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American Zionist Emergency Council, Chatham House Study,
1945.

**THE INTERESTS OF THE COMMONWEALTH
IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

**Three Papers
by a
Study Group of the Cairo Group
of Chatham House**

**Prepared by the
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**The Royal Institute of International Affairs
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PAPER 1.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MIDDLE EAST

I. Introduction.

The term Middle East is applied, conveniently rather than with accuracy, to an area of vital importance to the security of the British Commonwealth. Its importance is strategic and dates from the time when the "expansion of Europe" turned the whole world into the theatre of power politics. The area constitutes a land bridge between three continents. Possession of it by a predominant sea-power makes it possible to limit the scope of a military conqueror by confining the area of his conquests to a single continent, his own. Thus, for a military conqueror, possession of the Middle East is the key to world Power, for it opens the way to acquisitions of territory so vast that the advantages of sea-power would themselves be offset. The importance of the Middle East has been fully recognised by military leaders, by Napoleon and by the Germans in two wars. The two most important of modern would-be conquerors, Napoleon and Hitler, having been frustrated at sea and in the Middle East, exhausted their resources in a futile effort to break out by way of Russia. To the United Kingdom this area is of the very first importance and that fact has been recognised by all British Governments of modern times. In 1798, Napoleon attacked Egypt and the British Government reacted with the campaign which brought the victory of the Nile. Since then the protection of her interests in the Middle East has been a fundamental obligation on Britain's armed forces, second in importance only to the defence of the British Isles themselves. "No less than eleven times in the last 100 years were we involved in major international crises owing to complications in the Near East. Neither the Iberian nor the Italian Peninsulas, neither Germany nor the Hapsburg Monarchy have proved so inextricably interwoven with every imaginable issue of foreign policy as have the issues involved in the fate of Turkey and her former vassals", wrote Professor Seton Watson in 1937. Recent events have served only to emphasise the justice of the importance attached to the area. This importance is absolute and, it should be remembered, it is almost entirely strategic. There are other interests; oil, in particular, commerce, air routes, and a large number of British subjects, but, except perhaps for the first, they are of relatively minor importance.

II. Definition.

The Middle East is a term so loosely employed that it is not easy to visualize the area as a unit. Yet it is important to do so, for a unified policy is essential. Originally the whole area was part of the Ottoman Empire and as such was easily conceived of and necessarily dealt with as a whole by the Government of the United Kingdom. British interests have always been largely negative. Britain has no major concern with the area beyond the all important one of seeing that it did not fall into hands strong enough to employ its strategic advantages as a means of crippling Britain's world position. At first the pursuit of this end was a relatively simple matter. It involved a policy of supporting the weak Ottoman Empire of "bolstering up the Turk". The Ottoman Empire broke up piece by piece and in consequence, while British interests remained constant, her methods of securing them became increasingly haphazard and piece-meal. Today an innocent observer of the various channels through which British policy in the Middle East is administered might well conclude that there was no Middle East at all, and that e.g., Palestine, Egypt, Iraq, were widely separated Pacific Islands. In illustration of this we need look only to the inner core of the area: Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria and the Lebanon are the concern of the Foreign Office; the Sudan is administered (nominally in condominium with Egypt) on colonial lines by a body of officials who are recruited by the Foreign Office and are without responsibility to the Colonial Office; Palestine and Transjordan, on the other hand, with Cyprus and Aden, are directly Colonial Office areas; (although Palestine is a mandated territory) and War Office areas; while the affairs of the Persian Gulf are largely the concern of the Government of India. Thus the Middle East is for the Commonwealth a series of related strategic necessities which demand a close relationship with certain

States and territories. In consequence of these military arrangements, there arise political, cultural and economic considerations involving a wide area. The whole area in which British policy is thus directly conditioned by these initial military considerations may be regarded for purposes of this paper as the Middle East.

Some of the territories included in this area are important only for a single reason e.g., political and economic. Thus a map of the Middle East drawn by an economist might differ considerably from that of a strategist.

While the centre is the same in all cases the perimeter varies. Yet it is possible to make an accurate definition of the area from the point of view of Commonwealth military necessity. That necessity is, to-day, to deny to a possible rival Power the use of the land bridge between the three continents and the sea approaches to that bridge, as well as the Suez Canal. It is important to remember in this connection that a bridge can be crossed from two ends. The approaches from the South are just as important as those from the North and East. Consequently the total area which must be considered in relation to British policy in the Middle East is a large one. It can be divided into two categories (1) the core of inner ring of territories, the defence of which is considered a vital Commonwealth interest and (2) an outer ring of territories which must be considered because of their direct connection with some one or more aspects, strategic, political, economic or cultural, of the countries in the Inner Ring. In the first category are Syria and the Lebanon, Transjordan, Iraq, Palestine, Egypt, Cyrenaica, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and the Arabian peninsula, including Aden. The Outer Ring is made up of Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, Tripolitania, Eritrea, the Somalilands and Persia.

III. Present Position.

The Inner Ring of the Middle East, as thus defined, is a unity in so far as it is Arabic speaking. Britain has had three possible lines of policy in the Middle East since it became of such vital importance to her: (1) Conservation, i.e., "bolstering up the Turk", (2) Occupation, (3) the encouragement of friendly nation States in the area, strong enough to defend themselves, with help, but unlikely ever to become a serious danger. Of these policies, the first ceased to be practicable with the end of the Ottoman Empire, but had proved inadequate long before 1918 (c.f. the Occupation of Egypt). The second was never desired and never likely to be pursued as a policy. It would have been unpopular at home and there were none of the factors which have generally induced occupation, e.g., major economic interests. Thus, the actual moment of maximum occupation (1919) saw the adoption of the third policy. This third policy is in effect to encourage the development in the Arabic speaking countries of the idea of nationality, which had come to the Middle East from Europe during the second half of the 19th Century, and of the demand for the expression of that idea through the formation of Nation States, which had already led to the break up of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans and which, shortly after 1919, was to be adopted with conspicuous enthusiasm by the Turkish people themselves. This idea of Arab nationality has so far found expression in the setting up of a number of Arab States in varying states of independence. Intellectually, the origins of the movement may be traced to Beirut in the 1860's although the most important of the early political manifestations of the national spirit among Arabic speaking peoples occurred in Egypt before, and again some time after, the British occupation. But the creation of small and separated Arab states, while it certainly reflects the very real divisions and rivalries between the various groups of Arab-speaking peoples does not satisfy the full aspirations of the Arab peoples. The movement and the popular opinion which has arisen from it are not only local nationalist, they are also pan-Arab. Thus it is that there has arisen the present policy of H.M.G. which is to seek the creation of a united group of independent Arab States, joined together by political and other ties (which would express their sense of unity and joined collectively or severally with Britain for mutual assistance in the task of maintaining their territorial integrity.

So far the most developed aspect of this Anglo-Arab relationship is represented by the Treaties of Alliance which govern the relations between Britain and the two independent Arab States of Egypt and Iraq. It would seem that the logical fulfilment of such a policy would be the independence of the other Arab States e.g. the Lebanon, Syria-Palestine and eventually the Sudan and Cyrenaica, and the linking of one with the other and each and all with Great Britain along the lines initiated by the Anglo-Egyptian and Anglo-Iraqi treaties. There are, however, serious political difficulties in the way of the achievement of this ideal, for although it seems likely that such a scheme would overcome the mutual rivalries, like that between the royal houses of Saudi Arabia and Iraq, which stand in the way of the achievement of any unified Arab State, the two main problems which lie in the way of such a solution would have to be resolved. These are (1) the special position of France in relation to Syria and the Lebanon and (2) the problem of Jewish immigration and the world-wide agitation on the part of certain powerful interests for a special status for a Jewish colonisation of Palestine. It seems clear that the first of these problems is a matter to a very large extent of Anglo-French relationships. If British post-war policy once more envisages a close working agreement with France, and if the French attitude to mandated territories is modified to bring it into closer accord with the terms of the Atlantic Charter and of the mandated territories themselves, there is no reason why an Anglo-French Alliance should not be extended so as to constitute a joint Anglo-French godfatherhood of the Arab peoples. The other problem appears at the moment even less likely to be soluble for it is certain that a peaceful solution of the problems of the Middle East is impossible if the Great Powers attempt to set up a Jewish State in Palestine by force. But it does seem likely that the expectation that the problem will solve itself, given reasonable world conditions after the war, may be justified. There is no objection on the part of Arab Nationalists to a limited Jewish colonisation of Palestine or to the establishment and maintenance there of a cultural and spiritual home and there seems good reason to suppose that the consequences of a restoration of reasonable conditions in other parts of the world would be a substantial reimmigration of Jews from Palestine. In any case the solution of this problem lies in the domain of world affairs wider than those of the Middle East alone. But such a policy in the purely political sphere is not self-sufficient. The Middle East is not merely an area, which, for reasons of relative military and administrative strength, is dependent upon a great Power for protection. It is socially and politically a backward area which is increasingly conscious of, and dissatisfied with, its conditions. Standard of life are lower than among the peoples of the West. Arab nationalism has at times the appearance of a revolt against the West, but it is in itself a product of Western influences and a great part of the Arab people has a profound sense of inferiority of the standards of its social system and looks for guidance and help from the West while dreading political tutelage. This need cannot be ignored. The Middle East is a social and economic slum which the development of means of rapid transportation has brought too close to the doors of our society with its relatively high and vulnerable standards of life. Labour conditions in places in the Middle East, where industrialisation has begun, cannot fail to be of direct interest to the Commonwealth. The textile industry at Mehalla al Koubra, in Egypt, is the largest Middle Eastern industrial development to date. It employs 27,000 workers and its normal wage PT.7 (1/5d) a day was described recently as Egypt's greatest economic asset." Again, Egypt's experience with the Anopheles Gambia, a deadly malarial mosquito, brought by aircraft from the Western Coast of Africa, is ample indication of what more advanced countries will have in the future to expect from the health conditions which exist in the Middle East. That matters are unsatisfactory is evident. The need for their amelioration and the necessity for foreign assistance in securing this amelioration is generally recognised among educated Arab peoples, although their readiness to accept such assistance is conditioned by an understanding fear of political subjection. It is possible that the immediate political and military problems which face the Middle East and the Commonwealth jointly will prove capable of solution along the lines of current policy, but it is certain that the present policy of marginal control will not in the long run be adequate, for it is a policy of minimum interference, a policy based upon the belief that we can ensure the military and

political stability of the Middle East by cooperation in pursuit of this between the Arab peoples and the Commonwealth. This is believed to be possible because of the common interest of both parties in securing and maintaining this stability. Any form of participation by the Commonwealth in the internal life of the countries of the Middle East is, according to this view, to be discouraged as being a probable source of irritation to the Middle Eastern people. But the fact is that while they have a reasonable horror of political subjection, they are also fully aware that they need the assistance and intellectual leadership which only a great modern society can provide. It seems certain that, if they do not get it from the Commonwealth, they will seek it elsewhere. The peoples of the Middle East are seeking a way of life which, when it has been adapted to their own particular needs, will make possible the raising of their society to standards of life comparable to those of the West. In current jargon, they are seeking an ideology.

Perhaps the greatest weakness in our position in the Middle East is the entire absence of any relation between our foreign policy and the progressive social policy which has absorbed the greater part of British energies for the last 100 years.



PAPER 2GREAT BRITAIN AND THE MIDDLE EAST

A statement of the Problems.

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The purpose of Paper 1 was to establish the importance for the British Commonwealth, of the area generally known as the Middle East, to define that area, to emphasise that it should be regarded as a whole and to indicate something of its problems. Britain is in the Middle East chiefly for strategic reasons, and so long as the present organization of international society, based as it is upon power politics, continues to exist she will be vitally interested in the area. It is necessary to base our calculations upon the assumption that, whatever changes may come about in the organization of international society, the factors which are most important in a world of power politics will continue to hold their present over-riding position in the minds of national statesmen. Thus Britain and the Commonwealth will continue to be vitally interested in (1) the unrestricted use of the communications which pass through the Middle East in so far as they are a key to world communications in general and to those of the Commonwealth in particular, and (2) the strong position in world military operations which comes from the control of the area and the influence in international affairs which is the result of a hold on the Indian Ocean and the Eastern Mediterranean. There are also other interests, but except for oil, which is in itself little more than one stage removed from being a strategic consideration, they are of markedly secondary importance.

Thus British needs in the Middle East are: stability and public order in both peace and war, the denial of the use of the area to an enemy in time of war and its use for herself as a base in time of war, together, in time of peace, with bases from which she would be able to exercise the political influence which would arise from the existence of her military power in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. She needs access to certain resources, especially, in war to oil, and the power to deny such access to the enemy. Minor considerations are the importance of the area to the Muslim world to which many British subjects belong, and the freedom to trade and to exercise at all times the reasonable influence which her cultural activities in the area have given her. Finally, there are large numbers of British subjects and of British protected persons in the Middle East, and she needs to prevent discrimination against them, so long as there is a state of affairs in Middle Eastern countries which differs materially from that of the countries of Western Europe.

How could she achieve these ends of policy? There are a number of possibilities: (1) direct rule; (2) indirect rule by means of puppet states; (3) disintegrative alliances, i.e. by alliance with one or more local states or groups, which would most likely represent minorities so far as the whole Middle East was concerned, on the principle of Divide et impera; (4) by an alliance with the Majority Group of the Area, i.e. with the Arabs.

(1) This is unlikely to prove practicable for reasons which will be found to be elaborated in the succeeding paper. In 1918, after the overthrow of the Ottoman Empire, when British forces were in effective military occupation of most of the area, such a solution was immediately rejected. It is unlikely even to be considered today. There are other equally strong, if less immediate, considerations for rejecting such a policy. It would be a complete betrayal of the many promises made to the people of this area since the early days of the Arab revolt, if not since the original British occupation of Egypt, and would have as an immediate effect the complete destruction of our moral position in the Middle East. Further, it seems most unlikely that such a policy, even if the material means necessary for it could be found, would be even tolerable to British public opinion. (2) Comparable considerations to those above exist here. The example of German-occupied Europe has shown quite clearly, if any such demonstration were necessary, that Governments, which do not possess enough independence to be clearly more than mere puppets, are so quickly and completely deprived of all popular support that their existence becomes a positive menace to public order. (3) This is the classic policy which has usually been pursued by a Power, which has

found itself in a position comparable to that of Britain in the Middle East. Adoption of this policy would mean placing reliance upon a close association with the non-Arab peoples of the area and emphasising the differences between the Arabic-speaking group. Such a policy might, for example, seek to continue to treat Egypt and Iraq as individual nations states whose connection with their Arabic-speaking neighbours was sentimental rather than actual and to depend upon alliance with them and with Turkey and an expanded Jewish State in Palestine. This policy might commend itself to those who do not know the Middle East because of the continued existence of the tendency not to take the Arab seriously. In addition there still exists a deep rooted prejudice in favour of the Turk in spite of his unsatisfactory attitude during the latter part of the present war. He is generally believed to be the toughest and most reliable of Middle Eastern peoples and in addition there is a widespread feeling that he will have to be reliable in the future, so far as we are concerned, because of his fear of Russia. Similar judgments will probably be found to exist in relations to the Jews and here there is likely to be political pressure exercised in favour of a strong Jewish State from within the countries of the Commonwealth itself. Further, if France were to persist in continuing the policy which she has adopted towards the Levant states since the last war, she will be likely to be a willing collaborator in this policy, although the position of France in the Middle East must be considered as being necessarily an obstacle to the pursuit of policy of collaboration with the Arab peoples since, if she chose it would be equally easy for her to collaborate with us in such a policy and indeed most desirable that she should do so. (4) This is a policy based on the fact, to which attention was drawn in the first paper, that the core of Middle Eastern area is Arabic-speaking and that there is a great and growing desire for unity on the part of its peoples. With limitations, this is the policy which is now being pursued. It involves something analogous to the existing Anglo-Egyptian and Anglo-Iraqi Treaties modified so as to embrace the whole Arab centre of the Middle East. It is important that the degree of success obtained by the policy of which these treaties are an expression should not be lost sight of. It is not too much to say that it would not have been possible to have defended Egypt successfully against the Axis if the Egyptians had been hostile and in spite of the Rashid Ali episode, in 1941, the situation in Iraq during the present war has been surprisingly favourable to British interests. Considering the turbulent nature of many of the peoples of the Middle East and the historically extremely short period since the signature of the Treaties, it must be said that this policy has stood the test of war extremely well. There are of course several obstacles to the successful extension of this policy to the whole area, in particular, those obstacles are due to the fact that in some cases this policy has not been followed, e.g. Palestine. Their existence constitutes a sharp lesson in the necessity for treating the Middle East as a whole. Details of them will be found in the succeeding paper.

The chief argument for adopting this policy lies in the fact that Arab nationalism seeks not only the independence of a number of small Arab States, but also Arab unity. This desire for unity is steadily increasing and may at the moment be said to constitute the

No doubt with limitations, it is the present policy of the British Government to encourage and support this movement. Mr. Eden said as much in 1941 and 1943, and the present attempts to give expression to the desire for Arab unity, which have made remarkable progress, as was demonstrated by the results of the Alexandria Conference of 1944, may be said to have originated as a result of his speech of February 1943.

The problems of the Arabs arise chiefly from their relationship with the peoples and ideas of the West, a relationship which, since the beginning of modern times, has been one of undeniable, and increasingly conscious, weakness. The national movement is the expression of the Arab's awareness of the weakness and of his will to end it. Without some satisfaction of national feeling, there seems little hope of peace or progress, but behind the intense feeling aroused by the nationalist issue, there is a growing realisation of the greatness of the economic, social and cultural

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needs of the Middle East. Theoretically, it might be possible to satisfy these needs by imposition, i.e. by a policy of "Cromerism" with modern developments, along the lines of labour legislation, social service and, in particular, of more attention to education, than was given to Egypt under direct British rule. Such a policy, however, would mean direct control and this is impossible. At present, unsatisfied national feelings stand in the way of social progress. These feelings would be used by interested parties to prevent a foreign-imposed reform. This was in part what happened during the Egyptian national movement, in the years after the last war, and in the same way, the same interested parties are resisting attempts to bring about reforms through the existing governments, which in large measure they control. A satisfied Arab union would find its best man and energies increasingly directed towards reform. This is a field in which Britain too has expended her best energies for over a hundred years. Here she could both help the Middle East and provide a real moral basis for her interest and activities there. At best, it is a question of achieving a greater coherence between British social policy and conduct of foreign affairs. Britain's status in these countries will be much greater when her policy in them is more nearly a reflection of her true self.

The important question arises as to whether such a policy would lead to a conflict with the policies pursued in this area by any one, or more, of the other Great Powers. Primarily, this is a problem of the relations of the Great Powers throughout the whole field of international affairs. Certainly such conflicts have in the past been disastrous in their effects upon the peoples of the Middle East. A discussion on the probable relationships of Great Powers is entirely outside the scope of this paper. All that can be attempted here is to indicate briefly the nature and importance of Great Power interests in the area. The trade of the United States with the Middle East is very small indeed and amounts in a normal year to a turnover of less than a half of 1% of that with the average Middle Western city. The two important American interests in the area, except for her cultural and educational activities, which are not likely to be affected adversely by a policy of Arab unity, are a share in Arabian oil and the use of air bases on the World air routes. Soviet policy has always been to encourage the growth of local nationalism, although the Soviets have taken little active part in the Middle East until very recently. Now their stock is naturally high, they have appointed diplomatic representatives to the Middle Eastern States and are once more taking an interest in the fate of the Orthodox Church, but there is no sign that they are conscious of a major interest in the Middle East in any respect except that of Iranian oil. The most likely field of Great Power conflicts in the Middle East lies in the sphere of Anglo-French relations in which there is a long history of conflict. At present French policy in relation to the Levant States and to the wider question of Arab unity does not coincide with that of Britain. It is difficult to assess the precise reasons for the continuing French interest in the Middle East. Commercially, France's connection with the Levant States is not important. Militarily, it would seem to be even less so, if it is not, as in 1940, an unprofitable commitment. Perhaps the answer is to be found rather in the field of sentiment and tradition. The problems of the Levant States are discussed fully in the succeeding paper.

PAPER 3

GREAT BRITAIN AND THE ARAB WORLD

PART 1 - THE ARAB WORLD

The Middle East

The vague term "the Middle East" is used to indicate a group of countries lying around the Eastern end of the Mediterranean and the north-western rim of the Indian Ocean. It has no exact extension; but it may, although in some cases illogically, include Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Transjordan, Iraq, Persia, the Persian Gulf Protectorates, the Aden colony and Protectorate, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Cyrenaica, the Sudan and Eritrea, and perhaps Greece and Tripoli as well.

With reservations, it may be said that this area is a single strategic unit, in the sense that the conquest or defense of any part of it has peculiarly close relations with that of the rest (this however is less true of the outlying regions than of those which form the "core" of the Middle East). It is a strategic unit of peculiar importance, as the meeting-place of great land-masses and the connecting link between seas. To control the Middle East is a necessity for any Power which wants to extend its influence from one continent or sea to another; to join forces with another Power whose centre of influence lies in another continent or sea; to control the trade or communications between continents and seas; or to prevent some other Power doing any of those things. This importance it has retained and probably will retain whatever changes take place in the distribution of world-power. It is natural nowadays to think of the Middle East from the point of view of the Mediterranean, and as a pawn in the struggles of the Western States; it would be equally valuable however were the centre of power to shift from the Atlantic and Mediterranean to the Indian and Pacific Oceans or from Europe to Africa. There have indeed been periods when the Middle Eastern countries or at least some of them faced southwards and eastwards rather than westwards.

The history of these countries has alternated between periods when they were the battle ground of great military Powers, and others when they were absorbed into world-empires founded by such Powers. It would perhaps be truer to say that these two conditions have usually existed side by side; at almost all periods an Imperial Power seated in the Middle East has been forced to defend its hold against some other Power on the fringes or from beyond the limits of the region. The Middle East has known the armies and the rule of Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Persia, Macedonia, Rome, Parthia, Byzantium, the Arabs and the Turks; today Great Britain is the heir of all that grandeur.

The habit of dividing history into periods may obscure genuine continuity which has existed between those Empires. Each has inherited something from its predecessors: administrative system, social organization, the splendour of the courts, the allegiance of the subject. It is even not fantastic to regard them as successive phases of that world-Empire, above nations and languages, claiming kinship with the Gods, demanding the obedience of the whole world, whose roots stretch back unnumbered ages to unrecorded time, and which may be called the natural political structure of the Middle East.

Of the successive embodiments of this Imperial idea, all except the Roman and the British have had their centre of gravity in the Middle East itself. This fact may be forgotten today; when we are accustomed to regard the Middle East as a semi-colonial area in which outside Powers compete. For many generations it was a centre of political power in the Western world. Even in Roman days its power of attraction was strong enough to shift the whole balance of the Empire eastwards. It is only in the last century or so, with the growth of modern industry, that it has lost its power, and must see its fate decided from far beyond itself.

It is in the last century too that its importance as a bridge has obscured its value as a goal. Once it had economic as well as political power;

its grain, its crafts, the intelligence and skill of its inhabitants made the strength of the Empire which followed one another within it. Comparatively it is less important now in the world's economy than once it was, but it still possesses an economic asset which draws the eyes of the Powers upon it: it is one of the great oil-producing areas of the world.

The succession of world-empires and the constant movement of goods and empires throughout the Middle East have given it a political and social unity which is deeper than appears on the surface today; there are subtle connections between the political ideas, social organization and economy of Greece, Asia Minor, Persia, the Fertile Crescent and Egypt. It was never of course an undifferentiated unity. The local genius and self-consciousness of any region in the Middle East is too strong to be submerged in uniformity. Each Empire at its height has achieved a more or less precarious balance between order and diversity and between the desires and needs of the different regions. Whenever that balance has been overturned there has been an insurgence of local self-consciousness, often linked with religious feeling. Today the form which local feeling takes is nationalism, evoked, by the failure of the Western Powers to achieve a balance between their interest and the aspirations of the Middle Eastern populations.

Underlying the political and social unity there was a deeper intellectual and spiritual unity. The Greek, Egyptian, Sumerian and Persian spirits blended with one another and with the various manifestations of the Semitic genius - Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic - to produce the religions and cultures which have fertilized the whole Western world. Civilization comes from the Middle East; it was transmitted by Rome to Europe and is now being handed on by Europe to the outer world.

This unity of culture and the spirit was never complete. The Middle East contained a series of interrelated and overlapping civilizations rather than a single civilization. Unresolved conflicts existed even at times of the greatest harmony. Persia and Arabia, Greek and Semite, Christianity and Islam. But on a general view what meets the eye is unity and diversity. This is as true as ever today, when the coming of Western civilization has given rise to a new unity.

The Arab World

Certain parts of the Middle East have a further unity. They are "Arab countries". What may be called the "Eastern Arab World" consists of Egypt, the Sudan, Cyrenaica, Palestine, Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and the State of the Arabian peninsula. (There is also a "Western Arab World", including Tripoli, Tunis, Algeria and French and Spanish Morocco. Although it cannot, either in practice or for purposes of analysis, be wholly separated from the Eastern Arab world with which it has so much in common, it will not be dealt with in this paper. When the phrase "The Arab world" is used here, it is to refer to the Eastern countries only).

The Arab countries have special characteristics of their own and in addition possess a special relationship to Great Britain. To explain that relationship is the main purpose of the present essay; but first it must be asked, what are the characteristics these countries have in common, and in virtue of which they are said to form "the Arab World"? It is customary for popular writers on the subject to overemphasize their diversity, and to refer to their "bewildering confusion" of races, religions and peoples. This is a fiction, invented and propagated by Englishmen, Frenchmen and Zionists; they excuse their own failure to impose on the Arab world the sort of order they want by claiming that it is too chaotic to be receptive of any order at all. In reality the Arab world possesses a very clear unity resting on a number of bases:

1) The Arabic language. This is the primary and obvious principle of definition for the Arab world, which might better be called the "Arabic-speaking world". The principal tongue of all these countries is some dialect or other of Arabic. The dialects vary considerably but are all derived from the same source, the classical language which is still the written medium of the whole Arab world. There is a single Arabic literature, and the modern books and periodicals produced in Cairo are read in all Arab countries. There are rather more than 40 million people in the whole area. Arabic is the native language of all of them except 4 or 5 millions. About 1 million in Syria and Iraq speak Kurdish, half a million in Palestine speak Hebrew, two or three million negroes in the Southern Sudan speak various negro dialects, and a small number, mainly in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon, speak Armenian, Turkish and Persian. Bi-lingualism is very common however and among the linguistic minorities Arabic is widely used as a second language.

(11) A large proportion of the inhabitants of Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Trans-jordan and Iraq, and a smaller proportion of those of Egypt, the Sudan and Cyrenaica, have the same racial origin as those of the Arabian peninsula. They can trace their origin to the movement of tribes, either before or after the coming of Islam, from the Arabian peninsula. Whatever their racial stock, the traditions and customs of almost all the inhabitants of the Arab countries have been deeply influenced by the way of life of the Arabian desert. Their imagination too has been largely moulded by the "myths" of the desert and of the early Islamic centuries. "The Arabs", it has been said, "are a people clustered around a historical memory". This applies less however to certain regions than to others: Egypt and Lebanon for example have historical traditions, of their own, different from and in the case of Lebanon running counter to the main Arab tradition.

(111) Most Arabs are Moslems by religion. Indeed Islam has a special relationship to the Arab people. Its revelation was given to an Arab, its Holy Book is written in Arabic. The history of the Arabs is so intimately bound up with that of Islam that most people would regard Islam as entering into the definition of what an Arab is. For the last thirteen hundred years it has served both to unite the Arabs among themselves and to join them to a larger world of which they form a part. It has also given them their systems of law and formal ethics.

Islam is divided within itself however. In addition to the 30-35 million Sunni (orthodox) Moslems in the Arab world, there are 3-5 million Shi'i Moslems, part of them in Iraq and most of the rest, belonging to a rather different type of Shi'ism, in Yemen. There are also half - 1 million adherents of various other Islamic or semi-Islamic sects, mainly in Syria and Lebanon.

Moslems thus form the vast majority of the inhabitants of the Arab countries. There are also, however, about ~~two~~ two million Christians, most of them Arabic-speaking and belonging to the Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox and various Eastern churches. About a million of them, the Copts, are to be found in Egypt, while the remainder live mainly in Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Transjordan and Iraq; the largest concentration of them is in Northern Lebanon, where they possess a local majority. In addition, there are three-quarters of a million Jews, about one-third of them Arabic speaking Jews long settled in various Arab countries, the remainder recent Zionist immigrants into Palestine. Finally a large proportion of the Negro inhabitants of the southern Sudan are Pagans.

Economic Structure of the Arab World

What we have called "the Arab world" falls into a number of regions differing greatly in nature and possibilities. The following is a convenient rough division:

(1) Western Arabia: Hejaz (the western half of Saudi Arabia) and Yemen. A region of hills and villages sloping down to the Red Sea.

(11) Central Arabia: Nejd (the eastern half of Saudi Arabia). In parts sandy desert, in others barren steppes interspersed with oases.

(111) The Fertile Crescent, a semi-circle of cultivated land running round the northern rim of the Syrian Desert, the northern continuation of the Central Arabian Steppe. It falls into two sections: Iraq, the plain of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, and geographical Syria, (Palestine, Transjordan, Syria and Lebanon). Plain and plateaux in the east, and in the west the hills and mountains of the Mediterranean coast.

(1v) The Nile Valley (Egypt and Sudan), a cultivable strip irrigated by the river and surrounded on each side by sandy desert; widening at the north into the Delta, at the south into swamps.

(v) The fringes: Cyrenaica, Southern Arabia, the Persian Gulf. Strips of cultivable land along the coast, backed by deserts.

Of the 40 - 45 million inhabitants of the Arab world, over 20 million, or roughly half, dwell in the Nile Valley, about 10 in the Fertile Crescent, and the remainder in the other regions.

The population has been growing constantly in the last century, but faster in some countries than in others. In Egypt it has increased by several hundred percent, thanks largely to the increase in agricultural production; in the Sudan and the Fertile Crescent it has grown considerably but less spectacularly, in Palestine the growth has been most marked in the last twenty-five years, due both to Jewish immigration and to natural increase. In most parts of the Arabian peninsula the population has probably remained more or less stationary; in Cyrenaica thirty years of Italian rule have caused it to decline. Today the general trend is still upwards; already in Egypt there is a serious problem of over-population.

Arab history has always been filled with the movements of peoples. Inside the area there has been a constant flow of population from Central and Southern Arabia northwards into the Fertile Crescent and across the Red Sea into the Nile Valley. This continues today. There have also in the past been immigrations from north, west and east; in the present age the only important ones have been the coming of European Jews to Palestine. Of emigration to the outer world, there are two important streams today; one leads from geographical Syria to America and other parts of the New World, the other from Southern Arabia to the East Indies.

The first division of the population is into nomads and settled folk. The Syrian Desert, most of the interior of Arabia, almost all of Egypt except the Nile Valley, and much of Cyrenaica and the Sudan are stony and sandy wastes where settled agriculture is impossible, but a meagre living can be made by pasturage of camels and horses. The pastoral life is nomadic, its wanderings following the change of seasons. The unit of its social life is the tribe, whose affairs are regulated by tribal custom and which never willingly submits to civil government. Today, however, the aeroplane and motor car are making it possible to control the nomads, and the shrinking of the demand for camels is destroying the economic basis of their life. Probably, however, nomadism will not wholly die out, since it is the only way of utilising steppe regions of sparse vegetation.

The vicissitudes of nomadic life are continually driving tribes towards the fringes of the desert, the river-valleys and areas watered by rainfall, where agriculture is possible. By gradual stages they become first semi-nomadic, pasturing sheep instead of camels; then semi-sedentary, pursuing agriculture and pasturage side by side; and finally wholly sedentary peasants, mingling with the already existing settled population.

The main agricultural regions are the Nile Valley, producing cotton as well as grain and vegetables, the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates and the plains of geographical Syria, which are mainly grain-growing areas. All, those and other areas were intensively cultivated in the past with the help of irrigation works, but in the course of time the works decayed and the standard of cultivation declined practically to subsistence level. Today almost the only areas which are cultivated to a high degree of intensity are the Nile Valley and the coastal plain of Palestine, where citrus fruits are grown.

In Egypt and the Fertile Crescent the greater part of the cultivable land is owned by large landowners, either as absolute property or in perpetual usufruct, ; their relations with their tenants vary greatly but such tenures as metayage are common. Almost everywhere the peasants are heavily in debt to moneylenders, since facilities for agricultural credit are inadequate, and often the landowner himself is the moneylender. Moneylending indeed is one of the ways by which great estates have been built up; others have been secured by manipulation of the machinery of land registration or by grants from the ruler; and in many parts of the Fertile Crescent the landlord is the tribal chief who acquired the characteristics of landowner while retaining those of chief even after his tribe became sedentary.

There are also, however, other forms of land-tenure. In the less advanced regions different forms of collective ownership by the village or tribe still exist; in Lebanon, Egypt and elsewhere individual small holdings exist and are becoming more common; in every region there are large areas constituted as waqf or endowments, for religious or charitable purposes or else for the benefit of the founder's family. In Palestine a great part of the arable land is owned by the Jewish National Fund and cultivated by villages organized on a collective system.

Some of the products of agriculture are worked up into finished articles inside the Arab world itself. Everywhere there exist crafts, sometimes preserving their mediaval guild-organization and supplying clothes and other manufactured goods to the peasantry and nomads. Once these crafts exported their surplus, but Western competition has destroyed most of their external and part of their internal market. The Arab countries are not yet intensively industrialized; they lack many raw materials such as coal and iron and are still deficient in technicians and skilled labour. The only two areas in which industrial production is considerable are Egypt with its numerous textile and other factories, and Palestine which possesses a number of large concerns. At first the Egyptian factories were all foreign-owned, but in recent years a large number of Egyptian-owned companies have been established, largely financed by the Misr Bank. The Palestinian concerns are mainly financed by American and European Jewish capital. In Egypt, too, European and American investments are considerable.

In the absence of modern industry, most manufactured goods have to be imported; particularly all forms of machinery and the better quality textiles. Before the war the main sources of imports were Great Britain, the United States, Japan and Germany. Imports were mainly paid for with raw materials and foodstuffs: for example, cotton from Egypt, citrus from Palestine, dates from Iraq. There is another export which is more important on a general view than all the rest - oil. The oil wells of northern Iraq are exploited by an international company in which British, French, Dutch and American oil companies participate; the oil is brought to the Mediterranean by a pipe-line whose two branches reach the sea at Haifa and Tripoli. The concessions for the oil of Bahrein, Kuwait and the Persian Gulf region of Saudi Arabia have been given to American companies; they are now beginning to be fully used. Oil deposits exist also in Hejaz, Egypt, Syria and perhaps elsewhere. It is certain that the importance of the oil production of the Arab countries will increase greatly in the next decades.

Trade within the Arab world and between it and other countries has been made easier in the last generation by the establishment of stable currencies. Egypt, the Sudan, Palestine, Transjordan, and Iraq have currencies based on sterling; Syria and Lebanon, less fortunate, have a franc-exchange currency which has shared in all the fluctuations of the franc. Trade has also been stimulated by the improvement of communications. Except in Egypt the railway system is not highly developed, but in many regions improved roads are being built and the use of the automobile now extends almost everywhere: a factor of particular importance is the opening of the Syrian and Arabian deserts to motor-transport. Modern ports have been built in recent years, particularly those of Alexandria, Haifa and Basra; in normal times there are frequent maritime services to all parts of the world. The Suez Canal of course has become a vital link in the communications between Europe and the Far East, although it plays no great part in the economy of the Arab countries. In the last few years, too, airports have been built and air-routes both internal and external opened up.

The improvement in communications has had social consequences no less vast than the economic. The traditional Arab society was a group of closed communities; among the nomads the tribe; in the countryside the family, the village and the district; among the urban population, the quarter, the trade guild and the town. Among the religious minorities a further focus of loyalty existed; the sect, organized and possessing unchallenged and formally recognized jurisdiction over its members in matters of personal status. It was from these social entities that the basic political forms and ideas were derived: the supremacy of tribal or local custom; the prevalence of local dynasties; the toleration of diversity; the connection between government and religion; and the idea of the world - state, holding together the diverse units but not materially interfering in their lives.

These closed societies are opening under the impact of new forces, perhaps the most important of which are better communications. The horizons of men's lives and imaginations are no longer limited to a village; the habit of travel and the growth of urban communities are destroying the economic basis of the rural family; education and urban life are rendering impossible the exclusiveness of religious sects. New classes, the bourgeoisie, the small holders, the urban workers - are slowly becoming conscious of themselves and preparing to challenge the social power of the landowners. New political ideas are emerging: that of the nation as the natural unit of organization and loyalty; ideas of positive law, of uniformity and the secular state.

The transformation seems likely to affect in the long run every region of the Arab world and every stratum of society; so far, however, it has not affected all of them evenly. The towns have been much more fully Westernized than the countryside; even inside the towns there is a vast gap between the working-class and the educated half Westernized bourgeoisie who are now the backbone of political and cultural movements. There is also a great difference in level between the different Arab regions. The most fully Westernized places and those which have the highest standard of living are the large towns of Egypt, Palestine and Lebanon. The towns of Syria and Iraq and the smaller towns of the regions above mentioned are rather less advanced but nevertheless well on the way of Westernisation. Those of Arabian peninsula are scarcely touched by Western influences. The only country-districts with a free, enlightened and comparatively prosperous peasantry are to be found in Lebanon, and among the Jewish settlements in Palestine. In all other regions the peasants are still ignorant, diseased and unchanging; but in some parts their material condition is tolerable. The lowest level in every way is to be found in the crowded misery of the Egyptian villages and the marshes of lower Iraq.

PART 11

THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRITISH POLICY

The Ottoman Empire

When Great Britain came into contact with the Arab world for the first time in the modern era, the more civilized parts of it were ruled by the Ottoman Sultan; Egypt, the Fertile Crescent, Libya and Hejza were provinces of the Empire, and other parts of the peninsula were tributary to it. It was an Empire in which every form of diversity existed; it was just prevented from falling into chaos by the Ottoman Army, the habit of obedience to the Sultan and the sense of Islamic solidarity. Within this framework of unity local feeling and rivalries flourished; the Pashas of provinces, and the feudal dynasties warred with each other and built up virtually autonomous but precarious kingdoms; some regions such as Egypt were in practice independent under their ruling castes. There was the eternal conflict of the desert and the towns, with the desert on the whole in the ascendant, and a corresponding division of spheres between the official Sharia law and tribal custom. There was a further gap between the Semitic countryside and the commercial towns with their mixture of races. Finally, there was the chasm between the dominant Sunni community, for whom the State primarily existed, and the closed Christian, Jewish and heterodox Moslem communities, each carrying on its own life outside the State and part of from the rest. Torn by these inner divisions, wasted by strife and the tax together, its creative force long since dormant, the Arab world was mortally sick.

From its beginning the Ottoman Empire was in contact with Western Europe, but the nature of this contact changed in the course of time. From the 15th to the 17th centuries the Empire was aggressive and a menace to the Western States; but from the beginning of the 18th century it grew ever weaker. Its frontiers were gradually pushed back to Austria and Russia and it would not resist the growth of European influence within its domains. This influence grew by the use of the discontented Christian populations of European and Asiatic Turkey. Certain of the Powers gradually developed claims, more or less baseless, to protect Christian communities: France and Austria the Catholic, Russia the Greek Orthodox. Great Britain made no such claims and until the 19th century had no great political influence in the Empire; but in another sphere she possessed considerable interests. The trade of Europe with the Middle East had declined since the sea route to the Far East was discovered and the Portuguese destroyed the Arab trading system in the Indian Ocean; nevertheless the Levant routes still kept some of their importance, both for transit and for the exchange of goods with the Ottoman countries themselves. Colonies of Western merchants grew up in the great towns, with a special internal regime guaranteed by the capitulations. At first French and Italian merchants had the largest share of the trade, but from the 17th century onwards the English Levant Company became increasingly active, and with the growth of the British Empire in India the Syrian Desert and Red Sea routes acquired a new importance for the transport of persons, posts and goods.

The Nineteenth Century

Throughout the period of Napoleon's invasion of Egypt to the outbreak of the First World War the decay of the Empire continued. Its internal organization fell to pieces, and its frontiers shrank; its European provinces became independent States, North Africa was lost to France, Cyprus to Great Britain, Libya to Italy and Egypt to the virtually autonomous dynasty of Mohammed Ali. At the same time, revolutionary forces were at work in every aspect of life. The Ottoman countries for the first time came into contact with Western civilization. The products of Western industry entered their markets, changing their economic structure and way of life. Western mission schools and traders, and travel or residence, in the West brought in new ideas and knowledge in every sphere, and not least in the political. Moreover, the interference of the Western Powers grew in scope and force. Throughout the century, there was a struggle for supremacy in Stamboul; French influence was replaced by British, which itself declined in the later decades in favour of German. The struggle was no less acute in Egypt, where Anglo-French rivalry entered a new phase with the British occupation of 1882. In geographical Syria also the divisions of religious communities gave an opportunity for the Powers to pursue their rivalries in new ways. The rivalry of England and France was largely responsible for the conflict of Druzes and Maronites in Lebanon, which ended in the Civil war of 1860 and the establishment of an autonomous Lebanon, predominantly Christian in population and spirit, under international guarantees. Behind all this sparring for position was the thought that the Empire was falling to pieces, and the desire of the various powers either (as with Great Britain) to postpone or if possible prevent the collapse or (as with Russia) to seize the lion's share when it should take place.

The growth of British commercial interests continued in this century. Trade with the Arab countries was helped by the improvement of public order and communications, and the transit-trade was enormously increased by the opening of the Suez Canal. Great Britain began to acquire direct political interests too. Her commerce, her position as a Mediterranean Power and her Indian Empire were alike threatened by Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, which showed her the danger of allowing any strong Power to secure control of the Middle East. From that time she endeavored to secure a paramount influence in Stamboul; this she succeeded in doing in the days of Stratford Canning, and through her help to the Sultan in thwarting the attempt of Mohammed Ali to conquer the Empire. Later she lost something of her influence over the Sultan, but made up for it by the extension of a more direct control over parts of the Arab world. After the occupation of 1882 Egypt was virtually ruled by the British Consul General, although the appearance of self-government was retained; during this period, and particularly while Cromer was Consul-General, vast works were carried

out with the purpose of raising the standard of living. As a natural consequence of the occupation of Egypt, the Sudan was conquered in 1898, and a mainly British administration installed under the form of an Anglo-Egyptian condominium. From the Eastern side, the Government of India extended its protection over the principalities of the Persian Gulf and over Aden and its surroundings and became virtually the paramount power in much of the Arabian peninsula.

The Arab world did not remain wholly passive to the incursions of the West. They stirred it into activity, and the 19th century saw the rise of new movements of thought and life. Already in the previous century the Arabian peninsula had thrown up Wahabism, a reversion to the fervour of early Islam, but with the spread of Western education and ideas a more complex revival of intellectual and moral life began. Naturally it showed itself first on the countries of the Mediterranean fringe, and was centred in Cairo and Beirut. It had various aspects: the revival of the Arabic language and literature, the reception of Western culture, the attempt to give new life to Islam and reconcile it with modern civilization. In the political sphere, the resurgence of life passed through various stages. It began with the effort of the Egyptian and Ottoman rulers to reform the system of government, an effort which found expression both in formal enactments and in their unobtrusive but more effective reconstruction of the systems of law, administration and land-tenure. There followed various attempts to find a new form and focus for political self-consciousness: first the Pan-Islamism of Abdul Hamid and Jemal Pasha, then the liberalism of the Young Turks, finally and less ephemerally nationalism - Egyptian and Arab - which first showed itself as a movement of revolt against foreign rule but was in reality something more profound and an attempt to reconstruct the whole of society on a new basis.

The First World War

When the war of 1914 broke out, Great Britain was deeply involved in the Arab world, and inevitably in contact with the vital forces at work in it: the declining Ottoman authority; the incipient national movements; the rulers of the Arabian peninsula, particularly the Sharif Husein in Hejaz and the rising Wahabi power of Ibn Saud in Central Arabia; French colonialism, which had already made Syria a centre of influence, and planned to make it part of the French Empire; and Zionism, which aimed at creating an internationally guaranteed Jewish national home in Palestine, and had already led to the establishment of a considerable Jewish settlement there.

The needs of war compelled Great Britain to formulate a coherent policy in regard to all these forces. The years during and immediately after the war saw a serious effort of thought about the future of Great Britain in the Arab World. The system of ideas it produced may be summarised as follows: (i) Alliance with the Arab nationalist movement for the purpose of defeating and destroying the Ottoman Empire. (ii) Establishment in the Arab regions thus liberated of independent Arab governments in alliance with and under the tutelage of Great Britain. (iii) Reliance on the Sharif Husein and his sons for both these purposes. (iv) Restriction of this policy in practice to Hejaz and part of the Fertile Crescent. In the rest of the Arabian peninsula, Great Britain's existing relations with the various rulers should be maintained similarly those parts of geographical Syria in which France claimed special interests should be excluded from the area of independent Arab rule.

These ideas were formally embodied in the Husein-MacMahon letters (1915-16); but they only had an incomplete effect on British policy. Great Britain, being a world-power, had to take into consideration not only her need for good relations with the Arabs but also all the other sources mentioned above. To each of them some concession was made, which rendered impossible the fulfilment of the promise of Arab independence contained in the Husein-MacMahon letters:-

(i) The Sykes-Picot agreement (1916) made a concession to French ambitions. It divided the Fertile Crescent into a sphere of direct French rule (the Syrian coast); one of direct British rule (Southern Iraq); an international sphere (Palestine); and two spheres of Arab rule in the interior, one under French and the other under British influence.

(ii) The Indian Government wished to control Iraq or at least the southern portion of it: partly as an advanced defence-post for India, partly as a possible region of Indian immigration. (The importance of the Iraqi oil-wells was only

was only realized after the war, and then served as an additional argument in favour of direct rule). For this reason practically no direct contact was established with nationalism in Iraq during the war.

(111) There was a powerful pro-Zionist group inside the Government. In 1917 the Balfour Declaration was issued, binding H.M.G. to look with favour on the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine, without prejudice to the rights of the existing population.

(1v) The British Government was unwilling to encourage nationalism up to a point where it might endanger Great Britain's position in Egypt. Egyptian nationalism had grown in opposition to British rule, which had indeed been imposed after the defeat of the first Egyptian national movement. Thus British support of the national movement could not but be cautious and conditional.

These considerations made it impossible to follow a consistent policy. For the most part British policy was wholly opportunist. It is true that the Arab revolt took place and helped in the conquest of geographical Syria; but Arab help was neither asked for nor given in the conquest of Iraq; and when the war was over, the shape which was given to the Arab world was far distant from that for which the nationalists had been encouraged to hope:-

(1) Only in the Hejaz, the most backward of the Arab provinces which had belonged to the Ottoman Empire, was Arab independence recognized immediately and without conditions. The others were placed under Western Control in the newly invented form of the "mandates".

(11) The Fertile Crescent was separated from the peninsula, and again the eastern half of it (Iraq) from the western (geographical Syria).

(111) Geographical Syria was divided into a northern zone under a French mandate and a southern under British.

(1v) Each of these zones was then sub-divided. In the French zone, the autonomous provinces of Lebanon, whose mainly Christian population was traditionally loyal to France, were enlarged to include other territories not mainly Christian in population and created into a separate State with a facade of self-government but under strict control. In the interior the provisional government of Hussein's third son, Feisal, who had been installed after the conquest of Syria and had been accepted by the majority of the inhabitants of geographical Syria as their King, was expelled; and the region was organized, after a number of experiments, into autonomous governments of Jebel Druze and the Alawis (two regions where particularist feeling based on religion existed) and a rump State of Syria, all of them also under strict French control.

(v) The British mandated area was subdivided into Palestine and Transjordan. In the former an administration of ordinary colonial type was organized; the Mandate required Great Britain to facilitate the immigration and settlement of Jews, while safeguarding the rights of the existing inhabitants. The latter after a short period of chaos was made into an Amirate under Abdullah, Feisal's brother, with an indigenous administration under British supervision.

(vi) Iraq was first governed by a military administration on Indian lines; the result was the serious revolt of 1920. After this it was created into a kingdom, with Feisal as King, and self-governing institutions. The Mandate was supplemented by a Treaty defining the extent and methods of British control and it was anticipated that sooner or later another Treaty would be signed bringing the Mandate to an end. British supervision was effected through a network of "advisers", whose work was coordinated by the High Commissioner. The concession for the oil of northern Iraq was given to the Iraq Petroleum Company.

(vll) No concession was made to Egyptian national feeling during the war. In 1914 Ottoman suzerainty was formally ended and Egypt declared a British protectorate. Throughout the war Egypt accumulated a large number of grievances on questions both of principle and of detail. When the war ended and particularly when Egypt was refused a hearing at the Peace Conference, nationalist agitation came to a head. It was organized in the Wafd and led by Saad Zaghlul; after three restless years, some concessions were made to it by the declaration of Egyptian independence (1922), although with the reservation of certain disputed points. The Sultan (so-called since 1914) was declared King, and a more or less democratic constitution drawn up.

It may be noted that at the same time as the Arab world was enduring this settlement, so contrary to its wishes, Turkey was successfully resisting the attempt to impose a similar settlement upon her. Out of the struggle there emerged Mustafa Kemal's new nationalist Turkey, independent and iconoclast, which could not fail to have a deep effect upon the neighboring countries whose fate had been linked with hers through so many centuries.

The Mistakes of British Policy

The last war and the peace settlement had so profound an effect upon the Arab world, and so altered the whole spirit of their movement and in particular their attitude to Great Britain, that it is worth while to inquire what were the mistakes of British policy which helped to change such trust and cooperation as had existed between Great Britain and the Arab nationalists during the Arab revolt into the bitterness and suspicion of later years.

(1) There was no adequate machinery for forming a policy, no proper coordination between the different departments which were concerned with the Arab countries, no central responsibility for decision. The conceptions of the Foreign Office, the War Office, the Cairo Residency and the Government of India differed greatly and each carried on its own policy with at most an imperfect agreement with the rest.

(II) Allied with this defect of organization there went a defect of temperament. An attempt was made to please everybody up to a certain point, to promise each party what it wanted, in the hope that either the conflicting demands would somehow in the end be reconciled, or everybody would be satisfied with a fraction of what had been promised. There was a refusal to choose between alternatives or to face the consequences of one's actions: that subtle defeatism which the British call "muddling through".

(III) There was another characteristic defect of temperament - amateurishness, the reliance upon improvisation, uncontrolled by profound knowledge and systematic thought.

(IV) There was a failure to understand the spirit and vitality of the Arab movement. It is the common failing of a Great Power, accustomed to "play" with political forces, to forget that those forces have a life and tendency of their own. The British Government tended to take a proprietary view of the Arab movement, to believe that they had created it, and that once created it would remain under control as regards its extension, its programme and its direction. This view was peculiarly dangerous because the whole British conception of the Arab movement was faulty. There was no understanding that unity was as essential an aim of the movement as independence; that Arab nationalism was necessarily Pan-Arabism; that the nationalist idea if kindled in one region would sooner or later spread to others; and that the discontent and restlessness of one region would have repercussions upon all the rest. More fundamental still, very few of those responsible for forming policy understood that the coming of Western civilization was completely overturning the inner balance of forces in the Arab world. A new Arab society was coming into existence: power had passed from the desert to the sown lands, from the peninsula to the Mediterranean coasts, and from the countryside to the educated classes of the towns. No alliance with the Arabs could be successful unless it was an alliance with the new forces and satisfied their aspirations for the future of their nation.

The Years between the Wars

The two decades of peace were a period of rapid and fundamental change in the Arab countries, particularly in Egypt and the Fertile Crescent. Trade with the West increased in Egypt the Misr companies, and in Palestine various Jewish concerns laid the foundations of modern industries; the standard of living in the towns and even in certain country districts gradually rose, and almost everywhere the population grew. Communications were improved and a new economic factor was introduced with the exploitation of the oil fields in northern Iraq and along the coast of the Persian Gulf.

Economic change brought social change in its train. The towns grew, and with them the specifically urban classes; all classes to some degree submitted more or less willingly to a Westernisation of their way of life, of which the most important and surprising aspect was the emancipation of women, (not yet effective however in many parts). The improvement in communications and the spread of Western education tended to break up the immemorial community based on family, district and sect: and in place of sectarianism and localism there gradually emerged a "social consciousness", a sense of responsibility for the material and moral welfare of the whole community.

Everywhere there was an enormous expansion of schools - government, missionary and private. Something was done to supply the two necessities; universal elementary education and a highly cultivated elite. The higher institutions in Cairo and Beirut came nearer to European standards, and there was a constant flow of students to Europe and the United States. For the first time in centuries an Arabic reading public existed, and the result was a great increase in the publication of books and periodicals, mainly in Cairo. Much of this writing was ephemeral and superficial but running through it was a streak of seriousness, an attempt at a profounder understanding of Western civilisation and of the relationship between the Arabs and the west.

In the political sphere the dominant factor continued to be the growth of Egyptian and Arab nationalism, but it was a nationalism of a different character. From the experience of the war and the peace settlement it acquired a new colouring of bitterness against Great Britain and France, who had prevented the Arabs from obtaining independence and had erected artificial barriers - frontiers, dynasties, different systems of law, currency and administration - in the way of their unity. It was a nationalism too which was clearer than before about its aims: for example there was a growing consciousness that independence was not an end but only a beginning, and that vast internal problems must be faced once political responsibility had been secured. Again the movement for unity of the countries of Arab Asia, and for close alliance if not union between them and Egypt, grew continuously: it was encouraged especially by the Arab opposition to Zionism in Palestine, which acted as a focus of national endeavour. Above all, nationalism began to become explicitly more than a political movement and to face the deeper problems of the Arab revival: what should be the bases of the reconstruction of the Arab community? What should be borrowed from Western liberalism, secularism, socialism and authoritarianism? How far should the precepts of laws of Islam continue to guide the organization of society? More generally, what should be the relationship between the national movement and religion? Behind all these lay the greatest problem of all: What should be the relationship of the Arab nation to the Western world on the one hand, to its own past on the other? Should it draw nothing from its past except the inspiration of its example, and look for its principles to the West trying to become an integral part, although always a distinct part of the Western community? And if so to what extent and in what sense could it continue to be Moslem and Arab? Should it build itself up in opposition to the West, going for the principles of its inner life to its own Arab and Islamic tradition and borrowing from the West only material strength with which the better to fight it? Or should it try to blend the two civilizations together into something new?

There had been a period when the national movement, alike in Egypt and in the other Arab countries, had inclined wholeheartedly towards the West and had wanted nothing more than to build a liberal democratic nation like France or Great Britain; the experiences of the first World War however made it hesitate, and wonder

whether the way of the West was the right one. The experiences of the years between the wars strengthened these doubts. Several of the Arab countries had to pass through a period of great stress before their relations with the Western Powers were normalised, while others are still passing through it.

(1) Egypt For more than a decade after the declaration of independence Anglo-Egyptian relations continued to be strained. The Wafd demanded from Great Britain the negotiation of a Treaty recognizing the unconditional independence of Egypt, terminating the military occupation and settling the four reserved points: the Suez Canal, the Sudan, foreign interests and the minorities. On several occasions discussions took place but always inconclusively. There was a third party involved, the King, whose interest was to maintain and strengthen his own power; Egyptian politics in those years was a three-cornered game, in which every combination of forces was tried at one time or another. Finally in 1936 an Anglo-Egyptian Treaty was signed: Egypt was to enter the League of Nations and the military occupation was to end; but Great Britain was to continue to make use of certain strategic points, and in time of war was entitled to ask for Egypt's help. This solved the external problem at least temporarily: but the question of relations between King and Wafd continued and was further complicated by the gradual disintegration of the Wafd. Behind these immediate issues lay the deeper problem of poverty and the social order, which no one had yet dared to face.

(11) Iraq. After the accession of Feisal and the signature of the first Anglo-Iraqi Treaty, the history of Iraq was outwardly one of political and administrative progress, until in 1930 an Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of alliance was signed: Great Britain was to be allowed the use of two air-bases, and was to recommend to the League of Nations the termination of the Mandate. In 1932 Iraq was admitted to membership of the League of Nations. Under the surface however there existed factors which prevented the unity and stability of the new State. First of all there was the deep split between the Sunnis and Shi'is; the latter, although the largest united community in the country, possessed only a minor share in the Government. There again there was the problem of the large Kurdish minority and the small but difficult Assyrian community. There were deep chasms between town and country, peasant and landowner, one tribe and another, the old and the young generation, the north and the south. The whole of Iraq society was a influx; the only unifying factor was Arab nationalism, but this did not yet extend beyond the towns and even increased the turmoil, since the troubles of Syria, Palestine and other Arab countries found a speedy echo in Baghdad. After the end of the Mandate and particularly after the death of Feisal these factors came to a head and expressed themselves in numerous disturbances, of which the Assyrian incident of 1933 was the most sensational. To maintain their position successive Governments came to rely more and more upon the Army, which gradually came to dominate the Government and from 1936 was the real ruler of Iraq.

(111) Syria The life of Syria was dominated throughout these twenty years by the struggle to be rid of the French Mandate. The nationalists, including practically all the Sunni Arabs and some of the Christians and heterodox Moslems, never recognized the Mandate which had been imposed upon them. Equally they refused to recognize the partition of Greater Syria into British and French spheres and the subdivision of the French sphere; they were opposed to the creation of autonomous Druze and Alawi regions and to the enlargement although not necessarily the existence of autonomous Lebanon. They criticized also the way in which the Mandate was carried out: the corruption and inefficiency, the failure to train administrators and rulers and the encouragement of separation among the minorities. To these grievances were added economic discontents: the fluctuation of the currency and the dislocation caused by the partition of geographical Syria. A large part of the minorities, although not opposed to foreign protection in principle, shared in these particular grievances: there were no wholehearted supporters of the French except some of the Kurds, Alawis and Catholics. Discontent came to a head in the Syrian Revolt of 1925 and a succession of later disturbances. In 1936 the French Government changed its attitude and negotiated a Franco-Syrian Treaty similar to the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty; among other things, the two autonomous districts were incorporated in Syria. The French Chamber however failed to ratify the Treaty; this failure, together with the cession of Alexandretta - an essential part of Syria - to Turkey in 1939 finally destroyed all possibility of Franco-Syrian agreement.

(lv) Lebanon. In Lebanon the Maronites (and also the other Uniates) welcome French rule, on account of their traditional connection with France; although with the enlargement of Lebanon in 1920 they had lost their majority and formed scarcely a third of the population, French support gave them an artificial predominance. They were not all contented however with the way in which the Mandate was administered and particularly with the strict French control behind the constitutional forms introduced in 1926. At the other extreme were a large section of the Moslems, who had been incorporated in Lebanon in 1920 and formed almost a half of its population; they wished to destroy the independence of Greater Lebanon. Between them lay a middle group, mainly composed of heretodox Moslems and non-Catholic Christians, who wanted Lebanon, in its larger or its smaller form, to be a part of the Arab world but a special part with its own character and autonomy: a centre of Western civilization, religious toleration and lay nationalism for the Arab people.

In 1936, a Franco-Lebanese Treaty was negotiated, in most way similar to that between Syria and France but conceding to France the right to use Lebanon for military purposes without limitation of time or place. It too was not ratified by the French Chamber.

(v) Palestine In Palestine the all-absorbing political problem was the attempt of the British Government to carry out the Balfour Declaration. The country was opened to Jewish immigration, in regard to which and other subjects the Government worked in close relations with the Jewish Agency, a body with an official status accorded to it by the Mandate. Some limits were imposed upon immigration in the light of economic circumstances, but it remained at a high level throughout the whole twenty years, particularly after the rise of Hitler. By 1939 the Jews numbered about half a million out of a total population of about one and a half million. An attempt was made by the various Zionist organizations to settle the immigrants on the land bought from Arabs, who were to a large extent absentee landowners. A strong Jewish agrarian community was built up with various forms of organization from the privately owned citrus plantations of the coast to the communal villages. The majority of the immigrants however remained urban, concentrated, Haifa and the new, wholly Jewish town of Tel Aviv. They created a number of new industries and an active cultural life expressing itself in the revived Hebrew language. The internal affairs of the community were regulated by a national assembly in which a number of parties, based on different religious and political principles and class interests, struggled for supremacy. The dominant political and economic force was the Histadruth, the trade union organization.

Internally divided as it was, the whole community was held together with by the desire to keep open the doors of Palestine for the persecuted Jews of Europe. There were it is true groups which wanted no more than a cultural and religious centre for the Jews, of which aimed only at parity in numbers with the Arabs and the formation of a bi-national state. The majority however believe, and as the years passed expressed their belief with ever greater explicitness, that immigration and the purchase of land should be permitted by the mandatory power without limit until the Jews should possess a majority, when the Mandate should come to an end with the establishment of a Jewish State covering the whole of Palestine, or, as the extremists, urged, Palestine and Transjordan.

To all such demands the whole Arab community, alike its Moslem majority and its Christian minority, presented an unwavering opposition. Although by no means static and becoming increasingly alive to the importance of introducing Western economic methods and Western education, they realized that they could not for the time face the competition, they realized that they could not face the competition of European Jews possessing unlimited capital and backed by the Mandatory Power; they were therefore faced with the danger of being dominated by Jewish industry and commerce even before the Jews became a majority. When they did become a majority a further danger would arise, of the Arabs becoming a minority in a State in which the ruling element was a people wholly alien to them in mentality. Moreover these economic and political dangers would not be confined to the Arabs of Palestine but might extend also in one form or another to all the surrounding countries.

Arab opposition was not based only in the probable evil effects of Zionism, but also on grounds of principle. They could see no reason for giving a country to a nation whose effective connection with it had ceased two thousand years ago, and turning its indigenous inhabitants into, at best, a tolerated minority. They could not but be humiliated and angered by the way in which their country and their own future were disposed of without their consent being asked. They regarded themselves as having been cheated by Great Britain who, they held, had promised them independence in the Macmahon-Husein correspondence. Above all, whether or not Zionist immigration led to a Jewish State it would certainly prevent the incorporation of Palestine into a larger Arab unity, and so cut them off from the rest of the nations of which they formed an integral part. For all these reasons they demanded the immediate cessation of Jewish immigration and land-purchase; it might be more accurate to say that they took their stand on the principle that immigration and land purchase should not take place without the consent of the original inhabitants of the country; this would involve the cessation of immigration and land-purchase in the short run, but not necessarily forever if the Jews could satisfy the original inhabitants that their coming was not to be feared. They also demanded, both as a right and as a necessary guarantee for the execution of this policy, the establishment of a national government possessing as great a degree of autonomy as the other Arab governments. There were some no doubt who hoped that when this government was set up they would be able to rid themselves of the Jews who had already settled in the country; but the more reasonable nationalists would have been prepared to give the existing Jewish community not only formal guarantees but a fair share in the government, autonomy in internal affairs and scrupulously equal treatment in economic and other matters. They would also have conceded without question any military or economic demands which Great Britain made upon them.

As the years passed and the Jewish community grew, the Arabs pressed these demands ever more urgently and desperately. Finally they broke into revolt in 1936. The disturbances lasted some intervals until the outbreak of war, in spite of the Government's attempts to repress them, and were actively encouraged and assisted by the Arabs of the surrounding countries. They impelled the British Government to try to find a solution of the problem. It had previously made half-hearted attempts to this end, but had never pursued a consistent line of policy for long. In 1937 a Royal Commission sent out to inquire into the causes of the disturbances, produced a report recommending the participation of Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab State, each in treaty relations with Great Britain, and a British enclave around Jerusalem with a corridor to the sea. The plan was rejected on principle by the Arabs and some of the Jews; although other Jews would have been willing to accept it if its details were modified. It was later shelved. At the beginning of 1939 Anglo-Zionist and Anglo-Arab conferences were held in London to discuss the possibility of an agreed solution. They failed, and in May 1939 the British Government published its own unilateral suggestions for a settlement in a White Paper. Its three parts dealt respectively with immigration, land purchase and the establishment of self-government. In the next five years 75000 more immigrants were to be allowed, bringing the Jewish population up to about one-third of the total; no further immigration would then be allowed without the consent of the Arabs. The country was to be divided into an area where land-purchase would be freely allowed, another where it would be absolutely forbidden and a third where it would be permitted on conditions. Finally, once the disturbances were over steps would be taken designed to lead to the establishment at the end of the years of a national government in treaty relations with Great Britain.

This plan was rejected by all sections of Jewish opinion; the Arabs agreed with much of it in principle but desired the modification and clarification of its details and had no longer any confidence in the British Government's intention to put it into practice. Most of them would now be willing to accept it as a whole. It has remained the official basis of British policy since it was issued. Immigration has been limited: by the end of 1944 the quota had practically been filled. In 1940 regulations were issued in regard to the purchase of land. Nothing however has yet been done to prepare for the establishment of self-government.

(v) Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom which Ibn Saud had built up in Central Arabia was gradually extended until it included the greater part of the peninsula. In 1925 the long standing hostility between Ibn Saud and King Husein of the Hejaz came to a head. Husein was driven out and Hejaz and Nejd were united to form the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The absolute monarch followed a policy of maintaining law and order firmly, settling the nomads on the land where possible and cautiously introducing whatever appeared useful in Western technique. The basis of his foreign policy was his alliance with Great Britain, concluded in 1927, recognizing his complete independence and defining his relations with Great Britain and certain Arabian territories under British protection.

(vi) Of Transjordan there is nothing to record except the gradual construction of an indigenous government under unobtrusive British control. The problem of relations between Bedouin and settled folk, always acute in a region on the edge of the desert, was solved by tact and the creation of the Arab Legion. The relations of the Amirate to Great Britain was regulated by the Treaty of 1927, the system of government by an organic law.

VII) The Sudan continued under the concinium. After the murder of the Governor-General, Sir Lee Stack, in 1924 the Egyptian share in administration practically ceased. The Government remained almost entirely British in the upper ranks, although in the provinces the system of "native administration", "indirect rule", was used. The southern negro half continued to be very primitive and in need of direct control, but in the northern Arab provinces considerable progress was made both in education and in local government.

(IX) Yemen remained independent and aloof under its Imam, holding off all attempts at penetration by Western Powers and in the event shutting out all Western civilization. In 1934 the Imam went to war with Ibn Saud, was defeated and received a generous settlement.

(X) As for the rest of the Arabian peninsula, Aden was proclaimed a colony in 1937, and its surrounding protectorate was extended to include the Sultanates of Hadramaut. The principalities of the Persian Gulf remained under the political influence of the Government of India, but economically the dominant influence was that of the American oil companies which secured the concessions for the oil of Bahrain and Kuwait.

(xi) In Cyrenaica as in Tripolitania, Italian influence was extended from the coast into the interior in the 1920's. The open resistance of the Senussi Arabs was stamped out, and Arabs were dispossessed from the fertile lands to make room for Italian settlers. The Arabs had and could expect no share whatever in the government.

British Policy Between the Wars

What were the main lines of British policy during these years?

(1) Officially the main line of her policy was to encourage the efforts of the Arab peoples to construct their own political institutions and rule themselves, and in some cases actively help in the process. Her aim was to establish a friendly, equal and close association with free Arab States.

(11) In practice she was diverted from this general line of policy by other considerations: (a) In Egypt and the Persian Gulf and to a lesser extent in Iraq strategic considerations made it necessary for her to impose limitations upon Arab independence, in fact if not in name. (b) In Syria and Lebanon, her need for good relations with France impelled her to acquiesce in France's overthrow of Syrian independence and her subsequent refusal to accede to the demands of the nationalists. (c) In one region, Palestine, her pledged support for Zionism led her into direct opposition to the aspirations of the Arab inhabitants.

The ever-growing distrust of the Arabs for Great Britain, is proof enough that her policy failed. What are the reasons for its failure? It must be considered as only a single example of the general failure of Great Britain in the world during the period between the wars and this can be traced back to the maladies of her spirit:

(a) Her fundamental defect was that she had nothing to offer the world. Regions within her Empire, and States linked to her, could expect from her nothing more attractive to the imagination and satisfying to their deeper needs than good order and sanitation. Everywhere she fell under the imputation of maintaining her position by allying with vested interests, and so came to be regarded as an obstacle in the way of beneficial change. She carried to its limit that quality of opportunist flexibility, which many Englishmen regard as the virtue of their policy though in reality is its greatest weakness. Nor did her example any longer bewitch the outer world. Throughout the 19th century British wealth and tranquility had fascinated other nations and set them searching for the "secret" of British greatness which, if only they could find it, would make them as strong, rich and respected; but by the end of the first decade of the present century their Anglomania had almost disappeared. Nowhere were these defects more apparent than in the Arab World. On every level, the Arabs could claim, often with truth and always plausibly, that Great Britain had created or was helping to maintain every obstacle to their advance.

(b) There was no attempt to understand the problems of the Arab world and to think out a coherent policy. Insofar as policy was more than hand-to-mouth opportunism, and was influenced by ideas, it was the system of ideas worked out during the last war which still dominated the official mind. But the Arab world was moving so rapidly that a continuous process of thought was necessary if it was to keep pace with the changes in its subject-matter. Few of those in authority in England were thinking continuously about the Arabs. Few noticed that a new Arab nation was coming into existence, very different from the old; that a complete change in the balance of social power, between regions and between classes, was taking place, causing a temporary social instability which was at the root of the prevalent political instability. There was a general failure to grasp the real significance of the Arab national movement in its positive aspect, or to realise fully the unity of feeling which was bringing together the different parts of Arab Asia. All these changes were bound to have a decisive effect upon Great Britain's position in the Middle East; yet there was no centre where they could be adequately studied, practically no trained sociologists or philosophers who were making them the main object of their thought; and even if such had existed, no way of persuading those in authority to pay attention to their discoveries.

(c) There was a profound moral complacency, an assumption that Great Britain had a claim on the "loyalty" of the Arabs no matter how she treated them in return. It was also assumed that she had a claim on their gratitude for the help she had given them during and after the first World War. Even if gratitude, by itself or backed by fear, was a sufficient basis for Anglo-Arab relations, it would still have been too much to expect the Arabs to be grateful for their treatment after the last war. An Englishman, having direct knowledge of his own good intentions, which he believes to have been fully manifested in Iraq and elsewhere, excuses himself for those few cases, such as Syria and Palestine, in which circumstances did not allow him to be benevolent; but an Arab having to deduce British intentions from what he sees of British policy, takes precisely those few cases to indicate the general attitude, and finds even a sinister explanation for those other cases where Great Britain really had acted well.

Apart from these general defects which were common to British policy all over the world, there were certain others which were peculiar to her Arab policy.

(d) There was no unified policy for the Arab world as a whole. This was because it was not fully understood that there was a single Arab world; after a time the artificial political frontiers erected at the last peace-settlement came to appear natural. Another and perhaps more important reason was that there was no machinery for formulating a unified policy. Except at Cabinet level, there was no authority responsible for the Arab countries as a whole. Palestine was in the hands of the Colonial Office which administered it as one among a large number of colonial territories, without fully understanding that it was part of a larger whole; the Persian Gulf and part of the peninsula were the concern of the Government of India; the other countries were a Foreign Office responsibility, the Service departments also were vitally interested.

(e) The quality of the British officials dealing with the Arab world was not as good as it should have been. The officials of the Colonial Office and Foreign Office too rarely had deep first hand knowledge of the countries for which they were responsible; often they were not even interested except in the routine work and the day to day problems. Of the officials in the Middle East some were first-class as specialists and filled their posts admirably, but very few brought to their work a general view of the Arab world to give them direction and incentive in their task. There were many reasons for this: no adequate facilities existed for training officials, except in the Consular and Sudan Political Services, which produced perhaps the best type of all; there was no Middle Eastern Service, and officials might be posted to an Arab country from quite another part of the world to be removed once more when they were just beginning to learn their work. More important than all these reasons however was another: it is exceedingly difficult for an Englishman at the present time to establish a satisfactory moral relationship with Arabs, to see and understand them as human beings.

The Second World War

When the Second World War broke out the majority of thinking Arabs found themselves unable to take up a clear-cut attitude towards it. In the first war they had helped the Allies and the result had been French rule in Syria and Zionism in Palestine. If another Allied victory would mean the continuation of these evils, they could not be expected to view it with enthusiasm. Even those who from a general view of the interests of the world desired the victory of the United Nations could not work for it wholeheartedly, in the absence of any Allied statement about the future of the Arab countries. The prevalent opinion was that the Arabs had nothing to hope from the victory of either side, and must therefore remain neutral at heart and, so far as possible, in act as well.

This desire for neutrality however conflicted both with a natural reluctance to remain on the margin of the great events of the day and with a desire to use the war as a means of fulfilling the aspirations of the Arabs. The tension engendered by this conflict led to an instability of political life which affected almost all the Arab countries. It made it impossible for them in practice to remain wholly neutral, and caused them in certain cases to lean, but never wholeheartedly, to one side or the other.

On the other hand, they gave very considerable help to the United Nations in a number of ways. The Arab Legion from Transjordan took part in the campaigns and might, had things turned out differently, have played with honour a larger part; the Sudan Defense Force helped in the conquest of Italian East Africa and in the North African campaign, Ibn Saud throughout the war did not waver in his support of Great Britain, and acted as a tranquillising influence. The United Nations were able to use whatever harbors, airfields and communications they wanted in the Arab world without hindrances from the Arabs, and to impose vast measures of economic control with the assistance of the Arab Governments. In Egypt, which was not, it is true, much affected by the general Arab grievances but in which grievances of its own had given rise to a similar state of mind, the Government effectively responded to all the requests made to it under the terms of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty; it should not be forgotten that in the weeks of Alamein the British lines of communication were never threatened by unrest or sabotage, at a moment when the Egyptians could, had they wanted, have used Great Britain's emergency for their own advantage.

In the Fertile Crescent the situation was more complicated. It was here that the grievances of Zionism and French rule were felt most directly and in consequence the tendency towards the enemies of Great Britain and France was the strongest. The surprising thing is that it was only in one country of the Fertile Crescent, Iraq, and only for a short period that this tendency expressed itself in action. In Palestine the Arab revolt came to an end once war broke out, and throughout the war the Arabs remained quieter than Great Britain had any right to expect. Even in Iraq, the Government on more than one occasion offered its army for use in North Africa in return for some assurance about the future of Syria and Palestine.

The rejection of this offer left the field free to the forces which were combining to bring Iraq into the war on the side of the Axis; those who believed that Germany was going to win, those who had confidence in her promises, certain of the Palestinian exiles and those (fewer than was later alleged) who had taken German money. The end to which these forces were working was an Iraqi declaration of war upon Great Britain, which should be a blow for the freedom of Syria and Palestine no less than for the complete independence of Iraq itself. The declaration of war took place in 1941. The quick defeat of Iraq's army was followed by a temporary collapse of Iraqi self-confidence; for the remainder of the war it was ruled by the group of politicians who had always been staunch friends of the British alliance. In 1943 they brought the country into the war on the side of the United Nations.

From 1941 the immediate attention of the Arabs of the Fertile Crescent and to a great extent of those beyond it was focussed upon Syria and Lebanon. The whole situation in these countries was altered by the collapse of France and the disappearance of French prestige, and then the Allied occupation of 1941. After 1941 two problems were intertwined with one another. First was that of Franco-Arab relations. At the time of the occupation, France promised Syria and Lebanon independence, and some months later formally declared their independence; these declarations were endorsed by Great Britain. The French however delayed giving practical effect to their promises; it was not until 1943 that elections were held and representative governments took office, and even then they were not at first given powers sufficient for their tasks. Secondly there was the problem of Anglo-French relations. By the Lyttleton-de Gaulle agreement of 1941 Great Britain recognized France's privileged and preeminent position among European nations in Syria and Lebanon subject to the grant of independence. Nevertheless the presence of a British military force together with a civil government under French control gave rise to friction and suspicion. The connection between these problems sprang from two facts: the first that Great Britain had underwritten the declarations of independence, the second that if Syria and Lebanon were independent they would draw nearer to the other Arab countries and so fall into the British sphere of influence; they had not enough common interests with France to prevent this. Thus French reluctance to grant the States real independence was due to the belief that this would mean the loss of all France's position in the Levant; and British insistence on the necessity of allowing real self-government seemed to the French a breach of the Lyttleton-de Gaulle agreement.

These conflicts came to a head in Lebanon, where they were mixed up with internal problems: the struggle of the Maronites to retain their predominance in a State in which they were no longer a majority, and the logically distinct although connected conflict between those believed in Lebanese independence and those who wished to see Lebanon absorbed sooner or later into a Syrian or Arab State. The immediate result of the Lebanese crisis of November 1943 was the agreement of December, under which France agreed to transfer administrative powers to the two Governments. This was done during 1944, and the position of the Governments was further strengthened by the recognition of their independence by the United States and the U.S.S.R. But at the end of 1944 certain problems still remained. First the local armed forces had not yet been transferred to the Syrian and Lebanese Governments. Secondly the inclusion of the two States in the sterling bloc affected in 1941 came to an end after the financial agreement of February 1944 and this might cause financial dislocation in the future. Thirdly and most important, the French insisted that the Mandate could only formally be brought to an end by the signature of treaties on the Anglo-Iraqi model, while the two Governments refused to enter into negotiations for such treaties.

The Lebanese crisis aroused great interest throughout the Arab world, including Egypt. It stimulated the growing movement for Arab unity, which had already been encouraged by statements of sympathy from British spokesmen.

In September 1944, after preliminary conversation, a preparatory conference met in Alexandria, to prepare for a full conference to be held later. It was attended by representatives of the Governments of Egypt, Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Yemen and a representative of the Arab parties in Palestine. It resulted in the signature of a momentous Protocol, establishing a League of Commonwealth of Arab States. It would have a Council on which the States would be represented on an equal footing, and which would supervise the execution of agreements made between the States, organize periodical meetings, deal with matters of common interest and mediate in disputes. The Council's decisions would be applicable to those who accepted them, but would be obligatory in cases when disagreements between member-States were referred to it for settlement. States might conclude separate treaties with members or non-members provided they were not in contradiction with the Protocol; no member might pursue a foreign policy prejudicial to the policy of the Commonwealth or any of its members. The States would cooperate closely on economic, financial, cultural, social and other questions. By implication they expressed their willingness to link the Commonwealth on to any international authority or regional organization which might be established after the war.

In a special clause of the Protocol, the Arab States affirmed their respect for the independence of Lebanon within its present frontiers in consideration of her pursuing a policy of independence. In another clause they affirmed their concern for the rights of the Arabs of Palestine and their desire that Great Britain should carry out the engagements she had entered into in regard to the cessation of Jewish immigration and land-purchase and the gradual evolution of Palestine towards independence. While sympathising with the sufferings of European Jewry, they did not agree that its problem should be settled by another injustice at the expense of the Arabs of Palestine.

Attention was directed even more to economic than to political questions during the years of war. The war introduced several dislocating factors, two of them of particular importance: first the restriction imposed upon the import of goods by the shortage of shipping, and secondly the expansion of purchasing power caused directly or indirectly by the presence of enormous Allied armies in various Arab countries. These two factors were capable of causing inflation and other maladies unless preventive measures were taken. The restriction of imports made necessary the establishing of some sort of control to ensure that the most necessary goods were imported and were distributed to best advantage. It was to exercise this control that the Middle East Supply Centre was set up. Beginning as a British institution, it became an Anglo-American concern. Gradually its functions became much wider than those of a restrictive agency. It set itself to make the Middle East as far as possible a self-supplying economic unit, by such means as the encouragement of local industry and the distribution of its products. It organized a number of conferences of Middle Eastern Governments to deal with questions of common interest, which themselves gave rise to several embryo institutions a statistical bureau, an agricultural council - which may in time become as active and valuable as the parent body.

Some attempt was made to deal with the other problem, that of the increase of purchasing power, by the limitations of prices, the introduction of rationing schemes, the encouragement of saving and in other ways. These attempts were only partly successful for a number of reasons, perhaps the most important of which were administrative inexperience and the lack of trust which the populations felt in their Governments and their unwillingness to give Governments that cooperation without which schemes of economic control cannot be carried out. The result was a considerable rise in commodity prices and consequently in the cost of living, with all its incident hardships and discontents. This rise went furthest and approached nearest to inflation in Syria and Lebanon, where it was encouraged by the political unrest and instability endemic through the whole period of French control, and particularly by distrust of the local currency based as it was on the franc. This distrust was increased by the Anglo-French financial agreement of 1944 and found expression in hoarding on a large scale.

Had the rise in prices and the evils which went with it been allowed to affect the cost of essential foodstuffs without restraint, there might have been widespread famine and would certainly have been disastrous local shortages. This was prevented by the vast measures taken to organize the supply of wheat and other necessities by M.E.S.C. and the local Governments. In Syria, Iraq and other territories the area of cultivation was enlarged, and productivity increased by the introduction of better methods; and the distribution of grain both inside each country and in the area as a whole was carefully planned and controlled. In Egypt too the cultivation of foodstuffs was encouraged, partly from fear that Egypt's former reliance on her single crop of cotton would prove disastrous should cotton prices fall or export prove impossible. As it was, disaster was only avoided by the purchase of the entire crop in successive ~~ax~~ seasons by the British Government. A similar problem arose with the Palestinian citrus crop, much of which would not be sold, exported or used in any way economic disaster was only averted by maintenance loans to citrus growers.

In the war-time economic controls the United States played a leading part together with Great Britain. There were sufficient signs that this new economic interest would not be confined to the war. After the war American industry would wish to capture Middle Eastern markets, and American finance would seek in the undeveloped Arab regions opportunities of investment. Above all, the oil-resources of the Persian Gulf, for which American companies held the concessions, were likely to become of great importance for American Government and industry alike; already during the war plans were drawn up for the construction of a pipeline from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean. It was generally believed that sooner or later economic would give birth to political interest; this was viewed with apprehension because of the strength of the Zionist influence in the United States.

It was possible also in the later part of the war to perceive the growth of Russian interest in the Arab countries. Diplomatic relations were established with them, and the traditional connection of Russia with the Greek Orthodox Christians seemed likely to be revived. What form Russian interest would take was as yet unclear, but the general impression was that it would work for an alliance with the more progressive wing of the nationalist movement. This, together, with such other factors as admiration for Russia's strength and the general restlessness and desire for change, gave rise to a growing interest in Russia, particularly in the Fertile Crescent. This found partial expression in the spread of communism but extended far beyond the Communists. By 1944 many people were saying and more were thinking that if Great Britain rejected the friendship of the Arabs they would do well to offer it to the U.S.S.R.

PART III BRITISH POLICY AFTER THE WAR

British Interests.

So long as the war was being fought in the Middle East, it was possible to excuse Great Britain's failure to produce a positive policy or give any indication of her future intentions on the ground that the time was not opportune for making plans. Now the war in the Middle East is over, and the Arab countries have virtually entered the post-war period; the moment can no longer be delayed when the British Government must think over its Arab policy.

Great Britain is in the Arab world because of her interests. That is the first thing which must be said. British propagandists are sometimes in the habit of suggesting that they have simply dropped into the Arab world for the weekend, out of good nature, to see how things are going and give a helping hand (a process less enjoyable for the host than the guest). (This is ludicrous and deceives nobody, but sometimes leads foreigners to regard the British as hypocrites. It is equally important however not to go to the other extreme: out of eagerness to avoid sentimentalism, to fall into the morbid thoughtfulness of the disenchanted romantic. There are no interests without obligations. Great Britain's presence in the Arab world, although self-regarding, imposes duties upon her, and she cannot adequately safeguard her own interests unless she fulfils those duties.)

What are her interests?

- (1) Her first interest is to preserve peace in the Middle East and in the world.

✓ (11) As a Mediterranean Power, a Far Eastern Power and a world Power she must be in a position to make unfettered military use of the Arab countries during a war, and to deny such use to her enemies or those who might become her enemies. To achieve this purpose she must be able:

✓ (a) to use the harbours and aerodromes of the Arab countries, especially those of the Mediterranean coast.

✓ (b) To control the main lines of communication, particularly the Suez Canal and Red Sea and the air and land routes across the Syrian Desert:

✓ (c) To control the oil well of Iraq and the pipe-lines which bring the oil to the Mediterranean. (Control of Iraq is also important in this regard because it is necessary to protect the oil fields of Persia. It is still too early to say what will be the strategic importance of the discovery of oil along the west coast of the Persian Gulf).

(111) Economically her first interest is to keep open the trade routes which pass through the Arab world linking Great Britain with the Far East.

✓ The Arab countries are not of vital importance to her with as suppliers of raw materials or foodstuffs or as markets for her produce. Her trade with them however is by no means negligible and may be counted as an important secondary interest; as the purchasing power of the Arab countries increases her trade may be expected to grow in spite of competition from the United States. She also has large investments, particularly in Egypt.

✓ (1V) Neither her military nor her economic position can be assured unless the Arab countries, or at least those of them in which her main interests lie, are subject to stable Governments which are either themselves under British control or are friendly and willing to conform their policy to hers in matters of concern.

✓ (V) Other interests of rather less importance arise from the existence of large British communities in the trading centres of the Arab world, from the growing number of British schools and other cultural institutions and from the wide extension of the English language.

Alternative Policies

How can these interests best be secured? A number of alternative policies are possible:

✓ (1) Great Britain might occupy the Arab world by force and govern it directly as part of her Empire. (This policy might have certain advantages: in some ways it would make action easier in time of war. It might even incidentally be of some benefit to the Arabs, since it would give scope to a reforming Government to carry out constructive schemes. Cromer could only have done his work in Egypt with the backing of military force. It would also be intolerably troublesome and expensive, and in the more advanced Arab countries it would give rise to determined and violent opposition which would make such a regime, although imposed in the interests of stability, the most unstable of all.)

✓ (11) Another policy which is sometimes suggested is that of an Alliance with the other external forces possessing interests in the Arab world, and which all have a common interest (at least on a short view) in preventing an Arab resurgence. Thus an agreement with the Jews in Palestine, for large scale immigration and the establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth, would safeguard Suez, the naval base at Haifa and the pipeline; a close alliance with France would prevent Syria and Lebanon falling into hostile hands and alliance with Turkey would help to keep Iraq in order, while Great Britain would be strong enough to keep down the other countries. Quite apart from the immorality of this suggestion, it ignores the essential instability of such alliances, based on no principle but self-interest and hostility to a third party. Moreover it assumes that the Arabs are hopelessly weak, divided and unreliable; should this assumption be untrue, the proposed policy might prove disastrous and would moreover be unnecessary since another policy would then be possible.

(111) The policy followed in Iraq and Egypt, and which is now the official model for British dealings with the Arabs, is that of safeguarding British interests by treaty. In the more advanced countries these treaties are negotiated in fact with the nationalist movement; in the less advanced with the paramount chief or ruler. In the second case, the provisions of the treaty tend towards the establishment of a protectorate. In the first, they establish in form a scrupulously equal alliance. The Arab State conceded to Great Britain the right to use bases and communications and to call for its help in time of war. In return Great Britain recognized its independence, gives an implied pledge to protect it, and secures its acceptance as a member of the League of Nations or some such organization of States.

The policy has very great advantages. It concedes one of the fundamental demands of the nationalists: formal recognition of their equality with other nations. It helps to heal the wounded pride of the Arabs and so make normal relations with them possible. At the same time it imposes upon the representatives of Great Britain a higher standard of tact and consideration than they might otherwise achieve. Moreover the policy of garrisoning strong points by agreement instead of occupying the whole country by unilateral act is much cheaper, and at a time of crisis may be more effective. (There is no doubt that the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty was to be thanked for the complete lack of disturbances in Egypt during the critical weeks of 1942). If the strong points are far away from the capital and other centres of population, it reduces to a minimum the irritation and petty disputes which the presence of foreign forces in a country is bound to cause.

The defect of the treaty system, taken by itself and when not supplemented by other lines of policy is its assumption that the friendship of a State can be sufficiently assured by gratitude for the recognition of its independence and the offer of military protection. This is not true. No State can afford the luxury of basing its policy upon gratitude for past favours. Moreover the Arabs are likely to regard the recognition of their independence not as a generous gesture but as restitution for injustice; as for protection, in time of peace they will forget about it and in time of war will think, incorrectly perhaps but plausibly, that if Great Britain had not already installed herself among them there would be no need for her protection.

The treaty policy moreover assumes that there already exist stable Arab communities and governments with which Great Britain can conclude alliances. In reality these communities and governments are in process of becoming; until they are fully emerged no stable system of alliances will be possible. The main thesis of this paper is that it is Great Britain's task to help in creating the Arab community, but her help must be given in ways which do not infringe her recognition, in form and in fact, of the equality of the Arabs with other nations. A correct policy is one which holds together in a balance those two needs of the Arabs, for equality and for help, while at the same time safeguarding the essential interests of Great Britain.

British obligations.

At this point an objection may be raised. How can Great Britain or any foreign Power help to create the Arab nation? Is this not a matter for the Arabs themselves and no one else? This might be so if the present weakness and instability of the Arab community were due mainly to defects inherent in the Arabs themselves. In reality however they are due mainly to the impact of the West, which has given rise to unforeseen problems. These problems can only be solved through a deepened understanding of the West, on every level and in every aspect of life; the Arabs cannot decide their attitude to the West and to themselves until they know what the West is. Such knowledge they can only acquire with the help of the West.

It must be added that the Arabs are still largely passive to the West. It is symptom of their present malady that they cannot act spontaneously, but can only respond to what the West does to them, either by imitation or by reaction. The attitude which the West adopts towards them will largely determine their attitude towards it. If it goes out to them in help and sympathy, they will want to become part of it; if it shows them nothing but hatred, suspicion and contempt, naturally they will reject it. Which of these two attitudes they adopt will determine the whole spirit and structure of the Arab nation, and will not be without its effects upon the peace of the World. The Middle East will always be a source of

danger and trouble so long as the relation between its inhabitants and the foreign Powers which have dealings with them is one of hatred; balance and stability can only be achieved on a basis of trust, of liking and of good will.

This is true of every sphere of life, but above all of the political. In this age political unrests have their repercussions over the whole of life. A wrong political attitude towards the Arabs on the part of the Western Powers which have interests in the Arab world may poison the whole of Arab life; and a right political attitude is the condition of fruitful cooperation in any other field, however seemingly remote from politics. Moreover what matters is not what political attitude the Western Powers ultimately take up towards the Arabs, but what attitude they adopt now, in this generation or perhaps in the next few years. In this generation everything is fluid in the Arab world, and waiting to be moulded; the impressions it received now it will retain far into the future.

The more enlightened Arab leaders are fully aware of all this. They want help and are beginning openly to ask for it. It is a mistake to imagine that the nationalists want to be left alone and to shut out foreign influences from their country. For a short time after they obtain independence they will be tempted to reject help from outside and show that they can manage well enough by themselves; but this is likely to be a passing phase, and to give way to a more receptive attitude. It is true that a certain prejudice against foreign advisers and officials may persist, but it is directed not against them in themselves but against the questionable motives and still more the inferior quality of many of them.

Even if the need for foreign assistance be granted, another objection may be made. Why, it may be asked, should Great Britain be called upon for assistance more than other Western Powers? Had she sufficient resources in men and money to give help over and above her other commitments in the world? The answer to such doubts is to be found in the traditional relationship between Great Britain and the Arabs. For more than a hundred years Great Britain has had a closer and more varied contact with the Arab world than any other Power. There are more Englishmen in important positions in the Arab world than any other Europeans; the English language is widely spoken; most of the Arab countries are under direct or indirect influences. This gives Great Britain special opportunities. It also of course imposes on her special obligations. She has obligations to the Arabs since she more than any European nation except France has called the new Arab world into existence and she cannot therefore deny responsibility for it until it becomes in the fullest sense mature. She has obligations also to the Western community of nations, since she stands in a sense as its trustee and interpreter in its dealings with the Arabs; the Arabs will judge the whole West largely by her. That relationship between them and the West on which the peace of the world partly hangs, must primarily be a relationship between them and Great Britain.

It is not only an obligation upon Great Britain to pursue a policy of assistance and friendship, it is also her interest. Did she desire simply to hold a strong point in an isolated place, she might be as little concerned by what went on around as at Gibraltar, but her first interest is that at all times, alike in peace and war, she should have easy communications, and these are only possible if the governments of the States through which her life-lines run are stable and their peoples friendly. Stability, it has been already pointed out, does not yet exist and must be created; it is equally important to remark that friendliness too must be won. Only God can claim absolute devotion; on all human relations, friendship is conditional, and in politics it can be firmly based only on present interest and the prospect of future interest. Unless the Arab States are conscious that Great Britain has some essential help to give them in solving their own deepest problems, they will not be friendly to her, and if they are not friendly they will be hostile, not simply indifferent, for, being so closely bound to Great Britain as they are and seeing every day her soldiers in their towns, they could never be indifferent to her presence among them as to a stranger.

A Sound Policy

These considerations make necessary a more complex policy than those hitherto adopted, one which attempts to combine the merits of "Cromerism" with those of the policy of treaties:

- ✓ (1) The use of strong points by Great Britain, or a group of great powers, by agreement with the State in whose territory they lie. This will be necessary at least for a number of years, until the Arab States are developed enough to fulfil their military obligations in a world order. The precise conditions under which the points will be occupied and used cannot yet be defined, but it is clear that the Arab States would only give their agreement, if it were made clear that such occupation by a great Power did not imply any right to interfere in the internal affairs of the States. The States would probably demand some guarantee of this other than the word of the great Power concerned; a possible course would be to vest the ultimate control of the points in the hands of a commission composed of the Great Powers with Middle Eastern interests and of the Arab States themselves, or else an Anglo-Arab commission. Great Britain would garrison the strong points as the trustee of this commission, which would itself be responsible to whatever international authority is established. It might also be possible to extend the practice of leasing bases, adopted in the West Indies, or to make provision for the use of military units of the Arab States together with British units.
- ✓ (2) Formal recognition of the equality of the Arab States with other States, not only by Great Britain but by any inter-national authority, which is set up. The term "equality" is used here instead of "independence" because it is clear that nationalism has cried for "independence" in the last decades not for its own sake but because it was the mark of a full member of the society of nations. If all nations give up something of their sovereignty to an international authority, the Arabs will no longer claim that their sovereignty should be unrestricted. "Independence" moreover is a term mainly connected with "rights", whereas what is at issue is not whether the Western nations will concede their rights to the Arabs, but whether they will trust them as free partners in matters of common concern. The Arabs today are anxious to bear the responsibilities no less than enjoy sweets of nationhood.
- ✓ (3) Within the limitations imposed by her recognition of Arab equality, Great Britain should give active and unremitting assistance to the Arabs in every sphere of life in their endeavour to build up a modern community and State. This should be done even if no immediate political return is expected from it. Here as in everything the only course is to cast your bread upon the waters in the hope that some day it will return.

Immediate Problems.

✓ The policy outlined above would probably be endorsed by most reputable British officials in the Middle East. It would also be accepted by the wiser and more intelligent of the Arab leaders. There are other leaders, however, and with them a large proportion of the rank and file, who have been so embittered by British policy in the last twenty-five years that they are no longer willing to cooperate with Great Britain, and in some cases no longer ready to trust any Western Power. The opposition of these two groups is one aspect of that conflict between two attitudes on which depends, as has already been made clear, the fate of Arab nationalism and the Arab nation. At present there is a hidden struggle between them for the soul of the Arab movement, a struggle in which Great Britain is vitally interested. She can only carry out a satisfactory policy with the cooperation of the moderate leaders of Arab nationalism: this involves first that she should fully win their trust where she does not already possess it and secondly that she should help them to establish their ascendancy over the movement as a whole and to persuade the movement to adopt a policy of close and equal cooperation with Great Britain. Neither of these conditions can be fulfilled unless certain immediate issues are settled satisfactorily. Of these pressing questions, the two most vital obviously are those of Palestine and of Syria and Lebanon.

(1) Palestine

Since the beginning of the war there has been no major disturbance in

Palestine, but this does not mean that the tension has relaxed. The Arabs have remained quiet because of exhaustion after the revolt, the dissolution of their political organizations, the partial stoppage of the flow of Jewish immigration and of land-sales in accordance with the White Paper, and finally their desire not to embarrass Great Britain. They still remain firm however in their insistence that Palestine shall remain an Arab country; as a first step they would be willing to accept the White Paper or some similar measure. Almost all sections of the Zionists have now come out openly in favour of the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine; some still hope to obtain it through the support of great Powers, others believe that the Jews must achieve it by their own efforts - hence the purchase of arms, the formation of para-military organizations and the terrorist activities. The British Government is trying to find a compromise between these two parties, but in reality it has already found the only possible compromise. The White Paper demands sacrifices from both sides: The Arabs must recognize the position of the half million Jews already in the country, the Jews must be satisfied with what they have and look elsewhere for a solution of the problem of European Jewry. The Zionists would never accept the White Paper officially, but many of them would acquiesce if it were carried out firmly. The Arabs would certainly revolt, with the assistance of the Arab States, if a Jewish State were established; but if the White Paper were carried out they would lose their fear both of Zionism and of the British Government's intentions. Indeed if the first two parts of the White Paper were fully carried out they would even accept a postponement or at least a very gradual fulfilment of the proposals in the third part.

(2) Syria and Lebanon

The question of the treaty with France may become urgent very soon. The French insist on being given a position similar to that of Great Britain in Iraq. The Syrians and most of the Lebanese are unwilling to sign any treaty with France, since they do not consider that they have anything to gain by it. The only possible solution consistent with Great Britain's undertakings seem to lie in persuading the French that their real interest is their schools and establishments and persuading the Syrians and Lebanese to give a guarantee of the position of French institutions. Only Great Britain is able to persuade both sides, and it is in her interest to do so, since revolt or unrest in Syria would react on all the surrounding countries.

The French might hope to make such an agreement with Syria while holding on to their military position in Lebanon. There is a certain section of the Maronites who might be tempted to agree to such a settlement. If they succeeded in effecting it, the Moslems and Arab nationalists in Lebanon, assisted by those in Syria, would break up Lebanon from within. If, as seems more likely, Lebanon makes common cause with Syria, and both achieve full independence, there is no reason to fear that the question of Syro-Lebanese relations will become serious in the near future. The internal balance of Moslems and Christians inside Lebanon however will remain precarious; those foreign Powers which possess influence have a duty to refrain from doing anything which might increase the tension.

There are other questions, not perhaps so urgent or so far-reaching in their implications as these two, but no less liable to cause distrust to British intentions.

(3) Egypt

From 1942 to 1944 Egypt was ruled by a Wafdist Government, installed by British influence and cooperating closely with Great Britain. It was a tranquil period, but the tranquility has now come to an end. The King has finally got rid of the Wafd Government, and there is now a coalition Government in which the influence of the Palace is strong. The Wafd might well come out in strong opposition not only to the Government but to Great Britain, and make itself the mouthpiece of Egypt's demands in regard to the incorporation of the Sudan in Egypt, the withdrawal of British troops and the control of the Suez Canal. It is doubtful how far the present Government will want or be able to resist falling in with these demands. There is also a new party, the "Ikhwan el-Muslimin", which stands for a religious nationalism that is likely to be even more hostile to Britain's position than the others; while no-one can yet tell how important the movement of social unrest and reform is going to become. All these factors will make it necessary for Egypt to be treated with extreme tact and ability in the next few years.

(4) Iraq.

In Iraq also the immediate need will be for great care and tact on the part both of Great Britain's representatives in Baghdad and of the home Government. Iraq should never again be neglected as it was from 1931 to 1941. There are numerous problems which may cause trouble unless carefully handled: in the next few years power will be handed over by the older generation who have held it for twenty years to a new group who in general are not trained to rule and will tend to be suspicious of Great Britain; secondly, there is a growing split between two sections of the younger group, the orthodox nationalists and the socialists; thirdly, there will be a strong temptation for any Government to reinforce its power, inevitably weak in a country of Iraq's social structure, by calling in the Army. The Kurdish and Shi'i questions must also be watched very carefully; either if neglected might upset the whole balance of the State.

(5) Cyrenaica

Since its conquest from the Italians Cyrenaica has had a British military administration. No decision has yet been made about its future, except for an official statement that its inhabitants will never again come under Italian rule. It is probable that the settlement which would be most generally accepted would be to make it an autonomous principedom under Sayyid Idris el-Semusi, whom almost all the inhabitants recognize as their Chief, and to give it a relationship both to Great Britain and to the Arab Commonwealth similar to that of Transjordan.

(6) The Sudan

A further step towards self-government has been taken by the establishment of an elected advisory council in the northern Arab provinces. It is likely that the demand for greater self-government will increase in the next few years, and it is to be hoped that this demand will be gradually met until such time as the Sudan is fit for complete independence. The question of its relation with Egypt may become difficult; it seems that most educated Sudanese would rather enter the Arab Commonwealth as a separate entity than be incorporated into Egypt.

(7) Transjordan

On several occasions during the war the Transjordan government has asked for a treaty with Great Britain to end the Mandate and give Transjordan a degree of self-government as large as that of other Arab countries. Its request has been shelved for the duration of the war, but sooner or later will have to be considered seriously; to refuse it would arouse bad feeling in a region where it does not yet exist; and could not be justified by principle.

(8) Arab Union

Behind all these questions and intertwined with all of them is that of Arab union. Great Britain cannot prevent the association of the Arab States; all she can do is to determine whether it will be hostile or friendly to her. There can be no doubt since the Alexandria Conference that the Arab States desire the friendship of Great Britain; and in the Protocol they stated, expressly by implication, the conditions of that friendship. They want some formal expression of support by the British Government for the new Arab Commonwealth; they want her to recognize in all her dealings with the Arab States that they form a unit and must all be treated alike; they need her help in removing these obstacles to unity - artificial frontiers, different currencies, the rivalry of dynasties - which she herself has helped to create; finally they insist that the Palestine question is a matter of equal concern for all of them, and only if she concedes the rights of the Palestinian Arab can she hope for the trust and support of the Arabs in the surrounding countries.

Fundamental Problems

What are the problems with which the Arabs are faced in their attempt to construct a modern community, and in the solution of which they look for help from their Western allies? It is impossible to describe them all here, but a few of them may be mentioned by way of example:

(1) In the political sphere, perhaps the most urgent need is for political education: the understanding of what is a political community. The history of the Western nations suggests that the healthy political community is built on a foundation of voluntary associations, local, vocational and others. The establishment of associations was virtually impossible in Ottoman days and the Arabs have still not fully acquired the habit of it, although they have the germ of it in their religious, village and tribal institutions. Great Britain can help the Arabs to learn how to organize and to administer common affairs in two ways; in Palestine, the Sudan and certain other territories she can act directly, by the encouragement of municipal government, trade unions and other forms of association (in the field of local government the first steps have already been taken both in Palestine and the Sudan); in the independent States she can act indirectly, through official and unofficial English residents who take the trouble to learn the difficult technique of working with Arabs on a level of equality and of guiding and helping without dominating them. British Council officers have a great part to play in this, provided they interpret their functions widely enough.

(2) Another political problem which Great Britain can help to solve is that of the Christian minorities. It is clear that the minority question, whatever its ultimate origin, owes its present exacerbated state to two factors: first, the use of the minorities in the past and present by Western Powers as a pretext and instrument for dominating the majority; and secondly, the association of Arab and Egyptian nationalism with Islamic sentiment, which keeps the minorities out of the main stream of the national movement however much they may desire to enter it. So far as the first factor is concerned, the minority problem is only an aspect of the general problem of political relations between the Arabs and the Western Powers. Once the general problem has been settled, the other will lose much of its difficulty. The most important help which Great Britain can give to the minorities is to settle her differences with the majority amicably, and to refrain from using - or giving the impression that she is using - the minorities for her own purposes. As for the second factor, what is necessary is the development of a Westernized nationalism, a nationalism devoted to constructive tasks in which all sects have their part to play; which recognizes the importance of diversity inside the national community, and which is divorced from religious fanaticism although not necessarily from belief. This is important not only for the future of the minorities but for that of the Arab nation. Since the Christians are the most fully Westernized part of the community, they must play a large part in the Westernization of the Arabs as a whole. This is indeed their special task in the Arab world. By acting as interpreters of Europe to the Arabs, at one and the same time they render a service to the Arab nation and safeguard their own future as members of the nation. In the effort to understand and to interpret Europe they need and should be given the full help of Great Britain's cultural institutions in the Middle East.

If the Christians are to play their part, they must have a place in the Arab world where they are at home. This is the importance of independent Lebanon: it is not an exclusive Christian country, but one where Christians and Moslems can learn to live together on a level of absolute equality and in so doing develop a new Westernized Arab nationalism. This will only be possible however if the very precarious balance of sects is maintained and the whole spirit of sectarianism discouraged. This again can only come about if France and Great Britain use their moral influence to that end, with a full sense of responsibility and consciousness of the value and mission of Lebanon.

(3) The fundamental economic and social problem is that of raising the standard of living of peasants and workers. For this it will be necessary to raise the level of agricultural production, by such means as the introduction of new crops and methods; to reform the systems of land-tenure and agricultural credit and establish co-operative societies to increase industrial production and encourage trade unionism;

to improve public health and make elementary education universal. In the performance of these tasks both official and unofficial help is necessary. Unofficially, British technicians and capital can assist in the building of new industries; British trades unionists, cooperative experts and social welfare workers can advise and even mould the new associations of workers and social reforms which are springing up in the centres of the Arab world. What is even more important the British administrations in Palestine and the Sudan could if they wanted act as models for all the surrounding countries. They have the technical ability at their disposal and the resources of the Colonial Development Fund to draw on, although these are not yet adequate to their task. There is no reason why the British ruled territories should not initiate vast schemes of construction and reform which would sooner or later alter the face of the whole Arab world.

(4) The deepest of all problems, in itself and in its implications, is that of the relations of the Arabs to the Western World. Underlying the whole of this essay is the belief that the Arab world today is facing a crisis: will it enter into "communion" with the West or not? That is to say, will it establish with the West a relationship of mutual trust and respect, based upon understanding and tending towards mutual trust and respect, based upon understanding and tending towards common goal; or will it turn its back upon the West in hatred, and with feelings of wounded pride and injury, taking from the West no more than weapons the better to maintain its isolation?

This is a crisis of the whole of Arab life, although it is most obvious and urgent in the political sphere. The conviction on which this essay is based is that all hope for the future of the Arabs lies in their taking the first path and rejecting the second. Their choice is not yet made, and ultimately the making of it is their own responsibility. There is also however a heavy responsibility upon the Western nations to do everything in their power to help the Arabs to make the right choice. Man's will can be inclined although not forced by circumstances and conditions and in this instance it is the West which largely creates the conditions.

(a) The first condition is that the Arabs should understand the West aright. So far Arab understanding of Western civilization has been partial and superficial. They need to understand its roots in Hellenism and Christianity no less than its more recent phases. Until they have done so they will not be able to create anything of their own. That is not to say that their ultimate destiny is to become fully Europeanized. This is only one of the possibilities, the other being that once having assimilated the West they should try to create a culture of their own analogous to that of the West and in communion with it but deriving its animating spirit from a revived Islam. Which of these alternatives will be adopted depends on two things: first, whether or not Western civilization is essentially secular or essentially Christian; and secondly whether or not a revival and reform of ~~Islam~~ Islam - the creation of an Islamic system of thought based on Hellenism - is possible. But no matter which of them is adopted, the first step is profoundly to understand the spirit of the West. This is only possible by the intermediary of a fully Westernized elite.

To help in forming such an elite should be first object of all British cultural efforts in the Arab world; through translations and publications, through schools and institutes and above all through cultivated scholars and thinkers who themselves embody the spirit of Europe. The opportunity before the British Council and other organizations is enormous; but they can only take it if they are wholly serious about culture and about the general European rather than a specifically British culture. They should also try to work as far as possible through existing Arab or Anglo-Arab institutions rather than through specially created and ~~pure~~ purely British institutions.

(b) The present age is obsessed with politics. What happens in the political sphere leaves a deep mark on every other sphere of life. The Arab attitude to every aspect of Western civilization will be largely determined by the political

treatment they receive from the Western powers. A great responsibility lies upon the British Government, the Western Government with which the Arabs are most closely in contact. If it fails to establish a satisfactory relationship with the Arabs in the political sphere, it may destroy their whole many-sided attempt to draw nearer to Europe.

(c) Most people are concrete in their thinking. When an Arab thinks of Europe he thinks normally of the Europeans he has known, and of these a large proportion are English. He judges Europe by the treatment he has received from them, and bases his attitude to Europe as a whole on the relationship he has been able to establish with them. By universal consent the worst failure of Great Europe in the Arab world, and in other worlds as well, has lain in this field of personal relations. From arrogance, shyness or ignorance, Englishmen often hurt or humiliate Arabs, and the sense of personal or social humiliation may poison the whole of a man's mind and life. The behaviour of British residents in the Arab world, particularly in towns with large British communities, is a matter of the utmost importance; they must learn to treat the peoples whose hospitality they enjoy with scrupulous equality and respect. This is more difficult than it appears, for disrespect and contempt can disguise themselves in many subtle forms.

The machinery

Such a policy cannot be carried out unless the machinery or government is adequate.

(1) There is need first of all for an instrument of control and coordination. The first step was taken to this end by the appointment of a Minister of State (subsequently named Minister Resident in the Middle East). His work was hampered however by the limitation of his functions to those of suggestion and advice, and the failure to define his exact relationship to the Foreign and Colonial Offices, which still continued to divide responsibility with each other and the Indian Office. If the Minister Resident's office is to do its work effectively it must have a strong position vis-a-vis Whitehall.

(11) Even if this were not done it could still play an important part as a political intelligence centre. There are a number of organizations, civil and military, whose task it is to collect information and gossip about day to day politics, but almost nowhere is an attempt being made to interpret this information in the light of a general view of politics and the Arab world. There is no centre of understanding in the machinery of British Government so far as the Middle East is concerned. Nor if it existed are there the men to staff it; contemporary Arab world is not reorganized as a subject of study in the British universities. The first ~~ix~~ step is to create, as a constituent part either of a university or of Chatam House, a centre of modern Arab studies; then when the trained personnel are available, to establish a real intelligence department subject to the Minister Resident.

(111) Something also must be done to secure and to retain the services of first-class officials. A training school for would-be officials has been established in Jerusalem. It should be continued and expanded, and linked so far as possible with the centres of study and intelligence suggested above; it should not be simply a place where Arabic is taught and elementary facts imparted, but where students and officials who have a clear view of the Middle East and of British policy should try to mould the outlook of a new generation. It is equally important that once an official has acquired special knowledge of the Arab countries he should not be posted to some other part of the world, leaving his place to be filled by some newcomer who has to start learning from the beginning. Possibly there are technical difficulties in the way of creating an autonomous Middle Eastern Service; but at least inside each service officials could be earmarked for a particular region, as is done in the Consular Service, and there could be a greater interchange of staff between the different services.

(1V) The same consideration apply to unofficial Englishmen holding positions of responsibility: for example teachers and technicians. It has already been suggested how great their part can be in the execution of a constructive British policy; but if they are to fill their part they no less than government officials, need to be trained, to be offered some security of tenure and to be given the encouragement which comes from the consciousness of belonging to a Service. One of the principal tasks of the British Council should be to look after unofficial Englishmen in these ways, wherever they may be working and however remote their work may seem from that of "interpreting Britain to the world". This is even more important than the task of organizing specifically British institutions, from simple clubs to the suggested British University. Neither task however can be effectively performed unless certain conditions are fulfilled: it should be remembered that quality is far more important than quantity; the British Council must preserve its autonomy and not allow itself to be used for immediate political purposes; and it should never allow itself to become simply an organization, but always direct its work in the light of an idea.

The Other Powers.

This essay has confined itself to Anglo-Arab relations, but not on the assumption that Great Britain should, even if she could, try to make the Arab world as much her exclusive concern as for example India. Not only would the Arabs and the Great Powers not permit it, but it would be too great a strain on British resources. Thus it will be necessary to consider the relation between Great Britain's position in the Arab world and that of the other great Powers.

It is clear in the first place that Great Britain should not use her special position to prevent direct political and other relations between the Arab countries and the outer world. The Arab Commonwealth must be fully a part of the world commonwealth. Indeed one of the factors which led to the drafting of the Alexandria ~~For~~ Protocol was the desire to define the ways and means by which the Arab States can participate in a world organization. The text of the protocol itself hints at the possibility of the agreements between the Arab States and the organization they desire to set up among themselves being incorporated into a much wider network of international agreements and institutions. (It also emphasizes however that the Arab States desire to enter the international community as a single body, and to speak with one voice in its deliberations).

It is clear also that whatever military arrangements are made by the British Government with the Arabs will only have a chance of success if they are incorporated in a more generally security-system. It has already been stated that the Arabs would welcome the establishment of some sort of international system of providing a guarantee against the misuse by Great Britain of her military position. The other Great Powers also would not be inclined to acquiesce in Great Britain's occupying the strong points of the Arab world unless she did so with the consent of an international authority on which they themselves were represented. This does not mean that the actual occupation should be carried out by a group of Powers; such mixed enterprises are not likely to be successful. What it means is that Great Britain should ~~not~~ act as trustee on behalf, for example, of a Middle Eastern Commission, which itself would be responsible to the all-embracing international authority.

Moreover, Great Britain should remember that other Powers possess not only interests in the Arab world but also tasks to perform which they can carry out better and to the greater benefit of the Arabs than could Great Britain. France can perhaps do more than England for the spread of European culture; the United States has ~~more~~ more available capital to invest and technicians to lend; The U.S.S.R. can teach more in certain fields of social welfare and organization. Great Britain cannot prevent them making their contribution; to try to do so would arouse their hostility and that of the Arabs. Nor can she be indifferent to what they do; the choice is between friendly rivalry based on agreement and the rivalry of enemies. Equally however she cannot stand aside and let other Powers carry the whole burden of assistance to the Arabs. A division of labour, in which they did the constructive work while

she confined herself to the ungrateful task of maintaining the framework of order within which they functioned, would not help her to win the friendship of the Arabs.

It would be dangerous for Great Britain to refuse to recognize the interests and obligations of the other Great Powers but it would be equally dangerous for her to sacrifice her whole Middle Eastern policy to win their friendship or satisfy their demands. It is the peculiar difficulty of Great Britain's position that she can take neither her relations with the Arabs nor her relations with the other Powers as the sole criterion of her policy in the Middle East. It would clearly be fatal for her to win the friendship of the Arabs at the cost of her general world policy it would be no less fatal to follow a policy of piecemeal concession to other Powers up to the point when a logical and unified Arab policy became impossible. She must find and maintain a balance between her world policy and her Arab policy. The first condition of this is that she must have a clear view of her interests and obligations. The whole structure of political life in the Arab world - the relations of the Arab States with each other and with the Great Powers - rests upon Great Britain's presence in the Middle East. So long as Great Britain does not know her own mind, neither the Arab countries nor the other Great Powers will be able to form or carry out a clear policy.

The Alternatives

In this paper Great Britain's Middle Eastern policy has been dealt with as if it were an independent entity unaffected by her policy in other parts of the world. In reality of course her policy in any region is an aspect of her general policy, which can only be determined by taking into account every relevant factor. It may be that on a general view His Majesty's Government is led to adopt a policy other than that which is here suggested; her commitments and interests may oblige her to solve the outstanding political questions, particularly those of Syria and Palestine, in ways unfavourable to the Arabs; or else her resources in men and money may be inadequate to allow her to follow the path of construction suggested here. It is not within this paper's scope to say that such a decision would be right or wrong; it can only indicate what would be the probable consequences in the Middle East were it to be adopted.

Were Great Britain to permit the French to retain their military and political power in Syria, or to establish a Jewish State in Palestine or any part of it, the Arabs not only of the Fertile Crescent, but of other countries as well would write off the possibility of friendship and alliance with Great Britain. They would follow either of two paths, both fatal to Britain's power in the Middle East and one of them fatal to the Arabs. They might turn their backs completely upon the West in ~~every~~ everything except material matters, and adopt towards it an attitude of hatred. This would alter the whole spirit of the Arab movement, and make it either a movement like that of Japan, whose purpose would be to drive out the West, or else a movement like Nazism, without any purpose at all. The change would reveal itself in constant unrest and revolt, which the British Government would repress; the process of repression would aggravate still further the disease it was intended to cure. This would destroy the possibility of establishing a correct moral relationship between the Arabs and Europe; it would poison the whole Arab revival in every sphere of life; and it would ruin Great Britain's position in the Middle East.

The other attitude which the Arabs might adopt would be that of looking to some other Power to give them what Great Britain has refused. In the present circumstances this could only be Russia. It may be - it is at least arguable - that in the long run a substitution of Russian for British influence would be to the advantage of the Arab world. But the process of transition at its very easiest would involve a period of dislocation for the Arabs. It is not likely moreover to be an easy transition. In her attempt to maintain her influence and to hold back the striving of men's hearts and fancies towards Moscow, Great Britain would be led into measures of repression which would destroy what was left of her moral influence. Whether or not these measures were successful, they could not fail to harm the Arabs materially and spiritually and would certainly be fatal to British interests. There is a worse danger than that. The history of Eastern Europe and the Balkans in the last century has shown what a danger to world-peace is a weak, divided, unstable and discontented region in which two or more Great Powers have interests and influences and the inhabitants take sides with and against them. The Arab world might be such a region if it were dominated by one Great Power but looked to another to supply its deepest needs.

Even if the immediate political problems were solved, similar processes would

occur if Great Britain failed to carry out a longterm constructive policy. They would takelonger to show themselves, and there might in the beginning be less bitterness; but in the end they would produce the same results.

The truth of this analysis is known to every informed British official and every intelligent Arab nationalist in the Middle East. Most politicians and officials in London, where policy is made, know nothing of it. Unless they become aware of it and act accordingly, Great Britain's power in the Arab world will begin to crumble. The matter is urgent. Great Britain has a few months in which to solve the immediate political problems a few years at most in which to give some sign of her willingness and ability to help the Arabs in their constructive tasks. If she fails now she can look for no second chance.

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