

Trudy Gold - Palestine in the 1920's and 1930's, Part 1

- It looks so lovely there, Wendy.
- Oh, the sky is absolutely clear.
- [Trudy Gold] Lovely.
- [Wendy Fisher] And it's warm. It's beautiful.
- It's lovely in London. The blossoms are on the trees, so, getting there.
- I heard that, and the frogs are out.
- [Wendy Fisher] So, Patrick told us the other morning, which is lovely.
- He's got a thing about his frogs.
- So cute! That is so cute. So, Trudy, I think whenever you're ready, you can start. Over to you.
- Right, lovely.
- Welcome, everyone!

Visuals are displayed throughout the presentation.

- Well, all right, good morning, good afternoon, good evening, wherever you are. Now we come onto Palestine in the 20s and 30s. Some of you, who've been online for quite a while, will know that I covered up until about this period a few months ago. And what I'm going to do now is probably attempt the most difficult presentation of all, because this is one of the most conflicted, difficult areas to teach. And, I'm going to say, from the beginning, is there such a thing as objective history? No, of course there isn't. What I try to do is to balance the sources and to give you as an objective view of the time as I can possibly do. I hope I'm not an ideological historian. Having said that, I know where I come from, so I am going to try very hard to toe the line. But please remember, this is an incredibly complicated time. And not only that, this decade, really, from, I'm going to say, from 1917 to 1929, is one of the most controversial in Jewish history.

And then of course, tomorrow, when I take you through the 30s, what happens in this period has a huge impact on. What were British interests in the Middle East all about? Because we're going to have to be dealing with British interests, the interests of the Jewish community in various parts of the world, the interests of the Zionists, and within the Zionist movement there's a huge amount of splits, and, of course, the interests of the Arab population of Palestine. Added to that, that the Jews of Eastern Europe, in particular, were going through an absolutely terrible time.

With the collapse of the Czarist Empire, and then the two revolutions in Russia, Germany pulling out in the war, and then both the Ukrainian nationalists, the anarchists, and the white Russians fighting the Soviets. There were over 1000 pogroms in the Ukraine alone.

So, this is the backdrop. And, of course, if you think of Zionist ideology, the whole notion of having a Jewish state was to protect the Jews worldwide. Remember, the Zionists believed that Jews were a nation. And it brings us back to the old canard to define Jew. And as I've said to you many times, that is a totally personal definition for every one of us sitting around this Zoom. But please don't forget, to the Zionists, it's a national definition. So can we have the first slide? Thank you, Judi. Now, in the First World War, some very, very strange things happened in terms of Britain and the Middle East. I'm going to shortcut this, because I have covered it in great lengths. And those of you that don't know this period very deeply, what I can do is to go over it with you, by giving you a book list, but not today. Right, in 1914, the British, of course, are allied to the French and also to the Russians. These are the big powers.

Opposing them are the Germans, the Habsburg Empire, and the Turks. So, it's fascinating. In 1914, a memo comes out to the foreign office, stating that British interests are best served by stopping French and Russian empire building. So, know that what the British really wanted was an empire in the Middle East. The dream was an empire that stretched from Suez, through to the jewel in the crown, India. And the other point, of course, oil is becoming a very important part of the picture. So, as part of the aim of winning in the Middle East, the British did two things. The first thing was to try and persuade the Arabs, living under the Turks, to revolt. The Arabs, of course, themselves had had a great and glorious history, but by this period they are living under Turkish rule. Religiously, there's no problem, because they're all Muslims. But, if you could awaken Arab nationalism, you might actually be able to achieve something. And to do that, they had to find an ally in the Middle East. And they didn't really know which group to choose. The Saud family were considered. They were Wahhabis, and that, in the end, was decided against. So, they went with a man called the Sharif of Mecca, the Emir Hussein.

And they promised him land in the Middle East, centred on Damascus, to create an area known as Greater Syria, which was once the greatest empire of the Arab world, that if he would revolt against the British, and his son Faisal led the revolt with T. E. Lawrence. Then, about 15 months later, the British do a secret deal with the French. The war isn't going too well, so they do a deal with the French that, once the war is over, they will divide the Middle East in two, and everything north of Acre will be French, and everything south will be British, which is a problem as far as the promise made to the Arabs. And then you have the extraordinary Balfour Declaration, which was given in the form of a letter. It was written to Lord Rothschild, who was the secondary command of the Zionist organisation. And this is the letter. "I have much pleasure in conveying to you, "on behalf of His Majesty's Government, "the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist "aspirations, which have been submitted to, and approved by, "the Cabinet."

And I want you to engrave these words. And if there are lawyers amongst you, it's a fascinating document to deconstruct. "His Majesty's Government view 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. "I should be grateful if you could bring this declaration "to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation." Now, this was in the form of a letter, and it was treated with huge triumph by the Zionist Chaim Weizmann, who'd been in London since, he'd been in England since 1906. He was a lecturer in chemistry at Manchester. He'd made lots of contacts in the British government.

He'd made contacts in the press. He was very much an important figure and very useful to the British in inventions in the First World War. And he had lots of supporters. And, also, the British, at this stage, thought it was in their interest to give a pro-Jewish declaration. The great Yehuda Bauer said, "You almost have to suspend your belief that the British, "believe it or not, and there are memos to support this, "believed it would bring America into the war "and keep Russia in war." Look, a completely false assumption, but, nevertheless, that's what they believed. And they also believed that the Kaiser was about to issue a declaration to put pressure on the Turks. So, for a host of reasons, the Balfour Declaration is seen as a huge triumph by the Zionists. So, can we go on to the next slide, please, Judi? And here you have General Allenby. What happens is the British have an army in the Middle East, and it is General Allenby who crosses into Palestine. And I should mention here, the word Palestine, and I want to make this very, very clear, the Arabs called this region Greater Syria. Palestine had been a word, of course.

It was used first by the Romans. When the Romans conquered Judea, they renamed it Paestina, against the greatest enemies of the Jews, the Philistines. It was really a, sort of, humiliation. It was reused at the time of the Renaissance. And it was only being used in the Arab world by Christian Arabs who were being educated, particularly, in Paris. So, it's important to remember the use of words. Now, General Allenby, and I'm going to use the word Palestine, because that's the word we use now. So, General Allenby crosses into Palestine with an army. And accompanying that army were two Jewish divisions. The 37th and 38th were all fusiliers under the command of Colonel Patterson. And there was with them, of course, a man who's going to be awarded medals for valour, and that man was Jabotinsky, Vladimir Jabotinsky. So, the British, they take Beersheba. They then conquered Jerusalem. And there's a wonderful story about the conquest of Jerusalem. Evidently, a foraging party from the army was out looking for food, was led by the army cook, when the great dignitaries of Jerusalem came out to surrender the keys to the city. And there were journalists present, and, evidently, the company cook said, "I don't want any keys to any holy city, "I want eggs for my officer."

But the point is, the great city of Jerusalem, and Allenby treated it with great respect. The army walked in very, very, with great ceremony. This was, because, remember, this is a Christian. This is also a Christian symbol. And he promised that none of the holy sites, Muslim or Jewish, would in any way be damaged. And so, you now have the British Army ensconced in Damascus. And then, they march on. And they march on to Damascus. And can we go to the next slide, please, Judi? And here you see the famous, great Lawrence of Arabia. If you have

the chance, read "Pillars of Wisdom." It's wonderful. He was an extraordinary man, an adventurer, a very complicated man. But he is with the Arabs. He'd been with them in their revolt against the Turks. And now he is with them when the Emir Faisal, a son of the Emir Hussein, the Sharif of Mecca, marches into Damascus. *Fait accompli*.

This sent shock waves of nationalism throughout the whole of the Arab world, because the son of one of the most religiously important men in Islam, the symbol of Arab nationalism, because Damascus, as I said before, was once the seat of the greatest empire, he is now in Damascus. The British have a *fait accompli*. And, at this stage, you have all sorts of exchanges of letters between Zionists and between, this is a letter from, let me just find the right letter.

- Yes, this is from the Emir Faisal to the American Zionist Felix Frankfurter. "We Arabs, especially the educated amongst us, "look with deepest sympathy on the Zionist movement. "We wish the Jews a hearty welcome home. "We are working together for a reformed and revised "Near East, and our two movements compliment one another. "The movement is national, and is not imperialist. "There is room in Syria for us both. "In fact, I think that neither can be successful "without the other." And this is from Winston Churchill, writing in the Illustrated Sunday Herald. And he says this, "If, as may well happen there should be, "created, in our own lifetime, by the banks of the Jordan, "a Jewish state under the protection of the British crown, "which might comprise of three or four millions of Jews, "an event would've occurred in the history of the world, "which would, from every point of view, be beneficial "and will be especially in harmony with the truest interests "of the British Empire."

Now, at this stage, it seemed that there was not a problem. Okay, so, but then it's the end of the war, and the Treaty of Versailles and the San Remo Peace Conference. And at the San Remo Peace Conference, the Arabs have a real problem, because the French have this deal, the Sykes-Picot Agreement. And they say, basically, "We are going to put our own people in. "It's promised to us." And the San Remo Peace Conference goes with it. And this is when you have to coincide with the San Remo Peace Conference of 1920, you have the first anti-Jewish riots in Palestine. But I want to step back a little before I go onto that, because there's two things to talk about. One is, first of all, what on earth did the Balfour Declaration mean? Now, does it mean that there's going to immediately be a Jewish state in Palestine? What does a national home mean? So, and what does it mean to create a national home and at the same time make sure that the rights of the indigenous population are looked after? Does it mean a Jewish majority immediately? What on earth does a Jewish national home mean?

Now, back in 1918, Chaim Weizmann, who was very close to many members of the British government, he went to Palestine with a commission with Israel Sieff, and I hope his granddaughter is listening today, Dr. Meron in Israel, and Dr Ida, and Leon Simon. They went there, to Palestine. And their main purpose, at first, was to repatriate Jews who had been living in Palestine, who had been exiled by the Turks. So, the commission is in Palestine, and the British government have given them permission to get on with the repatriation. But, we have a military administration in Palestine. Allenby was a reasonably fair man, as was some of his staff.

Storrs was a very, very good guy. So was Meinertzhagen. But one of the problems was that some of the officers had developed attitudes which were very anti-Jewish.

And a lot of it comes from the fact that many of them had actually served in Russia. The minute the war was over, the British, the French, and the Americans actually employed troops. They deployed troops, I should say, to Russia to fight the Red Army, unsuccessfully. But, to so many of those in the West, Trotsky's Red Army, remember Lev Davidovich Bronstein, Trotsky, created the Red Army. And I've mentioned this to you many times in different presentations. A disproportionate number of the leadership of the communist parties were, in fact, Jewish, in Germany, in Hungary. Now, these people have thrown their lot in with internationalism. They didn't see themselves as Jews. And this is where we get to the problem of identity. I've already mentioned it once this evening. I can self-identify. How does the outside world identify with me? And many of the officers, very conservative officers, in Palestine thought that, basically, the communist revolution was a Jewish affair. And they felt it would spread to Palestine. And please don't forget that the majority of the settlers in Palestine, now, were Poale Zion, were actually Marxists. In the end, it's going to come together into Mapai.

But, if you think of the kibbutzim, and you think of the moshavim, you have a very left-wing organisation. So, there was this association of the Jews with communism, plus the fact "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion," which had born root in Russia, were spreading like wildfire. They were reviewed in the London Times in 1920. They were later found to be a forgery. But nevertheless, the protocols are in the air. And you have British officers who don't like these, kind of, communist type Jews. Even Churchill wrote an article in the Illustrated Sunday Herald saying that Zionism was good because it would, in fact, make Jews more aware of their own identity and run away from communism. So, there are vital problems with the Balfour Declaration. The situation is now that you have Faisal in Syria, but the French want him out. But before that, I'm going to talk about the Jewish interpretations. And the interpretations were, how quickly should there be a Jewish majority in Palestine? Chaim Weizmann very much felt that he had the trust of the British government. As I said, he had many friends in high places.

Israel Zangwill, who had really opted out of the Zionist organisation for a while, he'd created the Jewish territorial trust, but he came back into the fray and quote, "Such a national home will merely be a crown colony "with a predominantly Arab population. "It's neither Jewish, nor national, nor a home." Now, Jabotinsky. Jabotinsky had fought with the British. He was the first Jew to cross the river Jordan. When the Arab riots occur, the Nebi Musa riots of 1920, he makes the decision that he's going to fight, and I'm going to come back to that in a minute. But, already, he is disillusioned. Remember, he's Ukrainian. He's very aware of what's going on in the Ukraine. In fact, there's an issue on that that I'll be dealing with in another lecture. But the point is, he felt very strongly that what we're going to need. He looked around the world. He saw the problems for the Jews, not just in Eastern Europe. If you think about the chaos in the dismembered Habsburg empire, the chaos in Germany, the, kind of, prejudice against the Austrian, he was very much the strong man.

Remember, he'd written the book, "Samson." Samson was his figure. He felt that we're going to have to fight, and we will have to fight now. So, the majority of the yishuv supported the leadership of Weizmann, Sokolow, and Usiskin. They were much more moderate and diplomatic. And Weizmann, actually, said, "Make Palestine as Jewish as England is English, "but let's go for gradual Jewish immigration. "Let's work with the British and work through "the Jewish Agency." And he supported the gradual approach. They did encourage Hebrew, and what he wanted was permission for annual immigration of between 70 and 80,000. Now, there was also a problem for the non-Zionist, people like Edwin Montagu, Sylvain Levi, of the Alliance in Paris, because what they were worried about was that the fact that there's a certain section of the Jewish world were saying, "We are a national group," what would it do to Jewish identity in Britain? What would it do to Jewish identity in France?

And they were terrified of being accused of dual loyalty. So, you've already got these embedded problems, and now you have the problem of the Arabs and the why. And it's also very much stirred up by a lot of British officers in Palestine. There's a number of political clubs established. And the first was founded in Jaffa as early as the 8th of May, 1918. And that there were two major land-owning families in Palestine, the Nashashibi family, and the Husayni clan, no relation to the Emir Hussein. And, basically, they vied for control in Palestine. And all the main positions are taken with one family or another. Now, the situation begins to bubble because, after the San Remo Peace Conference, the French are given Syria. And what on earth is going to happen, then, to the Emir Faisal in Iraq? And what happens is the French are already putting troops in, and there is an incident in Tel Hai, in the north, where the great hero, Joseph Trumpeldor, is killed. And then there's a lot of whipping up, quite often.

And according to Weizmann, a lot of the whipping up was done by British officers. And it leads to the Nebi Musa riots. This is the Nebi Musa, the Feast of Passover. It's the Arab Nebi Musa, the Feast of Moses. It coincides with Passover. There are riots in Jerusalem. There are murders. Weizmann warned the military authorities, there's going to be a pogrom, but they didn't heed it. And, as a response to that, the Jews organize self-defense, the Haganah. The Haganah is actually created. And the Haganah, it's in Jerusalem. It's run by Jabotinsky. Self-defense units made up of the 37th and 38th Royal Fusiliers, who've now been demobbed, characters from the original, what was it called? There was a group created in Alexandria, the Zion Mule Corps, characters from that. And they went on the attack. Army of self-defense, but if we're attacked, we're going to attack right back. So, the Haganah is created, and the Arabs are whipped up by a man called Hajj Amin. The picture in front of you, by the way, is Faisal and his brother, the Emir Abdullah. More about him in a minute. Can we go to the next picture, please, Judi?

Yes, now that, of course, is Chaim Weizmann. Chaim Weizmann comes to Palestine, but he's flitting between Palestine and London. And then the next picture, of course, is of Vladimir Jabotinsky. That's a young picture of Weizmann. Can we see a picture of Jabotinsky, please, Judi? Yep. And then let's go to the next picture of the next man who is, of course, after Jabotinsky, Hajj Amin al-Husayni. As I said, he came from one of the most important land-owning families in Palestine. Hajj had been on a pilgrimage. He'd had a very good

education. He had joined, well, he'd been forced to join the Ottoman Army, but he was, in fact, wounded. And in 1916 he was in Jerusalem. And then the British came to Palestine. So, he now makes the decision. Once the British allow Faisal into Damascus, he becomes an officer in Faisal's army and recruits about 500 Palestinian Arabs to fight for Faisal in Damascus. To fight whom? The French. There's already skirmishes at Tel Hai. And it's, actually, going to come to the fore with a battle, the battle of Maysalun. So, basically, he fights for Faisal.

The problem was that Faisal is defeated. Faisal is defeated. The French evict him from Damascus. At this stage, Hajj Amin al-Husayni wants a Greater Syria. Palestine, remember, is part of Greater Syria. It's when he comes back to Palestine, having suffered from the defeat of Faisal. You know, the great dream, I can't over emphasise how important this dream of Arab nationalism was. You know, Islam, the third of the monotheistic religions, when it's founders and the followers of Mohamed burst out of what is now Saudi, they created the largest land empire the world has ever known. And the greatest of the dynasties was on Damascus. The second greatest was in Baghdad. So, it's important to remember these are also rival centres. So, what happens to Hajj Amin al-Husayni? He comes back to Palestine. He's disillusioned, and he realises, from his point of view, the Zionists, the Balfour Declaration, the Zionists have won, and it's Arab territory. And he begins to have opposition to any Jewish settlement in Palestine. And he is supported through all sorts of organisations, Christian-Muslim associations.

He has a lot of friends in the British military. And he whips the crowd up in the Nebi Musa riots. And after the riots, both he and Jabotinsky are considered guilty of fighting the British. They're therefore guilty of treason. Hajj Amin al-Husayni flees. He flees out of the country, and, actually, therefore, doesn't have any punishment, whereas Jabotinsky is up before the courts where he is erroneously called a communist. And he is sentenced to 15 years imprisonment. It's an absolute firecracker because, you know, Jabotinsky is a very, very popular figure throughout the Jewish world. The charismatic Jabotinsky, the charismatic Weizmann, oh, they were such strong individuals. And Jabotinsky, remember, he'd fought for the British. He'd been awarded medals by the British, and now he's been imprisoned by the British. And this is what, actually, hardens, this really hardens Zionist opinion, certainly the opinion of his followers, because Jabotinsky has his followers. And there's, sort of, the, kind of, feeling that the British have now betrayed us. So, as I said before, the Arab riots, though, did lead to the foundation of the Haganah.

And what I also wanted to mention to you, because it's not all a dark picture, what I want to mention to you also is how Jabotinsky, commander of the Haganah in Jerusalem, it leads to the founding of the Haganah itself. And Pinhas Rutenberg is also very involved with him. And the Haganah's, actually, formalised in Kvutzat Kinneret in 1920. It sees itself as the successor to Hashomer. Hashomer had been established to protect the kibbutzim back in 1909. It was illegal, but from 1920 onwards, it's going to be under the control of the Histadrut. There were three chapters. There were never many people in it in the 20s. And, of course, it's going to be such an important part of the story. What I'm doing in this presentation and tomorrow's presentation, I'm laying down the markers. And, in the beginning, the biggest chapter was in Tel Aviv with 350 people. And there was also a chapter in Jerusalem and in Haifa. They had very few weapons at

this stage, but it's formed. And, also, it's important to remember that, under the military administration, they are still forming the infrastructure.

So, on one level, Weizmann, the great diplomat, is prepared to accept, or is he, the British response. Slowly, slowly, nevertheless, things are happening. The Histadrut is established in 1920. It's the general organisation of workers in Israel. And, when it was, actually, set up, there were 4,000 workers, by 1927, 25,000 workers affiliated to it, which was 75% of the workforce, the Jewish labour force in Palestine. And, also, it's going to be responsible for the founding and establishment of the economic, financial, cultural infrastructure that, eventually, is going to emerge as departments of the state of Israel. Also involved in sports, industrial institutions, Bank Hapoalim, the workers' bank, which became the largest healthcare provider in Israel. That's how that started. Also, it's a Jewish state, if I may give you a little bit of propaganda here. The Technion had already been established in 1912. It's still ranked as Israel's top university, but, of course, the establishment of the Hebrew University, a great dream. So, against the background of the riots, against the background of the fighting and the instability, nevertheless, you have the determination to lay down the cornerstones of what would be a state.

And the Hebrew University, the cornerstone was actually laid on the 24th of July, 1918. And, of course, today it's a huge university with five affiliated teaching centres, including, of course, the Hadassah Medical Centre. Now, the first Board of Governors of the Hebrew University, and I really think, at some stage, we should really have a lecture on them, because who were on the first board? I think any university in the world would dream of a board like this: Einstein, Freud, Buber, Weizmann, Ahad Ha'am, Asher Ginsberg, just to name a few of them. The dream actually went back to 1884 in Kattowitz Conference of Hovevei Zion. And it was reiterated, believe it or not, at the First Zionist Congress. Einstein came to Palestine to, actually, give the first lecture. And it's opened, finally, in 1925 at a gala ceremony. It was a gala, and it was attended by leaders from all over the Jewish world, including British dignitaries. The other thing that was laid down, the Habima Theatre Company, that had actually been set up in Russia at the time of the revolution. The Czar is dead, finished. It's over.

So, let's set up a Hebrew speaking theatre in Bialystok, of all places. No, not strange, because Bialystok was also the home of Zamenhof, the man who created Esperanto. It was a city where language was very, very important, and Hebrew, the language of the Zionists, the language of the left-wing Zionists. And what happens is this company, they perform wonderful plays, the Dybbuk, the Golem, some of the great stories of the Jewish liturgy, but in Hebrew, not in Yiddish. At first they received recognition from the Russian government. But then, of course, anything affiliated with Zionism was closed down by the Yevseksiya. They on tours of Europe and America. Some of them stayed in America. But a group came to Palestine and founded the theatre company. So, you have the infrastructure of a future state through the Histadrut. Of course, you have the Palestine Commission, which becomes the Jewish Agency. You have universities, cultural associations, and now, of course, a centre of drama, and later, of course, the Palestine Orchestra. So, it's absolutely extraordinary that against the backdrop of already experiencing trouble with the Arab population, the creation of the infrastructure of the state.

Now, a military administration can't last forever.

And the decision was made to appoint Sir Herbert Samuel, the first High Commissioner to Palestine. In fact, this gives us a notion of British intentions, because he was appointed in 1920, before the Council of the League of Nations approved the British Mandate. And what happened when he's appointed, the military government withdrew to Cairo in preparation for the Mandate, which wasn't actually granted until 1922. And he's going to be High Commissioner from 1921 to 1925, the first Jew to, actually, govern the country for 2000 years. And Weizmann, when he goes to Palestine, Weizmann accompanies him to the Great Synagogue in Jerusalem.

- And, evidently, they were both called up to the bema, and it led to a huge upswing in Zionist expectations. And Hebrew was recognised, with Arabic and English, as one of the languages of the state. His appointment was incredibly controversial. Of course, the Zionists welcomed it, but Allenby and Louis Bols, his number two, called his appointment, "Very dangerous." And this is what Bols had to say. "The news was received with consternation, despondency, and exasperation by the Muslims and the Christians. "Arabs would see it as handing the country over at once "to a permanent Zionist administration "and predict massive violence." This was the letter, this was a note that Bols sent when Samuel is still in London. Lord Curzon read the message to Samuel and asked him to reconsider. Samuel takes advice from Zionists Gaster and from Weizmann, and he said, "These claims aren't justified." Meanwhile, Muslim, Christian. This is Sir Herbert Samuel.

Thank you, Judi. Meanwhile, Muslim-Christian associations had sent a telegram to Bols. Quote: "Sir Herbert Samuel, regarded as a Zionist leader, "and his appointment is the first step in the formation "of a Zionist national home in the midst of Arab peoples, "contrary to their wishes. "Inhabitants cannot recognise him, "and Muslim-Christian societies cannot accept responsibility "for riots and the other disturbances of people." There were questions in the House of Commons. This is one: What actions have been taken to placate the Arab population and, thereby, put an end to racial tension? "Three months after he arrived," this was in the Morning Post, "Sir Herbert Samuel's appointment as High Commissioner "was regarded by everyone, except the Jews, "as a serious mistake." Now, he had been a Zionist from meeting Weizmann back in 1914, and he'd already made a pro-Zionist declaration to the cabinet back in 1915. I think now is the time to try and assess where we're at, because we've had the Nebi Musa riots. You've had the Battle of Maysalun, where Faisal has been evicted. And, you've got to understand, Arab hopes have been so raised.

The Arabs of Palestine, those of whom were politicised, dreamt of a Greater Syria, of which they would be part. But it's all smashed, because the French have taken Syria. And they carve out Lebanon, mainly, because of the religious and factional divides. And it's also a French mandate. By the way, I'm sure you all know this, but a mandate is a device whereby a big power takes power enjoined to bring the inhabitants to self-rule. But now I go back to the whole issue. What on earth did the Balfour Declaration mean? And one of the problems is did it really mean anything? Now, in January, 1921, Lloyd George appointed Winston Churchill as Secretary of

State for the Colonies, with special responsibility for Britain's Mandates on Palestine and on Iraq. Basically, he wanted a cheaper administration, and he wanted to carry out the terms of the Balfour Declaration. A Middle Eastern department was established at the foreign office. Now Churchill, and remember, Churchill had Zionist sympathies. We've already, if you remember, I lectured on Churchill a few months ago. Those of you who listened, or if not, there's a brilliant book by Martin Gilbert, "Churchill and the Jews." He had already a great friendship with Weizmann, who he'd met when he had been the MP for North Manchester. He had sympathy for Zionist aspirations. And now he is minister for the colonies.

And on his way to Palestine, he stops off in Paris, where the French president already criticised British support for the Jewish national home, and says it's going to disturb the the Arab world. You know, you can make the case, but the French and the British really caused much of the problems that we see today. One of the great ifs and buts of history. If Faisal had been allowed to remain in Iraq, in Syria, would there have been some sort of accommodation? The letters seem to prove that there would've been. However, there is another factor that I have to bring to your attention. In Islam, there is the belief that the world is divided into Dar al-Islam and the rest. Dar al-Islam is the Middle East. And there is a theological question, can a non-believer rule over a Muslim in Dar al-Islam? Just as on the Jewish side, we have people who believe that the kingdom of Israel should be the kingdom of King David at his height. So, but, at this stage, the religious argument was not, necessarily, visible. But what I'm saying is it is there, and it has to be pointed out. Anyway, meanwhile, and this is another big part of the puzzle. You see, I'm really trying to pull together a jigsaw puzzle for you.

Remember, the British are in control of Iraq. Lawrence, who had been a great supporter of Zionism, he informed Churchill that he hadn't concluded an agreement with the Emir Faisal that, in return for Arab sovereignty in Baghdad, Amman, and Damascus, he would abandon all claims to Palestine and of French. Of course, the French couldn't be dislodged from Damascus, but would Jewish claims in Palestine be ratified by Faisal if he had something and his brother had something? What the British do, they ensconced Faisal in Iraq. The Emir Faisal is now the king of Iraq. He has a younger brother, Abudullah. Can we see the next slide, please, Judi? Winston Churchill, that wonderful picture of Churchill, of course, the man now responsible for the colony. Or is it a mandate? Can we see the next slide, please? Ah, here you have it. Weizmann is desperate that the Mandate, the line. You can see the lines of the Palestine Mandate. And remember, this is the Mandate as awarded to the British by the League of Nations. What Weizmann wants is a land beyond the sea of Galilee that just juts out a bit.

But what Churchill decides to do, and he's counselled by T. E. Lawrence, and he believes that if he chops off Transjordan, and he gives it to the am Emir Abdullah, he believed that then there could be peace. And that's exactly what happens. Transjordan is hived off. It is no longer part of the Palestine Mandate. It is now the Mandate of Jordan, Transjordan, and the Emir Abdullah, a brother of Faisal, is now ensconced in Jordan. So, you get the picture. The brother, Faisal, is thrown out of Syria, thrown out of Damascus. There's a French client there, but he is in Iraq, and his brother is now in Jordan. Now, it's at this stage that there's a huge rift in the Zionist

organisation. Jabotinsky makes a very passionate speech. Remember, when Herbert Samuel arrives in Palestine, he gives an amnesty to all political prisoners. And, consequently, Hajj Amin, although he'd managed to flee, is no longer a problem. He's back in Palestine, and Jabotinsky is a free man. But he realised his view now was that the British were not going to come through. Weizmann believed, and, you know, we mustn't use the hindsight of history, Weizmann believed that what he could pull off would be the slow accommodation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

But Jabotinsky, looking around the Jewish world, he said, "What is wrong with using the term state?" If you think about it, the Albanians have a state. The Italians have a state. Statehood is the normal condition of a people. And he believed that the cutting off of Transjordan from the Mandate was illegal. And, later on, of course, his followers, because his followers created the Irgun out of the Haganah. More of that next session. He believed that that was a betrayal by the British. And from then on, he never trusted the British. And there's going to be a huge division that's going to, really, exacerbate within the Zionist organisation. And, of course, the events in the 20s, 30s, and 40s are going to further concretize all of this. And it's going to explode, of course, into what we see as Israeli politics today, because, if you really understand this, I think you can begin to understand what happened with the great divisions in the Jewish world. Anyway, Churchill visits. He visits the Arabs in Palestine. He goes to Egypt. He visits the British. Of course, he visits the British authorities. He has lots of meetings with Jews.

But having done this, Weizmann, in the end, goes along with it, and he goes on to say that he's going to support Jewish settlement in Palestine. And he says this, "There is no reason why Palestine "should not support a large number of people "more than it does at present, "all in a higher condition of prosperity." The task before the Zionist is one of great difficulty. The present form of government was one that would continue for many years. And step by step the British would develop representative institutions. He says this, "All of us here today will have passed away "from the earth and our children and children "before it is achieved. "I think you'll be wise to give the Arabs your help "and your aid and encourage them. "They may fail if they are not guided "with wisdom and goodwill. "If they do not tread the parts of justice and tolerance "and neighbourliness, if the class of men who come in "are not worthy of the Jewish race, then they will fail. "And that will be the end of the experiment."

"But if they succeed, and, in the proportion, "such success can be accompanied by a general diffusion "of wealth and wellbeing amongst the dwellers in Palestine." So, basically, he's saying, "It's up to you, Jews. "Make this country paradise and bring the Arabs "along with it." The Arabs, of course, were absolutely furious. The Arab leadership said, and they wrote. They gave a very powerful argument insofar as they said, "Look, they're a Jews in Britain. They're a Jews in France. "They are citizens of those countries. "Why on earth do they have to take our land?" But Churchill, when they said this, Churchill said, "I am perfectly convinced that the cause of Zionism "is one that is good for the whole world, "and not only for the Jewish people, "but it will also bring with it prosperity, contentment, "and advancement to the Arab population of the country." And then he goes on to say, "The great event "was taking place without injury. "It is transforming waste places into fertile."

"It is planting trees and developing agriculture "in desert lands. "It is making for an increase in wealth and cultivation. "It's making two blades of grass grow where one grew before. "And the people of the country who are the majority "are deriving great benefit. "The Jews who are being brought from Europe and elsewhere "are worthy representatives." In fact, Dr. Arthur Ruppin, who was the founder of the kibbutz movement, wrote in his diary that Churchill's remarks made a huge impression. Anyway, when Churchill gets back to London, the white paper is issued, and the white paper is actually a re appraisal of policy. It tried to clear up the muddle that was the Balfour Declaration. It promised to elect a self-governing institution, a problem because that meant it would be Arab dominated, and they excluded all Zionist organisations from the country as administration. And, also, future Jewish immigration could only happen if there was economic absorptive capacity of the yishuv.

Now, this was something that wasn't in the Balfour Declaration. On the other hand, the white paper confirmed that the British Mandate would adhere to the Balfour Declaration, and the Jews were in Palestine as of right and not as on sovereigns. Basically, the Zionist organisation went along with it, apart from Jabotinsky and his people. And then Herbert Samuel announces elections to a legislative council. It was boycotted by the Arabs. Samuel tried to be impartial, and then he made a decision with huge ramifications. The post of Mufti of Jerusalem was vacant, and, because he was trying to go full parity with the Nashashibi and the Husayni clan, he allowed Hajj Amin al-Husayni to become Mufti of Jerusalem, which gave him huge power. Why? Because he had access to all the mosques, and he could call the people to holy war, jihad. And he is going to, gradually, whip up the Arab population. Now, I've gone as slowly as I can. I think now wouldn't be a bad time for questions.

I know it's a very complicated. I know some of you know this very, very well, but I also know that it's a complicated story. So, what I've done was I've tried to show you the conflicting claims. Why were the British there anyway? Were they there to help Jewish settlement, or were they there for their own interests? I think some British were, some British weren't. By the way, whilst Herbert Samuel was being appointed High Commissioner, there was a vote in the Lords against the Balfour Declaration that was passed. It was only the Commons that said, "Yes, it's got to go ahead," because there were already those who were saying British interests are best served by backing the Arabs, because, remember, the Arabs were in the majority. And now, the British and the French are fighting it out for sovereignty and hegemony in the Middle East. So, that's British interests. The Zionists, of course, wanted a homeland, a state, in Palestine. Would it happen slowly? Would it happen fast? And then, of course, the Arabs.

The Arabs were gradually being wakened to nationalism. What the British did by putting the Emir Faisal into Damascus really sent it soaring. But, you're going to see, gradually, the politicisation of the Arab population of Palestine. Now, at this stage, does Palestinian nationalism exist? It's Greater Syria, but there are certain villages. So, that's the situation. And then I'm going to come back to the story in 1928, 1929 tomorrow. So, let's see. Yep, let's go with some questions.

Q&A and Comments:

Yes, I did, Naomi, I did mention it was Purim.

Q: Were there not Jews living in Palestine?

A: Yes, of course there were, Laurie. There's been a settled Jewish community there, actually, there's always been a settled religious community, and Zionists began going to Palestine from 1881 onwards.

Many Jews were, oh, Ginsberg, I'm not answering that because it's huge.

Aret states that today Israel's high court orders the state to recognise nonorthodox conversions. Nonorthodox conversions, yes, it's so complicated being a Jew!

Yes, Judi Stone, with regard to the Balfour Declaration, Leslie Turnberg's book, "Beyond the Balfour Declaration," covers this period extremely well. Yes, it's a very good book.

Yes, Beersheba was captured by the Australian Light Horse, yes.

This is Rosalyn Springer. "My grandfather was with Allenby and claimed to be "the first Jew to enter Jerusalem "with the Royal Irish Fusiliers. "There were watermelon fields nearby. "They were tested for ripeness using bayonets." Incredible!

Q: What role did the Rothschild family play in the creation of a Zionist presence?

A: That's for Jay. Well, the French Rothschilds, of course, had set up Richon le Zion. The Rothschild family were very divided over Zionism. The English Rothschild, by this time, was a Zionist, but they weren't of huge importance, except as funders. They did fund a lot of things.

Q: What were the numbers of Arabs to Jews in Palestine at the time?

A: It's a very debated figure, but there were many more Arabs than Jews. But one of the problems was during the first Aliyah, 1881 to 1903, it's estimated that for every Jew that settled in Palestine, four Arabs moved in, because, remember, it was all the Ottoman Empire.

Why not say that Palestine included all of Jordan? That's what I did say. The original Mandate of Palestine did include Jordan.

- Trudy, Trudy, can I just jump in?

- Yes.

- Just before we lose many of our participants, I just wanted to say two things. First of all, Judi asked me to let everybody know that there were two and half thousand participants today.

- Wow!

- But that's not why I've jumped in. That's not the reason why I've jumped in. I'm sorry to interrupt the questions. I just wanted to remind our participants that on Sunday we are having Josh Aronson talk about the "Orchestra of Exiles," which is really about the orchestra of immigrants to Israel. But, you need to register. So, if you, and I think Judi's already sent out the link. Is that right, Judi?

- [Judi] That's correct. I have sent out the link, and I've had over 800 subscribe already today.

- Fantastic.

- Okay, well, I just want to give everybody the heads up. You need to sign up. Otherwise, you will not be able to get in. Josh has very kindly given it to Lockdown University to show just for Sunday morning, and then he will talk about his role in the production. Sorry, Trudy, back to you.

- And, how long, Wendy? About another 10 minutes I've got for questions?

- It's up to you.

Yes, I'm fine. Okay, oh, this is from Betty Lowenstein. My mother had very poor vision and was taken to Dr. Zamenhof when she was a little girl, as he was an ophthalmologist.

Yes, Zamenhof, another hero. We will be talking about him, I promise.

Q: How many Jews came out of Europe by 1839?

A: Not that many, Arnold. The greatest exodus to Palestine, the great exodus is between 1881 and 1914.

Yes, you're right, and I've already mentioned that the first Aliyah did encourage Arabs to come into Palestine, but it was probably two to one at that period. There was a larger Arab population.

Yes, the Golan was part of it, yes. It does actually say on the map, the Golan was given to the French, yes. To establish the Technion, Bev, yes, it was actually the Ottomans. And it was very interesting, the establishment of the Technion in 1912, because a lot of them wanted the language to be German.

Now, Melvin, the excision of Transjordan was in contradiction to Article 5 of the Mandate. Yes,

this is a real. Look, one of the problems that I'm trying to clear up by making it even more complicated. There are so many things that happened, and you can find reasons for them, but what I would suggest, to work our way through the Arab-Israeli conflict, we really have to go fact, by fact, by fact.

Q: Can I repeat the name of the book?

A: Yes, it's called "Churchill and the Jews" by Martin Gilbert.

Q: Were the Arabs already looking at control of oil?

A: Yes, it was a problem already, yes.

Q: What happened to Jabotinsky?

A: There's going to be so much more about Jabotinsky. One of the issues is I've lectured on a lot of these people, but new people are joining. So, what I intend to do is I'll try and catch up as we go. Jabotinsky survived. He died in 1940 in America. But I'll be talking about him again next week.

What else have we got? I have to, just a few slides with bullet points.

Yes, unfortunately, my grandson isn't with me, and Judi is wonderfully helping me.

I agree. Yes, Weizmann and Samuel were both members of the New West End Synagogue in Bayswater. That's from Jeffrey.

Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East.

Q: Were there any attempts to impose a democratic government on any of the Arab countries?

A: That is a very interesting story.

Q: Jillian, how influential was Israel Zangwill?

A: Israel Zangwill, his influence is more important in Herzl's time. He was with Herzl at the first Zionist Congress. And, in fact, you can say that political Zionism was born in his house when Herzl came to visit him in 1896 at 24 Oxford Road, Kilburn. He was a great writer. He was the man who coined the phrase, "the melting pot." Fascinating man. Read a biography of him. If they gave Husayni Iraq, no, no, be careful.

Marlena. The Emir Hussein had been the Emir of Damascus. He is then Emir of Iraq. It's the Husayni family. They are different. Be careful. They're different.

There was great amount stemming from the Jews, yeah.

Look, Mitzi, the whole issue of anti-Judaism in the Arab world.

Ah, Baroness, Baron Ditchie. Oh, I love this!

Q: Would you regard the Balfour Declaration or San Remo as the legal foundation of Israel?

A: This is very complicated. The legal foundation of Israel, I think, is the United Nations Partition Agreement. I think it's got to be 1947 when, after the Shoah, the United Nations partitioned that one fifth of Palestine that's left into a Jewish state and a Palestinian state. I think the Balfour Declaration's too nebulous. That, I'd have to think carefully about that, Ruth, but I think I would go with that.

Q: What was the role of Ben-Gurion during this period?

A: Good question. We'll be talking a lot about Ben-Gurion in the future. He becomes the leader of the Histadrut. He's Poale Zion. He's a left-wing Zionist. I'll be looking at his whole biography with you.

Yes, I have read "A Line in the Sand."

Q: What was the role of Christian nonconformists in the creation of Israel?

A: Can we wait till we get to the creation of Israel?

There've been a lot of pro-Christian Zionists, yes.

Laurence Oliphant was amazing. There's all sorts of interesting ones.

Q: What is the name of Leslie's book?

A: Can't remember. I think it's "After the Balfour Declaration." Maybe, if he's online, maybe he could tell us.

Q: Did Herbert Samuel do anything to help create the state of Israel?

A: Good question, Lawrence. Not sure, actually. He doesn't have that wonderful a reputation with historians. He was in a terribly difficult position. He tried to be even handed. He was a British official. He was a Jew and a Zionist who became a British official.

Oh, yes, Thelma saying, "Been trying to understand the issues. "Today helps, but still not quite

there yet. "Very complicated." Yes, you are right, and I've got tomorrow. And remember, I'm only taking you up to the First World War. So, I will be coming back to it. I know, it's unbelievably complicated. I will talk to my son-in-law, who is so good at presentations, to see how we can bullet point it.

Why not mention the fights and that it was Weizmann who laid the? Yes, yes, yes, because, Howard, I covered all of that about three months ago. That's the problem I'm dealing with, and I'm trying.

And it was Ottoman land, not Arab land. Yes, except the Arabs lived on it. It's a complicated story.

Did the San Remo conference? Yes, it did support a Zionist's claim, but not a state. It's the Balfour Declaration. The British Mandate, actually, had the Balfour Declaration written in it. If, I don't know how many lawyers, but tell me what the Balfour Declaration meant.

Who might have been a better choice of Mufti? Anusha Beer, because they were much more moderate, definitely.

Q: What was the relation with Christians in Mandated Palestine?

A: Depends what Christians you're talking about. There were a lot of Christian-Muslim associations fanned by British officers.

I know I haven't mentioned Ben-Gurion even once. I'm going to be talking about Ben-Gurion a lot. At this stage, it's mainly Weizmann. Ben-Gurion's coming through.

Okay, unfortunately, I think one of the problems we're having, I've lectured on all these characters, but because a lot of you have joined late, I'm going to have to think of a way of bringing it all in.

Look, Iva, "Dr. James Parkes, the Anglican historian "and great friend of the Jews, in his history of Palestine, "makes our rights to the land of Israel crystal clear, "biblical and simple. "He brilliantly disposes of Islamic claims."

Okay, look, I know there's a lot of people who are going to be very passionate about this. I'm trying very hard to steer the course.

Michael, I don't give enough power to the Balfour declaration. Judeans saw it as the passport to the Judean state, as well as many Christians. Right, thank you, Michael.

"Beyond the Balfour Declaration," thank you. Thank you, Leslie.

Q: What was Begin's role at this time?

A: Begin was very young. Begin is not going to come to the fore, really, and he's going to become involved in Jabotinsky's movement in the 30s, but he's not in the picture yet.

Q: Marilyn, this is an interesting question. Does not the position of Herbert Samuel the problem when a Jew is in a high position for his country in Israel Palestine?

A: Yes, yes, I think that's very much part of the story. Herbert Samuel, a Jew and a Zionist, is High Commissioner, but he's a British officer. Gertrude Bell was important in helping, trying to help, the British understand the Arabs.

Oh, thank you Linda. She's ordered the "Timechart History of Jewish Civilization." Lovely. Yes.

Q: So, the British and the French set the two brothers against each other in Jordan and Syria?

A: Well, no, no, in Iraq and Syria, Iraq and Jordan. It's Iraq and Jordan, Howard. He's evicted from Syria. The British give him the consolation prize of Baghdad. His brother, Abdullah, is in Jordan. The great clash, if you want the great clash, is going to happen with the Saudis, because the father lives, of course, in the Hijaz. Now, the Hijaz is what becomes known as Saudi Arabia, because there is a battle, and the Saud dynasty destroyed the Husayni clan. And then the Saudis are blood enemies of Iraq and of Jordan. Arab politics are very complicated.

I think that's enough, Wendy, don't you? Is Wendy still there? Or Judi?

- [Judi] Yeah, thank you so much, Trudy. Wonderful. Thank you so much, Trudy. And we will continue tomorrow.

- Yes, we continue tomorrow. And Judi, thank you for the slides. And look, I hope I've been as clear as possible. Some of the questions you've asked, unfortunately, I've already addressed them in other lectures, so I'm going to have to think. And I promise you, I will look at biographies of Ben-Gurion and of Begin and of Golda. And again, I think of Chaim Weizmann and Vladimir Jabotinsky. And, of course, there are so many others as well. It was a period of giants. I think whatever side of the political divide you're on, I think they all were people of huge vision, and I think they all cared passionately about the Jewish people.

They disagree, but something for you to think about, what this really illustrates is Jewish powerlessness. They were all dreaming of a solution to the Jewish problem, quote, unquote, and they were all dreaming of, you know, a safe haven. Nationhood to them meant a safe haven. And again, we're back to the old canard of what on earth does Jewish identity mean? So, why don't you all ask your families and really argue about it by tomorrow. Anyway, thank you all very much, and I'll see you tomorrow. Bye, Judi.

- [Judi] Thank you, Trudy. Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Bye-bye, everyone.