AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

BRITISH RADIO POLICY IN MANDATORY PALESTINE 1936-1948 INTERNATIONAL CAUSES AND COLONIAL EFFECTS OF A NEW MEDIA

By

Edward George Atkinson-Clark

A thesis
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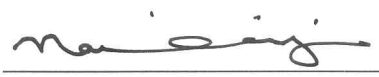

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Title: British radio policy in mandatory Palestine 1936-1948 – international causes and colonial effects of a new media.

This study examines the inter-locking features of British radio policy with regards to Arabic broadcasts from three British controlled stations between the years 1936 and 1948. British policies regarding radio stations in the period in which Palestine was a British Mandate (a legal device created after the First World War and the dissection of the Ottoman Empire, in which Britain and France acted as controlling political powers through much of the Middle East) are used as a way of viewing intersections between great power politics, aspirations for (and the control of) national identities, and the development of the concept of a 'correct' usage of a new technology – for example the location of the new device in either a home or a public space. The twelve year period between1936 and 1948 was a period of unprecedented social shift in Palestine. The way in which Britain conceptualised its policies in the region and its official view on how its personnel should interact with the population of the Mandate were the defining features of this shift. That this region in the same period and through the same policy stance saw the birth of both the BBC World Service and the official state broadcasting station of Israel, is worthy of interest in and of itself.

This study contextualises three individual stations, and in particular their formation and demise. This provides a basis to attempt to answer the question of how

much international influence effected the listening patterns and policies of Palestine. It does this by taking a critical view, informed by the canon of British official documents on the subject, as well as by contemporaneous English language newspaper reports.

Emerging from the question of how important, and in what way, international factors were to the formulation and revision of official attitudes towards Palestine more generally, and radio more narrowly; this thesis shows that different approaches were taken towards the aims of airwave control during this period. These were based on different understandings of what radio broadcasting meant and what it was meant for. These factors resulted in panoply of attitudes, and a significant growth in the number of personnel involved in this very particular activity.

This work deals with the issue of how states can, and try to, modulate the tone and purpose of broadcasting technologies. The present study is of particular interest in this sense as it is a display of how a set world order dealt with the emergence of a new and disruptive communication technology. In particular focus are how Britain established elaborate institutions in order to control this technology – the obvious contemporary example being the development of a series of regulatory bodies and channels to control and regulate the internet.

CONTENTS

Abbreviations

AIR – All India Radio

ANA – Arabic News Agency

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation

CAB – British Cabinet Office

CO – Commonwealth Office

DO – Dominions [i.e. South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Canada] Office

FCO – Foreign and Commonwealth Office (successor to the Foreign Office [FO])

FO – Foreign Office

MOI – Ministry of Information [WW2 British Ministry]

NA – National Archives[British official archives]

NEABS – Near East Arab[ic] Broadcasting Station

P&T – Department of Posts and Telegraphs [Palestine Government Department]

PBS – Palestinian Broadcasting Service

PIO – Public Information Office [Palestine]

PP – Palestine Post

PRO - Public Records Office [Former name of NA]

PWE – Political Warfare Executive [WW2 British body]

SAA – Sharq al-Adna

SOE – Special Operations Executive [WW2 British Secret Military Organisation]

1. INTRODUCTION

A new form of communication emerged during the first half of the twentieth century which enabled, for the first time, instantaneous mass communication over very large distances. This radical shift from more proximal ways of passing information to radio broadcasting, began processes which as diverse as the formation of national identities, to the creation of more effective military strategy.

It was an expensive and unwieldy technology, often requiring large capital outlays in order to make it work properly; it could reach beyond traditional national borders and finally, it transcended previous social structures. It did not matter who you were, but if you could hear a radio receiver, you could understand the information in the same way as anyone else with a command of the language used for broadcasting.

Owing to these reasons broadcasting was on the whole the pursuit of national governments.[1] It is through this lens of broadcasting as a new, exciting and wide ranging technology wedded from its start to the international system that this thesis will approach the topic.

British policies regarding radio stations in the Mandate period can therefore be used as a way of viewing intersections between great power politics, aspirations for, and the control of, national identities, and the development of a concept of a 'correct' usage of a new technology – such as the location of the device in either a home or a public space . The twelve years bookended by 1936 and 1948 saw an unprecedented

[1] This can be seen most clearly in the case of the All India Radio station, discussed below.

social shift in Palestine. The way in which Britain conceptualised its policies, and its official views on how British personnel should interact with the population of the Mandate, were one of the causative features of these changes. That this region in the same period and through the same policy stance saw the birth of both the BBC World Service and the official state broadcasting station of Israel, is worthy of interest in and of itself.

The viewpoint offered by analysing the period with this set of interests at the forefront allows us to witness an empire in decline. That radio can be, and often was, seen as a weapon replacing conventional arsenals is clear, but also important is how many of the assumptions of the empire, seen in the formation of policies and paradigms such as straight news[2], were undermined when there was stress placed on the British system.

Additionally, radio technology was seen as a way in which it was easier to have a direct presence throughout the rather inhospitable territory of Palestine. Edwin Samuel[3] often complains in his autobiography about how tiresome long horseback tours of rural regions were, implying that fewer were made because of this. His experiences, especially in the context of connecting the urban centre to the rural periphery, seem to be a strong force in some of Samuel's later work, as the Director of the Palestinian Broadcasting Service. Additionally, a second wavelength was thought to be required to ensure an even pattern of coverage over the territory.

[2] 'Straight news' was the BBC paradigm of news gathering which suggested that news should be presented in as neutral a way as possible, without slant.
[3] Edwin Samuel, A lifetime in Jerusalem: the memoirs of the second Viscount Samuel. (London: Vallentine, Mitchell, 1970).

Perhaps most importantly for the state, radio also seemed to hold a powerful force over those who heard it – an idea which is often referred to as the 'magic bullet' thesis. This is premised on the idea that through merely hearing information, the population would believe and act in the way it was hoped. This concern can be seen in two ways over the course of the Mandate, both in a positive and a negative light. One of the foundations on which the PBS was based was that of educating rural farmers in the most modern techniques. This was a gradual process,[4] and as the educational output of the station grew, it was also used for broadcasts aimed at schoolrooms, as well as being useful for the propagation of information on good food practice.

In contrast to radio usage for state sanctioned broadcasts, the British state held a combative policy with regards to third party involvement. Fears about outside broadcasters stirring up the public in the territory were strong enough to start a new broadcasting policy, which was more aggressive in nature. That the Italian radio station Bari, and the German radio station Zeesen, were thought to be such threats, especially in their transmission of information on the Arab leadership and Arab/British relations, lends itself to some assumptions. These range from not only the intentions of broadcasters, but also an assumed unthinking acceptance of messages which were put over the airwaves. This is a core point, and one which may not necessarily be immediately clear, and reflects the states image of its populous. Through discussions between administrators at the time, an important assumption was that the general population lacked the ability to engage in discerning listening practices.

[4] And also very relevant to discussions of what the right amount of broadcasting to which community, and on what subjects, as will be seen below.

That British influence is still visible in the concept of public broadcasting, including public interest broadcasting, is both interesting and tied to the influence of British personnel and technology in the region during this period. The manner in which the first networks in the area were established with close relations to, and a dependence on the BBC itself, as well as the system of broadcasting it represented, is demonstrative of the way in which the Mandate powers allowed and enforced European practices within their wards. Beyond this, that two rival National Broadcasting institutions claim a station which was established by the British as their forefather, both in terms of the institutions, but also of the technical infrastructure and personnel infrastructure, is illuminating. [5] Further, that the early doyens of much of the Hebrew and Arabic language broadcasting were trained through the British system is indicative of an oft invisible influence. These stations are Kol Israel (the voice of Israel) and the Jordanian Hashemite radio station[6] – not two organisations you may directly expect to share the same heritage. This is certainly suggestive of a lingering colonial influence on the post-Mandate media ecosystem.

Finally, this angle for investigation shows points of conflict between two different communities. This is a reflection of the period – where both groups were competing for any number of resources as well as influence – but is also particular to the institutions themselves. That there was an Arabic broadcast started from London, and not a Hebrew station, demonstrates a concern with a violent population,[7] and the

[5] Of the Jordanian and Israeli national broadcasting stations
[6] Elias Sahhab, "This Is Radio Jerusalem…1936," *JERUSALEM QUARTERLY* 5, no. 1 (February 7, 2004), http://www.jerusalemquarterly.org/ViewArticle.aspx?id=132.
[7] Although there was later opened a BBC Hebrew station. Needless to say, it did not last as long as BBC Arabic has.

establishment of a 'grey'[8] station in the visage of Sharq al-Adna further shows the ways in which the British were concerned with the correct[9] type of information being distributed. There was also a number of illegal broadcasting services offered by the Jewish community, but not by the Arabs. This, in counterpoint to international concerns, shows a division between the interests of groups in having a cohesive media policy. The internal dynamics of Palestine leant against a unitary approach to regulation, as this was an approach which unequally treated the two communities.

The prime research question is that of evaluating the way in which the actions of diverse interest groups, both internal (in the guise of the Jewish lobby, the Palestinian National movement, and the home departments of the British Empire) and external (in the guise of the Italian and German state) defined the policies, positions and development of both the conceptualisation of the provision of radio services audible in Palestine, and the development of the actual infrastructure itself.

The core premise of this thesis will be that despite multiple territories, stations, governments and languages, there is a discernible pattern in the policies which relate to broadcasting which could be heard in Palestine, as well as sometimes throughout the rest of the Arab world. The argument can be more realistically seen as an assessment of attitudes of the official participants, and the way in which their views were embedded into the institutions controlling these technologies. It cannot be said that there was not a single, unchanging policy throughout the period, nor was there one body, nor organisation, which had absolute power over radio audible in Palestine over the period

[8] A radio station whose ownership and control is unclear or deliberately deceptive, although they are often actually under the control of states.
[9] For Britain – it is safe to say that Italy also probably considered its broadcasts to be 'correct' in so much as they served their national aims.

in question. However through observation of official documents we can see which issues convinced administrators and politicians that the approaches previously taken were no longer the best. The historical context is also relevant to the following discussion, as it was more often international considerations which defined these policies, rather than internal questions. This system of interaction quite often undermines the idea of any 'organic growth'[10] in the systems in question – namely, BBC Arabic, the PBS and Radio Sharq al-Adna. The projection of power, in the case of the BBC, and of new, scientific, methods of farming and teaching, as well as an attempt at social cohesion, in the case of the PBS, were two issues which were of vital interest to the bodies which controlled them. That they could be used to institute change in practice among the population, even if subtly, was a vital and formative part of their institutional identity.

The analysis will therefore be concentrated on changes in stance, as well as instances of internal debate which did not lead to changes in policy where it may. Both concerns and policy shifts are easier to examine within the documentary evidence, as it is far harder to observe a system operating as was intended, and which enjoyed no further challenges to its operation. Due to this, official documentary analysis will be used as the prime point of assessment, although this will be supported by contemporary accounts of the media system in Palestine, as well as discussion of the media of the time. Further contributions will be taken from relevant biographies and auto-biographies.

[10] The concept of 'Organic Growth' is alluded to in the Bowman report of 1937, and mainly refers to the idea of an organisation growing of its own accord, and according to the parameters established at its inception. The concept can also be taken to preference the absence of outside control being placed over new developments in the organisation, either by retractions of certain supports or the imposition of new policies.

The system for selecting these official documents was that of analysis of the 'canon' of literature dealing with this topic, contained in pertinent works such as Stanton and Boyd. These were supplemented through cross referencing the official records with new accessibility available through the British National Archives[11] with search terms connected to the institutions of radio in the period, with appropriate filters for department and time period. Additionally, previous analyses, which have not had the same thematic concentration as this current thesis were critically analysed, and so were also fertile grounds for connections between different trends and elements of the narrative. Selections from this set were made on the grounds of the contributions the particular discussions within the official records made to the narrative, and the grounds to which clarified any ambiguities within narratives which had different foci.

To supplement these official records of the period, the online database held by the Palestine Post was consulted. The overwhelming majority of the papers volumes are available online, and there is powerful search functionality available over these records. Using similar parameters as were used through the National Archive databanks, a sample set was created. This was further whittled down by their narrative use – to highlight and specify issues within the history. However, the nature of the medium and also the audience the paper was serving tended to mean that it tended to not provide 'new' information, and that which it does tends to be questionable. The decision to select of the biographies of Rex Keating and Sir Edwin Samuel was taken due to their presence in the mandate, and connected to the PBS, during the last years of its operation. This is particularly useful, as they both offer first-hand accounts of a period which is otherwise relatively quiet in terms of official records.

[11] i.e. http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/

The structure of this thesis will reflect the importance of the context in which any decisions were taken. Therefore the History section (Chapter 3) will be of a longer length than might normally be expected. This is deliberate, so as to give those who do not have previous knowledge of the history of the Palestine Mandate the information required to understand the conflict as it unfolds. From here, the analysis chapters 4, 5 and 6 will be split into two. The first halves of these chapters will give further contextualisation of the periods in question (which are 1936-39, World War 2, and 1945-48 respectively). The second halves will assess changes in policy in the light of their territorial, regional and international context, leaning on documents from Government reports, Colonial and Foreign office internal documents, the minutes of the British cabinet, as well as documents produced by the Palestinian government itself.

The final chapter (Chapter 7) will conclude the thesis, and will argue that the system of policy and regulation which has been discussed offers a useful and interesting light, by which to examine the conception which the British Government had of its position in the world, the reasons it had for being in the Middle East, as well as its relations with other countries and its colonial subjects.

2. REVIEW OF SECONDARY SOURCES

2.1. Talking about Talking about Media

This chapter addresses literature on British policy concerning radio broadcasting in Palestine. First, I will examine what the goals of the various projects were; second, what changes were considered and made to these goals, and the reasons for them. Third is an analysis of the form of action taken by official protagonists in this narrative – be they following a goal based approach, or one which responds to stimuli on an ad-hoc basis. In this, prime importance is given to events, rather than plans. This means that whilst there may be teleological aims for a structural arrangement, there can also be process-based concerns which define potential paths for future development. These three issues, of the creation, change and goal of policy, offer boundaries to this thesis. This will be done on several levels, ranging from the theoretical, to the specific. This review of secondary sources will guide this treatment, through evaluating some of the key issues of theory, questions of the media and then medium, and by outlining other studies which occupy contiguous spaces. Whilst not all such studies utilise a similar theoretical approach, they do all make significant contributions to the question as a whole. Furthermore, the work which exists within this space define the history of the field, and can hence be used as both exemplar and informant.

This section will therefore be structured as a system in and of itself. Section 2.2 will be concerned with the notion of media theory. Section 2.3 treats notions of editing

and suppression of media – and defines the limits of the media eco-system as inherited by the British Mandate. Section 2.4 follows on to a discussion of the radio in general, and radio propaganda[12] in particular. This is followed by section 2.5, which is concerned with alternative models of Public Service broadcasting, in an attempt to challenge the broadcasting system of both the Palestine Broadcasting Service (PBS) and the BBC. Section 2.6 places this study in the context of works specifically analysing contiguous periods and spaces, as well as containing discussion of texts which can act as sources in themselves. Section 2.7 contains concluding remarks, and a brief summation of the canon as discussed.

2.2. Meta Media Theory

While the literature pertinent to this form of radio media is broad, there are several strands which are useful for an overarching understanding of this subject area. Given that this study is concerned with three institutions (Sharq al-Adna, BBC Arabic and the Palestine Broadcasting Service [PBS]), and at least three different government departments directly (the Mandate Government, the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office), a framework which will allow all inputs to be regarded is important. Within literature on media, the production of work studying the interrelations of media's and their regulators has been a veritable industry in itself.

One of the underlying premises of this (amongst almost all other studies of media institutions in general) is that of the assertion that media do effect social and political change in the world. While this is intuitively obvious, it is also supported by

[12] In this study, unless specifically referred to otherwise, I have attempted to keep to a 'neutral' view of propaganda, specifically referring to news and broadcasting which was designed to skew the information it was referring to, the perception of those who heard it, or both.

'the agenda setting function of mass media' theory of McCombs and Shaw. [13] Their keynote piece asks the question of how media representations of real events can change the perceptions of non-participants. The conclusion of their theory is that the most influential aspect of media systems is in choosing the topics discussed – and subsequently defining the agenda of, in their case, political candidates. They are, in effect, shaping the conceptual world of importance through specific targeting of key issues and questions, as well as giving an insight into the world outside that of lived experience. This view, first posited in 1972, is directed more at the reception of media, and so maintains its coherence even when moved from the context it was originally placed in. To wit, it is less important from where something is heard than what it is saying.

That multiple different sources can be heard, often with the same effect, is one of the most revealing conclusions that can be taken from McCombs and Shaw's work. That this present study is concerned with three broadcasting platforms makes this a significant issue. This realisation points to the importance of evaluating the three radio stations not only as individual organs, but also as a whole. Dajani, in discussing the role of the Lebanese media system, establishes that 'the structure and content… of the mass media is unique to the society in which it operates…the structures and content of media institutions are determined by the existing social forces'. [14] His study of the Lebanese experience, which focusses on elements of cohesion and consensus building in the civil-war period, highlights the importance of evaluating the context in which systems emerge, as these create path dependencies and long term structures. His outlook

[13] Maxwell E McCombs and Donald L Shaw, "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media," Public Opinion Quarterly 36, no. 2 (June 20, 1972): 176–187.
[14] Nabil Dajani, *Disoriented Media in a Fragmented Society the Lebanese Experience* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1992).

contributes to views of structural comparison, which are required in any evaluation of a specific temporally and spatially bounded media system. Furthermore, to follow the logic of this study beyond the intra-Lebanese situation, Dajani establishes ways in which to view the relationship between the Mandatory metropolis, and the mandated periphery.

An alternative and complimentary structural evaluation of media systems is that of McQuail[15], who creates a framework through which it is possible to evaluate mass media. One of the more significant aspects of his work is in demonstrating the dual nature of the media, in its guise as both a medium for private consumption (i.e. viewing for purely enjoyment), as well as its political role in the control and public distribution of information. He posits that multiple interests are continually operational in transmitting (figuratively, as well as practically) information about the world.

Despite this dynamic tension, McQuail has at the core of his media systems evaluation a notion of the 'fourth estate'. He holds that the media should normatively operate as a check and balance on the demands of a democratic regime. This concentration admittedly robs his theoretical outlook of some force when looking at specifically non-democratic regimes (although it does add some value when evaluating Britain during the period in question). Regardless of this, his system framework provides useful insights. His approach meshes different areas of the 'mass media system' into one network which can be evaluated as a whole, despite not necessarily operating with formalised connections between different segments of the system. This stance has been influential for some time, as it allows the state, here understood as

[15] Denis McQuail, McQuail's Mass Communication Theory, 4th ed. (Sage Publications Ltd, 2000).

being the gatekeeper of media restriction, to apply regulation as befits the current set of technical limitations. Examples of this can be seen in the distribution of radio wavelength (through processes such as the UN Spectrum decisions in Lucerne, 1933) or through the allocation of paper to newspapers or periodicals as seen in World War 2 Palestine, and described by Martin. [16]

McQuail also demonstrates that mass media is the 'primary source of definitions and images of social reality…the most ubiquitous expression of shared identity'. [17] This statement identifies two trends within the field. The first is the significance of media consumption for the formation of identity. The second is that governments have the power to define the limits of the conceptual space. [18] Both the practice and presence of media participation in the Mandate era further the argument for understanding the system as a network of interactions, rather than unitary and disconnected statements and positions from either regulators or media-industry participants.

2.3. An inherited system of media control

In connecting mass media to identity creation, it is particularly relevant to look at studies on the operation of regulation. This is notably an area in which governments and other vested interests often have significant weight. Given the location and the time of this study, it is particularly relevant to look at "inherited regulation". [19] However, as the first trans-Atlantic broadcast occurred in 1921, and the first European broadcast to

[16] Leslie John Martin, "Press and Radio in Palestine Under the British Mandate," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (1949): 186–193.
[17] McQuail, *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory*.4
[18] At least prior to the 1980s, when mass media was often deregulated
[19] Notably, Britain maintained much of the system of press regulation which the Ottoman regime had used, such as large deposits for publishers as well as pre-publication 'vetting'.

the Middle East was in 1934, a view on the history of magazine and newspaper regulation in the Ottoman period is the closest it is possible to get. Through observing this particular topic, it is possible to see both mutual expectations of the press and the regulatory body, as well as an ideology of information control. Despite British best intentions, such as Allenby's declaration[20] that there would be no more censorship, these attitudes appear to have been hard to move away from.

Ayalon's history of the Arab Print Press gives a good overview to the history of censorship in the region. [21] In this, he situates printing within the greater history of Ottoman integration into the European political and economic system. The development of state bulletins, in this view, laid the conceptual framework and categories for later print – and, by extension, later mediums in general. The narrative he weaves is of the Istanbul court being concerned with limiting poor media reports of Egyptian and Ottoman practice in European journals. This led to the purchase of shares in French newspapers by Isma'il Ali.[22] As concerns domestic regulation, the first law of publication was enacted in 1857, and contained provisions which were to continue to hold weight into the time of the Mandate. This includes one of the first controls in the region over the reporting of political sensitive or events likely to incite the population.[23] These policy tools were to mark a long lasting, concerted, but ultimately fruitless effort to control pernicious ideas percolating into and within the Empire. Journalists were to be licensed, and publications censored before publication. [24] Furthermore, through an

[20] Discussed below
[21] Ami Ayalon, *The press in the Arab Middle East : a history* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).
[22] Mohamad Ali's grandson
[23] Mustafa Kabha, *The Palestinian Press As Shaper of Public Opinion 1929-39: Writing Up a Storm* (Vallentine Mitchell, 2007).xiv.
[24] The requirement that journals and newspapers had to be seen by government officials prior to their publishing.

expansive use of incentives and punishments, the state endeavoured to bring informal controls over published material. This culminated in an attempt to instigate a state owned publication, al-Sultanat,[25] which was intended to appear as if it were private. This was an approach which was to gain much traction right up until the Suez crisis of 1956.

The period until 1948 is often seen as integral to the creation of the Palestinian national narrative.[26] In this, the development of a national press, can be seen as being bound by territory and not religion. Mustafa Kabha, in *'Writing Up A Storm',*[27] surveys the controls which were placed over the press in Palestine under late Ottoman and early British rule. His focus is on the fostering of national identity and the particular manner in which rulers sought to regulate this. He highlights 1876 as the beginning of officially sanctioned, and state controlled, mass media in Jerusalem, as it was in this year that two state sanctioned presses, which were both owned by the *mutasarrifiyya,*[28] were launched. However, Kabha's focus on a media counter-narrative, with particular reference to alternative journals in Ottoman and Mandate territory, puts him at odds with standard texts on the matter. His survey of the pre-1929 period sees significant value in minority publications, which often foreshadowed later developments in terms of the display and deployment of Palestinian identity. In particular, the media environment on which he focuses prior to 1929 saw discussions on the sale of Arab lands to Jews, which helped develop the discourse of resistance. His evaluation of the

[25] Ayalon, *The press in the Arab Middle East*.24
[26] Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (Columbia University Press, 2009); Weldon C Matthews, *Confronting an empire, constructing a nation Arab nationalists and popular politics in mandate Palestine* (London; New York; New York: I.B. Tauris ; Distributed by Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), http://site.ebrary.com/id/10156505.
[27] Kabha, *The Palestinian Press As Shaper of Public Opinion 1929-39*.
[28] A district governor

newspaper form as both constituent and formative of the development of national identity therefore foreshadows the current study in a number of ways. It evaluates the ways in which the British authorities engaged with self-confident Arab publicists and journalists. It also underscores an official fear of unmitigated publishing and, by extension, broadcasting rights. In this light, the British placed themselves squarely in the centre of this system as soon as they arrived in the territory, defining their policies in relations to those of the past. Particularly important to this is a proclamation of General Allenby after the conquest of Jerusalem, in which he announced that there would be no further censorship of the press. This position was significantly altered by the British in the following years, but serves as a deliberately calculated 'break' from the previous system of media governance.

Dajani offers the dominant narrative as regards the development of Arab press relations. [29] His account gives a nuanced view of the geographic disparity of Ottoman control over media matters and how this affected the manner in which the Divine Porte managed its international profile. The contention of this approach is that regions of the empire which were experiencing politically tumultuous times and popular unrest were less likely to be as firmly controlled by central authorities. These areas tended to be more likely to have non-regime presses established, as both a form of identity and a demonstration of freedom from Istanbul's authority. That much of the Levantine coast had been administratively separated by international intervention served to strengthen this as a 'cradle' of technological development: The period immediately after British invasion, and after the 1929 riots, acted to significantly increase interest in and the number of Arabic news sources. Dajani's position appears here as in contrast to that of

[29] Nabil Dajani, "Arab Press," in *Arab media : globalization and emerging media industries*, ed. Khalil Rinnawi et al. (Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2011), 45–66.

Kabha, in suggesting that the press developed under conditions of opportunity and interest, but did not necessarily act as a key catalyst in forming the popular perceptions which brought these issues to large scale interest and awareness.

2.4. Radio as a unique set of media engagements

To a great extent, radio systems in the Western World have come to be seen as an outdated, and often irrelevant, technology. Many of the metrics of development which used to include radio as an indicator of economic development no longer include it, and now prefer to concentrate on other communications technologies. These tend to be both mutually responsive such as telecommunications, and 'one-to-many' or networked, such as the internet or, increasingly, broadband internet. This has left something of a historical patina over the study of radio as a medium, and also leaves understanding of it comparatively static. However, this is not to say that it has always been like this. Borderless communications such as radio were perhaps one of the biggest disruptive technologies of the nineteenth and twentieth century, fundamentally changing almost all fields of social and economic engagement.

One of the most notable studies on this topic is Headrick, who also contributes to larger discussions on the effect which technology has on the political processes into which it integrates.[30] Clearly this topic has superficial cognates with more contemporaneous situations, and in addition some of the underlying premises remain the same. However, this comprehensive work does not fully cover the particularities of the situation. Whilst Britain and the BBC are covered in his work, colonial broadcasting as a topic is mainly viewed through French territories. His particular focus on the

[30] Daniel R. Headrick, *The Invisible Weapon: Telecommunications and International Politics, 1851-1945* (OUP USA, 1992).

international nature of the telegraph offers interesting inroads into denaturalising the PBS as an inevitable formation in relation to Britain, as well as underlining the impossibility of viewing any technology in a politically neutral fashion.

Almost certainly, one of the most fruitful scholars on the entire subject area of radio in the Middle East is Douglas Boyd, who has operated a long term project surveying the medium in the Middle East.[31] Boyd's works, particular those about international radio broadcasting in general, offer some insights into the reasons for which states invested significant resources into being able to internationally broadcast. His view that there are four core reasons for this practice,[32] are equivalent to his evaluation that there are seven reasons for people to listen.[33] However, his underlying evaluation is that 'it is hard to find international radio broadcasting without a political viewpoint reflected in their programming'.[34] This is a view which rings true when one considers that a vast amount of both the literature and the radio stations which operate on the world stage have either been overt propaganda, front stations, or nation building enterprises.

It is not surprising, therefore, that a large part of the historic literature on the topic of radio broadcasting is either a criticism of, or a guide to, propaganda techniques.

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[31] Douglas Boyd, "International Broadcasting in Arabic To the Middle East and North Africa," *International Communication Gazette* 22, no. 3 (January 1, 1976): 183–196; Douglas Boyd, "Cross-Cultural International Broadcasting in Arabic," *International Communication Gazette* 32, no. 3 (January 1, 1983): 143–167; Douglas Boyd, "International Radio Broadcasting in Arabic A Survey of Broadcasters and Audiences," *International Communication Gazette* 59, no. 6 (December 1, 1997): 445–472.

[32] i) to enhance national prestige, ii) to promote commercial interests, iii) to attempt religious or political indoctrination or in support of religion or ideology, iv) to foster cultural ties.

[33] i)to hear news and information programming, ii)to be entertained, iii) to learn (i.e. languages), iv)to hear religious or political broadcasts (i.e. to have views reinforced), v) to enhance ones status, vi) to/in protest, vii) to pursue a hobby.

[34] Douglas Boyd, "International Radio Broadcasting: Technical Developments and Listening Patterns in the Developing World," *Space, Communication and Broadcasting* 4, no. 1 (1986): 25–32.29.

Thomas Grandin's 1939 '*The Political Use of Radio'*[35] was written in the context of a Britain that felt that it was being threatened over the radio waves. Italian broadcasts had been directly attacking the foreign policy of Britain, for instance calling into question the ability of Eden to manoeuvre Britain through tensions with Germany. The underlying, and often persuasive, narrative which Grandin makes through this text is that Britain was woefully unprepared for a new type of war – one which happened over the airwaves. A notable example was an incident in which Jews were attacked and defeated by pro-Italian Muslims in Tunis. The Muslims[36] were reported as supporting the Italian state, and as being strong in the face of the Jewish people. However, it later transpired that the cinema in front of which this had happened had been previously torn down. Unsurprisingly, this was a lie – but one which does demonstrate the uncertainty which could be created with intelligent use of international broadcasting.

Another significant, although ultimately unsubstantiated,[37] claim in Grandin's, now rather antiquated, account of the ten years prior to 1939 is that Italian agents sold reduced price radio sets to Arab café owners – and had them set only to receive Italian radio broadcasts. This will be treated below, but confusion and slight disgust appears whenever the question of subsidised radio ownership, used as part of an aggressive strategy, is aired. The first part of this was the belief that '[these] broadcasts were effective incitements to rebellion'.[38] The second was that this was not how radio was supposed to work: The institutional set-up of Britain could not, at that time, conceive of such a blatant twisting of the truth.

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[35] Thomas Burnham Grandin, *The Political Use of the Radio*, 1971st ed., History of Broadcasting, Radio to Television (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1939).
[36] Tt that time called Mohammadans
[37] Boyd also maintains that he has not found any proof of this practice ever taking place. .Douglas Boyd, "Sharq Al-Adna/The Voice of Britain The UK's 'Secret' Arabic Radio Station and Suez War Propaganda Disaster," *Gazette* 65, no. 6 (December 1, 2003): 443–455.
[38] Grandin, *The Political Use of the Radio*.52

This brings into focus one of the more bountiful areas of study, regarding the manner in which Britain's radio engagement has been seen – that of the set-up of the BBC, and in comparison to this, the American system. The BBC was, from the beginning of its existence, required to be an impartial producer of news. It was on this line that the PBS was later designed, as well as the principles on which BBC Arabic operated. It certainly seems, at times, that the British Government were sticking by the 1937 *International Convention concerning the Use of Broadcasting in the Cause of Peace,*[39] a document originally passed by a number of high contracting parties. [40] The document functionally establishes that, in an ideal world, states should not broadcast incendiary material into the borders or areas of interest of one another, in particular if it is in a language not spoken by the transmitting country. Italy's use of Radio Bari, to broadcast in Arabic, is certainly one example of this.

Here exists a curious blind spot in the literature of pre-WW2 Arabic broadcasting, in so much as the German 'Radio Zeesen' is somewhat under-reported in comparison to its Italian counterpart. This is a strange situation, as it is maintained by several authors to have been a significant station from its launch in early 1939. [41] The broadcasts, which came from near Berlin, are often discussed exclusively in relation to the detail that the former Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, al-Husseini, gave his time and energy to it. However, the station does offer an appropriate springboard from which to position an approach to German broadcasting, something which was, at times, far more

[39] *UN General Assembly, International Convention Concerning the Use of Broadcasting in the Cause of Peace (Geneva, 1936)*, 1938, http://treaties.un.org/pages/LONViewDetails.aspx?src=LON&id=509&lang=en.
[40] Only ratified by the UK, New Zealand, Australia, India, Brazil, Denmark, Luxembourg and France (as well as the dependencies and controlled states of these) by 1938
[41] Matthias Küntzel, "National Socialism and Anti-Semitism in the Arab World," *Jewish Political Studies Review* 17, no. i-ii (2005): 99–118., Boyd, "International Broadcasting in Arabic To the Middle East and North Africa."

pernicious than anything which Bari broadcast. Furthermore, it underscored German interest in the region – acting almost as a latent threat to the maintenance of Allied dominance through the Eastern Mediterranean. Much like the British in its early stations transmitting 'straight' news, the creation of an aggressive radio strategy allowed the injection of the 'right kind of news' into the area. In this case, this was of extensive discussions about British and Jewish collusion – a topic which was considered to be of a highly sensitive nature by the mandatory authorities.

Arguments concerning broadcasting models are also carried on by Marquis[42], Saerchinger[43] and Wasburn[44], who concern themselves respectively with: the difference between public service and private sector organisations, the effect of public service ownership on the production and dissemination of mis- and dis-information, and how state-controlled enterprises create and maintain control over the social construction of reality. Marquis' discussion concerns the differences between the American model of broadcasting – of a division into networks in order to more efficiently attract advertising revenues, and the British public service model – with a focus on neutrality in the presentation of materials and news. One of the main differences (despite the issue of neutrality) between the two was the need, in the American model, to fill the hours of the day with broadcasting. This was an unheard of undertaking – Marquis suggests that a concert station required almost 7,000 hours of concerts per year [45] - and so it instituted

[42] A. G. Marquis, "Written on the Wind: The Impact of Radio During the 1930s," *Journal of Contemporary History* 19, no. 3 (January 1, 1984): 385–415.
[43] Cesar Saerchinger, "Radio as a Political Instrument.," *Foreign Affairs (pre-1986)* 16, no. 000002 (January 1938): 244.
[44] Philo C Wasburn, *Broadcasting propaganda : international radio broadcasting and the construction of Political reality* (Westport; London: Praeger, 1992).
[45] Marquis, "Written on the Wind."386.

new dynamics into radio stations acquiring listeners.[46] Listeners, always important to broadcasters, became an economic imperative.

The BBC model, on the other hand, did not have the same economic do-or-die determinism as entities in the American system. It had economic interests in mind, but not necessarily at the heart of its operations after it changed from a company to a corporation in 1927. Market forces did not necessitate the penetration of new markets, at least domestically. The BBC was seen to avoid the '*prostitution'* of the America market, and also the '*propaganda'* of the German,[47] but should not be viewed as neutral or naïve to either of these forces. Saerchinger, writing in a pre-WW2 context, takes the view that one should not see the BBC as passive in comparison to either of these models. His view is that foreign language broadcasting and the Empire Service represent the superlative 'democratic' embodiments of external radio relations. No less, he equates the development of international radio facilities and infrastructure as an equivalent component of re-armament as that of the navy, although this notion does not entirely seem fair to the armed forces. In particular, this mirrors the growth of transmitter capacity – which robbed states of merely having one or two radio interlocutors, positioned safely on its borders. It forced them to encounter any potential aggressors with the potential to broadcast internationally. This evaluation, based on the experience of 1938, sees a Britain feeling threatened, but using its resources to bolster defences through offering clear, unbiased news to those who would hear it.

Wasburn, writing some fifty five years after Saechinger, maintains roughly the same points, merely couched in terms of the accumulated theory of the times. The

[46] In fact, the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) was formed by its shareholders to increase the market size for their radio sets.
[47] Marquis, "Written on the Wind."402.

premise that all international broadcasting is on some level political is held to be true. However, for Wasburn the battle is over the creation of symbolic realities, not over territory itself. Any competition between different stations or national positions should be understood as being over how accurately external actors can match domestic understandings of the world – namely, how well matches can be made to local tastes and social conceptions. Wasburn posits that 'differences in the constructed realities of the speaker and a foreign audience may lead the audience to view the speaker's assertions as lacking meaning or credibility'.[48] This is a notion that raises questions as to the success of radio programming in the Mandate era, especially given that managerial and editorial staff were drawn mainly from London. The natural conclusion of this view is that there will always be symbolic (and often insurmountable) barriers between the intentions of foreign broadcasters, and those who consume their output. That all of the three stations discussed in this study are certainly within this remit, that of '[deriving] their meaning from the political culture in which they are embedded',[49] which is not the culture of their recipients - creates the structural tensions which emanate from the topic. British political elites therefore hoped to shape an audience, as well as a message. In this, they were attempting to overcome the divergences in the constructed realities of London and the Arab world. The way in which this vision was articulated was not necessarily couched in these terms for the duration of the period. However, the result of this policy would be to leap the gap of different understandings, with the intention of making broadcasts more effective. It can therefore be seen that the question of how to pull the sentiment of Arab listeners, and to push broadcasting notions towards them,

[48] Wasburn, *Broadcasting propaganda*.52.
[49] Ibid.xxi.

was actually the umbrella question of almost all of the policy changes made over the period.

To develop this argument, the extension of specific radio stations to certain areas can be seen as a way in which the sending state seeks to shape the social reality of those who receive the information and transmissions. That this is a particular kind of propaganda is clear – and, given the specific context of a Britain in partial imperial decline, the social reality it sought to create was of a more powerful and integrated empire. In this, Britain was seeking to 'create the image of power without investing in power's more costly substance'.[50]

If Wasburn's theoretical perspective does not necessarily offer insight when looking back in time, Brunner's survey on the effect of radio broadcasting technologies on the worldview of rural inhabitants in the Middle East in the early 1950s does.[51] His study suggests that listening to the radio does have a noticeable effect on the way in which consumers engaged with the radio, and in particular with news services. This brought interesting results to the fore, particularly concerning who tuned-in, and what they were deliberately listening to. This survey offers a view of radio as a specific tool of the listener, with a reported 80% of the population planning ahead to hear particular programmes. Whilst, admittedly, this was a survey conducted after the introduction of all British broadcasting interests into the region, it does certainly show a rural population as interested in the world as their urban counterparts.

[50] Robert Paul Shay, *British rearmament in the thirties : politics and profits* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977); Wasburn, *Broadcasting propaganda*.
[51] Edmund des. Brunner, "Rural Communications Behaviour and Attitudes in the Middle East," *Rural Sociology* 18, no. 2 (June 6, 1953): 149–155.

Abu Lughod's later, and more in depth, study of the Egyptian countryside offers further views into a 're-orientation' of the horizon of the political reality. [52] His argument, that exposure to news about the outside world makes consumers more interested in it, despite the fact that this information will not have the slightest effect on the lived experience of the listeners. To prove this, a test was carried concerning the news of the death of Mohammad V of Morocco in 1961. The level of knowledge of the event was significantly above what would have been expected, and also arrived faster than most newspapers were able to publish. People heard radio news and passed it on by word of mouth. This was clearly the most effective way for news to be passed between different members of a society, even if it was news disconnected from any form of reality within the lived experience of the population.

Egypt was not the only place in which studies were undertaken. In fact, one of the most in depth studies on radio in the Middle East happened during the Mandate era, involved participants in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon, and was conducted by the American University of Beirut under the administration of John Stuart Dodd.[53] This survey, which at points is both systematic and thorough, gives a particularly effective view into the listening public not found anywhere else, particularly within Palestine. The survey clarifies certain questions, such as how many people had full range radio receivers,[54] and also which parts of which programmes were listened to.[55] Beyond this, it demonstrates the ordering of which state listens to which stations. This shows that local stations often rank above only the BBC Arabic broadcast. This showed that a large

[52] Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, "The Mass Media and Egyptian Village Life," *Social Forces* 42, no. 1 (October 1, 1963): 97–104.
[53] Stuart C Dodd, *A Pioneer Radio Poll in Lebanon, Syria and Palestine* (Jerusalem: Government Printer, 1943).
[54] Apparently 91% of all sets could receive long, short and medium wave - Ibid.4
[55] The vast majority of people listen to news, but very few people listen to colloquial Arabic broadcasts or educational lessons.

number of Arabs were listening to the Palestine Broadcasting Service. However, the survey also took answers from the Jewish population of Palestine who were counted separately within Palestine and who were also questioned in a different way. This was done through postal questionnaires, rather than interviews which raised some interesting questions about the Jews being discussed. It particularly shows the implicit assumptions about the literate nature of all those who were questioned, be it Jewish or Arab.

2.5. Alternative radio development – Challenging the BBC model through colonial broadcasts

In the way that it is of interest to view the same geography, over a set time period, it is also interesting and useful to de-naturalise developments through looking at different territories, at a similar time. A valuable analogue for this is that of the British role in developing and maintaining a media environment focussed around radio in Colonial India. The available documentary evidence of British rule in India has been expanding vigorously since decolonization, and allows a demonstration of how Palestine, whilst being technically a Mandate territory, was often treated as if it were a colony. In particular, the practice of establishing mass news distribution spread over both multiple language groups and difficult terrain provides a valuable comparison.

Pinkerton's article on radio broadcasting in the Raj[56] summons up several other similarities. Firstly, he highlights a tension between the BBC, the Government of India, and the Colonial Office over what powers should be delegated to whom, and why. This view of interactions in terms of the ethereal (i.e. radio programming itself) and the institutional (who gets to decide what is being broadcast) offers a lot to the

[56] Alasdair Pinkerton, "Radio and the Raj: Broadcasting in British India (1920–1940)," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 18, no. 02 (March 14, 2008): 167–191.

present study. Secondly, creating a radio station that could both transmit and be intelligible to the correct groups in society was a major concern. It seems that the desire for those in large villages and small towns to be able to hear the India Broadcasting Corporation was not quite met by the availability of electricity to power these devices which created an interesting tension between the ideal and the plausible. Thirdly, his study sees India potentially falling under the 'radio spell' of the USSR as well as how the British Government was prepared to backstop investment in order to ensure that this did not happen under any circumstances.

This last idea, of a British fear of what could best be understood as 'hypnosis by radio', can be seen across other colonial endeavours. Charles Hamm's discussion of the manner in which South Africa integrated an Afrikaans language section into an English station[57] displays a system which found it hard to integrate different linguistic worlds into one designed around a national identity. The South African state, in constructing almost all of the radio infrastructure in the country, as well as nationalising control in 1927, displayed a remarkable fear of what private interests could do if given enough control over the distribution of information. As it was, they were quite happy to model a system on the BBC – only with an added emphasis on recreating and developing the class divides which existed in British society at the beginning of the twentieth century. After the establishment of the 'separate development' policy in 1948, the government took an ever more penetrative role in 'sifting and arranging' news, often to the detriment of other peoples and regimes surrounding its borders. With large swathes of the state not receiving radio transmissions, the government was able to control who and what, was listened to. The assumption which leads to this departure

[57] Charles Hamm, "'The Constant Companion of Man': Separate Development, Radio Bantu and Music," *Popular Music* 10, no. 02 (November 17, 2008): 147.

from universal access is clear – that information transfer can be dangerous to states that do not enjoy absolute legitimacy.

Lelyveld clarifies some of these points,[58] again in reference to the All India Radio (AIR) Station, on which there is a vast literature. He positions his argument in the realm of the transfer of technology between the core and the periphery of Empire, allowing for the medium to be viewed as a specifically European manner of interaction. This places European fears and hopes for radio onto a trial population. That the technology was immensely powerful in terms of reach was clear, but whether it could enforce or inform anything else was always, and remains, unclear. However, the importance of creating and defending the ethereal imperial space surely trumped concerns that empire broadcasting may be have been, for want of a better phrase, a white elephant.

2.6. Palestine and Radio – contiguous studies

Although there are limited studies which deal exclusively with the topic of specific radio stations in Palestine, there are a few surveys completed close to the period of this study. What literature does deal with the subject tends to view this as part of a greater narrative, either of the balance of power in the Eastern Mediterranean in the run up to the Second World War, or as part of the Mandate period of the Palestine/Israel conflict. The BBC as an international broadcaster, especially with Arabic as the first foreign language channel it hosted, has also brought some light to the topic, but the literature has tended to treat other elements of British stances as peripheral.

[58] D. Lelyveld, "Transmitters and Culture: The Colonial Roots of Indian Broadcasting," *South Asia Research* 10, no. 1 (May 1, 1990): 41–52.

There are a small number of studies which deal with the specific radio stations. Two of these stand out as written around the period in question, based on first-hand experience of living through the period.[59] Both prove very useful in creating a narrative grounded around 'living through' the period, and experiencing at first hand the forces which were in play.

Other works see the media environment of Palestine through the lens of Italian and later German belligerency in the Eastern Mediterranean. This is a trend which goes from Barbour[60] in 1951, who almost singlehandedly lays the development of an international foreign language system to national conflict, to Williams in 2006,[61] who evaluates Italian radio propaganda as a tool of peacetime diplomacy. The latter study, based on extensive Italian archival research, sees an Italy willing to create a public image of itself as a friend of oppressed Muslim populations everywhere – and of a policy which even paints Mussolini as the 'sword of Islam'. That Italy suspected that its imperial ambitions would be weakened by the creation of a Jewish state is considered undeniable by Williams, and it is from this standpoint that she views the development of Radio Bari: to attempt to subvert the goals of the Balfour declaration.

MacDonald offers one of the most discussed works on British Middle East broadcasting,[62] and clearly draws a line between the interest of the Foreign and Colonial Office in radio programmes in the Middle East region in the late 1930's.

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[59] i.e. Avida Mordechai, "Broadcasting in Israel," *Middle Eastern Affairs* 11, no. 3 (November 1952): 323–324., Martin, "Press and Radio in Palestine Under the British Mandate."
[60] Nevill Barbour, *Nisi Dominus a Survey of the Palestine Controversy* (Institute for Palestine Studies, 1969)., and was a journalist who lived in Palestine for six years during the Mandate
[61] Manuela A Williams, *Mussolini's propaganda abroad subversion in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, 1935-1940* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), http://site.ebrary.com/id/10273139.
[62] Callum A. MacDonald, "Radio Bari: Italian Wireless Propaganda in the Middle East and British Countermeasures 1934-38," *Middle Eastern Studies* 13, no. 2 (May 1, 1977): 195–207.

However, his view can be somewhat myopic, in so much as it precludes any other reason for the development of radio infrastructure in the region.

Stanton, in her work on the history of the PBS,[63] refutes the notion that the PBS was conceptually developed and created in order to counter this threat of audio-invasion by Radio Bari. She offers fascinating insights into the development of the station and its programmes, as well as and perhaps more importantly, the development of the market for radio receivers. Additionally, her study evaluates many personal narratives and diaries in order to establish a lens of micro-engagement, as well as one based on the macro-ideological, through which to examine the medium and period.

The desire of British authorities to occupy the entire spectrum of radio broadcasting in Palestine can be seen in several other works, most notably the work of Douglas Boyd. The first of his works is the development of the Sharq al-Adna station[64], originally at Jaffa, and then at Cyprus. This station also operated under the name of the Middle East Broadcasting Station, amongst others. The station, most probably built in 1941 by Allied intelligence operatives, operated as a "clandestine asset", [65] meaning that it did not widely disseminate the fact that it was owned and controlled by the British government.[66] The future of this station – notably its unmasking during the Suez crisis[67] – dominates the rest of the narrative history, and somewhat overshadows the fascinating foundation of this broadcasting platform.

[63] Andrea L Stanton, "A Little Radio Is a Dangerous Thing: State Broadcasting in Mandate Palestine, 1936-1949", 2007.
[64] Boyd, "Sharq al-Adna/The Voice of Britain The UK's 'Secret' Arabic Radio Station and Suez War Propaganda Disaster."
[65] Or a 'grey station'
[66] The ownership of the station was actually a 'National Secret' for much of its existence.
[67] During the Suez Crisis, the majority of the then-Arab (mainly Egyptian) broadcasters at Sharq al-Adna left their posts after being instructed to give propaganda as to the intentions of the Egyptian Government. The station was then re-launched as the 'Voice of Britain'.

Boyd's second major work on the attempt of the British Government to maintain dominance over the airwaves is concerned with secret Hebrew broadcasting, [68]which he posits were an important way for the Jewish community to produce an identity, as well as communicate in such a way as create a political discourse outside of the elite. Some of these 'stations' (although these may have been very small groups of people) later would become the official Israeli state broadcaster 'Kol Israel' – lending, in retrospect, a faint air of absurdity to some of the extreme measures British authorities pursued in trying to enforce radio silence.

But this was silence in order to allow for British voices. The perceived impact of the PBS and Sharq al-Adna on local political aspirations were in relation to the BBC Arabic service. Founded in part owing to a panic regarding propaganda broadcasts, and part due to the desire to project British ideals internationally, BBC Arabic has maintained its presence as one of the most significant vessels of British intentions. Partner, in his treatment of the first fifty years of the first non-English BBC broadcasting service, [69] makes clear the concerns which were held by almost all levels of policy makers towards the end of the 1930s. Drawing on BBC archives, he gives a more nuanced view of the dynamics between BBC and Government, not to mention the Mandate Government in Palestine.

[68] Douglas Boyd, "Hebrew-language Clandestine Radio Broadcasting During the British Palestine Mandate," *Journal of Radio Studies* 6, no. 1 (1999): 101–115.
[69] Peter Partner, *Arab voices : the BBC Arabic Service, 1938-1988* (London: British Broadcasting Corp., 1988).

2.7. Issues observed through the literature

To sum up the writings above, the literature on the subject of British radio policy stances in Palestine is wide, deep, and very fragmented. Different approaches and institutional biases, utilising a variety of different sources and theoretical bases, have added to a general understanding of the topic. There are convenient launching points on any number of issues. The topic area lies alongside any number of key research topics (such as the intersection of technical modernity with traditional societies, the identity formation of the Palestinian National movement, and the decline of the British Empire, to name but three). There are a number of interlocking institutions and personnel, and the entire whole was documented with a thoroughness which is both refreshing and onerous. However, as Stanton notes, this is curiously an underwritten topic. Through a close reading of official Government discussions, both in the Cabinet in London and the Executive in Palestine, this study aims to illuminate the beginning of the systems which produced– the official radio stations of Jordan and Israel, as well as one of the most respected international Arabic language broadcaster. It must also be remembered, however, that this system also sparked one of the great PR fiascos of the tail-end of the British Empire.

3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Peel Report of 1937, when looking at the Zionist and Arab visions of Palestine, came to the conclusion that:

> *"To explain how [that] unhappy situation has come about a brief historical introduction is required. The present problem of Palestine, indeed, is unintelligible without a knowledge of the history that lies behind it, rooted so deeply in the past."*[70]

This is as true an explanation for the situation in the country from '36 to '48 as it is for the years which precede them. It is in this light that this chapter will outline some of the key treaties and events upon which an image of the territory can be hung.

This chapter will be divided into four sections. The first will be concerned with Ottoman control over Palestine, the second the time between the beginning of the First World War and the installation of a civilian administration, the third the period 1923 until 1929, and the fourth 1929 until 1936. This chapter will be aimed at the political history of Palestine, with discussions on radio broadcasting occupying the analysis sections later. This chapter has been designed for those who are not familiar with the history of Palestine, and so can be read lightly by those who are.

[70] Great Britain Palestine Royal Commission, *Palestine Royal Commission Report Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament July, 1937 [With Maps]* (ppxii404pl9London, 1937).2

3.1. The Ottoman Period

3.1.1. Territorial identity

Palestine as a territorial entity is one which often appears projected into the past, rather than to have existed as a contiguous realm before the breakup of the Ottoman Empire, marked by the treaty of Sevres.[71] In this, any understanding of Palestine must view it as a modern concept – one designed rather than created. For instance, it was fully possible to travel from Jerusalem to Damascus prior to the First World War without any travel documents.[72] Even into the British Mandate, issues concerning delineation continually plagued administrators, with communities existing in liminal spaces along boundaries – not to mention those who made their livings as smugglers into the Levant.[73]

As such, under Ottoman rule, the territory existed under the administrative control of either Beirut or Jerusalem – and was considered part of Greater Syria. As Krämer notes, a 'conceptual entity' did exist, and enjoyed loose borders which *'stretched from the Litani to the Negev, bordered on the West by the Mediterranean and to the East by the Jordan valley'*.[74] However, more often than not this boundary was shaped by power relations between neighbours than by any internal dynamics. Under Ottoman rule, the area was repeatedly fused and subdivided with other areas within the region, and the term "Palestine" fell out of official (or at least regular) usage. However, the term was sometimes mentioned in court documents. Needless to say, the unity of the

[71] *Anglo American Committee Of Enquiry*, 1946. Appendix IV.
[72] Barbour, *Nisi Dominus a Survey of the Palestine Controversy*.106.
[73] Naomi Shepherd, *Ploughing Sand: British Rule in Palestine, 1917-1948* (Rutgers University Press, 2000).
[74] Gudrun Krämer, *A History of Palestine: From the Ottoman Conquest to the Founding of the State of Israel*, trans. Gudrun Krämer and Graham Harman (Princeton University Press, 2011).

term ‘Palestine’ - and the distinct, bordered administrative area which was used by the British - bordered on novelty in the area – one based more on creation than of inheritance. Krämer uses the phrase ‘Arabs from the later Palestine Mandate area’ to circumvent the problem of nomenclature.

There was, to the end of the First World War, no unitary set of definitions for the territory which were bundled together by the Mandate government, and preceded by the British invading force. Needless to say, borders between different units were often overlapping and contradictory. Divisions which were used for tax purposes were not necessarily the same as those which were used for the Christian church hierarchy, nor of Islamic judges. [75] Additionally, trade tariffs were often levied at borders of different geographic divisions, adding to a complicated system in which there was not a traditionally understood ‘central’ authority for the larger ‘Greater Syria’ region. Added to this was a road system which was severely underdeveloped, meaning that many villages and towns were functionally autonomous until approaching the turn of the 20th century. It is in this light that an understanding of a distinct ‘Palestine’, including one of a shared political knowledge as well as an integrated economy, must be put.

3.1.2. Ottoman practice of rule in Palestine

In terms of social developments during the period up until the First World War, the Ottoman Tanzimat reform process had made significant dents in erstwhile traditional relations of power, notably landlord and client relationships. A key change was the strengthening of the urban elites in relation to rural clan leaders. In order to maintain political and social relevance, a number of rural notables migrated to the city.

[75] Ibid.

Part of the net effect of this was a weakening of the negotiating powers of the rural and farming communities, as well as beginning the process of a large amount of farming land in the countryside being legally owned by absentee landlords. [76]

A simultaneous, and interconnected, development was the millet system. Under this regulatory framework, religious and ethnic communities were represented by their highest clerics or lawyers at the Divine Porte in Istanbul. The reality of this in Palestine was that religious communities were the prime identifier of people – leading to a situation in which a senior Islamic judge in Jerusalem held a higher position than the military or administrative chiefs of the time. These two processes were the foundations of what has come to be known as a 'policy of notables'[77], in which elites were co-opted into the decision making and administrative processes of the state. This practice, first started in the late Ottoman period, indubitably was continued well into the first half of the British Mandate period.

The final element of the Ottoman government which is of particular interest to the period after 1936 is how Jewish immigration, and the Jewish population itself, were both treated and considered. Primarily, the first *Aliya*[78] started around 1882, with a wave of migrants from Tsarist Russia finding themselves in the province[79]. While this was clearly permissible, with another *aliya*'s making ground between 1904 and 1914, it did not go unnoticed. The Ottoman state banned the sale of land by pre-existing Jewish communities to new European and Russian Jews. [80] This was a measure clearly

[76] Tom Segev, *One Palestine, complete : Jews and Arabs under the Mandate* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000). REF
[77] Krämer, *A History of Palestine*.p.74
[78] literally translated as 'ascent', but meaning Jewish migration to Israel
[79] Ibid.pg121.
[80] Ibid.

designed to stop new communities establishing themselves as permanent residents at the time, and foreshadows the most significant legal dimension of any future struggle.

3.2. World War I to a Civilian Government (1923)

3.2.1. The First World War

The First World War, whilst deeply formative on the region in terms of outcomes, did not hold much in terms of military process. What is clear is that from the moment the Turco-German alliance was activated, the contiguity of a British controlled Egypt and a Palestine controlled by the Ottoman Empire posed a tactical problem. In terms of the question of how much interest or manpower was needed in the Middle East to guarantee the safety of lines of communication to India, there was only ever critical evaluation after the war. During the War, this appears to have been considered an obvious feature of strategy.

The allied campaign through the Middle East was long, and contained many interesting asides such as the adventures of TE Lawrence (of Arabia) in the Arabian Peninsula. It began with the attempted invasion of Egypt by Ottoman troops in early 1915, and ended with the Armistice of Mudros in late October 1918. [81] However, for this thesis, the most pertinent facts of the campaign are that, in the advance up towards Palestine, Allenby's force was twice repelled from Gaza before being successful. The Allies conquered Jerusalem in late 1917, after a long campaign through the areas between the Suez Canal and the city itself. Stories about the event vary, [82] but it seems

[81] Signed aboard the HMS Agamemnon in the harbour of Mudros, on the Greek island Lemnos.
[82] There are reports that Allenby deliberately overexposed pictures of the 'incorrect' people engaging in these activities, leaving an odd hole in the history of the event.

that a reasonable number of both Jerusalem dignitaries and commoners attempted to surrender the city to an equivalent number of British troops and officers. The why's and the wherefores' to this particular element of Palestinian history are less important, however, than the fact that they happened – Jerusalem was now under the control of the British Empire, and the Ottoman Empire was about to be dissected.

3.2.1.1. Wartime Dealings

What can be said, however, is that the First World War in the Middle East was far more defined by secret agreements than by military manoeuvrings. Deals were often made in secret, in order for one or more parties to gain a key strategic edge.

The British were no stranger to these notions. To an extent, double dealing was core to their regional war strategy. They offered proclamations, implied and explicit, which led all sides to believe that they would be able to take advantage of Britain's largesse in establishing or maintaining political control, often in territories of their own choice. However, British policy was more closely connected to the maintenance of imperial prestige, competition with the trajectories of French, Russian and Italian desires and expectations, and the defence of India. These multi-polar negotiations were to be inevitably problematic, and as such it is of little surprise that the system which was formed after the end of the First World War did not fully please any parties.

There was also internal dissent within the British ruling elite as to the wisdom of occupying the territory of Palestine after the end of the war – a feature which would not disappear over the coming twenty six years. The arguments made in favour of a defence of the Suez Canal were undercut by Lord Raglan in a debate in the House of

Lords, [83] who maintained it would be an inevitably tricky and costly expense, which the country could ill afford. This view was backed by Field Marshall Sir Henry Wilson, who was the highest ranking British officer in the Middle East. He also took the stance that the British Empire could no longer afford to enforce order in countries which were not vital to its interests – and Palestine, in his eyes, fell under this category.[84] Whilst hindsight supports this view, it is the key to understanding the internal dynamism which established the system of the next twenty five years. Some of the key treaties and statements are addressed below.

3.2.1.1.1. Husain-McMahon correspondence – 1915-16

> *"Before setting out to war in Palestine, the British had gotten themselves tangled up in an evasive and amateurish correspondence with the Arabs"*[85].

So argues Thomas Segev, when viewing the Husain-McMahon correspondence. These letters serve as the cornerstone upon which much Arab suspicion of British interests is based. The 'correspondence' was a series of letters between the Sharif of Mecca, Husain bin-Ali, and the British High Commissioner in Egypt. The letters treat the future of the Arab lands which were at that time under the control of the Ottoman Empire. Their core element was a quid-pro-quo, of the support of the Hashemite dynasty for an Arab rebellion in return for British support of the territorial ambitions of the family. In line with wartime practice, the correspondence was treated as secret, and was not officially released by the British until 1939.

[83] Hansard, *HL Deb 27 March 1923 vol 53 cc669-70*
[84] Segev, *One Palestine, complete*.p.147
[85] Ibid.Pg 4.

The original intentions behind the correspondence, at least in terms of British interest, were threefold. The first was to counter a growing perception that Germany was expanding its influence in the region, and as such may have been able to apply pressure to the communication lines to India (passing through the Suez Canal). The second was to move beyond Britain's support for the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Given the alliance between the Ottoman Empire and Germany in 1914, the sense that the eastern coast of the Mediterranean was under the control of one state suggested that British interests would be best served through a territorial division. The third was to co-opt an Islamic religious authority to act against the potential of the Caliphate based in Istanbul.

These policies converged in the British policy of supporting the Arab revolt, with the payment for this being the gift of a state for the Arab peoples. Whilst, at root, a clear idea, there arose misunderstandings[86] surrounding the second two letters (of October 24th and December 13th 1915) sent from McMahon to the Sherif. Different interpretations of the phrases 'Arab lands', 'Purely Arab' and 'not-purely Arab' were used by the British, which led Sherif to feel that he had been led astray. The fundamental miscomprehension was a British tendency to equate 'Arab' and 'Muslim', whereas the position taken by Faisal was that of an 'Arab' being from the linguistic and ethnic group. As such, it became plausible for regions which had significant Christian and Druze communities to be excluded from the proposed area for an Arab state, as they were 'non-Arab' in the parlance of Britain. To further complicate the proposals, Palestine had not, as mentioned above, been a single administrative entity under Ottoman governance, and so could only be referred to in relation to other areas. The

[86] Which were just as likely to be deliberate as accidental.

correspondences reliance on rather vague 'districts', rather than the pre-existing Ottoman divisions of 'Sanjaqs' or 'villayets', left multiple interpretations likely. Furthermore, the status of any territorial delineation was coloured with *"…regard to those portions of the territories therein in which Great Britain is free to act without detriment to the interests of her Ally, France"*[87]. This condition added a further complication, and was defined by a separate agreement with France to which Husain was not privy.

This exchange of letters was revisited at a conference in 1939[88] (which also happened to be the first time that the letters were officially acknowledged and published), in which the British acknowledged the ambiguity of some of the language. By this stage, however, the issue had passed – and the correspondence was no longer the prime issue of importance.

3.2.1.1.2. Sykes-Picot Agreement – 1916

The second significant 'secret' agreement regarding the boundaries of what would later become the Palestinian Mandate was the Sykes-Picot agreement, made by Sir Mark Sykes representing the British Empire, and by Francois Georges-Picot, representing France in May 1916. This agreement was primarily intended to clarify the respective spheres of influence of Britain, France and Russia given victory over the Ottoman Empire. Of prime importance to the British was to maintain their interest in the region, and indeed to extend them to Iran, but to do this with no common border with Russia. [89] The Ottoman Empire had previously fulfilled this necessity, and now France was sought as a buffer power. The majority of what is now considered Palestine

[87] Text from Peel Report (1937), pp.18-19. Quoted from Krämer, *A History of Palestine*.p145
[88] Ibid.pg.143
[89] Ibid.p.147.

was to be an internationally managed territory, given the significant religious interest vested in it by the three main Abrahamic faiths. However, economic interests of Britain were to be recognised, with territory set aside for a railway line connecting Baghdad (which was to fall within the British zone of exclusive influence) to Haifa. This was to provide transport for oil, which had been recently discovered in Iran. The British navy had switched to oil as its main form of combustion in 1912 under the guidance of Winston Churchill. This made the supply of the fuel of vital strategic interest, and as such was crucial to the nation's naval dominance. Perceptions of other European powers interfering in the transfer of the oil was considered to be a very serious threat, and so should be seen as perhaps one of the more important needs for settlement in the region.

The British appear to have been aware of the conflict which this had with the previously made commitments to an Arab state. However, the needs of war and the presence of a significant British military force were expected to reshape any and all previous commitments in line with a larger strategy the Empire had for the region. What was to become increasingly clear was that the more commitments were made as to the future of the territory, the further away from any single commitment the expected reality drifted. This was a tendency which clearly was to the advantage of Britain, who subsequently took advantage of the ambiguity in order to reach a maximal territorial position prior to the end of the war.

3.2.1.1.3. Balfour Declaration – November 1917

The third major British commitment made during this period, and also perhaps the most controversial, was that to the Zionist movement. The Balfour Declaration, as it

came to be known, was not in the form of a traditional Government paper, but was a published letter between the British Foreign Minister, Lord Arthur Balfour and the Second Baron Rothschild, who was the honorary President of the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland. The text of this letter centred on the assurance of support for "the establishment in Palestine [of] a national home for the Jewish people". [90] The letter was subsequently published in British media on the 9th of November 1917.

Furthermore, rumours of Germany issuing statements in support of Zionism presented a situation in which the British Government felt threatened in this theatre. This mixture was also domestically reinforced by influential political and social supporters of Zionism, as well as a widely held belief in the power of the worldwide Jewish community. Lloyd George, as well as other influential men such as Lord Cecil, the Undersecretary of the Foreign Office, continued to support the idea of the Jews as a vastly powerful group. It was believed that they could control the outcome of the war through their control of capital, could influence the decision making of the American Government, and could control the outcome of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. [91] This support, Lloyd George believed, was worth paying for.

The terms of the Sykes-Picot agreement left large swathes of the Palestinian countryside under the control of an international administration. A support of Zionism therefore gave the British a strong claim to directly assist in this administration, in a way similar to French claims to Syria and Lebanon in support of the Christian communities there. Furthermore, the phrasing used a term new in international law – a 'national home'. This gave British diplomats a great deal of leeway in its interpretation.

[90] Great Britain Palestine Royal Commission, *Palestine Royal Commission Report Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament July, 1937 [With Maps]*.p.22
[91] Segev, *One Palestine, complete*. P.38.

Furthermore, the letter makes reference to the *"existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine"*[92] – and as such, ensures the acknowledgement of the current majority of the population, whilst not explicitly stating what rights they have besides that *"nothing shall be done which may prejudice [their] civil and religious rights"*. [93] The declaration was thereby phrased as to offer apparently all things to all men – whilst in fact making calculated "*considerations of who would be the most useful to British interests under the given circumstances*"[94]. In this particular instance, it clearly appeared that the Jews would be. It was thought that the granting of the possibility to create a 'national home' would enamour them to British, and would eventually lead to the creation of a Jewish commonwealth as a natural ally of Britain.

3.2.2. Military administration after WW1

3.2.2.1. The Zionist Commission

These three statements of intent were made on a war footing, and were thus subject to deliberate ambiguity and strategic deception. Therefore, the military administration imposed on the territory after the Armistice of 1918, initially under General Allenby, had a number of territorial claims under which it had to operate. This certainly fits in with Segev's view that:

> *"The British entered Palestine to defeat the Turks; they stayed there to keep it from the French; they then gave it to the Zionists because they loved "the Jews" even as they loathed them, at once admired and despised them, and above all feared them. They were not guided by strategic considerations, and there was no orderly decision making process."*[95]

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[92] Great Britain Palestine Royal Commission, *Palestine Royal Commission Report Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament July, 1937 [With Maps]*.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Krämer, *A History of Palestine*. P.150
[95] Segev, *One Palestine, complete*. p.33

The group which was to take most advantage of this was the Zionist organisation of the United Kingdom, who quickly sent a delegation to the land occupied by the military authorities. Chaim Weizmann arrived as part of the Zionist commission in March 1918, in order to 'help' the British forces bring the Balfour declaration into effect. This was not met with much enthusiasm by those officers on the ground, many of whom felt that the policies implied by the Balfour declaration were undermining any co-operation which may have been possible with the Arab population. [96] Wasserstein demonstrates a tension between the commitments made in London to the Zionists, and the actions of the early years of the OETA (Occupied Enemy Territory Administration) which were bound more closely to commitments made to the Arab leadership. This interaction plays into the earlier belief of some British administrators, mentioned above, that the reality of potentially contradictory agreements and commitments would be resolved by a significant British presence in the region. It additionally acts as a foreshadowing of later divisions, between administrators on the ground – who had to face the lived realities of the Mandate – and the interests of the Government in London, who over this period were concerned with global political interaction and balancing. Wasserstein sees this as more complicated.

> *"[B]etween Whitehall and OETA* [Occupied Enemy Territory Administration]*, and equally between the leadership of the Zionist organisation in London and the local leaders in the Yishuv…British –Zionist relations were thus frequently more a four- than a two- sided affair…"*[97]

[96] Bernard Wasserstein, *The British in Palestine : the mandatory government and the Arab-Jewish conflict 1917-1929* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991). P.23
[97] Ibid.26.

3.2.2.2. Paris Peace Conference

Perhaps the prime example of the goals and ambition of the Zionist Organization is the Paris Peace Conference, which was called in 1919 in order to establish peace terms for the defeated central powers. The Zionist Organisation submitted a proposal to the conference, and also sent a delegation. The proposal had some significant points with regards to the entitlement the Jewish people had to territory, and also a further statement on the territory which the Zionists felt should be under this. It is worthwhile mentioning this, as it displays the maximal desire, as well as formalised will, which the Zionist commission had at this point. This must be constantly viewed in the light that the Zionist position was the only one which had both coherence and consistency. The British viewed the Palestine question in terms of larger European political issues, especially its relationship to France and Russia. The claim that it was of vital importance to preserving influence over communication corridors had been questioned, and its leaders often had only biblical references on which to base their assertions. In this way, the discussion over territory was easily guided by the Zionists targeted campaign (through formal statements and state-like behaviour), which set the discursive boundaries of the issue.

3.2.2.3. A Civil administration under military command

This situation left the military administration in a rather difficult position. Whilst the personnel did have some experience in battle, and one or two in administration, it was not prepared to enact many of the commitments which had been made by the Government in London.

> *"It is important to remember how this Administration grew up in Palestine. It was started by complete amateurs, led by amateurs. There was practically nobody in the Administration who had ever worked in an administration. It was the blind leading the blind, and that is what this country suffered from for years."*[98]

This view, offered by a witness interviewed by the Peel Commission in Palestine, shows one side of the military administration - at least, which was viewed by those ruled by it. However, there were two conflicting views the British had of themselves which do not quite equate to this.

The first of these was the administration's feeling that they were involved in a 'tug-of-war" over the domestic political situation. As discussed above, the ruling authorities could not commit any act without it being interpreted as in the favour of one or the other community. One of the obvious examples in the early years of the OETA was that of land sales – due, partly, to an absence of land records, these having been largely taken by the retreating Ottoman forces[99]. However, this was read as a betrayal of the Balfour Declaration by the Jewish population, and led to further tensions between the Zionist Commission and the OETA. The same can be said of the Arab view – which had been progressively disappointed since a realisation of the lack of integrity of the Husain-McMahon commitment, as well as the Anglo-French declaration.

The second self-image was that of neutrality, and was manifested in a largely infrastructure oriented way. Pappé notes that the British were very effective at building roads, and constructing an integrated market[100] – although there were not many areas in

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[98] Great Britain Palestine Royal Commission, *Palestine Royal Commission Report Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament July, 1937 [With Maps]*.160
[99] Krämer, *A History of Palestine*.156
[100] Ilan Pappe, *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples* (Cambridge University Press, 2003). 110.

which there could be seen such a 'value neutral' development. This feature – of neutrality through equality and modern construction – is that which is vital for the later understanding of civil development, and the Palestine Broadcasting Station.

This certainly acts as an example of divergence from, rather than break with, the authorities and style of the Ottomans. A key example of this is what Matthews hints might have been an attempt by Ronald Storrs, the military governor, to partially re-introduce the Millet system. [101] This was mainly through the creation of the Supreme Muslim Council (SMC) in 1922, which had (at the time) the role of being the only legitimate representative of the Arab population to the Mandate government. This was originally intended to act as a match to the Zionist Commission, and again displays a British conflation of 'Muslim' and 'Arab'. This did not, however, stop the Chief Mufti, Haj Amin al-Husseini (appointed in 1921), from considering himself the *'millet-bajj'*, or chief representative. [102] Whilst the organisation initially began to cultivate positive relations with the British, over time it did become not only a focus for Arab dissent, but also developed a tendency of 'Islamising' what were, in fact, 'Arab' issues.[103]

This policy, of allowing an elite Muslim representative (and often, bordering on executive) power, represented the importation of British practice from other states they controlled. Edwin Samuels, the son of the first High Commissioner of Palestine, states in his memoirs that 'although Palestine was legally a mandated territory, it was administered more or less as a crown colony'. [104] This fits with the narrative of

[101] Matthews, *Confronting an empire, constructing a nation Arab nationalists and popular politics in mandate Palestine*.34.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Krämer, *A History of Palestine*. 220
[104] Samuel, *A lifetime in Jerusalem*.50

revisionist accounts of the early period of British rule, which have attempted to view these years through the lens of interaction, rather than opposition. [105]

3.2.2.4. The Personnel of the OETA

In terms of personnel, there was a distinct split in the ranks of the administrators – with, on the one hand, those of a distinct Zionist bent, and on the other, those who were opposed on practical or ideological grounds to it. This division tended to split along religious lines[106] - with Richard Meinertzhagen acting as the 'sole gentile upholding Zionism'. [107] He occupied the post of Chief Political Officer, a very influential position. Herbert Samuel, a British, Zionist and Jew, was appointed to be the High Commissioner in 1920, before the Mandate system had been officially recognised by the League of Nations. On the other hand, the majority of the rest of the colonial officers found the Zionist identity difficult to handle, displaying confusion at actions the Zionist community took, [108] as well as its tendency to politicise all possible organisations, such as the Scouts[109]. This did not suit al tastes. Ernest Richmond, the Assistant Civil Secretary to the Political division of the military government, resigned in frustration at the pro-Zionist policies being promoted, which he felt were being promoted under the guise of neutrality, by the OETA executive. [110]

[105] Nicholas E. Roberts, "Re-Remembering the Mandate: Historiographical Debates and Revisionist History in the Study of British Palestine," *History Compass* 9, no. 3 (March 2011): 215–230. p221
[106] The British Zionists also often were British Jews.
[107] Krämer, *A History of Palestine*.p.54
[108] Such as Jewish communities removing weapons from sealed caches without permission from the Government
[109] Shepherd, *Ploughing Sand*.p.36
[110] Ibid. 67

3.2.2.5. From the Mandate Decision to the installation of the British Mandate proper

Two large outbreaks of inter-religious violence occurred before the installation of the civilian government. These were, first, the 'Nebi Musa' riot of April 1920, and second, the 'Jaffa Riots' of early May 1921. Together, these form the first violent altercations between the two communities, and heralded a long term decline in the ability of the British to maintain inter-communal peace. The Jaffa Riots also caused one of the first major committee reports to be put together, the Haycraft Committee of Inquiry.

3.2.2.5.1. The Nebi Musa riots, April 4-7 1920.

In 1920, the celebration of Nebi Musa, a Muslim procession to a shrine connected to Moses, happened to occur in the same week as both Greek Orthodox Easter and Passover. There were widespread attacks against Jews throughout Palestine, in which five Jews and four Arabs were killed. [111] Shepherd attributes to this festival the accolade of being the beginning of the Arab-Jewish conflict.

The Ottoman authorities had traditionally allowed both Christian and Muslim communities to celebrate at the same time, as many of the Christian pilgrims came from Russia.[112] In 1920, however, the proximal cause of the tension was the announcement in February 1920 of Britain's intention to carry out the Balfour Declaration. The Arab population had not received any matching confirmation from the British, [113] allowing Muslim religious leaders to make highly inflammatory speeches concerning the intentions of the occupying forces.

[111] Segev, *One Palestine, complete*.
[112] Shepherd, *Ploughing Sand*.41
[113]Despite some suggestion that they intended to, see John Glubb, *Britain and the Arabs: Study of Fifty Years, 1908 to 1958*, 1St ed. (Hodder & Stoughton, 1959).

There is some dispute as to the precise cause for this gathering to become violent, but Segev posits that quite early on, an elderly Jewish man was attacked, and potentially killed.[114] Needless to say, however, the civil disturbances went on for three days – and were marked by British mistakes, including the withdrawal of a significant proportion of Imperial troops from the country. This was less significant, however, to the problems the Palin Commission[115] saw on the horizon, regarding Zionist aggression.

3.2.2.5.2. Jaffa Riots, May 1-7th 1921

The main conclusions drawn from the Palin report were that the Zionists, in both an official and an unofficial capacity, were forcing the administration into positions which were aggravating the Arab population into acts of violence. It also suggested that the British administration had, on the whole, been acting in a balanced fashion.

May Day in 1921 was to demonstrate the tensions between the two communities. Two rival groups of Jewish socialists organised marches in Jaffa on the same day – and whilst at least one group had been semi-officially warned to not carry through with their plan[116], this did not stop fights breaking out between the two whenever their processions met. Whilst this was, at first, an inter-Jewish affair, it quickly descended into civil violence against the Jewish community in, at first Jaffa, and then much of the rest of Palestine. Reports suggested that the Arab population had heard the disruption (of the police attempting to separate the two marches) and assumed

[114] Segev, *One Palestine, complete*.128.
[115] Formed at Port Said in response to the rioting of April 1920. The findings were never made public, but the forum was used by the Zionist Commission to strongly criticise the OETA.
[116] Segev, *One Palestine, complete*.176

it had been directed against them – and gone on the offensive against their imagined attackers.

The first day of rioting saw Arab aggression against the Jewish population – and the second saw the reverse, as armed Jews took revenge through Jaffa. Mutual looting and violence spread from Jaffa and Tel Aviv, to areas outside of the urban centres of the country, including agricultural centres in Hadera and Rehovot. Despite attempts on the part of senior community figures to bring the rioting under control, it was only after a state of emergency had been declared and British forces brought from Egypt that violence diminished. In total, around 100 people had been killed, roughly divided between Arab and Jew.

Krämer notes that there is no evidence that this was a religious attack, that it was pre-planned, nor that it was co-ordinated between different parts of the Mandate.[117] However, as was becoming standard procedure, a commission was set up in order to establish what the underlying causes of the disturbances were.

3.2.2.6. Haycraft Committee of Enquiry

This commission, whilst having personnel labelled as 'more astute' than those who undertook the Palin enquiry[118], nevertheless came to similar conclusions regarding the difficulty the British were having in dealing with the Zionist population. Whilst it *"placed the blame squarely on the Arabs"*, [119] the report did identify significant issues regarding Arab fears of being totally side-lined to the growing Jewish population. Whilst the latter were only 10% of the population, the Zionist movement had

[117] Krämer, *A History of Palestine*.211
[118] Segev, *One Palestine, complete*.186
[119] Ibid.187

exceptionally well developed access to the highest levels of policy making, both in London and Jerusalem.

The main findings of the commission were that:

> *"The fundamental cause of the Jaffa riots and the subsequent acts of violence was a feeling among the Arabs of discontent with, and hostility to, the Jews, due to political and economic causes, and connected with Jewish immigration, and with their conception of Zionist policy as derived from Jewish exponents"*.[120]

It also expressed the opinion that the Zionist community acted in an *'overbearing'* fashion and with considerable *'arrogance'*[121], which fuelled tensions still further than merely economically isolating the Arab population. That the sentiment of hostility against Zionists was so widespread was taken as indicative of a prevalent fear of a steady increase of Jews in the Mandate. This position was used as a foil to the argument that Arab disquiet was mainly concerned with issues of British control.

The Supreme Muslim Council, briefly mentioned above, was established as the representative body of the Muslim population, in the view of the Peel commission as a conciliatory move taken by Samuel. He formed the SMC in December 1921 as an organisation to oversee the *Awqaf,* as well as the Islamic religious (status) courts. This was considered a slight level of purchase over the Arab movement – a program which was at least partially supported by Lloyd George, who is reported to have commanded Weizmann and Balfour to 'bribe the Arabs' into a conciliatory position.[122] The conclusion of the process, started by the Nabi Musa Riots, was of an overarching policy

[120] Great Britain Palestine Royal Commission, *Palestine Royal Commission Report Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament July, 1937 [With Maps]*.51
[121] Ibid.
[122] Segev, *One Palestine, complete*.194

which was reinforced in London, to be questioned by administrators in Palestine, and to be fed back into the London political world by the Zionist Organisation based there. This system would not change greatly over the coming years.

3.2.2.7. Churchill Memoranda, June 1922

The British White Paper of 1922, or Churchill White Paper, was one of the first attempts by the British Government to establish its interpretation of the Balfour Declaration. It introduced the important concept of 'economic capacity' to discussions as regards the number of immigrants which Palestine could support. It also made the point, core to British actions then and later, that the Jews in Palestine were there *'of right and not of sufferance'*. [123] This yardstick was later modified beyond the limited definition of economic capacity to include the 'will' of the Arab people for new arrivals[124]. One of the most important elements of the introduction of this policy into public knowledge (the premise had been applied by administrators for some years) was that it created a bureaucratic function into which the Zionist authorities could reach. This could lead them to potentially employing the power to define the terms on which immigration quotas would be set.

3.3. Civilian Government 29th September 1923 to the Shaw Commission 1929

As discussed above, the first five years of British rule over the Palestinian territory established several clear patterns for governance, which were to be continued throughout the rest of the time the British remained. First of all, was a fourfold division in the policy making apparatus of the British. There were often times when directions,

[123] Krämer, *A History of Palestine*.213
[124] Ibid.note44

given by Zionist sympathisers in London, were treated with a high degree of scepticism by those on the ground, who were often more credulous of the Zionist mission in Palestine. The feedback also worked the other way, with pro-Arab reports being relayed to London. This led to an intra-government politics, in which administrators were often carrying out the goals of multiple agencies. The second was the pattern of tension-conflict-commission which came to be used as the tool through which recommendations were created for the administration of the territory. The third was the trend of the Mandate being defined strongly by the interests of both the Empire, and also of considerations for the other powers – it was a region which, whilst it may have brought prestige and honour to the Empire, was always a relative concern.

3.3.1. The Mandate – situated and legislated

The British established a civil government headed by Sir Herbert Samuel on July 1, 1920. This was following on from the San Remo round of the Paris Peace Conference, of April 1920. However, the Mandate only officially came into operation on the 29th of September 1923.

The regulations which were imposed on the Mandate powers were, in their way, both strict and lax. They offered little in the way of guidance, and set definite, if immeasurable goals, for which to aim. One of the key points in the legal structure of Mandate system (Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, in fact) was that there were to be two categories of mandated territory – type 'A' and 'B'. The former was the higher, and implied a civilisation or people which would soon be ready for the ultimate goal – which was self-government and independence. All of the former provinces of the Ottoman Empire were labelled as type A.

However, there were some important restrictions placed on both Britain and France, through the Mandate treaties themselves, as well as through the structures of the League of Nations. Of particular note is that there were very few positive injunctions placed upon the new rulers of these territories. For instance, they: 'must not use the possession to reinforce armies…. Must not use forced labour for private gain.'[125]. They were also "encouraged to preserve the pre-existing social and political arrangements[126]" by the Mandate treaty article 13 – yet none of these documents offered a programme for doing these things.

This came into stark contrast with the inclusion of the Balfour declaration in the Mandate treaty, which also made it binding under international law. [127] This offered a very direct interpretation, reviewed sporadically by the British Government, and set boundaries and targets which could be aimed for.

The result of this somewhat contradictory messaging was that:

> *"The task which faced the new high commissioner was … rather complicated. On the one hand, it was necessary to issue what he described as 'reassuring statements' to the Arabs, and on the other, to do nothing to prevent the Jews from advancing steadily towards their goal of an ultimate Jewish majority. This was, in fact, the policy in Palestine with great persistency, certainly until the MacDonald white paper of 1939, and, according to the Arab delegates at the London Conference, even in that document."*[128]

We must return with caution as regards imposing what seems obvious now on these events. However, the core notion – of conflicting goals, does a good job of

[125] Shepherd, *Ploughing Sand.*15.
[126] Permenant Mandates Committee, *Mandate for Palestine and Memorandum by the British Government Relating to Its Application to Trans-Jordan, Approved by the Council of the League of Nations on September 16th, 1922*, *C.P.M.466. / C.529.M.314.1922.VI*, n.d.
[127] Krämer, *A History of Palestine.*169
[128] Barbour, *Nisi Dominus a Survey of the Palestine Controversy.*p.110

explaining apparent inconsistencies in administrative policy. Different officials could feel justified in enacting policies either way, relying on the fact that they were re-assured by at least one of the base texts, treaties or later policy documents. However, in order to maintain cohesion within the legal set-up they had established for themselves, the Mandate certainly had to accelerate the development of the Jews – either with or without damage wrought on the economic and social standing of the Arab Palestinians, in the first half of the Mandate. This necessitated a trend of relatively holding back the development of the latter community.[129] This came into conflict with Article 2, which holds the Mandatory power to:

> *"secure the establishment of the Jewish national home, as laid down in the preamble, and the development of self-governing institutions, and also for safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race and religion…"*[130]

However, of the three elements of this article, only the establishment of the Jewish national home could easily be quantified. Arab self-governing institutions proved very difficult for the Mandate to establish, as any acceptance of their existence was taken to be acceptance of the Zionist political message held within the legal structure of the Government. This tension, perhaps inevitably, led to the religious and civil rights of all the other members of the new semi-state being compromised.

Other regulations of the Mandate document were generalised – such as the rules over antiquities (Article 21), or imposing regulations to contain diseases as per the orders of the League of Nations (Article 19). The signatories were also highly

[129] Krämer, *A History of Palestine*.170.
[130] Permenant Mandates Committee, *Mandate for Palestine and Memorandum by the British Government Relating to Its Application to Trans-Jordan, Approved by the Council of the League of Nations on September 16th, 1922.*

concerned with the Holy Places in Jerusalem, using three of twenty eight articles to delineate the appropriate practices as regards conflicting claims to these sites.

3.3.2. Mandate Powers - the early years

The years between the formal introduction of the Mandate and the 1929 (Wailing Wall) riots were quite quiet in terms of statements and restatements of policy. The Palestinian Pound was substituted for the Egyptian in 1927, Jewish immigration somewhat declined, as well as there being an earthquake – which destroyed a building at the Jewish university, as well as damaging Government House. [131] This was all occurring at the same time as the beginnings of the Great Depression – funds were tight, and so the Zionist Commission was not able to repair the demolished building, nor support a new wave of migrants.

Samuel left his position as High Commissioner in June of 1925, to be replaced by Lord Plumer, a non-Jew. Plumer[132], oversaw three of the calmest years in the duration of the Mandate, and is accounted to have '*stayed out of Politics'*. [133] The period was so quiet, for the reasons mentioned above, that Plumer even suggested a cessation of local reports being sent back to London. It was a period of administrative rule, with political matters (such as elected administrative assemblies) being left undecided, or at least postponed. The quiet atmosphere throughout the territory must have acted to make this kind of concession less immediately important, if it was considered at all.

Plumer did, however, have strong ideas on education. He thought that schooling should 'firm up' pupils character. However, the institutional legacy which

[131] The official seat of the Government in Palestine
[132]Or Hubert Onslow, as he was styled before being ennobled
[133] Segev, *One Palestine, complete*.289

1923-28 was to leave consisted of what kind of education was required and who required it most. According to Article 15 of the original Mandate document, *"the right of each community to maintain its own schools for the education of its own members in its own language"*[134] is enshrined, and can only be loosely forced into the general educational requirements of the Mandate.

Given that Palestine was intended to not be a drain on the exchequer in London, but to fund itself through tax revenues, it is no surprise that external management of schools was considered an ideal practical solution. However, there were divergent goals among the different communities – and different expected outcomes from the Government. Humphrey Bowman, the Mandate head of Education[135], took the view that what was required were schools which provided the rural population with both skills and basic literacy, which would help them stay in the countryside, and not migrate to the city[136]. Schools were, in this conception, to *'enlighten the peasant, make him a contented citizen and keep him on the land'*. [137]

Different expectations of education were obvious. This can be seen clearly over an argument concerning the most appropriate way to disburse a gift earmarked for education in the then Palestine territory, by an Iraqi Jew.[138] Whilst some British administrators, Humphrey Bowman included, saw the funds being used for an elite school which included both Arabs and Jews, this was quickly dashed by Zionist

[134] Permenant Mandates Committee, *Mandate for Palestine and Memorandum by the British Government Relating to Its Application to Trans-Jordan, Approved by the Council of the League of Nations on September 16th, 1922*.
[135] And a long term senior administrator in Palestine, who was instrumental in the formation of the PBS
[136] Matthews, *Confronting an empire, constructing a nation Arab nationalists and popular politics in mandate Palestine*.48.
[137] Krämer, *A History of Palestine*.180.
[138] Segev, *One Palestine, complete*.284

pressure in London and Jerusalem. An academic high school was established for the Jews, with an agricultural college founded for Arab students. This left a situation where, by 1925, two higher education colleges had opened for the Jewish population, none had been for Arab youth – who often had to go abroad in search of this. Matthews concludes that, by 1926, the schools had become entirely dominated by confessional interest – and were mainly segregated. [139]

3.3.2.1. Co-option of Arab elites in running of the state

Arab right to self-government in Palestine was voiced in one of the weakest forms in the region, when compared to Iraq, Syria or Lebanon. From being discussed mainly as '*the existing non-Jewish communities'* in the original Balfour declaration , to recognition of the Jewish Agency as the main interlocutor with the Mandate Government, there was little institutional provision for the exertion of Arab authority. Furthermore, *"the pre-amble* [of the Mandate Treaty]*made it the main task of the Mandatory to implement the Balfour Declaration"*[140] – establishing a situation in which any Arab or Muslim representative body was formed purely on the pleasure of the Government, and thus could be pressured in ways not possible with the Jewish Agency.

The more influential urban families of Jerusalem in particular were concerned that taking positions of authority from the Mandate undermined their refusal to acknowledge the Balfour Declaration, as this was one of the basic principles of the Mandate government. While there were attempts to institutionalise a body which had members of all the communities, which would be known as the Assembly, in the end

[139] Matthews, *Confronting an empire, constructing a nation Arab nationalists and popular politics in mandate Palestine*.167
[140] Krämer, *A History of Palestine*.169

Plumer didn't push for this. This would have swiftly became politicised, and after that, useless. In the end,

> *"since no representative institution emerged, Palestine was governed according to the 1922 Order in Council which conferred absolute power on the High Commissioner, and ensured that all operative decisions remained in the hands of Mandate officials. Legislation was the prerogative of the High Commissioner and his advisors: the government of Palestine*"[141]

3.3.2.2. Wailing Wall riots

The apparent tranquillity, marked not so much as by a lack of violence but of an institutionalisation of it, was to come to an end with the Wailing Wall riots of late August 1929. The wall was, at that time, facing a very slim alley. The wall itself is supposedly the last remaining wall of the Temple, and is also considered part of al-Aqsa mosque by some Muslims. Prior to the Aliya's, the main Jewish population of Jerusalem had mostly been both old and indifferent, leading to an easy relationship between the Jewish community and the *waqf* which oversaw the wall. However, over the course of the eighteenth century, the wall had been elevated in importance within the diaspora – leading new immigrants to treat the place and the object with far more reverence than had been previously seen. Whilst in the past *'a wink and a bribe'*[142] had eased relations between the two communities, a new set of expectations were emergent, especially as for newer arrivals, practices of apparent irreverence against the holy site by Muslims seemed immediate and insulting, rather than long standing practice. In this light, the reported piling up of household waste next to the wall seems plausible – this

[141] Shepherd, *Ploughing Sand*.17.
[142] Segev, *One Palestine, complete*.298

had not been traditionally the holiest of the Jewish places in the city, and as mentioned, it was a very narrow passage[143].

The proximal cause of the riots, which killed almost 250, was the placement of a screen at the 'Wailing Wall', in order to separate male and female Jewish worshippers. The screen placement was taken by much of the Arab community (as well as certain members of the administration, such as Edward Keith-Roach), to be an alteration of the pre-existing social and political arrangements of the territory, which was defended under Article 13 of the Mandate treaty. Added to this, the tension over territory in the Old City, and it becomes clear that the battle lines had already been drawn. There had been several attempts to purchase the land, and calls in Britain for the land to be expropriated for this very purpose. [144] It has been noted that this practice may have been pre-existing, but overlooked due to the old 'bribe and a smile' arrangement between the Old Yishuv community and the *waqf* authorities.

The first action (and reaction) occurred in August 1928. By 1929, however, both communities had redefined their positions to the extent that they both seemed unlikely to compromise. There had been discussion amongst nationalist Zionists that perhaps the Temple should be rebuilt – and amongst Muslim meetings, the inalienable right to their territory had been firmly re-established. Tit-for-tat violence is reported to have occurred starting from the Jewish holiday remembering the destruction of the temple, followed immediately by the Muslim holiday remembering the Prophets birthday.

[143] After 1948, the Jewish Army cleared the area around it of Arab housing, creating the more recognisable modern space
[144] Krämer, *A History of Palestine*.229.

Friday the 23rd of August 1929 saw several militant Muslim preachers stir up those who came to hear their sermons in Jerusalem. It was reported that many believed the Jews were planning an attack on the al-Aqsa mosque, and as such a number brought weapons – and were not talked down by the Grand Mufti. After sermons, bands of Arab's began marches throughout the city, and were met with armed resistance. The conflict quickly deepened and spread, with attacks and killings in Hebron as well as the Jewish community of Safed. Whilst many Jews had been protected by their Muslim or Christian neighbours, many others (who had often been unaffected by this or any other protests) moved from mixed neighbourhoods to those which were solely Jewish. Many of the Arab men who were executed became martyrs – and their families began to receive support from Arabs in other countries. [145] After the British had imposed collective punishment on many Arab communities, it became more acceptable, and understandable, for two separate economies to develop. As first actions, reciprocal boycotts of 'Arab' and 'Jewish' products were established.[146]

3.4. Shaw Commission 1929 (published 1930) until 1936

Sir John Chancellor replaced Lord Plumer as High Commissioner in late 1928. The easy peace which had reined since 1921, and which Plumer had assumed to be the normal state of affairs, was not to last. As the Peel Report noted in 1937, '*the hopes on which the optimism of 1925 had rested had been shown to be illusory'*. [147] The Shaw Commission, was to act as demonstration of the unwillingness and unlikelihood of a genuine reconciliation between the two communities.

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[145] Ibid.234.
[146] Great Britain Palestine Royal Commission, *Palestine Royal Commission Report Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament July, 1937 [With Maps]*.
[147] Ibid.82

3.4.1. Shaw Report of March 1930 and the Hope Simpson Report of October 1930

The overall feeling of this report was that the policy of the National Home was misguided, and some of the specific suggestions made included the restriction of immigration and the sale of land to Jews. It found that:

> *"There can, in our view, be no doubt that racial animosity on the part of the Arabs, consequent upon the disappointment of their political and national aspirations and fear for their economic future, was the fundamental cause of the outbreak of August last."*[148]

The report recommended further study on the issues of both immigration and also land sale. This was aided by the belief in London that to keep Palestine as a net contributor to the Imperial treasury, a situation which was believed to be more likely if more Jewish immigrants arrived (with, correspondingly, their capital). This resulted in a greater tax take[149] – arguably an ideal situation for London.

The Hope-Simpson Report was formed in response to the Shaw Report's request for further study on the issues of the capacity of Palestine for immigration, as well as looking at some of the Arab fears over the destructive nature of Zionist goals towards the territory. It maintained the main points of the Shaw Commission, and acted to inform a new statement of British policy which was published on the same day, as the Passfield White Paper.

3.4.2. Passfield White Paper

In response to the above mentioned reports, also informed by a long and detailed set of proposals by Chancellor, the Government in London resolved to publish

[148] Ibid.81.
[149] In 1928, Jews made up 17% of the population but contributed 44% of tax take..Krämer, *A History of Palestine*. Note 30, pg235

a new policy (updating the 1922 Churchill White Paper). [150] The main body came directly from the suggestion of limiting Jewish migration – and was initially regarded as an unmitigated catastrophe for the Zionist movement.

This resulted from the main innovation in the paper, which was to focus on immigration as an effect on the entire economy, and not only on the Jewish element of it. This was phrased as a redefinition of the concept of 'economic absorptive capacity' as had been laid out in the 1922 policy. The subtext of this was that Jewish migration should not put Arabs out of work. It was well received by administrators, who felt that it made their position far clearer. [151] Unfortunately for them, the Passfield White Paper is mainly notable in its failure to come into force.

3.4.3. The 'Black Letter'

The position expressed by Passfield was anathema to the Zionists. It would have meant that the British mandate would begin to actively work against a Jewish majority in the territory, and would have re-imagined the concept of the 'national home' as one of semantics, rather than demography. This caused scandal amongst the Zionist lobby, which pushed strongly for this policy to be rejected. Chaim Weizmann, the head of the Zionist Organisation, resigned his post. He applied considerable pressure through a long established network of contacts, including the former Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, former Foreign Secretary Chamberlain, and Winston Churchill, to name but three. Furthermore, the Exchequer was encouraged to be concerned about the level of investment that the Jewish diaspora would *not* bring to Palestine – and which would, to some extent, be required from the central Government.

[150] Segev, *One Palestine, complete*.334.
[151] Ibid.335.

The end result of this lobbying was the rejection of the anti-immigration stance of the paper. This came in a 'letter of Clarification' from Prime Minister McDonald to Chaim Weizmann. It 'clarified' the way in which the British saw such things as the availability of State land for Jewish settlers, as well as the admission of Jewish labour (and associated capital). The Peel Report later attempted to maintain that this was not a change of direction, by listing the consonant characteristics of both reports which were carried out. However, these continuous features are things such as the Department of Development – part of the infrastructure of Governance, and not part of the key points targeted by the Arab community. Segev maintains that it, in all practical ways, *'cancelled the white paper'*. [152] It is not because of a change in departmental structure that this correspondence was deemed 'the Black Letter'.

3.4.4. Structural underpinnings of competition and competitiveness

The conflict between Jews and Arabs is regularly referred to one of economic conflict – of many Arabs feeling that their future had or was being taken, by the large inflow of Jewish capital and goods. However, the years between 1930 and 1936 passed with a great deal of tension, but little violence. The Haycraft Report originally puts this as:

> *'It is all very well to say that there has been peace for a generation between Arab and Jews. It was the sort of peace that exists between two bodies of men who have little or nothing to do with one another'*[153]

[152] Ibid.237
[153] Great Britain Palestine Royal Commission, *Palestine Royal Commission Report Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament July, 1937 [With Maps]*.52.

It is clear that mutual antagonism was not going to become any easier to handle, by either side. Yet by ensuring that the communities only co-existed rather than co-operated, it laid the scene for any conflict to escalate far faster than before. Whilst there had been Jews of the old Yishuv living as neighbours with Arabs before the Wailing Wall riots, this was a diminishing feature.

Furthermore, the key problems identified by the commissions of the late 1920's, such as the Jewish economy blotting out the potential for economic development in that of the Arab, began to actively emphasise economic divergence. Whilst there is no doubt that the economy of the entire Mandate was growing, there were slight disparities in the way this was coming about. Whilst organic growth, in terms of population and GDP, was in the favour of the Arab population, injections of capital and skilled labour were certainly in the hands of the Zionist movement. The Jewish community doubled between the 1931 and 1936, to mention just one metric. [154] Another is the extent to which Jewish industrial output composed the GDP of the Mandate – between 1933 and 1936, this was about 57%. This only served to emphasise the differences of the late 1920's.

Also, over this period, the power of notables began to decline as the structural underpinnings of their power (such as rural/urban relationships) began to substantially change. New organisations sprang up, and others fell away. The Arab Executive, the only pan-Arab officially recognised body, had disintegrated after the death of Musa Kazim al-Husaini in 1934. An attempt by the High Commissioner, at this point Wauchope, to establish a Legislative council (albeit with very limited powers), was

[154] Krämer, *A History of Palestine*.240.

strongly opposed by both the Zionists and administrators in London. [155] This reputedly led to a feeling of hopelessness from the Arab community – as, at least in their eyes, all overtures to conciliation had been rejected.

3.4.5. Effects on land exchange

The 1930's are widely thought of as one of land exchange and identity formation rather than large scale clashes. The land being purchased went from being that of fallow or abandoned land from absentee (local and foreign) landlords to being that of cultivatable land from actual farmers. This practice considerably increased tensions, as it began to be clear that the Zionist land policy was securing an economic base for a state, rather than merely participating in the Mandate community. [156] The increased pressure on agricultural land came from a corresponding increase in the number of Jewish immigrants. The Jewish population of Palestine went from being 17% in 1931, to 27% in 1936, as well as a boom in the urban economy – seen in such facts as a tripling of the size of Tel Aviv.

Haj Amin al-Husseini had initiated several initiatives to prevent land being sold to the Jewish settlers, including an 'Arab fund' to match the 'Jewish fund' for land. However, the tendency of urban Arab elites to liquidate their landholdings in return for profit had undermined the practice. The Mufti attempted to cease this activity was through the issuing of a fatwa in January 1935, prohibiting the practice. Furthermore, the first Arab political parties were formed in 1934, and in 1935 three of them submitted a petition to the High Commissioner. In this, they demanded that the practice of land sales be stopped, and that Arab leaders be included in the decision

[155] Ibid. p 265.
[156] Ibid.246

making process for Jewish immigration. [157] In particular, they demanded that they be involved in any decisions related to the absorptive capacity of the country – a crucial element of any further discussion over immigrant quotas. The land issue was, as ever, very deeply embedded with immigration – for one, there needed to be the other. Discussions over who decided the absorptive capacity of the country (in turns, either Palestine or the 'Jewish economy') were explosive. The Jewish Executive viewed this as their lifeline, and the Arab community viewed the often generous quotas as a direct attack on their landowning powers.

3.4.6. Development of inter-communal tension, and the start of the Arab revolt

It is in the light of increased economic tension, and political disenfranchisement, that subsequent political processes must be seen. An increasingly frustrated Arab movement felt more and more threatened – not only by the Jewish movement itself, but also by pro-Zionist policies put into place by the Mandate Government. One of these was permission granted to the Jewish Agency for further land acquisitions – a policy which, as the Agency was careful to document, generally did not seriously undermine the wellbeing of those who were moved. [158] Whilst this may have been the case, it was still seen as an attack on the feasibility of an Arab state.

The Zionist movement was also becoming increasingly frustrated with the migratory *status quo*. David Ben Gurion argued, unsuccessfully, that any immigration policy should take into account all of world Jewry, rather than just the

[157] Alexander Cadogan, "The Political History of Palestine under British Administration - Memorandum by His Brannic Majesty's Government presented to UNSCOP," Official Committee Submission, October 2, 1947. P23.
[158] Segev, *One Palestine, complete*.p379

Jewish population currently in Palestine. [159] In the light of German policy of the period, it was surely with legitimate concern that many of these claims were made. However, it was not just with a plea for further immigration that the Jewish community was responding. In mid-October 1935, a large consignment of weapons was found in a delivery of concrete, which was destined for a Jewish businessman in Tel Aviv. This swiftly became public knowledge, and added to growing fears of widespread Jewish arming. [160]

The Peel Report viewed the situation such:

> *"almost every factor, both internal and external, prejudicial to a peaceful outcome was stronger than it had been at the outset* [of the Mandate]*"*

Amongst these collective pressures, the killing of two Jewish travellers by a group suspected of being connected to the late Sultan al-Qassem[161] led to a quickly escalating series of counter-attacks and counter-violence. Strike committees were swiftly formed by members of the Arab community, notably the middle class, including doctors and lawyers around the country. These groups are widely thought to have not been co-ordinated by the traditional elite, although they certainly were in communication with one another. [162]

An Arab National Committee was then formed by the elite in Jerusalem, in order to bring more cohesion to the protest movement. It was headed by the Mufti, and it called for a more widespread strike than had initially been seen, with a view to the

[159] Shepherd, *Ploughing Sand*. P185
[160] Krämer, *A History of Palestine*.p.264
[161] Ibid.p271.
[162] Ibid.p273.

three key demands of the Arab cause: a cessation of all immigration, a ban on the sale of land Jews, and the creation of an Arab national government. That the first two of these objectives would have been against the spirit (if not the letter) of the Balfour Declaration, the collision between the two agendas was inevitably protracted and traumatic. However, outside actors had increasingly become involved in the process. Independence movements in both Egypt and Syria had recently been relatively successful in pursuing their agendas through direct action. [163] Furthermore, Italy had begun to spread propaganda as to the nature of the British regime in the country. [164]

3.4.7. Competition in Europe changes the way in which Palestine is conceived

This conflict, which will be evaluated further in later chapters, acted as a way for external forces to become involved in British affairs in the Middle East. Italy's invasion of Abyssinia, and subsequent transmission of Arabic radio broadcasts to the Middle East, act as one example. That other Arab countries began to leverage their alliances with Britain through involvement in the debate over partition is clear. [165] However, that Palestine was becoming an expensive endeavour, and a potentially risky one at that, was becoming an accepted political truth. This had been foreseen by many at the beginning of the Mandate period, and only served to become truer over the course of 1936-39. It certainly becomes clear that, from the release of the Peel Report in 1937, British administrators were in one mind over the importance of limiting further exposure, in men and money, to the Palestine issue. Unfortunately, however, many in London followed a different view.

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[163] Shepherd, *Ploughing Sand*.
[164] Williams, *Mussolini's propaganda abroad subversion in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, 1935-1940*.
[165] For instance, Ibn Saud began to use the Palestine issue as a wedge issue through which to extract more concession from his British allies.

4. 1936 – 1939

The following three chapters will deal with the latter mandate period, and will be split into three chronological chapters. The first will deal with the years of 1936 to 1939, the second the World War 2 period, and the third 1945 to 1948. Based on this distinction, in this chapter I will analyse the formation of two of the three stations treated in this thesis – the Palestinian Broadcast Service from Jerusalem, and the BBC Arabic service from Daventry. The majority of the available documentary evidence deals with the formation of these two broadcasting services. [166] Because of the large investment of time and capital which this required, this chapter will also contain a more in-depth look at the London Government's stance concerning the region, and the role of Britain within it.

The three years discussed in this chapter, from 1936 to 1939, were perhaps the most tumultuous within the life of the British mandate system. The Arab uprising, the brief radio war between Italy and Britain, the launch of the Palestine Broadcasting Service and BBC Arabic, the release of the Peel Report, and the outbreak of the Second World War all stand to make this period nothing if not interesting. To sum up – Palestine became, over the period of three years, an annoyance rather than a (perceived) necessity to an Empire, now witness to its own decline. Yet there were still two expensive radio broadcast systems established to serve the needs of the inhabitants of Palestine, and these contrived the generate official consternation, often at the highest levels. The amount of time spent discussing the system in the Cabinet in London is bizarre, given the only just over a million inhabitants in the Palestine Mandate. In terms

[166] Full records pertaining to the creation and maintenance of Sharq al-Adna have yet to be released.

of population being effected, this equates to the contemporary United States cabinet discussing ways in which the right kind of radio service could be provided specifically for the city of Memphis, in the state of Tennessee.

This chapter will be divided into four sections. The first will give a brief overview of the 1936 to 1939 period, and the second will outline conflicts between the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office over the future of the territory in the context of partition. The third will discuss the background and formation of the Palestine Broadcasting service. The fourth will do the same for BBC Arabic.

While these two latter issues do not flow perfectly in chronology, they do loosely follow two themes. The first is of the uncertainty as to what the establishment of a broadcast presence in the region would do, and further, what it would or could be used for. The second theme is that of mixed belief in London as to the 'correct path' for British interests in Palestine – or indeed, any conception as to an ideal outcome of the Palestine question. In the background of these deliberations was the looming threat of war, and subsequently of a power struggle over assets perceived as vital.

4.1. History of 1936-1939

4.1.1. The Riots of '36

The riots of 1936 allegedly began with either the killing of some Jewish travellers by some of the followers of Sultan Qassem,[167] or the discovery of a Jewish cache of weapons in Jaffa[168] and ended with the beginning of the Second World War.

[167] Shepherd, *Ploughing Sand*.
[168] W. F. Abboushi, "The Road to Rebellion Arab Palestine in the 1930's," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 6, no. 3 (April 1977): 23–46.

Whilst there were some breaks in the fighting, such as the duration of the Peel Commission's investigations in Palestine, these can be as equally characterised as periods of re-arming and anticipation. No less, it would be fair to evaluate the period of '36 to '48 as being of almost continual conflict.

This conflict, which started with a strike, ended with British occupation of much of the country using troops from both England and Egypt. It is relevant to the current topic that the protests started just weeks after the beginning of broadcasting from the PBS.

The ebb and flow of the first stage of the riots first saw the main Palestinian cities being occupied and resistance to British rule suppressed. After the summer of 1936, therefore, the strike and protest movement moved to the countryside – an area which the British had never been fully able to dominate, even under conditions of peace. The 'triangle' of Nablus, Jenin and Tulkarm[169] became the main focal points of resistance, which was increasingly both connected to other parts of the country through both the press and a growing number of radios receivers.[170]

4.1.2. The Peel Report

In response to the strike and riots of 1936, a Royal Commission was established.[171] The committee decided to draw a full history of the conflict, going back to the beginning of the 20th Century and Ottoman rule – a feature which further makes this report unique. There was some consternation as to when the report would set off

[169] Krämer, *A History of Palestine*. P274
[170] Ibid.
[171] Great Britain Palestine Royal Commission, *Palestine Royal Commission Report Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament July, 1937 [With Maps]*.

from England to the Mandate territory,[172] seen as prevarication by many in Britain over what instructions were to be given to its chair, William Robert Wellesley, Earl Peel.

Further to this concern over what stance the commission had been instructed to take, the Arab community as a whole refused to countenance engagement with the fact-finding and hearings elements of the enquiry, at least until the committee left the Middle East region in late January 1937. Whilst the report highlighted many other elements of the situation, its main finding was that of a structural disjunction between the desire of the Jewish population to establish a homeland (and, implicitly, a state), and that of the Arab population, who were widely opposed to this aim. This flew in the face of the position which the Jewish agency had been attempting to develop, which was that the series of disturbances had been related to specific issues, and not meant as a generalised opposition to the Zionist programme. To simplify its arguments, the Peel report concluded that the Mandate system was institutionally flawed, and that a partition of the territory was the only way in which there could be a guarantee of peace. That both of the national communities were unlikely ever fully to engage in a unitary state was recognised – and the complexity of a canton system, as in Switzerland, was considered ultimately to hold too many problems. Many of the holiest places in the country, including Jerusalem, were set to be internationally controlled, but mainly managed by the British in a continued mandate.

Both Jewish and Arab bodies acknowledged the plan, [173] albeit with significant reservations. The Arabs were the most vocal in their opposition – they rejected it outright, making the case that they were being made to pay for the crimes of Europeans.

[172] British Cabinet proceedings, CAB 51(36). 9/7/1936.
[173] Rather than accepted

The Jewish community, on the other hand, was concerned that they would not have enough space for their future expansion. This division set the stage for the continuation and complication of the on-going conflict in the administration of the territory as discussed by Wasserstein. This largely amounted to a continuation of the theme that the most important features for establishing different decision making paradigms was no longer based on territory itself, but had in large part its defining features formed abroad.[174] While this particular notion, noted in relation to the Jewish question in Europe, is significant, this section will focus on how this conflict also came to be defined by a rift between the London departments of the Foreign Office (FO), and Colonial Office (CO) in London

4.2. Partition – point and counterpoint

4.2.1. Debates between the Foreign Office and Colonial Office over the Peel report

The Peel Plan made clear a long standing policy rift between the FO and the CO over the correct interpretation of the positions Britain had taken over an extended period, in relation to the 'National Home' idea, and the notion of the 'absorptive capacity' of Palestine.[175] To an extent, this can be seen as a split based on the rival spheres of concern which the two ministries had. Before 1936, the Palestine territory had been under the control of the CO, a ministry of state significantly less powerful than the FO. However, the increase of troops in the mandate over the early parts of the 1936 disturbances caused the FO, and some of the Middle East-focussed military chiefs, to

[174] Wasserstein, *The British in Palestine*. P26
[175] This idea, originally proposed by the Churchill White Paper of 1922, stipulated that the number of Jewish migrants should be seen in light of the economic capacity and growth of the Mandate Territory.

become more interested in it. In the middle of this arrangement was the Mandate administration which was widely criticised for not allowing the Military administration a wider remit in the suppression of the troubles.[176]

The section of the FO which dealt with Palestine was the Eastern Department, headed during this time by George Rendel.[177] The department dealt with all of the other states in the wider Middle East, and so was, to an extent, the foreign policy organ of the Palestine Mandate administration– despite being almost entirely based in London. This gave it a clear incentive to not allow the issue of Palestine to become a weak point in Britain's Middle East alliance structure. With this as its prime objective, there was neither intention nor desire within the department to see the partition of Palestine go ahead, as it was suspected that, much as 1936 had regionalised the British structures of control with regards to the mandate, the events would bring other countries in the region into the fray.

Opposed to the FO in this was the CO, which was, as mentioned, a lot less influential – both in terms of official status and personnel. Whilst the CO had Sir William Ormsby Gore[178] as its Minister, the FO had Anthony Eden[179] – a far more influential and experienced politician, with connections at the top of the British decision making apparatus. The CO had, as its prime point of contact with Palestine, the Middle

[176] Michael Joseph Cohen, *Palestine, retreat from the mandate : the making of British policy, 1936-45* (London: P. Elek, 1978).
[177] Not to be confused with Mr. R A Rendall, who was an administrator connected with the PBS
[178] William Ormsby Gore (from 1934 Baron Harlech) b.1885, d.14/Feb 1954. Served as the British representative to the LoN Permenan Mandates Commission 1921/22. He also served as Postmaster General in 1931 (at that point, the lead Minister in broadcasting affairs), and was Colonial Secretary from 1936-38. He was succeeded by Malcolm McDonald.
[179] Anthony Eden (the 1st Earl of Avon) b1897, d.14/Jan/1977. Served as British Prime Minister 1955-57, and was Foreign Secretary 1935-1938, 1940-1945, and 1951-1955. He was also later the architect of the catastrophic British Suez campaign in 1956, which effectively ended British influence in the Middle East.

East (ME) Department, headed by, in turn, a Mr. Williams, and a Mr. J M Marten. The ME Department was concerned with the events and affairs inside Palestine, with limited interest or focus on its regional position. This led them to follow the Peel logic, of considering the mandate system (as well as the National Home policy) being unworkable. This was perhaps the natural development of this logic, as it was those working in the CO who had been at the front edge of the complaints of administrators on the ground. Within this dispute, it is reported that the CO was:

> "*shocked by the levity with which the FO are prepared to throw partition overboard, without… having any well considered alternatives to take its place. They seem to… have no apprehension of the seriousness of the question or of the considerations on which the proposals of the Royal Commission are based"*.[180]

It further became clear that in the eyes of the CO partition would allow a chance for the British to leave the Mandate, and to an extent extricate themselves from British engagement in the Middle East generally. It appears that they considered this period in Britain's foreign affairs as something of an embarrassment.

4.2.2. The Woodhead commission and the St. James' conference

The tool which was to be used to end this inter-ministry conflict was the Woodhead Commission, also sometimes known as the Technical Commission. It had been suggested by the Peel report that a further commission should be set up to deal with boundary delineation issues. This was headed by Sir John Woodhead, of whom the CO was correctly suspicious. Cohen argues that the FO attempted to enforce its position, viz. no partition, on the commission[181]. That this did not directly work, in so

[180] Cohen, *Palestine, retreat from the mandate*. P43
[181] Ibid. p46

much as it proved more problematic than expected to fully 'load' the committee, encouraged George Rendel of the FO's Eastern Department merely to ensure that the terms of reference given to the committee were specifically tailored to further the argument that the policy of partition should be abandoned.

However, this policy did not necessarily work in the favour of those who opposed partition. Woodhead returned a split verdict[182] on the viability of the plans for territorial division, but the lead position was that of a modification of the Peel proposals. However, the issue had now been raised to a level regularly considered by the cabinet, which brought with it a corresponding amount of political pressure on all participants. Despite the Peel and Woodhead proposals both suggesting partition as the only viable option, a white paper was published by the Government just one month after Woodhead's submission, which supported strongly a continuing British presence in the country. It also proposed inviting both sides, Arab and Zionist, to a roundtable discussion in London, often referred to as the St. James' Conference.

The conference occurred over February and March 1939, and whilst being labelled as a 'round table' discussion, the two sides never actually met. Notably, as regards the FO/CO division over who should rightfully have a voice, several other Arab countries attended – specifically, Egypt, Iraq, Transjordan, Yemen and Saudi Arabia. [183] Any attempt to keep the issue from becoming regionalised had failed.

In terms of attendance, the delegation from Arab countries included many notables from the Arab Higher Committee, although the Grand Mufti was excluded.

[182] This commission, like many others, returned 'verdicts' which were voted for by its members, allowing both majority and minority opinions to be published.
[183] Krämer, *A History of Palestine*. P292

However, most other Arab groups rallied around the possibility of a settled agreement. The process of these deliberations necessitated a brief revisiting of the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, which was acknowledged by the British as being particularly ambiguous. Additionally, there was some scandal when a draft agreement meant for the Arabs was accidentally sent to the Zionist camp – leading to accusations of duplicity and unfair terms of engagement. [184] Needless to say, the conference ended with no agreement over any of the stated questions: immigration limits, territorial boundaries, or the notion of partition itself.

Cohen posits that this was the overall intention of the FO during the conference – to sow discord, and encourage the belief that there was no possibility of any negotiated settlement to the conflict. He continues in the belief that the Foreign Office, on the eve of war, was prepared to compromise any previously made commitments in order to maintain Imperial strength.

4.2.3. An interdepartmental victory for the FO

The conclusion of the conference was a British policy paper, labelled the MacDonald White Paper. This was a form of Middle East appeasement, despite no real likelihood of the plan being carried out.[185] However, crucially, it acted as a buffer against the opinion of the other Arab states. These had come to expect greater concessions in general, and over the issue of Palestine in particular, and this was what they got. The policy limited Jewish immigration to 75,000 over the course of the coming five years (i.e. to 1943), with further additions to this number being agreed by the Arab leadership in Palestine. This enraged the Zionists, as they refused to accept

[184] Cohen, *Palestine, retreat from the mandate*.
[185] Krämer, *A History of Palestine*.p294

that the consent of the Arab population should in any way control the development of their 'National Home'. However, the rising tide of first fear, and then war, in Europe put the issue in stasis. Ben Gurion noted that the Jews should fight 'with the British as if there was no White Paper'. However, he concluded his remarks that they should also 'fight against the White Paper as if there was no war'.[186] The Second World War was, at best, the conflict in stasis.

4.3. The formation of the PBS

I have presented above background for all forms of British policy making with regards the Mandate territory. Within these structural boundaries, several different strands of thinking can be discerned, most notably as regards the question of the creation of a Jewish national home and the opinions of administrators in London to the question. I have set these bounds for analysis and discussion.

Most importantly were the views of the FO and the CO respectively – that Palestine existed within a regional framework which was deeply interconnected, and that Palestine was an entity unto itself, which existed mainly without input from other Arab countries. These two attitudes clearly had an impact on the approach which different elements of the British administrative system had towards radio stations. It is in the context of these two approaches that interlocking policy decision making processes existed.

[186] Ibid.

4.3.1. Why in Palestine and why in 1936?

In her monograph on the Palestine Broadcasting Service (PBS) based in Jerusalem, Stanton asks one of the more pertinent questions on the topic of broadcasting to the Mandate (or indeed, anywhere). Why do it at all? This question flows from multiple points, which can be faced loosely station by station. In particular, the issues dealt with by Boyd in 2.4 above list the major reasons for this activity. However, with particular reference to the PBS, the question is: why would Britain want to create a separate public sphere in an occupied territory? As she notes:

> *"A public space is meant to serve the civil society of a self-governing people – but a colonial or mandate public space is divided, fractured by the incompatible needs of the governing authorities and those of the population."*[187]

That this assumes no opposing agency is clear. It seems to go without saying that a British controlled broadcaster would not have the interests of the communities in mind. The extension of this argument is that it would act to undermine any alternative attempts of the respective communities to create so called 'authentic' cultural expressions. This issue, dealt with in part, does not seem to hold weight in the view that actually the PBS was a subject of considerable contention between the different communities,[188] and was seen as both creating identities and reinforcing connections already established.[189] The 1948 break-up of the station will be discussed below, but that a British founded (and funded) station was wanted for more than just its assets merits at least cursory interest.

[187] Stanton, "A Little Radio Is a Dangerous Thing."p8.
[188] Mordechai, "Broadcasting in Israel."p323.
[189] Sahhab, "This Is Radio Jerusalem…1936."

4.3.2. The colonial experience of establishing radio stations

The British already had some experience with the creation of foreign domestic broadcasting stations, notably the All India Radio service (AIR). The formation of the Egyptian broadcasting service had also been pursued in the years running up to 1936. That both of these stations were linked to the PBS in terms of personnel, and also of institutional structures and practice, becomes clear when observing elements of both which were shared between them.[190] Whilst India offered the experience of a linguistically divided service, Egypt often offered (local) technical services to the station.[191]

The provision of radio services in India had begun somewhat earlier than that in Palestine, with the first government intervention into the industry in 1930, upon the liquidation of the India Broadcasting Company,[192] and the subsequent total take-over by the Colonial government. That the stations in India had been set up, and then taken over by the Government, appears to have sent the signal that radio broadcasting was capital investment of a nature which could only really be undertaken by the state. The ability to transfer information over huge distances came to be a dominant issue in India, and when added to the limited uptake of radio licences (and the subsequent inability of the station to self-fund), this concern was further emphasised. The technology was clearly too important, and expensive, for the private sector to handle.

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[190] Derek Penslar, "Radio and the Shaping of Modern Israel 1937 to 1973," in *Nationalism, Zionism and Ethnic Mobilization of the Jews in 1900 and Beyond*, by Berkowitz (Brill Academic Pub, n.d.).
[191] CO 814/11 (1936) p.57 gives a comprehensive list of the salaries and stipends paid to the Egyptian Broadcasting Service over the course of the previous year.
[192] Lionel Fielden, *Report on the Progress of Broadcasting in India up to the 31st March 1939* (Delhi: Office of the Controller of Broadcasting, June 3, 1939).

A heavy paternalistic overtone can be found in some of the announcements concerning the foundation of the stations which were to become components of the AIR, even prior to the government acquiring control of the system. Lord Irwin,[193] for instance, is recorded discussing the plight of those who were not able to leave their homes through the force of cultural restriction. It was thought that the provision of a radio service to these people would 'enlighten and enliven their lives. This ideal, of enlightenment of those who lived far from modern cities, can be seen even going back to the foundations of Indian broadcasting. The Birkenhead Correspondence of 1926, one of the first times the notion of the service was officially raised, suggested loudspeakers should be set up in villages, so as to allow all to hear major cities over the airwaves.[194] Claude Francis (C.F.) Strickland,[195] a figure to whom we will return, was an ardent supporter of radio for this reason. His concern was that not all Indians in the villages would be able to participate in urban life and civilisation, and would, therefore, remain inevitably bored and unproductive. His solution was the installation and introduction of radio services. A further feature, which he outlined in a series of public lectures over 1933/4[196] was that it would increase spending effectiveness– both in terms of Government spending and public service provision. His suspicion, that spending on weddings would be more restrained if people were not so bored, can now be considered quite quaint. However, and more significantly for the Palestine case, he thought that there could be a reduction in spending on teachers, as school lessons could be given over the airwaves.

[193] At this time, the Viceroy of India
[194] Pinkerton, "Radio and the Raj."
[195] Strickland was an expert in co-operative farming in the Punjab (and in remote regions in general), until his retirement to Britain in 1927. After this date, he made several research and lecturing tours, including that in Palestine. Arguably his work in Palestine was that with the largest effect, although his work in India (where he was the Registrar of Co-operative Societies – Punjab) also received plaudits from the Colonial Office.
[196] Pinkerton, "Radio and the Raj."

Several other issues made the Indian example particularly pertinent to Palestine. Primarily, is that in neither India nor Palestine there was not a universally recognised language of the state. The division between Urdu and Hindi speakers[197] throughout India made a single universal service unlikely.[198] Attempts to homogenise service and programme provision required translators – who were, in turn, politicised along linguistic lines. Lelyveld also reports on concerns about favouritism between the different languages. Where this narrative diverts from the analogue of Palestine is in the case of India, a 'Hindustani' language – a fusion between the two – was attempted. This was never going to be possible in the case of Palestine.

That radio was to be used for political purposes in colonial settings is considered an implicit assumption by others. Derek Penslar, when considering the roots of Israeli radio, traces back to the British practice of importing technicians from the Punjab – who had already experienced the dynamics of difficult terrain, divided populations and an urban elite who were unwilling to share the power of informational distribution.[199] Added to this, a regular fear of outside broadcasts – in India, of the Russian Bolschevik propaganda machine, and in Palestine, Italian and German broadcasts – helps to underscore the similarities of process in the two countries.

4.3.3. Domestic broadcasting in Palestine – documents and paradigm

4.3.3.1. CF Strickland and his plan.

Strickland, the Indian administrator mentioned above, did not limit his inspirational views of broadcasting to the Indian subcontinent. Whilst conducting

[197] The two major language groups which were discussed in the context of Indian broadcasting
[198] Lelyveld, "Transmitters and Culture."
[199] Penslar, "Radio and the Shaping of Modern Israel 1937 to 1973." P64

research on the rural Arab population (*Fellaheen)* between 1930 and 1933,[200] he made similar recommendations for the establishment of a Palestinian broadcasting system, which would also provide information to Arab villagers,[201] the majority of whom were assumed to be uninformed and illiterate. His view, that radio would make education a simpler and cheaper endeavour, was easily transposed onto the distribution of other forms of information – notably in terms of the (correct) explanation of British policy and actions in the Mandate. Another key feature of this conception of an incipient public service was that it would provide information on farming practice – a feature which was directly aimed at the rural Arab population. [202]

Two of Stricklands ideas which turned out to have the deepest roots were the installation of community receivers, and 'rural help' programmes. [203] In terms of the former, the number of community sets which were in the field was a figure which was closely watched – all of the Posts and Telegraphs Department annual reports available record this figure, and factor it is as an important expenditure. This was, curiously, the case even through to the end of 1947, with a tally of 195 Battery sets and 217 electricity operated sets having been distributed and maintained by the government.[204] And in terms of the latter, there was a lively debate about the best way in which educational shows could be put out – with formats ranging from monologue to discussion.[205] Whilst it seems that these were generally given in Arabic, after broadcast they were

[200] His initial research was on what effect changing the quantity and cost of debt available to the Fellaheen would be. Palestine Executive Council Minutes of the 12th November 1930 (no.387), CO 814/26
[201] Palestine Post, 12/March 1933 p2
[202] It seems that often the Jewish population considered themselves too advanced for this service, the main reason that the majority of such broadcasts were in Arabic and not Hebrew.
[203] Specifically, Health, Education and Agriculture programmes.
[204] Department of Posts and Telegraph Annual report, 1947. CO 814/40.
[205] Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Annual report, 1938. CO 813/12.

recirculated in Arabic and Hebrew through local newspapers, as well as the Palestine Radio Times.

4.3.3.2. The first outline - 1933 proposal and subsequent discussions

One of the first times there was a discussion regarding the foundation of the service was 1933,[206] directly after Palestine had been 'given' a frequency over which to broadcast at the Lucerne conference.[207] A committee of senior officials in the Mandate was founded, and reported in December 1933[208]. The key conclusions of the report – that a station should be established according to the British model,[209] and should transmit in the three official languages of the Mandate, are those which came to pass. To the extent that these should be the metrics on which the service should be based, it was at least superficially successful.

The situation which encouraged the very idea that this idea was both plausible and a suitable usage of resources is interesting in itself. One element of this must be that there was a large surplus in the Palestinian budget at the time, which had been designated for 'useful' projects.[210] This certainly helped in the evaluation of the likelihood of this project – as it had been seen in India, these projects had a tendency to become substantially more expensive than they were first intended, especially when strange topographical features of the country were brought into account.

This fact was commented on extensively in the official debate over the station. Some of the initial responses to the High Commissioner's suggestion of a service were

[206] Documents relating to this can be found under CO733/266/7
[207] Also, see Charles Strickland, "Broadcasting in Rural India," *The BBC Yearbook*, no. 1934 (n.d.): 43–44.
[208] Stanton, "A Little Radio Is a Dangerous Thing."p15.
[209] i.e. public interest, and ideally paid for by a license fee.
[210] Britain and the East. October 10th 1935 [Special Palestine Edition]. P7.

that he had been, at best, optimistic regarding the expected cost of the station. At worst, it seems that there were those, particularly in the BBC, who felt that he and the Palestinian government had deliberately lowered the estimate so as to make the proposition more likely to come to completion. This belief seems to have been held by many until the Chief Engineer of the Posts and Telegraphs Department, Mr. Basher, was sent for meetings and consultations with the BBC and the FO in London, in early 1934. Another element which can be felt from internal memo's sent between different departments in London was that they were dealing with some opportunistic amateurs in Palestine, who in no way were prepared for, or considerate of the weight of responsibility implicit in broadcasting. Mr. Basher was to deny them these beliefs, and insert a degree of trust into the exchange of information between the two capitals. The former can be highlighted by the CO's request that the BBC offer as much assistance to the PBS "as would be considered appropriate" – the latter, that actually there was considerable pre-existing experience in tasks of this nature within the Colonial regime in general, and the Palestinian administration in particular.

However, one of the most interesting components of the original proposal for the station from Jerusalem was that they would take on the role of a state monopoly, thereby excluding the possibility of any other private enterprise broadcasting material which could not be so easily controlled. There had been a private station controlled by a Jewish entrepreneur, Mendel Abramavitch, who had been awarded a licence in 1932.[211] This broadcaster, who had both displayed his broadcasting prowess from the National Show and been to a Ben Gurion teaching college, may also have been the reason that

[211] Penslar, "Radio and the Shaping of Modern Israel 1937 to 1973."

the fact that Arabs were not widely listening to the wireless was mentioned in correspondence surrounding the issue.

The documentary evidence does shed light on the inner tensions of the discussion – in particular, that at first, London felt that they were to be responsible for a significant fee, for minimal benefit. However, that radio was considered a useful tool of control – at least, in terms of the wider illiterate population, and also in the exclusion of the airwaves of others, seems evident. It also demonstrates that there was significant buy-in from certain departments in London, most notably the CO. This would later develop into a low level conflict over the strategic aims of different London Government departments with regards the Middle East as a whole.

4.3.3.3. The '36 document of analysis, or the Bowman Report

Transmissions from Jerusalem began on the 30th March 1936 – about three weeks before the Arab strike began. The second major policy paper on the topic, [212] known as the Bowman report, was published in October 1936. It offers some points on the formative service, highlighting that many of the practices used when the station was started were designed to be temporary. However, change was not always forthcoming, mainly due to political and military considerations. Many plans for the station were halted by the general strike, causing it to be in fact one of the more formative contextual factors regarding the development of the organisation, and the report emphasises the need for change to suit the climate.

[212] Humphrey Bowman, *Report of the Committee On The Development of The Palestine Broadcasting Service* (Government of Palestine, October 30, 1936), Israel State Archives.

Some of the commentary offered in official response letters to this document are fascinating, and reveal many of the tensions between London and Jerusalem over funding issues as well as other policy issues. Perhaps some of the most significant sections of the report issue the premise that the PBS could be self-supporting financially, respected as neutral, and under the control of the Government when needed. That all three of these premises were pursued by the Committee merits analysis of the document itself.

Taken at the abstract level, this agenda is that of a Government seeking influence without long term capital expenditure. The report makes this quite clear with regards the news service:

> *"[W]e think that the organization of such a centre [news gathering] would be fully justified in that the results would enhance Government's prestige and increase its contact with the public, help to loosen the stranglehold which the local press now has on public opinion in Palestine, and give to the PBS a degree of influence and authority as a source of accurate news not only in Palestine but in neighbouring countries".*[213]

The report of the committee is also concerned with increasing the radio-related revenue of the Government and subsequently the PBS itself. [214] It also attempts to demonstrate that, as Stanton maintains, [215] the radio was a commodity as well as a service. This was done through almost constant reference to the number of wireless receivers which had been sold – and therefore the amount of tax receipts the Government had received – in comparison to what would have happened without the PBS.

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[213] Ibid. p.7.
[214] This topic had also been highlighted by the London Treasury in the 1933 report discussed above.
[215] Stanton, "A Little Radio Is a Dangerous Thing."

Furthermore, the report offers suggestions to make the service more popular – to increase revenues as well as to make the station more widely heard, and thus more influential. [216] Two of the largest expenses proposed were a new radio mast, and a brand new purpose built studio complex. In the context of the Peel commission having just been released, it is not surprising that many viewed such expenditure as potentially a very wasteful activity.

Additionally, and treated as a minor point in comparison to issues of construction in the report, there is a slight uncertainty as to what effect the radio was having. The report notes that it had not possible in 1936 to see how effective some of the more experimental elements of the programme were, such as special programmes for farming communities. The proposal that further studies should be done for '*six months under normal conditions'*, when made in the context of 1936, makes it clear that the service was never able to organically develop as intended, free from any outside political or military concerns.

To an extent, this is understandable – the PBS had been set up with considerable input from the BBC and other British institutions, and functioned as a serious investment of time and finance by the CO in London. It is unsurprising that they were unwilling to surrender their control over the station, and the influence it gave them, for this 'organic growth' to occur.

[216] This must have seemed very self-serving, even by the standards of the time. Viewing the official comments given on the document by other interested parties, one feels the incredulity as to some proposals, and gets the view that certain members of the committee became rather over-excited in producing the recommendations.

4.3.4. The PBS 'model' and Government control

The model which the PBS took after was clearly that of the main organisation which had birthed it – the BBC.[217] However, it is clear that the premises of the station – notably, a sense of detachment, of 'straight' news, and of 'independence', were largely a fiction when compared to its intellectual parent.

The BBC was a totally separate institution from the Government, and was protected (at least domestically) from political interference. However, the PBS did not enjoy the same level of exclusion. The British cabinet, for instance, issued an order that the High Commissioner should make more frequent broadcasts to 'counter' the influence of Radio Bari over the course of 1936 – very soon after the station had been established.[218] This is in contrast to the rather optimistic view of Leslie John Martin, an American resident of Palestine over the time. He viewed the attempts the Mandate government made to control the medium of radio as a less than serious issue – one which could be viewed as both 'primitive' and 'preventative'.[219] That the Government only controlled the news is to be taken as a positive sign of a lack of interest – and that, subsequently, the Mandate was not indulging in propaganda. This is a message which, to an extent, rings true to the notions incumbent within the BBC and early PBS.

However, this does not seem so true for the political dynamics from the Cabinet in London. Discussions in London in July 1937 centred over how the British could most suitably respond to Italian radio provocations. Jerusalem was the first transmitter system considered, and it seems with some reluctance that it was acknowledged that effective rebukes could not be broadcasted from a mandatory

[217] Mordechai, "Broadcasting in Israel."p322
[218] Minutes of British Cabinet, Cabinet 51(36) 9/7/1936
[219] Martin, "Press and Radio in Palestine Under the British Mandate."

territory. [220] This was primarily under the rules of the Mandate, which stated that the territory was not allowed to be used for military or aggressive purposes. This displays a distinctly more legalistic interpretation of media and information control than can be seen in Italian broadcasting of the period. It could certainly be said that the attitude taken by Britain was based on what was possible, not what was ideal.

The extension of this discussion resulted in the *Cabinet Committee on Arabic Broadcasting*, [221] which was to be formative document for a variety of broadcasting fields. Primarily, the committee had its terms of reference closely connected to the establishment of a transmitting station which was able to provide suitable repost to the virulent broadcasts from Italy. There were questions within Palestine about how seriously the British took these perceived assaults – and, although they came from the widely pro-Jewish newspaper the Palestine Post (despite the broadcasts being in Arabic), [222] which certainly appears to have stirred official attention. The conclusions of the committee will be discussed below, as they have more relevance to the BBC than to the PBS.

4.4. The formation of BBC Arabic

4.4.1. A history in documents

Before discussing the effect the 1937 Command Paper and associated committee had on the formation of BBC Arabic, it is useful to examine the conceptual

[220] Minutes of British Cabinet, Cabinet 31(37). 21/7/1937
[221] Cabinet Committee on Arabic Broadcasting (CP247(37). 27/10/1937
[222] The Palestine Post. 27-12-37 p1.

framework which existed for the introduction of such a radical new idea, namely non English broadcasting from the BBC.

In terms of chronology, the Imperial Wireless Telegraphy Committee of 1924 lays a good ground for analysis. [223] It was published prior to the incorporation of the BBC,[224] and subsequently offers some ambivalence about things which were to later become core to the BBC mission. At the time which it was held, wireless was being used as much to transfer information as to broadcast music and 'shows' – at least, internationally. It was in this light that the Committee was formed, and it was mainly concerned with the 'imperial chain' of broadcasting and rebroadcasting stations.[225] The conclusion of this report was that there should be initiated a system of state ownership of wireless services throughout the Empire, on the condition that these should be under the control of the Post Office. However, the report does also clearly identify issues which resurface at other points in the history of British broadcasting. These include the extent to which there should be a concern with the generation of revenue, how there should be symmetry throughout the Imperial system, [226] and the degree of control which the Government should have over the facility, in both peace time and in conflict.

The architecture of these issues was to last well into the end of this period, and was expanded by (amongst others[227]) the Ullswater report of 1936,[228] which was

[223] Robert Donald, *Report of the Imperial WIreless Telegraphy Committee*, February 25, 1924.
[224] The process through which the BBC went from being a private enterprise to a public body.
[225] A chain of radio transmitters and receivers which were able to transfer information from the furthest reaches of the Empire to London. The Egyptian link in the chain came in for particular ire in this report.
[226] A considerable amount of space in the report is given over to discussions of to what extent there should be alternative systems (to the central, London based one) in the dominions, and in particular, Canada.
[227] Such as the Crawford Committee (1925) which advised no Government interference in broadcasting.
[228] Cabinet Command Paper CP24 (36) 5/03/1936

concerned with the future of the by then publicly owned BBC. The report was remarkable for many transformational ideas for broadcasting, as well as confirming the suitability of the BBC Governance system. However, for the matter at hand, the most significant was the suggestion that the BBC could be involved in foreign language broadcasting. [229] The Committee advised *'the appropriate use of languages other than English*[230]*'* – much to the consternation of other elements of the Governments foreign policy machine. This committee was also used as a shorthand explanation of the process of the formation of any foreign language broadcasting services by the Cabinet when assessing international broadcasting policy in 1946:

> *"In October 1937, after other countries, notably Germany, had embarked on extensive schemes of broadcasting to listeners in foreign countries in their own languages, the Government of the day decided, in accordance with a recommendation of the Ullswater Committee, that broadcasts of news in foreign languages should be started, without detriment to the development of the Empire service"*[231]

The creation of the BBC Arabic service, in relation to its formation due to international factors, rather than internal dynamics, will be discussed in section 4.4.3 below. However, it is also useful to give some context to the international system of governance, as well as some attempts at a normative definition of correct international broadcasting practice.

[229] D. R. Browne, "Going International: How BBC Began Foreign Language Broadcasting," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (September 1, 1983): 423–430.p425
[230] Partner, *Arab voices*.
[231] Cabinet Command Paper CP (46)241 21/05/1946

4.4.1.1. International conferences – Lucerne and the ITU statement on 'broadcasting for peace'.

The Lucerne broadcasting conference in May and June 1933 established the territorial and bandwidth limits of the European region.[232] The conference was concerned with the manner in which the growing power of broadcasting technology was causing an increase in the number of stations which experienced interference. The development of broadcasting technologies is clear, as the last time spectrum had been allocated on a cross-continental fashion had been in 1929, at the Prague ITU conference. For this study, the most pertinent elements of the conference proceedings is the allocation of spectrum to Palestine, which it was due to share with the British North and West Regional stations.[233] Britain was also assigned one long wave length stations and ten medium wave stations under the plan.[234] It was under these regulations that the PBS, as well as the BBC (eventually, over shortwave), was able to provide broadcasting to the Middle East.

In terms of normative limitations to the development of broadcasting, there was the League of Nations statement of belief in the benefit of a form of 'peaceful', or non-aggressive, broadcasting.[235] This was a framework which was primarily established to allow resolution of conflicts between different signatory states, and to ideally limit the possibility of one country broadcasting into another for the purpose of causing social conflict. The phrasing of the act was that broadcasts:

[232] The European region encompassed continental Europe, the UK, Turkey, Syria, Palestine and the North African coast.
[233] 'Palestine's Wireless Wavelength', The Palestine Post. 19/09/1933 p7
[234] Cabinet Command Paper CP (46) 241. 21/06/1946
[235] *UN General Assembly, International Convention Concerning the Use of Broadcasting in the Cause of Peace (Geneva, 1936).*

> '*which, to the detriment of good international understanding, is of such character as to incite the population of any territory to acts incompatible with the internal order or the security of the territory of a High Contracting party*'[236]

It also caused the general principle of not interfering with the broadcasts of other signatory states to come into being. The official act came into force in early April 1938.[237]

One of the best examples of this normative restriction was that of the British discussion of potentially blocking the broadcasts of radio Bari into the Middle East in the late 1930s, through the use of a ship equipped with a blocking transceiver.[238] That this had become a problem enough for British policy to come up against self-created international norms clearly displays how rigid some of the regulations regarding transmission were perceived to be. Needless to say, the Italian government had not ratified the agreement which would have actually prevented the British from immediately responding with the resources at its disposal.

4.4.2. The influence of radio Bari

The role of foreign intervention into controlled territories, combined with an abiding fear of the effect which radio was able to produce, was crucial to this leg of British radio policy making. This section will loosely evaluate some of the secondary literature on Radio Bari; will look at the official British reception and response to this

[236] REF 61 in Williams
[237] The list of states which had acceded to the treaty can be found in the Literature Review chapter above.
[238] MacDonald, "Radio Bari."p198-9

intrusion into radio space and the perceptions of the so-called radio war in the Palestine Post.

4.4.2.1. Radio Bari begins broadcasting, and develops into a tool for Italian interests

Relations between Italy and Great Britain prior to 1939 were a harbinger of things to come. Italy's colonial (and, indeed, imperial) ambitions in the Middle East directly competed with Britain's control of the Eastern Mediterranean region. This process began with the question of the Trucial States prior to the First World War, but was heightened in the inter-war years. This power competition, fused with Italy's self-view of itself as a Muslim power,[239] and of its true inheritance of the Roman Imperial regime, began to form a conceptual entity which was 'more' than just a European colonial power.[240] This tension was brought to a head by the Italian annexation of Abyssinia (the so-called Abyssinia crisis) in 1935. This was to be a feature of Italo-British relations which was thought to potentially seriously tip the balance of power in the region, with commensurate repercussions.

It was in this light that Radio Bari began broadcasting in Arabic throughout the Middle East in March 1934.[241] Whilst the intentions of the radio station were not continually anti British, a policy can certainly be derived in which the station was developed as a tool for future use. Much as the British stations realised that, in order to build a following (and thus, a semi-captive audience), they must be more than just news

[239] In which the Italian propagandist organisations began to paint Mussolini as the 'Sword of Islam'
[240] Williams, *Mussolini's propaganda abroad subversion in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, 1935-1940.* p36
[241] Ibid.

(be it either 'skewed' or 'straight').[242] Italian broadcasts subsequently also included light music, and some entertainment programmes. To give an idea of integration of this broadcasting into the Fascist state, the head of all propaganda within Italy, Galleazzo Ciano, oversaw the establishment of the service.[243]

Whilst in the first year of its operation the station was at best projecting a neutral tone concerning Britain; the tone of broadcasts became significantly anti-British after the Abyssinia crisis. This was to be expected, as sanctions imposed by the British on Italy began to be felt.[244] Italy's radio 'tool', which was becoming increasingly popular,[245] subsequently became a growing concern for respective British Governments in both London and Jerusalem. Both of these bodies struggled to deal with the popularity of a radio station distributing skewed news to Palestine by shortwave rebroadcasts from Rome.

4.4.3. Fears of the Italian broadcasts in Cabinet documents and the Palestine Post

The British were aware of the growing power of Bari, and this is seen through mentions of the situation regarding Italy in the London Cabinet, and also reports from the Mandatory Government to the Colonial Office. The Mandatory Government was aware of the limitations of its remit regarding the PBS, but this did not stop calls for the High Commissioner to make 'very frequent broadcasts' to disprove or discount statements made by the Italian station.[246] As mentioned above, there was a growing

[242] MacDonald, "Radio Bari." P191.
[243] Williams, *Mussolini's propaganda abroad subversion in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, 1935-1940.*
[244] See Cabinet 17 (36) [11/03/1936] for a layout of the effect that trade sanctions were having on Italy, as well as Britain
[245] By 1937 it was thought by the British High Commissioner that 60% of those listening to the radio in Palestine were listening regularly to Bari (MacDonald 196)
[246] Minutes of Cabinet 51(36). 9/07/1936

number of people who were tuning into the Italian broadcasts, no less than because they often reported news on the state of the British relationship with the Arab leadership – a topic which did not commonly receive a large amount of time on the PBS or on the Empire service (the only two British services which, at this stage, were broadcasting to the region). Contributing to the paranoia with the power of Bari even further was a belief that Italian agents were distributing radio sets – giving the Italian presence a physical as well as an ethereal presence.[247] The range of the broadcasts radiated even beyond just the Eastern end of the Mediterranean, as Malta had to impose a ban on listening to the broadcasts[248], much the same as Italy would impose bans on listening to foreign broadcasting in Libya over the late 1930's.[249]

The Palestine Post offers some interesting pointers on what policy was concerning the station, and how the people themselves actually engaged with them. [250] The newspaper charts the progress of the station with a light touch for the first two years of its operation. However, often the station is mentioned in connection to a concern regarding Britain's lack of response to it.[251] Quite poignantly, a writer asks when there will be a British station capable of returning the favour in terms of the provision of propaganda to the Middle East. Interestingly, the first mentioned location for this new station is Cyprus – a call which had also been taken up in the British cabinet at the time. On the one hand, this displays a remarkable sense of ownership of the PBS –it is clearly hoped that the station will not be used for the purposes of

[247] Boyd states that he has not found conclusive evidence of this happening, however it was clear that the British administrators were convinced of this. Boyd, "Sharq Al-Adna/The Voice of Britain The UK's 'Secret' Arabic Radio Station and Suez War Propaganda Disaster."p445.
[248] Cabinet CP 176(35) 20/09/1935
[249] Muhammad I. Ayish, "Foreign Voices as People's Choices; BBC Popularity in the Arab World," *Middle Eastern Studies* 27, no. 3 (July 1991): 374–389.
[250] Although, admittedly, this was from a mainly Zionist angle.
[251] Palestine Post, 27/12/1937 p1

discounting propaganda with more propaganda. On the other, it points to a rather more serious issue – that the Jewish population, as manifested through a Zionist newspaper – were themselves concerned that the broadcasts, which were being heard by the Arab population, may have been undermining their position, both politically and physically, in the Mandate. In this, it is one of the few times in the pre-WW2 period where the interests of the Zionist organisation and Britain were aligned, in so much as they were both concerned with maintaining sovereignty over the airwaves. Implicitly, it can also be assumed that it was hoped that this would also increase security on the ground.

4.4.4. The British response: the formation of BBC Arabic

Superficially, it is fair to say that British concern with the Bari broadcasts led to the creation of BBC Arabic, much as a British consideration of the educational and social development of the Palestinian population led to the formation of the PBS. However, the process was neither linear nor the outcome pre-determined. The BBC had had some internal hopes for a broader international presence, which would be in line with that of the other European countries. It is also widely believed that John Reith[252] had held out hopes for this development since at least the early 1930s.[253] The FO certainly had significant interest in the development of such a service, but the CO (which had recently significantly assisted the Mandate Government in the creation of the PBS) considered it questionable that any further Arabic broadcasts were necessary. Furthermore, the Dominions Office (DO) was not convinced that this was a practical, or indeed good, idea – quite possibly based on the twin notions that this would divide the 'international broadcasting' budget of the BBC, and subsequently reduce the amount of

[252] The Director General and virtual founder of the BBC, who is widely attributed to forming many of its most important components, such as neutrality from Government control
[253] Partner, *Arab voices*.

energy went into the Empire Service,[254] as well as undermine the good name and trustworthiness of BBC services in general.[255]

However, it appeared to the Cabinet that something must be done regarding the Italian broadcasts. Initially, several deputations were optimistically made to the Italian embassy, to request a cessation of the activities.[256] This was met with a lack of concern from Rome – which resulted in some spurious claims. One of these was that Bari was an independent and private broadcaster,[257] and so could not be interfered with by the Italian government.[258]The Italian government also stated that it was a rogue transmitter operating on the frequency, in November of 1935 – something that the British eventually proved was not the case, later in that year. That this apparent provocation would not go unmatched was certain.

In response to Cabinet concern over the Bari broadcast, several tactical questions were raised. There was initially hope that Jerusalem would be able to temporarily salve the issue – however, due to limited popular appeal on the ground, [259] its short range, [260] and views on the neutrality of the station as well as the appropriateness of broadcasting counter propaganda from a mandate territory, this idea

[254] This was a pan-Empire English language channel, inaugurated in 1932, which kept most of the Dominions [excluding Canada], as well as Colonial expats and administrators, in cultural contact with London
[255] Browne, "Going International." P426
[256] MacDonald, "Radio Bari."
[257] Ibid.p199
[258] This was a ploy that the British were later to use.
[259] Due to the broadcasting of Hebrew language programmes, many Arabs refused to listen Callum A. MacDonald, "Radio Bari: Italian Wireless Propaganda in the Middle East and British Countermeasures 1934-38," *Middle Eastern Studies* 13, no. 2 (May 1, 1977): 195–207.
[260] It only could really be heard clearly up to 300 miles away

was quickly dropped. However, this did not stop it being used in the House of Commons when questions were asked about the Government's response.[261]

Apparent disappointment with this initial finding led to the Cabinet Committee on Arabic Broadcasting.[262] One of the initial proposals which the Committee considered was the placing of a broadcasting station on Cyprus, with the intention of using it as a base for propaganda. However, this idea, whilst initially tempting, was dismissed on technical grounds – were it to be using shortwave to broadcast, it would not be heard by the Eastern Mediterranean countries, and were it to broadcast on medium wave, the Arab Gulf countries would not be able to tune in. There appears a distinct lack of technical knowledge from the participants of the committee, with what appears frequent misunderstandings of the technical limitations of receivers, transponders, and indeed of the differences between short and medium wave.[263]

The final findings of the committee are illuminating. It found that the solutions put forwards so far – namely, using the Jerusalem station and installing a new facility in Cyprus – would not be fit for the purpose originally envisaged. This led it to the position of recommending a course of action which had been informed through, initially, a series of technical interactions with an organisation which had been excluded from the proceedings to this point – the BBC. This was, in fact, the creation of the BBC foreign broadcasting service. This built on the Ullswater Committee's inclusion of the suggestion of a BBC foreign language component, and also fit with a new information

[261] Cabinet Minutes 39 (37), 27/09/1939
[262] Cabinet Command Paper CP247(37) , and also known as the Kingsley Wood Committee
[263] Not least, the number of people in the Middle East who had receivers capable of receiving one or the other, or both, of these frequency bands – a measurement which the British never appear to fully have got the hang of counting. The first significant research was undertaken in 1946 by JS Dodd of AUB. See both above and below, as well as bibliography.

paradigm: Britain was not only intending to use its new station to generate 'a favourable predisposition to the broadcasting government', but also as:

> *'regards the Arabic broadcasts, however, [it is] the intention of the Foreign Office [is] that these should be of a propagandist nature'*[264]

Whilst it was not the intention that there would be broadcasts directly akin to those of Radio Bari in terms of offensive or blatant-ness, it is clear that the much vaunted BBC neutrality had been compromised, in terms of the beginning of a form of government control that had not previously existed.

4.4.5. The flexibility of the BBC, the 'Gentleman's Agreement', and straight news

One of the main concerns which the BBC appears to have with operating within this context is that of control over news. John Reith, as well as other BBC administrators, was a firm believer in the importance of producing 'straight' news. However, this was conjoined with the pressure from the government that it should be at least able to partially control news broadcasts from the station.

This tension, of independence versus control, operated as a running battle between the two organisations for much of the time the station was being discussed at the political level. Reith stated the need for 'absolute independence' at the cabinet committee hearing on the issue,[265] despite also requesting significant funding from the FO. This ambiguity – of independence as well as financial reliance – was one which often confounded both organisations. Although, it must be said, it arguably frustrated the FO more than the BBC. The lead example of this is that, while the FO had an official take on events which were to be reported on, they did not have a firm

[264] Cabinet Command Paper CP247(37)
[265] Ibid, Browne, "Going International."

commitment from the BBC to respect their view. The major demand they made was that the FO have the ability to control the material in the news specifically for the Middle East.[266] The first (and probably most discussed) lens on this is the opening news broadcast from the station. Amidst huge anticipation, the news was heard throughout the Arabic speaking world in January 1938 – only to have one of the top line news stories concern the hanging of 'another Arab', due to his possession of an illegal rifle.[267] This left an initial bad taste in the mouths of many of those who heard it, although appears to have been largely overlooked within a short amount of time.

The conditions set out by the BBC representatives at the Kingsley Wood Committee[268] were firm, and appeared non-negotiable. That the major concession to the FO was that, if it really wanted to distribute news which went against the better knowledge and judgement of the BBC, it could be preceded by a message indicating that it had been requested by the Department. This was an outcome which the FO had been attempting to avoid throughout the process, as its preferred option was to preserve the *'FO's traditional preference for conducting official propaganda through intermediary organisations in order to protect the credibility of the material put out'*[269].

The eventual outcome of this wrangling between the FO and the BBC was that there would be a concession that the BBC would recognise that it 'might have to show more elasticity and perhaps be more amenable to Foreign Office views than in the case of other than Arabic language'. This was to be set to be recognised in an agreement that the BBC would maintain 'close touch' with the FO over matters of sensitivity. This

[266] Ibid. p.427
[267] Nevill Barbour, "Broadcasting to the Arab World: Arabic Transmissions from the B.B.C. and Other Non-Arab Stations," *Middle East Journal* 5, no. 1 (Winter 1951): 57–69. P59
[268] Quite often referred to as 'the first Kingsley Wood Committee'. The second was during the Second World War
[269] Partner, *Arab voices*. P13.

clearly meant different things for both sides– the FO expected to have all of its news production desires met, and the BBC expected little interference unless there was a significant issue. To close the deal, there was the anticipation of a 'gentleman's agreement' between the two organisations, symbolised by an exchange of letters. This never happened – a cabinet meeting in late 1937 removed the necessity, downgrading it to a verbal agreement. [270]

Browne comments that this was the beginning of an undoing of the BBC – and that later events were to show that any retreat from absolute neutrality were likely to be pernicious in the long term.[271] In this instance, the lack of written guarantees allowed 'special circumstances' to be the catalyst for increasing control. The overseas BBC service, due to the financial set up left after the Second World War, of a grant in aid (rather than a payment from the license fee[272]) enabled the FO and treasury to issue directions over the number of hours broadcast, as well as the languages which could be broadcast in. Over the short term, the BBC's ability to enforce its own will on the set-up of the broadcasting establishment in which it operated had been maintained. However, in the long term, it would be political interests which dominated (rather than were accommodated) the international broadcasting system.

4.4.6. Zeesen – German broadcasting from 1938.

One of the final components of the media ecosystem is the emergence of a German presence in the Arabic broadcasting space in the late 1930's. The Berlin-Government backed station, based at Zeesen (a town near Berlin) appears to have taken

[270] Cabinet 40(37) 3/10/1937
[271] Browne, "Going International." P428-9
[272] The license fee was the charge levied on those in the UK who had a radio, and later, a television receiving set.

the reins of anti-British rhetoric from around mid-1938, based on reports in the Palestine Post.[273] Further, the Nazi station is reported to have replaced the 'now long defunct' Bari by early 1939.[274] The German station is also listed as having many of the same broadcasting topics as its Italian predecessor – namely the discussion of potentially embarrassing events in the Mandate, whether fictitious or not. In particular, the station did all that it could to foster suspicion of the British policy towards the territory – a feature which was only to become more strong during the course of the Second World War, as well as immediately afterwards.

Thematically, this station will be treated more fully in the context of the War, as it was during that time one of the most discussed personalities of the Mandate – the Grand Mufti – was exiled from the Mandate, and fled to Germany, where he proceeded to broadcast to Palestine over the German radio stations.[275]

4.5. Comments

These three years were crucial for the territory itself, the British control over it, and radio broadcasting from and to it. The launch of the PBS and the BBC Arabic service show that it is more than just consumer delight, informational exchange or international norms which guided the installation of these very expensive technologies. The fact that international stations were set up to defend national interests against other states is one of the more interesting aspects of the immediate pre-war period – be it either understood through the paradigm of ethereal re-armament or a balancing of powers. That this happened primarily over the Eastern Mediterranean is of no surprise –

[273] Palestine Post 11/01/1938 p3, 'A Little Squid From Bari'
[274] Palestine Post 26/03/1939 p2
[275] Küntzel, "National Socialism and Anti-Semitism in the Arab World."

it was an area which was coveted by Italy, and which held (at least the perception of) significant tactical value for the British Imperial defence structure.

5. WORLD WAR II

If the period of 1936-1939 is considered formative for the conflict in Palestine, the rest of the Middle East was defined by the Second World War. Whilst Palestine was not occupied anew, [276] or even directly involved in the larger campaigns of the conflict, in no way did this mean that it was impervious to its effects. The advance of Rommel in North Africa potentially threatened the Mandate, and a proximity to Cairo, which was to become the Middle East Supply Centre, gave senior administrators and information control experts easy access to Palestine and its civil bureaucracy.

When combined with the effect of the 'regionalisation' of the Palestine conflict, it can be seen that policies concerning information control and dissemination must be considered in the light of their regional and linguistic effect. [277] This is the main thrust of this chapter, which is concerned with an evaluation of how international interests encouraged the British Government to develop controls over and responses stations audible within its sphere of influence, and its policy on information in the Middle East as a whole.

This chapter will be divided into six sections. The first will give a brief overview of the military events of the Second World War in the region in general, and in Palestine in particular. The second will examine the role which Cairo had as a centre of interest for the Middle East, with the third section considering how war time conditions encouraged the BBC to change its position regarding 'straight' news. The

[276] Despite being still under the Mandate of Great Britain
[277] While territorial and ethnic considerations did develop over the period, these were not highly significant at this time.

fourth section will evaluate how the PBS was effected by an increased Government interest in controlling its output, with the fifth examining the reasons for the creation of a third radio broadcasting platform in the region, under the name 'the Near East Arabic Broadcasting Service'. The final section will offer some comments on these issues.

5.1. Palestine in the Second World War

Krämer maintains that it was the 'larger context' of the Middle East, rather than Palestine itself, which dominated decisions over the period of the war.[278] However, this context did have effects on the territory. In particular, the use of Palestine as a training area for military units caused an uptick in the economic activity of the entire Mandate.[279] These troops also guaranteed a degree of safety, although after the assumed conciliation of the 1939 White Paper, there was also a calmer atmosphere throughout the country.

The economic benefit of having 'normalised' trade with the British and Allied forces throughout the region, as well as a growing number of migrants from the 'existential threat' to Jewry in Europe, also contributed to a development boom including considerable improvement to infrastructure, including the road network, carried out by the British and other allied troops..

However, that is not to say that there was no regional intrigue. Of particular note were the sister mandates of Lebanon and Syria, which fell under the control of a pro-Vichy government after the German conquest of France. After the then-Government hosted German planes in Lebanese airports in early 1941, British forces, supported by

[278] Krämer, *A History of Palestine*. P. 296.
[279] Norman Bentwich and Helen Bentwich, *Mandate Memories, 1918-1948: From the Balfour Declaration to the Establishment of Israel*, First. (Schocken Books, 1965).

the Haganah[280] and the Free French, succeeded in completely occupying the country within three months, leaving the Free French, under De Gaulle, in control of the territories.[281] When combined with the entrance of Italy into the war in June 1940, the Eastern Mediterranean had all of the elements necessary for a great-power conflict. With bombing sorties aimed at Jaffa and Haifa over the course of 1940 and 1941, this reality was almost realised.

Furthermore, and arguably more important to the long term existence of the Jewish community in the Mandate, the British army began to utilise and train Jewish soldiers, who fought under the British flag.[282] Whilst a Jewish legion was ultimately formed (in 1944), Jews who had knowledge of the centre of Europe, as well as having the linguistic skills to operate there, were much in demand as intelligence officers prior to this. It was through ways such as this that the Yishuv, through legal co-operation with the British, began to develop militarily capabilities towards the end of the Mandate period.

However, the issue of Jewish immigration continued to be a thorn in the side of the administration. Whilst there was theoretically a quota for legal immigration (under the Peel, and then MacDonald recommendations), this also required the acquiescence of the Jewish population of the country, which was not forthcoming. Whilst the administration was enthusiastic about turning back boats full of migrants to their point of origin, there were also a number of schemes in place which allowed 'legal'

[280] A Jewish paramilitary force which was later to serve as the core of the Israeli Defence Force (IDF).
[281] Joseph Malki, "Allied Military Strategy in the Levant During World War II and Their Effects on Lebanese Society 1940-43" (American University of Beirut, 2001).
[282] Krämer, *A History of Palestine*.

migration.[283] Added to this, there were ever more illegal migrants – and the Administration showed much less skill or enthusiasm for deporting these.[284]

Furthermore, after it no longer seemed likely that Germany would succeed in its attempted occupation of the Middle East, there was a significant growth in Jewish violence against British forces and the Mandate Government. Krämer notes that, during this phase of the conflict, the Arab population was a secondary concern – and that the British were certainly considered the most significant opponent to the Jewish populations' realisation of their eventual goals.[285] While the main Hagana organisation had called a functional truce with the British forces over the course of the war, Lehi, a more militant Jewish organisation, was founded in 1940. Whilst the core of the group was killed in 1942,[286] there was an upsurge in anti-British organisation beginning in 1943. Examples of this included the attempted assassination of High Commissioner MacMichael, as well as the killing of Lord Moyne, the British Minister in the Middle East, in November 1944.[287] The tensions caused by this action caused the Hagana to begin to try to control the actions of other Jewish military groups, as well as giving the British reasons to begin reprisals against the killings.

It was in this context, of a considerably developed tension in the territory (albeit not at the level of the first breath of the Arab revolt) that the Suez was further prioritised by the British as a vital asset. It is obvious that in a situation where the Suez acted as the lynchpin of the British presence in the Middle East, that Cairo would

[283] Such as rotating amounts of credit in European cities – which allowed multiple people to gain legal migratory status by demonstrating financial ability.
[284] Segev, *One Palestine, complete*.p377
[285] Krämer, *A History of Palestine*. P303
[286] Ibid.
[287] Ibid.

become the political and transport hub for the Allied forces in the region during the War.

5.2. Egypt as a centre of gravity for Palestine

The Middle East has often been said to rotate around Cairo, and Egypt has even more often been said to be the most significant Arab country. Adding Britain's long standing control over the country, as well as heightened concerns over the effect which war time conditions would have on the Middle East, led London to establish a body to oversee trade in and to the region in 1941.[288] The Middle East Supply Centre (MESC) was established originally to deal with perceived inefficiencies in the supply chain leading to the Middle East, especially in the context of growing threats to shipping lanes going through the Mediterranean.[289] The office, which began its life as a simple arbiter of shipping tonnage, proceeded to spread its influence into almost all areas of Middle Eastern economic life. It was, for instance, the first organisation to establish accurate census data for the region, which was then used to decide which areas, cities and states would receive what allocations of imported goods. The corollary of this action was that the MESC also began to stress the importance of intra-regional trade, which had been neither wide reaching nor deep until the war.

The MESC became an Anglo-American co-operative operation in 1942,[290] and from there began to, in a small way, change social relations in its area of control. Of particular note was a concentration with the export-led nature of the Egyptian economy

[288] Martin Wilmington, "The Middle East Supply Center: A Reappraisal," *Middle* 6, no. 2 (Speing 1952): 144–166.
[289] German U Boat action, as well as Italian air attacks, had made the passage through the sea highly dangerous.
[290] Wilmington, "The Middle East Supply Center: A Reappraisal." P.146

prior to the war. A stress on cotton as a cash crop had left the state in a poor position with regards to a limited quantity of shipping space – a situation which was remedied by encouraging the land-owners to switch to food production. That this undermined many previous social relations is clear – for one, grain is far more fungible a product than cotton, thus giving the farmers an increase in discretion in terms of the use of the product, namely that they could eat it.

That the MESC did not have legislative power, but only that of restricting shipping space available to any state or industry in the Middle East for both import and export. [291] This functionally operated as a tool to define what consumption could happen where in the region, and allowed some domestic populations to feel that it was issuing diktats from abroad. The realisation of this was expressed through anti-colonial sentiment. However, many of the local Governments readily accepted the rules and numbers issued from Cairo, with those in Palestine often listing the 'suggestions' of the Centre as 'rulings' – and then using these as the basis for promulgation.

It was not only shipping which was controlled from Cairo. Barbour discusses the BBC in Cairo – and how it came about that there was an office established there,[292] and Partner also highlights how Cairo had become a centre of world press during the war.[293] This had the important effect of professionalising much of the Arabic information gathering process – it had been, up until that time, often the task of diplomats to report on the important issues.[294] It is with a bit of concern that a diplomat reports 'missing one or two' important stories prior to this point – something which was

[291] Which, in terms of scope of operations, included the Levant, Egypt, Jordan, and sometimes Turkey
[292] Barbour, "Broadcasting to the Arab World: Arabic Transmissions from the B.B.C. and Other Non-Arab Stations."
[293] Partner, *Arab voices*.
[294] Ibid.p22

not considered an ideal situation in the context of the war propaganda machine. Furthermore, this policy established how important it was to 'compete' for the attention of the Arabs.[295] While other World War 2 radio stations are discussed below, it appears that London had realised that this was a market in which they were competing. This was very dissimilar from the situation back at home, the notable feature of which was that it was an institutional monopoly. The wide range of stations which were on offer is hinted at by Dodd's survey of the area's listening practices[296] - which certainly does position the BBC as one of many stations which could be heard or trusted.

That there was a 'psychological' effect of radio broadcasting was also one of the major developments seen through the work of those in Cairo. Rex Keating, later of the PBS, recounts in his autobiography the work done by those operating in radio in Egypt over the first years of the war. [297] He is very particular in noting the effect which different pricing policies for newspapers was having – and how a cheaper journal, published by the Americans, was being far more widely read than the British alternative. Whilst the same could not, at that time, be said for the Egyptian Broadcasting Service overtaking the PBS in terms of the number of listeners, it can certainly be noted that there were many, such as Keating, as well as Reggie Smith, who were 'poached' by PBS in the war years, highlighting the importance placed on local knowledge for administrators of the service. Of particular note was that several of these figures were also connected to the PSB (Psychological Warfare Bureau) in Cairo – an understated feature, but one which certainly does hold sway to the degree of concern

[295] Barbour, "Broadcasting to the Arab World: Arabic Transmissions from the B.B.C. and Other Non-Arab Stations."
[296] Dodd, *A Pioneer Radio Poll in Lebanon, Syria and Palestine*.
[297] Rex Keating, *The trumpets of Tutankhamun : adventures of a radio pioneer in the Middle East* (Basingstoke: Fisher Miller, 1999).

which was being shown regarding broadcasts from other countries, in particular Radio Zeesen,[298] and eventually the USSR.[299]

The interaction between the territories of Egypt and Palestine were also not limited to the transfer of single administrators or the conceptual apparatus for broadcasting. The very real issues of territorial control brought Palestine to the attention of the cabinet in London time and again – with issues such as the correct administrative set up of the Mandate territory (should there be a military governor in the Mandate?), [300] and what the consequences of moving troops from Egypt to Palestine would be (should these troops be immediately replaced, or will they be able to move back to Egypt if required?). [301] With these views, the two territories were bound together in official thought –as well as in official practice. It is in this light that one would expect a unified policy response in terms of broadcasting to emerge. This is this most important issue which will be assessed in the rest of this chapter.

5.3. BBC Arabic and policy responses to the Second World War

The BBC has widely attempted to maintain its independence against many challengers, and has often publicly stated its interest only in 'straight' news.[302] However, the FO, which had been from the outset the paymaster of the service, often seemed to have the view that foreign language broadcasts should be handmaidens of their policies. Furthermore, there regularly appears in discussions of the role of a

[298] i.e. Cabinet W.P. (R.) (40) 18
[299] The USSR began broadcasting in Arabic in 1943. Barbour, "Broadcasting to the Arab World: Arabic Transmissions from the B.B.C. and Other Non-Arab Stations."
[300] i.e. CP193(38)
[301] i.e. Cabinet 40(37), where there is a stated concern with 'provocative' military manoeuvres in the region.
[302] Referring to unbiased accounting of the facts (often placed in opposition to propaganda or the looser defined 'national publicity')

Government broadcasting that the BBC's non-propagandist, and independent of Government approach, may (or sometimes phrased as 'must') change in times of national emergency.[303] That the Second World War was one of these is difficult to dispute.

However, the BBC was not enthusiastic at being described as 'the fourth arm' of the armed forces.[304] From a slow and often confusing beginning,[305] however, the wheels of state began to envelop elements of the BBC's Foreign Service remit, beyond what had previously been the case. Partner outlines some of the major changes, which included an increase in the number of Arabic speaking staff. This account will be given in the context of Neville Barbour's[306] discussions, in his 1951 article,[307] in which he outlines a first-hand account of the rapidly growing (in both political importance and floor space) organization.

One of the more notable features of the early war years of the Arabic service was that the personnel who were in charge were often either from the BBC or were, like Barbour, experts and amateurs from outside Government service. This added another layer to the tension of 'propaganda' – these men were often guided, in a similar way to their colleagues in the MESC, by a loyalty to or fascination with the population they were serving, sometimes beyond loyalty to their employers. This did not directly fit with the agenda of a 'weaponised' BBC, and from reports from early in the 1940's,

[303] i.e. Cabinet 10 (38), 2/3/38
[304] Partner, *Arab voices*.
[305] Sir Samuel Hoare, who was among the first senior officials in the Ministry of Information, stated in Parliament that there would be no such thing as propaganda, but only straight news.
[306] Barbour had been taken from the Ministry of Information, and had lived in the greater Middle East for some years during the 1920's and 30's. His account is one of the fullest of the war years, alongside Partner's archival account.
[307] Barbour, "Broadcasting to the Arab World: Arabic Transmissions from the B.B.C. and Other Non-Arab Stations."

when criticism appeared from many friendly to Britain in the Arab world, this becomes clearer. For instance, Bahrain's ruling family are alleged to have formed themselves into a group offering criticisms of the BBC Arabic service.[308] Reportage on negative elements of British politics was seen by some to be 'airing dirty laundry' in the sight of those who were intended to be ruled – such as coverage of the Parliamentary crisis of 1940.[309]

Whilst Barbour notes that 'it was agreed that in broadcasting to the Arabs the corporation would not seek to rival local stations', [310] it does also seem that the BBC was engaged in a conflict, at least for attention, with its local rivals. Of a particular mention was an issue of how to operate in both fields at the same time – of not directly competing with other local stations, and also presenting a good face for Britain. After the Narvak offensive in 1940,[311] there was a dearth of 'good' news to report. This brought to a head a conflict which Winston Churchill in particular had been following – that it was not considered ideal to allow natives or locals of occupied territories hear the negative side of what was going on in London.[312] That there had been a coalition Government formed in London in the after effects of the Parliamentary crisis allowed 'more effective controls' to be placed over the BBC.

This flew in the face of the 'Gentleman's Agreement', negotiated by John Reith three years previously. This had implied that there were not to be overt or

[308] Partner, *Arab voices*.p35
[309] Partner, *Arab voices*.p36.
[310] Barbour, "Broadcasting to the Arab World: Arabic Transmissions from the B.B.C. and Other Non-Arab Stations."p61
[311] The campaign in which Germany conquered Norway, causing a huge amount of worry in other Northern European countries, and a Government crisis in Britain
[312] Of importance to this feature is that Winston Churchill did not in any real way like the BBC external service at all, and is famous for having mentioned the organisation very, very sparsely in his magisterial memoirs on the war years.

consistent control over the BBC from the FO. Churchill, by then Prime Minister, noted that reforms over control, and in particular the proposed subservience of the BBC to Ministry of Information, should proceed.[313] This was to present problems in terms of newsgathering as the Arabic broadcasting section of the BBC had previously enjoyed reasonably free associations to other organisations within the greater Government framework. Of particular note, however unsatisfactory, was that with foreign-posted diplomats feeding news back for broadcasting. This made the BBC much more dependent on central Government – perhaps reflecting previous issues which had been faced. It is entirely possible that several years of a somewhat liberal attitude towards the 'Gentleman's Agreement' had placed the BBC, and in particular the foreign language broadcasting services, in an already vulnerable position. The dogmatic approach taken by Churchill regarding foreign publicity as a weapon of war certainly did not help.

As if to highlight this point, the same War Cabinet[314] decided that there should be a triumvirate, consisting of the BBC, the MOI and the FO, which would be responsible for the 'correct' interpretation and eventual transmission of Government Policy abroad, in particular in foreign languages. This coincided with the introduction of what Partner refers to as a 'sharp attack'[315] on the BBC, in which Professor Rushbrook Williams[316] was brought in to offer criticism and improvement to the service, whilst being based in the MOI. His critiques were mainly mounted at the allegedly inappropriate nature of the broadcasts to the Arab Middle East. His attacks

[313] A discussion of the role of the BBC was carried out in War Cabinet WP (40) 491 (26/12/40), where it was decided that there should not be full nationalisation of the BBC, and that an intermediary organisation should be placed between the Cabinet Office and the Corporation
[314] War Cabinet WP (40) 491 (26/12/40)
[315] Partner, *Arab voices*.
[316] Professor Rushbrook Williams was an Oxford Don, as well as being for a time the Eastern Services Director of the BBC and a civil servant in India.

against the organisation took heavy reference to (later Sir) John Bagot Glubb,[317] who had written a memo as to the most desirable broadcasting for the Bedouin. He also drew a large number of unfavourable comparisons between Radio Zeesen and BBC Arabic,[318] and attempted to demonstrate how Zeesen was engaging in propaganda which was far more successful than anything which London was, at that point, able to put together. However, this view is not necessarily supported with reference to reports of the Palestine Post, which comments mainly on the formation of the German service,[319] as well as an absence to inciting material in them.[320] However, both the publisher and the audience of the PP should be taken into account when considering the newspapers output (it was published by Zionists for English speakers in Palestine), meaning that any reporting negative to Britain would likely be dulled down. It would be fair to expect more mention to be made of the topic if Zeesen had been as effective in its campaign as was thought in the MOI.

Despite there not being all that much truth in these attacks on the service did not seem to halt those who were criticising the service, either in terms of an increase or the cessation of them. This may have been the fact that there was simply not all that much to report on which put the Allied forces in a positive light.[321] These two facts forced the institutions to clash with the previous *modus operandi* of the Arabic service – it had not been designed to be a short term weapon, but had been instructed to maintain

[317] Often referred to as Glubb Pasha, who was at this time a Government official in Palestine. He was later to take up a position in Jordan in which he commanded Jordanian troops. REF
[318] The lead German Arabic station, based near Berlin
[319] i.e. 24/7/1939 p1 and 14/8/1939 p2
[320] As in 26/7/39 p5
[321] There was scant good news to report in late 1940 regarding Allied advances, necessitating a favourable comparison with Axis forces for those who listened to radio stations broadcast by both sides.

long term relevancy – as had been suggested in a previous Cabinet note.[322] They had been told to, wherever possible; develop a positive identity of Britain in the minds of those who were listening to the service. It was not necessarily to the fault of the broadcasters that there were two conflicting paradigms at work – nor that there were multiple different agencies competing to command their voice. It is not without surprise, therefore, that the running battle over the degree of 'propaganda' which should be inserted in to the service was slowly won by the FOI and the FO – much against the then-recent history of the BBC Arabic service, as well as a wider BBC institutional bias. It does certainly seem that the Near Eastern Department, which presided over the Arabic Service, lacked the aggression which was necessary for some official quarters to be content with its output.

Given this, it seems fair to assert that at least as far as the Arabic output of the BBC was concerned, the Second World War was defined by outside organisations giving targets not necessarily contiguous with the long term objectives of the organisation. Furthermore, there were very real concerns over the ability of internationally broadcast radio to disrupt populations within controlled territories – thus stretching the remit of the service even further.

However, the director of Arabic Services, writing in 1942, refers to the 'radio weapon', and how effective it had been in a variety of different settings – in particular, in close co-operation with diplomacy and the armed forces[323] - with radio acting as a clear third, if not fourth, arm to the military machine. It was clearly a very different service which emerged from the war, than went into it.

[322] Cabinet note . CP 153(39). 10/7/1939
[323] Director of Services Hilleson, from *The 1942 BBC Yearbook*, in Partner, *Arab voices*. P46

5.4. The effect of WW2 on the PBS

It has been argued that the BBC Arabic service was directly affected by the context of war, and that this may be a feature of the organisation being easily accessible from London, and therefore integrated into the larger information organisations of Great Britain. That these features, of proximity to power and integration into a larger system, are not true in the case of the PBS does not mean that the service was unaffected by the conflict.

Cairo had become very much a central hub of economic and media control over the course of 1940/41.[324] The Egyptian State radio had been incorporated into news provision and Arabic language material to the BBC in London, and had also on occasion provided direct feeds to America.[325] The war had also come to Lebanon and Syria, and Iraq had become a hot bed of discontent, eventually leading to the short lived government of Rashid Ali. The context of the mandate situation clearly presented some issues for the sensitive treatment of certain topics. As has been mentioned above, there was some concern from, amongst others, Lampson in Cairo about Britain allowing unwelcome news to be broadcast throughout the world.[326] That the PBS did not fall directly into this problem did not mean they were averse to it.

This section will analyse the manner in which the PBS had to adapt to the situation as it stood. What must be remembered was that there had been continuous strife in the territory since very soon after its first broadcasts. The 1936 report on the

[324] This also coincided with the establishment of a Minister Resident in the Middle East in Cairo, Richard Casey (later Lord Casey). This policy was intended to stop the need for all political decisions to be passed through London.
[325] As was the case with Rex Keating and the opening of Tutankhamen's tomb in 1939. Keating, *The trumpets of Tutankhamun*.
[326] Partner, *Arab voices*.

station had called for a period of 'normal' functioning before any long reaching decisions could be taken.[327] Up until the end of the war, it can be seen that there had still not been a chance for the 'regular' or 'organic' development of the service.

While the PBS did not have the same institutional arrangements as the BBC, and as such did not enjoy the same level of discussion and concern as its progenitor, which is not to say that the 1939 to 1945 period were of a fully 'organic' development. The station had been under the nominally direct control of the Government for all of its existence,[328] although there had been discussions of re-allocating the service to its own department, starting from the Bowman report in 1936.[329] This was to become the case during WW2, with the entire organisation being re-delegated to the Public Information Office (PIO). [330] The PIO had been in control of news broadcastings throughout the life of the station,[331] but during the War redesigned much of the broadcasting for its own purposes.

Some of the most keynote redesigns were in the case of issues in which there was pre-existing government intervention. One of the most important reach-out of Government control over normally civil broadcasting was related to issues of food – quite possibly prompted, directly or indirectly, by directives from the MESC in Cairo. For instance, the Food Control Department was given time over the airwaves to discuss food safety over the course of 1944, with what can only be assumed as the intention of

[327] Bowman, *Report of the Committee On The Development of The Palestine Broadcasting Service*.
[328] Under the Department of Posts and Telegraphs (P&T)
[329] Bowman, *Report of the Committee On The Development of The Palestine Broadcasting Service*.
[330] Palestine Executive Council Decisions 860-865 (May-June 1941) CO814/37
[331] Stanton, "A Little Radio Is a Dangerous Thing."p171.

reducing the amount of waste food produced, and to maximise what was provided.[332] The report states that there was also an attempt to get different communities to cook each other's food – a programme which, whilst clearly fascinating for inter-community relations, sadly does not have any follow up reports or statements of success.

A second attempt in terms of food related activity was that of a more macro-economic nature. The Mandate government suggested that (or, given the situation, perhaps forced) the PBS to circulate prices of different foods– in a fashion similar to the shipping broadcast.[333] This was in an attempt to cease price gouging activities of individuals and organisations around the country – presumably the Government was attempting to make the market for different commodities more fluid, or to embarrass those who had taken advantage of privileged information to hoard food. However, it was reported that this policy had failed to take off – with few in the territory voluntarily submitting pricing information to the PBS for recirculation. With reference to MESC activities, this may well have appeared as a further attempt of the occupying power to regulate in an unwelcome fashion. Furthermore, this policy could have been perceived as an attempt to give potentially sensitive information on food production in areas mainly occupied by either Zionist or Arab farmers to any who desired it – a policy destined to not meet a welcome reception. British and European rationalisation, it appears, certainly fell afoul of the difficult trends of territory and production – the two points on which many of the on-going disputes between the two warring factions in Palestine were based.

[332] Food Control Department 1944 report. CO 814/17
[333] CO 371/52567. 5/11/46

With regards to the future of the PBS, however, there is a glimmer of hope within official discussion. There are a variety of different trends at work; which are mainly encapsulated in the Executive Minutes of the first half of 1941.[334] The main issue at hand is the future organisation of the PBS – an idea divided into two main sub-questions – of external accountability, and of how the station will be internally structured. The way in which these questions were approached is whether the PBS would step outside its P&T[335] organisation, and move into being its own separate administrative unit, and whether there would be separate divisions within the station itself. In the end, it was decided that there would be separate controllers of Arabic and Hebrew – under the control of a British administrator, who was to be seconded from the BBC. This was to highlight the long running allegiance between the two institutions, at least in terms of their outlook. This was, on the whole, of acceptance of the policies of their home countries, with limited acknowledgement of different points of view. However, this was to change radically with the introduction of non-British senior administrators into the PBS – as these were to bring a far more partisan attitude to the station, as shall be discussed in the following chapter.

The PBS was, on the whole, an organisation that was not required to move that far from its original remit in order to fully comply with the desires of those who required it to be a Government mouthpiece, as well as a cornerstone of a cleverly structured propaganda agenda. The battles fought within and by the BBC to maintain its coherency had no place in an organisation which was only intended to become separate from a Government department after the war, and which had factional tensions over the correct broadcasting policy of news embedded in its very structure.

[334] Palestine Executive Council Minutes, (April-June 1941)[Meetings 860-865] CO 814/37
[335] Posts and Telegraphs department, of the Palestine Administration

5.5. Creation of Sharq al-Adna

The third and final broadcasting platform which will be discussed in this thesis is radio 'Sharq al-Adna'. It began broadcasting as Freedom Broadcasting station from Palestine in the early 1940's, and at the close of 1948 was known as the Near East Arabic Broadcasting Service (NEABS), transmitting from Cyprus. The history of this station after the period in question is also a fascinating topic, with its final messages being related to the abortive 1956 Suez campaign by Great Britain. However, this shall not be delved into here.

There are a variety of things which make this station different from the PBS or BBC Arabic. However, in so much as there were different underlying currents with regards the establishment of the PBS and BBC Arabic, there is also a remarkable amount of continuity of purpose. In terms of Sharq al-Adna, this is not the case – it was to later become an undeclared 'black' station[336], and had advertising on the airwaves. In terms of its purpose, it was there to fill a need in the growing pantheon of British information service requirements – in this instance, to provide more biased news,[337] and to present opinion useful to the British cause, but which could not be accounted to an entity which called for straight news. This had been a particular concern of the BBC since the instigation of the BBC Arabic service, with John Reith having made it perfectly clear that, during peacetime, the News service would not be tampered with by FO pressure.

In terms of documentary evidence concerning the foundation of the station, there is a comparative paucity. This is partly due to the establishing agencies, which

[336] A radio station which does not make it clear who either controls or funds it.
[337] Martin, "Press and Radio in Palestine Under the British Mandate."p18

were military in nature. Many of the records pertaining to the formation of the service are not in the public domain.[338] However, there is, to a large extent, a collective memory of the station's early years seen through some other histories of similar issues.

Partner establishes its provenance through its relationship to the BBC, and to the BBC's office in Cairo in particular.[339] His research establishes that it was originally constructed for the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) by the Royal Corps of Signals (a British army division). The transmitting station was near Jerusalem, whilst the studios were in Jaffa. However, the Palestine Post maintains that the first place the station found residence was in Jenin, only subsequently moving to Jaffa.[340] This information is largely confirmed by Jack Connel, who is credited in his biography of being the officer in charge of the establishment of the 'Voice of Arab Youth', then working for the wartime SOE.[341]

It is alleged that the first broadcasts were heard between the first half of 1941[342] and September of that year,[343] [344] although there is some ambiguity as to the exact start date of the station. What is often suggested is that it was founded with the assistance of engineers loaned from the Egyptian Broadcasting Service.[345] Partner gives a good potted history of the re-alignment of the organisation in view of a great number of propaganda operations operating out of the Middle East by the Secretary of State in

[338] Attempts were made to access them, however they are housed in the FCO in London and have not been released under Freedom of Information regulations yet.
[339] Partner, *Arab voices*.p53
[340] The Palestine Post. 23/6/47 p3
[341] Robin Bryer, *Jack: A Literary Biography of John Connell (John Henry Robertson 1909-1965)* (AuthorHouse, 2010).
[342] Partner, *Arab voices*.p50
[343] The Palestine Post. 24/9/41 p2
[344] Boyd (2003) also finds a variety of sources and dates for the foundation of the station, ranging from early 1941 to late 1942.
[345] Another operation in the Middle East which was largely helped by the BBC in its establishment.

Cairo. This led the station to be put under the tutelage of the Political Warfare Executive (PWE) in 1943. It was funded by the FO after the war, and is noted for having a significant number of 'local talent' – AUB is reported as having a large number of its graduates in the ranks of the station's broadcasters.[346]

The message which SAA/NEABS put out was far more partisan than any other station over which the British had influence. It is reported as having a decidedly anti-French attitude even during the war, when France was an erstwhile ally of Britain.[347] Furthermore, it is also reported as having the occasional anti-Jewish outburst between 1939 and 1945 – again, perhaps reflecting the local (Arab) level of its own staffing. This was to be shown in a time outside of the scope of this research, when the entire Arab staff resigned in the 1956 Suez campaign due to the overt nature of British propaganda.

This was not to say, however, that the station was not connected to the official world inside Palestine. The Palestine Post reports a number of official trips to the station in 1942 and 1943,[348] including officials from the PBS (Mr. Ajaj Nuweyhid, the Arabic section chief of the PBS, was in attendance at an April 1942 tour of the station's facilities), as well as from the Public Information Officer and the Chief Secretary of Palestine. To say that this was a covert operation is to overlook such official engagements with it. To complete this picture, the first Officer in charge of Sharq al-

[346] Martin, "Press and Radio in Palestine Under the British Mandate."
[347] Ray Alan, "Arab Voices, British Accents, and the Pitfalls of Propaganda," *The Reporter*, September 19, 1957.
[348] The Palestine Post, 24/4/42 p3 and 11/2/43 p2

Adna, Wing Commander Marsack,[349] was appointed as the BBC representative in the Middle East in 1946.[350]

However, despite this somewhat ambiguous situation, the station seems to have grown at a startling rate, and was on air for longer than almost all other broadcasters to the region – in February 1943, it was thought that the station was transmitting between ten and twelve hours a day – about six times the output of the BBC Arabic service.[351] This was certainly rapid growth, and is testament to a number of different features of the service. One of these, which was to become infamous over the course of the late 1940's, was the emergence of the NEABS as something resembling a wire service.[352] It is quite possible that this was in connection with the Arabic News Agency (ANA), established at around the same time in Cairo, which was to be a further British expansion into the media world of the Middle East. This service provided news services to a variety of organisations around the region,[353] and also presumably to its sister British station. The Palestine Post often cites the NEABS as the source of stories it reporting on – a feature which was not uncommon (the paper also takes stories from the BBC and PBS), but this does highlight the growth in importance of the station. [354]

The second feature of its rapid popularity was its more biased reporting style. This certainly appears to have enamoured it far more to residents of Palestine than some of the earlier broadcasts of the BBC, which had been widely considered as having been designed for Englishmen who spoke Arabic, than Arabs themselves. In this, it certainly

[349] A New Zealand Officer who had been stationed to both the Sudan and Egypt prior to the war, and who had converted to Islam.
[350] The Palestine Post, 4/12/45 p3
[351] Partner, *Arab voices*.p53.
[352] Martin, "Press and Radio in Palestine Under the British Mandate."p18
[353] Alan, "Arab Voices, British Accents, and the Pitfalls of Propaganda."
[354] Or Sharq al-Adna – the station appears to have used both call signs over the period of the War

appears that some of the criticisms of the other British stations during the war – that they lacked vigour in the attack in terms of propaganda, for instance, or that they were not directly focussing on their audience – had been incorporated into a newer, well-funded, and more partisan station.

5.6. Comments

The War had a great many influences on Palestine as a whole, in particular with how it fit with other countries in the region. It also signalled the end of Britain's dominance of the Middle East. Through looking at these three stations, and the reasons for changes in their policy and purpose, it becomes clear that with reference to Palestine, changes were wrought on the radio infrastructure far more due to concerns with outside the territory, than inside it. The BBC Arabic service was involved in a turf war with regards to its official position within the departmental structure in London (not to mention, Churchill's ambivalence to the organisation as a whole), and the PBS was occupied by the official Information ministry, as well as being used to broadcast pro-Free French messages to Vichy Lebanon and Syria.

As if to underscore the inability of these organisations to effectively respond to perceived needs, NEABS was founded with the goal of offering something else – imagined as far closer to the very successful Zeesen broadcasts. The rather British division of comment and News was broken down, displaying very little concern for the nominal 'straight news' paradigm normatively followed in London or Jerusalem.

However, the changes which occurred during the war were, to an extent, superficial in comparison to some of those within the 1945-1948 time frame. If 1936-

1939 had been crucial to Palestine, and WW2 had been to the Middle East, the greatest changes in these three years were to the British Empire system. The main events outlined in the final analysis section will be in the context of a reconfiguration of power relations, given a shrinking British interest and ability in the region.

6. 1945-1948

The end of the Second World War symbolised many things for the world balance of power. In the particular context of this study, however, the most prominent feature was the decline of the power of Britain – it's 'moment in the Middle East'[355] had passed. As the mandatory power began to feel the waning of its abilities throughout the world, the long standing mission to Palestine – long derided by many of the inhabitants of the territory – began to appear as something of a mistake. Many of the opinions against the prospect of an indefinite occupation of a far-away territory, given in the wake of the First World War, began to appear prescient. This was the beginning of a long wind of change for the former hegemon, and the departure from Palestine was perhaps one of the least thought out, and indeed, least noble changes from previous engagements.

This final analysis section will give an overview of some of the changes in the final three years of the Mandate, beginning at the end of the Second World War, and ending with the official end of the Mandate on the 15th of May 1948. It will also discuss several features of the latter half of the Mandate which are better dealt with thematically rather than chronologically, namely the creation of 'pirate broadcasts' from the mainly Jewish population and attacks against the radio infrastructure itself. This chapter will be in two main sections. The first will give a brief political insight into the happenings of the Middle East in these years. The second will view the period as both one of

[355] Partner, *Arab voices*. P56

continuity and change, as seen through changes in the structure and policy of the Mandate administration itself, and then through observations of the three stations discussed above. These shall constitute sub-sections of the latter part of this chapter.

6.1. The end of the Mandate

The global British position had been unquestionably weakened by the end of the War. The immediate consequences of this included a scaling down of non-essential territories, specifically those which were not core to lines of communication. These were focussed around the Suez, and the passage to India. Furthermore, British prerogatives in terms of defining the sphere and scope of Mandate policies was being progressively challenged – first, by the Biltmore conference, and secondly, by the intervention of US President Truman into the debate on immigration. The Biltmore conference, held in the Biltmore hotel in New York in 1942, was one of the first times a maximal Jewish state had been proposed by official Zionist groups. It was not just a Jewish state within the territory of mandatory Palestine which was suggested, but of a state much larger than that which had been previously proposed.[356] In combination with this, the first news of the Holocaust had become known in the United States, which led to much more systematic lobbying and political engagement of the Jewish community (and those who were pro-Zionist) in the country.

To a large extent, this expansion of interest led to the statement of President Truman in August 1945, which strongly suggested that Britain should allow in a further 100,000 Jewish immigrants to Palestine. This did not affect British policy in the short term; however it did cause a great upsurge in violence against the British – who were

[356] Krämer, *A History of Palestine*.p302

now being seen to deliberately block entry, even in the light of American demands to the contrary. Needless to say, America did not accept nearly anything like as many as this number of Jewish migrants over the same period.[357] This upsurge of violence led Britain to mobilise in the region of 100,000 troops into the territory. Zionist efforts against British occupation included assassination of personnel,[358] as well as the destruction of infrastructure controlled or owned by the British. This included oil pipelines, weapons arsenals and bridges.[359]

This campaign of massive disruption resulted in the British operation named 'Agatha' (or Black Sabbath), in which nearly 3,000 Jewish activists were arrested, and a great number of them interned in detention camps throughout the country. In response to this, one of the largest acts of violence against the Mandate administration was carried out in July 1946, in which the King David Hotel, the headquarters of the General Staff in Palestine, [360] was bombed by Irgun. 91 people were killed in the explosion.

The mobilisation of such a large number of troops in the Mandate, as well as the evolving British policy of retrenchment in the Middle East, led to an acknowledgment by Foreign Minister Bevin in February 1947 that Britain was to retreat from the Mandate, in the face of insurmountable difficulties.[361] The decision of the British Government to retreat from the entire region also included the decision to pass the problem to the newly formed UN, who in a time honoured fashion formed a

[357] Ibid.
[358] Perhaps the most famous was Lord Moyne, in Cairo.
[359] The effect of this campaign on the PBS will be discussed below.
[360] As well as the home, for a time, of the PBS.
[361] Segev, *One Palestine, complete*.ch.23 covers this period very thoroughly.

committee (UNSCOP[362]) to decide over the correct method of resolving the tensions in the territory.

UNSCOP was in Palestine over June and July 1947. This commission, in a predictable fashion, received full co-operation and testimony from the Jewish population and leadership, but only scant testimony from the Arab population. During the period of its hearings, there was a much publicised case of the British turning back a passenger ship (the President Waterfield) which contained 4,500 migrants. It ended back up in Hamburg, in the British controlled zone of Germany. This appears to have had a strong effect on those on the committee, who seem also to have had in mind the recent Holocaust.

The conclusions of UNSCOP, published in early September 1947, recommended the general principle of partition, roughly in line conceptually with the Peel report recommendations of 1937. However, the human geography of the territory had changed by this point. Patterns of Jewish land ownership were as such that the territory delineated to them was substantially more than what was actually owned by the Jewish population. With dense pockets of Arabs in Jewish territory, and vice versa, this was a plan which, if carried out, was bound to be rife with conflict.

However, this did not stop the plan being approved by the UN General Assembly in late November 1947, in what was known as Resolution 181. Soon afterwards, Britain announced its decision to leave on May 14th of the next year. What must be stated is that there was no formal decision as to how power would be distributed after the end of the Mandate – Henry Gurney, the then Chief Secretary to the

[362] United Nations Special Committee on Palestine

Palestine Mandate, suggested that there was to be something akin to a scorched earth policy, with lunatics to be let out of asylums and prisoners to be let out of gaol[363] [364].

The time from the announcement of Resolution 181 to the end of the British Mandate, fighting was to get underway. A series of trigger events, such as the killing of Jewish travellers in a bus between Petah Tykvah and Lyddah in late November 1947, and the formation of armed Arab units attached to a nationwide series of strike committees (as had been formed in the Arab strike between 1936 and 1939), [365] occurred – although it is certain that there were violent actions and reprisals on both sides of the conflict. Furthermore, the Arab League[366] (which favoured non-direct intervention at this stage of the conflict) allowed volunteers to go to the territory from January 1948. Many of these volunteers served under Fawzi-al-Qawuji's Arab Liberation Army (ALA). However, this organisation was distinctly opposed to the forces loyal to the Mufti, causing a certain degree of inter-Arab factional infighting.

That is not to say that there was not a considerable advantage enjoyed by the Arab forces in the first months of the conflict. They controlled most of the arterial routes throughout the country, as well as being at liberty to strike at many different Jewish homes and businesses. This was matched by Jewish extremist violence against many Arab population centres – Ben Gurion ordered the clearing of the Arab quarter of Jerusalem in late February 1948.[367]

Jewish and Arab attitudes to British personnel had notably changed over the period. It was no longer they who were preventing the Jewish population from enjoying

[363] Samuel, *A lifetime in Jerusalem*.p237
[364] Considerations of this are also discussed in FO 371/68530
[365] Segev, *One Palestine, complete*. pp500-518
[366] Which had been formed under the Alexandria protocol in REF
[367] Krämer, *A History of Palestine*.p311

its own state – now the real enemy were the Arab residents of the soon-to-be-ended Mandate.

Following from this, there began systematic clearing of Arab populations over the course of April and early May, under what was known as 'Plan D'.[368] This was a replacement of the guerrilla warfare that had been undertaken previously, where there were conventional military tactics used by the Zionist armies to conquer and control key parts of the country. The first major culmination of this was the massacre of Dair Yesin, in April 1948, where a combined Irgun and Palmach force murdered over one hundred residents of the town, later parading the survivors through West Jerusalem[369].

The period immediately prior to the end of the British Mandate is one where the mandate power faded to irrelevancy before the official end of its tenure. That is not to say that there was not a significant level of dis-union. In February 1948, the Mandate was excluded from the Sterling area, which caused a disruption in any trade which was still occurring normally. Additionally, the postal system ceased to work (as the roads were too difficult to travel on, amongst other reasons). Norman Bentwich states that, by late February 1948, most of the features of a modern state had ceased to exist[370] – leaving the final months of the Mandate limbo between conflict and nation building.

6.2. British monopoly on the air undermined from within

One of the defining features of the airwaves over the Palestine Mandate was that there was competition for attention. However, the final years saw a rather different form of competition emerge. While before there had been competition between states

[368] Pappe, *A History of Modern Palestine*.
[369] Ibid.
[370] Bentwich and Bentwich, *Mandate Memories, 1918-1948*.p181

for the attention of Arab listeners, now there was a number of 'pirate' stations operated by Jewish operatives and organisations in competition with local and international stations. Whilst, obviously, this would have had an effect on the listenership of the Egyptian Broadcasting Service,[371] the main target of these broadcasts in the early years was the mandatory power – and therefore, the PBS, the BBC and NEABS were the main targets of these organisations ire.

To give context to this apparent outburst of activity, however, it is important to think of the position of the Jewish population in Palestine, especially as regards the other Jewish populations throughout the world. In particular, there appears to have been an abiding concern with what the Zionist organisation could deem their 'own' radio outlet. This was first realised in the acquisition of the first (and only) mandatory private radio license in the early 1930's,[372] secondly through a longstanding desire to have their own shortwave station to Europe[373], and thirdly in actually issuing short wave international broadcasts to other parts of the world, notably Russia, through the usage of the PBS' international ability.[374] Given this history of an aspirational attitude with regards to publicity, it is not surprising that, when the equipment required for broadcasting became objects which it was possible for these organisations to possess, they were quick to adopt broadcasting as an integral part of their propaganda machines.

It must be noted that there were no rival Arabic pirate stations. Boyd maintains that this was primarily due to a belief that the existing organs of broadcasting were

[371] That competition can be seen throughout the period can be seen in Dodd, *A Pioneer Radio Poll in Lebanon, Syria and Palestine*.
[372] See above for the narrative of Mendel Abramavitch and the Ben Gurion radio society in 4.3.3.2
[373] Samuel, *A lifetime in Jerusalem*.p210. Kol Israel, the state broadcaster when Israel came into being, immediately began international broadcasting over shortwave.
[374] Palestine Post. 25/9/1941 p3

already on their side, especially with regards to other stations based in Arabic countries around them.[375] Nevill Barbour's attitude, whilst roughly similar to that of Boyd, goes further in suggesting that the Arab speaking people of Palestine had been given a sense of self-importance by the large number of Arabic broadcasting stations set up for their benefit over the course of the Second World War – and thus did not feel the need to create their own, especially if against the wishes of the Mandate government.[376] Both attitudes feel intuitively accurate – the Strickland paradigm of PBS development had had a specific focus on the Arab *Fellaheen* for its target audience, and the Palestine Post posited that many of the broadcasts were of no use to the already modern and literate Jewish population.[377] However, this conspicuous absence may also have been due to a lack of comparable Arab organisations to the Haganah, Irgun or Stern group.

Boyd's study, perhaps the most full on this topic, focusses on the effect which these broadcasts had on the successful creation of the state of Israel – a topic which is outside the scope of this research. However, there are some exceptionally useful elements to his work, which, when compared with contemporary sources on the issue, offer an insight into British policy towards these illegal stations.

As Boyd notes in frustration, one of the features of illegal broadcasting is that they have a proclivity to not keep detailed records of their personnel or operations. As such, it is hard to pin down the exact time frames of the radio stations operated by Jewish opposition groups. However, it is easier to describe general trends of the activities of these organisations, and to insert points of certainty into them. This also

[375] Boyd, "Hebrew-language Clandestine Radio Broadcasting During the British Palestine Mandate."
[376] Barbour, "Broadcasting to the Arab World: Arabic Transmissions from the B.B.C. and Other Non-Arab Stations."
[377] Palestine Post 30/6/1939 p11

serves as a way to map different points of British policy (or, as it often seems, lack of) regarding these practices.

Boyd[378] maintains that the first 'illegal' broadcasts are reported to have been from the Haganah organisation,[379] [380] during the Arab disturbances which began in 1936 (he further suggests that the actual start date for broadcasting may have been in 1940, although as mentioned, dating these services can be widely ambiguous). However, like many other anti-British policies from the Jewish population, this was largely ceased over the course of the Second World War.[381]

Martin, who was resident in the territory over this time, also allows a significant break in major broadcasting activities over the course of the War.[382] However, as regards the formation of Haganah's radio station, he suggests an alternative date, positing that the organisation began operation in January 1948, and had been preceded only by the Irgun,[383] who had been on the air for '*some time*' prior. [384] This apparent discrepancy may well be due to confusion as to the true identity of these stations – another key element of these organisations is that they have a degree of deniability, as well as the ability to change their names with ease, due to no form of registration or regulation being either in place or imaginable.

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[378] Boyd, "Hebrew-language Clandestine Radio Broadcasting During the British Palestine Mandate."
[379] The radio station went under the call names 'Kol Israel' and 'Jewish Defender', although this list is by no means exhaustive. The Kol Israel name was restricted by Haganah leadership prior to May 1948, who wanted to reserve it for the first official radio station of the State of Israel.
[380] Previously mentioned as having assisted British forces in conquering Vichy controlled Lebanon
[381] However, it was reported in the New York Times that there had been at least four recent broadcasts from a then anonymous Hebrew station by the middle of October 1945. New York Times, 13/10/1945. P6.
[382] Martin, "Press and Radio in Palestine Under the British Mandate."
[383] Also known as the IZL(Irgun Zevai Leumi). Tge Irgun was a hardline Zionist underground movement headed by Ze'ev Jabotinsky
[384] Martin, "Press and Radio in Palestine Under the British Mandate."p18

Whilst the Haganah was certainly the largest militant group, both the Stern Gang[385] and the IZL operated their own radio stations, with Irgun allegedly operating one from 1939.[386] The organisation was to use their radio capacity to announce victories, and the successful completion of missions (as well as the killing of Arabs). Lehi also broadcast with reasonable frequency, but appears to have not placed as much importance in the activity as its rivals.

However, one feature of all illicit broadcasting which can be considered to be crucial was that of the introduction of Arabic broadcasts by first Haganah, to accompany the original Hebrew. Martin indicates that February 1948 was the month which these began on the Haganah station (which was then known as "Jewish Defender"), with Boyd concurring that this happened 'between 1945 and 1948'.[387] Martin notes that this was one of the most listened to broadcasts in the entire Mandate, following with the (presumably apocryphal) Zionist joke that they would time their raids to coincide with the evening Arabic news, in the certainty that most Arabs would be at home in order to listen to them.[388] Perhaps the popularity of these broadcasts was connected to the Haganah leaderships policy of obtaining information 'secret' to rival Arab organisations, and broadcasting this – a tactic which pulled in an audience, much as Axis broadcasts concerning alleged double dealings between the British and Arab leadership over the period of the Second World War had. Whilst it is impossible to quantify how effective this broadcasting policy was, Martin maintains that it caused

[385] Lohame Herut Yisrael, trans: Fighters for the Freedom of Israel. Also known as Lechi
[386] J C Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968).
[387] Boyd, "Hebrew-language Clandestine Radio Broadcasting During the British Palestine Mandate."p106
[388] Martin, "Press and Radio in Palestine Under the British Mandate."p18

considerable suspicion of the Arab political classes by the masses – as well as suspicion of one another within the political classes themselves.[389]

However, as regards British policy on the topic, there are two narratives. One is that of the law, which was that illegal transmission was an offence for which one could be imprisoned. On the other hand, there was the diminishing desire and ability of the British administration to enforce these regulations. One (and perhaps one of the only) notable success the British enjoyed in a campaign against these was the arrest of Geula Cohen, an announcer for the Stern Group radio station caught 'in the act' of broadcasting in January 1946. She was sentenced to two years for illegal broadcasting (as well as five for firearm possession), although managed to escape.[390] That is not to say that there was not considerable official attention given to the subject over 1946 – jamming technologies which had originally been vetoed with reference to Bari broadcasts were employed, and directional locaters were also used. As regards the former, the portability of these stations made it a challenge to block a signal over the entire Mandate, and as the latter, security procedures in place made it a challenge for the authorities to accurately place the origins of the broadcasts.[391]

However, as Boyd notes with some finality, after Britain's announcement of its withdrawal from the Mandate, Britain ceased to be a target for illegal radio stations anger. It is with some interest, however, that the station of Kol Israel,[392] which had as its first broadcast one of the first political gatherings of the new Israeli state, would later

[389] Ibid.
[390] Boyd, "Hebrew-language Clandestine Radio Broadcasting During the British Palestine Mandate."p109
[391] Ibid.p112
[392] The Haganah station, which had renamed itself to 'The Jewish Defender' prior to the formation of the state

become a cornerstone of the Israeli states official information structure.[393] It must be remembered that it was with degree of certainty that these illegal transmitters were operating – and, when compared to British disinterest, it is easy to understand how these stations could operate with what often appears a free hand.

6.3. Continuity and Change in Arabic and Palestinian radio policy

One of the biggest questions which should be addressed when viewing this particular time and this particular place is what it was thought state radio broadcasting was for, and whether it was thought to be effective in this. It is really in only this light that it is possible to see the way in which any changes were brought about. For instance, if radio was considered to be merely a cheap form of overseas power projection, then changes in this vein, notably a strengthening of aggressive broadcasting, should be considered the most important. However, if international foreign language broadcasting is considered more of a supply of information,[394] as is the traditional BBC view, then this should be considered the barometer of a changing global situation.

There is constantly a negotiated middle ground between these two poles, with individual agency and opinion often making up the difference over the course of this final period of British control over Palestine. What this means for an analysis of trends in these final three years of this study is that there were institutions and practices which had come to be thought of as existing separate from the dynamics of a shift in Imperial ambition or ability. In this, it will be useful to return to Douglas Boyd's reasons for

[393] It is attested by Mordechai that the Israeli broadcasting system was the child of the PBS and the Haganah (and other resistance movements) radio stations. Mordechai, "Broadcasting in Israel."
[394] Or as a public service, in the same vein as water or electricity.

states to internationally broadcast.[395] These are i) to enhance national prestige, ii) to promote commercial interests, iii) to attempt religious or political indoctrination or in support of religion or ideology, and, iv) to foster cultural ties. To target each of these specifically, they can be seen as, in turn, a desire to enhance the prestige of the British Empire, to maintain and expand commercial interests in the Mandate (beyond merely the end of British control), to engage in the support of an ideology which allowed the Mandate to be ruled by British, in this situation, quite similar to point i), and to create long lasting links to the Imperial centre. It is this paradigm which will be evaluated over this period.

6.3.1. BBC Arabic in a post-war context

In line with the changes in Britain, there were changes in the BBC Arabic service. The heightened stresses of conflict over the Middle East region in WW2 were no longer there, and with this absence, there was a similar absence of funding. The FO, the principle funder of the service, no longer considered it a necessary expenditure. As if to heighten this paucity of funds, the possibility of sharing equipment with Sharq al-Adna[396] was raised, and eventually accepted.[397]

Furthermore, the role the service was to play was in a process of change. The semi-overt political propaganda of the war years was to be replaced by programming

[395] In this particular situation, I think it is appropriate to consider the PBS to fall under this rubric – although there were a growing number of domestic hires in the service of the station, the overall policy guidelines were set by people deeply integrated into the Colonial administrative regime.
[396] An idea previously suggested, but which had been put down for potentially undermining the BBC's neutrality.
[397] Boyd, "Hebrew-language Clandestine Radio Broadcasting During the British Palestine Mandate."

which was meant as a 'means of projecting Britain'.[398] This included programmes which were designed to explain Britain to the listeners of the station – with segments from over the UK in which Arabic residents outlined the way in which the country worked. Further than this, many talks were given on some of the 'worthy' elements of British society, ranging from life at an Oxford college to the British transport system. This style of talks, which were there to educate (and, implicitly, to demonstrate how superior British systems of society and governance were to the Arab listeners), were on the whole written in English and then translated into Arabic, with a few notable exceptions. Also, elements of British culture were being inserted into the programming without the need for translation – the inclusion of Women's programmes into the listings, firstly introduced by Leila Tannous.[399] This style of programming very clearly demonstrates the 'modernist' agenda of foreign language broadcasting which was to become the default setting of post-War BBC.

This was very much in the light of the belief that the technical skills which the BBC had, which set it apart from its local competitors. While this had been very much the case over the course of the War, it became increasingly true afterwards when more resources were being distributed towards features than news and subtler forms of propaganda. However, there is little discussion of this feature in contemporary press reports, which often had a focus on the other happenings in the Arab world, most importantly the political troubles in Palestine. Nor was there any major discussions of the service in British cabinet, unlike had been happening in the mid-to-late 1930's, apart from brief mentions through the guise of the renewal of the BBC Charter.[400] Through

[398] Partner, *Arab voices*.
[399] A young Lebanese woman
[400] Cabinet 62(46), 27/06/1946

this dismissal of the topic from official lips, as well as discussions of the service being forced into 'efficiency' savings against some of the organisations principles, it can be seen that the BBC's provision of Arabic broadcasts were no less at the whim of the domestic and international climate. While it in no way necessarily lost its interests or strengths, built over many years, the way in which it was conceived as part of the British information system over the War also meant that, come the end of it, the service lacked both funding and a driving cause.

6.3.2. Sharq al-Adna – moved from its purpose and its place

The position of Sharq al-Adna was one which could, and did, change over the course of these years. Being a British controlled (indirectly, from London) station broadcasting from inside the territory gave it a unique attitude and approach. Furthermore, the station was highly integrated into the Palestinian Government. These facts would equate to the likelihood of the station not having an easy transition into a post-British territory. An analysis of this period must be made mostly from eye witness accounts, and reports from the Palestine Post, as official documents relating to the station are scarce.[401]

Prior to the moment in which the British departed, and indeed after the end of the period under study, NEABS offered a variety of opinions which were not in step with the 'official' line of London. This is unexpected, given the allegedly GBP10,000 annual subsidy which was given from London to the service.[402] However, the service was credited by the same newspaper for giving an insight into the views of British

[401] There are still a number of British Government documents relating to the station which are not available for consideration.
[402] Palestine Post 3/5/50 p3

foreign policy,[403] and is also reported to have shown frustration with Government censorship during the War, despite this being a policy which the Jerusalem administration claimed to 'loathe'.[404]

While there has been discussion over the 'black' or 'clandestine' nature of the station,[405] there appears little mystery in the Palestine Post over the state which owned the NEABS. Perhaps due to a lack of knowledge of the inner workings of British bureaucracy, it was still attributed to the Army in 1947,[406] and the War Office in September 1948[407] (neither of these organisations had ever really been in control of the station, according to Partner[408]). What is important to both of these, however, is that it was Britain who was pulling the strings.

The relevance of the ownership of the station can be linked back to the four reasons for international broadcasting as enumerated by Boyd above. The question of what was being gained by this station, especially in the context of the British in decline, must be tempered by the view that the station was moved,[409] in February 1948, to Cyprus.[410] This reveals quite a great deal– one of the most significant things being that it was considered valuable enough to be moved to another location, albeit, a British controlled one. This very location had previously been extensively discussed before, in

[403] Palestine Post 11/4/49 p3
[404] Palestine Post 22/7/45 p3
[405] Boyd, "Sharq Al-Adna/The Voice of Britain The UK's 'Secret' Arabic Radio Station and Suez War Propaganda Disaster."
[406] Palestine Post 23/6/47 p3
[407] Palestine Post 28/9/48 p1
[408] Partner, *Arab voices*.
[409] Boyd, "Sharq Al-Adna/The Voice of Britain The UK's 'Secret' Arabic Radio Station and Suez War Propaganda Disaster."p446
[410] That this objective, discussed at length in the British cabinet from the mid 1930's, as well as bring the terms of reference for the highly influential 'Broadcasting in Arabic' Committee, is worth noting.

particular by the Arabic Broadcasting Committee.[411] A second, but related, point was that it was from this time that the British Government began to refute its involvement with the station – denying in Parliament any connection between the Foreign Office and the station,[412] and claiming that it was for technical and not political reasons that the station had relocated to Palestine. This, to a certain extent, tallies with a brief description of privatisation which the PP gives in 1950 – where it describes a small consortium of current and immediately retired British diplomats operating the station.[413]

A scathing article on the station after the Suez crisis suggests that actually the FO had been in direct and regular contact with the station, and had given it the instructions to 'sell' Britain, both in terms of its policies and goods which it produced.[414] Castle's point – about the station being used to market Britain – fits very cleanly into the paradigm which Boyd proposes, as well as the new BBC *modus operandi*. In this, a transition can be seen in the way the station was to be used – from a station integrated into the ruling system of Palestine, to one which was more of a marketing (rather than propaganda) exercise. Some of the comments in the Palestine Post after May 1948 show that the station had taken on a guise which was to try to gain an audience – in particular, through increased uses of music, light entertainment and opinionated news items. The process can certainly be seen in the light of a changing mission objective. Despite BBC administrators being recruited after the end of the Mandate,[415] it was increasingly staffed by those from the region they were broadcasting to. This further reinforces a view that the policy concerning the station had been altered

[411] see note above in 4.4.4
[412] Boyd, "Sharq Al-Adna/The Voice of Britain The UK's 'Secret' Arabic Radio Station and Suez War Propaganda Disaster."
[413] Palestine Post 3/5/50 p3
[414] Barbara Castle, "The Fiasco of Sharq al-Adna," *The New Statesman and Nation*, December 29, 1956.
[415] Bryer, *Jack*.

to reflect a role which was more about increasing the power of the station for later purposes, in opposition to the previous agenda, which focussed closely on the maintenance of the British system in the Middle East.

6.3.3. PBS in the dying days of Mandate

Despite the situation in Palestine being increasingly dangerous, the PBS continued broadcasting until quite late in the Mandate.[416] However, it was also increasingly fragmented – with different departments relocating, either for political or practical reasons. This section will identify three trends in this three year period. The first is continuities in the approaches taken by administrators to the station – both in terms of the institution of the PBS, and in terms of administrators in the Mandate as a whole. The second will examine the long term bombing and terror campaign against the PBS (which began before this period, but certainly culminates with it), and finally, conflicts over the possession of the physical equipment of the station. The context for all of these actions is implicitly international – the ability for organisations to operate against the institutions of the state with apparent impunity is one which implies external forces at work.

6.3.3.1. Continuities in the approaches of administrators

While a terror campaign was occurring within the territory, there was for quite some time still the continual operation of a state.[417] This did not exclude the PBS from

[416] Stanton, "A Little Radio Is a Dangerous Thing.", discusses the possible 'end points' of the station, and concludes that this is a matter of opinion and political leaning as much as a formal end point.
[417] Bentwich and Bentwich, *Mandate Memories, 1918-1948.*

its operations – for instance, detailed figures relating to the number of hours broadcast in the three different languages were published in the P&T annual report for 1947.[418]

This element of 'business as normal' can also be seen in some of the conflicts between different personnel within the organisation. The memoirs of Edwin Samuel[419] and Rex Keating[420], two senior PBS administrators in the last days, provide evidence of this. Samuel,[421] an ardent Zionist, was the director of the PBS from May 1945 to the end of the Mandate, directly spanning the period of this chapter. Rex Keating, an administrator more attune with the Arab population after some years in Egypt and the wider Middle East, served as the Deputy Assistant Director of Broadcasting, and arrived in Jerusalem in July of the same year. He also stayed on with the organisation until the end of the Mandate. One of the few things the two men appear to have agreed on was that, by the end of the Mandate, the station was one of the better ones in the Middle East.

While Samuel posited that:

"By the time the mandate wound up, it was, I think, generally agreed, both inside and outside Palestine, that the PBS was one of the best broadcasting stations in the Middle East"[422]

Keating merely generally praises the station, and plays up the significance it has in the regional broadcasting set-up. Perhaps less verbose than Samuel, one does

[418] Department of Posts and Telegraphs Annual Report 1947
[419] Samuel, *A lifetime in Jerusalem.*
[420] Keating, *The trumpets of Tutankhamun.*
[421] The son of Herbert Samuel, the first High Commissioner, who was a devout Jew.
[422] Samuel, *A lifetime in Jerusalem.*

certainly take from his memoirs the feeling he was very proud to be connected to the station.

That these two men were at the apex of the PBS (with, for a time, Ajaj Nuwaiyhid as the director of Arabic broadcasts) demonstrates the trend within the Mandate governance organisation for there to be both Zionist and anti-Zionist administrators working side by side. Actions taken by both administrators clearly demonstrate this.

Samuel, when working as the station director, decided to operate polling and conduct surveys (as well as 'town hall' style meetings),[423] in order to improve the output of the station. This was in principle a revelatory idea – there had not been any real interaction with the audience until this point.[424] However, he was to only operate this exercise in the Hebrew population – on the grounds that there were a far larger number of Jews who owned and listened to the radio than Arabs. The logic he operates here is somewhat fuzzy – as it was a "well-known" fact at the time that there was a larger number of Arab listeners per 'Arab' radio than vice versa.[425] [426] Furthermore, from the origins of the station, there had been a campaign to distribute radio sets to Arab villages, in order to educate the *Fellaheen*. The action of Samuel was certainly one which contained within it either a calculated exclusion of a significant portion of the population from an exercise in outreach, or a set of naïve assumptions as related to the interest of the Arab population in participating. Given his acknowledgement that he did

[423] Palestine Post 25/11/46 pp
[424] In the context of the BBC, the popularity of a show was often measured by how many letters it received a year, or a month.
[425] The literature of the time takes this as a fundamental truth, often connected with the political and information role of the Arab coffee house.
[426] Stanton, "A Little Radio Is a Dangerous Thing." Also highlights the statistical arguments used to maximise Hebrew time on the air.

whatever he could, often breaking rules, to bring in as many Jews during his period in the Administration[427] does not directly indicate the attitude which he had when approaching the question of user surveys, but it certainly does send an indication of the wide degree of leeway which officials were able to have in both the discretion of their duties, as well as in their personal political opinions.

In counterpoint, one of Rex Keating's first actions in his position at PBS was to organise and air a broadcast concerning the crowning of the Jordanian, Prince Abdullah.[428] To match it, Keating also organised the live broadcasting of the appointment of a new Anglican bishop for Jerusalem, taking place in London, over the PBS. The fact of this inclusion is notable – Keating speaks glowingly of the Arab population,[429] and appears to have shown a suspicion of Jewish political movements and motivations in line with many other British administrators. In this, the Jewish population was often cast as 'the wrong kind of native', or sometimes as a second colonising force. Keating is in no way unusual, but it is his appointment (and also, the assistance he offered in filling other vacancies in the PBS during the Second World War) which serves to demonstrate that there was a continuity of thought amongst many of the administration staff over the course of the period, which was largely sceptical of the Jewish population.

A final point to be made as regards the continuation of trends within PBS must be made as regards the original intentions of CF Strickland, that the service could be used for broadcasting educational programmes to Arab *Fellaheen*. In early 1947, there

[427] Samuel, *A lifetime in Jerusalem*.p149
[428] Keating, *The trumpets of Tutankhamun*.p80
[429] His narrative on the volunteer Arab militia who defended the radio stations in which he worked is particular of this stance

was a programme initiated which was to further integrate Arabic lessons into schools, using material from radio broadcasts.[430] That this was still occurring, with such detailed information published even up until the final reporting year of the Mandate, does indicate that there was a momentum of operations in the PBS. Furthermore, the existence of the same tensions within the PBS at the end of the Mandate, as in the military occupying force under Allenby at the beginning, is suggestive of the major forces for change coming from outside the service, and indeed outside even the control of Government. That these forces may have come from inside the territory within the final three years of the Mandate, and not from outside as was the case in the former twenty five years, will be discussed with relation to the PBS in the following two sections.

6.3.3.2. A demolition campaign and attacks on radio personnel

Much as pirate radio stations sought to subvert the controls of the British Mandate over information policy, the same can be said for the destruction of broadcasting equipment, and to a lesser extent, attacks on the personnel who were required to operate it. This deliberate focus on the means of distributing information can be seen to have several roots – from preventing specific information being broadcast,[431] to undermining the government's ability to project its authority over the entire territory. However, this practice was not merely restricted to the final three years of the Mandate, but had been in operation from before the War began.[432]

[430] Palestine Post 17/3/47 p7
[431] As was the case in the destruction of power lines prior to the broadcast of the findings of the McDonald White paperMarcia Biggs, "What Were We Being Told Palestine and the New York Times 1917 1948" (AUB MA Thesis, December 2008).p22.
[432] The first reference found is to the bombing of PBS Children's hour in August 1939.

Whilst not highly reported, the Posts and Telegraphs annual report of 1938[433] stated that lines were regularly sabotaged between different regions of the territory, a fact which had mildly effected the broadcasting hours which were operated. The solution to this was to create a radio link between Lydda and Ramallah – although this was to leave further elements of the operation vulnerable to sabotage.

The first time the station (rather than the infrastructure it relied on) was specifically targeted was during August 1939, where the Children's hour broadcast was targeted with three bombs,[434] damaging a considerable amount of equipment and killing two working in the building at the time. The Palestine Post featured the story on the first page, although reported only one death.[435] Broadcasting continued after a short intermission, although this was now happening from the reserve transmitter, in Ramallah.[436] Whilst it is difficult to draw a connection, with the Palestine Post not stating any, the next week featured another attempted bomb attack on the station, although this only injured a policeman, not causing any structural damage.[437]

In keeping with a general attitude of acceptance and non-violence over much of the war, there appears only one serious incident in the record of the PP. This was in May 1944, when eight Hebrew speakers[438] attempted to storm the building housing the Ramallah transmitter.[439] That they failed is notable, but this is only the case in the

[433] Department of Posts and Telegraphs Annual Report 1938. Government of Palestine.
[434] Stanton, "A Little Radio Is a Dangerous Thing."
[435] Palestine Post, 3/08/1939 p1
[436] Stanton notes that only one person, a Jewish worker in the English section of the station, was charged in connection with the bombing.
[437] Palestine Post, 9/08/1939 p1
[438] The PP fails to identify them as Jews, although from the language spoken this is all but certain.
[439] Palestine Post 15/9/1944 p1

context of things to come. The stated intention of the raid was to broadcast a message over the air – the subject of which, now lost, would be of quite considerable interest.

The escalation in violence achieved through the Irgun-orchestrated assassination of Lord Moyne[440] in Egypt led to further intensifications of conflict, with the British holding a harsh line on Jewish extremism up until the declaration of the retreat from the Mandate. This led to a situation in which the threat of civil conflict prevented many from moving freely around the city – in particular, Jews into Arab areas, and vice versa. However, the Palestine Post states that one of the larger attacks specifically against the PBS, in January 1946, was carried out by Jewish activists. The newspaper report states that electrical equipment crucial to broadcasting had been blown up, causing the station to completely cease its activities.[441]

Both Samuels and Keating discuss in quite some length the campaigns of violence against the transmitting equipment and personnel of their respective sections of the station, as well as offering their solutions to these problems. In terms of the latter, the practical solution of decentralisation also had the effect of fragmenting the identity of the station – and thus resulted in the desired effect of those engaged in guerrilla warfare.

Samuel's solution to this issue was to split up the service in 1947.[442] The Jewish section began to be broadcast from Rehavia, whereas the English section moved its operations into the German Colony (in what was termed 'Security Zone A)[443] – both

[440] Lord Moyne was a close friend of Churchill's, and was the British Minister Resident in the Middle East (based in Cairo)in 1944
[441] The Ramallah re-broadcasting station ran off the same transponder, therefore meaning that this was a one-hit knock out of the station.
[442] Samuel, *A lifetime in Jerusalem*.p247
[443] Ibid.

sections continued to operate with armed guards at the studio, who were later replaced with soldiers from Jordan.[444] The Arabic section continued to work in Broadcasting House. The only section which was still 'mixed' was that of News, which was located in the Public Information Office, and so was more directly controlled by the administration.

The splitting of the services was arguably justified by the situation in which the broadcasters found themselves. British broadcasters began to develop programmes for the rest of the British administrators in the territory, under the label of 'Second Programme',[445] which Keating reports were very similar to BBC outputs. The other sections of the station appear to have gone the same way – with the producers and performers increasingly producing programmes which were only relevant to their audiences, whereas prior to this there had been an attempt to have the other portion of the population tuning in. This division of staff and territory was therefore the beginning of the creation of functionally different, if nominally united, entities.

However, this disregards the continual usage which many parts of the population made of the radio. Martin states that the station became vastly more important in the last months of the crisis, as it was one of the only local and reliable sources of news.[446] This was particular relevant when it came to issues such as which roads were mined, as well as where there was particularly fierce fighting. That the news section was the last broadcasting department to be split up, as well as competing with stations which quite often geographically distant, skewed only towards one side of the conflict, or both, the station cast a long shadow in the final months.

[444] Stanton, "A Little Radio Is a Dangerous Thing." P222
[445] Keating, *The trumpets of Tutankhamun*. P87
[446] Martin, "Press and Radio in Palestine Under the British Mandate."

6.3.3.3. Campaigns for Seizure

Differentiation of service and equipment was certainly no accident, at least on the part of the Zionist movement. The Jewish Emergency Committee requested that Mordechai attempt to acquire as much broadcasting equipment so as the Jewish successor state would be able to broadcast to the Jewish parts of Palestine.[447] When combined with the continual reference Samuel makes to *Kol Israel*[448] as 'our successor', it can be certainly thought that there was a plan to acquire as much as was feasible.[449] In January 1948, there was a further division of tasks, with the planning of programs being delegated to the Arabic and British sections, with the Hebrew and Music sections also deciding what content they would put out. The final division, of finances, occurred in March. Keating notes that once the Hebrew section had separated into the Jewish area of Jerusalem, he never saw the personnel again. He concludes that he believed that the section on the whole had been slowly stealing equipment and files, again, for the formation of a new station.

The question of to whom the equipment belonged to was certainly not only on the minds of the practitioners. The 1948 UN body in the territory made the request that they be given 'an appropriate amount of time daily' on the PBS, in order to communicate with the people of the to-be-terminated Mandate.[450] However, of more relevance, is the question of what would become of the Beitjala and Ramallah transmitters after the final British withdrawal. That there was a concern that the British would try to remove (or not appropriately defend) these crucial parts of infrastructure

[447] Mordechai, "Broadcasting in Israel."p323
[448] The first official radio station in Israel
[449] This feeling is also very palpable in Keating's writing on this – that Samuel was attempting to gain as much for the formative Hagana/Jewish radio station as possible.
[450] FO 371/68532

was clearly of some concern to the Commission. However, it does certainly seem that the British would not have been able to take any of the equipment of the mandatory broadcasting station with them even if they had wanted to (it seems that, as regards the Beitjala transmitter, it is possible they may have). [451]

Both the Arabs and the Jews swiftly seized what they were able to after the 15th May deadline for withdrawal. The former used the Ramallah transmitter to continuously broadcast the Arabic section of the PBS until August 1949, when it was renamed the Hashemite Jordanian (Palestine) station,[452] and the latter swiftly changed its name to Kol Israel, with broadcasts emanating from Tel Aviv. Needless to say, British opinions on, or intentions regarding, both of these facts were almost totally irrelevant to them coming to pass.

6.4. Comments

Britain's retreat from the Palestine Mandate is often considered one of its less dignified moments, despite seeming inevitable from the end of the War, and therefore allowing a reasonable amount of time for planning the break-down of the regime. Many of the problems which the Mandate government left in place are still points of conflict – such as the division of land, and the right of certain populations to exclude themselves from the economy as a whole.

However, this is not to say that there were only economic and micro consequences for the territory. In the context of the present study, this period was one over conflict and control of resources, as well as an acknowledgement of the importance

[451] Quite possibly that which was used by Sharq al-Adna, in which case it was removed to Cyprus
[452] Stanton, "A Little Radio Is a Dangerous Thing." p225

of radio broadcasting in order to secure an identity. Boyd points out that the Zionist movement is one of the few freedom-fighting coalitions to successfully establish a state,[453] whilst heavily relying on the radio as a means of projecting power. Furthermore, the division of the station in 1948 displays that both sides of the conflict were interested in maintaining their influence over the entire country.

In terms of individual usage, however, controversy still surrounds the extent to which the Arab population was instructed to leave their homes before and during Plan 'D'. That radio played a significant part in this, in particular in the context of illegal radio stations, does demonstrate the power of an unchecked media.

Finally, all of these actions occurred in a specific international context – in which the then-contemporary regulation of these technologies was slowly being eroded, not only in Palestine itself but also on the global stage. Diminishing resources provided by Britain had a definite effect on the way in which 'the British message' could be transmitted – with the result that there was a focus shift from generating political power to 'selling' Britain, both as an entity and as a producer, to listeners throughout the region.

[453] Boyd, "Hebrew-language Clandestine Radio Broadcasting During the British Palestine Mandate."

7. CONCLUSION

This study has surveyed the process of policy formation in relation to radio broadcasts from British controlled radio stations which could be heard in Palestine, between 1936 and 1948. In doing this, several different narratives have been considered, with special reference to the way in which external pressures modulated responses to a series of perceived crises in the greater system of British control over the territory. In particular, attention has been given to a control over the airwaves as a way of battling for the attention and affection of those within the Palestinian Mandate territory.

This thesis has argued that different approaches were taken towards achieving this aim over the period. These were in turn based on different understandings of what radio broadcasting meant (and was meant for). These different factors resulted in both panoply of different attitudes, and a significant growth in the number of personnel involved in this very particular activity.

Through this argument, conclusions have been drawn in line with the theoretical outlooks which were discussed in Chapter 2. These were, specifically, the approach of McCombs and Shaw, Dajani, McQuail and Wasburn, which were concerned with, respectively, the relationship between multiple platforms and messages, the unique nature of the formation of any media environments, notions of media and policy existing in one, interrelated, network, and the power which media has to be the prime point of definition for social images of society.

Any connection of this context to events past the nineteen forties is, at first glance, nebulous. However, redacting the specific names of the technology and of the powers who wielded them reveals a useful set of memes. This is, in fact, a narrative focussed around the attempts of a hegemonic state to regulate and control an emerging and disruptive technology, through heavy investment in both the techniques and the technology required for there to be no rival basis of information produced over this medium. The narrative is also of the creation of the idea of a 'platform' technology. Whilst the new medium of communication is initially conceived through the lens of pre-existing technologies, it rapidly comes to redefine the way in which large scale interactions occur. This narrative parallels the development of the internet, and many-to-many communication technologies in general, is evident. The British campaign to fully control the airwaves, and to be the main defining feature of a new symbolic reality in Palestine, is one which has several analogues in the past sixty years, and is in turn the echo of many previous incarnations of new communication technologies.

In terms of connecting this analysis to deeper theoretical arguments, there has been an implicit discussion between different attitudes to radio, and to information provision and control more generally. The conclusions drawn from the narrative have been that there was a deep concern, and often uncertainty, at the heart of British conceptions of what radio could do.

The first of these is with reference to the idea, found in McCombs and Shaw, that the most important thing is that something is heard, and not where it is heard from. This finding certainly reinforces the view that the ethereal was considered as much a part of the territory as anything else. The contention that British policy was directed at

this goal seems very sound – after all, the granting, then rescinding of a private radio station early in the 1930's goes part of the way in which the British were unwilling to have rivals to put out broadcasts. This premise is demonstrated through the years in which there was international contention over this medium – a desire to eliminate the power of Radio Bari was the direct stated cause for the formation of BBC Arabic. To mesh this idea with the overarching research question, of to what extent international influence altered and defined the policies regarding radio, leads to the conclusion that a distinct fear of alternative voices, no matter where from, having significant effect on the Palestinian population pushed the British to mount a strong and solid defence of the ethereal space.

The second theoretical approach used to understand this process is that of Dajani, whose discussion concerning the unique nature of any media system must be understood through contemplation of the legacy it inherits. Furthermore, his position implies that from the moment of the systems inception, there is a degree of stasis – setting the situation where the political balance at the inception of the system becomes the normative point from which further deviations are made. The consequence of this thinking is that one must look at the structure of the society *as the medium is emerging* in order to see how future developments can be weighed. This feeds into seeing how there was a certain balance of power in Palestine, between the Aliya-led Jewish population and the Arab Palestinians, at the beginning of this period. As was described in Chapter 3, an extended period of sparring – both political and violent – had given the Mandate authorities, as well as the Departments in London, significant concern with regards to growing discontent. The perception that this discontent could be suppressed, or at least harnessed, by a series of radio interventions does not mean that the structure

of the society remained the same. For instance, despite the growing political power of the Jewish population towards the last three years of the Mandate, the perception remained that the Palestine Broadcasting Service was mainly serving the Arab population, leading to the development of rogue Jewish broadcasting stations.

The approach which McQuail suggests, of conceptualising media systems as networks, in which there is not a strict hierarchy of command and control, also fits well within the larger argument. An understanding that multiple inputs to potentially unrelated organisations, such as the influence of Indian administrators into the development of the PBS and the effect which Jewish lobbyists had on Whitehall thinking, leads to a situation in which it is possible to integrate different elements of the larger system without necessarily needing to evaluate individual causation. Contemplating that there were several departments, several broadcasting platforms and a multitude of different backgrounds of the protagonists, this enables a clearer evaluation of the relationships. The theory behind this certainly allows a stronger view on regulation, as parts of the system almost totally disconnected from one another, both in terms of personnel and distance, are able to equally contribute to the development of the social and political outputs.

Finally, the theoretical approach detailed by Wasburn, offers a concluding and interlocking plank, as well as offering a conclusion to the argument. This outlook is, on the one hand, a modulation of McCombs and Shaw, and on the other, an extension of an intuitive view of what broadcast media can do. The approach indicated by Wasburn would be to see the establishment of these stations as about attempting to influence the way in which Palestinians thoughts – namely to define the social world in which they

lived. The underlying notion here is that the Palestinians could be made into better citizens of the territory, if they were formed through listening to the radio. The structural disjuncture between the social world of the home territory, from where the main body of the administrative staff were drawn, and the recipient audience, was certainly a fact which can be felt throughout correspondence on the issue. The output of these stations was designed, in a sense, to trick listeners into participating in the process. Entertainment was provided as a way of engaging listeners, under the presumption and hope that they would come for the entertainment, but stay for the news. This did not necessarily happen with the PBS, nor with the BBC. However, through allowing a much stronger local presence in the creation of content in Sharq al-Adna, it does seem that substantially greater traction was achieved. The formation of three stations implies three different perceived realities, and this is intuitively correct. However, it also has the meaning of different social realities of the projecting, or home, power. In this, the difference was of context – the PBS was formed out of a desire for state-like qualities, the BBC out of a concern for the power of Italian broadcasts, and Sharq al-Adna as specific tool for assisting military forces in open conflict.

The very fact that there was a possibility for rival powers to penetrate the interior of a state with potentially disruptive information seriously challenged the pre-existing system of territorial management – both in a positive and a negative sense. The assumptions about what radio could do were clearly at the forefront of the minds of almost all of those who considered the problem. These two axes form a useful way of viewing the findings of this research, and were highlighted by an early League of Nations decree prescribing the ‘correct’ usage of the medium.

The positive aspect of an increase in the control of the ethereal space was that more information could be provided more easily to those within the territory. As in Chapter 1, Samuel discussed how arduous village to village visits were, and therefore how inconsistent these could be throughout the country – there was very limited 'coverage' of the official voice in the countryside. The effect of radio on this was to allow all villagers to benefit from modern techniques and information, and allow government information to be distributed both fairly and equally.[454] However, in terms of a negative effect on territorial control, it allowed other agencies to intervene in the dissemination of information – an element of radio consumption which the British attempted to mute through the provision of radio sets which could not be tuned to the wrong stations.[455]

The other axis of analysis has been more pragmatic, and has viewed official and press views on the manner in which radio affected those who heard it (or at least, the fears of what was being heard and the effect it could have on the greater Palestinian population). Official concerns were very great about the effect which radio could have, and this can be seen in the correspondence of both London and Jerusalem on the matter. The continual repetition of mantras such as that suggesting that 'Arab culture is far more dependent on the spoken word' certainly helped those in the policy making machinery view the medium as vital, and control of it even more so.

There clearly existed a contrast here of governmental fear and public indifference, and this can be used to explain many of the changes in policy over the period. This ranges from the initial beginning of a radio service in private hands,

[454] In this context, with the added effect of the 'village radio' programme.
[455] Amongst others – the Italian government attempted to ban the 'incorrect' listening patters of those in Libya, and the British did the same in Malta

through its movement into national control, to the provision of multiple information and entertainment sources. The original lobbying bid from the High Commissioner, for a station for the Mandate, notes that it would perhaps be ideal to have a government monopoly, as this would also enable far more 'useful programming', along the line proposed by Strickland. Some of the last correspondence on the questions considered here concerns what broadcasting equipment would be left for a future state, as well as the removal of an entire station to a different part of the British Near East.

Firstly however, as useful as this argument over specific needs of the individual populations undoubtedly was, the existence of these stations were metonymic for many of the larger issues facing the territory, including the question of how much the Jewish population required the strongly paternalist tone of British colonial officials. At first, the claims for increased Jewish control over the PBS seem fair. The Arab population could, if desired, listen to other radio broadcasts from around the region – while the PBS was the only service to provide Hebrew broadcasting. This point serves is a component of official engagement on the whole – and speaks to the idea of a regionalisation of the question of Palestine (as well as British control over it).

Secondly, that the British were not hugely concerned with the specific issues of what was left in their former territory, indicates a growing disinterest in (and perhaps disenchantment with) the technology. While it had clearly been a major source of policy for the War, the ability to use the techniques to maintain control over an unwilling population (as opposed to counter direct attacks on it) was under threat. Sharq al-Adna's information policy, especially considering their pro-Arab stances on news in the '48-'50 period, are indicative of the above mentioned 'sale' of Britain as an entity. In this, by

producing news which was widely listened to (and, indeed, taken as something of a wire service), the role of radio had become that of creating favourable conditions for the sponsoring country.

Finally, this can be seen as the development of a more nuanced view of the medium. By the end of the period, radio was no longer considered directly as a weapon, with a fixed end and the strongly held perception that it had the ability to win a war, be it one on the ground or for the audience's minds. This was particularly the case regarding Britain's engagement in Palestine – no matter how much investment they made, nor how many stations they had; radio certainly did not stop the eventual dissolution of the British system of governance. Indeed, the medium itself merely became another point of contention and conflict, with even those British Mandate administrators who were involved in the service being targeted for killing. However, what it certainly did was to open up a new plane of conflict, in both international and domestic affairs, which was the specific and deliberate control of information – and even more importantly, the platforms for disseminating it.

8. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has been limited by a number of issues, which point to future areas of research as well as new directions for understanding this topic.

Firstly, a key limitation is the often inaccurate or unclear labelling of documents within the British record keeping system. Whilst it is impossible to fully gauge the value of policy positions not read or seen, it seems likely that more comprehensive knowledge would offer a more nuanced picture of the topic. This inadequacy on the one hand leads to wasted time, and on the other leads to a limiting of knowledge available.

Secondly, there are still some records, particularly with regards to radio Sharq al-Adna which are not in the public domain. It is certain that these will be made available in the future, in London in particular, and after this it will be easier to view the formulation of these policies, rather than just seeing shades of them when the action of these policies was taken.

Finally, in terms of document access, the BBC does not provide access to their archives to the majority. Additionally, they have made no move to digitalise their holdings, which are in a warehouse in the UK.

In terms of language, this thesis is myopic in its view of the world. There are certainly documents and newspaper articles on the topics covered above in Arabic, but these were not readily accessible, nor digitalised. Reference must be made to areas such as Arabic newspapers, who quite possibly made explicit reference to the Palestine

Broadcasting Service. Furthermore, the Director of Arabic Broadcasting for a time, Ajaj Nuweyhid, left a chapter in his biography on his tenure at the PBS. Deeper analysis of this, with specific cross references to other elements in the Arabic literature on this would probably assist in understanding this component of the Palestinian ecosystem.

This final point sets the stage for new directions, or extensions, of this field of research. The first would be to evaluate the extent to which techniques of broadcasting, in terms of formats of entertainment shows, were transferred throughout the regimes of the world controlled by the British. While the influence of Strickland, in terms of moving the idea of agricultural shows from India to Palestine, is clear, it is less clear if these also developed in Egypt or in Burma.

Furthermore, there is a gap in the literature in English on Radio Zeesen, besides its connection the Grand Mufti. A development of this would certainly also yield an interesting view on the way in which the Second World War professionalised the broadcasting industry, as well as how it changed the interaction between Information Ministries and the broadcasting apparatus throughout the rest of Europe.

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