

But the promise of the British soon turned into a betrayal of the Arab cause when in November 2, 1917, the Balfour Declaration for the establishment of a Jewish Homeland in Palestine was passed.² This declaration was viewed as the stepping-stone for British serious commitment in the establishment of a Jewish national homeland, simultaneously the main root of the Palestinian problem. In the declaration, Arthur James Balfour, the then British Foreign Secretary declared that;

His Majesty's government views with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of the objective...³

Later on the Allied Supreme Council allocated Palestine to Great Britain, and in July 22, 1922, Great Britain was formally confirmed as mandatory power by the Council of the League of Nations.⁴ With this mandatory power, the British took over the total responsibility on Palestine; hence the establishment of the Jewish state was mobilized as the answer to the commitment in the Balfour Declaration.

This declaration was actually void and illegal because, on the one hand, it violated the rights of the original inhabitants of Palestine, and on the other it was made by a foreign government, which had no power or sovereignty in Palestine to qualify her to make a promise in favor of an alien people.⁵ The Balfour Declaration became the cornerstone of British policy during the mandate, and served as a pretext to permit massive Jewish immigration into Palestine against the will of its original inhabitants. In thirty years of colonial administration, the British government transformed Palestine into a country divided against itself.

2. George Lenczowsky, *The Middle East in World Affairs*, Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1982, pp. 391-396.

3. John Norton Moore, (ed), *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974.

4. *Op.cit.*, pg.391.

5. Henry Cattan, *The Question of Jerusalem*, London: Third World Centre, 1980, pg.17.