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# SAN REMO & ISRAEL'S RESTORATION



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# San Remo & Israel's Restoration

by Kelvin Crombie

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## Introduction



One of the most significant events of the 20th century occurred between 19-26 April 1920. This was the Conference held at the Villa Devachan in San Remo in Italy to determine what terms were to be imposed upon the Ottoman Turkish Empire at the end of World War One. Those present were mostly delegates of the Allied powers.

At this Conference Mandates were offered to Britain and France to administer former regions of the defeated Turkish Empire and prepare them for self-rule. The legal foundations for the future state of Israel, as well as the nation states of Iraq, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon were laid at this Conference.

All of these modern-day nations are encompassed within the geographical area written about by the Hebrew prophet Isaiah some 2,700 years ago:

*"In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria – a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, "Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance." (Isaiah 19: 23-24)*

The LORD of hosts (Almighty God) referred to Israel as 'My inheritance.' The background for this profound statement is found in the book of Genesis. There we are informed that Almighty God promised the land of Canaan (later the land of Israel) to Abram (later known as Abraham) and his physical descendants. Abram then questioned Almighty God, saying: "Lord God, how shall I know that I will inherit it?" (Genesis 15: 8)

Almighty God then confirmed his promise to Abram in the best known way in the ancient world – the making or cutting of a covenant and the swearing of an oath (Genesis 15: 12-21; Exodus 6: 8 ; Numbers 11: 12, 14, 23 ; Deuteronomy 1: 8).

This promise was transferred to Abraham's son Isaac and then to Isaac's son Jacob. These men, known as the Patriarchs, all lived near the town of Beersheba, which means 'the well of the oath.' In the time of the Patriarchs, and right on up to the time of Jesus, when a promise was sealed with an oath, it was expected to be kept no matter what the consequences were (Psalm 15: 4).

These Scriptures reveal the sanctity of the oath as confirmation of a promise, and the centrality and strategic importance of the land of Canaan, the land of Israel. But are these principles (of the oath) and promise (of the land) now obsolete; are they from a by-gone era and no longer relevant today?

The delegates at the San Remo Conference had to discuss, among other matters, another, related, promise. This was the promise made to the Jewish people by the British War Cabinet in 1917 regarding the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine, a promise later known as the Balfour Declaration.



San Remo Conference, 1920

Why would British, and other, politicians at that time believe it right that the Jewish people who had been in national dispersion for some 2000 years, be encouraged to return to the land of Israel, the land of covenant promise - under British protection?

The answer to that question can only be fully understood by looking at events prior to April 1920, and especially the period when the Ottoman Turkish Empire was finally defeated. If the Turkish Empire had not been defeated, there would have been no San Remo Conference, no modern state of Israel, no modern Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, or Palestinian Authority, nor probably, a Saudi Arabia.

### **The Land Between the Empires**



The region mentioned in Isaiah's prophecy, and in particular the land of Israel, has always been at the centre of world events. For millennia numerous trade routes had criss-crossed this land and region, bringing the precious commodities of the East to the shores of the Eastern Mediterranean and onwards to Europe.

Whoever controlled that strategic region monopolised the wealth of the trade coming from the East. Throughout antiquity large empires controlled that region, especially Assyria, Babylon and Persia to the north, and Egypt to the south.

In the centre of this region was the land of Israel, which has always been a 'land between empires.' Whoever controlled that geo-political buffer zone could more easily keep at bay any rival empire, either to the north or to the south.

This could have been the geo-political rationale behind the decision of Cyrus, emperor of Persia, to allow the Jewish people to return to the land of Israel after the Babylonian exile – so that the Jewish people could be a natural ally in that land against possible incursions by the rival empire of the south, namely Egypt.

The land of Israel was also geo-politically important during the time of Jesus, when Rome to the west needed a buffer zone against her enemy Parthia to the east. In 66-72 AD there was a Jewish Revolt against Roman control and the Romans were concerned that the Parthians would join the Jewish fighters, so they sent in huge forces to subdue this revolt. A subsequent Jewish revolt occurred between 132-135 AD. The Romans triumphed on both occasions: Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed, the majority of the Jewish people were dispersed into foreign exile and the name of Judea was changed to Palestine in order to erase the Jewish connection.

For hundreds of years thereafter the exiled Jewish people never gave up the hope of being restored to the land of covenant promise.

The likelihood of the Jewish people ever being restored to the land of Israel during those centuries was, naturally speaking, impossible. They were living under regimes in Europe and the Middle East which were basically unsympathetic to their desire to be restored. Additionally the land of Israel came under the control of Islam, which had no place for a restored Israel in what it deemed as part of *dar al Islam* – the region of Islam.

Only a miracle could restore them.

In the meantime the followers of Jesus had taken His message out from Jerusalem to the uttermost ends of the world, taking with them the writings of Isaiah and Genesis, and indeed all the Holy Scriptures. In time, people all over the world became aware of these covenant promises. But for many centuries the Established

Church held a basic belief that these promises were no longer relevant. The Church, it maintained, was the 'New' Israel.

However, during the period of the Protestant Reformation, Christians began to read and believe the Scriptures and then began to remind Almighty God of His covenant promises to the people of Israel.

### **The Ottoman Turkish Empire and Age of Discovery**



Between the years 1453-1517 the Ottoman Turkish Empire took control over that entire region detailed in Isaiah's prophecy. By doing so they gained control over the trade routes coming from the East. The Turkish Sultan was also the *Caliph*, or spiritual head, of Sunni Islam, ruling from Constantinople.

A direct result of this Turkish monopoly was that it forced the European empires to set sail in search of direct sea routes to the East. The Portuguese achieved this when they landed in India in 1498.

Thereafter the importance of the Middle East region dwindled, as less trade went through it, while conversely, other European empires, including Britain, the Netherlands and France now began to utilise this new sea route.

Following the formation of the East India Company in 1600 Britain became economically and politically linked to India, and in time the wider region which included Australia and New Zealand - at the uttermost ends of the earth.

### **Napoleon and the land between empires**



The 'land between empires' continued to languish – until 1798, when Napoleon Bonaparte and the French invaded Egypt in order



to use it as a staging post en-route to India, with the object of ejecting the British from there.

In response the British Government despatched Admiral Nelson in pursuit of Napoleon. Then in 1799 Napoleon invaded the land of Israel (Turkish Palestine of the time). While there Napoleon seemingly called upon the Jewish people to return to their promised land – under French protection!

However, this did not come to pass because a combined Turkish-British force defeated the French forces and ultimately drove them out of the region.

Napoleon's incursion also excited the attention of the Bible-believing, or Evangelical, Christians, especially in Britain, many of whom believed that the Jewish people would be restored to the land of Israel prior to the second coming of Jesus. Some Jewish people were also now becoming awakened to the possibility of a national restoration.

This French incursion resulted in British strategists constantly observing events in the Middle East, determined to ensure that no rival European powers, especially France and Russia, would take any pre-eminent position in that region. During the following one hundred years numerous British strategists proposed the idea of Britain gaining control over Palestine in order to safeguard the route to India. Many of these strategists were influenced by the writings of the Holy Scriptures.

Almost every decade of the nineteenth century witnessed a conflict or incident which progressively drew Britain and the Jewish people into more active involvement in that region. Throughout these decades many British initiatives had some evangelical Christian association and some were even endorsed by the British Government.

Some British initiatives were:

- the establishment of the British consulate in Jerusalem, which was the first consulate there;
- the establishment of a British missionary society (today named CMJ),<sup>1</sup> which built Christ Church inside the Old City of Jerusalem, the first Protestant Church in the region;
- the establishment of a Protestant Bishopric, which was a joint venture with Prussia and had the enthusiastic consent of Queen Victoria. The first Anglican bishop in Jerusalem was a former rabbi named Michael Solomon Alexander, whose seat was at Christ Church;
- the establishment of the Palestine Exploration Fund, whose staff included, at one time, none other than Horatio Kitchener; and
- the increasing activities of the Jewish philanthropist Sir Moses Montefiore, whose involvement there furthered Jewish interest in the land of Israel.

Additionally the other European nations were also now increasing their activities in this strategic 'land between empires.'

## **The Suez Canal and Egypt**



No event in the 19th century troubled the British more than the French-inspired Suez Canal Project. Many British strategists opposed it, but when it was completed in 1869 they knew that Britain would then need to control it, in order to control the route to India.

In 1875 the British Government, led by Prime Minister Disraeli, gained financial control over the Suez Canal Company. This was followed in 1882 by the landing of British forces along the Suez Canal and then by gaining control over Egypt. Britain now

controlled the strategic west side of the Suez Canal and the route to India.

### **Jewish Zionism – and the new Cyrus nation**



Coinciding with these British strategic moves, the first wave of Jewish nationalists came to settle and cultivate the land of Israel in 1882. This movement began in the wake of terrible anti-Jewish violence, known as pogroms, in the Russian Empire. Baron Rothschild of France assisted these Jewish settlers in Palestine. The Jewish nationalist movement became more energised following the formation of the Zionist movement in 1897, initiated by Theodor Herzl.

But this Jewish nationalist movement needed a modern day Cyrus nation, a world power which could assist them in their endeavours. Initially the Zionist movement looked to Germany to be this Cyrus nation.

But this was not to be. From 1898 Germany was more intent on building a strong economic and geo-political relationship with the Ottoman Turkish Empire. This relationship was given full expression when the Turks allowed the German Emperor, Kaiser Wilhelm II, to ride with great pomp and ceremony into Jerusalem in October 1898.

The Germans could not form this relationship with Turkey **and** simultaneously support a Jewish restoration to the land of Israel.

The Jewish nationalist, or Zionist, movement then began looking towards Britain to be the Cyrus nation.

At that stage, however, Britain desired to maintain a good relationship with Turkey. Additionally, due to the rise of Germany, Britain was seeking to forge a strong relationship with Russia, and especially with France.

By 1913/1914 Britain's desire to be in good relations with France resulted in unofficial commitments being made to France that in the event of the fall of the Ottoman Turkish Empire, Britain would have no strategic interest in the region to the east of the Suez Canal, that is, Palestine. Some British strategists, however, were not in agreement with this position.

By mid 1914 the land of Israel was once again showing up on the geo-political radar screen.

### **Beginning of World War One**



Shortly before World War One began Turkey and Germany entered into a secret agreement. Britain was already prepared in case Turkey should openly join with the Central Powers of Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empires and she had forces stationed along the Suez Canal, and also ready to land in the Persian Gulf to secure the oilfields of that region.

When at the end of October 1914, Turkey did openly enter into the conflict, British and Indian troops landed in Mesopotamia to secure the oil fields and thus began a four year campaign there.

Shortly after the War began, a Jewish Parliamentarian, Herbert Samuel, spoke to Foreign Secretary Edward Grey about the future of Palestine and also put together an official Memorandum in which he focussed upon two matters: the geo-political benefits for Britain of having control over that strategic land; and the ambitions of the Jewish nationalists in that land.

The matter of British strategic and Jewish national aspirations for the future destiny of the land of Israel had now been brought to the fore in an official capacity – even though Prime Minister Asquith dismissed such considerations. Others though did not dismiss them.

In February 1915 Turkey's intentions in the Middle East became clear when they attempted to capture the Suez Canal. Although they were defeated, this attack, thereafter, focused British intentions upon how best to defend the Suez Canal against any future such Turkish attack.

### **The Dardanelles/Gallipoli Campaign**



In January 1915 the Russians issued a call to their Allies for help, as they were being defeated on the battlefield. To get supplies through to them the British and French planned for a naval breakthrough at the Dardanelles Straits, the strategic waterway which connects the Black Sea with the Mediterranean Sea, and also hoped to knock Turkey out of the War.

The campaign began with a naval assault in February 1915, but ultimately this assault had failed by mid March.

This campaign provided the Russians with the possibility to obtain what they had desired for years – control of the waterways between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, and thence into the wider world.

On the 4th March 1915 the Russian Government sent a Memorandum to the British and French Governments stating that in the event of their victory at the Dardanelles, these regions, including Constantinople would need to be handed over to Russia.<sup>2</sup>

In return the Russians indicated that Britain and France should determine what they would want in a future with a defeated and dismembered Ottoman Turkish Empire.

This for me is the tangible beginning point of the road which led to San Remo in April 1920.

The British Government then put together a committee headed by Maurice de Bunsen which was tasked with determining Britain's geo-political interests in the Eastern Mediterranean region – once the Turks had been defeated.

Following the failure of the naval attack, a land assault by the Allies was launched on 25th April 1915 with the landing of British, Anzac (that is, Australian and New Zealand) and French troops on the beaches of Gallipoli in the Dardanelles Peninsula. A small group of Jewish nationalists known as the Zion Mule Corps landed the following day.

### **The findings of the de Bunsen Committee**



As the fighting continued, in June 1915, the de Bunsen Committee presented its findings to the British Government. Within their report they stated that France coveted the region of Syria, including Palestine. Of this French demand, the Committee stated:

*"It would appear that Russia is ready to accede [agree] to the French claim to Cilicia and Syria proper, but will demur [object] strongly to the inclusion of Palestine."<sup>3</sup>*

The Committee suggested certain regions of future British and French interest in the 'former' Turkish Middle East, with Palestine located within the proposed British sphere. The Committee further stated:

*"They [the Committee] have felt free to deliberate on the assumption that the French claim will be rejected, since they are convinced that the forces opposed are too great for France ever to make that claim good, but for the same reason they consider that it will be idle for His Majesty's Government to claim the retention of Palestine in their sphere. Palestine must be recognized as a country*

*whose destiny must be the subject of special negotiations, in which both belligerents and neutrals are alike interested.”<sup>4</sup>*

The Committee basically recognized the dilemma associated with determining the future of Palestine: the French wanted it but the Russians did not want the French to have it. All this was connected with France historically being the protector of Roman Catholic interests in the Middle East, while Russia saw itself as the protector of Orthodox Christian interests in the Middle East.

The Committee recognized that the destiny of Palestine ‘must be the subject of special negotiations.’ Discussions then began in earnest with the French, in order to determine more specifically, the areas of interest for the British and the French.



Bunsen Committee, 1915

### **Enter Al-Faruqi, Emir Hussein and the Arab Nationalists**



By August 1915 there was still no breakthrough at Gallipoli. A new possibility was drastically needed. Then a Syrian Arab serving as a Turkish soldier at Gallipoli named Mohammad Al Faruqi deserted

to the British. He stated that many Arab officers were ready to rise against the Turks if the British were willing to endorse Arab nationalist aspirations. Seeking a solution to the stalemate at Gallipoli, the British hastily sent Al-Faruqi to Egypt. Discussions then intensified with the Arab nationalists, and particularly with Emir Hussein, the Sherif of Mecca in the Hejaz region of Arabia.<sup>5</sup>

Certain understandings were ultimately reached with Emir Hussein. But the implementation of these understandings was much dependent upon the Arab nationalists launching an uprising during the period of the Gallipoli campaign.

There would appear to be a certain ambiguity in the wording of the correspondence from the British representative, Sir Henry McMahon, to Hussein. This was understandable as the Arab nationalists, and Emir Hussein, were basically unknown entities, and Britain was also locked in formal discussions with the French. The British understanding was that the area of Palestine was not included in the area discussed regarding any possible future Arab national entity in the former Turkish Empire.

### **Defeat at Gallipoli and new beginnings in 1916**



Due to a number of factors, including the absence of an Arab uprising against the Turks, the Allies conceded defeat at Gallipoli at the end of 1915. Many of the British and Anzac forces then returned to Egypt. The Turks now planned another assault on the Suez Canal.

In response to this imminent threat the British then formed the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (or EEF), which was tasked to defend the Suez Canal. A major component of this force was the Anzac Mounted Division - mounted troops from Australia and New Zealand. Deeming offense as the best form of defense, this British-



Anzac force began to drive the Turks back across the Sinai during 1916.

The hoped for Arab uprising finally began in June 1916, not in Gallipoli or in Syria as originally intended, but in Arabia, and only occurred due to a considerable British investment of funds, and of key personnel, including Colonel T.E. Lawrence. In time the Arab movement was mostly associated with Emir Hussein's son Feisal and was to play a supporting role in the campaign to defeat the Turks.

That same year a final agreement with the French was reached which became known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement. This Agreement determined which regions of the former Turkish controlled Middle East the British and French would administer. The future of Palestine was still to be determined, but it would be administered by some form of international body, a scheme termed *internationalisation*. The final form of its administration would need to be determined following discussions with other parties, including Russia.

### El Arish and Lloyd George



At the end of 1916 the British-Anzac Egyptian Expeditionary Force had reached El Arish – signalling that the Sinai had been cleared of the Turks. Their task under the Asquith Government had been completed – the east bank of the Suez Canal was now protected from any Turkish assault.

Then, at that very juncture, there was a change in government; David Lloyd George became Prime Minister and Arthur Balfour became the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Lloyd George did not want the French to have any jurisdiction on the east side of the Suez Canal, especially over Palestine. He also

wanted a primarily British-led force to capture the Turkish province of Syria.

With this in mind he ordered the capture of Palestine (or southern Syria). This offensive began in January 1917, with Gaza as the first objective, followed by Jerusalem. However, in March and April 1917, the British-Anzac force suffered two major defeats at Gaza, and they had to regroup.

This involved appointing a new commander, General Edmund Allenby and adopting a new strategy. With intelligence sent by a Jewish espionage ring in Palestine known as *Nili*, a surprise attack was planned upon the Turkish-held inland town of Beersheba. That attack would take place on 31 October 1917.

### **The Jewish nationalists enter the equation**



By 1917 the political status of Palestine had yet to be determined, but with the gradual withdrawal of Russian involvement in the War from March 1917 onwards, France recognised an opportunity for gaining control there. In June 1917 they informed the Zionist representative Nahum Sokolow of their support *"in the renaissance of the Jewish nationality in that Land from which the people of Israel were exiled so many centuries ago."*<sup>6</sup>

But the Jewish nationalists recognised that their best chance of fulfilling their vision would be if the British-led force captured the land and sponsored such a restoration.

For Britain's geo-political plan to succeed - that at the end of the War they would control the east bank of the Suez Canal including Palestine, and thus further secure the route to India – then Britain needed to find an appropriate solution to the *internationalisation* scheme.

At this time the Zionist Organization, which was ably represented by Chaim Weizmann, was encouraged to submit a formal request to the British Government outlining their desire for a Jewish national home in Palestine – under British protection. That request came in the form of a letter from Lord Rothschild, on behalf of the Zionist Organization, to Foreign Secretary Balfour on 18th July 1917.

The British Government and Zionist Organisation now had the daunting task of gaining the support and agreement of the Allies, namely France, Russia and Italy, as well as the United States of America and the Vatican.

Finally, after considerable activity and discussion, a final decision pertaining to the Zionist request, for a Jewish national home in Palestine, was to be made at the British War Cabinet meeting scheduled for 31 October 1917 in London.

### **The first victory - Beersheba 31 October 1917**



Early on the morning of 31 October 1917 British infantry and Anzac and British horsemen began their surprise attack on Beersheba, the town associated with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Following earlier British and New Zealand successes, in the late afternoon some 600 plus Australian horsemen charged across the plain on the east side of Beersheba and managed to seize the town with most of the precious water-wells still intact.

These soldiers from Australia, New Zealand and Britain, had captured the town associated with the Patriarchs, to whom Almighty God had sworn an oath relating to the land of Israel.

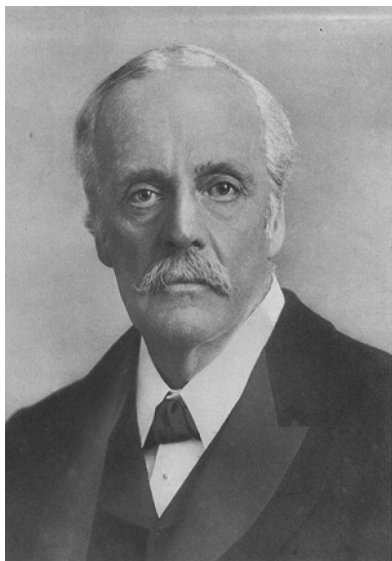
## The 'Balfour Declaration' finalised – 31 October 1917



During the afternoon of 31 October the British War Cabinet met in London and voted overwhelmingly for the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. Several days later this historic decision was communicated in a letter from Balfour to Lord Rothschild and became known as the Balfour Declaration.

Britain had indeed been marked out by Almighty God to be the Cyrus nation to bring the people of Israel back to the land of covenant promise. This decision was a major step in bringing this to pass.

But, as important as this decision was - this promise, this commitment - was still just a piece of paper. Until the entire land of Israel, even the entire province of Syria, had been captured from the Ottoman Turks, that promise would have no chance of being implemented.



Foreign Office,  
November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

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 has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet

"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 would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

*Y. in*  
*Arthur Balfour*

Sir Arthur Balfour. He issued the Balfour Declaration in 1917 on behalf of the cabinet.

## Jerusalem and Damascus



After Beersheba there were two more strategic objectives, Jerusalem and Damascus. Jerusalem because of its emotional and spiritual significance and Damascus because it was the capital of the province of Syria, and its capture would represent a significant military and political victory.

Jerusalem was captured on 9 December and two days later, on 11 December, General Allenby entered the former Biblical capital of Israel to participate in the official surrender ceremony, which took place on the steps of the Citadel or Tower of David. Part of this building had been left standing by the Romans in 70 AD as a testimony to their victory over the Jewish people. Immediately opposite the Citadel, and facing Allenby, was Christ Church – which represented those Christians who favoured the restoration of Israel.

Soldiers from Christian nations had captured the City of the Great King (Psalm 48: 2 ; Matthew 5:35).

The campaign to capture the remainder of the province of Syria began on 19 September 1918, when troops from Britain, Australia, New Zealand and India, as well as the Arab Northern Army led by Feisal and supported by T.E. Lawrence, began the final thrust. Smaller units such as the 'Jewish Legion' (the 38th and 39th Battalions Royal Fusiliers) were also involved.

Damascus was finally captured on 1 October 1918 by Australian horsemen. Feisal and Lawrence entered Damascus afterwards. The British authorities wanted Feisal's forces to be credited with the capture of the Syrian capital, the city associated with Saladin, the Muslim leader who had defeated the Crusaders.

Even so Damascus still was not the final goal – the British-led forces including the Arab Northern Army needed to capture the entire

province of Syria, right up to the border with Anatolian Turkey, before the Turks would surrender.

This was accomplished, mostly by the men of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force. An armistice with the Ottoman Turks went into effect on 31 October 1918.

The cost of defeating the Ottoman Turkish Empire was high. In the Mesopotamia, Gallipoli and Syria/Palestine Campaigns, some 88,150 mostly British, Indian, Australian and New Zealand soldiers were killed or died.<sup>7</sup> It was indeed a high price to pay.

### **Challenges after the end of hostilities**



But that victory now had to be turned into a political victory favourable for the British. This proved to be somewhat elusive. Britain was now faced with trying to reconcile war-time commitments and understandings with the French, the Jewish nationalists and the Arab nationalists.

France now wanted to make good on the conditions of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, whereas Britain and especially Lloyd George now saw that agreement as basically redundant in view of the final results on the battlefield. The Turks had been defeated mostly by soldiers from the British Empire, and very few French troops had been involved.

France was nevertheless determined to obtain its geo-political objectives especially in those parts of Greater Syria that were not being administered by the British. But in order to achieve this they came into conflict with the Arab nationalists and the followers of Feisal and Emir Hussein of the Hejaz.

The Conference to determine conditions to be imposed upon Germany after World War One began at Versailles near Paris in February 1919. It was during this period that the conflicting

ambitions of Britain and France in the Middle East came to the fore. Britain also sought for the United States of America to accept some responsibility, especially over Armenia and Constantinople. All decisions relating to terms to be imposed upon Turkey were deferred while the United States considered this possibility. Ultimately they decided against accepting any official involvement in the former Ottoman Turkish Empire.

During that interim period the environment continued to change in the Middle East. Turkish nationalists led by Mustapha Kemal grew in strength and were opposed to the loss of any territory from Anatolian Turkey, part of which was coveted by Greek nationalists.

As the Arab nationalists saw their ambitions in Syria being militarily thwarted by the French, they strengthened their efforts to obtain their goals in Palestine. There they were faced with the Jewish nationalist aspirations, which were officially supported by the British Government. But there were also many British officials, both in London and in Palestine, who opposed the concept of a Jewish national home in Palestine.

The environment in the Middle East by April 1920 was very different from the one left by the soldiers of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force following the Armistice with Turkey on 31 October 1918.

But despite this different environment, one factor remained unchanged: the Ottoman Turkish Empire had been defeated by the mostly British-led forces. By the basic rules of war, the Allies now had a right to determine the future governance of that defeated Empire.

The British Government had issued a promise to the Jewish people for a restoration to the land of Israel, the land of covenant promise. Such a promise had been reliant upon a military victory, which had been gained from Beersheba onwards. Whether or not

Britain would remain faithful to her initial promise would soon be determined.

### **The promise officially validated**



On 25 April 1920 at the Conference in San Remo delegates from Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Greece and Belgium (and representatives from the United States) offered a Mandate to Britain to administer Palestine. The Palestine Mandate included the Balfour Declaration. Britain was now formally charged with fulfilling their promise to establish a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. This Palestine Mandate was later incorporated into the official peace treaty with Turkey signed at Sevres in France in August 1920.<sup>8</sup> It was then officially endorsed and accepted by the British Government and the League of Nations – and became international law.

Despite ecclesiastical, political, military and ideological barriers of the highest order, the miracle of the physical restoration of Israel was actually going to happen. The covenant promise given by Almighty God to Abraham was being validated before the eyes of the entire world.



## End Notes



1 William Wilberforce and Lord Shaftesbury were both involved with this Society.

2 Telegram No 249, Sazanov to Ambassador Buchanan, 4 March 1915, and conveyed to Buchanan by Grey on 5 March 1915. National Archives CAB 21/1, 10 March 1915, No, 8.

3 De Bunsen Committee Report, CAB 42/1/12, located in De Bunsen Private Papers Collection, Middle East Centre, St. Anthony's College, De Bunsen GB 165-0078, p. 1.

4 De Bunsen Committee report, *ibid*, p. 26. v For further information on the Al-Faruqi affair, see Crombie, K. Gallipoli – The Road to Jerusalem, (Perth: 2014), pp. 361-371.

5 Foreign Minister Cambon to Nahum Sokolow, 4 June 1917, cited in Stein, L, *The Balfour Declaration*, (London, 1961), pp. 416-17.

6 *Statistics of the Military Effort of the British Empire during the Great War*, War Office, London, March 1922.

7 The Treaty of Sevres was later superseded by the Treaty of Lausanne of July 1923, with the new Republic of Turkey, but the Palestine Mandate was not altered.

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