

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

PALESTINE AND TRANSJORDAN

(A) PALESTINE: A ZIONIST STATE

THOUGH Palestine is the birthplace of both the Hebraic and the Christian religions, the followers of neither faith predominate there today. Of Christian sects there are many, the members belonging for the most part to religious orders that are associated with the holy places. The population is composed chiefly of Moslem Arabs, with much smaller numbers of Druses, Jews, and Turks. Before the World War Jews formed barely an eighth of the total population.

A ZIONIST STATE

The widespread interest in the creation of a new Jewish state in Palestine springs from the fact that such a state forms a homeland for Jews. Some of the Jewish leaders had visions of a Palestine in which Jews would become the majority race; but the more immediate program was to set up a state from which action could be launched looking toward the amelioration of the condition of Jews in central and eastern Europe. It was not at all intended to start a great migration of persecuted Jews toward Palestine, for the country could not contain them. The form of political control was the most serious immediate problem. To turn over the government of the new state to either the Jews or the Arabs would have meant discord from the start. The population had had no experience in government, and it would certainly have carried into its first political contests a fanatical religious feeling that would have meant disaster if outside supervision had been withheld.

In view of these possibilities there appeared to be but one course to take: to make a strong western power the mandatory. In the treaty of Sèvres (1920) it was provided that Palestine should be administered by a mandatory, and that this mandatory should carry out the terms of the British declaration of 2 November 1917, which guaranteed the establishment of a Jewish national home. At the same time it was specified that the rights of non-Jews were not to be prejudiced. By the treaty of Lausanne (1923), which displaced the treaty of Sèvres, Turkey left to "the parties concerned" all rights and titles respecting territories outside the boundaries of Turkey (Fig. 173), thus confirming the positions of France in Syria and Great Britain in Palestine as mandatory powers.

It was logical to select Great Britain as the mandatory of Palestine, because of (1) her interest in the security of the Suez Canal near by and in the orderly behavior of the Arab tribes that adjoin Palestine on the