

# Archives Unbound: French and British Mandates in the Middle East

TWO NEW COLLECTIONS!



## About the Mandates

At the conclusion of World War I, the League of Nations established the mandate system, which gave authority to the victorious Allies over the former colonies of the German and the Ottoman Empires. The mandated territories were assigned to individual powers to govern until they were deemed capable of self-rule. It was agreed that the territories of the Arab world would require only a short period of British (Iraq and Palestine) and French (Lebanon and Syria) rule before they could choose their own leaders and become autonomous states.



The texts of the mandates stated that “the Mandatory Power commands and governs only *to educate*.” But Britain and France sought mandates according to their own economic and strategic interests. Within each new state, France and Britain mined veins of social diversity to strengthen their position overall. France divided Syria into a number of mini states on the basis, according to the French, of separatist feelings among various segments of the population. Britain divided Iraq and Transjordan into two jurisdictions each, one under so-called tribal administration and the other under the central government. Mandatory rule was meant to accommodate the principle of self-determination, but it required force to be carried out. Major rebellions occurred in Iraq in 1920, in Syria from 1925 to 1927, and in Palestine from 1936 to 1939. These rebellions had a profound effect on the shape of mandatory rule. The mandate period was relatively short-lived; Britain left Iraq in 1932, France left Lebanon and Syria in 1945 to 1946, and Israel was created from the former Palestine mandate in 1948.

## ***The British Mandate in Palestine, Arab-Jewish Relations, and the U.S. Consulate at Jerusalem, 1925-1941***

**Date Range:** 1920-1940

**Size:** est. 25,000 pages

**Source Library:** U.S. National Archives

This collection consists of correspondence and telegrams received and sent by the American consular post in Jerusalem. The topics covered by these records include the protection of interests of American citizens, foreign trade, shipping, and immigration. But there is more to these records than traditional consular activities – the Jerusalem post provides a unique look into the British Mandate in Palestine. Consular officials reported on the administration of the Mandate, Jewish immigration, terrorism, and Arab rebellion. There are unique materials on the relationship of Palestinians to other Arab countries, British policies, the Zionist movement in Palestine and abroad, Communist influence in Palestine, reports on Islamic conferences, racial and religious disturbances and riots, the “holy places question,” partition of Palestine and the Arab Entente, Jewish-Arab relations and impact on Palestine, and Jewish and Arab national aspirations.

Initially, the British Mandate caused Jewish people to be optimistic about the eventual establishment of a homeland. Their optimism inspired the immigration to Palestine of Jewish peoples from many countries, particularly from Germany when Nazi persecution began. The arrival of many Jewish immigrants in the 1930s awakened Arab fears that Palestine would become a national homeland for the Jews. By 1936 guerrilla fighting had broken out between the Jews and the Arabs. Unable to maintain peace, Britain issued a white paper in 1939 that restricted Jewish immigration into Palestine. The Jewish people opposed the policy and looked to the United States for support.

# Archives Unbound: French and British Mandates in the Middle East TWO NEW COLLECTIONS!



## ***The French Mandate in The Lebanon, Christian-Muslim Relations, and the U.S. Consulate at Beirut, 1920-1941***

**Date Range:** 1920-1941

**Size:** est. 35,000 pages

**Source Library:** U.S. National Archives

This collection consists of correspondence and telegrams received and sent by the American consular post in Beirut. The topics covered by these records include the protection of interests of American citizens, foreign trade, shipping, and immigration. But there is more to these records than traditional consular activities – the Beirut post provides a unique look into the French Mandate in Syria-Lebanon. Consular officials reported on the administration of the Mandate, its problems, French repression and Arab rebellion. There are unique materials on the Druse Rebellion of 1925, religious conflicts between Christian, Maronite, and Muslim communities, repression by French military forces, French efforts to settle Bedouin tribes in Syria, nationalist organizations and rebellion, anti-Zionism activities, riots and civil disturbances in the cities, villages and rural areas, failure of the Franco-Lebanese Treaty of 1936, creation of a new mandate administration in Syria in 1939, the war clouds in Europe, and Palestinian views on Syrian independence.

### ***Archives Unbound :***

***Archives Unbound*** answers the call within libraries and university departments to digitise small collections of primary source material. This new online resource digitises the most sought-after microfilm collections from Gale and Primary Source Media, capturing defining moments in history. Between 5,000 to 200,000 pages per title, these specialist collections act as small adjuncts to the large Gale digital collections making them an affordable option for libraries and departments.

Visit [gale.cengage.co.uk/unbound](http://gale.cengage.co.uk/unbound) for more details