

**From the Balfour Declaration of 1917 to the Farhud of 1941:  
Treatment of Jews in Iraq and Patterns of Jewish Emigration**

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Submitted for PLSC 157 and revised for the Twelfth Annual ASMEA Conference

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November 2, 2019

## **Introduction:**

In 2008, the New York Times estimated that a total of under ten Jews remain in Iraq, yet one hundred years earlier, Jews made up nearly 25% of the population of Baghdad.<sup>1</sup> Notably, the majority of this drastic decrease in Jewish population took place over a relatively short period of time, all within about half a century. During that time, two classes of major global transitions took place with significant ramifications for the Jews: (1) the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and formation of the state of Israel, and (2) World War II, the rise of Nazi power, and the Holocaust. Although these two major events have some overlap in cause and effect, it is interesting to consider if, how, and when either factor contributed to the increasing anti-Semitic sentiment in Iraq.

## *Research Question:*

How and why did Iraqi Arab sentiment towards the Jewish population in Iraq change from the Balfour Declaration of 1917 to the Farhud of 1941?

## *Thesis*

Together, the change in Iraqi leadership, the rise of Iraqi nationalism in response to British foreign power, and the development of Palestine as a Jewish state give the best explanation for rising anti-Jewish sentiment among Iraqi Arabs from 1917-1941. Ultimately, the Farhud of June 1941 stemmed from more anti-Zionist than pro-Nazi sentiment in Iraq.

<sup>1</sup> Farrell, "Baghdad Jews Have Become a Fearful Few."

### *Research Roadmap:*

This essay consists of three main sections: (1) literature review; (2) qualitative research; and (3) lasting impacts. In this essay, I will begin with a brief background of religious minorities in the Middle East with a specific emphasis on Iraq. Next, I include a summary of the existing literature on Jews in Iraq from 1917-1941 and rising anti-Zionist sentiment in Iraq. Following the literature review, I explore primary documents concerning Jewish life in Iraq from 1917 through 1941 argue that the change in Iraqi leadership, the rise of Iraqi nationalism in response to British foreign power, and the development of Palestine as a Jewish state give the best explanation for rising anti-Jewish sentiment among Iraqi Arabs from 1917-1941. Lastly, I connect the rise in anti-Jewish sentiment in Iraq to Jewish emigration from Iraq to Palestine and demonstrate a correlation between the aforementioned causes of anti-Jewish sentiment with Jewish migration. In conjunction, these three sections form a holistic view of the changing Iraqi sentiment towards Jews and Zionism from 1917-1941. Though anti-Jewish sentiment in Iraq has been studied previously by a number of historians, this paper is novel in its focus on the early-stage rise in anti-Jewish sentiment and presents a new comparison of these anti-Jewish sentiment with Jewish migration to Palestine prior to the war of 1948.

### **Background Information:**

The Middle East has enjoyed high levels of ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity through several iterations of leadership. Beginning with the Ottoman Empire, different religious groups including Jews and Christians maintained religious integrity within the empire; notably this freedom came at the cost of the “jizya” tax, but nevertheless, the Ottoman Empire allowed religious

minorities to self-rule, self-educate, and coexist in a diverse society.<sup>2</sup> “The local tapestry naturally exhibited variety in religion, with Muslims of different sects alongside Hindus, Christians and Jews” in the Gulf region.<sup>3</sup> However, this freedom was limited to people of the book (monotheists), and did not extend throughout the remainder of societal development in various countries in the Middle East.

In particular, the Jewish people have encountered various levels of independence, toleration, and at times hostility in the Middle East. Although the Jews paid the “jizya” and maintained independence through the Ottoman Empire, stronger anti-Semitic sentiments grew later on in the timeline of the Middle East. Specifically in Iraq, sentiment towards Jews transitioned from acceptance towards low levels of resent verging on violence at times. After World War I, “the ingredients making up Iraq included Shi’i Arabs in the south, Sunni Arabs in the west and centre, and Kurds in the north. Jews comprised a large portion of Baghdad’s population; Christian villages and city quarters were dispersed in the center and north.”<sup>4</sup> However, Iraqi sentiment towards Jews began a distinct transition in the post-World War I time frame. Although the Jews had enjoyed relative religious freedom and tolerance in Iraq prior to World War I, following the Balfour Declaration of 1917 “Jewish colonization of Palestine under British auspices stoked anger at London and suspicion of Iraq’s large and ancient Jewish community,” marking a distinct change in sentiment towards Iraqi Jews.<sup>5</sup> Ultimately, the period of time from the Balfour Declaration (November 2, 1917) to the Farhud (June 1-2, 1941) provides a comprehensive picture of this change in sentiment towards Jews in Iraq. Considered the “watershed in the history of the Jews in Iraq” the Farhud was “the first and only pogrom against

<sup>2</sup> Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*. pg. 90

<sup>3</sup> Commins, *The Gulf States: A Modern History*. pg. 12

<sup>4</sup> Commins. pg. 128

<sup>5</sup> Commins. pg. 130

the Jews in modern Iraq and marked the culmination of the change in Jewish-Muslim relations in a country where the Jews had been a small but successful minority, well integrated within the Muslim environment.”<sup>6</sup>

### **Literature Review and Historiography:**

The existence and prevalence of Jews in Iraq has been depicted in detail within existing literature. In particular, Iraqi Jews were considered a prevalent part of society at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nissim Rejwan, in *The Jews of Iraq: 3000 Years of History and Culture* writes, “the Jews of Baghdad in the first two decades of [the 20<sup>th</sup>] century occupied a clear and acknowledged position of superiority in the Mesopotamian economy...As a community the Jews were perhaps the wealthiest and certainly the best educated”.<sup>7</sup> Although present day conditions in Iraq seem impossible for Jewish life, it is necessary to first understand the prevalence of Jews in Iraqi society prior to the rise in anti-Semitic sentiment.

Moreover, Jews in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century enjoyed complete freedom and integration within the Iraqi society. Abbas Shiblak, in *The Lure of Zion: The Case of the Iraqi Jews* notes that “at least until the 1920s, nationalists regarded the Jews as brothers and comrades. In an earlier phase, Arab nationalists (or at least most of them) considered the Jews of the Arab countries as an indivisible part of the Arab ‘race’”.<sup>8</sup> Not only does this demonstrate the extent to which Jews lived culturally integrated lives in Iraq, but also it serves as a starting point for the impact of Arab nationalism on anti-Semitic sentiment in Iraq. As Shiblak demonstrates, early Arab nationalists

<sup>6</sup> Tsimhoni, “The Pogrom (Farhud) against the Jews of Baghdad in 1941.”

<sup>7</sup> Rejwan, *The Jews of Iraq: 3000 Years of History and Culture*. pg. 210

<sup>8</sup> Shiblak, *The Lure of Zion: The Case of the Iraqi Jews*. pg. 46.

did not consider Arab nationalism as inherently anti-Semitic, but rather viewed the Jews as part of the Arab-Iraqi culture.

This integrated culture of Jews and Iraqis continued through the mandate period of the 1920s and early 1930s in Iraq. For the most part, Amir Faisal continued the prior policy of Jewish acceptance and respect within society. The Faisal-Weizmann agreement of 1919 expressed Faisal's sympathy to the national aspirations of the Jews. In addition, "Faisal declared that henceforth there would be no discrimination between Muslim, Jew, and Christian. 'There is only one country called Iraq', he asserted, 'and all its inhabitants are Iraqis... We all belong to this noble [Semitic] race...'"<sup>9</sup> Overall, this sentiment remained relatively stable through the end of the mandate period in 1932 and the death of King Faisal in 1933.

However, as the culture of self-determination in statehood developed through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Jews in Iraq began to worry about their status in an Iraqi state. With the "publication of an Anglo-French Declaration promising to 'encourage and assist in the establishment of indigenous governments and administrations in Syria and Mesopotamia'"<sup>10</sup> Jews started to reconsider their positions in Iraqi society under Iraqi rule. In addition, Rejwan cites two major developments that contributed to growing unease amongst the Jews of Iraq. He writes, "firstly, the rise of the Nazis in Germany; and secondly, the fact that Iraq had become something of a haven for Arab nationalist activists from Syria and Palestine, seeking refuge in the first Arab country to attain independence from the British".<sup>11</sup> In conjunction with the succession of King Faisal by his son Ghazi who served as a weaker leader and promoted more Arab nationalism enthusiasm, Rejwan argues that anti-Jewish sentiment rose after this transition in leadership.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Rejwan, *The Jews of Iraq: 3000 Years of History and Culture*. pg. 213.

<sup>10</sup> Rejwan. pg. 211

<sup>11</sup> Rejwan. pg. 217

<sup>12</sup> Rejwan. pg. 217

However, Shiblak offers additional insight to the factors leading up to the Farhud of 1941. He writes, “it is simplistic to see the Farhud as a fundamentally anti-Jewish act; it was rather the result of deep and suppressed anti-British feeling, which found its outlet against the Jews”.<sup>13</sup> In contrast to Rejwan’s analysis of the Farhud as the culmination of rising anti-Jewish sentiment, Shiblak takes a more holistic approach to explain the Farhud, offering a counter argument to simply anti-Jewish tendencies. Nevertheless, Shiblak argues that “the mass emigration of Arab Jews can be understood only in the light of the establishment of Israel and the armed and political hostilities that followed”.<sup>14</sup> Notably, this places an emphasis on Jewish emigration from Iraq after 1948, more than half a decade after the Farhud.

However, Shiblak treats Jewish emigration from Iraq to Palestine prior to 1948 as unimportant and minimal. He writes, “before 1948 there was insignificant emigration from Iraq to Palestine. The little migration that occurred was mostly for religious reasons. The international economic crisis in the late 1920’s and the promulgation of the military service law in 1934 probably led to some further emigration.”<sup>15</sup> Although the majority of Jewish emigration from Iraq to Palestine occurred post 1948, there are records of emigration from 1922-1945 detailing Iraqi Jewish immigrants to Palestine. However, the existing literature on Iraqi Jewish migration lacks extensive analysis of this time period leading up to and immediately following the Farhud. The remainder of this paper focuses on early-stage anti-Jewish sentiment and actions in Iraq. In addition, I track early-stage Jewish emigration from Iraq to Palestine and suggest that emigration patterns may be correlated with the early-stage rise in anti-Jewish sentiment in Iraq. This paper

<sup>13</sup> Shiblak, *The Lure of Zion: The Case of the Iraqi Jews*. pg. 53

<sup>14</sup> Shiblak. pg. 13

<sup>15</sup> Shiblak. pg. 44

serves to fill a gap in the existing literature by focusing on the time period prior to the war of 1948 in Palestine and Israeli state formation.

### **Qualitative Research:**

Although language ability limits primary source analysis for accounts of Jews in Iraq from 1917-1941, the *Iraq Administration Reports 1914-1932* provide a British administrative perspective of events in Iraq; in conjunction with secondary sources that had access to Arabic archives, these reports help form a complete and complicated view of Jews in Iraq from 1917 to 1941.

#### *Early Sentiment Towards Jews in Iraq: Tolerance and Acceptance*

In the early 1900s through King Faisal's reign, Iraqi Jews continued to benefit from the Ottoman Era trend of acceptance and tolerance among Iraqi Arabs. Notably, administration reports from Britain mention religious minorities including Jews and Christians, but do not capture any animosity against these groups through the early 1900s. In the 1917 Administration Report of the Baghdad Wilayat, the section on Christians and Jews states,

A large number of the better homes immediately outside the city are owned by Baghdad Christians and Jews, some of whom are also proprietors of gardens and lands in the district...the Political Officer is chiefly concerned with them only on questions of billeting in Advanced Base area, compensation cases for damage to gardens, and disputes regarding the agricultural companies in which they became partners or the Government taxes which they farm.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Christians and Jews, in "Administration Report of the Baghdad Wilayat, Baghdad District, 1917" pg. 27-28. Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Iraq Administration Reports 1914-1932, Volume 1: 1914-1918* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1992), pg. 375-376.



Notably, the main concern of the Political Officer regarding the Jewish and Christian minorities in Baghdad does not include any religious conflict or Arab nationalist ideas, but rather focuses on economic and agricultural factors that do not mention religion. This observational report on behalf of the British administrative officers in Iraq supports the theory of continued Jewish acceptance stemming from the Ottoman Empire.

In addition, the same report describes respect for Jewish monuments in Iraq, also demonstrating minority integration and the absence of anti-Semitic sentiment in Iraq throughout the 1910s and 1920s. The report notes, “The Jewish Synagogue containing the tomb of Haskail is respected by Muhammadans as being the tomb of “Dhu al Kifl” mentioned in the Quran. Kifl has a well-built covered bazaar owned by the Daniel family, Jewish landowners who have large estates in that neighborhood.”<sup>17</sup> Though the Synagogue is also a holy site for Muslims, this report notes that the bazaar around the site was owned by a Jewish family, again demonstrating the high extent of Jewish integration into Iraqi economic and social life.

This sentiment of Jewish acceptance continued beyond the publication of the Balfour Declaration and well into the 1920s and 1930s. Even after the Balfour Declaration of 1917, Iraqi Jews continued to thrive in Baghdad, regardless of their religious minority status. Wien, a historian focusing on Iraqi nationalism, writes “In the 1920s, Jews enjoyed increasing prosperity in the society... One of twenty senator posts was reserved for a Jew, and the constitution of 1924 guaranteed equality before the law, freedom of worship, and establishment of minority language schools, as well as equal civil rights and access to government posts.”<sup>18</sup> Beyond merely surviving,

<sup>17</sup> Kifl Municipality, in “Administration Report of the Baghdad Wilayat, Hillah District, 1917” pg. 105-106. Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Iraq Administration Reports 1914-1932, Volume 1: 1914-1918* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1992), pg. 449-450.

<sup>18</sup> Wien, *Iraqi Arab Nationalism: Authoritarian, Totalitarian, and pro-Fascist Inclinations, 1932-1941*, 2006. pg. 44

Wien describes a complete integration of Jews not only in Iraqi society, but also in political and educational systems.

Wien's account of complete integration of Jews in Iraqi society is corroborated by British administrative reports on education and government in Iraq. A special report covering the progress of Iraq from 1920-1931 discusses a number of rights specifically for minorities. Sections include "Freedom of Conscience", "Right to Maintain Schools", "Equal Status as 'Iraqis'", "Participation in the Administration", and "Communal Spiritual Councils", all of which further detail the extent of religious minority protection for Jews and Christians.<sup>19</sup> These rights maintain consistency from the prior Ottoman traditions and ensured protections for the Jewish minority. The report states, "the right of separate religious communities in 'Iraq to have their own courts competent to give valid decisions on matters of personal status has been inherited from the regime of the old Ottoman Empire and has been confirmed in the Constitution of 'Iraq."<sup>20</sup> Notably, the religious freedom and security of minorities guaranteed by the Ottoman Empire persisted through the time period of this special report.

Lastly, the report also details the extent of protection for education of minorities, demonstrating the early norm of acceptance and tolerance for Jews in Iraq continuing from the Ottoman Empire. It notes, "Government schools since 1920 have been and still are by law open to all pupils without restriction of religion."<sup>21</sup> In line with the existing sentiment of religious tolerance in Iraq, this report documents some of the more physical manifestations that religious

<sup>19</sup> Other Minorities, in "Special Report by His Britannic Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations on the Progress of 'Iraq during the period 1920-1931" pg. 279-287. (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1931). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Iraq Administration Reports 1914-1932, Volume 10: 1931-1932* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1992), pg. 279-287.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. pg. 281.

<sup>21</sup> Religious Minorities, in "Special Report by His Britannic Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations on the Progress of 'Iraq during the period 1920-1931" pg. 229-230. (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1931). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Iraq Administration Reports 1914-1932, Volume 10: 1931-1932* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1992), pg. 229-230.

tolerance informed in Iraq. In addition, a Public Education Law further demonstrates this religious integrity among minorities by mandating “pupils belonging to the religious minority are allowed to absent themselves from the religious lessons given to the majority” in order to avoid schools proselytizing.<sup>22</sup> Not only did Jews benefit from tolerance in society, but also their status as religious minorities seems to have informed policy and law formation in early Iraq; despite their minority status in Iraq, Jews and Christians maintained authority over education of their populations.

### *Changing Sentiment Towards Jews in Iraq: Rise of Anti-Jewish Movements*

Although the years immediately following the Balfour Declaration of 1917 demonstrated little variance from the Ottoman-style acceptance of minorities in policy, later reports document the gradual transition of Iraqi sentiment towards Jews. Notably, this transition mirrors rising anti-Zionist rather than anti-Jewish sentiments in Iraq. One administrative report of 1927 reflects this changing environment. The 1927 administrative reports include specific sections referring to the protection of minorities in Iraq, but unlike prior reports, this section focuses on intentional political measures to ensure peace between minorities in Iraq and the Arab majority. The report states, “it is essential, in order to satisfy the aspirations of the minorities—notably the Christians, but also the Jews and Yazidis—that measures should be taken for their protection.”<sup>23</sup> Notably, this concern for the safety of Jewish minorities in Iraq suggests the beginning of a transition of sentiment towards the Jewish population. Unlike prior policy towards minorities that aimed to include

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> The Protection of Minorities, in “Report by His Britannic Majesty’s Government to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Iraq for the year 1927” pg. 33-34. (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1928). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Iraq Administration Reports 1914-1932, Volume 8: 1925-1927* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1992), pg. 377-378.

minority populations in government, this section treats Jews as minorities requiring protection under Iraqi law, reflecting the beginning of a larger overall transition. Whereas earlier documents regarding religious minorities appeared to fully integrate the minorities into channels of government and education, this report focuses on protection for the safety of these groups, marking a change in policy towards minorities of Iraq after the Balfour Declaration of 1917.

Whereas the Jews enjoyed a period of tolerance and acceptance from the Ottoman Empire through the beginning of Iraqi state formation, this tolerance began to expire as the reign of King Faisal I drew to an end. Although King Faisal I “maintained friendly relations with the large Jewish community of Iraq and had open channels with their political, commercial and religious leaders” his successors, King Ghazi and then King Faisal II did not continue this policy.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, even during Faisal’s rule, undertones of tension began to arise within Iraq. Allawi, an expert on King Faisal I, describes how Faisal attempted to assuage the tensions and maintain a healthy relationship with the Jews. Faisal met often with Jewish leaders and attended banquets with the chief rabbi of Baghdad; though the Jews experienced growing anxiety and tension living under the Arab government, Allawi notes “their gradual reassurance by reason of Faisal’s obviously enlightened attitude.”<sup>25</sup>

Though King Faisal attempted to maintain a good relationship with the Jewish population, external factors such as British foreign influence affected his influence over widespread Iraqi sentiment. Jewish minorities tended to support British influence in Iraq out of desire for their own safety; however, simultaneously the Iraqi Arabs began to resent Jews for their support of the British. Allawi notes, “large groups of urban Jews and Christians...were eager to bind the future of Iraq with Britain, seeing in this the best safeguards for their own security and prosperity,” but

<sup>24</sup> Allawi, *Faisal I of Iraq*. pg. 547.

<sup>25</sup> Allawi. pg. 372.

at the same time “a growing nationalist of crypto-nationalist political class...was making itself felt by noisy opposition to the dominance of the country by the British.”<sup>26</sup> This created a binary in that the Jews wanted British involvement for their own protection, but by siding with the British, Jews incited growing anti-Jewish sentiment within Iraq.

Nevertheless, as resistance to British influence increased and Iraqi nationalism grew stronger, tension regarding Jewish minorities in Iraq grew to outbreaks of violence. British administrative reports record two such event in subsequent years from 1928-1929. The 1928 British administrative report contains a section called “Some Internal Events of the Year” and within this section includes the description of “An Anti-Zionist Riot”.<sup>27</sup> The report reads,

Lord Melchett (then Sir Alfred Mond), a distinguished supporter of the Zionist movement in Palestine, went to ‘Iraq on a visit early in February...his visit to ‘Iraq had as its main object the study of agricultural conditions there and an enquiry as to whether they could not be improved by a wide use of suitable chemical manures. The Jewish community in Baghdad having shown a desire to organize some public functions in his honour, distorted rumours of the preparations which were being made were circulated in Baghdad and mischief-makers created the impression that Lord Melchett had come to preach Zionism in ‘Iraq. As a result, his arrival in Baghdad on the 8<sup>th</sup> February was made the occasion for an angry anti-Zionist demonstration...They indulged in much stone and bottle throwing and used sticks freely against the police...Enquiries showed that the demonstration had been organized by men who appeared to be deliberately using every pretext which came to hand to cause disturbances and to excite anger and ill-feeling.<sup>28</sup>

While this report details a riot against Jews, it is important to note some specific elements regarding this early show of anti-Jewish violence. First, this riot in 1928, though it does target the Jewish minority in Iraq, occurred mainly out of opposition to expected Zionist teachings. The report

<sup>26</sup> Allawi. pg. 340.

<sup>27</sup> Some Internal Events of the Year: An Anti-Zionist Riot, in “Report by His Britannic Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations for the year 1928” pg. 21-22. (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1929). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Iraq Administration Reports 1914-1932, Volume 9: 1928-1930* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1992), pg. 21-22.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

specifies that the riot occurred in response to a distorted perception of Sir Alfred Mond's reason for visiting. Second, the report describes those involved with the organization as people eager to "excite anger," suggesting that this demonstration may not have represented the sentiment of Iraqi society more broadly. Rather, it appears that a small group of people eager to incite conflict contributed to the event in a manner perhaps unrepresentative of society.

However, in the following year, multiple Palestine-related protests and meetings occurred, suggesting a growing anti-Jewish sentiment among Iraqi society more broadly. In 1929, the British administration report records a notable protest within a large mosque of Baghdad. The report estimates four to five thousand men attended the mass meeting to "protest against the policy of His Britannic Majesty's Government in Palestine" and form "a Committee of Protest to represent and make public the views of the 'Iraq nation on the situation in Palestine.'"<sup>29</sup> In juxtaposition with the record of the 1928 Sir Alfred Mond riot, the 1929 demonstrations reflect a larger portion of Iraqi society. More than the few instigators described in 1928, these demonstrations included over 4,000 Iraqi Arabs. In addition, these demonstrations continued through the year and on the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, "arrangements were made for a demonstration of national sympathy with the Arabs of Palestine" and officials "dispatched telegrams of protest against the principles of the Balfour Declaration to the British Government, the League of Nations and the Commission of Enquiry in Palestine."<sup>30</sup> While these protests did not include any recorded violence, they demonstrate growing anti-Zionist attitudes across Iraqi society and reflect a broader transition in sentiment through Iraq.

<sup>29</sup> Anti-Zionism in 'Iraq, in "Report by His Britannic Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations for the year 1929" pg. 24. (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1930). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Iraq Administration Reports 1914-1932, Volume 9: 1928-1930* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1992), pg. 198.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

In addition, this report is essential in debunking the popular stance that attributes growing anti-Jewish sentiment in Iraq to increasing Nazi power in Germany. Some historians suggest that the Farhud resulted from increased Nazi influence and anti-Semitic propaganda from Germany. However, the anti-Zionist sentiment that rose in Iraq during the rise of Nazi Germany stemmed more out of reaction to events in Palestine than in reaction to Nazi Germany. As reflected in the aforementioned 1929 anti-Zionist demonstrations in Iraq, Iraqi Arabs resisted Zionist movements, but not necessarily all Jews. For example, “newspapers of Baghdad celebrated the anniversary [of the Balfour Declaration] by publishing special issues devoted to anti-Zionist articles ornamented by heavy black margin lines as a sign of national mourning.”<sup>31</sup> Notably, the report never mentions “anti-Semitic” or “anti-Jewish” demonstrations, but only “anti-Zionist.” This word choice in the primary source reflects a broad distinction in Iraqi society between Jews and Zionists. The report notes “leaders of public opinion unitedly exerted their influence to prevent any kind of disorder and especially to prevent hostile demonstrations against the Jews.”<sup>32</sup> The distinction here between Jews and Zionists represents a clear trend in Iraqi public opinion and suggests that most anti-Jewish acts of violence stemmed from this anti-Zionist ideology rather than from Nazi influence. As summarized by historian Peter Wien “the growing difficulties of the Jews resulted rather from the rising concerns about the Palestine issue among Arab nationalists in Iraq than from racism of the Nazi kind.”<sup>33</sup>

Ultimately, the effects of growing Iraqi nationalism in response to British influence coupled with the transition of power from King Faisal I to his successors and the strengthening Zionist movement in Palestine all contributed to the conditions leading up to the Farhud in 1941.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Wien, *Iraqi Arab Nationalism: Authoritarian, Totalitarian, and pro-Fascist Inclinations, 1932-1941*, 2006. pg. 47.

Though all three of these conditions had been developing since the Balfour Declaration, they reached peak potency in 1941, resulting in a large outbreak of violence against the Jewish population. Michael Eppel, an expert on Iraq, writes, “During May, Iraq was officially at war with Britain...on June 2, outbreaks of violence against the Jews took place in Baghdad and Basra. Nationalist elements led by activists, the last remaining vestiges of the Rashid ‘Ali government, denounced the Jews as pro-British and slaughtered them.”<sup>34</sup> As modern nationalism in Iraq developed and Iraqi citizens associated Jewish goals with British initiatives in Iraq, Zionists and Jews were conflated, creating the conditions that enabled the Farhud of June, 1941.

### **Lasting Impacts of Rising Anti-Jewish Sentiment:**

Beyond the anti-Zionist protests, this change in attitude towards Jews in Iraq likely contributed to patterns of Jewish emigration from Iraq to Palestine. Appendix I represents migration data for Jews from Iraq to Palestine in the years 1922-1945. All immigration data comes from *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports: 1918-1948* (Volumes 1 – 11) researched and collated by Robert L. Jarman.<sup>35</sup> Although this data alone is not sufficient to draw claims of causation, it is interesting to note that periods of heightened Jewish emigration from Iraq to Palestine correlate with various significant events in Iraq. Most prominently, a large peak in 1932 corresponds with the end of the British Mandate in Iraq. In addition, this is followed by relatively high emigration in 1933-1935 which may be related to the succession of King Faisal I by King Ghazi and the subsequent changes in policy regarding minorities. In addition, there is a smaller peak in 1928, the same year of the Sir Alfred Mond riot discussed above. Again, this quantitative

<sup>34</sup> Eppel, *Iraq from Monarchy to Tyranny: From the Hashemites to the Rise of Saddam*. pg. 48.

<sup>35</sup> Robert Jarman, ed., *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports 1918-1948, Volume 1-11* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1995).



data does not necessarily imply causation between growing anti-Zionist sentiment in Iraq and increasing Jewish emigration from Iraq to Palestine, but it is possible that these anti-Zionist acts influenced when some number of Jews emigrated to Palestine.

### **Conclusion:**

Overall, Iraqi Arab sentiment towards Jews transitioned from an attitude of tolerance and acceptance to one of resent and animosity from the Balfour Declaration of 1917 to the Farhud of 1941. However, this transition occurred in stages and developed along anti-Zionist lines to a greater degree than broader anti-Jewish movements. Ultimately, growing Iraqi nationalism in response to British influence in Iraq contributed to Iraqi Arabs losing trust in the Jewish minority. In addition, the transition of power from King Faisal I, who made efforts to befriend and support minority groups in Iraq, to King Ghazi and then King Faisal II, neither of whom made the same attempts, accelerated the growth in anti-Jewish sentiment. Lastly, as Zionist movements in Palestine grew stronger, so too did anti-Zionist movements in Iraq. As Jews and Zionists were conflated and aggregated together in the minds of Iraqi Arabs, conditions conducive to violence against the Jews arose, leading up to the events of June 1941.

While anti-Jewish sentiment in Iraq has previously been studied by a number of historians, this paper presented a new focus on early stage anti-Jewish events in Iraq. Further, this paper attempted to demonstrate the possible effect that growing anti-Jewish sentiment had on Jewish emigration from Iraq to Palestine.

## Appendix 1) Quantitative Analysis of Iraqi Jewish Immigration

The data below tracks immigration data for Palestine from 1922 to 1945. The numbers recorded below summarize the total number of Jewish immigrants from Iraq for each given year. All immigration data comes from *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports: 1918-1948* (Volumes 1 – 11) researched and collated by Robert L. Jarman.<sup>36</sup>

The data below is represented graphically as a time series in order to visualize trends in Iraqi Jewish migration in conjunction with the raw data.

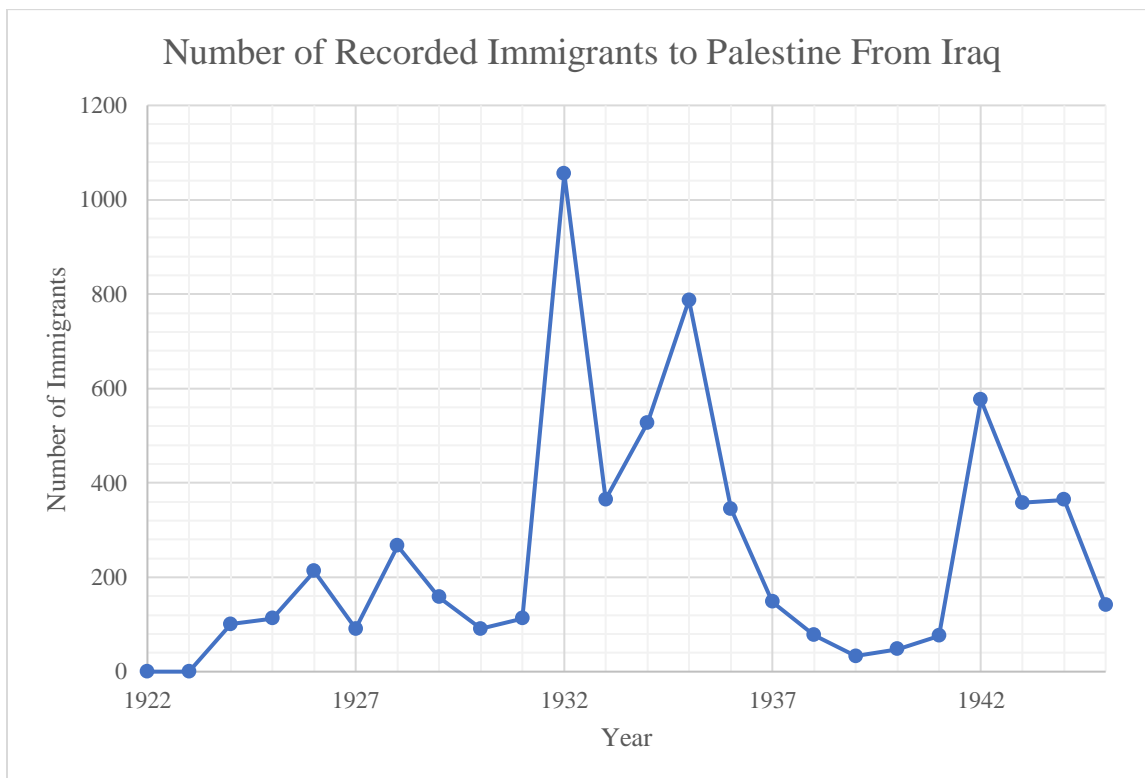


Figure 1) Timeseries of Jewish Immigration to Palestine from Iraq from 1922-1945.

<sup>36</sup> Robert Jarman, ed., *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports 1918-1948, Volume 1-11* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1995).

**Table 1) Number of Recorded Jewish Emigrants from Iraq to Palestine per year**

<i>Year</i>	<i># from Iraq</i>	<i>Year (cont.)</i>	<i># from Iraq</i>	<i>Year (cont.)</i>	<i># from Iraq</i>	<i>Year (cont.)</i>	<i># from Iraq</i>
1922 <sup>37</sup>	0	1928 <sup>38</sup>	267	1934 <sup>39</sup>	527	1940 <sup>40</sup>	48
1923 <sup>41</sup>	0	1929 <sup>42</sup>	158	1935 <sup>43</sup>	787	1941 <sup>44</sup>	76
1924 <sup>45</sup>	101	1930 <sup>46</sup>	91	1936 <sup>47</sup>	345	1942 <sup>48</sup>	576
1925 <sup>49</sup>	113	1931 <sup>50</sup>	113	1937 <sup>51</sup>	148	1943 <sup>52</sup>	358
1926 <sup>53</sup>	213	1932 <sup>54</sup>	1,055	1938 <sup>55</sup>	77	1944 <sup>56</sup>	364
1927 <sup>57</sup>	91	1933 <sup>58</sup>	365	1939 <sup>59</sup>	33	1945 <sup>60</sup>	141

<sup>37</sup> Countries of Origin of Immigrants, in “Report on Palestine Administration, 1922,” pg. 55 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1923). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports 1918-1948, Volume 1: 1918-1924* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1995), pg. 387.

<sup>38</sup> Provenance of Immigrants, in “Report by His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the year 1928,” pg. 94-95 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1929). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports 1918-1948, Volume 2: 1925-1928* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1995), pg. 586-587.

<sup>39</sup> The Nationality of Immigrants Registered in 1934, in “Report by His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the year 1934,” pg. 36-37 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1935). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports 1918-1948, Volume 5: 1934-1935* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1995), pg. 48-49.

<sup>40</sup> The Countries of Previous Residence of Immigrants Registered in 1940, in “The Unpublished Mandate Report for the year 1940,” pg. 3-4. Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports 1918-1948, Volume 9: 1940-1941/2* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1995), pg. 35-36.

<sup>41</sup> Countries of Origin of Immigrants, in “Report on Palestine Administration, 1923,” pg. 50 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1924). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports 1918-1948, Volume 1: 1918-1924* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1995), pg. 440.

<sup>42</sup> Provenance of Immigrants, in “Report by His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the year 1929,” pg. 132-133 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1930). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports 1918-1948, Volume 3: 1929-1931* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1995), pg. 132-133.

<sup>43</sup> The Countries of Previous Abode of Immigrants Registered in 1935, in “Report by His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the year 1935,” pg. 44-45 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1936). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports 1918-1948, Volume 5: 1934-1935* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1995), pg. 486-487.

<sup>44</sup> The Countries of Previous Residence of Immigrants Registered in 1941, in “The Unpublished Mandate Report for the year 1941,” pg. 3-4. Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports 1918-1948, Volume 9: 1940-1941/2* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1995), pg. 327-328.

<sup>45</sup> Provenance of Immigrants, in “Report by His Britannic Majesty’s Government on the Administration under Mandate of Palestine and Transjordan for the year 1924,” pg. 61 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1925). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports 1918-1948, Volume 1: 1918-1924* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1995), pg. 589.

<sup>46</sup> Provenance of Immigrants, in “Report by His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for

the year 1930,” pg. 41-42 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1931). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports 1918-1948, Volume 3: 1929-1931* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1995), pg. 269-270.

<sup>47</sup> The Countries of Previous Abode of Immigrants Registered in 1936, in “Report by His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the year 1936,” pg. 71-72 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1937). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports 1918-1948, Volume 6: 1936-1937* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1995), pg. 85-86.

<sup>48</sup> Country of Previous Abode of Immigrants Arriving, 1942, in “Departmental Administrative Reports for the administrative year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 1942; Palestine: Department of Migration—statistics of migration and naturalization,” pg. 16 (Jerusalem: Government Printing Press, 1943). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports 1918-1948, Volume 10: 1942-1943/4* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1995), pg. 20.

<sup>49</sup> Provenance of Immigrants, in “Report by His Britannic Majesty’s Government to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Transjordan for the year 1925,” pg. 55-56 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1926). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports 1918-1948, Volume 2: 1925-1928* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1995), pg. 115-116.

<sup>50</sup> Provenance of Immigrants, in “Report by His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the year 1931,” pg. 23-24 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1932). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports 1918-1948, Volume 3: 1929-1931* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1995), pg. 581-582.

<sup>51</sup> The Countries of Previous Residence of Immigrants Registered in 1937, in “Report by His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the year 1937,” pg. 60-61 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1938). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports 1918-1948, Volume 7: 1937-1938* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1995), pg. 72-73.

<sup>52</sup> Country of Previous Abode of Immigrants Arriving, 1943, in “Departmental Administrative Reports for the administrative year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 1943; Palestine: Department of Migration—statistics of migration and naturalization,” pg. 16 (Jerusalem: Government Printing Press, 1944). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports 1918-1948, Volume 10: 1942-1943/4* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1995), pg. 358.

<sup>53</sup> Provenance of Immigrants, in “Report by His Britannic Majesty’s Government to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the year 1926,” pg. 61 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1927). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports 1918-1948, Volume 2: 1925-1928* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1995), pg. 287.

<sup>54</sup> Provenance of Immigrants, in “Report by His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the year 1932,” pg. 28-29 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1933). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports 1918-1948, Volume 4: 1932-1933* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1995), pg. 40-41.

<sup>55</sup> The Countries of Previous Residence of Immigrants Registered in 1938, in “Report by His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the year 1938,” pg. 69-70 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1939). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports 1918-1948, Volume 7: 1937-1938* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1995), pg. 507-508.

<sup>56</sup> Country of Previous Abode of Immigrants Arriving, 1944, in “Departmental Administrative Reports for the administrative year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 1944; Palestine: Department of Migration—statistics of migration and naturalization,” pg. 16 (Jerusalem: Government Printing Press, 1945). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports 1918-1948, Volume 11: 1944-1945* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1995), pg. 20.

<sup>57</sup> Provenance of Immigrants, in “Report by His Britannic Majesty’s Government to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the year 1927,” pg. 70 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1928). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports 1918-1948, Volume 2: 1925-1928* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1995), pg. 432.

<sup>58</sup> Provenance of Immigrants, in “Report by His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the year 1933,” pg. 42-43 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1934). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports 1918-1948, Volume 4: 1932-1933* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1995), pg. 338-339.

<sup>59</sup> Country of Previous Abode of Immigrants Arriving, in 1939, in “Departmental Administrative Reports for the administrative year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1939; Palestine: Department of Migration Annual Report 1939,” pg. 17-18 (Jerusalem: Government Printing Press, 1940). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports 1918-1948, Volume 8: 1938/9-1939* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1995), pg. 663-664.

<sup>60</sup> Total Immigrants Registered, Classified by Race and Country of Previous Residence, in “Departmental Administrative Reports for the administrative year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 1945; Palestine: Department of Migration—statistics of migration and naturalization,” pg. 23 (Jerusalem: Government Printing Press, 1946). Reprinted in Robert Jarman, ed., *Palestine and Transjordan Administration Reports 1918-1948, Volume 11: 1944-1945* (Slough, England: Archive Editions, 1995), pg. 633.

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