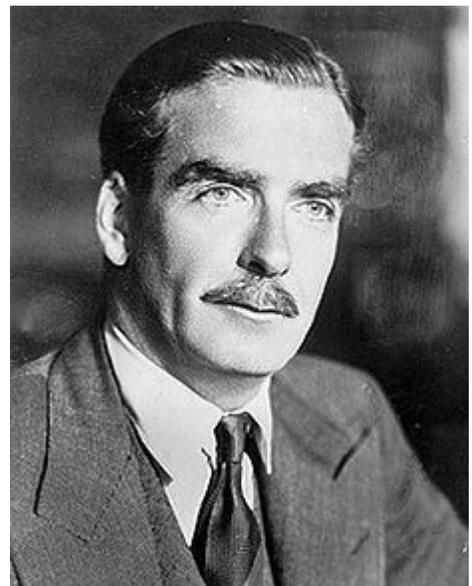


Middle East Partition - Time Magazine 1937

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MUSSOLINI'S MIDDLE EAST PARTITION POLICY

TIME MAGAZINE - Monday, July 19, 1937

Britain's new Cabinet, anxious to announce the terms of their decision to partition Palestine (TIME, July 12), met at No. 10 Downing Street last week in worried session over what might be the attitude of Benito Mussolini. Would Il Duce use his super-power radio station at Bari, which daily broadcasts in Arabic to the natives of the Near East, as an engine of propaganda to stir up the tribes and wreck partition? Would Bari even broadcast in Hebrew to stir up the Jews? During the Ethiopian crisis, Britain learned to her cost how much trouble the Bari station can stir up among her natives, and of late Bari has unflatteringly called the English "whiskey-guzzling hyenas."

So great was the Cabinet's anxiety that it decided Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden must swallow his Yorkshire pride, ask Italian Ambassador Count Dino Grandi to transmit a "personal appeal" to Premier Mussolini to keep the Bari station quiet about partition of Palestine. Since elegant Mr. Eden two years ago had an encounter with the Dictator at which they exchanged high words and parted on terms of mutual contempt (TIME, July 8, 1935), the Personal sacrifice asked of the young British Foreign Secretary last week was great. Count Grandi few days later brought the British Cabinet an especially courteous cable signed by Il Duce who agreed to keep Bari quiet on Palestine for the present. Few

observers in either London or Rome thought Premier Mussolini had done this open favor without receiving some secret concession from Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, presumably having to do with British policy on Spain (see p. 19).

The British cannot partition Palestine, which they hold as a mandate from the League, without the consent of Geneva's Permanent Mandates Commission, and its president is the Italian Marquis Alberto Theodoli—another reason why the British Cabinet were being nice to Il Duce.

Triple Play. Palestine is to be partitioned as forecast (see map) into a Jewish State, a British Mandate over the Holy Places, and an Arab State. First thing to notice and recall is that the Palestine Mandated Territory ("Palestine") and the Trans-Jordan Mandated Territory ("Trans-Jordan") are both held by Britain under one and the same mandate from the League. Thus, in a sense, the "frontier" between Palestine and Trans-Jordan has been anomalous, and this anomaly the British Cabinet now propose to sweep away, making a single political unit out of Trans-Jordan and the portion of Palestine now assigned and partitioned to the Arabs. Thus this week the Emir of Trans-Jordan, His Highness Abdullah ibn Hussein, figured that what the British are going to do will, at any rate, enlarge his realm and glory. His Highness came out instantly for partition of Palestine, declared in a special edition of his personal newsorgan that he is "highly pleased."

The Jewish State is to contain nearly all the best and most fruitful land in Palestine and is to have the country's only deep-sea harbor, Haifa. Nevertheless, its relatively small area was a heavy blow last week to Jews who have come to look upon all Palestine as "The Jewish National Home."

The proposed new British Mandate over the Holy Places is designed simply to keep a heavily armed umpire strategically placed between Jews and Arabs. As usual His Majesty's Government plan to "reserve" to themselves for many years all sorts of rights and duties permitting British forces to operate by land, sea and air with as much impunity in Palestine, after it is partitioned, as the British still retain in Egypt, despite its face-saving official status as "the Independent Kingdom of Egypt."

Dopesters Correct. On scanning the Report of the Royal Commission, observers noted how accurate in every important respect were the forecasts of the big Jewish news agencies fortnight ago as to exactly what the British Cabinet had decided to do. They were even right on such minutiae as that Britain will halt sales of land to Jews which might adversely affect the chances for a smooth partition, and that for this year Britain will drastically check Jewish migration into Palestine. Britain and the Jewish State are to 'pay the Arab State \$10,000,000, plus subsequent additional subsidies, as a sop to Arab opinion.

Double Cross, Because of certain U. S. treaty rights in Palestine, Washington as well as Geneva must be persuaded by the British Cabinet to agree to much of the proposed scheme. Moreover, it must pass both Houses of Parliament, which will only commence to debate it this week. Everything pointed to at least two years of negotiation and adjustment before Palestine can possibly be partitioned. Best and most characteristically British thing about the report was the way it made a clean breast of the fact that Britain, during the World War, secured Arab support by making a series of promises to the Arabs which cannot by any human possibility be fully kept if Britain should also fully keep the promises she made to Jews during the World War to gain their support.

Thus the Royal Commission and British Cabinet employed again the masterly technique by which Stanley Baldwin when Prime Minister used to confess that Britain had blundered and muddled, always winning fresh applause for the frankness and manliness of his confessions. To put as good a face as possible on Britain's double-crossing promises to Jews and Arabs during the War, Paragraph 24 of the Report ingeniously reminds Arabs that if the Allies had lost the War the Palestine Arabs would still be

under Turkish thralldom, and that Jewish aid was one of the vital factors which made it possible for the Allies to win the War.

Rape Proposed, Peace Predicted, The question this week was really whether the Jews and Arabs are being deftly double-crossed again. Opinions:

"In the name of God and religion," the Palestine Arab Committee of the Grand Mufti Haj Amin el Husseini of Jerusalem telegraphed to doughty King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia and the vigorous Imam of the Yemen, "the Arab nation of Palestine begs Your Majesties to direct support of the nation in this historical and critical situation and appeals to you ... to do your utmost to save Palestine from the evils of Imperialism and Judaization and from being torn asunder. . . ."

"This is a major disaster for world Jewry," cried anti-Nazi Boycott Chief Samuel Untermyer in Manhattan. "Protest against the proposed rape of Palestine!"

"I deny the necessity for the Commission's recommendation that Holy Places need the protection of a Christian mandatory as a 'sacred trust to civilization,' " declared at Jerusalem the Secretary of the Arab Committee, Fuad Saba, who is himself a Christian. "All Holy Places of Palestine have been fully protected for thirteen centuries! A typical example is that for centuries the keys of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre were in custody of Moslems because of friction and differences between the Christian communities."

"Great Britain is guilty of the gravest betrayal of a most sacred trust!" cried Rabbi Stephen Samuel Wise, President of the Zionist Organization of America. "We Jews found Palestine an almost abandoned waste. Under the mandate of Britain we transformed that waste into a high civilization! [The Report] attempts to set up another spurious Arab kingdom, strikes at the very heart of Jewish hopes and is an affront to the League of Nations."

"The existing system in Palestine could only end in disaster!" broadcast from London Earl Peel, Chairman of the Royal Commission. "I predict peace between Jews and Arabs when each have their own states in Palestine!"

6,000 Years. Nearly 4,000 B.C. is the legendary time when the Tribe of Jacob set themselves up in Palestine, and it was not until 633 A.D. that Palestine was ever conquered by the Arabs. During its 6,000 years of history, however, Palestine has been conquered and reconquered innumerable times, notably by the Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Egyptians, Romans, Byzantines, European Crusaders, the Turks and even briefly by Mongolian invaders. As long ago as 1700 B.C. conquered Israelites had to quit Palestine for Egypt, as they have indulged in innumerable migrations since, but love of Palestine has remained in the fibre of their race, and innumerable times members of the Tribes of Israel have tried and succeeded variously in getting back.

Toward the close of Queen Victoria's reign arose the present agitation to create a Jewish state in Palestine, but for decades the grip of Turkey and therefore of Islam on the land blocked Jewish efforts. The crackup of Germany and her Turkish ally, with General Allenby capturing Jerusalem as a sort of 20th Century Crusader in December 1917, was the decisive moment, because five weeks earlier British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour had made his historic Declaration: "His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of that object, it being 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 the Jews in any other country."

Jews have always read this Balfour Declaration one way, Arabs have always read it the opposite way, and among neutral statesmen opinion has long been unanimous that the late Lord Balfour perpetrated one of history's most monstrous ambiguities, a weasel which has drenched Palestine in strife for 20 years. This week neutral opinion had not yet crystallized, but widely His Majesty's Government was beginning to receive credit for honest efforts to simply cut with one harsh stroke the Palestine Knot. Approving Nazi editors told Germans this week that the wise British had made a "judgment of Solomon," apparently forgetting that Biblical King Solomon at the last moment did not permit the disputed babe to be partitioned.