



## The First Phase of the Mandate

The appointment of the first High Commissioner for Palestine was a controversial one that made the British intentions in the upcoming Mandate clear: Sir Herbert Samuel was a Jew and a fervent Zionist who had played a central role in shaping British policy towards Palestine expressed in the Balfour Declaration. His appointment was greeted with dismay by the Palestinians and with joy by the Zionists, and his policies went a long way towards setting the foundations for a Jewish takeover of Palestine. While denying the Palestinians a cohesive authority, he allowed the Jews to build institutions and even granted them the right to levy taxes. His appointments of rival Nashashibis and Husseinis to positions of authority weakened the Palestinian political resistance to Zionism, and his administration of the land set the precedent for a system of expropriation which is still employed by the Israeli government today. His tenure as High Commissioner, during which the Jewish population in Palestine was allowed to double through immigration, was marked by anti-Palestinian policies including closure of Palestinian institutions and a ban on Palestinian flags. These policies have been faithfully reproduced by the Israelis in the post-1967 occupation of Palestine.

## Diplomatic Timeline during the Mandate

**1919:** The Hejaz delegation to the post-WWI Paris Peace Conference appeals unsuccessfully for self-determination and the implementation of the Hussein-McMahon agreement, with no success.

**1919:** The American King-Crane Commission visits Palestine and determines that the Mandate would not be the best choice for the former Ottoman territories. Its report comes too late to forestall the decisions of the Paris Peace Conference.

**1920:** The first Palestinian delegation (*below*) travels to London to explain the Palestinian aspirations and their opposition to the Balfour Declaration, led by Musa Kazem al-Husseini (3<sup>rd</sup> from left).



**1921:** The Cairo Conference is called by Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill to determine the future of the former Ottoman provinces captured during WWI.

**1921:** The Haycraft Commission of Inquiry investigates the Jaffa Riots and places responsibility on the Arabs, concluding that they highlighted fears of the consequences of mass Jewish immigration.

**1922:** The Churchill White Paper confirms the British position on the Balfour declaration and holds the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence inapplicable to Palestine.

**1930:** The Shaw Commission and the Hope-Simpson Commission investigate the riots of 1929 and recommend that Jewish immigration and land purchase be restricted.

**1930:** A Palestinian delegation to London demands cessation of Jewish mass immigration and land acquisition in Palestine, and the establishment of a representative government.

**1930:** The Passfield White Paper articulates a new British policy that Jewish immigration and land purchase should stop, but is repealed in PM MacDonald's "Black Letter" to Chaim Weizmann a few months later after Jewish protests.

**1936-7:** The Peel Commission (*below*) investigates the causes of the Palestinian revolt against the Zionists and British, and recommends partition and population transfer for the first time.



**1938:** The Woodhead Commission proposes a strategy to implement the Peel Commission's partition plan.

**1939:** Palestinian, Arab and Jewish delegates fail to come to a satisfactory agreement at the St James's Palace Conference in London. It is followed by the 1939 MacDonald White Paper restricting Jewish immigration and land purchase.

**1946:** The Anglo-American Commission of Enquiry visits Palestine and recommends continuation of the British Mandate, while the Morrison-Grady Plan recommends a binational federated state. Neither proposal gains approval.

**1947:** Yet another conference on Palestine convenes in London at St. James's Palace to consider British proposals for its division into Arab and Jewish provinces (federal solution) under a British High Commissioner.

**1947:** The British submit the Question of Palestine to the UN, which issues UN Resolution 181 for partition of Palestine into a Jewish and Arab state, with Jerusalem and Bethlehem as a *corpus separatum* under international control.

