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In the aftermath of World War I there was furious agitation throughout Islam against the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. Coupled with the powerful effect of the principle of self-determination, British indifference to Muslim sentiments gave rise to militant nationalism in Islam which became de facto anti-Western. This detailed and convincing account describes British indecisiveness, policy contradictions, and how militant nationalism was aggravated by the Greek invasion of Smyrna and its ambition to create a Hellenic Empire in Anatolia with Britain's connivance.

Immediately after World War I there was a fair chance of mutual coexistence and good relations between Arabs and Jews in Palestine. This possibility was nipped in the bud by the military administration (1918-1920) responsible for the anti-Jewish riots in Jerusalem in April 1920. High Commissioner Herbert Samuel supported the Arab extremists in his misguided policy, and complicated the situation further. The appointment of Hajj Amin al-Husseini to the exalted post of Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, and subsequently to the presidency of the Supreme Moslem Council of the Palestinians, proved fatal to Arab-Jewish relations and to the possibility of peace.

As Friedman shows, the British administration of Palestine bears a considerable share of responsibility for the Arab-Zionist conflict in Palestine. Against this diplomatic background Arab-Jewish hostilities thrived, with consequences that endure today