palestine.

The attitude of Jamal Pasha could not prevent Zionist agents from emphasising the merits of pro-Zionist policy upon the Turkish and German Governments. Jews, very cleverly did not give any opportunity to Turkish Government to suspect that they were disloyal. They also claimed that when the war had been won, the Empire would have been so strengthened that it would be able to profit greatly from Jewish financial assistance, without being in any way endangered by Jewish nationalism.

To the Germans Herzl's original arguments concerning the indentity of Jewish and German culture and business interests was stressed. It was stated that Zionism was a Jewish international movement. It was mainly concerned with the Jewish interests. It also emphasized that: "It was a powerful movement, of great significance for the future, which, from a higher political stand point, should be of the greatest interest to the German Government."
In Egypt Mr. Jabotinsky, a Revisionist, from the beginning of the war, held the view that the Allied Powers were going to be victorious and that the Turkish Empire would inevitably be partitioned. He, therefore, said that the Jews, as Zionists, should give some definite assistance to Great Britain, so that they might have a substantial claim upon Britain at the end of war. It was, moreover, essential to awaken in the English an appetite for Palestine.

In England Dr. Weizman took a leading part in Zionist affairs. Dr. Weizman, a highly gifted and eloquent Russian Jew, exerted a great influence over many British leaders and especially over Mr. Balfour. The attention of Mr. Balfour was drawn in the vortex of Zionism and seemed to have made a common cause with it. Mr. Balfour then offered some territory to the Zionist in East Africa. But Dr. Weizman refused it saying that East Africa was not Palestine. The "Manchester Guardian", a liberal newspaper, became an instrument of propaganda of the theory that a Zionist settlement in Palestine would be of great strategic and political value to the British Empire. An article which appeared in Manchester Guardian on November 22, 1915, from Mr. Sidebotham's pen, was apparently the first occasion in which, the journal "yoked the international ideal of the Zionist in harness with an Allied Victory in the War."

A quotation from the article would serve as an example of the arguments used. He wrote: "A couple of thousand years, before the Suez canal was built, the rulers of Egypt were perplexed with the problems of the defence of their land frontier, and what helped them to solve it was the existence in the old Jewish nation of powerful bigger-states against the great military empires of the north."

The ignorance of history shown in this passage is grotesque. At the period mentioned there were of course, no great military empires in the north. So far as Egypt's northern land frontier was in danger, it could have been only from the aggressive and rather barbarous Maccabean Jewish kingdom itself. However, Mr. Sidebotham and his Jewish friends in Manchester drew up a memorandum on these lines, urging British support of Zionism on political and military as well as on humanitarian grounds. The memorandum was submitted to the foreign office in 1916. They also circularised it among influential people, of whom only ten replied. Of these it is significant that Sir George Adam Smith, the geographer of Holy Land, wrote condemning the idea of making a nation of Palestine. "Palestine never had been, and every would be a nation," he said. The British Palestine Committee which consisted of Mr. Sidebotham and his colleagues, then began issuing a weekly paper. They sent this paper only to those whose assistance they hoped to win or whose opposition they desired to modify. This paper has been characterised in the report of the Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs as a cleverly written paper. The phrasing is that of the British Liberal Imperialism; the content is exclusively Zionist. 1 It was in fact the type of paper which, by serving supposed Jewish interest under a cloak of serving the interests of the national of which the writer was a subject gave a plausible pretext for the attacks of antisemites. About the same period Dr. Weizman was brought into contact with Mr. Lloyd-George, whose sympathy for all humanitarian projects made him a ready listener. A valuable Jewish supporter in the British cabinet was the Home Secretary, Sir Herbert Samuel. When in December 1916, Mr. Balfour became Foreign Secretary under the Premierships of Mr. Lloyd-George, Zionists hopes ran high. For Mr. Balfour had long sympathised with that aim, and had probably

1. Survey of the British Commonwealth Affairs -
been justified in this by his visit to the U.S.A. In America the Zionist influence was very strong and had created a very favourable attitude towards the project in President Wilson's mind. Negotiations then began between the Government and the Zionists. A formula was submitted by the Zionists organization for the consideration of the Government on July 18, 1917. It was worded as:

"His Majesty's Government after considering the aims of the Zionist organization, accepts the principle of recognizing Palestine as the National Home of the Jewish people, and the right of the Jewish people to build-up its National life in Palestine under a protection be established at the conclusion of peace, following upon the successful conclusion of the War.

"His Majesty's Government regards as essential for realization of this principle the grant of internal autonomy of Palestine, freedom of immigration for Jews, and the establishment of a Jewish National Colonizing corporation for the settlement and economic development of the country.

"The conditions and forms of the internal autonomy and a charter for the Jewish National Colonizing corporation should in the view of His Majesty's Government be elaborated in detail and determined with the representations of the Zionist organisation"1.

Meanwhile, however, the Jewish Conjoint Committee, which officially represented Anglo-Jewry, sent to "The Times" a letter strongly protesting against the Zionist project. "The Holy Land " they wrote, "has necessarily a profound and undying interest for all Jews, as the cradle of their religion, the main theatre of Bible history, and the site of its sacred memorials...........since the dawn of their political emancipation in Europe the Jews have made the rehabilitation of the Jewish community in the Holy Land of their chief cares, and they have

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always cherished the hope that the result of their labour would be the regeneration on Palestine soil of a Jewish community, worthy of the great memories of their environment and a course of their spiritual inspiration to the whole of Jewry. Accordingly, the Conjoint Committee have welcomed with deep satisfaction the prospect of a rich fruition of this work, opened to them by the victorious progress of the British Army in Palestine.

The Committee went on to state that in accordance with these ideas it had recommended that His Majesty's Government should issue a public declaration formally recognizing the high historic interest which Palestine possessed for the Jewish community, and affirming that at the close of the war "the Jewish population" in Palestine would be secure in the enjoyment of Civil and religious liberty, equal political rights with the rest of the population, reasonable facilities for immigration and colonization, and such municipal privileges in the town and colonies inhabited by them as may be shown to be necessary.

The Manifesto of the Conjoint Committee produced a storm of protest in Zionist circles; but its representation supported by the influence of Mr. Montagu, a non-Zionist Jew, at that time Secretary of State for India, were not without effect. For in the declaration as it was finally sanctioned Palestine was not recognized as "the National Home of the Jewish people", but mention was made of the establishment in Palestine of a national home. Provisions were also added, but in vain, for the protection of the rights of the non-Jewish communities, and of the rights and political status enjoyed by the Jews in other countries. The latter provision was generally understood to mean that the development of the National Home should not be such as to impair the position of Jews in other countries, by causing them to be regarded as foreigners, and thereby
deprived of rights which they previously possessed.

The declaration was finally issued on November 2, 1917 in the form of a letter addressed by Mr. Balfour to Lord Rothschild, a leading English Jew, in sympathy with Zionist aspirations. The letter runs as follows:

"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 shall be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation."

Yours sincerely,

Arthur James Balfour.

Great pains were taken to make the declaration known to the Jewish population of central and Eastern Europe. Millions of leaflets were circulated through the Jewish Communities. They were dropped from the air on German and Austrian and widely distributed through the Jewish belt from Poland to the Black Sea. There were many reasons which led him to favour the Jews. Dr. Weizman also an important factor in this regard. He became a noted research worker in Chemistry at Manchester University, and after the outbreak of war in 1914, contributed notably to the British war effort with discoveries in the field of explosives. There is little doubt that Dr. Weizman's wise and eloquent advocacy of the Zionist cause, and


and the respect in which he was held by British Political leaders, were powerful factors behind the issue of the Balfour Declaration.

Mr. Lloyd George, in a Parliamentary debate in June 1936, described the general situation of the Allies at the movement when the Declaration was issued. "It was one of the darkest periods of war. At the time the French Army had mutinied, the Italian Army was on the eve of Collapse, and America had hardly started preparing in earnest. We can to the conclusion that it was vital that we should have the sympathies of the Jewish community." This statement of Lloyd George was not made until nearly twenty years after the period concerned, and, in spite, it is a little difficult to see why the sympathies of the Jewish Community should have been considered as particular so vital to British interests at that moment. The U.S.A. has entered the war some months before. The Russian Revolution had removed any unwillingness of the Russian Jews to fight on the side of the Allied. Dr. Weizmann himself stated that before the Royal Commission in 1936 that most of the rich Jews were not Zionists, and that, therefore, no question seeking Jewish financial assistance involved. It is asserted that it was mainly and primarily on humanitarian grounds, and not on account of material support, that the British Government favoured the Zionist course. If the English Political leaders had such a high moral then why did they impose Jews on Arabs and thereby do a great injustice. They badly needed money for war efforts which at that time they could get from the Jews only, and that is why to say they supported the idea of a National Home. It could also be true that the British Cabinet in general were influenced by the idea that such a

declaration would in some way help the British cause, at a moment when no help could be neglected. In the propagating of this belief a great part was played by the British Palestine Committee with its powerful Press connections.

The British public had no foreboding of these future controversies. Thus an enthusiastic meeting was held at the Covent garden Opera House on December 2, 1917. The meeting was held to celebrate the issue of Balfour Declaration. The speeches made by the three English supporters, on this occasion of the Declaration, fully confirm the thesis that the motive for its issue was predominantly humanitarian. Lord Robert Cecil stated that "our wish is that Arabian countries shall be for the Arabs, Armenia for the Armenians and Jirdeh for the Jews........ and it is can so let Turkey, real Turkey, be for the Turks".

These machinations show that there was a great and planned conspiracy, of which the British were the main architects. The purpose of this conspiracy was to drive a wedge into the Arab territory and then to make it a constant source of trouble for the Arab nations. The purpose was twofold, first to create and carve out a national home for the Jews, who out of gratitude for their benefactors, would subserve their Imperialist-cum-capitalist interest on the oil rich resurgent Arab Soil and secondly to perpetuate a tension in this region so that they may always remain economically backward, politically unstable, militarily dependent upon the resources constantly offered by the so called benefactors of the humanity. Consequently the sentiment of Arab nationalism was sought to the developed around this nucleus whereas the sentiment of nationalism at home had not fully crystallised. In the word of Berger "Social history and personal development have combined to
produce a society. In the near East in which insecurity, hostility, suspicion, revilery, find their compensation in strong adherence to religious ritual., patterns of immigration and hospitality and a limited form of cooperation".

The British authorities were probably content to leave the phraseology of the Balfour Declaration vague, and to commit to the future the responsibility. for determining its precise meaning and implications. But it may well be contended that a National Home in the full sense of the words carry with them the logical implication of political independence. A Guaranteed minority-Statute for the Jews in Palestine would have meant, as Dr. Weizman pointed out, nothing but a ghetto life in an Arab State.

There are many consideration due to which British Government supported the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. Firstly Christian of the Great British had a genuine sympathy for the Jews. Secondly Britain was too much desirous to secure the backing of world Jewry at a time when the war was not going too well. Thirdly and lastly the Government of Great Britain wanted to honour Dr. Weizman for his services to rendered during the war. Moreover, Britain's special interest in the Middle East also influenced her policy. Sir Leopold Amery drew attention to the importance of Palestine in Great Britain's imperial policy. Dr. Weizman has recorded the fact that "Italian look on Zionism as a clock for the creation of a British Imperial out post in the Levant.

The Zionists did not want Palestine to be Internationalised as envisaged in Sykes-Picot Agreement, they did also oppose a British-French Condominium. Dr. Weizman was convinced that Great Britain was the one power to whose keeping the Jewish National Home could be safely
entrusted. Thus the American-Jewish congress in 1918 and the Zionist organization in 1919 urged the selection of Great Britain as the mandatory. At least the mandate for Palestine was allocated to Great Britain, mainly because of Balfour Declaration. France on this occasion expressed her anger and maintained that Palestine really fell within her sphere of influence in Syria and the Roman Catholic Communities in Palestine disliked a Protestant mandatory powers.

In the text of the mandate the Balfour Declaration was also incorporated. The Jews hoped that the mandate would give open recognition to the historic right of the Jews to Palestine. Instead it recognized only the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine, and the grounds for reconstituting their National Home in that country. Article 2 reads:— "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. But the great Britain certainly did not use every endeavour to discharge this threefold responsibility. Britains, being partial, always favoured Jews. And persistent Arab opposition to the National Home eventually undermined the foundations of the whole British policy.

The conclusion must not, however, be drawn that the Arabs lacked sympathy for the Jews in their flight in Europe. In most of the Islamic countries the non-Muslims were not loyal to their Government. And it was on this account that many Jews were expelled from Spain and Portugal in 1492. But they were accorded welcome in Muslim Lands. The Sharif-Husain
in conversation with Commander Hogarth in 1918, expressed his willingness to help the persecuted Jews. He said that he would welcome them in all Arab lands. Again, under certain conditions the Emir Feisal, son of Sharif Husain, was prepared to implement an agreement reached with Dr. Weizmann in 1919 for the settlement of Jews in Palestine. Part of the preamble of this document is worth quoting as illustrating the relations between these leaders of the two communities. "Mindful of the racial kinship and ancient bonds existing between the Arabs and the Jewish people, and realizing that the unrest means of working out the consummation of their national aspiration in through the closest possible collaboration in the development of the Arab State and Palestine... (we) have agreed, etc. The conditions specified were never fulfilled and the agreement lapsed. A Syrian Committee formed in Paris at the time of peace Conference stated that "All those among them (the Jews) who are oppressed in certain retrograde counties are welcome. Let them settle in Palestine, but in an autonomous Palestine connected with Syria by the sole bond of federation.

At the Paris Conference of 1919 the Emir Feisal had admitted that Palestine stood in a unique position. In a memorandum presented to the conference he wrote: "The Arabs cannot risk assuming the responsibility of holding level the scales in the clash of races and religions that has in this one province so often involved the world in difficulties. They would wish for the effective super-position of a great trustee so long as the representative local administration commended itself by actively promoting the material prosperity of the country. But this was not typical of the Arab attitude which claimed that Palestine fell within the area reserved for the Arab in the McMahon correspondence. But this was officially denied by the British Government. The Arabs wholeheartedly opposed the
mandate on principle. The main contention of the Arabs was that Great Britain had no right to dispose of Palestine solely because she had been instrumental in freeing it from the Turks. At the 1933 Conference the Lord Chancellor admitted that in 1918 Great Britain had not been free to dispose of Palestine without regard for the wishes and interests of the inhabitants.

The assumption is therefore, justified: "the prime cause of the disaster were the British, it was they who gave the Jews the Balfour declaration of 1917 with its National Home and then opened the door to them. British protection and patronage enabled the Jews to make Palestine their home and to multiply under the protection of the British Arms. Their colonies were founded and extended and the Jewish immigration flourished. Under the wing of the British mandate Jewish terrorism hatched and grew and was trained by the British hand until it became an organised Military force".1

Arab opposition to the mandate and to the Jewish National Home increased rather than diminished as years followed. The general standards of health were not raised by the British Government. Arab agriculture was not allowed to flourish. Malaria and such other dangerous diseases were very common among the people. The land-tax was increased and the Arabs were being deprived of bringing their lands under cultivation. On the contrary the general standards of healths for the Jews were raised. Land tax was reduced for the Jews only. In the field of education the British Government could not provide facilities for the Arabs. Most of the money was spent on education devoted to Jewish schools.

1. Musa Allami - The lesson of Palestine, Middle East Journal October 1949 Pages 373-74.
The Arabs opposed the mandate because they wanted full independence and they also thought that the Jewish National Home would deprive them of the independence. Palestinian Arabs felt dissatisfied and there was a deep unrest among them. The Arabs were suspicious of the Zionist propaganda and British intentions. The mandate, in fact, was merely a cynical device for promoting British "Imperialism" under the mark of humane consideration of the Jews.

The Jews also did nothing to allay Arab fears. Palestine was considered as a country almost without inhabitants. Some Jews believed that the Arabs would welcome them because of the material benefits they brought with them. Individual Arabs were of the considered as backward and inferior. Certain aspects of the Jewish economy excluded Arab participation. The struggle between the Jews and the Arabs was regarded as a contest between progress and reaction. Among the Jews it was believed that: "Had they (immigrants) shown a little more discretion and less self-righteousness, more adaptability and broader interpretation of their pioneer mission the effort, even if rejected, even if ultimately hopeless, would have made a great difference, particularly for the latter internal development of the State of Israel". Dr. Weizman even at one time expressed the hope that Palestine would ultimately become as Jewish as England is English.

The Jews also had not failed to realise the supreme importance of good relations with Arabs for they wanted to live in Palestine. The Zionist Conference in 1921 passed resolution expressing "the determination of the Jewish people to live with the Arab people on terms of unity and mutual respect, and together with them to make the common home into a flourishing community, the up-building of which may assure to each of its peoples an undisturbed national development". But it was on paper only.
Practically all the Jews were hostile towards the Arabs.

It was a common belief that the mandatory might have done more to promote good-will between the two parties. But inability to secure Arab cooperation doomed the policy of the mandate to failure. The Shaw Commission which visited Palestine in 1929, reported: "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 for fulfilment of the pledge to the Jews"1. The Peel Commission in 1936 described the disturbance in Palestine as 'the outcome of a conflict between Arab and Jewish nationalism'. In the opinion of the Commission, 'it is fundamentally a conflict of right with right'2. This conflict has been described as one between a nationalism which was being satisfied under powerful protection, and a nationalism in process of frustration. The complexity of the situation was accentuated by the fact that nowhere in the world was nationalism more intense in the period between the two wars than in the Middle East, and nowhere was it more deeply seated than in Palestine"3.

British bureaucracy did not strive to reconcile the claims of the sides, because it was against her diplomacy and the policy of 'divide and rule'. The Arabs urged that the question of the legality of the mandate be referred to the International Court of Justice. After getting no response from the British Government they then began to agitate as the promises made for the independence was not fulfilled by the former.

The Jews on the other hand maintained that the primary purpose of the mandate was the establishment of the Jewish National Home, and that all other

objectives must be subordinated to this. To them there was nothing wrong
with the mandate. To promote the establishment of the National Home they
convined at illegal immigration, fictitious marriages, and the opening
of mushroom banks. The British Government, with wearysome regularity,
sent Commission after commission to Palestine to study the situation on
the spot, and to make recommendations. It tried in 1922, 1930, 1936 and
again in 1939, so as to re-interpret the mandate and make it workable.
When in 1939 the British Government finally adopted an interpretation
which the majority of the members of the Permanent Mandates Commission
considered to be incompatible with the text of the mandate, the Jews
in turn had recourse to violence. So often had British policy flattered
that by this time both sides shared the same conviction that nothing
but the use of force could induce the British Government to change its
mind.