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Without the Zionist movement, the state of Israel would not exist today. Zionism was the vision of a few European Jews, designed to create the impetus for the Jewish people to return to their ancestral homeland, and it engaged the cooperation of key international players to aid in this quest. The British played a particularly critical role in making the return to Palestine possible, although their support turned out to be an obstruction on the path to Jewish autonomy rather than the advantage it was originally perceived to be. The British assisted in opening Palestine to Jewish settlement for motives far different from those of the Zionists, resulting in a situation that pitted the Jewish immigrants against their European sponsors as well as the Palestinians they were displacing, the Arab nations that surrounded them, other Jews who did not support the goals of Zionism, and the opinion of much of the world. That the Zionist settlers survived to become the nation of Israel was a tribute to their determination, but the cost in lives was high, and the struggle to outlast their enemies never-ending.

The British presence in Palestine ended in 1948, opening the way for the battles between Jews and Arabs that ended in the birth of Israel. The story of the affiliation between Britain and the Zionists concluded in a way that no one, in the beginning, could have predicted. Nor was Britain originally a direct part of the Zionist vision, although indirectly it provided a historical opportunity for the movement. As Shapira puts it, “[Political] Zionism made its initial appearance in the waning days of the age of European imperialism.”¹ In the early twentieth century, nationalist movements were emerging in European colonies across the globe, including those in the Middle East, and countries such as Britain were losing their holds on colonial possessions. Popular opinion was shifting toward indigenous rule, paving the way for the exit of Europeans from lands like Palestine. Zionists saw this as an opportunity to stake their claim in the Palestinian territories, more as a reclamation of Jewish historic and religious rights than as a new form of colonization by European Jews. It was the upheavals occurring in Europe at this time, combined with the tottering rule of the Ottomans over Palestine, that paved the way for the dreams of Zionism to evolve from a conception to a reality.

The status of homelessness had been an integral part of the Jewish identity since the Diaspora in their ancient history. The vision of the Zionists, crystallizing in the nineteenth century, was to achieve “the fulfilment of Jewish experience: the recovery of institutional nationhood, the restoration to the ancestral homeland, and the resumption of Israel’s messianic role in the reconciliation of history and metahistory.”² Zionism, therefore, had its base in both the religious and secular worlds—and proponents of one or the other point of view often found themselves at odds. A study of the movement reveals partisanship in many of the existing analyses;³ in the end, the conclusion must be that the state of Israel was formed from a synthesis of political and religious motivations.

Zionism, then, grew from two visions of the Jewish future, both culminating with “the end of the millennia of struggle between the Jew and the world”⁴ and resulting in the creation, or re-creation, of a homeland for the dispersed Jews. Taylor credits Perez Smolenskin as founding Zionism in the 1860s, basing it on the earlier “metaphysical concept of Jewish nationalism” of Moses Hess.⁵ Smolenskin visualized the Jews as separated from the rest of Europe by their race and cultural heritage rather than their history of homelessness and persecution, and spoke of a nation where Jews could live by their own beliefs and customs. The danger he saw for Jews as a people was assimilation into the predominant culture wherever they had settled—although assimilation was more of an effort than a reality, given the anti-Semitic attitude prevalent in much of Europe, particularly in Russia. A place to bring Jews back together, as themselves, seemed the solution, especially since

1. Anita Shapira, “Zionism in the Age of Revolution,” *Modern Judaism* 18, no. 3 (Oct., 1998): 21 (accessed April 27, 2007).

2. Alan R. Taylor, “Zionism and Jewish History,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 1, no. 2 (Winter, 1972): 35, (accessed April 27, 2007).

3. Arthur Hertzberg, ed., *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1997), 16, (accessed April 27, 2007).

4. *Ibid.*, 18.

5. Taylor, “Zionism and Jewish History,” 37.

some prominent British Gentiles had been interested in the idea of a Jewish homeland in Palestine since the middle of the nineteenth century.⁶ This idea was brought “within the orbit of official policy” when Britain, still operating in an imperialistic mode, occupied Egypt in 1882 and looked to Palestine as a likely location for allies of the British cause.⁷ Taylor maintains that the practical conception of a Jewish Palestinian homeland originated in the minds of Gentiles, and that only later was the idea popularized among Jewish intellectuals. According to Taylor, at the time that Gentile ideas for returning Jews to Palestine began circulating, the Jews themselves had not yet begun to think along those lines, at least not from a political standpoint. “Not only was Diasporan Judaism politically quiet in orientation,” he says, “but its view of Israel’s restoration to the Holy Land was entirely religious”⁸—an event that would herald the arrival of the long-awaited messiah and an age of international peace. It was later that Smolenskin, who believed the Jewish identity was formed more by culture than by religion, spread another, more earth-bound view among his people.

This new view grew naturally in the age of social reform brought about by the rise of Progressivism and by the revolutions of the early twentieth century. In Austria, Theodor Herzl took the idea of political Zionism and infused it with a new practical urgency. Herzl brought the World Zionist Organization into being; its First Congress met at Basle in 1897.⁹ Herzl’s motivations have been interpreted differently by various historians, but there is general agreement that he framed his vision of Zionism as a solution to the “Jewish Question” that had been a concern within Europe for centuries. Jews were forever culturally and religiously apart from the places where they lived, and their nonconformity with the prevailing culture was a constant invitation to the growth of anti-Semitism and the civil disorder that followed in its wake. They were also seen as an economic liability, a group of interlopers (no matter of how long a residence) who took jobs and business away from natives. Herzl’s answer to the consistently vexing problem of Judaism was simple: provide a homeland for the Jews and help them get there. To do this, capital and political will were needed, and Herzl had his first success in funding the Zionist cause when he appealed to the immensely rich and powerful Rothschild family.¹⁰ Halbrook maintains that, in order to make his proposition more attractive to his elite audience, he based it on a class model that would solve the problem of what to do about the working-class Jews who (he felt) were responsible for anti-Semitism in Europe, while at the same time providing enormous profit-potential for the wealthy investors in the Zionist scheme. To this end, he emphasized the benefits to the non-Jewish powers of Europe in both extending their colonial holdings and ridding Europe of a lower class prone to revolutionary thought, and to the “Jewish upper bourgeoisie” by allowing them greater opportunity to assimilate into European culture when the provocative, anti-Semitism-inspiring lower classes of Jews were gone.¹¹ Herzl was personally responsible for increasing European interest in the idea of a Jewish homeland as he pitched his ideas to not only Joseph Chamberlain—“the colonial secretary whose name is legendary in British imperialism”¹²—but also to ministers and heads of state across Europe and in Turkey.¹³ Herzl presented the proposed Jewish state as an ally of Europe; implicit in this alliance was the understanding that “[the European powers’] umbrella and patronage would be necessary for bringing about the state as well as protecting it thereafter, in return for services rendered against third parties,” putting the relationship on an “imperialist-colonialist basis.”¹⁴ Also implicit was the idea of the purity of the Jewish state, in which there was little or no role for the existing non-Jewish population of Palestine.¹⁵ This type of racism was not an unfamiliar concept to the imperialism dominant in the nineteenth century. Whatever Herzl’s motivations, he spared no effort in attempting to convince the political and economic

6. Ibid., 38.

7. Ibid., 39.

8. Ibid.

9. Abdul-Wahab Kayyali, “Zionism and Imperialism: The Historical Origins,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 6, no. 3 (Spring, 1977): 104, (accessed April 27, 2007).

10. Stephen Halbrook, “The Class Origins of Zionist Ideology,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 2, no. 1 (Autumn, 1972): 92, (accessed April 27, 2007).

11. Halbrook, “The Class Origins,” 93.

12. Ibid., 97.

13. Ibid., 93.

14. Kayyali, “Zionism and Imperialism,” 104.

15. Ibid., 105.

players of Europe that a Palestinian homeland for the Jews was in their own best interest, and he achieved some degree of success. But Herzl died unexpectedly, at the age of forty-four, before his dream could be realized.

The Zionist cause received a setback with Herzl's death, and without his unifying vision the movement split into two factions, one of which was content to form a Jewish state in any suitable location, and the other of which insisted that Jews belonged in Palestine and Palestine only.¹⁶ (This latter group, on behalf of all Zionists, turned down the British offer of a colony in Uganda.) Of additional concern was the small number of Jews worldwide that professed an interest in Zionism. This interest began to grow, however, with the outbreak of World War I, which pitted Great Britain and its allies against the Turkish rulers of Palestine, who fought on the side of the Kaiser. Given encouragement by the vulnerable position of the Ottomans, more Jews joined the Zionist movement and a new leader emerged in the person of Dr. Chaim Weizmann. Weizmann was a chemist who had emigrated to Britain from his native Russia in 1904, and Zionism seemed to him to be the best hope for Europe's Jews. He began a "programme of establishing rapport with British politicians"¹⁷—a group willing to listen to him because of his ability to make chemicals valuable to the war effort—by meeting with Arthur Balfour, a British earl and prominent politician with a life-long interest in the Jewish culture.¹⁸ The fact that Balfour was a close friend of the Rothschild family, who were already providing financial support to the Zionist cause, added to Weizmann's chances for success in winning Balfour's backing, and indeed the two developed an immediate rapport at their first meeting. Although they did not meet again for ten years, Balfour did not forget the Zionist cause and campaigned on its behalf within the British power structure. Weizmann, too, worked within the Zionist association during the period before and during the War, drawing the two factions together again and re-emphasizing Herzl's "three-point programme—organization, recognition, and colonization."¹⁹ In 1914, Weizmann met with two cabinet ministers, Herbert Samuel, a British politician and a Jew, and David Lloyd George, who would become Prime Minister two years later.²⁰ During this meeting, he stressed the strategic geographical position of Palestine, positioned in close proximity to the Suez Canal and at the beginning of routes leading from the Mediterranean Sea to Asia. Weizmann presented the Zionist war plan to his influential audience, stating that its goals were:

(1) an Allied victory, (2) the establishment of a British mandate in Palestine, (3) an understanding that such a British mandatory would then facilitate the entry of a million or more Jews into Palestine within a period of twenty to thirty years after the mandate was established, and (4) an understanding that the mandate would terminate in a Jewish-controlled Palestine which would continue to serve Britain's interest in the Suez Canal by acting as a bulwark to the defence of that waterway.²¹

After this meeting, Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary, promised to help the Zionist cause, as did others in the British government.²² The Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, however, was committed to enlisting Arab support for Britain and so rejected the idea of a British-supported Jewish state in Palestine. Nor were all the Jews in Britain behind the Zionists, fearing that increased anti-Semitism would be the result of the push for a Palestinian homeland. But when Asquith left the government and Lloyd George became Prime Minister, support for the Zionists was sufficient to produce the document they had been waiting for. The Balfour Declaration, as it was called, reported Britain's commitment to the Zionists as approved by the cabinet. Dated November 2, 1917, it read:

16. Alan R. Taylor, *Prelude to Israel: An Analysis of Zionist Diplomacy 1897-1947* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961), 8, (accessed April 27, 2007).

17. Taylor, *Prelude to Israel*, 9.

18. Blanche E. C. Dugdale, *Arthur James Balfour: First Earl of Balfour, K.G., O.M., F.R.S., Etc.* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1937), 324, (accessed April 27, 2007).

19. Taylor, *Prelude to Israel*, 10.

20. *Ibid.*, 12.

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*, 13.

His Majesty's Government view [sic] 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.²³

The last two points were originated by the British rather than the Zionists, but altogether the Declaration was a cause for celebration among those who had worked so hard for it.

The Balfour Declaration was followed by the sought-after British mandate for Palestine after the Ottoman Turks were defeated in World War I. Once again, the Zionists did not get everything they had asked for, due primarily to the lack of support from British Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon. Opposition to the proposed Zionist state was growing in Britain, and Winston Churchill issued a White Paper that watered down the administrative role of Jews under the mandate.²⁴ Still, most of the Zionist's aims were achieved, and with the approval of the Supreme Council of the post-war Peace Conference, the mandate was issued and approved in 1922.²⁵

The British government had already investigated the situation in Palestine following the end of the war. Of great importance to the Zionists was "[acquiring] a favoured position with the British authorities" in charge of Palestine, and thus "it was of no small significance to the Zionists that Herbert Samuel was appointed the first High Commissioner."²⁶ The Zionist Organization, now called the Jewish Agency and open to non-Zionist Jews, was appointed as the "public body for the purpose of advising and cooperating with the Administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish national home and interests of the Jewish population in Palestine" under the terms of the mandate.²⁷ The Jewish Agency had four main goals, as outlined in 1925:

(1) the development of a continuously increasing volume of Jewish immigration into Palestine, (2) the redemption of the land in Palestine as Jewish public property, (3) agricultural colonization based on Jewish labour, and (4) the promotion of Hebrew language and culture in Palestine.²⁸

But the very success of the Zionist movement caused trouble in Palestine from the beginning of the mandate era. Warnings by some members of Zionist groups had been issued from the movement's inception concerning the "dangers of building up the Jewish State at the expense of other peoples."²⁹ These warnings were largely ignored, and the influx of 300,000 Jews into Palestine during the years of the mandate, combined with the Zionists' goal of reclaiming Palestinian land, led to rioting by the native Arabs. The investigatory report of the rioting by the British Shaw Commission "blamed the Arabs for starting the trouble, but [was of the opinion] that the underlying cause was Arab opposition to the Jewish National Home and to Jewish immigration."³⁰ The Commission subsequently accused Jewish immigration organizations of ignoring the strictures of the mandate against any activity that interfered with the rights of the existing non-Jewish population of Palestine, and recommended limitations on immigration. Immigration, and the rapid repopulation of Palestine by Jews, was the primary goal of the Zionists, and the Commission's recommendations did not sit well with Weizmann and the other leadership of the Jewish Agency. Zionist supporters in the British government initiated a Parliamentary debate on the subject, and members of the Jewish Agency were able to meet with the British Cabinet. Weizmann, as leader of the Zionist delegation, attempted to persuade the Cabinet that Britain had a moral obligation to the Jews that overrode "what would

23. David Ben-Gurion, "From the Founding of Petah Tikva to the Present Day," in *The Jews in their Land*, ed. David Ben-Gurion, trans. Mordechai Nurock and Misha Louvish (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1966), 285.

24. Taylor, *Prelude to Israel*, 36.

25. Taylor, *Prelude to Israel*, 27.

26. *Ibid.*, 29.

27. *Ibid.*, 42-43.

28. *Ibid.*, 44.

29. Taylor, *Prelude to Israel*, 30.

30. *Ibid.*, 48.

ordinarily be thought of as an immoral lack of consideration for the Arab majority in Palestine.”³¹ He also stated the Zionist position that it was the Arabs who were causing the trouble and interfering with the fulfillment of the promise of a Jewish homeland. Weizmann was persuasive enough to quell the move to restrict immigration, and the Jewish population of Palestine grew.

But troubles with the Arabs did not cease, and were in fact exacerbated by the arrival of more and more Jews. Arab workers called a general strike in 1936, and again a British commission investigated the situation. The Royal Commission, as it was called, seeing that differences between Arabs and Jews seemed irreconcilable, recommended partitioning Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states. The Zionists agreed with the plan, but the Arabs rejected it, and the plan was abandoned.

The Zionists were soon to have a setback in a matter they thought had been settled. As Taylor describes it, “With war clouds looming over the European horizon, the British called the London Conference in 1939 to try to settle the Arab-Jewish controversy. The famous MacDonald White Paper, issued on 17 May 1939, imposed severe restrictions on Jewish immigration.”³² Although the Zionists objected vociferously to this alteration of the mandate, their protests went unheard as the Second World War consumed the government of Britain.

Additional restrictions were put in place in Palestine during the war. Buying of land by Jews was limited to a very small coastal area, as was settlement.³³ Much as the Palestinian Jews objected to these restrictions, they were committed, as allies of Britain, to join in the fight against the Axis powers. At the same time, “the Zionist leaders developed a coordinated programme of opposition to the Mandate’s continuation.”³⁴ Weizmann and David Ben Gurion traveled to the United States seeking support for repeal of immigration limits and widening of Jewish settlement rights, effectively switching the Zionist focus of support-seeking from Britain to the U.S. Still, the Zionists could not operate in Palestine without Britain’s approval, and this they sought through an appeal to Winston Churchill, who put his support behind their demands. But despite Churchill’s backing, the Zionists could no longer count on Britain to help them achieve their goal of populating Palestine with a Jewish majority, and a policy of activism against the British strictures was enacted.³⁵ As Taylor writes, “At the beginning of 1940, Ben Gurion informed the General Officer Commanding in Palestine that he had no intention of taking any active steps to help end the disturbances then taking place among the Jewish community.”³⁶ Even while 136,000 Palestinian Jewish volunteers fought with the British army (although not as Palestinian units, which the British were reluctant to arm),³⁷ Zionist leaders from Palestine, Europe and the United States met at the Biltmore Hotel in New York City in 1942 to decide the policy to be initiated in light of what they considered the abrogation of Britain’s mandate. Ben Gurion argued for immigration to be placed under the control of the Jewish Agency and limitations to be lifted, and against offering Arabs equal representation in Palestine’s government. The resolutions of this conference, known as the Biltmore Program, called for:

- (1) recognition that the purpose of the provisions in the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate declaring the historic connection of the Jewish people with Palestine was to found there a Jewish commonwealth, (2) the invalidation of the MacDonald White Paper, (3) a solution of the problem of Jewish homelessness as part of the post-war settlement (here implying that the Zionist solution was the only solution), (4) the transfer of control of immigration into Palestine to the Jewish Agency (thus giving that Agency one of the essential powers of a sovereign government), and (5) the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish commonwealth.³⁸

31. *Ibid.*, 50.

32. Taylor, *Prelude to Israel*, 52.

33. Arnold Blumberg, *The History of Israel* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1998), 60 (accessed April 27, 2007).

34. Taylor, *Prelude to Israel*, 54.

35. Taylor, *Prelude to Israel*, 55.

36. *Ibid.*

37. Blumberg, *History of Israel*, 60.

38. Taylor, *Prelude to Israel*, 56-57.

The Zionists achieved a major victory in 1944 when the British announced that a Jewish Brigade would be formed in Palestine.³⁹ This unit, which fought in Italy, was first step towards a Jewish army that the Zionists had been working toward for years. Taylor quite legitimately raises the question of whether the creation of an Israeli army, which grew from this first brigade, was not a betrayal of the Zionist alliance with Britain, since the ultimate aim of most Palestinian Zionist leaders was to use the army to defeat the Arabs, who were protected by the British under the policy established by the Balfour Declaration and continued in the mandate.⁴⁰ Nor did the Zionist leaders hesitate to promote illegal immigration in violation of the 1939 directives. They were especially angry that immigration rules were not relaxed in the face of the large numbers of Jewish refugees from Europe who would have liked to enter Palestine. The trend was toward ever-increasing dissatisfaction with the British arrangement, and impatience to establish a true Jewish state, and to this end illegal arms were stockpiled by the Zionists during the war. Matters came to a head in 1944, when Ben Gurion demanded that the British government allow the formation of an unpartitioned, independent Jewish state in Palestine. But the Labor government that took power in Britain after the war ended proved to be hostile to the Zionist goals, and the stage was set for more drastic action Zionist activists.⁴¹

Several underground activist groups had formed in Palestine during the years since the issuance of the White Paper, and these became increasingly active in the aftermath of the war. These groups—principally the Lohamei Herut Yisrael, or LEHI, and the Irgun Zvai Leumi—engaged in subversive acts designed to undermine British authority in Palestine. Arabs were still seen as an impediment to a fully Jewish state, but Britain was the real enemy.⁴² Various terrorist acts had been committed by these groups during the war, and they escalated after its end, much to the dismay and disapproval of the majority of Palestinian Jews. The best known of these attacks may be the bombing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem in 1946 that killed 100 British, Arabs, and Jews. The Jewish Agency and the National Council (Va'ad Leumi) condemned this terrorist act by the Irgun in no uncertain terms, calling the murders “loathsome crimes.”⁴³ The British were in no mood for apologies, however, and arrested hundreds of Jewish leaders, exacerbating the situation. Meanwhile, the United States, under pressure from American Jews, was urging the British government to ease its restrictions on immigration to Palestine, and a joint Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry was proposing a plan for the “cantonization of Palestine under British supervision” that pleased no one and was abandoned.⁴⁴ British Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin was willing to consider the entry of Jewish refugees into Palestine as a humanitarian effort, but the Zionists insisted that immigration was a political matter and should have no limitations. Bevin felt that “there was no moral basis on which to support the establishment of a Jewish majority in what had theretofore been a country inhabited by a Jewish minority,” and refused to sanction the idea of millions of Jews pouring into Palestine at the behest of the Zionists.⁴⁵ The strikes and violent protests mounted by Arabs between 1936 and 1939 were still fresh in the minds of the British, who in any case still felt their responsibility towards the non-Jewish people of Palestine, as outlined in the Balfour Declaration.⁴⁶ Therefore, the demands of the Zionists were doomed to fall on deaf ears.

By this time the Zionist-controlled Jewish Agency, despairing of cooperation from the British, endorsed the idea of sustained acts of terrorism by the Irgun and LEHI groups.⁴⁷ The Agency was also engaged in an ongoing clandestine campaign of smuggling illegal immigrants into Palestine, which had the dual purpose of populating the country with as many Jews as possible while at the same time steering Jewish refugees away

39. *Ibid.*, 69.

40. *Ibid.*

41. Blumberg, *History of Israel*, 63.

42. J. Bowyer Bell, *Terror Out of Zion: Irgun Zvai Leumi, LEHI, and the Palestine Underground, 1929-1949* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977), 107.

43. Ben Gurion, *The Jews*, 303.

44. Taylor, *Prelude to Israel*, 93.

45. Taylor, *Prelude to Israel*, 93.

46. Yehuda Bauer, *From Diplomacy to Resistance: A History of Jewish Palestine 1939-1945* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1970)

47. Taylor, *Prelude to Israel*, 94-95.

from settling in other regions.⁴⁸ It is notable that the majority of the refugees imported in this manner were young, strong men and women who could serve as assets in the physical building of the Jewish state.

The combined campaigns of terrorism and illegal immigration were ultimately successful in wearing down the British will to remain in Palestine. The British requested a hearing before the United Nations in 1947 in which they asked for investigation of the Palestinian situation. The committee which carried out this task recommended that formation of an independent state was the most viable option, although “there was . . . disagreement as to the nature of that independence. Seven of the committee members supported the thesis that the Jewish minority of Palestine should be granted control of the country, while three others thought control should be vested equally in the hands of Jews and Arabs.”⁴⁹ Seven other committee members came up with the idea of dividing Palestine between the Arabs and the Jews, with the capital of Jerusalem being administered internationally. Surprisingly, the Zionists accepted the idea of partition, realizing that it would mean acknowledgement of their status as an independent nation on a par with their Arab neighbors. The United Nations backed the partition plan, but the American delegation, in an effort to make the change more palatable to the Arabs, offered to include the southern portion of the Negev in their territory.⁵⁰ The Zionists found out about the proposed arrangement and Weizmann approached President Harry Truman to lodge a complaint. Truman, always a Zionist sympathizer, saw to it that the offer was withdrawn, clearing one obstacle from the path to statehood. The Zionists then concentrated their energies on garnering enough votes to ensure passage of the proposal. They managed to bring a great deal of pressure to bear on the U.N. delegates; in the end, their efforts succeeded, and the measure endorsing statehood passed. At the personal request of Weizmann, Truman recognized Israel just eleven minutes after it became a state.⁵¹

Following the vote, the British announced that their mandate would formally end on May 15, 1948.⁵² Reaction from the Arabs in Palestine was immediate: Jews in the Middle East were attacked and rioting ensued. Arabs from all points of the region poured into Palestine, and the future of the new Jewish state looked bleak. Nonetheless, a Jewish Provisional Government was set up, unrecognized by the British, who had withdrawn into fortified locations to prepare for their withdrawal. The Jews raised money, bought weapons, and prepared for war. The Provisional Government sought the support of other nations, an effort that met with mixed success. The British, meanwhile, encouraged the king of Trans-Jordan to seize the part of Palestine that had been partitioned for the Arabs, going so far as to provide British military leadership and weapons.⁵³ Twenty-four hours before the end of the British mandate, David Ben Gurion officially and publicly proclaimed the existence of the new state of Israel—and the war began.

Israel won that war from a political standpoint, but the conflict has never ceased. The dream of Zionism—to establish a state for the Jewish people—failed to take into consideration the will of the Arab population to remain in the place that is as much a homeland for their people as for the Jews. The partnership of Britain and Zionism could not survive the warring motivations that brought them together in the first place, and although relations between the two countries are greatly improved, the lessons of the Palestinian experience will not soon be forgotten. Zionism did, indeed, bring Israel into existence, but at a very high price—one that continues to be paid.

48. *Ibid.*, 95.

49. Taylor, *Prelude to Israel*, 98.

50. *Ibid.*, 99.

51. *Ibid.*, 101.

52. Blumberg, *History of Israel*, 74.

53. Blumberg, *History of Israel*, 76.

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