

on future Anglo-Arab relations in Palestine:

The policy which is enunciated in clause No. 4 (regarding Jewish Colonization in Palestine) will meet with strong opposition from both Christian and Moslem Arabs who have already shown distrust of the lengths to which H.M. Government are prepared to go as consequence of Mr. Balfour's announcement to the Zionists.<sup>14</sup>

Two weeks earlier, Clayton had laid the alternatives before Sykes: 'We have therefore to consider whether the situation demands out and out support of Zionism at the risk of alienating the Arabs at a critical moment.'<sup>15</sup> In a memorandum to the War Cabinet circulated to the Middle East Committee, Sykes indicated his choice as to the two alternatives set out by Clayton. 'Palestine and our Zionist declaration combined gives us and the Entente, as a whole a hold, over the vital, vocal and sentimental forces of Jewry'.<sup>16</sup>

#### A Crowd of Weeds

Sykes added that a 'crowd of weeds' were growing around British (political) assets in the area; the first of the weeds on his list was 'Arab unrest in regard to Zionism'.<sup>17</sup>

In view of Palestinian Arab reactions to the Balfour Declaration and the JNH policy, the Military Authorities, who were primarily bent on winning the War and preserving peace and order in the country, withheld publication of the Declaration in Palestine throughout the period of the military administration and attempted to stick to the Law and Usages of War.<sup>18</sup> However, according to Colonel Ronald Storrs, the Military Governor of Jerusalem during the period of the Military Occupation:

The Military Administration notably contravened the Status Quo, in the matter of Zionism. . . General Allenby's very first proclamation and all that issued from me were in Hebrew, as well as in English and Arabic. Departmental and public notices were in Hebrew and, as soon as possible, official and municipal receipts also. We had Jewish officers on our staffs, Jewish Clerks and interpreters in our offices. For these deliberate and vital infractions of military practice OETA was criticized both within and without Palestine.<sup>19</sup>

This, however, did not satisfy many leading Zionists in Palestine who were anxious to turn Palestine into a Jewish State 'as Jewish as England

is English'.<sup>20</sup> as soon as possible. Dr Weizmann, the Zionist leader, proposed that 'the whole administration of Palestine shall be so formed as to make of Palestine a Jewish Commonwealth' under British trusteeship'.<sup>21</sup> Zionist impatience led to a certain amount of friction between the home authorities, who were willing to give way to Zionist schemes and pressures, and the local British authorities in Palestine and Egypt who were responsible for carrying out the Zionist policies in the face of Arab resentment and counter-pressures.

Indicative of the pace contemplated by Balfour and Weizmann was the interview in December 1918, at the Foreign Office, where the Zionist leader revealed his plans to the British Foreign Secretary:

a community of four to five million Jews in Palestine. . . from which the Jews could radiate out into the Near East. . . But all this presupposes free and unfettered development of the Jewish National Home in Palestine not mere facilities for colonisation.<sup>22</sup>

The British were less concerned about these grandiose plans at that time than they were about preserving their war position in the area. To achieve this end an Arab-Zionist understanding was deemed necessary. Forcing the hand of King Hussein on the Zionist issue was the first step in this direction:

In this matter it should be pointed out to the King that the friendship of world Jewry to the Arab cause is equivalent to support in all States where Jews have political influence.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, as a result of Clayton's efforts, the Arab Committee in Cairo, alias the Syrian Welfare Committee, undertook to send emissaries to Palestine to persuade the Palestinian Arabs to take a more conciliatory attitude towards Zionism.

These efforts did not allay Arab suspicions in Palestine. Clayton's weekly reports from Jerusalem consistently talked of Palestinian uneasiness at Zionist activity and distrust of Britain's 'Zionist policy'. Towards the end of February, 1918, Clayton reported that 'Educated Moslems are still much disturbed at what they deem preferential treatment of the Jews and at the possibility of Jewish domination'.<sup>24</sup>

Owing to the general war considerations, the British Government was anxious that a Zionist Commission visit Palestine, headed by Weizmann with Captain W. Ormsby-Gore as its liaison officer. The Foreign Office informed Wingate that the