

and Christian, interpreted the Declaration as an intention of the British Government to set up a Jewish Government at the end of the War, to deprive the Arabs of their land and cast them from the country. They looked upon the Commission as the advanced guard of Jewish capitalists and expropriators, and naturally have received 'with the greatest amount of suspicion.'³⁹

As for the British authorities in the area Weizmann informed Brandeis that 'the British officials have tried their best before our arrival to allay the suspicions of the Arabs both in Egypt and Palestine'.

On 8 May, the Military Governor of Jaffa summoned the political and religious notables of the Arab port to meet Weizmann. After listening to Weizmann's speech, an Arab spokesman assured the Zionist leader that 'both Moslems and Christians shall treat their compatriots the Jews as they treat one another so long as the Jews regard and respect the rights of these two religions, thus confirming their words by their action'. The Palestinian spokesman availed himself of the opportunity to demand

that Great Britain will allow representation of the Moslems and Christians to attend the sittings of the Convention or the body of men that have to consider and settle the question of this country.⁴⁰

Shortly after hearing the Palestinian demand Weizmann hastened to write to Balfour arguing against the application of the democratic system as it 'does not take into account the superiority of the Jew to the Arab, the fundamental qualitative difference between Arab and Jew'⁴¹. In the same letter Weizmann put forth proposals for the founding of a Hebrew University, the handing over of the Wailing Wall to the Jews and the acquisition of Crown, waste and unoccupied lands in Palestine by the Zionists.⁴² The Zionist leader then proceeded to submit to the British Foreign Secretary a plan to circumvent Palestinian Arab opposition to Zionism:

The problem of our relations with the Palestinian Arabs is an economic problem, not a political one. From the political point of view the Arab centre of gravity is not Palestine, but the Hedjaz, really the triangle formed by Mecca, Damascus and Baghdad. I am just setting out on a visit to the son of the King of the Hedjaz. I propose to tell him that if he wants to build up a strong and prosperous Arab kingdom, it is we Jews who will be able to help him

and we only. We can give him the necessary assistance in money and in organising power. We shall be his neighbours and we do not represent any danger to him, as we are not and never shall be a great power. We are natural intermediaries between Great Britain and the Hedjaz.

Weizmann's meeting with Faisal took place on June 1918 at Wahida. According to Colonel Joyce's report the meeting was cordial but Faisal was non-committal:

Sharif Faisal declared that as an Arab he could not discuss the future of Palestine either as a Jewish Colony or a country under British Protection. These questions were already the subject of such German and Turkish propaganda and would undoubtedly be misunderstood by the uneducated Bedouins if openly discussed. Later on when Arab affairs were more consolidated these questions could be brought up.⁴³

At a meeting of the London Zionist Political Committee held on 6 August, Nahum Sokolow, who was in the chair, confirmed the purpose of the Zionist contacts with the Arabs outside Palestine (Cairo and Hedjaz), when he said that the Zionists 'hoped to entertain the best relations with the real representatives of Arabs outside Palestine so as to influence the Arabs inside Palestine'⁴⁴

The Zionist efforts in this direction were spurred by the tactics of the Palestinian Arab leadership. For as the convergence in British policies and Zionist aims in Palestine became clearer, the Palestinian Arabs sought to restore the balance of power by closer alliance with the main Arab movement. During the second half of May 1918, the Palestinians adopted the 'Arab Flag' and the 'Arab Anthem' (of the Arab Revolt) as Palestine's own.

The Palestinians quest for greater Arab concern and backing was not their sole reaction to the impending dangers. Spurred by the Zionist challenge, the Palestinians tried to set up political, social and educational institutions in an effort to achieve greater internal cohesion and revival, which was deemed all the more necessary in view of the possibility of being politically isolated and denied contact with the neighbouring Arabs.

On 6 June *The Palestine News* reported the founding of the following societies in Jaffa: *Dar al-Ulum al-Islamiyya* (The Islamic