



Hydropolitics along the Jordan River

• Scarce Water and its Impact on the Arab-Israeli Conflict •

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1923-1948: Nationalism, immigration, and "economic absorptive capacity"

Once the formidable process of border delineation between the British and French Mandates was complete, it was left to these powers to decide how best to balance their own national goals with those of the local populations. Between the World Wars, both powers relinquished increasing control in favour of the new nations of the region, but the process of allowing the region to turn inward was not without its difficulties. Conflicting national claims, ambiguities over historic promises, and, more to our point, discrepant claims as to how many people the land of Palestine could absorb, based on its land and water resources, each added to the strife of the process of nation-building (see tables 2.4 and 2.5).

The delineation of Mandate boundaries was only the first step in the 20year process of withdrawal of British and French from the Middle East. Although each wanted to be influential in its respective mandated territory, it was clear that local national aspirations demanded local leadership. This was brought home to both the British and French when, in March 1920, the General Syrian Congress proclaimed a full and undivided independence of Syria, including Palestine; named the Emir Feisal as their constitutional king; and announced "the termination of the present occupying military governments" (Sachar 1969, 274).

Although the French pushed Feisal out of Syria later that year (he was named King of Iraq in 1921 by the British), both Syria and Mesopotamia were granted provisional independence, subject to mandatory control, at the San Remo Conference in 1920 (Sachar 1969, 279). By 1921, Feisal's brother Abdullah was installed by the British as Emir of Transjordan, which was separated from the rest of Palestine at the Jordan River. Transjordan declared its independence on 15 May 1923, but remained linked to Britain until that country's mandate ended in 1946. Similarly, Lebanon became a republic independent from Syria in 1926, but gained full independence only in 1946, along with Syria, when British forces ousted the French after World War II.

Table 2.4 Population of Palestine, 1922-1942^{a,b}

Year	Total	Moslems		Jews		Christians		Oth (No.)
		(No.)	(%)	(No.)	(%)	(No.)	(%)	
1922 Census	752,048	589,177	78.34	83,790	11.14	71,464	9.50	7,61
1931 Census	1,033,314	759,700	73.52	174,606	16.90	88,907	8.60	10,1
1931 ^c	1,036,339	761,922	73.52	175,138	16.90	89,134	8.60	10,1
1932	1,073,827	778,803	72.52	192,137	17.90	92,520	8.61	10,3
1933	1,140,941	798,506	69.99	234,967	20.59	96,791	8.48	10,6
1934	1,210,554	814,379	67.27	282,975	23.38	102,407	8.46	10,7
1935	1,308,112	836,688	63.96	355,157	27.15	105,236	8.04	11,0
1936	1,366,692	862,730	63.13	384,078	28.10	108,506	7.94	11,3
1937	1,401,794	883,446	63.02	395,836	28.24	110,869	7.91	11,6
1938	1,435,285	900,250	62.72	411,222	28.65	111,974	7.80	11,8
1939	1,501,698	927,133	61.74	445,457	29.66	116,958	7.79	12,1
1940	1,544,530	947,846	61.37	463,535	30.01	120,587	7.81	12,5
1941	1,585,500	973,104	61.38	474,102	29.90	125,413	7.91	12,8
1942	1,620,005	995,292	61.44	484,408	29.90	127,184	7.85	13,1

Source: Esco Foundation (1947).

a. Exclusive of members of His Majesty's Forces (Great Britain).

b. Adapted from table, "Estimated Population of Palestine," Statistical Abstract of Palestine 1943, p. 2.

c. The figures for 1931 and following years are as of 31 December of each year.

Table 2.5 Recorded immigration and emigration, Palestine, 1930-1939

Year or period	Immigration			Emigration			Net immigration	
	Jews	Non-	Total	Jews	Non-	Total	Jews	Non-

		Jews			Jews			Jews
1930	4,944	1,489	6,433	1,679	1,324	3,003	3,265	165
1931	4,075	1,458	5,533	666	680	1,346	3,409	778
1932	9,553	1,736	11,289	x ^a	x	x	9,553	1,736
1933	30,327	1,650	31,977	x	x	x	30,327	1,650
1934	42,359	1,784	44,143	x	x	x	42,359	1,784
1935	61,854	2,293	64,147	396	387	783	61,458	1,906
1936	29,727	1,944	31,671	773	405	1,178	28,954	1,539
1937	10,536	1,939	12,475	889	639	1,528	9,647	1,300
1938	12,868	2,395	15,263	1,095	716	1,811	11,773	1,679
1939	16,405	2,028	18,433	1,019	977	1,996	15,386	1,051
Total	222,648	18,716	241,364	6,517	5,128	11,645	216,131	13,588

Source: Esco Foundation (1947).

a. "x" indicates that emigration was not reported.

Meanwhile, in Palestine, which after Transjordan's separation in 1922 referred only to the territory from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean, tensions began mounting between the local Arab and Jewish populations, increasingly resulting in violence. The process had been foretold in prescient detail, if with an overly optimistic timetable, in 1919 in a letter from Richard Meinertzhagen, newly appointed Political Officer in Palestine, to Prime Minister Lloyd George:

In fifty years time both Jew and Arab will be obsessed with nationalism ... Nationalism prefers self-government, however dishonest and inefficient, to government by foreigners however efficient and beneficial ... Jewish and Arab sovereignty must clash. The Jew, if his immigration programme succeeds, must expand and that can only be accomplished at the expense of the Arab who will do his utmost to check the growth and power of a Jewish Palestine. That means bloodshed. (25 March 1919, Sachar 1987, vol. IX, 293)

The British, caught in their effort to balance their conflicting promises to Arabs and Jews, as stipulated in the Balfour Declaration, increasingly blamed Zionist settlement policies, particularly immigration and land purchases, for

the troubles.

In April 1920, even as the peace talks were in progress, riots broke out during the Nebi Musa festival in Jerusalem, during which several Jews and Arabs were killed and several hundred wounded (Sachar 1969, 392). In subsequent hearings on the actions of the British police, officers of the military government insisted that Zionist provocation alone had inflamed the Arab rioters. The Zionists, in turn, accused the British of complicity with Arab nationalists, despite warnings from intelligence sources of the potential outcome. Richard Meinertzhagen, by then a colonel and Chief Intelligence Officer in Cairo, took the witness stand to endorse fully the Zionist claims, "to the astonishment and indignation of the British authorities" (Sachar 1969, 393). One result of the investigation was that, four days after the Mandate was awarded to Britain at San Remo, the military government Palestine was dismantled in favour of a civil administration.

Nevertheless, tensions between Arabs and Jews increased. On May Day 1921, a group of Jewish Communists marched through Arab Jaffa. Local Arabs, incensed and incited by nationalists, rioted and looted Jewish stores. One principal target was the Zionist immigration depot, where 13 newcomers were stabbed to death (Sachar 1969, 398). During the week, as rioting spread throughout the country, a total of 47 Jews and 48 Arabs were killed.

This time, though a commission of inquiry found that the Arabs were unquestionably the aggressors, "the feeling against the Jews was too genuine, too widespread and too intense to be accounted for in a superficial manner" (cited in Sachar 1969, 399). As a result, the Civil Administration for the first time imposed a ban on Jewish immigration. Although the ban was lifted by July 1921, rigid controls were imposed, including the necessity for a guarantee of employment for each immigrant (Sachar 1969, 396).

In part because of this strife, Sir Herbert Samuel, the High Commissioner in Palestine, wrote in June 1922 a White Paper (a formal policy statement), which was meant as a definition of the British interpretation of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate. Although supporting the principle of a Jewish national home, what became known as the Churchill White Paper (named for Winston Churchill, at the time Colonial Secretary) restricted the interpretation of a "national home," geographically excluding the territory east of the Jordan River; politically, by defining it in terms of "development of the existing

community"; and numerically, limiting future immigration to "the economic capacity of the country" (Sachar 1979, 127).

Two ideological seeds were planted in the Churchill White Paper that would have far-reaching implications. First, in calling for "undisturbed national development," for both Arabs and Jews, the Paper advanced the principle that two nations could develop separately in Palestine. Over the years, this idea would recur and be refined as a two-state solution, or "partition." Second, the White Paper would be the first, but hardly the last, document linking ArabJewish tensions with "economic absorptive capacity." This theme, too, would reappear in later British policy, as is examined below.

Disappointed in the Paper but wary of losing British support altogether, the Zionist Executive signed the document. In contrast, objecting to any concept of a Jewish National Home in Palestine, and arguing that "the numbers of the Jewish community [then about 80,000 people] ... had already exceeded the capacity of the country to absorb new arrivals" (cited in Esco Foundation 1947, 479), the Palestine Arab Delegation rejected the document in its entirety. The Arab view, as presented to the League of Nations in 1928, was that a constitutional government, proportional to the local population before immigration began (about nine to one, Arabs to Jews), should be implemented (Esco Foundation 1947, 479).

By the end of the 1920s - a period of worldwide depression and, in Palestine, several years of below-normal precipitation - peak unemployment led to a concerted effort of national development on the part of the Zionists. Projects included road-building, irrigation, and land amelioration. Two major concessions were acquired from the British government - one for potash works at the Dead Sea (Weizmann Letters 1968, vol. XIV, 151), and the other for a hydropower facility at the confluence of the Yarmuk and Jordan rivers (Rutenberg Concession, appendix I in Simon and Stein 1923). Though Rutenberg's dam was destroyed in the 1948 war, Israel has occasionally argued for greater allocation of Yarmuk water on the basis of Rutenberg's 70year concession, granted in 1926 (Naff and Matson 1984, 30).

Most contentious, however, was the Zionist policy of large-scale land purchases, notably along the Mediterranean coast, and in the Jezreel and Beisan valleys (Ruppin 1936, 182-190; "The Beisan Lands in Palestine: Government Statement of Policy," October 1929, unpublished).

In August 1929, tensions over Jewish access to the Western Wall in Jerusalem degraded into a week of Arab rioting throughout Palestine. In Hebron 66 Jews were killed and, five days later, another 45 Jews were killed in Safed. By the end of the week, 133 Jews had been killed, mostly by Arab rioters, as had 116 Arabs, mostly by British police (Weizmann Letters 1968, vol. XIV, xii).

The British commission of inquiry distinguished, in its Shaw Commission Report of March 1930, between immediate causes of the outbreak, including the Western Wall dispute and inadequate deployment of police and military forces, and the fundamental cause - Arab opposition to Jewish immigration and land settlement (Esco Foundation 1947, 624-629).

Granting that Jewish development "has conferred material benefits upon Palestine in which the Arab people share," the commission charged that,

In the matter of immigration there has been a serious departure by the Jewish authorities from the doctrine . . . that immigration should be regulated by the economic capacity of Palestine to absorb new arrivals. (Esco Foundation 1947, 625)

The commission called for a clearly defined policy regarding Jewish immigration "with consultation of non-Jewish interests" (Esco Foundation 1947, 637). Land purchases were curtailed and immigration restricted, pending a survey of Palestine's agricultural potential.

Such a survey was contained in the Hope Simpson Report of 22 August 1930, which concluded that, after allowing for Jewish land holdings and potential Arab agricultural growth, remaining cultivatable lands in Palestine were "insufficient to maintain a decent standard of life for the country's Arab rural population" (Esco Foundation 1947, 637). The Report called for reduction or suspension of immigration if it adversely affected the Arab population, but suggested that, with an active policy of agricultural development, an additional 20,000 Jewish families could be settled.

The restrictive elements of the Report were emphasized in a formal statement of policy, known as the Passfield White Paper, submitted on 20 October 1930. The White Paper affirmed Hope Simpson's conclusions that no margin of land was available for immigrants and recommended that state-owned land be made available for landless Arabs.

Several points of dispute were raised by the Report. One was a most basic disagreement over data collection. An air survey suggested that there was about 40 per cent less cultivatable land available than the government's own land survey had previously described (Esco Foundation 1947, 637). Ruppin (1936, 206) suggested that, as the photographs were taken in June or July, when most grains were already harvested, mistakes in interpretation were likely. Ambiguities were also raised over the whole process of land acquisitions. Because land was often bought from absentee landowners, the legal rights of those who actually worked the land were occasionally tenuous. Equally vague was the status of some state lands, which either had been Turkish state land before the war, or was land for which no records existed. Because of these facts, and because the Zionists tried to compensate these squatters, although not legally required to do so, it was possible that there was some truth to both the Arab claim that 100,000 cultivators had been dispossessed and the Zionist claim that Zionist settlement had not dispossessed the fellahin from their lands (Weizmann Letters 1968, vol. XIV, xxvii, xxx).

However, the most divisive issue raised in the White Paper, and one that is still not resolved today, was the question of how many people the land (and water) resources of the country could absorb. A flurry of pointed Zionist criticism followed publication of the Paper, which raised several objections to the British method of defining economic absorptive capacity (for example, Weizmann to Lloyd George, unpublished letter, 27 March 1930, Ruppin 1936, and Weizmann Letters 1968, vol. XIV).

The Zionists pointed out that, when the issue of absorptive capacity was first raised in the Churchill White Paper in 1922, Transjordan was still a part of Palestine. By "lopping off" a vast and underpopulated area, and an area where Jews were being offered large tracts of land, the absorptive capacity had been reduced to the detriment of Jewish settlement (Weizmann to Lloyd George, in Weizmann Letters 1968, vol. XIV, 253). Furthermore, it was argued, industrial development was dismissed by the Report as impractical (Esco Foundation 1947, 641), as was agriculture in the area around Be'er Sheva in the desert south, which lacked an adequate supply of water.

Criticism of the lack of consideration of the potential for movement of water resources and intensive cultivation came not only from the Zionists, who had already initiated several irrigation schemes throughout Palestine, but also from

within the British government itself. A 1931 report by Lewis French, Director of Development for the government of Palestine, states,

It is noteworthy that until comparatively recent times the vast importance of the water problem has not been fully appreciated by the Administration. (French 1931, 21)

The potential for increasing intensification of both land and water use was at the heart of Zionist criticism. The Hope Simpson Report had defined cultivatable land as land "which is actually cultivated or can be brought under cultivation by the application of the labour and financial resources of the average Palestinian cultivator" (cited in Ruppin 1936, 208). Arthur Ruppin (1936, 207-208), at the time Director of the Jewish National Fund, suggested that, to be fair, an expansion of the definition of uncultivated land was possible:

1. Uncultivated land which can be cultivated even with the present-day methods of the fellahin.
2. Land which is uncultivated but can be used for the planting of trees.
3. Land which is not being worked because of insufficient rainfall, but which could easily be worked if water could be obtained from the ground, or pumped up from nearby rivers and used for irrigation. This is the case in the Jordan valley and in some sections of Southern Palestine.
4. Land which is unworked but which could be made cultivable if large improvement schemes, which need time and capital, were instituted, e.g. swamp areas, like the Huleh.
5. Land which for the time being cannot be profitably cultivated.

The above guidelines became a framework for the methods the Zionists would employ to increase the land's absorptive capacity over the following decades, as the projects suggested were slowly implemented. On the basis of these guidelines, Chaim Weizmann argued to the British that, unless obstructed, "we shall be able to put at least 50,000 additional families on the land, without the least injustice to its present occupants" (Weizmann to Lloyd George, 27 March 1930, Weizmann Letters 1968, vol. XIV, 253)⁶ (see appendix I, map 13).

The British government responded to Zionist complaints about the Passfield White Paper in the form of a letter from Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald

to Chaim Weizmann, dated 13 February 1931. Although not equal to the Paper in the level of legality, the MacDonald Letter was issued as an official interpretation of the White Paper. The letter reiterated the Mandate's obligation to "facilitate Jewish immigration and to encourage close settlement by Jews on the land," and suggested that State lands be made available to both Jews and Arabs (cited in Weizmann Letters 1968, vol. XV, xv). The letter reaffirmed the government's right to control immigration, as well as the link between immigration and economic absorptive capacity.

The Zionists regarded the letter as a restoration of the status quo ante, while the Arabs, who had greeted the limitations of the Passfield White Paper with satisfaction, called the MacDonald Letter "a black frame for the White Paper" (cited in Weizmann Letters 1968, vol. XV, xvi).

In 1933, Adolph Hitler and his Nationalist Socialists came to power in Germany, and immigration, still tightly controlled by the British, took on new urgency for the Jews in Palestine. That year alone, 25 per cent of the permitted 40,000 immigrants were from Germany, with an additional 15,000 arriving by the middle of 1935 (Report of the Central [Zionist] Bureau reprinted in Weizmann Letters 1968, vol. BI, 44). Seeking to expand available land for the newcomers, Chaim Weizmann entered into negotiations for land in Syria (around Lake Huleh and on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee) and was told by the French Director of the Bank of Syria that the whole southern belt of Lebanon, from the Palestine border to Beirut, was for sale and badly in need of development. The French High Commissioner, Henri de Jeuenel, vetoed the sale (Weizmann to Warburg, 5 November 1933, Weizmann Letters 1968, vol. XVI, 118).

The Arabs of Palestine, alarmed at the fervour of Jewish immigration, charged that the government policies were "paving the road for driving the nation away from its homeland for foreigners to supersede it" (Esco Foundation 1947, 768). Finally, in 1936, the tensions ignited in an intensified re-enactment of the violence and policy reviews of 1922 and 1929. On 25 April 1936, the Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini, established an Arab Higher Committee, which proclaimed a general strike throughout the country, demanded the cessation of Jewish immigration and of land sales to Jews, and called for a "National Representative Government." The strike quickly turned to violence and finally to armed rebellion against both the British and the Jews, as irregulars began to arrive from neighbouring countries in the name of

"Committees for the Defence of Palestine" (Sachar 1979, 200). By July 1936, with more than 300 dead, the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Nuri es-Said, managed to negotiate an end to the uprising. The British, for their part, promised a Royal Commission of Inquiry.

During what became known as the Peel Commission investigations of 1936 and 1937, Arabs and Jews reiterated their now-familiar claims. Haj Amin alHusseini testified that the 400,000 Jews in Palestine were more than the country could absorb (Sachar 1979, 203). He suggested the abandonment of the "experiment" of the Jewish national home, and a cessation of Jewish immigration and land sales to the Jews (Esco Foundation 1947, 815). Chaim Weizmann, testifying for the Zionists, and backed by a recent survey of Palestine's water resources (see Bein 1971, 277-278 for details), argued that there was room for 100,000 Jewish farming families even without the Negev, and suggested an emphasis on agricultural and industrial development as a means of reconciling Jewish and Arab interests (Esco Foundation 1947, 813).

When the findings of the Peel Commission were issued in July 1937, it became apparent that dramatic shifts in British policy were in the offing. The shift in thinking had been hinted at during testimony, when some of those testifying had been asked, hypothetically, of the feasibility of "two areas developing the possibility of self-government" (cited in Weizmann Letters 1968, vol. XVI, xxiv). The thinking of the Commission was described by Peel (1937, 767, 772) as follows:

We came generally to the conclusion as regards immigration, that economic absorptive capacity, though useful as a test, is really not sufficient, and that such matters as psychological and social effect and the impact of the new population on the old must also be considered ...

It seemed to us impossible to carry on in the country under the existing Mandate and with its limitations, and we felt that the only way to arrive at a final settlement of the matter was to divide the country into Jewish and Arab areas which would make it possible at once to give them a degree of selfgovernment ... We should be able to give to the Jews all the dignity of a State, instead of merely a Jewish National Home ... There would be no limit on Jewish immigration except what the Jews themselves think ought to be applied ... The Arab grievances, the Arab hostilities, the Arab fear of the Jews would be at once turned into other channels.

The only feasible solution to conflicting promises and needs, the Commission concluded, lay in abandoning the concept of economic absorptive capacity in favour of dividing Palestine into two self-governing communities. Perhaps neither side would be fully satisfied, but both would come to realize that "the drawbacks of Partition are outweighed by its advantages. For if it offers neither party all it wants, it offers each what it wants most, namely freedom and security" (cited in Sachar 1979, 204).

Palestine and Transjordan would be divided into three: a Jewish state along the coast and in the Galilee, an Arab state comprising the rest of Palestine and Transjordan, and a permanent British enclave around Jerusalem with a corridor to the sea and British bases along the Sea of Galilee and in the Gulf of Aqaba (Sachar 1979, 305) (see appendix I, map 14).

Although the form and feasibility of partition would undergo many variations and set-backs between 1936 and 1948, the process towards statehood gained inevitably.

After the Peel Commission Report, the Arab revolt, begun in 1936, gained momentum, as did Jewish settlement. The Jewish Agency, feeling that partition was imminent, set out on an intensive settlement programme, building 55 farm communities between 1936 and 1939 (Sachar 1979, 216). The emphasis for site location was in the northern Galilee, to reinforce the projected boundaries and to guarantee the inclusion of what Jordan headwaters were left from the Mandate process.

In response to Arab resistance, a report on partition, the Wood-head Report of 1938, suggested modifications to the borders of the two projected states. The report recommended two partition plans as alternatives to the Peel plan (see appendix I, maps 15-17). The modifications were due mostly to the mixed ethnic make-up that would have resulted from the Peel recommendations. The Wood-head Report also included a section on limitations that scarce water resources placed on the possibility of population resettlement - the first British policy paper specifically naming water as a factor limiting policy objectives in Palestine (Woodhead 1939).

A blow to Zionist plans came later in May 1939, in the form of the MacDonald White Paper. This report, a total reversal of British policy, called for a single state in Palestine, west of the Jordan River, governed by Arabs

and Jews in proportion to their population (but specifying that Jews should not exceed one-third of the population), immigration based on the economic absorptive capacity but limited to 75,000 for a five-year interim period, and a prohibition of land transfers to Jews in parts of the country (Esco Foundation 1947, 901-908) (see appendix I, map 18).

Palestine's Jews reacted with shock and anger, particularly in light of exacerbating conditions for European Jewry. An oath was read in synagogues and public meetings:

The Jewish population proclaims before the world that this treacherous policy will not be tolerated. The Jewish population will fight it to the uttermost, and will spare no sacrifice to frustrate and defeat it ... The Yishuv [Jewish administrative body] will neither recognize nor admit any callous restriction of Jewish immigration into its land. (Cited in Esco Foundation 1947, 909)

Arabs also rejected the Paper, which was surprising as it seems to be an agreement to each of the demands made during prior testimony. The statement of the Arab Higher Committee read, in part:

The ultimate decision as to the fate of a people depends on its own will, not on White or Black Papers. Palestine will be independent within the Arab union and will remain Arab forever. (Cited in Esco Foundation 1947, 908)

With a return in the MacDonal White Paper to the legitimacy of the concept of economic absorptive capacity, focus on the water resources of Palestine gained in importance. The Ionides Plan, published in Amman in 1939 by the British Director of Development for the Transjordanian government, supported the Arab claim that the region's water resources were inadequate for Jewish immigration. Ionides recommended that the waters of the Jordan River be used for irrigation within the watershed, that floodwaters from the Yarmuk be stored in the Sea of Galilee, and that a canal be dug along the East Ghor parallel to the Jordan River to use Yarmuk water for irrigation (Hosh and Isaac 1992, 3).

On 3 September 1939, three and a half months after the MacDonal White Paper was issued, with the sworn enmity of both Palestine's Arabs and Jews, Britain declared war on the Axis powers.

Throughout World War II, the Zionists, while supporting Britain against Germany, set out on a campaign of resistance and illegal immigration within Palestine. Even in the face of increasingly desperate Jewish refugees, the British immigration quotas held, enforced by a naval blockade along the Palestine coast. Appeals for exceptions, including one to absorb an additional 10,000 Jewish children from central Europe, were denied (Sachar 1979, 219). By the end of World War II, and the terminal date of the White Paper interim period, 50,000 legal and illegal immigrants had been admitted to Palestine 25,000 less than had been agreed to.

With the end of World War II, as the magnitude of destruction of European Jewry became apparent, and as the British showed no sign of relaxing immigration quotas, the Zionists began a campaign of open resistance against the British. As tensions increased, the British made an offer in 1946 to repudiate the MacDonal White Paper and allow 100,000 immigrants into Palestine immediately, and to remove restrictions on land purchases - in exchange for the Jewish population turning in their arms. This demand was deemed impossible by the Zionists, who argued that, in the event of British evacuation, the Zionists would be left defenceless (Weizmann Letters 1968, vol. XXII, xxi).

Facing increasing opposition to their presence on the part of both Arabs and Jews, the British began to look to other powers, first to the United States and finally to the newly created United Nations, for assistance with the problem of Palestine. Partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states increasingly became the most advocated option, first in an Anglo-American plan in 1946, and later, when Britain ceded the Mandate to the United Nations, in the UN Partition Plan of 1947 (see appendix I, map 19).

The Zionist position on whether partition should occur and, if so, what the minimum territorial requirement would be for a viable Jewish State, was increasingly influenced by Walter Clay Lowdermilk. Lowdermilk, director of the US Soil Conservation Service, published in 1944 *Palestine, Land of Promise* at the commission of the Jewish Agency. In contrast to the Ionides Plan of 1939, Lowdermilk asserted that proper water management would generate resources for four million Jewish refugees in addition to the 1.8 million Arabs and Jews living in Palestine at the time. He advocated regional water management, based on the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), to develop irrigation on both banks of the Jordan River and in the Negev Desert,

and building a canal from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea to generate hydropower and replenish the diverted fresh water (Naff and Matson 1984, 32).

Referring to Lowdermilk's work, a 1945 aide-mémoire on Palestine described Zionist reservations on partition:

With the sea in the West, the Jordan and the Power and Potash concessions in the East, the chief water resources in the North, and the main land-reserves in the South, any partition scheme seems bound to disrupt the country's economic frame, and wreck the chances of large-scale development. (6 April 1945, cited in Weizmann Letters 1968, vol. XXII, 299)

At the same time, a 1944 study, "The Water Resources of Palestine," undertaken by Mekorot, the national water company for Jewish Palestine, described an "All-Palestine Project," for irrigation and hydroelectric development. The study included frontier adjustments that would be desirable for a basin-wide development scheme in Palestine. It was suggested that the Mandate border be moved upstream where it met the Hasbani, Dan, and Baniyas headwaters to allow for more effective drainage; eastward along Lake Hula to leave room for a conduit on the east side of the lake; and upstream along the Yarmuk to include an area of about 80 km² of Transjordan to develop a series of impoundments along the river (Mekorot 1944). It should be noted that, although the report included plans to bring Litani water into the Jordan watershed, it was assumed that agreement would have to be reached with the Lebanese government to do so. Lebanese territory was not included in the list of desirable frontier adjustments.

In the case of partition, it became clear to the Zionists that, at a minimum, three areas were needed for a viable Jewish state: these were the Galilee region with the Jordan headwaters, the coastal zone with the population centres, and the Negev Desert, to absorb "the ingathering of the exiles."

On 2 February 1947, Great Britain officially turned the fate of Palestine over to the United Nations. The UN Special Committee on Palestine recommended partition of Palestine into two states, but included a vehicle for joint economic development, "especially in respect of irrigation, land reclamation, and soil conservation."

The Jewish state included the areas described above, and the Arab state included the remainder of Palestine, based on population centres. Jerusalem was to be an international city, and the Jewish state would pay a £4 million annual stipend to the Arab state to reflect the more advanced agricultural and industrial position of the former (UN Resolution on the Partition of Palestine 1947, chap. 4). The General Assembly approved the Partition Plan on 29 November 1947.

Though the Jewish Agency reluctantly accepted partition, the Arab states rejected it outright and, when the British pulled out of Palestine in May 1948, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia went to war against the new state of Israel.

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