



# حوليات كلية الآداب

تصدر عن مجلس النشر العلمي - جامعة الكويت

## وعد بلفور في الوثائق البريطانية ١٩٢٢ - ١٩٢٣

رؤية جديدة لخلافات قديمة

د. سحر سليم الهنيدي

## ثمن الرسالة

الكويت ٥٠٠ فلس - البحرين دينار واحد - قطر ١٠ ريالات -  
الإمارات ١٠ دراهم - السعودية ١٠ ريالات - عمان ريال واحد -  
اليمن ١٠ ريالات - مصر ٣ جنيهات - لبنان ١٥٠٠ ليرة -  
الأردن ٧٥٠ فلساً - سوريا ٥٠ ليرة - السودان جنيه واحد - ليبيا  
ديناران - الجزائر ١٠ دنانير - تونس دينار واحد - المغرب ١٥ درهماً

## الاشتراك السنوي لعدد (٨) رسائل

سنة			سنوات الاشتراك
الدول الأجنبية	الدول العربية	الكويت	نوع الاشتراك
15 دولاراً	4 دنانير	3 دنانير	أفراد
60 دولاراً	15 ديناراً	15 ديناراً	مؤسسات
سنتين			سنوات الاشتراك
الدول الأجنبية	الدول العربية	الكويت	نوع الاشتراك
25 دولاراً	7 دنانير	5 دنانير	أفراد
100 دولاراً	25 ديناراً	25 ديناراً	مؤسسات
3 سنوات			سنوات الاشتراك
الدول الأجنبية	الدول العربية	الكويت	نوع الاشتراك
35 دولاراً	10 دنانير	7 دنانير	أفراد
140 دولاراً	35 ديناراً	35 ديناراً	مؤسسات
4 سنوات			سنوات الاشتراك
الدول الأجنبية	الدول العربية	الكويت	نوع الاشتراك
45 دولاراً	13 دنانير	9 دنانير	أفراد
180 دولاراً	45 ديناراً	45 ديناراً	مؤسسات

جميع المراسلات الخاصة بشروط النشر أو أية استفسارات أخرى بشأن  
الحوليات توجه إلى رئيس هيئة تحرير الحوليات - ص. ب. : ١٧٣٧٠  
الخالدية - الكويت : 72454 ت : ٤٨١٠٣١٩ فاكس : ٤٨١٠٣١٩

ISSN 1560-5248 Key title: Hawliyyāt Kulliyat al-ādāb

E-mail: aoffoa@kuc01.kuniv.edu.kw

# حوايلبات كلية الآداب

تمدرعن بملس النشر العلمى - جامعة الكويت

دورية علمية محكّمة تتضمن مجموعة من الرسائل  
وتعنى بنشر الموضوعات التي تدخل في مجالات  
اهتمام الأقسام العلمية لكلية الآداب

الحولية التاسعة عشرة  
الرسالة السادسة والثلاثون بعد المئة  
١٤٢٠هـ - ١٩٩٩م

هيئة التحرير

د. عبدالله العمر

رئيس التحرير

أ.د. محمد رجب النجار

أ.د. مصطفى تركي

أ.م.د. فاطمة عبدالرزاق

د. منيرة التمار

## الهيئة الاستشارية

أ.د. حسن حنفي

أ.د. غانم هنا

أ.د. لطفية عاشور

أ.د. محمد الجراش

أ.د. محمود عودة

## قواعد النشر في حوليات كلية الآداب

- ١ - حوليات كلية الآداب دورية علمية محكمة تنشر مجموعة من الرسائل في الموضوعات التي تدخل في مجالات اختصاص الأقسام العلمية بكلية الآداب .
- ٢ - تنشر الحوليات البحوث والدراسات الأصلية باللغتين العربية والإنجليزية ويراعى ألا يتجاوز عدد صفحات أي بحث ١٣٠ صفحة ولا يقل عن ٤٠ صفحة .
- ٣ - تقدم البحوث مطبوعة على الآلة الكاتبة على مسافتين من ثلاث نسخ على ورق مقاس ٢٩×٢١ سم (A4) وعلى وجه واحد فقط وترقم جميع الصفحات بما في ذلك الجداول والصور التوضيحية، وينبغي مراعاة التصحيح الدقيق للطباعة على الآلة الكاتبة في النسخ جميعها .
- ٤ - يرفق الباحث ملخصاً باللغتين العربية والإنجليزية في حدود ٢٠٠ «مائي» كلمة تتصدر البحث .
- ٥ - ترسم الخرائط والأشكال والرسوم بالحبر الصيني على ورق «شفاف» حتى تكون صالحة للطباعة . أما الصور الفوتوغرافية فيراعى أن تكون مطبوعة على ورق لماع، وإذا كانت ملونة فلا بد من تقديم الشريحة الأصلية .
- ٦ - يراعى وضع خطوط متعرجة تحت العناوين الجانبية، وكذلك الألفاظ والعبارات التي يراد طبعها بينط ثقيل .
- ٧ - تكتب في قائمة المصادر كل التفاصيل المتعلقة بكل مصنف من حيث اسم المؤلف كاملاً مبتدأ بالكنية أو الاسم الأخير، وعنوان المصنف تحت خط متعرج وذكر الأجزاء أو المجلدات واسم المحقق أو المترجم ورقم الطبعة، ومكان النشر ثم اسم المطبعة أو دار النشر، ثم سنة النشر ويتبع في قائمة المصادر النظام الآتي : الطبري، أبو جعفر محمد بن جرير .
- تاريخ الرسل والملوك، تحقيق محمد أبو الفضل إبراهيم، ط ٣، مصر، دار المعارف، د . ت .
- جامع البيان في تأويل القرآن، تحقيق محمد محمود شاكر، ط ٢، دار المعارف بمصر . د . ت .
- الشايب، أحمد، تاريخ النقائض في الشعر العربي، ط ٣، القاهرة، مكتبة النهضة المصرية، ١٩٦٦ .

٨- تثبت الهوامش على النحو التالي :

يذكر لقب المؤلف ثم الجزء ثم رقم الصفحة ، وإذا كان للمؤلف أكثر من مصنف في البحث فيذكر لقب المؤلف ثم عنوان المصنف ، ثم يليه الجزء ، ثم رقم الصفحة ، ويتبع في الحواشي النظام الآتي :

- الطبري ، تاريخ الرسل والملوك ، ج ٣ ، ص ٩١ .

- الطبري ، جامع البيان في تأويل القرآن ، ج ٢ ، ص ١٢٠ .

- الشايب ، ص ٤٠ .

٩- توضع أرقام التوثيق بين قوسين وترتب متسلسلة حتى نهاية البحث ، فإذا انتهت أرقام التوثيق في الصفحة الأولى عند الرقم (٦) يبدأ التوثيق في الصفحة الثانية بالرقم (٧) وهكذا .

١٠- أصول البحوث التي تصل للحوليات لا ترد ولا تسترجع سواء نشرت أو لم تنشر .

١١- لا تقبل الحوليات البحوث التي سبق نشرها ، كما لا يجوز نشر البحوث في مجلات علمية أخرى بعد إقرار نشرها في الحوليات إلا بعد الحصول على إذن كتابي بذلك من رئيس تحرير الحوليات .

١٢- عند طباعة البحث المقبول للنشر على المؤلف أن يقوم بمراجعة تجربة الطبعة الأخيرة بمطابقتها على الأصل ، مع مراعاة عدم إجراء أي تغييرات فيها تختلف عما ورد في الأصل ، سواء بالإضافة أو الحذف .

١٣- تمنح إدارة الحوليات لمؤلف كل بحث منشور خمسين نسخة مجانية من بحثه .

١٤- ترسل البحوث وجميع المراسلات الخاصة بالحوليات إلى :

رئيس تحرير حوليات كلية الآداب

كلية الآداب - جامعة الكويت

ص . ب : ١٧٣٧٠ الخالدية

رمز بريدي : 72454

الكويت

ISSN 1560-5248 Key title: Hawliyyāt Kulliyyat al-ādāb

E-mail: aotfoa@kuc01.kuniv.edu.kw



**وعد بلزور في الوثائق  
البريطانية ١٩٩٢ - ١٩٢٣**

رؤية جديدة لخلافات قديمة

د. سحر سليم الهندي

**المؤلف :**

**د . سحر سليم الهندي**

دكتورة في التاريخ / جامعة مانشستر ١٩٩٥ .  
عملت في المجلس الوطني للثقافة والفنون  
والآداب في دولة الكويت منذ العام ١٩٨٧ حتى  
١٩٩٨ ، مديرة تحرير سلسلة كتاب «عالم  
المعرفة» ، ثم مديرة لإدارة النشر في المجلس .

**الإنتاج العلمي :**

- لها أعمال منشورة تأليفاً وترجمة ، وتحت  
الطبع كتاب:

*A Broken Trust: Herbert Samuel, Zion-  
ism and the Palestinians 1920 - 1925*

الذي يصدر عن دار نشر I.B. Tauris البريطانية .

## الملخص

عندما أعلنت وزارة الخارجية البريطانية عن وعد بلفور في نوفمبر ١٩١٧، لم تكن السياسة التي ينطوي عليها ذلك الوعد واضحة تماماً، وقد أدى هذا الغموض المتعمد في العبارات إلى الإرباك والتشويش. وعندما فازت حكومة المحافظين في الانتخابات في أواخر عام ١٩٢٢، وكانت السياسة المؤيدة للصهيونية في لندن آخذة بالأفول، تعرضت الحكومة لضغوط قوية من البرلمان والصحافة لتفسير معنى وعد بلفور. في هذه الظروف أخذت وزارة المستعمرات، التي كانت مسؤولة عن فلسطين منذ عام ١٩٢١، على عاتقها البحث في جذور تلك المسألة للوصول إلى حل نهائي حولها، وكانت نتيجة ذلك التنقيب والبحث ظهور أول تفسير رسمي لمعنى وعد بلفور يصدر عن الحكومة البريطانية، بعد خمس سنوات من إعلانه.

في هذه الدراسة سوف نلقي بعضاً من الضوء على تلك المسألة المثيرة للجدل، بناء على وثائق وزارة المستعمرات في ١٩٢٢-١٩٢٣، التي أظهرت أن وزارة الخارجية البريطانية ليس في حوزتها أية وثائق تذكر حول كيفية نشوء ذلك الوعد.

وفي ضوء ذلك الاكتشاف المثير، اجتهدت «دائرة الشرق الأوسط» في وزارة المستعمرات بتدوين كل ما تمكنت من الحصول عليه من ذاكرة أولئك الذين شاركوا في صياغة وعد بلفور بغية الوصول إلى تصور عن الأسباب التي دعت الحكومة البريطانية عام ١٩١٧ إلى إعلانه. ومن هنا تذهب هذه الدراسة إلى أن التفسير الذي صدر عن وزارة المستعمرات في أوائل العشرينيات كان أكبر أهمية من وعد بلفور نفسه، فعلى أساس ذلك التفسير الرسمي وبناء على نصيحة وزارة المستعمرات اتبعت الحكومة البريطانية سياسة التمسك بالسياسة الصهيونية في وقت كانت فيه الظروف مناسبة للرجوع عن تلك السياسة، مما كان له تأثير بعيد المدى في مستقبل المنطقة.



- Chaim Weizmann's Scientific Work: 1915-1918. *Arabic and Islamic Garland*, London, 1977.
- Cornelius, John. The Balfour Declaration and the Zimmermann Note. *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs.* vol. XVI, no. 2 August/September 1997, pp.18-20
- Sir Mark Sykes and Palestine 1915-16. Elie Kedourie. *Middle Eastern Studies* Vol 6. 1970.
- The Balfour Declaration. What Did Britain Promise In Palestine? Musa Mazzawi. The Council For the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding. London.
- Palestinians Under Occupation. Prospects for the Future. Ed. Peter F. Krogh & Mary C. McDavid. GeorgeTown University . Symposia in Honour of Zafer Al-Masri. Washington,
- Reinharz, Jehuda. The Balfour Declaration in Historical Perspective. in *Essential Papers on Zionism*, ed. Jehuda Reinharz and Anita Shapira. London, 1996. pp. 587-616.
- Said, Edward. The Question of Palestine, New York, 1979.
- Seikaly, Samir. Unequal Fortunes: The Arabs of Palestine and the Jews During World War I. *Studia Arabica & Islamica: Festschrift For Ihasan Abbas.* Ed. Wadad al-Qadi. American University of Beirut, 1981.
- Vereté, Mayir. Why was a British Consulate established in Jerusalem? *The English Historical Review.* Vol. LXXXV, 1970.
- Moore, John Norton. (Ed), The Palestine Question. Seminar of Arab Jurists on Palestine, Algiers, July 22-27, 1967. Part One. Hitorical "Rights". Princeton, New Jersey, 1974.

\* \* \* \* \*

- Palestine. A Study of Jewish, Arab, And British Policies. Published for the ESCO Foundation for Palestine, Inc. Yale University Press. 1947.
- Rokach. Livia. The Catholic Church and the Ouestion of Palestine. Saqi Books. London, 1987
- Sanders, Ronald. The High Walls of Jerusalem. A History of the Balfour Declaration and the Birth of the British Mandate for Palestine. New York, 1983.
- Sharif, Regina. Non-Jewish Zionism. Its Roots in Western Diplomacy. London, 1983.
- Stevens, P. Richard. Zionism and Palestine Before the Mandate: A Phase of Western Imperialism. The Institute for Palestine Studies, Beirut, 1972.
- Storrs, Ronald. Orientations. London, 1937.
- Sykes, Christopher. Crossroads to Israel 1917-1948. Indiana University Press, 1973.
- Wavell, Colonel A.P. The Palestine Campaigns. London, 1928.
- Westrate, Bruce. The Arab Bureau. British Policy in the Middle East 1916-1920. The Pennsylvania State University Press.1992.
- Yapp, M.E. The Near East Since the First World War. Longman. London and New York, 1991.
- Zeine, Zeine. The Struggle for Arab Independence. Western Diplomacy and the Rise and Fall of Feisal's Kingdom in Syria. 2nd. ed., N.Y. 1977.

## ARTICLES

- Lord Balfour's Personal Position On the Balfour Declaration. The *Middle East Journal.* Documents. Comment by Caroll Quigley. Vol. 22. 1968.

- Kadegan, Allan Laine. Soviet Zion. The Quest for a Russian Homeland. Macmillan, London. 1994.
- Kedourie, Elie, In the Anglo-Arab Labyrinth. The McMahon-Husayn Correspondence and its Interpretations 1914-1939. Cambridge University Press. 1976.
- Khalidi, Rashid. British Policy Towards Syria and Palestine, 1906-1914: a study of the antecedents of the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Balfour Declaration. Oxford, 1980.
- Khalidi, Walid. Palestine Reborn. London. 1992.
- Kimche, Jon. The Unromantics, The Great Powers and the Balfour Declaration. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. London, 1968.
- Knox, D. Edward. The Making of a New Eastern Question: British Palestine Policy and the Origins of Israel 1917-1925. The Catholic University of America Press. Washington, D.C. 1981.
- Lesch, Ann Mosely. Arab Politics in Palestine, 1917-1939: The Frustration of a Nationalist Movement. Ithaca, Cornell Univ. Press, 1979.
- Louis, Wm. Roger. In the Name of God, Go! Leo Amery and the British Empire in the Age of Churchill. W.W. Norton & Company. N.Y., London, 1992.
- Mandel, Neville. The Arabs and Zionism Before World War I. Berkely, Univ. of California Press, 1976.
- Marlowe, John. The Seat of Pilate: An Account of the Palestine Mandate. London, 1959.
- Massey, W.T. How Jerusalem Was Won. Being the Record of Allenby's Campaign in Palestine. London, 1919.
- Massey, W.T. Allenby's Final Triumph. London, 1920.
- Monroe, Elizabeth. Britain's Moment in the Middle East, 1914-1956. London, 1963.

- Huneidi, Sahar. Sir Herbert Samuel, Zionism and the Palestine Arabs, 1920-1925. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Manchester, 1995.
- Knox, Dennis. The Development of British Policy in Palestine, 1917-1925: Sir Gilbert Clayton and the "New Eastern Question". Ph.D. Thesis, Michigan State University, 1971.

### SUGGESTED READINGS

- Anderson, M.S. The Great Powers and the Near East, 1774-1923. London, 1970.
- Antonius, George. The Arab Awakening. Beirut, 1969.
- Abu Lughod, Ibrahim. (Ed) with a foreword by Arnold Toynbee. The Transformation of Palestine. Essays on the Origin and Development of the Arab-Israeli Conflict. Northwestern Univ. Press, Evanston, 1971.
- Barbour, Nevill. Nisi Dominus: A Survey of the Palestine Controversy. London, 1946.
- Berkowitz, Michael. Western Jewry and the Zionist project, 1914-1933. Cambridge Universtiy Press, 1997.
- Chaim Weizmann. Statesman of the Jewish Renaissance. The Chaim Weizmann Centenary 1874-1974. The Zionist Library. Jerusalem, 1974.
- Crossman, Richard. A Nation Reborn. The Israel of Weizmann, Bevin and Ben-Gurion. London 1960.
- Davis, John H. The Evasive Peace. A Study of the Zionist-Arab problem. London, 1968
- Howard, H.N. An American Inquiry in the Middle East: The King-Crane Commission, Beirut, 1963.
- Jehuda Reinharz and Anita Shapira , ed. Essential Papers On Zionism, New York University Press, 1996.

wife of Israel's first President as told by David Tutaev, London, 1967.

- Wilson, Jeremy. Lawrence of Arabia. The Authorised Biography of T.E.Lawrence. London, 1989.

## ARTICLES

- Gillon, D.Z. The Antecedents of the Balfour Declaration. *Journal of Middle Eastern Studies.* Vol. 5. 1969.
- Herrmann, Klaus, J. Political Response to the Balfour Declaration in Imperial Germany: German Judaism. *Middle East Journal.* Vol. 19, 1965.
- Huneidi, Sahar. War Balfour Policy Reversible? The Colonial Office and Palestine 1921-23. *Journal of Palestine Studies,* 106 Vol. XXVII no.2, (Winter 1998)
- Kaufman. Edy. French pro-Zionist Declarations of 1917-18. *Middle Eastern Studies,* Vol 5, 1979
- Manuel, Frank E. The Palestine Question in Italian Diplomacy, 1917-1920. *Journal of Modern History.* Vol. 27. 1955.
- Ormsby-Gore, William. Great Britain, Palestine and the Jews. *The XIX th Century and After.* Vol. 88 July-Dec 1920.
- Rosen, Jacob. Captain Reginald Hall and the Balfour Declaration. *Middle Eastern Studies.* Vol. 24, 1988.
- Vereté, Mayir. The Balfour Declaration and its Makers. *Middle Eastern Studies,* Vol 6. 1970.

## THESES

- Herrman, I.M. Anglo-Zionist Relations from Herzl to the Balfour Declaration 1902-1917. Ph.D Thesis, Oxford University, 1971

- Roskill, Stephen, Hankey, Man of Secrets. 1919-31. London, 1972.
- Schölch, Alexander. Palestine in Transformation, 1856-1882: Studies in Social Economic and Political Development. Institute for Palestine Studies. Washington D.C., 1993.
- Shorrock, William. French Imperialism in the Middle East. The Failure of French Policy in Syria and Lebanon, 1900-1914. Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1976.
- Stein, Leonard. The Balfour Declaration, London, 1961.
- Stein, Leonard (Ed), The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, August 1914-Nov. 1917 Vol. 7. London, 1975.
- Taylor, Alan R. Prelude to Israel, An Analysis of Zionist Diplomacy, London, 1959.
- Taylor, A.J.P. The First World War. London, 1966.
- Teveth, Shabtai. Ben-Gurion. The Burning Ground, 1886-1948. Boston, 1987.
- Teveth, Shabtai. Kitchener, Grey and the Question of Palestine. In From Palmerston to Balfour, Collected Essays of Mayir Vereré Ed. Norman Rose, London, 1992.
- Tibawi, A.L. Anglo-Arab Relations and the Question of Palestine 1914-1921. London, 1978.
- Vital, David. Zionism: The Crucial Phase, Oxford, 1987.
- Wasserstein, Bernard. Herbert Samuel. A Political Life, London, 1992.
- Wavell, Sir Archibald. Allenby. London, 1940.
- Weisgal, W. Meyer & Carmichael Joel. (ed.) Chaim Weizmann. A Biography By Several Hands. London 1962.
- Weizmann, Chaim. Trial and Error. The Autobiography of Chaim Weizmann London, Fourth Impression, 1950.
- Weizmann, Vera. The Impossible Takes Longer: Memoirs by the

Middle East 1914-1922. London, 1989.

- Gilbert, Martin. Exile and Return. The Emergence of Jewish Statehood, London, 1978.
- Gilmour, David. Curzon. London, 1994.
- Hadawi, Sami. Bitter Harvest. Palestine Between 1914-1967. New York, 1967.
- Hyamson, A.M. Palestine Under the Mandate 1920-48. London, 1950.
- Ingrams, Doreen. Palestine Papers, 1917-1922, Seeds of Conflict, London, 1972.
- Jones, Philip. Britain and Palestine 1914- 1948. London, 1979.
- Khalidi, Walid. (Ed.) From Haven to Conquest: Readings in Zionism and the Palestine Problem until 1948. Institute for Palestine Studies, Beirut, 1971.
- Ludendorf, General. My War Diaries. 1914-18 (Trans.) London, no date.
- Mallison, W.T. The Balfour Declaration: An Appraisal in International Law. Northwestern University Press. 1971.
- Massiri, A. Wahhab. The Encyclopedia of Zionist Concepts and Terminology, (Arabic), Cairo, 1974.
- Penslar, Derek. Zionism and Technocracy: The Engineering of Jewish Settlement in Palestine 1870-1918, London, 1991
- Presland, John. Deedes Bey, London, 1942.
- Robert, John and Hadawi, Sami. The Palestine Diary 1914-45. Vol.I Beirut, 1970
- Rose, Norman. (Ed) From Palmerston to Balfour. Collected Essays of Mayir Vereté. With an Introduction by Albert Hourani. Great Britain, 1992.
- Roth, Cecil. A History of the Jews. N.Y. 1961.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### PRIMARY SOURCES

#### Unpublished

- Public Record Office, Kew  
*Colonial Office, Foreign Office, Parliamentary Command Papers, Cabinet Office, Air Ministry.*
- The Middle East Centre, St. Antony's College, Oxford.  
*The Papers of Sir Herbert Samuel*
- National Archives. Washington. *Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1910-1929.*

#### Published

*The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann.* General Editor Meyer Weisgal. Oxford University Press, London. Israel Universities Press, Jerusalem.

### SECONDARY SOURCES

- Adelson, Roger. Mark Sykes: Portrait of an Amateur. London, 1975.
- Amery, Leopold. My Political Life, War and Peace 1914-1929, Vol. 2, London, 1953.
- Bermant, Haim. The Cousinhood, New York. 1971.
- Bowle, John. Viscount Samuel. a biography. London, 1957
- Cocker, Mark. Richard Meinertzhagen: Soldier, Scientist and Spy. London, 1989.
- Elon, Amos. Israelis, Founders and Sons, London, 1971.
- Fromkin, David. A Peace to End All Peace, Creating the Modern

*Resolution of Jewish Ministers' Association of New York.*

*The Agudath Horabbonim Hamatifim, the Jewish Ministers' Association of New York, has adopted the following resolution:—*

"Resolved that all Jewish rabbis of America, the true representatives of the Jewish faith, be called in conference to petition the President of our God-blessed country, the Senate and the House of Representatives, as well as the other Powers, favourably to consider the restoration of Palestine to the Jewish people."

*Convention of Jewish National, Socialist, Workmen's Committee.*

The first convention of the *Jewish National, Socialist, Workmen's Committee*, called together in the last days of March to discuss the vital questions which will have to be taken up by the American Jewish Congress, adopted various resolutions, the final clause of which stated:—

"The convention hereby declares that it is the historic and sacred duty of American Jewry to demand in concert with all other parts of the Jewish people full national liberation and the possibility of an independent development of the Jewish people in an assured home in Palestine."

Dr. Chaim Zhitlowsky, one of the leaders of the Jewish Socialists in the United States of America, has adopted Zionism and enrolled himself as a member of the Poalei Zion of America. Together with him, two other noted Jewish labour leaders, Dr. Elsberg and Mr. Rotbenbaum, have joined the Poalei Zion.

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE					
1	2	3	4	5	6
Reference:					
Cab 24 -					
4					
COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT THE WRITTEN PERMISSION OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON					

a referendum on the question, secondly to lay before the All-Russian Jewish Congress the question of Jewish claims in Palestine, and thirdly to claim the admission of a representative of the Jewish nation at the future peace conference to be held upon the closing of hostilities for the expression of the wishes of the Jewish nation and for the defence of its historic and national rights and interests."

*Practical Zionism.*

Passing to the practical side of the Zionist movement, we desire to mention the following facts:—

In Moscow the "Haboneh," a company with a subscribed capital of 5,000,000 roubles, has been formed for the purpose of building houses in Palestine on the cessation of hostilities.

The considerable monthly returns of the Jewish National Fund are due particularly to receipts from Russia. This willingness to make sacrifices evinced by the Russian Jews (250,000 roubles during the first month of their deliverance) opens up very favourable prospects for the development of the Jewish National Fund in the future.

THE GROWTH OF ZIONISM IN AMERICA DURING THE WAR.

On the outbreak of the war American Zionists promptly set up in New York a provisional Executive Committee for Zionist affairs, which became, for certain purposes, a real International Zionist Executive. The head of this organisation was Mr. Brandeis, now Mr. Justice Brandeis, of the Supreme Court. It made its chief task the maintenance of the Jewish settlements and educational and other institutions in Palestine. For this purpose it raised vast sums of money, and the persistence of Jewish work in Palestine through three years of war is due primarily to American Zionists. In three years over 360,000£ passed through its hands, independently of the ordinary Zionist collections such as Shekel and National Funds. The Provisional Executive, at the same time, established intimate relations with the political factors in the United States and laboured to assist in the development of Zionism throughout the American Continent, notably in Canada and the Argentine. The recent Zionist Convention in Canada was the most impressive in the history of the movement in the Dominion.

*The United States.*

What may be called local Zionist affairs are under the control of the American Zionist Federation and affiliated bodies. These have grown greatly in strength during the war. At the Baltimore Conference on the 24th June last, it was reported that there were 170 societies attached to the Federation, 41 to the Hadassah or Women's Union, 98 to the Zionist Union of the Western States, 450 to the Young Judah Association, 87 to the Order Sons of Zion, 190 to the Misraché or strictly orthodox Association, 95 to the Poalé-Zion or Zionist Labour Party. To these should now be added the Order Brith Shalom with 50,000 members. At the time of the Baltimore Convention it was announced that there were 50 new Zionist Societies in process of formation. The number of shekel payers had risen in 1917 to 320,000, which is more than 120,000 increase over the preceding year. Every shekel payer formally accepts the Zionist programme and subscribes to the Zionist funds.

Some idea of the financial power of Zionism in the United States may be gained from a few illustrations. At mass meetings held in conjunction with the Baltimore Convention it was announced that 60,000£ was raised for Jewish relief in Palestine and the other war zones. The National Fund, which exists for the purchase of land in Palestine to be held by the organised Jewish people, obtained over 12,000£ during the year in voluntary gifts. In May the various Achuzah and other American societies for the co-operative purchase of land and foundation of colonies in Palestine were formed into a union, which has an actual capital of 30,000£, and within five or six years will have an income of 200,000£. It is worth observing that this union will make special provision for the settlement in Palestine of Jewish ex-soldiers.

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE					
1	2	3	4	5	6
References—					
Cab 21					
4					
COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH—NOT TO BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT THE PERMISSION OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON					

between nationalist and Zionist papers as against non-nationalist is about ten to one. Even the non-nationalist papers no longer actively oppose Jewish Nationalism. They simply lay their chief stress on class interest.

*All-Russian Zionist Conference, Petrograd.*

The outstanding feature of recent Zionist developments in Russia has been the holding of the All-Russian Zionist Conference, which opened in Petrograd on May 24, 1917.

The Conference received official recognition. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Terestchenka, wished the Conference success.\*

Representatives of Jewish democracy assured the Conference that the masses would respond in a Zionist spirit to the question of a Jewish centre in Palestine.

The Conference was attended by 552 delegates from 680 towns. The most remotely situated districts were represented. There were delegates from Turkestan, Bokhara, and the Crimea. The Jewish soldiers at the front sent 24 representatives.†

In addition to the delegates there were 500 visitors from provincial towns, and over 1,100 from Petrograd. The proceedings were attended by 87 newspaper correspondents.

At the Conference speeches expressing welcome and good wishes were delivered by M. Warshavsky, President of the Petrograd Jewish Community, who had hitherto opposed Zionism, and by M. H. Sliosberg, the well-known politician and lawyer, who previously had also not been favourable to the movement. The latter declared that the Zionist idea was dear to him, and he uttered the wish that the aim of the Conference should be attained in the near future. Zionism had kept the flag of Judaism aloft, he said, and the whole future of Jewry now depended upon the future of Zionism.

The delegate from Samarcand (Turkestan) said: "In our city there are 12,000 Jews, and we are all Zionists. In the whole of Turkestan there are no Jews who are not Zionists. We are all with you. We bring you our means and our souls."

*Delegation of Soldiers to Conference.*

There was also a delegation of soldiers from the front, which announced that practically all the soldiers at the front were Zionists, and that as soon as the war was over they would be ready to go to Palestine at the bidding of the Zionist leaders and play their part in building up the new national life.

*The Resolutions of Conference.*

The Conference carried the following resolution on Palestine unanimously:—

"Considering first that the Jewish people, in view of its disposition and dispersion all over the world, can recreate for itself conditions for normal development of its national, cultural, and economic life only through the restoration of a national autonomous centre in its historic home, Palestine.

"Secondly, that the Jewish nation has never severed its ties with its ancient home, and has always longed for it, and that its moral and historic right to Palestine is incontestable and irremovable.

"Thirdly, that the aspirations of the Jewish nation so manifested fully coincide with the great principle of self-definition, of freedom and independence for the development of all nations proclaimed by the democracies and governments of all countries.

The seventh Zionist Conference in Russia unanimously expresses its firm belief that when establishing the basis of the future national and political life the nations will recognise and count with the clearly stated will of the Jewish nation for the re-settlement and re-birth of Palestine as its national centre, and will consequently create conditions guaranteeing the free and successful development of the concentration of Jewish forces and of the restoration of Palestine.

"To ensure the concrete and full manifestation of the will of the Jewish nation the Conference considers it necessary first to organise among the Jews

\* For attitude of the Russian Government see Appendix IV.  
 † See special Military Order of General Alexeev, Appendix V.

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

Reference—

**Cab 24**

4

COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON



*Zionist Conference in Warsaw.*

The popularity of the Zionist idea among the Polish Jews is demonstrated by the fact that, in spite of the appalling conditions under which they live under the oppressive German occupation, they convened in May last a Zionist Conference in Warsaw, which was attended by nearly 400 delegates, representing a great number of communities, synagogues, societies, and groups, consisting of all classes of the Jewish population. In July last a plebiscite was inaugurated among the Jews of Poland with a view to ascertaining their attitude towards Zionism. The plebiscite resulted in the acceptance of a resolution in favour of Zionist aims.

*Attitude of Press.*

The leading Jewish press in Poland is Zionism. It is noteworthy that the "Ha'nt," which has the widest circulation of all the newspapers, Jewish and non-Jewish, has recently given its adherence to the Zionist programme.

*Sacrifice for Jewish Colonists in Palestine.*

Wilna has for several years been the centre of Russian Zionism. It was the seat of the Zionist Central Committee. Wilna, with its old Jewish traditions, as a centre of Jewish learning and as the cradle of the Neo-Hebraic literature, has always taken a leading part in the Jewish national movement. It is remarkable that in the darkest hour of their trial and struggle for existence, when they had to collect every penny to satisfy the most vital needs of thousands of their starving brethren, they devoted part of the funds which were sent to them for the relief of the Jewish colonists in Palestine and for the continuation of the educational work to prepare new settlers for the Palestinian colonies.

Bialystok has since the very outset of the national movement been a great centre for the organisation and preparation of groups of colonists for Palestine, a work which was initiated by the late Rabbi Mohilewer. During the last year new groups of pioneers for the colonisation of Palestine after the war have been organised in connection with the neighbouring Jewish Lithuanian communities of Zabludowo, Knishin, Wilkowskiki, and Grayevo (in the Louza government).

All the reports published in the Jewish press and reports which have reached us in private letters are unanimous in the statement that the number of organised Zionists (Shekel-payers) has considerably increased and that the income of the Jewish National Fund has exceeded any amount ever reached before. The political standing and the influence of the Nationalist Jews in Poland and Lithuania is best shown by the fact that on the Town Councils of the capital of Poland, Wilna, and Bialystok and other places numerous Zionist representatives have been elected by the Jewish masses.

As already stated, these activities only concern the two and a half millions of Russian Jews who are living under the German occupation and who have not been influenced by the Russian Revolution.

*Zionism in post-Revolutionary Russia.*

The beginning of a modern constitutional régime heralded by the Revolution for all the inhabitants of Russia, the liberation of all oppressed nationalities, creeds and classes, has opened out an era which the Russian Jews have welcomed with enthusiasm.

Having now attained the status of full citizenship and equal rights, it is urged in some quarters that this change would weaken or even destroy the national solidarity. But such is not the case, as the history of the first revolutionary movement in 1905-8 demonstrates. The idea of liberty in Russia, far from weakening Jewish nationalism, did but intensify and deepen the national aspirations.

Immediately after the first Revolution a Zionist Conference was held in Helsingfors, at which they defined their attitude of solidarity with the international Zionist movement.

Amongst the Jewish masses nationalism made great progress all over Russia. The nationalist Yiddish press of Warsaw, which has since played such a considerable part in forming Jewish public opinion, is a product of that epoch. A great number of cultural nationalist Jewish societies (Hazamir and others) were established in that period (1906).

In regard to the present Revolution, so far as we can judge from the facts at our disposal, the national movement among the Russian Jews has made great headway.

1	2	3	4	5	6
PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE					
Reference:-					
Cab 24					
4					
COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITH- OUT PERMISSION FROM THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON					

which must be the basis of the development of this sun-enriched soil! He may be answered by reference to the Jewish agricultural colonies established in Palestine in recent years. These colonies have achieved remarkable results and seem to point to the survival of the old pastoral instinct of the Jews.

Arid and unhealthy land has been made fertile and habitable by the work of the tillers of the soil and by the skilful cultivation of eucalyptus trees. Several centres have also been started for the treatment of disease, particularly blindness, which is so unfortunately prevalent among children in the East owing to crude notions of hygiene.

In studying the future of Palestine and the practicability of an autonomous Jewish State there, it is fair to remember that the Jew on the whole gets on quite well with the Mahomedan, with whom he has racial affinities—both represent branches of the Semitic race—and between whose religion and Judaism there is much in common, as one would expect from a like derivation.

But many difficulties immediately suggest themselves. The ancient Temple of Solomon, for instance, is to-day the second Holy Moslem place after Mecca. The Jews would not interfere, but some might remember that it was once the Temple of Solomon.

To be quite frank, I have yet to be convinced that the foundation of an independent Jewish State comes within the domain of practical politics, but I see no reason why guarantees, if they were desired, should not be given to the Jews of the fullest liberty to manage their own local affairs and for the protection of the results of their labour, and I do not doubt, whatever the future of Palestine, that this condition could be obtained. Whether this would satisfy the aspirations of the Zionists who desire the foundation of an autonomous Jewish State is another matter.

VIEW EXPRESSED BY MR. JACOB SCHIFF.

*Extract from a Report of a Speech by him, "American Jewish Chronicle," April 27, 1917.*

I may say something which will surprise many of you elders. For the first time in the last three weeks the thought has come to me: "Why hasn't the Jew his own homeland?" I am not a believer in a Jewish nation built on "isms"—egotism first, atheism and agnosticism. I am a believer in the Jewish people, in the Jewish mission. I believe that somewhere there should be a great reservoir from which Jewish culture, unhampered by the materialism of the world, should spread its beautiful ideals to all parts of the world. This homeland, naturally, is Palestine.

THE JEWISH NATIONAL IDEA AND THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT AFTER THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION.

*Zionism in the Russian Provinces occupied by the Enemy.*

It should be noted that 42 per cent. of the 6,000,000 of Russian Jews are not affected by the Russian Revolution. The ten governments of Poland (Warsaw, Petrokoff, Plozk, Kalisch, Lomza, Kielce, Radom, Lublin, Suwalki, Siedlce), with a population of about 1,800,000 Jews, are occupied by the enemy and have no connection with the recent events in Russia. The same applies to the Jews in the governments of Lithuania (Brest-Litovske, Wilna, Grodno, Kovno, and a part of Minsk), with a population of at least 800,000 Jews. The remainder of the Jews who live in the few places of Volhynia occupied by the enemy are also unaffected by the Russian Revolution. In all the provinces, which are densely populated by Jews, and in the two most important Jewish communities of Russia (Warsaw and Wilna) the national idea and the Zionist movement have greatly developed during the last generation, and during the war have received an added impetus. The terrible hardships and sufferings which the Jewish population of these provinces have endured during the war have brought home to many of them the consciousness of their unity and the necessity of a refuge of their own.

[1074]

E

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE					
1	2	3	4	5	6
Reference -					
Cab 21 - 4					
COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON					

emancipation. I at least can proclaim from the housetops that my kith and kin are dear to me wherever they are, without being constrained to find forced and unsatisfactory excuses. I at least can remember Jerusalem, mourn for its loss in public or in private, without being asked what Zion is to me or I to Zion. . . . And this spiritual freedom—scuff who will!—I would not exchange or barter for all the emancipation in the world."

Zionism, which in its present form may be said to have been born in 1896, is the outcome of Eastern Jewish thought and action. Its headquarters until recently have been in Poland. Whether the centre of gravity of Jewish activity will now be shifted remains to be seen. Dr. Weizmann says: "It is too early as yet to estimate even approximately the effect of the war on the great Jewish centres in which a part of it is being waged, but it is already obvious that it will deal a shattering blow at what has been for centuries the great reservoir of Jewish strength."

What is it that the Zionists want? The idea that they wish the Jews of all races to be congregated together in Palestine may at once be dismissed as absurd. Nothing of the sort is proposed. Neither do they want to establish a mere colony in the sense in which that term is usually employed. Zionism stands for a national revival. Its aim and goal, the Very Rev. Dr. Gaster says, "is to create for the Jew a new home, not so much for physical as for spiritual life. This must be borne in mind and never lost sight of—that the Holy Land is to become the spiritual centre of the Jews. This stands far above any political or economic consideration." It should be added that Dr. Gaster's idealism soars very high. He holds that the re-establishment of Jewish national life in the ancient home of Judaism will help to solve many of the burning questions of the day. Such are "the problem of tenure of property, the problem of commercial dealing, the protection of the labourer, the purity of food, simplified procedure in the Courts of Justice protection against usury, against rings and monopolies, democratic organisation, and the principles of equitable taxation. . . . The Jewish regathering is to be of great moment in the history of the emancipation and progress of mankind. Only from this point of view has Zionism a meaning and Judaism a justification." Mr. Nahum Sokolow quotes the pathetic question propounded to him by an enthusiastic youth, who may be regarded as a typical "New Jew," to the following effect: "Are we still a people to whom youth and health may return, or a bleached and scattered heap of bones? Are these bones never again to live and move?"

It would be both premature and presumptuous to attempt to forecast the future of the Zionist movement. All that can at present be done is to state the nature of the problem, and to note that some slight practical progress has been made towards the realisation of the Jewish ideals. For some years past a steady stream of Jewish immigration to Palestine has set in. There are now forty-five Jewish colonies, having a population of about fifteen thousand souls and covering an area of about one hundred and ten thousand acres. Good roads have been made. Numerous elementary schools in which Hebrew is taught have been established. "That Hebrew as a living language has come to stay," Dr. Selig Brodetsky says, "that, in fact, Hebrew is well on the way to becoming the mother-tongue of Palestine Jewry, is obvious." From a material point of view, the Jewish colonies thrive. The very common idea that the Jews can never be successful agriculturists has been completely disproved. They export fruit and wine in large quantities. In one colony the value of the irrigable land has risen from 3*l.* 12*s.* per acre in 1890 to 36*l.* an acre. The trade of Jaffa, which in 1904 was valued at 760,000*l.*, had in 1912 reached the figure of 2,000,000*l.* Liberal encouragement has been given to arts and industries.

Enough, however, has been said to show that, although possibly the Jewish question will not mature quite so quickly as some of the more enthusiastic Zionists consider probable, it is rapidly becoming a practical issue, and that before long politicians will be unable to brush it aside as the fantastic dream of a few idealists.

VIEW EXPRESSED BY SIR ALFRED MOND, M.P.

*Extracts from an Article by him in the "Weekly Dispatch," April 8, 1917.*

As for the Palestinian ideal, which the British advance in South Palestine has quickened in the hearts of many of the Jewish people, the question which the average man will ask himself is: Are the Jews suitable for the agricultural life

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE					
1	2	3	4	5	6
Reference—					
Cab 24					
4					
COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH—NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON					

from exercising so commanding an influence over national life as has been the case in some other countries. There is not, as in Austria, a Jew moneylender in almost every village in the country, who often holds the future welfare of the noble in his castle and of the villager in his cottage in the hollow of his hand. An incident such as that which came within my personal knowledge whilst residing in Styria would be impossible in this country. I was asked by an Austrian friend to make enquiries as to whether he could rent a country house in the neighbourhood of Graz. After visiting one house, the proprietor asked me whether my friend was a Jew. I replied in the negative. He then explained to me that he was an ardent anti-Semitic, and that he would not, for any pecuniary consideration whatsoever, let his house to a Jew. In no country has the Jew fewer causes for complaint than in England. He is under no civil disabilities. After a struggle, which never excited more than a somewhat languid interest, he was given full rights of citizenship. Jews now sit in both Houses of Parliament. They occupy important public positions. A distinguished man of Jewish origin ruled for some years the destinies of England. The faith of his ancestors and his hereditary proclivities have not prevented him from being regarded to this day by a large section of the community as a typical British patriot. When, therefore, Dr. Weizmann says that what the Jew wants is "to find a place in the social structure of the world which shall enable him to live as a human being without demanding that he cease to be a Jew," the average Englishman will reply with much reason, and perhaps with some slight indignation and amazement, that he has given the Jew all that he asks; that Judaism is a cult like any other, which he is free to exercise in this country; that the British conscience is clear; and that the Jewish question may be dismissed from the minds of British politicians and the British public. And yet this answer, plausible though it may appear, is far from disposing of the whole question.

Whatever sentiments may be entertained towards the Jews, and whatever opinions may be held as to the wisdom of affording encouragement to their present aspirations, it is surely desirable that those aspirations should be understood. It may well be doubted whether they are generally understood in this country. The very useful series of essays now published under the title of "Zionism and the Jewish Future" enables us to gain some insight into the views current in Jewish circles, and the aims which the leading members of the Jewish community seek to attain. The publication is all the more timely because one of the consequences of the war will almost certainly be that the whole Jewish question will in the future have to be approached under auspices which differ widely from those which have hitherto obtained.

The first point to be grasped in order to arrive at a true comprehension of the meaning of the movement known as Zionism is to recognise the fact that for many years past there have been two main currents of Jewish thought which have been moving in divergent directions. It is natural that it should be so. To use an expressive phrase employed by that talented novelist, George Eliot, *Judaea*—and, consequently, the Jews—is "poised between East and West." The tendency of the Western Jews has been to Westernise Judaism. Moses Mendelssohn (1729-86), who may be said to be almost the founder of this school of thought, held that the best solution of the Jewish question was that "the Jew should become as like as possible to the Gentile." The predominating note of Western Jewry has, therefore, been a movement from the Jewish to the non-Jewish. This movement received a great stimulus from the French Revolution, which broke down the walls of the Ghettos and thus emancipated the Jews, but which, at the same time, went far to denationalise Judaism. Toleration has produced its natural and inevitable result. It has tended to break up the solidarity of the Western Jews, and to facilitate assimilation with the non-Jewish communities to which they belong.

The thought of Eastern Jewry has developed on precisely opposite lines. The inefficiency of persecution, unless it be conducted on a scale and after a fashion which have now become practically impossible, has been clearly demonstrated. It has served to foster the movement which it was intended to stifle. The most passionately ardent Jews prefer persecution, which keeps alive the flame of nationalism, to emancipation, which tends to quench it. The following extract from the works of Asher Girsberg, who adopted the synonym of "Achad-ha-Am" (One of the People), is characteristic of their views. Speaking of the Western Jews, he said:—

"Do I envy these fellow-Jews of mine their emancipation? I answer in all truth and sincerity, No! A thousand times No! The privileges are not worth the price! I may not be emancipated, but at least I have not sold my soul for

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

Reference: Cab 21 / 4

COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

4. Alternative draft submitted by Mr. Montagu, M.P.:-

"His Majesty's Government accepts the principle that every opportunity should be afforded for the establishment in Palestine of those Jews who cannot, and will not, remain in the lands in which they live at present, will use its best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, and will be ready to consider any suggestions on the subject which any Jewish or Zionist organisations may desire to lay before it."

5. Draft by C. G. Montefiore, Esq.:-

"His Majesty's Government is anxious that free and unimpeded Jewish immigration into Palestine should be established. It views with favour unrestricted Jewish colonisation in that country. It will do its best to facilitate such immigration and colonisation, and will also seek to secure such municipal and local autonomy for the Jews as may be found possible, it being clearly understood." &c. (Paragraphs 2 and 3 of Draft No. 2.)

6. Draft by L. L. Cohen, Esq.:-

"His Majesty's Government, viewing with favour the settlement of Jews in Palestine, will use its best endeavours to facilitate their immigration and colonisation in that country, and to secure for them the enjoyment of civil and religious liberty, together with municipal privileges, in the towns and colonies inhabited by them; it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done to interfere with the rights and privileges of non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed in any other country by such Jews who determine to retain their existing nationality or citizenship."

7. Draft by Sir Philip Magnus, M.P.:-

"His Majesty's Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a centre of Jewish culture, and will use its best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object; it being understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status now enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

APPENDIX III.

VIEWS OF THE LATE EARL CROMER.

"Spectator," August 12, 1916.

It is believed that on the eve of the French Revolution there were less than three million Jews in Europe. There are now some nine million, besides about two million in North America and smaller communities in other parts of the world.

From the earliest days of the Dispersion the Jews have, for different reasons, been viewed with dislike and suspicion by the rest of the world. Juvenal, who regarded the Jews as magicians, inveighed against them, and attributed their faults to the fact that they set aside every seventh day as a day, not of rest, but of "sloth." The fifth-century poet, Rutilius (*Itiner.*, V. 388), regretted the Dispersion as he feared that the subjugated nation would conquer their conquerors. *Victoresque suos natio victa premit.* The prejudices of the pagan world were inherited in an intensified form by Christians and Moslems alike. Those of the Christians led to the comprehensible but wholly irrational conclusion that future generations of Jews for all time should be persecuted because some of their predecessors had crucified Christ. Those of the Moslems were based on the personal history of Mohammed. They still survive. Among the most civilised nations of the world, dislike based on religious prejudices, if it has not wholly disappeared, has been greatly mitigated, but other causes have supervened which have kept anti-Semitic sentiments alive.

In England there has never been any "Jewish question" properly so called. This is due partly to the fact that religious toleration, both in the letter and the spirit, has established a firm hold on English public opinion, and partly to the further fact that the relatively small number of Jews in the United Kingdom—there are at present only some two hundred and forty-five thousand—has prevented them

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

Reference -

Cab 24 - 4

COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

7. Given the realisation of the hopes and aspirations of the Russian and Rumanian Jews, the Jewish question "disappears."

8. The pre-war population of Palestine was, I believe, under 400,000; the number of Jews in Europe is estimated to be nine and a quarter millions; if it is contended that there is a "Jewish question," the creation of a Jewish State in Palestine will scarcely solve it.

9. It must also be acknowledged that the new Jewish population to be attracted to Palestine will consist largely of Jews from the Near East, and, consequently, Jews at present belonging to enemy belligerent nations will be very numerous amongst the population.

There will be thus established foci of intrigue on the flank of British interests in Egypt.

10. A pronouncement on the part of His Majesty's Government in the sense indicated in the draft declaration of its attitude towards the Zionist movement will, I fear, further accentuate the divergence of opinion, to which reference is made in the letter now under reply, and is not demanded by British Jews, whose interests have always met with consideration from His Majesty's Government.

11. If, however, a formula has to be devised, the following amended declaration is submitted:—

"His Majesty's Government, viewing with favour the settlement of Jews in Palestine, will use its best endeavours to facilitate their immigration and colonisation, and to secure for them the enjoyment of civil and religious liberty, and municipal privileges in the towns and colonies inhabited by them; it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the rights and privileges on non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed in any other country by such Jews who determine to retain their existing nationality and citizenship."

12. I assume that this letter is to be treated as confidential, and will be submitted only to the Members of the War Cabinet and to His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

APPENDIX II.

DRAFT DECLARATIONS.

1. Draft submitted by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, August 1917:—

"His Majesty's Government accept the principle that Palestine should be reconstituted as the national home of the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to secure the achievement of this object, and will be ready to consider any suggestions on the subject which the Zionist Organisation may desire to lay before them."

2. Draft submitted by Lord Milner to the War Cabinet, the 4th October, 1917. (Draft submitted to various Jewish representatives, the 6th October, 1917):—

"His Majesty's Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish race, and will use its best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object; it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed in any other country by such Jews who are fully contented with their existing nationality."

3. Amendments to No. 2, proposed by (a) the Chief Rabbi, (b) Dr. Weizmann, (c) Mr. Sokolov, and (d) Lord Rothschild:—

Paragraph 1. For "Jewish race" substitute "Jewish people."

Paragraph 3. Substitute the following phrase: "or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

[1074]

D

1	2	3	4	5	6
PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE					
Reference: Cab 21 / 4					
COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON					

11. For the words "who are fully contented with" I should wish to see substituted the words "who have no desire to relinquish their existing nationality and citizenship."

12. If the present words of the draft declaration are, for some reason or reasons unknown to me, believed by His Majesty's Government to be in the interests of British policy, and if His Majesty's Government is anxious to publish this formula for the sake of this country as well as for the Jews, I would, of course, subordinate my Jewish feelings, wishes, and interests to the interests of England and the Empire.

13. The position of many Jewish institutions and charities in Palestine which may not desire to be disconnected with their present relationship to Jewish (but non-Zionistic) organisations in European countries must be safeguarded. No Jew residing in Palestine should be compelled to come into, or join, a new Jewish "nationality."

Up to the opening of the war, the most influential Zionists were Germans and Austrians. There is only too much reason to fear that any "national home" of the Jews in Palestine will be a centre and a hotbed for German intrigue.

15. I venture to express the hope that His Majesty's Government has earnestly weighed, and will earnestly weigh, the possible effect of the proposed declaration upon the situation of the Jews in Turkey. Even if the declaration be not issued till the British army is in occupation of Palestine, there will still be a large number of Jews in the rest of the Turkish Empire. These may denounce the declaration, and so obtain protection. But they may become the victims of massacres hardly less atrocious than the massacres of the Armenians.

16. I have assumed that this memorandum will not be shown to anybody except the members of the War Cabinet and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

(9.)

*From Mr. L. L. Cohen, Chairman, Jewish Board of Guardians.*

1. The establishment of a "national home for the Jewish race" in Palestine, presupposes that the Jews are a nation, which I deny, and that they are homeless, which implies that, in the countries where they enjoy religious liberty and the full rights of citizenship, they are separate entities, unidentified with the interests of the nations of which they form parts, an implication which I repudiate.

2. The expression "by such Jews who are fully contented with their existing nationality and citizenship" is open to a similar objection. The British Jew, for instance, is not merely "contented" to enjoy his rights as a national and citizen, but is prepared (as he has shown) to fight for them, and to join in any constitutional movement to secure their preservation.

3. I suggest that the promulgation of a declaration in the terms indicated will prejudicially affect the present prospects of the Jews in Russia and Rumania. His Majesty's Government has always exercised its beneficent influence to improve the lot of the Jews in both these countries, and has endeavoured to secure for them equality of treatment with other communities in these countries.

4. In Russia, through the revolution, the Jew has been released from the shackles which have oppressed him for generations, and he is working, so it is reported, to strengthen the foundations of the new Government. Are his enemies in Russia, still numerous, if quiescent, to be furnished with the argument against the Jew's freedom, that he is not a Russian, but a member of a nation, which is to be established elsewhere?

5. In Rumania, the Jew has had to content himself with promises up to the present, but these promises are taking a more definite shape, and the fulfilment of the hopes of the Rumanian Jew may be accomplished before the end of the war.

I conceive a great danger to the Rumanian Jew in the draft declaration, which will be used as a weapon by the opponents of the concessions promised him.

6. In my view a stimulus would be given to anti-Semitism everywhere by a draft declaration, and British Jews, equally with others, would suffer from this attempt to settle "the Jewish question." What is now proposed is optional emigration to the new State; with a revival of persecution, always possible, the Jews might be compulsorily emigrated; the words in the declaration, relating to the preservation of the political status of the Jews in other countries, would not protect them in such eventuality.

Public Record Office					
1	2	3	4	5	6
References:-					
Cab 21 - 4					
COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITH- OUT THE PERMISSION OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON					



opponents, and should, I suggest, be withdrawn from the proposed formula. Indeed, the inclusion in the terms of the declaration of the words "a national home for the Jewish race" seems to me both undesirable and inferentially inaccurate.

On the other hand, a statement to the effect that the British Government would take steps to secure to the Jews now or hereafter resident in Palestine freedom to develop their religious culture and to observe their religious rites would be welcomed by the Jews and would be consistent with the traditional policy of the British Government. It is essential, however, as stated in the proposed formula, that any privileges granted to the Jews should be shared by their fellow-citizens of other creeds.

It should be remembered that under Turkish rule the Jews have latterly enjoyed many advantages. They have been permitted to found agricultural and commercial colonies, to establish schools, and to teach in those schools through the medium of the ancient Hebrew language. Any pronouncement on the part of His Majesty's Ministers to the effect that they would be prepared to take steps to establish for Jews, and for Jews only, a "national home in Palestine" might be interpreted as implying that the government of that country would, under certain conditions, be transferred to the Jews; and such a pronouncement would certainly arouse considerable opposition from other Palestinian communities, and might result in the Jews now resident in Palestine being exposed to the same treatment at the hands of the Turks as has been unhappily experienced by the Armenian Christians.

The Zionist agitation is a movement of comparatively recent date. The Jews of Spain and Portugal, at the height of their prosperity, made no attempt to use their influence to secure for themselves a "national home in Palestine," nor did they subsequently, when they fled from Spain to Holland and to other countries. If the Jews of Russia had been permitted to observe their religion, and had enjoyed equal civil rights with their fellow-citizens, the Zionist movement would not have developed, and it is more than probable that the agitation will not long outlive the avowed objects of the Revolution.

I know not what may be the real objective of the War Cabinet's military operations in Palestine. It is, however, rumoured in Zionist circles that the conquest of Palestine by Great Britain is desired in order that Palestine may become an independent buffer State between Turkey and Egypt; and that having regard to the declared policy of the Allies to annex no new territories, the country would be restored to the Jews under a British protectorate. Whether this be so or not, I feel sure that our Government, in accordance with its repeated declarations, would deem it necessary to consult the existing inhabitants of Palestine as to the ruling power under which they would desire to live; and, in all probability, they would elect to be governed by Great Britain or by one of our Allies, who would hold the balance fairly between the Christian, Jewish, and Mahomedan communities.

There is only one other remark which I desire to offer. The words "who are fully contented with their existing nationality" fail to express the aversion of Jews to the country of their birth, where they enjoy equal rights with their fellow-citizens. It is not, as has been unwisely suggested, for any distinctly Jewish ideals that Jews are fighting in the present war. They need not the offer of a national home in Palestine to excite their ardour or to stimulate their courage. They are fighting for the attainment of the self-same objects which His Majesty's Ministers have so unmistakably defined.

The wording of the proposed draft declaration of policy, if modified in accordance with the suggestions I have offered, would read as follows:—

"His Majesty's Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a centre of Jewish culture, and will use its best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object; it being understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status now enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

(8.)

*From Mr. C. G. Montefiore, President of the Anglo-Jewish Association.*

1. In common with all other members of the Jewish community, I am grateful to His Majesty's Government for its interest in the welfare of the Jews.

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE					
1	2	3	4	5	6
Reference: Cab 24					
4					
COPYRIGHT MATERIAL - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED FROM ANY SOURCE WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON					

declaration. With regard, however, to the wording of the draft, I beg leave, in accordance with your suggestion, to submit the following observations in behalf of the Zionist Organisation.

I understand that it is the desire of His Majesty's Government to express its sympathy with Jewish national aims in Palestine in a formula which will, at the same time, meet with the approval of all sections of British Jewry, including those who have not accepted the programme of Zionism. This desire is, no doubt, responsible for the inclusion of a proviso safeguarding the interests of non-Jewish communities in Palestine and the status of Jews who enjoy political rights in other countries.

While the Zionist Organisation would naturally prefer a declaration on the lines of the draft which my friends and myself had the honour to submit some weeks ago, it is not desirous of raising new questions. His Majesty's Government is aware that it is the Zionist movement which is responsible for such steps as have been taken towards the realisation of Jewish national aims in Palestine, and that the future prosecution of these aims, with the invaluable aid which His Majesty's Government so generously offers, will be the particular charge of the representatives of the Zionist movement. The safeguards mentioned in the draft are not open to any objections, since they are and always have been regarded by Zionists as a matter of course.

The following alterations, however, in the wording of the declaration I venture to suggest as most desirable:—

- (1) Line 2. "The establishment in Palestine of a national home." I would suggest the substitution of "re-establishment" for "establishment." By this slight change the real character of the movement and its historic basis would be recognised.
- (2) Line 3. "The Jewish race" I would suggest to be altered to "the Jewish people." The definition of "race" is a much-disputed question. It would also be questionable whether the word refers to all persons of Jewish origin or only to Jews. "Jewish people" is the best definition.
- (3) I would also suggest in substitution for the concluding phrase, "or the rights and political status . . . nationality and citizenship," the following more comprehensive expression: "or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country of which they are loyal citizens."

These alterations I recommend to your consideration, as I think that in this form a more adequate expression will be given to the principle.

The Zionist Organisation has always looked to Great Britain for sympathy and assistance, and it will hail with gratitude and enthusiasm the proposed declaration of His Majesty's Government. The millions of Zionists and their supporters all over the world are keenly aware of the immeasurable services which Great Britain has rendered and is rendering to the liberation of oppressed nationalities, and they confidently hope that His Majesty's Government will be instrumental also in the liberation of the unfortunate masses of the oldest and most hard-trying of living nationalities.

(7.)

From Sir Philip Magnus, M.P.

In replying to your letter of the 6th October, I do not gather that I am expected to distinguish my views as a Jew from those I hold as a British subject. Indeed, it is not necessary, even if it were possible. For I agree with the late Chief Rabbi, Dr. Hermann Adler, that "ever since the conquest of Palestine by the Romans we have ceased to be a body politic"; that "the great bond that unites Israel is not one of race but the bond of a common religion"; and that we have no national aspirations apart from those of the country of our birth. Holding these views, I venture, in compliance with your request, to offer a few remarks on the wording of the proposed declaration of policy with respect to the Zionist movement and its relation to the future of Palestine. I cannot agree that the Jews regard themselves as a nation, and the term "national" as applied to a community of Jews in Palestine or elsewhere seems to me to beg the question between Zionists and their

[1074]

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE			
1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4
Reference: Cab 21			
DEPARTMENT OF DOCUMENTS - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON			

4

(5)

*From Dr. Weizmann, President of the English Zionist Federation.*

It is my deep conviction that the declaration framed by His Majesty's Government will, when announced, be received with joy and gratitude by the vast majority of the Jewish people all over the world. It will supply a powerful impetus towards the regeneration and rejuvenation of an ancient country and an ancient people, and will thus form a notable step forward on the path of human progress and display anew the magnanimity of the British Empire.

I must abstain at this stage from entering upon a discussion of the views on the Jewish problem held by Zionists and Jewish Nationalists. These views have been fully expounded in the press and literature in this and other countries, and I personally have had the honour to lay the Zionist view before prominent members of His Majesty's Government. But as your letter refers to the divergence of view existing in Jewry on the subject of Zionism, I beg leave, shortly, to refer to this point.

Although it is unfortunately true that a certain number of Jews, chiefly in Western countries, are opposed to the idea of a Jewish national home in Palestine, it is no less true that these opponents, who are comparatively few in number, are almost exclusively to be found amongst those Jews who by education and social connections have lost touch with the real spirit animating the Jewish people as a whole. Our opponents, therefore, are entitled to speak in their own name only, but have no right to speak for the Jewish masses whose hopes, aspirations, ideals, and sufferings they do not share. The real motive underlying their opposition is of an eminently individual nature. Our opponents are overcome by fear lest the existence of a Jewish national home compromises to a certain extent their own position in the eyes of the peoples in whose midst they are living and with whom they desire to be totally identified. This motive, which they do not conceal, is in itself an indication that they are conscious of being an isolated minority in Jewry and of having the bulk of the Jewish people not with but against them. Had it been really their sincere conviction that the great majority of the Jewish people does not sympathise with the establishment of a national home, they would have no reason to be afraid of a scheme which can only be realised by the whole-hearted and enthusiastic collaboration of all living forces in Jewry. They would, on the contrary, be content to let the experiment pass unhindered, in order to show by its certain failure how correctly they had interpreted the mind of the Jews in general.

As to the wording of the declaration, may I be allowed respectfully to suggest one or two alterations?

(a) Instead of "establishment," would it not be more desirable to use the word "re-establishment"? By this small alteration the historical connection with the ancient tradition would be indicated and the whole matter put in its true light.

(b) The last lines of the declaration could easily be interpreted by ill-wishers as implying the idea that, with the re-establishment of the Jewish national home, only those Jews will have a right to claim full citizenship in the country of their birth who in addition to being loyal and law-abiding citizens would also totally dissociate themselves from the Jewish national home, showing no interest in, or sympathy with, its successful development. This unnatural demand is surely not in the mind of His Majesty's Government, and in order to avoid any misunderstanding I respectfully suggest that the part of the declaration in question be replaced by the following words:—

"... the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country of which they are loyal citizens."

(c) May I also suggest "Jewish people" instead of "Jewish race"?

(6)

*From Mr. Sokolov, Chief London Representative of the Zionist Organisation.*

I received with profound pleasure and satisfaction your letter of the 8th instant, and I wish to express to His Majesty's Government the deep gratitude of the Zionist Organisation for the spirit of sympathy and justice manifested in the proposed

1	2	3	4	5	6
PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE					
Reference—					
Cab 24					
4					
COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH—NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON					

to point out that the opponents of Zionism have almost entirely framed their opposition on the false hypothesis that the possession of a national home and status by one body of Jews would necessarily react on those Jews who preferred to remain citizens of the countries they now live in. In expressing my opinion that this belief is wholly unfounded, I would like to indicate that of the 12,000,000 Jews in the world, at least 10,000,000 are either active Zionists or else pro-Zionist. The greater part of these 10,000,000 hold that they, as Jews, have a historical and inviolable right to a national home, and moreover, a home in Palestine, the land of their forefathers. One of the chief aims of the Zionist Federation, when the settlement in Palestine takes place, is to see that while obtaining as large a measure of autonomy as possible, no encroachment on the rights of the other inhabitants of the country should take place. The relations between the Palestine Jews and their neighbours have hitherto been scanty and spasmodic, which is mainly due to mutual ignorance and indifference, but I have no fear that this would continue if a settlement under the aegis of the Allied Powers is carried out. I feel sure that this hour of crisis offers a great opportunity for a most beneficial development of a country rich in possibility, and a broad basis for permanent and cordial relations between Jews, Armenians, Arabs, and the other inhabitants of the country. Among the 450,000 Jews of the British Empire only some 10,000 or 15,000 are opposed to Zionist aspirations.

I would conclude by once again welcoming the declaration as an expression of the benevolence of His Majesty's Government towards the Jewish people.

(4.)

*From Sir Stuart Samuel, Bart., Chairman of the Jewish Board of Deputies.*

1. I think that Jews resident in Great Britain are by a large majority favourable to the establishment of a national home for Jews in Palestine, under proper safeguards.

2. English Jews generally have held aloof from the Zionist movement because they were not convinced that Palestine could support a greatly increased population, and should they approve a large immigration into that country they might be faced by the problem of a starving population requiring to be removed to another destination. Consequently, it would be necessary to provide a Jewish settlement in Palestine with the funds required for public works, irrigation, roads, loans to agriculturists, &c. In my opinion, 20 millions sterling would be required to give such a settlement the start that would likely ensure success. This amount would, I think, be provided by the Jews of the world if the settlement were under the auspices of the Allied Powers.

3. A second reason for the aloofness previously alluded to is that many English Jews resented the suggestion that they could be faithless to the country in which they had been settled over 200 years, and adopt, or as it has been put, return to another nationality. Regarded generally, their attitude is that whilst they would be favourable to the project that those Jews who wish to go to Palestine being enabled to do so, and willing to regard it as a restoration of their land to the Jews, it would be necessary to make it clear that any State, if founded, would be a modern State, having no claim upon Jews outside it to be regarded as its nationals. Hence, in my opinion, the draft declaration is susceptible to amendment, and suggest that in line 8 the words after "non-Jewish communities in Palestine" be deleted, and in their place substituted "or the nationality or rights, or political status enjoyed in any other country by Jews." You will observe that Jews who are not "fully contented with their existing citizenship" are not protected by the proposed formula. In my opinion, not 10 per cent. of British-born Jews would go to Palestine.

4. It must be within the knowledge of His Majesty's Government that German and Austrian influence in Palestine has grown largely in recent years. Applications for assistance formerly written in Hebrew and English are now in Hebrew and German. Are the German and Austrian Jews to remain there, or if expelled to be allowed to return as Zionists? They should be made ineligible for 20 years.

5. Non-Jewish opinion would, I think, be conciliated if a statement were made simultaneously that the Holy Places in Jerusalem and vicinity would be internationalised, or at any rate not be placed under entirely Jewish control.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

Reference:-

Cab 21

4

COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

2

community in England, having recently issued a pronouncement in a hostile sense, were censored by their constituents and obliged to resign.

If the policy were carried into effect through British influence it would be calculated to win for the British Empire the gratitude of Jews throughout the world, and, wherever the interests of the country of which they were citizens were not involved, to create among them a bias favourable to the Empire.

I presume that such a declaration would not be made public until a favourable military situation had been brought about in Palestine. Otherwise it might lead to the persecution of the Jewish colonists there at the hands of the Turks. It might also prove an embarrassment at home, as it might be represented that one of the reasons for the continuance of the war was the pursuit of subsidiary aims, of which this was one. But the adoption of the declaration now, and its confidential communication to those who are interested, would clear the air, and would be, I think, a wise step.

(2.)

*From the Chief Rabbi (Dr. J. H. Herz).*

It is with feelings of the profoundest gratification that I learn of the intention of His Majesty's Government to lend its powerful support to the re-establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people. The proposed declaration of His Majesty's Government that it "will use its best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object" will mark an epoch in Jewish history. To millions of my brethren throughout the world it will mean the realisation of Israel's undying hope of a restoration—a hope that has been the spiritual lodestar of Israel's wanderings for the last 1,800 years.

The draft declaration is in spirit and in substance everything that could be desired. I welcome the reference to the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine. It is but a translation of the basic principle of the Mosaic legislation: "And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex (oppress) him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself." (Lev., xix, 33, 34.)

I would suggest one minor alteration in the wording of the last three lines. I am anxious that the phrase:

"... or the rights and political status enjoyed in any other country by such Jews who are fully contented with their existing nationality and citizenship"

be shortened to:

"... or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

In conclusion, I must, as Chief Rabbi, thank the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and the members of the War Cabinet for their striking sympathy with Jewish aspirations, and assure them that the overwhelming majority of Anglo-Jewry, as well as of the Jewries of His Majesty's Overseas Dominions, will rejoice with me at this broad humanity and far-sighted statesmanship of the men who guide the destinies of the Empire.

(3.)

*From Lord Rothschild.*

I would welcome a declaration on the lines of the draft you send me, for I think it will to a great extent meet the objections raised by the anti-Zionists.

Personally, I think that the proviso is rather a slur on Zionism, as it presupposes the possibility of a danger to non-Zionists, which I deny. However, I welcome this declaration because it would show that His Majesty's Government is benevolently disposed towards and would lend its potent support to the aspirations of the great mass of the Jewish people, these aspirations being to have a home where they could speak their own language, have their own education, and have their own civil and religious institutions under the protection of the Allied Governments. I should like

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Reference—									
Cab 21									
4									
COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON									





## Appendix B



PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

C0733/35 176984

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

1/3 think it very important to know the story of the negotiations which led up to the Balfour declaration of 28th Nov 1917 (viz. General Curzon's first post-arrival) should be set out for the S.F.S. and possibly the Cabinet.

The F.O. and Sir Horace Stanley both have material. The matter was first touched by the late Sir Mark Sykes early in 1916, & he interviewed Dr. Gorter & Sir Herbert Samuel on his own initiative as a student of Jewish politics in the Near East. Dr. Weizmann was then unknown. Sykes was frustrated by General Hugh Trenchard, D.M.S., as all the most useful & helpful intelligence from Palestine (then still occupied by the Turks) was got through & given with zeal by Zionist-Jews who were for the first pro-British. Sir Donald Gordon took the matter up heavily from the Russian & East-European point of view & early in 1917 important representations came from America. The form of the declaration & the policy was decided here & there after by the War Cabinet, & correspondence (printed by Sir H. Stanley as a cabinet paper) was entered into with leading Jews of different schools of thought.

After the declaration, the utmost care was made of it by Lord Balfour's propaganda department, & the volume of the declaration received remarkable tribute from General Lushington. On the strength of it we ought recruited special battalions of foreign Jews in New York for the British Army with the leave of the American Govt.

The S.F.S. should have a statement showing a similar declaration by other powers up to & including the recent one of the American Senate; & also a summary of what has been done by the Jews already in Palestine, i.e. 4 millions of money, schools etc. Some of the Zionist organisations' claims are really valueless. The Balfour declaration in its final form was actually drafted by Col. Curzon & myself. I wrote an article on the question about 2 years ago which has gone into the S.F.S. records.



## Appendix A



was being debated between 1922 and 1924, the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office was largely responsible for continuing the government's pro-Zionist policy in face of strong internal opposition, especially in the light of the Geddes Act <sup>163</sup>, with its strong pressure to cut down on expenditure all over the British empire, and of the opposition in the House of Lords and other governmental circles. It was here again that Weizmann and the Zionist leadership stepped in to convince high-ranking British officials that the 'national home' policy was cheaper for the British government than the maintenance of a large garrison in the country. The Middle East Department moreover, drove home the notion that the mandate itself was linked to the idea of a Jewish national home, as if it was its *raison d'être*, and as if the two were irreversibly and intricately linked together.

Finally, it is interesting to note that in 1945, Winston Churchill was quoted as saying that he was "not aware of the slightest advantage which has ever accrued to Great Britain from this painful and thankless task." <sup>164</sup>

Whether this policy was in the best interest of Britain in the region is still open to question. The answer could be seen in the light of later developments to have been negative.

---

163. Sir Eric Geddes.

164. Stein, The Balfour Declaration. op. cit., p. 619.

ember 1922 stressed the importance of the role played by international Jewry to the Allied cause, at a time, he suggested, of great peril to the Allies. As this was the only official interpretation of events leading up to the Balfour Declaration to be found in British archives, and as the decision to continue a pro-Zionist policy was based on this particular interpretation, its significance becomes multiplied. However, whether the account of events in this minute is consistent with what actually occurred is more open to question. The documents reveal that this view has been contested by at least some high ranking policy makers during the crucial months when the Balfour Declaration was debated, but their views went unheeded.

The notion that the pro-Zionist declaration 'saved' the empire in its moment of crisis is a very doubtful one. The international power of world Jewry turned out to be greatly exaggerated, and the Foreign Office subsequently received information that Zionist strength within Jewry was now thought to be considerably weaker than official circles in London had at first believed. Although positive reports of the declaration's impact were received in London in November and December of 1917, with accounts of happy demonstrations throughout the Jewish world, more realistic views emerged shortly afterwards.<sup>161</sup>

Moreover, the Committee of Imperial Defence seems to have held the view that Palestine was not as strategically important as was often suggested. It will be recalled, that in July 1923, Shuckburgh had written to the Secretary of State:

"...You will remember that it was decided to refer to the Committee of Imperial Defence the question of how far Palestine, quite apart from pledges and commitments of every kind, is to be regarded as of strategic value to the British Empire. I understand that the C.I.D. have now received papers on this subject from all the Departments concerned..."<sup>162</sup>

By pressing its own interpretation of events, as the future of Palestine

= Operations: Egypt and Palestine Aug. 1914 - June 1917 (London, 1928 - p.219)

Vital states that as such, the Balfour Declaration "was an act designed primarily to achieve advantages in the short term. That for the Zionists it represented a promise of great things to come was incidental to its main and immediate purpose..." (Vital p.297).

161. Vital op.cit.,pp. 297-98.

162. CO733/58. July 2, 1923.

C.E.Hughes, the American Secretary of State: "...At Paris [i.e., at the Peace Conference] I always warmly advocated that it should be taken, not by Great Britain, but by the United States." 156

Indeed, according to Leonard Stein, "neither on the British nor on the Zionist side was there any disposition, at the time, to probe deeply into its meaning - still less was there any agreed interpretation".<sup>157</sup> In addition, Stein reveals that this was not inconsistent with Lord Hankey's impression. In a private conversation with Stein, Hankey told the Zionist historian that his own recollection from many conversations with Balfour was that:

"When asked privately what he understood by a Jewish National Home in Palestine, his answer would be, in effect, that he could give no exact definition - it might turn out to be anything from a religious and cultural centre, a kind of Jewish Vatican, to a Jewish State; time alone would show." 158

When in 1923 the Colonial Secretary sought to arrive at a final decision on Palestine, and whether the pro-Zionist policy was to be maintained or reversed, the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office advocated its own version of events leading up to the Balfour Declaration and defended the government's pro-Zionist policy in the face of considerable opposition at home, with disastrous consequences to the Palestine Arabs.<sup>159</sup>

(2) The official documents worked out during 1923, stress that the short-term war measure was a decidedly more important factor than the long-term strategic considerations in the minds of British officials at the time when the declaration was issued.<sup>160</sup> For this, one man, Ronald Graham, was largely responsible. Ormsby-Gore's minute of De-

156. Ibid., pp. 618-619.

157. Stein, *ibid.*, p.552.

158. Ibid, p.555

159. For more details see Huneidi, Sir Herbert Samuel.... op.cit., pp. 390-441.

160. David Vital quotes the authors of one of the volumes of the official history of the great war as saying : "The development of the war, which was ever engaging more nations and affecting more interests, the imperative pressure of Allied needs, and the international power of the Jewish race, had made desirable the recognition of Jewish aspirations for a 'National Home' in Palestine". (See Lt.Gen. Sir George Macmunn & Capt. Cyril Falls. Military =

### Summary and Conclusion

The Balfour Declaration was carefully worded to mean anything, from a Jewish cultural center in Palestine, such as a Hebrew University, to a full-fledged state; it was left for time to tell what the final outcome would be.

In effect, this inherent ambiguity gave British officials the liberty to explain it each according to his own understanding, and this was to last throughout the early 1920s and beyond, causing much confusion along the way.

Given all the complications surrounding the Balfour Declaration, there is sufficient reason to believe that, had it been postponed for a few months, or perhaps even weeks, it might never have materialised; and Weizmann himself attests to this. In his reflections on the declaration ten years after it was issued, Weizmann noted that its foundations had to be laid through years of hard work.

"The Balfour Declaration of 1917 was built on air ... every day and every hour of these last ten years, when opening the newspapers, I thought: Whence will the next blow come? I trembled lest the British Government would call me and ask: 'tell us, what is this Zionist Organization? Where are they, your Zionists?' For these people think in terms different from ours. The Jews, they knew, were against us." <sup>154</sup>

In the light of all the above arguments, it can be concluded that:

(1) In 1917, it was not clear what exactly was meant by the Balfour Declaration, and hence the 1922-24 official British interpretation of it seems to have been much more decisive than the declaration itself. It will be recalled that when, on 31 October 1917, Balfour recommended the pro-Zionist declaration to the War Cabinet, he had no clear idea as to what exactly was to be done, since he advocated "some form of British, American or other protectorate".<sup>155</sup> Again in August 1919, Balfour wrote: "I am an ardent Zionist...but, I should personally like someone else to take the Mandate", and in 1922 he wrote to

154. See W.T. Mallison. op.cit., pp. 85-86.

155. Ibid., p.605.

country, which should therefore now be handed over to the Jewish race who would make the ancient land flow with 'milk and honey' once again.

The notion that Palestine had been neglected over many centuries, and that the Jewish colonizers had made it "flow with milk and honey" was prevalent in Zionist literature and propaganda at the time, and this Zionist reasoning was fully shared by Ormsby-Gore.

In the same article, Ormsby-Gore makes the curious remark that "It is conceivable that in a Jewish Palestine there could exist Mahommedan Jews [!]" . Finally, he quotes a passage from the thirty-sixth chapter of Ezekiel, which, he says, perhaps more than any other passage in the bible, "illustrates" the ideas "which underlie the Zionist movement", adding that "nothing can now stop the Zionist movement." <sup>152</sup>

Whatever might be said, Ormsby-Gore had firm convictions about Zionism. When he met with the London Zionist Political Committee in 1918 and reported on his five months abroad [with the Zionist Commission in Palestine], he stated his conviction that "sooner or later" there would be a Zionist Palestine, advocating "peaceful penetration" by Zionist Jews from the coastal areas towards the hills.

As for the Palestine Arabs, he looked down on them with contempt; to him, they were not even Arabs, but merely "Arabic-speaking vice-ridden" people.<sup>153</sup>

152. W. Ormsby-Gore. Great Britain, Palestine and the Jews. In *The Nineteenth Century and After* .Vol 88. July-December 1920. pp.621-631.

153. See Knox, op.cit., p.180. Quoting "Report on the Existing Political Situation in Palestine and Contiguous Areas by the Political Officer in charge of the Zionist Commission". FO 371/3395 and 3389 August 1918 .

accuracies take on a particular significance. For not only was he a whole-hearted Zionist who was instrumental in bringing out the Balfour Declaration, and who took practical steps towards achieving those ends (he was appointed in 1918 to the Zionist Commission to Palestine to secure every facility for the movement and its members), but he was actually in a position to see his own ideas being realized. In the *19th Century*, Ormsby-Gore wrote :

"Only twice in its long eventful history has [Palestine] formed a separate State, first under the Jews, and then for nearly a century as the kingdom of the Latin Crusaders",

dismissing its Arab past as merely "part of successive empires" he argued that "the bulk of the present Mahommedan population are probably of Canaanite or Phoenician stock".

On the agricultural situation of the country, Ormsby-Gore makes the sweeping remark that "potentially it is a rich, very rich, agricultural country which has been allowed to go to ruin since Roman times".

It is odd to suggest that the lamentable situation in Palestine had gone on uninterrupted for such an unusually long stretch of time. Ormsby-Gore completely disregards the catastrophic effects of World War I on the agriculture of Palestine (largely due to the Turkish policy of felling huge numbers of trees as an energy source for their army - the depredations of war were in fact one of the factors underlying the disastrous famine which swept the area-).

A balanced view of the situation in Palestine on the eve of World War I could have been gained by looking at the situation from an unbiased historical perspective. The general agricultural backwardness can be reasonably attributed to the decline of the Ottoman empire in the latter part of the 19th century, rather than to Ormsby-Gore's silly remark that, once the Romans had ceased to rule Palestine, the native element allowed the land to rot and go to ruin. There are many further implications behind Ormsby-Gore's statement. For one, he was hinting that the native dweller of Palestine had been such an 'inferior' farmer, throughout so many centuries, that he could not even manage to keep his land fertile; and that because of this he had no merited claim on the

tence that appears to have been omitted in the last minute. The final part of the last draft of the Balfour Declaration (which was written by Amery and Ormsby-Gore as we have seen, and was sent for the "immediate" signature of the Secretary of State) read as follows :

"...I should be grateful if you would pass on this declaration to the Zionist Federation and *secure that it is given the necessary publicity*" (my italics). Thus, "pass on" was replaced by the word "bring", and "to the Zionist Federation" became "to the knowledge of" the Zionist Federation. The declaration was ended here with a full stop. The word "secure" was at first replaced by the less forceful "see". But in the end, the Secretary of State seems to have decided against letting the Zionist Federation, (or at any rate, Lord Rothschild, because the letter was addressed to him), "secure" the "necessary publicity" for the Balfour Declaration and the sentence was omitted altogether. (See p.28 above for the text of the Balfour Declaration).<sup>150</sup>

### 13. Ormsby-Gore's Article in *The 19th Century*

Finally, Ormsby-Gore ends his minute by mentioning an article which he himself had written in 1920 in the *19th Century*, and which he stated "has some interesting data."

The article referred to is entitled *Great Britain, Palestine and the Jews*. About the history of the Balfour Declaration, it has nothing to add, and is in this respect, disappointing. However, there is an important side to it that is both interesting and revealing; i.e. the very fact that it was written by William Ormsby-Gore. The article contains a number of misconceptions, a few and quick examples of which will be given . Coming from Ormsby-Gore, under-secretary for the colonies 1922-24, and future Colonial Secretary ( as Lord Harlech) <sup>151</sup> these in-

150. FO 371/3083 Nov 2, 1917. p. 121.

It is interesting to note that the name of a Mr. Dunlop appeared for the first time in connection with the drafting, of the Balfour Declaration when, twenty-two years later, Harold Nicolson wrote in the *Spectator* in 1939: "My mind goes back to those distant days of 1917, when in a dark basement of the Foreign Office, Mr. Dunlop and I were charged with the task of drafting and redrafting the Balfour Declaration..." (See Vital. op. cit., p. 371).

151. Ormsby-Gore later became Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1936-38. It is not without significance that the partition of Palestine was first mooted in 1937, while he was Colonial Secretary.

later, to verify whether the course of events was as he remembered it and whether the Rothschild draft was in fact Nicolson's (or, as Stein himself believed, that of Sykes). Leonard Stein's account went like this: While the Zionist Committee were busy drafting a formula to be submitted by Rothschild to Balfour, Nicolson was instructed by Sykes to draft a reply to Rothschild, to be submitted to Balfour for approval. Sokolow was shown Nicolson's successive drafts; the idea was that the Rothschild draft should be one known in advance to be acceptable to Balfour and Sykes. When Nicolson's formula was finally completed, and Sokolow "knew what formula might be expected to be acceptable", he went back to the Zionist Committee and arranged for a draft on Nicolson's (or Sykes') lines to be submitted to the British government. When Rothschild wrote a draft on the 18th of July, Stein asserted that "Balfour's approval of the formula had already been obtained". Harold Nicolson answered Stein's letter a week later, telling him that he [i.e. Stein] had "attributed much more importance to his [i.e. Nicolson's] part in the Declaration than is really justified", adding that, although he could not assure him that was what had occurred, nevertheless it was more or less correct, and that Stein's "sequence of events is probably accurate".<sup>147</sup>

In the same letter, Nicolson mentioned that he was only "attached to Mark Sykes to see that he did not lose documents".<sup>148</sup> This last remark is particularly interesting in view of the admitted absence of all relevant material on the declaration, and of suggestions by some scholars that the absence of documentation may be due to the way Sykes handled the case, to his inexperience and to his particular character as a negotiator who depended on verbal communication leaving no written records.<sup>149</sup>

Finally, a minor but perhaps significant detail regarding the actual wording of the last draft of the Balfour Declaration may be added here. Foreign Office files reveal that the carbon copy of the letter finally sent to Lord Rothschild on November 2nd contained a final sen-

147. Stein, The Balfour Declaration op.cit., pp. 471-72. Also compare this to Weizmann's description of the sequence of the same events from a letter which he wrote to Gaston Wormster in Paris on October 16th 1917, in *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann*. op.cit., p. 535.

148. Ibid. In this respect Stein asserts that Nicolson and Ormsby-Gore are the two authorities on the Balfour Declaration.

149. See for instance, Fromkin op.cit., pp.189-90.

these great sums? and answers that it was the submerged Jew in Eastern Europe, the rank and file Jew everywhere. Since, he adds, these resources have to be constantly renewed, and the resources of the East European Jew have already been largely exhausted, further funds must be "wrung" from American Jews (-and Dr. Weizmann was already on his way there-), otherwise "the whole movement will collapse".<sup>146</sup> Finally, Ormsby-Gore mentions "the Zionist organizations [sic] election leaflets" as having been "rather effective". This point remains ambiguous, the present writer having been unable to find any explanation for this remark.

## 12. The Final Draft of the Balfour Declaration.

That the final draft of the declaration was written by Leopold Amery and Ormsby-Gore himself has already been verified.

Although Amery's authorship of the declaration had been a known fact (the Milner-Amery draft was the one that was finally approved by the War Cabinet), yet, when Shuckburgh read the minute of Ormsby-Gore in December 1922, he thought it wise to verify this from Amery himself, before printing the minute for circulation as a Cabinet Paper. Shuckburgh reveals that he had not known of Ormsby-Gore's help in writing the last draft. Amery's answer to the inquiry made by Shuckburgh was that the last draft was "actually" his but that "it of course, embodied various previous drafts". Amery is here referring to the fact that, for at least the last five months, the declaration was being drafted and redrafted, receiving the most careful scrutiny by Zionist leaders as well as British officials, to the extent that it traveled back and forth across the ocean (for Brandeis to participate in the redrafting process), the first of these drafts being the one submitted by Weizmann upon Balfour's invitation.

Leonard Stein gives a thorough account of this aspect of the declaration. He also reveals a letter which he had written to Harold Nicolson on 19 March 1952, which contains some interesting details. Nicolson was in 1917 a young Foreign Office official, who had assisted Sykes in handling the Zionist question. Stein wrote to him thirty-five years

146. CO 733/54 J.M.N Jeffries. The Palestine Deception. *Daily Mail* 24 January 1923.

in his view, not to be Arab opposition, but Jewish reluctance to provide the Zionists with the necessary funds to make the "national home" a reality.

The development loan that Samuel and Weizmann had envisaged was repeatedly delayed, as it became increasingly evident that Jewish financiers were opposed to Zionism. And when Weizmann visited America in 1921 and 1923 to raise funds, only a small fraction of what had already been anticipated was achieved. Thus, "the fund-raising failure had a direct impact on the Zionist enterprise in Palestine" and as early as October 1920 Zionist cash resources for the development of Palestine were so inadequate that Zionist officials asked for the number of Jewish immigrants to be reduced from 16,500 to a mere 1,000 immigrants per month.<sup>145</sup>

A revealing article on the question of Jewish funds was written by the *Daily Mail* correspondent, J.M.N. Jeffries, on 24 January 1923. Jeffries, who had been on a three-month investigative mission in Palestine and had met many Arabs, Jews, and British officials on the spot, reported the following conversation between himself and a prominent Jew in Jerusalem, who, he said, was at the point of abandoning political Zionism. Upon asking him "what on earth did you want the Balfour Declaration for at all?", the prominent Jew frankly replied that it was "the power of a statement of that sort which enabled us to reach the people's hearts and pockets". Jeffries adds that the sum of £8 million had been collected in gifts, and quotes, from the papers of the Jewish Reorganization Commission, a report written to Weizmann in 1921 (before the £8 million had been raised), to the effect that:

"The vast amounts expended have contributed in slight degree towards the establishment of a self-supporting Jewish community...It is with deep regret we were obliged to conclude that the farms of the Jewish National Fund of which all Zionists have been taught to speak with pride were, from the standpoint of future national colonization, of little value".

The *Daily Mail* correspondent then poses the question: Who provided

145. For more details see, Wasserstein, Bernard. Herbert Samuel- A Political Life. London 1992, p. 254.

existent, and Italian Zionism had thus far been a sentimental, philanthropic movement with no political force. All of a sudden, the delegate of the Zionist Organization, Nahum Sokolow, became a factor within Italian diplomacy, after the Italian Foreign Minister, Sonnino, received intelligence information of a meeting between Sokolow and the Pope, who was said to have given the Zionist leader certain assurances. "With the holy father pro-Zionist, could the Italian government be more Catholic than the Pope?" reflected the Italian Foreign Minister.<sup>143</sup>

Events followed rapidly and Sokolow achieved his goal. Nevertheless, the Italian pronouncement was not another Balfour Declaration, as Jeffries notes, the Italian government put in the missing words which made all the difference. And by "inserting" the words "legal and political status",

"the Italian Government guaranteed that the National Home should not prejudice those very fundamental rights of the Arabs which the Balfour Declaration deliberately had excised. ... with entire politeness it indicated that it was not deceived by the terms of the Balfour document, and that it would not be party to the suppression of native rights".<sup>144</sup>

## 11. Zionist Funds and the Jewish National Home

By focusing on the things that had "been done by the Jews already in Palestine", such as the 4 millions in money and the schools, Ormsby-Gore suggests that great achievements had been accomplished in Palestine. A closer examination, however, will reveal a different picture. The High Commissioner, Herbert Samuel, during the first few months of his Civil Administration in Palestine, constantly complained that the expected Jewish funds for the development of Palestine were insufficient. Indeed, the main obstacle in the winter of 1920-21 seemed,

143. For an in-depth analysis of Italian diplomacy regarding Palestine, see Manuel, Frank E. The Palestine Question in Italian Diplomacy, 1917-1920. *Journal of Modern History*. vol. 27. 1955, pp. 263-280 .

144. Jeffries, The Balfour Declaration. op.cit.,p. 19.

have overruled this possibility too, nevertheless, in the final analysis, the French were prepared to overlook the Sykes-Picot Agreement in return for a British recognition of French supremacy in Syria. <sup>141</sup>

### iii. The Italian Pronouncement

The Italian pronouncement also came in the form of a letter from the Italian ambassador in London, the Marquis Imperial, by order of Baron Sonnino, the Italian Foreign Minister, to Sokolow, on 9 May 1918. It read :

"In connection with the requests which have been made to it His Majesty's Government is happy to confirm the previous statements made through its representatives in Washington, the Hague and Salonica, that is to say that it is prepared to take steps with pleasure in order to facilitate the foundation in Palestine of a Jewish national centre, on the understanding however that no prejudice shall arise through it to the legal and political status of existing religious communities and to civil and political rights already enjoyed by Israelites in any other country."<sup>142</sup>

However, when Sokolow translated the Italian text into English, which was also quoted in the British official documents only in its original language, he seems to have put his own interpretations on it. Leonard Stein once again notes a number of inaccuracies in his translation, detailing these on page 593. (ft.17) of his above-mentioned book *The Balfour Declaration*.

In Italy, Zionism had, until the British government's issuing of the Balfour Declaration, received only lukewarm response. The Jews there were an elite group in a country where anti-semitism was non-

141. Vereté, *From Palmerston to Balfour...*, op.cit., pp. 185, 188-9.

142. J.M.N.Jeffries, *The Balfour Declaration*, p.19. The Institute of Palestine Studies, Monograph series no.7. Beirut, 1967). Compare Jeffries' translation to that of Leonard Stein, op.cit. p. 592. The two translations have the same spirit; with only two words differing. Whereas Stein used the more accurate "Hebrew national centre" ["ebraico" in the original ], Jeffries translated it as "Jewish national centre". The other difference is the use of the word "legal" which Stein translated as "juridical".)

and France's main concern was to secure its influence on geographical Syria and the Holy Places. Because Britain was also interested in Palestine for strategic considerations, it was decided that Palestine should be internationalised. French encounter with political Zionism was still to come later, and was, as already been seen, the result of Sykes' manoeuvres to get the French to meet the Zionist' leader Nahum Sokolow. For, during the early meetings between Sykes and a group of young British Zionists, (including Lord Rothschild, Chaim Weizmann, Harry Sacher, Nahum Sokolow, and Herbert Samuel) during which a memorandum written by Sokolow was submitted, Sykes encouraged Sokolow to meet with Georges Picot to press Zionist demands. Sykes also explained to Picot what the Zionists wanted in Palestine, and impressed him that since France and Britain wanted to gain the support of world Jewry, it was essential to meet their demands.<sup>139</sup> However, the fall of Jerusalem in December 1917, opened a new phase of conflict and tension in Franco-British relations over the future settlement of the Near East. The French were well aware that their insignificant contribution to the Palestine campaign placed them in an awkward position, however great their claim was. The rising anti-imperialist feeling further undermined their claim to the region. Moreover, French presence in a military controlled Palestine was merely symbolic, and British officials had little sympathy to the terms of the Sykes-Picot Agreement. It was now that Lloyd George had decided that direct British control in Palestine was preferable to an international one.<sup>140</sup> In March 1919, when Britain finally decided to hand over the mandate over Syria to the French, France had yet to acknowledge British influence in Palestine. Still continuing to call for an 'integral Syria', French agents, exploiting anti-Zionist feeling in Palestine, organised an anti-British anti-Zionist propaganda campaign which was rather effective. At this point, the Zionists had not yet come to any agreement with the French, and needless to say, the idea of an 'integral Syria' under French control would have aborted Zionists plans, for the French did not have it in their agenda to set up a 'national home' for the Jews in Palestine. The Sykes-Picot Agreement would

139. Vereté, From Palmerston to Balfour..., op.cit., pp. 18-19.

140. Wilson, op.cit., p. 464.

interests in the Levant.<sup>132</sup> The French had also to deal with the Germans, whose economic and political influence was growing in Asia Minor, in the form of economic concessions to build the Anatolia railway.<sup>133</sup>

In 1912, French suspicion of the British led the British Foreign Secretary to deny such interest to the French ambassador in Cairo. However, this did not mean any 'official' British recognition of French influence in Syria, but rather that the British were still committed to the policy of maintaining the integrity of the Ottoman empire. France was now openly claiming *La Syrie integrale* (geographical Syria) as 'the France of the Levant'.<sup>134</sup> Towards the end of 1913, France was deeply involved in negotiations with the Turkish and German governments for railway concessions in Syria and Lebanon, the success of which would have secured France's economic superiority in the region.<sup>135</sup> It was under the capitulation system that foreign powers were allowed to hold certain monopolies in the Ottoman empire. Under such capitulations, a French company owned and operated the Jaffa-Jerusalem railway, and on the eve of the war, France had secured for itself the right to construct new ports at Haifa and Jaffa. The *Banque Ottomane* had in fact represented French interests, and business was conducted in Palestine through the *Credit Lyonnais*.<sup>136</sup> However, there were signs of growing British influence, especially in Southern Syria ( i.e. Palestine), and one influential British official in the Near East (Gertrude Bell)<sup>137</sup> reported in September 1914 that Palestine was "exceedingly pro-British".<sup>138</sup>

After the war broke out, and long before the final outcome of the war was yet in sight, the French and the British met in secret ( in 1916) and decided to partition the Arabic speaking provinces of the Ottoman empire (the Sykes-Picot Agreement). Zionism was not yet an issue,

132. Ibid., p. 79.

133. Ibid., p. 66.

134. Tibawi, op.cit., p. 27.

135. Shorrok, op.cit., p. 97.

136. Tibawi, op.cit., p. 26.

137. Oriental scholar, archaeologist and government official. Member of Arab Bureau, Cairo 1915, Oriental Secretary to the High Commissioner, Iraq, 1917-20.

138. Shorrok. op.cit., p. 100.

Before moving on to the next point made by Ormsby-Gore in his minute, and to put things in better perspective, it is necessary to briefly focus on the nature of Franco-British rivalry in the Levant throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

French ecclesiastical establishments in the Ottoman empire far outnumbered those of any other nationality. Thus, on the eve of World War I, there were no less than 500 missionary schools in Ottoman Turkey. The majority of these were concentrated in Syria (including Lebanon and Palestine), counting between 50,000-60,000 students.<sup>128</sup> France's connection to Palestine is age-old, going back in time even earlier than the crusades. However, more documented evidence of such relations took place between Sulaiman the Magnificent and Francis I, and ever since, France claimed its monopoly over the transport of pilgrims to the holy land, acting as protector not only of religious orders and merchants, but of Roman Catholic interests in general.<sup>129</sup> French influence in Syria and Palestine reached its highest point in 1860, where missionary orders<sup>130</sup> set up schools and hospitals, as well as charitable institutions such as orphanages and asylums. This continued well after 1871, when the new anti-clerical secular regime in France persecuted the Jesuits, leading them to expand their activities outside France. Thus, as a result of persecution at home, Jesuit influence grew even more in the Ottoman empire, and by 1880, these missionary orders proved to be among the most useful aspects of French influence abroad. At the same time, British influence was rising, which led one Jesuit to remark: "were we not such good Frenchmen, the British flag would presently be flying over all our oriental establishments".<sup>131</sup>

Towards the final years of the 19th century, as Ottoman influence deteriorated, and the French feared the growing British influence in the Near East, France concluded that it must increase her influence there to demonstrate to the British that it had not abandoned her traditional

128. Shorrok, William. French Imperialism in the Middle East. The Failure of French Policy in Syria and Lebanon, 1900-1914. Univ. of Wisconsin Press. 1976. p 17.

129. Tibawi, op.cit., pp. 13-14.

130. These included, among others Jesuits, Franciscans and Lazarists, etc.

131. Shorrok, op.cit., pp. 16-17.

However, the Zionist historian Leonard Stein asserts that, as far as France and Italy were concerned, the only evidence to support Balfour's statements were Cambon's letter of June 4th and Pichon's letter of 14 February 1918, in the case of France, and they were both addressed to Sokolow and not to the British government, or any other international entity. Stein also observes that Sokolow's translation of the French statement was inaccurate. Whereas the French used the term '*un etablissement juif*' Sokolow transformed it into "a Jewish national home". Stein's translation of the French statement, which had never been, up to that point, translated into English, and had always been officially quoted only in French, reads as follows :

"Monsieur Sokolow, representing the Zionist Organizations[sic] was this morning [February 9th] received at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by Monsieur Stephen Pichon, who was happy to confirm that there is complete agreement between the French and British governments in matters concerning the question of a Jewish establishment in Palestine."

Indeed, two years later at the London and San Remo Conferences, the Zionists, who had so far made the most out of the assurances of Pichon, were brushed aside by French representatives, who firmly stated that there had never been a French endorsement of the Balfour Declaration.<sup>126</sup>

In addition to Sokolow's influence, one of the most important external factors influencing the decision of the French to make a pro-Zionist declaration may well have been New York. Tardieu, the French High Commissioner there, had become interested in the American Zionist movement and was closely in touch with Justice Brandeis. Moreover, it was Weizmann who had indicated to Brandeis the importance of maintaining this relationship with the French official. Tardieu justified a pro-Zionist declaration in that it secured for France the support of the 400,000 Jews who lived in the French colonies in North Africa.<sup>127</sup>

126. Ibid., pp. 590-91.

127. Kaufman., op.cit., p. 390.

It is significant that Balfour needed to read out to the cabinet similar declarations of sympathy in order to persuade his own government that other major powers had already been committed to the Zionist cause. When Sokolow went to Paris, on Sykes' advice, he set out to convince Picot [this seems to have been one of Sykes' manoeuvres to get rid of the Sykes-Picot Agreement] that the "Jews are in a position of a child who cannot tell whether he likes his father or mother best", and that "it is hardly for them [i.e. the Jews] to say whether they would prefer England or France as suzerain power, and that therefore the question must be settled between the governments themselves".<sup>122</sup>

Thus, the declaration made by Jules Cambon<sup>123</sup> came earlier than the Balfour Declaration and indeed was thought to have "influenced" it one way or another. Mark Sykes was very satisfied with the results of the "Declaration Cambon", for it served his plans in two ways; first, after having the French, who were the main competitors of Britain in Palestine, declare their sympathy with Zionism, he could now openly reveal British sympathetic views towards the Zionist cause; and second, he could now use the French declaration to persuade the hesitant and silent members of the British cabinet to follow the French lead!. The French, however, preferred to keep their declaration unpublished, and the Quai d'Orsay gave it only internal circulation to some of its embassies. For different reasons, neither the Zionists nor the French made the declaration public in France itself<sup>124</sup>. In retrospect, the "Declaration Cambon" seems to have been especially tailored for the British cabinet.

On his part, whenever he found it necessary, Balfour continued to stress the "other" declarations by "other powers" long after 1917.

In the spring of 1919, Balfour wrote to Curzon from Paris that it might be useful to remind the military authorities in Cairo how the "French, United States and Italian Governments have approved the policy set forth in my letter to Lord Rothschild".<sup>125</sup>

122. Kaufman, Edy. French pro-Zionist Declarations of 1917-18 . *Middle Eastern Studies*. vol.15, 1979 , p. 377.

123. Director-General of the French Foreign Ministry.

124. Kaufman, op. cit., pp.374, 384-5.

125. Stein, The Balfour Declaration, op.cit., p.588.

June. It stated that the outcome of World War I was to enable the Jewish people to re-create and re-organize a national home in the land of their fathers, and afford an opportunity to the House of Israel to re-establish its Jewish life in the ancient Jewish land, therefore be it

"Resolved by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that the United States of America favors the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of Christians and all other non-Jewish communities in Palestine, and that the holy places and religious buildings and sites in Palestine shall be adequately protected".<sup>120</sup>

## ii. The French Declaration

As soon as a declaration of sympathy with the Jewish people was contemplated by the British government, Mark Sykes was very keen on obtaining the approval of the French, and while Weizmann was busy presenting the Zionist case to British officials, Sykes had Nahum Sokolow sent to Paris with the mission of persuading the French government to issue a pro-Zionist declaration similar to the Balfour Declaration. In the eyes of Balfour too, it was expedient that the French declaration should precede the British one chronologically, as a means of persuading the not very enthusiastic members of the British cabinet.

On 4 October 1917, the question of the German declaration came before the War Cabinet. Balfour, in presenting the case to the cabinet, relied on three main arguments, and at the end of his speech read a "very sympathetic declaration" by the French government. (Balfour's description of the French announcement as "very sympathetic" was a considerable exaggeration, to say the least). To convince the cabinet, Balfour stated that "he knew" that President Wilson was "extremely favourable to the movement."<sup>121</sup>

120. Documents Relating to the Palestine Problem. Published by the Jewish Agency for Palestine. London 1945

121. CO733/ 58 C.P. 60 (23) . 10 January 1923, op.cit.

Wilson, or through Colonel House, these were carried out without the knowledge of Secretary of State Lansing, who held hostile views to Zionism. And thus, Lansing could later maintain with "complete accuracy" that the United States government had never approved the declaration prior to its announcement. House himself expressed his personal misgivings about the whole idea by saying: "...If I were the British I would be chary about going too definitely into that question."<sup>117</sup>

And as late as September 19th no specific written approval from Wilson was yet in sight. Weizmann continued to press hard on Brandeis to influence the American President. The formula for the declaration, as has already been seen, underwent a series of changes. The October formula which Weizmann had sent to Brandeis was significantly watered down to meet the approval of anti-Zionist Jews. Whereas in September the British promised to "secure the achievement" of the Jewish national homeland, in October they merely promised to "facilitate" it. When reminded again by Colonel House, President Wilson left House's original note on this question forgotten in his pocket for more than a month. Eventually, he told House that he concurred with the formula. It is not clear whether President Wilson was aware of the changes that the formula he was approving had undergone. On October 16th House wrote: "I will let the British Government know that the formula they suggest as to the Zionist Movement meets with your approval."<sup>118</sup>

One author, Frank E. Manuel, concludes that the declaration was a minor incident in President Wilson's mind, and that

"under the circumstances it is rather far-fetched to consider Wilson one of the progenitors of the Balfour Declaration. The most that can be said is that he allowed it to happen." <sup>119</sup>

The resolution of the American Congress referred to in Ormsby-Gore's minute of December 1922 had been announced the previous

117. Manuel, Frank E. *Judge Brandeis and the Framing of the Balfour Declaration* In *From Haven to Conquest*, Ed. Khalidi W., op.cit., pp. 168-69.

118. Ibid. p. 171.

119. Ibid., pp. 165-172.

sued the declaration. <sup>116</sup>

When studying the early history of these alleged "similar" declarations, it will become evident that they were not so much the outcome of an entirely independent decision by each power as the direct result of British-Zionist planning and persuasion. Again it was Mark Sykes who pulled it all together, and who was largely responsible for such endeavours.

### **i. The American Resolution**

During the war, American Zionists in the circle of Justice Brandeis were kept informed by their Zionist friends in London of the talks between them and the British War Cabinet. Through his efforts with humanitarian relief work for starving Jews in Palestine Brandeis got in touch with State Department officials, and had occasion to mention to them Zionist endeavours in London. However, the extent to which Brandeis received from American officials verbal approval for Zionist political aims as opposed to purely humanitarian ones remains controversial. In May 1917, Balfour, during his trip to the United States, discussed with Brandeis the subject of Zionism and his own declaration. The two were mutually impressed and Balfour personally pledged his support for Zionism. There is no evidence, however, that Balfour discussed a Jewish Palestine with President Wilson during the same visit. Moreover, it seems that the American State Department did not consider the political implications of the Balfour Declaration prior to its issuance on November 2nd. In the following months, when the declaration was being drafted, its drafts reached Brandeis to secure the approval of the American government. During the crucial months of September and October, when the critical details of the Balfour Declaration were being debated in London, the British were trying hard to draw in President Wilson as an active partner. But it is important to remember that whatever discussions for a Jewish Palestine were conducted on a direct level between members of the Brandeis group and

---

116. Stein, The Balfour Declaration. op.cit., p. 587; and for more details see Vereté, M. From Palmerston to Balfour. op. cit., p. 26.

Legion, campaigned vigorously among the rank and file of the *Poali Zion* and among American Jewry at large, Ben-Gurion himself being among the first to reach Palestine in 1918 as a soldier with the Jewish Legion. <sup>112</sup>

It is, however, questionable whether in 1917 the bulk of American Jewry, who were mainly concentrated in New York, supported Zionism. Moreover, it is not known what numbers were recruited there for the British army. While one scholar (Cecil Roth) gives the impression that the East Side of New York was a hotbed of Zionist activity, another (Amos Elon) asserts that the vast majority of the Jews in lower East Side was far removed from the Zionist cause.<sup>113</sup> The fact that Ben-Gurion's harvest was only 600 Jewish immigrants from America between 1919 and 1923 <sup>114</sup> tends to support the second view.

Moreover, there is no evidence to suggest that the Jewish Legion played any significant role alongside Allenby's forces in occupying Palestine. In September of 1917, as General Allenby's expeditionary force was driving out the Turkish army, Ben-Gurion wrote in his diary, as he lay sick in bed: "I fear our battalion has lost the chance to take part in the conquest of Palestine." <sup>115</sup>

## 10. Similar Declarations by France, Italy and the U.S.

Ormsby-Gore's reference to "similar declarations by other powers...including the recent one of the American Senate" refers to declarations made by France and Italy, in addition to the American one.

Zionist negotiations with the French and Italian Governments towards a pro-Zionist declaration were far more difficult than with the British. In Paris as well as in Rome, the announcement of the Balfour Declaration was met with a distinctly cool reception. This was evident from the extent of Zionist efforts needed to extract an endorsement of the Balfour Declaration, and in both cases, the endorsements were communicated to the Zionists and not to the British government, who is-

112. Elon, Amos. Israelis, Founders and Sons, London.1971 p. 133 ; see also Teveth. *ibid.*, pp. 124.

113. Elon. *ibid.*,p. 133.

114. Teveth, *op.cit.*, p. 126.

115. *Ibid.*, p. 132.

American Jews who joined later were attached to the 39th and 40th.<sup>106</sup> The roots of Jabotinsky's idea for the Jewish Battalions (which was later conceived in the form of the Zion Mule Corps) may have been inspired, ironically, by a previous plan devised in 1915 by Itzhak Ben-Zvi<sup>107</sup> and David Ben-Gurion to form a Jewish Legion, *ha-Halutz*, whose members would fight with the Turkish army for the defence of Palestine.<sup>108</sup> The idea was at first approved by the Turkish commander (40 men actually volunteered), and the battalion was formed, only to be later disbanded by Jamal Pasha.<sup>109</sup>

In New York, the East Side was the centre of Jewish life in that city, consisting mainly of Russian immigrants who had just reached the New World. There were, according to a famous English historian, whole streets in which nothing but Yiddish was heard; there were Synagogues for every Jewish sect, children were taught in Hebrew, and the general atmosphere resembled that of the Pale of Settlement.<sup>110</sup> It was here, in East Broadway, that the British opened their recruiting mission offices on Forty-second Street. The Jewish Legion Committee office was situated on Twenty-third Street.<sup>111</sup>

David Ben-Gurion, general secretary of the *Histadrut*, (National Workers Organization) 1921-35 and future Israeli P.M. and statesman, who had at the beginning of the war been expelled by the Turks from Palestine, came to America and was active making speeches for the *Poali Zion* movement (the Labour Movement), and when the British started to recruit Jews in New York for the British Army, Ben-Gurion and Ben-Zvi, as members of the Committee for an American Jewish

106. Stein, The Balfour Declaration, op.cit., pp 489-90; 493.

107. Zionist leader, formerly Shimshelvitv (1884-1963). Second president of Israel. Born in the Ukraine, he joined the Zionist movement in his youth. He organised the *Poali Zion* party in Palestine and was prominent in the Jewish underground military movement during the early twenties.

108. For more details see Vital op.cit.,pp.228-232.

109. Massiri A. Wahab.The Encyclopedia of Zionist Concepts and Terminology. ( Ar.) Cairo, 1974. p. 286 ; see also Teveth, Shabtai. Ben-Gurion, Boston, 1987 p. 768.

110. Roth, Cecil. A History of the Jews. New York ,1961. pp. 362-3. The Pale of Settlement consisted of 25 provinces in Czarist Russia ( in Poland, Lithuania, White Russia, Ukraine, Bessarabia and Crimea) where Jews were permitted permanent residence. Permission to live outside its confines was only granted to certain groups. The Pale was abolished in 1915 in effect and legally in 1917. See The New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia. p.731.

111. Teveth, op.cit., p.125.

ber 1917 came as a real 'Christmas gift' to the British, the capture of Palestine seems to have caused "little distress to the Germans".<sup>104</sup>

## 9. The Recruitment of Jewish Battalions in America.

The ninth consideration in the minute of Ormsby-Gore is that, as a direct result of the Balfour Declaration, the British Government recruited special battalions of "foreign" Jews in New York with the permission of the American government.

The contribution of William Ormsby-Gore himself to the idea should not be lost sight of. In April 1917, Ormsby-Gore drew up a paper for the Cabinet Office on the question of "Zionism and the suggested Jewish battalions for [the] Egyptian Expeditionary Force", in which he advocated the idea and frankly linked the two issues. Ormsby-Gore went on to say that Zionists were anti-Russian; they were also profoundly anti-German, and were deeply suspicious of the French. Although it was not clear to him why the Zionists had become pro-British, the important point, he concluded, was that "Zionist leaders regard the success of our arms as the only hope for Zionism".<sup>105</sup>

The Jewish Legion, originally the brainchild of Vladimir Jabotinsky, and brought to the attention of the War and Foreign Offices with the backing of Chaim Weizmann as early as 1916, was conceived to enlist unnaturalized Jews of Russian origin, resident in England, in the British army. At first, British response to the idea was one of indifference. But as the military situation changed, and the British invasion of Palestine was in full swing, the idea of the 'liberation' of Palestine with the help of a combatant Jewish Legion, thanks to the activities of Zionist leaders in Britain, gained a new momentum. The battalion raised in England was attached to the 38th Royal Fusiliers, whereas

104. Taylor, AJP . op.cit., p.206. And for a more detailed analysis of the German aspect of the Zionist question in general, see chapter. 36 pp.533-542 in Leonard Stein's *The Balfour Declaration*, which deals with German Zionist leaders and the German government during W.W.I Also see: Herrmann, K., Political Response to the Balfour Declaration in Imperial Germany: German Judaism. *Middle East Journal*. 19. 1965.

105. Vital, op.cit., pp. 231-32.

Leonard Stein explains that the German paper was reputed to be a semi-official one, and that the writer, Gustav von Dobeler, was a "well-known right-wing publicist". On these premises the Zionists founded their conclusions, which they conveyed to the British government, that a German pro-Zionist declaration was imminent.

Dobeler's article, entitled A Jewish Republic In Palestine, stated, according to Weizmann's translation of it to Graham, that

"A Jewish Republic upon Palestine soil as intermediary between Egypt and India- the idea is an extraordinarily good one for England but would be destructive to the political future of the Central Powers...It is thus evident that England...is about to carry out the cleverest political move by the creation of a Jewish Republic...The establishment of a Jewish State under Turkish supremacy would be for us a measure of defence...England in the possession of Palestine would signify the isolation of Central Europe." <sup>102</sup>

A week later, Weizmann again wrote to Ronald Graham that

"there seems to be very little doubt that the German Government is endeavouring by all means at its disposal to work on the Zionists in Germany with a view to utilize them for purposes of a peace agitation." <sup>103</sup>

However, there is little reason to believe that Palestine, still more a Jewish Palestine, was contemplated in Germany, and it is doubtful whether it had any real significance for the Germans. But to the British the Palestine campaign was important in raising the "shaken spirits" of a badly defeated army. Following a series of disastrous defeats on the western front, as well as in Mesopotamia and Palestine, the British were intent on a victory in the east. On 9 December 1917, Allenby received the surrender of Jerusalem. Some weeks earlier, the British had announced that Palestine was to become a national home for the Jews under British auspices. Their motives, in addition to enlisting the support of world Jewry for the war effort, was to rule out their old rival, France, from any control of Palestine. Although the British were overjoyed, and Allenby's successful campaign in Decem-

102. The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann. op.cit., p. 431.

103. *Ibid.*, p. 438.

more in touch with them, and Polish propaganda was to be prevented."<sup>98</sup>

He added that although nothing definite resulted from this, it did enable the Germans to follow a settled policy with regard to the Lithuanians. Moreover, Lundenorf does not seem to hold any hostile or "anti-semitic" attitudes towards the Jews. As for Lithuania, he noted that

"No restrictions were imposed on anyone in the practice of his religion. We went so far in our toleration as to give the Jews wheaten flour for unleavened bread...".<sup>99</sup>

Could it be then that, by hailing the Balfour Declaration, Ludendorf was hoping, among other things, to win over the Jewish element who formed the majority of the population in Lithuania ?

It is important to note that during 1917 the Zionist movement was spreading in Lithuania, as well as in Poland and other parts of Russia, and new groups of pioneers for the colonization of Palestine after the war were organized among the Lithuanians.<sup>100</sup>

On the other hand, early in October 1917, Balfour pleaded for the speedy announcement of the declaration because, as he informed the cabinet, the Germans were contemplating announcing their own similar pro-Zionist declaration. And when further evidence reached the Foreign Office that the Germans were endeavouring to make use of Zionist aspirations for their own ends, the F.O. commented that they were already aware of the Germans' fear of British Zionist propaganda.<sup>101</sup>

Again, it was none other than Weizmann who brought news of the suspected German pro-Zionist declaration to the British. As early as June 1917, he wrote to Ronald Graham enclosing an English translation of an article about a "Jewish Republic", which he claimed appeared in the *Reichsbote*.

98. Ibid., pp. 471-72.

99. Ibid., p. 204 Vol. 1.

100. War Cabinet Paper , G-164 Oct. 17, 1917 op. cit., p. 14 ( See Appendix B).

101. CO 733/ 58. C.P. 60 (23). op. cit.

following Germany's unrestricted submarine warfare.<sup>95</sup>

However, a few months later, Ludendorf's attitude began to change, and by July 1917 he was constantly speaking of the deterioration of German morale.<sup>96</sup>

In his memoirs, Ludendorf makes no mention of the Balfour Declaration, neither does he reveal anything about his own attitude towards the Jewish question, beyond some passing remarks on the state of affairs of Jews in Lithuania and Eastern Europe. But from what one gathers from his memoirs, the explanation for Ormsby-Gore's remark might lie in the situation in Lithuania. According to the German General, the Lithuanian movement was seeking to unite with Poland. Ludendorf firmly believed that

"We had no reason to permit these agitations...we could no longer consider anything but our own future, and the dangers which might threaten us from Poland ... the establishment of a Poland that would surround East and West Prussia was incompatible with the security of Germany...".

According to Ludendorf, German rule in the East must be based on the Lithuanians and White Ruthenes (i.e. Ukrainians).<sup>97</sup> Furthermore, he advocated that Lithuania should be in the closest relationship to Germany and united under the personal sovereignty of His Majesty, either in his capacity as King of Prussia or Emperor of Germany. In this way, Germany would gain a military base for defence against further surprise attacks by Russia, and one which could also provide a land for the settlement of German troops after the war.

In one of the very few places in his memoirs where he mentions the Jews, Ludendorf states that:

"Jews were to be found all through Lithuania. ....My immediate object was to obtain the Imperial Chancellor's consent to a pronounced pro-Lithuanian policy.... The Lithuanians were to be won over by all possible means, and the White Ruthenes in the northern district to be brought

95. Fromkin. op.cit.,p. 255.

96. My War Memories 1914-18. By General Ludendorf . (2 vols). Trans. London . No date. p. 458 vol. 2.

97. Ibid. Vol.2. p .470. See also p.458.

from the new situation created by the Declaration." 89  
Even a man as powerful as Hankey, 'keeper of a million secrets' as he was known, felt threatened by the "power wielded, entirely without scruple, by the Northcliffe press".90 On 24 May 1917, he wrote:

"Interesting discussion at morning War Cabinet on subject of the articles on the submarine question in the *Times* and *Daily Mail*, and all the Northcliffe press, which supply valuable propaganda to the enemy, who makes full use of it". 91

On the other hand, as late as September 1918, the prevalent political mood in London seems to have been a gloomy one. A.J.P. Taylor asserts that Northcliffe, "presumably a well informed man" told one of his subordinates that "none of us will live to see the end of the war".92 It was through Zionism that many top-ranking and influential British statesmen believed salvation would come.93

## **8. Germany and the Balfour Declaration.**

The statement in Ormsby-Gore's minute that "remarkable tribute" was received from General Ludendorf is perhaps the most obscure in the whole minute. Erich Ludendorf was the 'presiding military genius' of the then German Chief of the Greater German General Staff, Paul von Hindenburg. Together they controlled German military and civil policy from July 1917 until autumn 1918.94 In January 1917, Ludendorf believed that the war could be speedily won, without any compromise,

89. Vital. op. cit., p. 298. Quoting a minute by Ronald Graham. F.O.371/ 3083. Nov. 3 1917.

90. Roskill, op.cit., Vol.1. p.304.

91. Ibid., pp.390-91.

92. Taylor op.cit., p. 211.

93. It is interesting to note that, at least until 1920, the *Times* continued to be an enthusiastic supporter of the Balfour Declaration, calling it the "only sound policy" the Allies could have adopted towards the Jewish people. But as time passed, and difficulties multiplied in Palestine, this enthusiasm faded, and we begin to read reports in the *Times* from its correspondents on the spot severely criticising the government's pro-Zionist policy.

94. Palmer, Alan. *Penguin Dictionary of 20th Century*. London 1952. p.188.

Although the details of what was said in the press to convince the English public of the validity of the Balfour Declaration remain interesting and deserve the attention of a separate study, it is not very difficult to apprehend the logic that prevailed in those crucial months, since the main aim of British policy makers at the time was to strengthen the pro-Ally sympathies of Jews everywhere. The Ministry of Propaganda, under Lord Northcliffe, made use of the Balfour Declaration immediately following its publication and during the course of 1918. By owning the two important daily newspapers, Northcliffe controlled half the London press. Through them it was said he controlled both the "classes and the masses".<sup>85</sup>

Not much more can be added about this aspect of the case. What will be useful, however, is to focus some attention on Northcliffe himself and to demonstrate the extent of the power he exerted in those crucial years. Sir Alfred Charles William Harmsworth, known as the Press Lord, was Britain's greatest newspaper proprietor. In 1918, he was appointed Director of Propaganda in Enemy Countries, and was later known to be an anti-Zionist.<sup>86</sup> Whenever the situation arose, Lord Northcliffe was "called upon to conduct political warfare".<sup>87</sup>

During the earlier days of World War I, following a political crisis on an issue concerning the shortage in shells, known then as the "shell scandal", Northcliffe was bent on bringing down Kitchener.<sup>88</sup> His propaganda machine was again, at least partly responsible for the fall of the Asquith government in the final days of 1916, when, as noted above, he used all his power to convince the English public that it was Asquith's government that prevented the Generals from winning the war. Following the announcement of the Declaration on November 2nd, the F.O. and the government's propaganda machine immediately set out to devise "the best method of obtaining full political advantage

85. See for instance, Fromkin, *op.cit.*, p.233.

86. See Jones, *op.cit.*, p. 96.

87. Taylor, AJP. The First World War. London, 1966. p.224.

88. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

getting the approval of the American President, and when a few weeks later another enquiry reached Washington from the British, it seems that Brandeis had finally succeeded in changing President Wilson's views. On hearing the news, Weizmann and his colleagues celebrated the happy occasion in London. Leonard Stein asserts that in so far as

"...Brandeis helped to swing Wilson from discouragement to approval of a British assurance to the Zionists, he rendered a signal service to the Zionist cause."

Stein also indicates that

"Wilson's September message had come near to killing the Balfour Declaration. Had his reply to the second British enquiry been equally chilling, it is quite possible that the Declaration would never have seen the light."<sup>84</sup>

## 6. The War Cabinet and the Balfour Declaration

That the "form of the Declaration" and the ensuing policy "was debated more than once by the War Cabinet" has been made abundantly clear in Part One of the present study. Sir Maurice Hankey's War Cabinet Paper of 17 October 1917, mentioned in Ormsby-Gore's minute, has also been discussed at some length and does not need to be dealt with again. It is reproduced in full in Appendix B.

## 7. Northcliffe's Propaganda Machine and the Balfour Declaration

Next, Ormsby-Gore's minute deals with Lord Northcliffe's Propaganda Department, and the "utmost" use it made of the Balfour Declaration, thus affecting the course of events of the war, or so it was believed.

Exactly how the "utmost" use was made of it is not very clear from the various sources that have dealt with the subject, and the best way to verify this point is to go through the issues of the *Times* and the *Daily Mail* for that period, but this is beyond the scope of the present study.

84. Stein, *The Balfour Declaration*, op.cit., pp. 196-97.

ing firms, due to the fact that money and credit were needed for the war, and all the important international banking establishments of the day conducted major operations in America, through the New York banking house of Kuhn, Loeb & Co. American Jews, mostly Russian immigrants fleeing Czarist-Russian oppression, detested the Czarist regime and wished to see it destroyed. Jacob Schiff, the most influential figure of his day in American Jewish life, and a senior partner in the Kuhn & Loeb Co., wrote in 1915:

"It is well known that I am a German sympathizer...England has been contaminated by her alliance with Russia.. I am quite convinced that in Germany anti-semitism is a thing of the past."

To demonstrate the extent of the power exerted by Schiff's firm, it will suffice to mention that it financed Japan in the Russo-Japanese war in 1904-05.<sup>82</sup>

Throughout 1916, Sykes was busy attending a series of meetings in the house of Chaim Weizmann in which Malcolm and Sokolow took part, with the knowledge and approval of Sir Maurice Hankey, secretary to the War Cabinet. It was at this point, in the autumn of 1916, that the triumvirate of Sykes-Weizmann-Sokolow decided to send a secret message to Justice Brandeis to the effect that the British cabinet would help the Jews gain Palestine in return for active Jewish support for the Allied cause. This information was ciphered to Washington through the Foreign Office. Sir Ronald Graham was then one of the principal under-secretaries.<sup>83</sup>

Finally, the matter reached President Wilson in September 1917, when he was approached by the British War Cabinet as to his views on a pro-Zionist pronouncement. According to Leonard Stein, he sought advice, "not from Brandeis", but from his "still more intimate confidant, Colonel House". Upon the advice of the latter, he sent a discouraging reply to the British cabinet. But the British firmly insisted on

82. Hadawi & John, op.cit., p. 63. See also The New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia 7th edition. New York, p. 836. And for more details, see Vital.op.cit.,p.115.

83. Hadawi & John, ibid., p.72, quoting the review World Jewry 1 March 1935 described by Samuel Landman; Secretary of the World Zionist Organization 1917-22.

ism, he was suspicious of British designs in Palestine. Although he favoured a Jewish Palestine, he was reluctant to support a British one. When the War Cabinet was contemplating the Balfour Declaration, one of the first things it sought was President Wilson's approval. The proposed declaration was presented to the American government as an expression of sympathy for Zionist aspirations, as if it were solely motivated by British concern for the persecuted Jewish race. But to the mind of Colonel House, President Wilson's foreign policy adviser, who influenced Wilson against the Balfour Declaration, the declaration basically meant that

"The English naturally want the road to Egypt and India blocked, and Lloyd George is not above using us to further this plan".<sup>80</sup>

Justice Brandeis, leader of the Zionist movement in America since 1914, was converted to Zionism in 1912. He set out to address an issue which seemed important in his eyes. American Jews had hitherto been uninterested in Zionism; in fact they had distanced themselves from it for fear of accusations that attachment to Zionism might undermine their loyalty to their new country, the great bulk of them having been recent immigrants from Russia and Eastern Europe. What Brandeis sought to do was to provide these immigrants with a new identity. He had noticed that American Jews lacked an important thing, which, in his view, other Americans possessed, and that was a national heritage. He admired Irish-Americans, and persuaded his fellow American Jews that by identifying with a 'cause' they would be better Americans, and not the opposite as they had feared. "Every American Jew who aids in advancing the Jewish settlement in Palestine," Brandeis stated, "will likewise be a better man and a better American."<sup>81</sup> In this way, Brandeis tried to win over American Jews to Zionism.

Another significant aspect of the case concerns finance and banking. Britain and her Allies had attached prime importance to Jewish bank-

80. Fromkin, op.cit., p. 295.

81. Ibid., pp.299-300.

promising them Palestine, it was hoped that they would side with the Allies. And second, he was thinking of what a Jewish unit in the British army might do in the conquest of Palestine.<sup>78</sup>

These two objectives, however, seem to have been intimately connected. The Russian-born Jabotinsky, who was the chief initiator of the idea of making use of a Jewish force in the British Army, was naturally going to seek recruits for his Jewish battalions from Russia and Eastern Europe, in addition to the unnaturalized Jews living in England who were also of Russian origin. More of this will be said later.

## 5. American Jewry and the Question of Zionism

The fifth point in the minute concerns American Zionist activities. Ormsby-Gore confirms that early in 1917 "important representations came from America". It is not very clear what he meant by this statement. Did Ormsby-Gore mean that Zionist delegates came from America? Or that American Zionists reflected on the issue and proposed solutions? Or was it rather that they provided certain facts to influence the conduct of the British government? Reference has already been made to the part played by James Malcolm and his drawing the attention of Mark Sykes to the important role American Zionists were capable of playing in dragging America into the war on the side of the Allies. The key-word was Palestine. Louis Brandeis, U.S. Supreme Court Judge and President Wilson's confidant, was influenced to win over the President, and in April 1917 the United States entered the war to rescue the Allies, as a result of the famous Zimmerman telegram which was decoded by British Intelligence. The German Foreign Secretary, Arthur Zimmerman, sent a secret cable instructing his Minister in Mexico to seek an alliance with Mexico against the United States. In return, Mexico was to be given Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.<sup>79</sup> On the other hand, while President Wilson was sympathetic to Zion-

78. Fromkin, op.cit., p.291.

79. Ibid, p. 255. Also Hadawi, Sami. Bitter Harvest, Palestine between 1914-1967. N.Y. 1967. p18. See also an interesting recent article by John Cornelius in Washington Report On Middle Eastern Affairs. August/September 1997. Vol.XVI No. 2, entitled The Balfour Declaration and the Zimmerman Note, pp. 18-20.

"From my knowledge of Jewish conditions in Germany and Austria, I do not think that the British note will exercise the slightest influence upon the Jewish masses in the Central Powers."

The American vice-consul believed the Jewish masses to be conservative, their sympathies lying "entirely" with their own governments where the opportunities for social and religious freedom were "bound to improve after the war". Those who may have been "momentarily enthused by the ideal of freedom offered in a Jewish state", were, in Edelman's opinion, Russian and Romanian Jewish emigrants who were still resentful of their late oppression.<sup>75</sup>

It can therefore be concluded that the East European point of view, or rather the effect of East European Jewry on the course of the events leading up to the Balfour Declaration, was greatly exaggerated in importance, and for this one man, Ronald Graham, seems to have been largely responsible.

One author notes that, while the idea of committing Britain to the Zionist cause was inspired by Gerald FitzMaurice and Mark Sykes, "Graham was probably more responsible than anyone else in the government for actually embodying the commitment in an official document". The role he played, however, "tends to be passed over by historians- possibly because he failed to leave a significant archive of private papers behind him".<sup>76</sup> Graham was the first British official to discuss with Vladimir Jabotinsky<sup>77</sup> the creation of a Jewish unit in the British army, following his return to England from Cairo, where he had been in service for more than ten years. He immediately set out to urge the Foreign Office to support Zionism publicly. Thus, Graham's interest in Zionism was twofold. In the first place, he considered it from the angle of the oppressed Jews in Eastern Europe; and by

75. National Archives, Washington. Microfilm Roll no.79 - 130 G 141. Samuel Edelman to Hugh Wilson. Bern, 1 Dec 1917. Near Eastern Intelligence Section.

76. Fromkin. op.cit.,p. 291.

77. Russian-born Zionist leader (1880-1940). During World War I, he advocated the recruiting of Jewish regiments to fight on the Palestine front. This led to the establishment of the Zion Mule Corps in 1915. In 1917, the British government formed the Jewish battalions. In 1925, Jabotinsky formed the World Union of Zionist Revisionists in opposition to official Zionism.

The Foreign Office was under the impression that Russian Jews exerted great pressure on their government. When the British ambassador in Petrograd, fully aware that the Jews in Russia were a persecuted minority of no political consequence, reported to the F.O his belief that the Jews could not affect the course of the war, he found no one to listen to him.<sup>74</sup>

Of particular importance at this juncture are the American Intelligence reports. However, because the views expressed in them fundamentally contradicted those of the British, one may suppose that the American reports might have been referring to German Jews who held German citizenship and who opposed political Zionism, while the British referred to the Yiddish East European pro-Zionist element in German Jewry. This is, however, no more than speculation, as it is difficult to prove the point.

On 1 December 1917, Samuel Edelman, American vice-consul in Geneva, wrote that the German press brushed aside the British declaration on the Zionist question. The *Berliner Tageblatt* "ignores it completely", although, he maintained, this paper was known to be in Jewish hands. Some papers, he added, declared that it was a British trick to stir up racial antagonism between the Jews of the Central powers, and that, if successful, England desired to organize a buffer state as a further protection to Egypt and the Suez Canal. According to the same American report, the conservative Jewish press, *Die Judische Presse* of Berlin, wrote on November 16, two weeks after the Balfour Declaration was announced, that British sympathy for Zionism was not on humanitarian grounds, but in the interest of British world politics. "Judaism", the German paper continued, "has no political aims, only moral ones, and hence this British declaration should not be taken seriously." It further observed that Balfour's declaration did not speak of a "Jewish State", but of a home in Palestine, concluding that "it is quite plain that the civil and religious rights of the Arab and Christian populations must be considered".

In his report to Hugh Wilson, Edelman also spoke of the situation in Eastern Europe:

---

74. Fromkin, op.cit., p. 296.

tion, Amery thought, the Jews were to be offered the chance of "building their own homeland in Palestine".<sup>70</sup>

There is a thin line dividing East European Zionism from the German version, and hence it is difficult to discuss one without mentioning the other.

The total population of Imperial Germany in 1910 was 65 million. According to the census of that year, the number of Jews was more than half a million. 87% held German citizenship, while the remaining 12.8% consisted of Yiddish-speaking immigrants from Czarist Russia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, essentially known as the *Ostjuden*. It was this East European element among German Jewry which traditionally identified with Zionism and supported it.<sup>71</sup>

For this reason British policy makers were 'justified' in their fear of German Zionism; 'Zionism' itself had always been a uniquely German and East European phenomenon, (such at least, had always been the case until Weizmann initiated it in England), and up until 1914, the Central Office of the Zionist Organization, as well as the powerful Zionist Executive, were located in Berlin, with followers all over Eastern Europe.

The early Zionist movement operated within the sphere of the German *Kulturbereich*.<sup>72</sup> During the war, a new organization under the name *Komitee für den Osten*, (K.f.d.O.), which was also founded in Germany, aimed at placing at the disposal of the German Government the know-how of Jews in Eastern Europe (and America) to contribute to the overthrow of Czarist Russia and to secure the national autonomy of the Jews. Naturally, Zionists outside the Central powers were hostile to the activities of this organization, and it was then, and upon Weizmann's advice, that the central office was to be moved from Berlin. Moreover the conduct of Zionist affairs during the war was to be entrusted to a provisional committee for general Zionist affairs in America.<sup>73</sup>

70. Fromkin, op.cit., p.295.

71. Herrmann, Klaus J. Political Response to the Balfour Declaration in Imperial Germany: German Judaism. *Middle East Journal*. No. 19. 1965. pp. 303-304.

72. Penlar, Derek. Zionism and Technocracy: The Engineering of Jewish Settlement in Palestine 1870-1918. London, 1991. p. 150.

73. John & Hadawi. op.cit., p. 59.

and might throw the Zionists into the arms of the Germans, who would be more than happy to welcome the opportunity, especially as Zionism itself was originally a German idea. <sup>66</sup>

In the opinion of Albert Hyamson, the Anglo-Jewish historian and civil servant who directed the Department of Immigration in Palestine (1921-34), the Jews in the new Russian government were bitterly opposed to Zionism. Hyamson noted that, as the Balfour Declaration coincided with the outbreak of the Bolshevik revolution, and as the Jews were seen to be powerful among the revolutionaries, it had been suggested that the declaration should be effective in keeping the new Russian government in the war on Britain's side. However, he dismissed this suggestion as "worthless", because the influential classes in Russia, as elsewhere, were "anti-Zionist almost without exception". <sup>67</sup>

On 1 November 1917, Graham urged the immediate publication of the Balfour Declaration. He stressed the fact that Zionist leaders were prepared to send agents to Russia, America, Egypt and elsewhere to help work up a pro-Ally and pro-British campaign of propaganda among the Jews. Graham advised: "the sooner this starts, the better."<sup>68</sup>

The Prime Minister held similar views. One of the reasons for the adoption of the Balfour Declaration, noted Lloyd George, was the state of Russian Jewry, which, he wrote, had been secretly active on behalf of the Central Powers, acting as the chief agents of German pacifist propaganda inside Russia. It was believed that if Britain declared its willingness to fulfil Zionist aspirations in Palestine, this would have the effect of bringing Russian Jewry to the side of the Allies. It was also hoped that such a declaration would have a powerful effect upon world Jewry and would secure for the entente the aid of Jewish financial interests.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, it was Leopold Amery who noted that the Balfour Declaration was not addressed to British Jews but to Russian and Polish Jewry, who were denied citizenship, and who were, in his opinion, a "separate nation". By the Balfour Declara-

66. Ibid., pp. 259-262; 288.

67. Hyamson. AM. Palestine Under the Mandate 1920-48, London, 1950. p. 34.

68. Gilbert, Martin. Exile and Return. The Emergence of Jewish Statehood. London, 1978. p. 105.

69. John & Hadawi, op.cit. pp. 90-91.

cause, its connection with negotiations leading up to the Balfour Declaration, and the keen interest of one senior Foreign Office official at the time, Ronald Graham, in that aspect of the case.

One of the causes for the restoration of the "Palestine Idea" to the government's agenda was the problem of Jews in Russia and Eastern Europe, which, in the view of at least some British policy makers, definitely "required treatment". A change in Russian policy towards the Jews could have restored Jewish confidence in Russia. But in British eyes, no such change was forthcoming.<sup>64</sup>

Moreover, early in 1917, as events were turning against the Allies, and with the Russian revolution breaking out in March, the British considered it a matter of urgency to arouse the patriotic feelings of Russian Jews, which were expected to show signs of fading as a result of the Russian revolution. The effect of the emancipation of Russian Jewry, a member of the Rothschild family told Ronald Graham, was to close the chapter of Zionism, and he added that "the Revolution had knocked the bottom out of the Zionist argument that their plan is the only solution". On hearing this, Graham turned to Weizmann for more information and advice. The Zionist leader was justifiably alarmed to hear the same old questions being asked once again: How influential were the Jews inside Russia? Where did their sympathies really lie? There had been signs that the information reaching London from the independent sources of the Foreign Office differed from the picture Weizmann had successfully established since the beginning of the war. The British consul in Odessa wrote to the F.O. on 10 May 1917 that, in everyone's view, the "Jews are working against England and are strongly in favor of Germany...England is represented as Russia's worst enemy...". On 27 June 1917, Graham minuted that "our best card in dealing with the Russo-Jewish proletariat is Zionism".<sup>65</sup> Again on 24 October, Ronald Graham wrote a memorandum to Balfour telling him that "further delay will have a deplorable result ...and may jeopardize the whole Jewish situation". He added that delay in publicly announcing a pro-Zionist declaration would almost certainly lead to losing the cooperation of Russian as well as American Jewry,

64. Vital, *op.cit.*, pp. 192, 214.

65. *Ibid.*, pp. 260-261. Quoting FO 371/2996.

document that took the credit for finally inducing the hesitant President Wilson to declare war on Germany. On 19 February 1917 Hall told an "appreciating" Balfour that the time had come to make use of the Zimmerman telegram. ( See p. 94 below).

Also in January 1916, Sykes was gathering supporters, chief among them being Maurice Hankey, to discuss his proposed Arab Bureau in Cairo, but it was Hall who firmly stood in his way. In order to allay Hall's fears, an interdepartmental compromise was reached and he (i.e. Hall) was asked to name his own candidate for the Arab Bureau. Hall's choice fell on Hogarth<sup>62</sup>, [to head the Arab Bureau in Cairo] and Sykes lost the post he had dreamt of. As a result of this incident, Sykes seems to have been convinced that Hall was strong and able to block his way, and that it was better not to oppose him. This also explains in the view of one author, (Jacob Rosen), why Sykes "fell into line", and suddenly discovered the "glittering light of Zionism". The same writer demonstrates that it was following Hall's memorandum of 12 January 1916, in which he severely criticized Sykes, that the latter underwent a "total metamorphosis" and moved to the Zionist track. In the same memorandum, Hall suggested that in the Brown Area the question of Zionism should be considered. According to Rosen, however, it is difficult to follow Hall's activities beyond this point due to the "paucity" of documentation, adding that even Hall's biographer, Admiral William James, asserts that "It is unlikely that there are now any papers in the official archives which would throw any light on his activities. His was not the type of work that could be recorded in reports and letters of proceedings".<sup>63</sup>

#### 4. Russian and East European Jewry and the Balfour Declaration

The fourth element in Ormsby-Gore's minute involves the implications of the Russian and East European "point of view" on the Allied

62. David George Hogarth. Traveller and Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Director of Arab Bureau, Cairo 1916-1918.

63. For more details see Rosen, Jacob. Captain Reginald Hall and the Balfour Declaration. *Middle Eastern Studies*. Vol. 24. January 1988. pp.56-67. See also Vereté. The Balfour Declaration and its Makers. op.cit., pp.54-55 .

"with a view to securing exemption from military service for six men without whose assistance the cause of the Zionist movement in this country could not be carried on".

Weizmann told MacDonogh that Graham supported the idea, and that it was he who had referred him to MacDonogh. The Zionist leader added that without these men "the political work of Zionism in this country would be crippled". Weizmann's request was granted in full. His list included Hyamson, Landman, Simon Marks, Sacher, Sieff and Leon Simon.<sup>60</sup>

However, it is noteworthy that when MacDonogh, once an enthusiastic sympathizer with the Zionist cause, visited Palestine in May 1920, he reported that "our policy is one fraught with extreme danger". He also stressed to the government that, should the Jews be given "unwarranted ascendancy over the other inhabitants", there would be serious local trouble and even "rebellion throughout our Eastern Empire".<sup>61</sup>

Another aspect of the Intelligence question worth examining, albeit not one of the points made by W.Ormsby-Gore in his minute, concerns Captain Reginald Hall, Director of Naval Intelligence (DNI) during 1914-18. Hall, who seems to have enjoyed Balfour's unlimited confidence in his capacity as First Lord of the Admiralty 1915-16, was the first to draw attention to the extreme importance of securing for Britain exclusive control of all railways in the South of Palestine, in order to assure its position in Egypt. Thus, he suggested that in the Brown Area, the question of Zionism and British control of all Palestine railways should be considered. This was in sharp contrast to the terms of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, and Captain Hall did not hesitate to make his point clear when he wrote a memorandum, on 12 January 1916, criticizing the memorandum which Sykes and Picot had prepared following their discussions at the beginning of January.

Throughout the war, it was Naval Intelligence which monopolized the deciphering of the enemy's diplomatic, naval and military messages. Furthermore, the DNI was in charge of "Room 40", which deciphered the famous Zimmerman Telegram in January-February 1917 - the

60. The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, op.cit., p. 421.

61. Vital op.cit., p.369.

initials of "The Glory of Israel will not lie"), which gave invaluable information to the British army after its disastrous defeat in the battle of Gaza at the hands of the Turks. Aaronson transmitted important information to British warships off the Palestine coast. Moreover, he was a staff officer at British Army Headquarters in Cairo, as well as adviser to General Allenby. His work was part of a plan to realize Jewish aspirations in Palestine and end Turkish rule. In mid-October 1917, the NILI group was discovered by the Turks, with all the expected consequences.<sup>56</sup>

Having escaped Turkish revenge, Aaronson continued to promote Zionist interests during the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, having also, thus far, succeeded in introducing a number of British officials to Zionism, including W.Ormsby-Gore. When the latter joined Sykes and Amery as one of the three assistant secretaries to the War Cabinet, he already had a clear idea of the immediate prospects of Zionism. As secretary to Lord Milner, Ormsby-Gore had been sent to Cairo to work in the Arab Bureau, where he first met and was directly responsible for Aaron Aaronson, whose information about Turkish defences proved of great value to the British military command in Egypt, and who impressed Ormsby-Gore highly.<sup>57</sup>

Another British official who was converted to Zionism by Aaronson, was Richard Meinertzhagen,<sup>58</sup> who had taken charge of espionage operations behind enemy lines, under General Allenby.<sup>59</sup> That was the extent of British interest in Zionism from the point of view of the Intelligence officers.

However, there were other ways in which the Director of Military Intelligence extended help to the Zionists. On 29 May 1917, Weizmann, as president of the English Zionist Federation, wrote to MacDonogh stating that he had written to Ronald Graham of the Foreign Office

56. For more interesting details see: The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Vol.7. August 1914 - Nov.1917. Ed. Leonard Stein, London 1975. p. 523

57. Fromkin. op.cit. p. 278.

58. Col. Richard Meinertzhagen. Pro-Zionist, Chief Political Officer, Palestine & Syria 1919-1924. Military Adviser, Middle East Department, Colonial Office, 1921-24.

59. Ibid. p.308.

seems consistent with Mr. Balfour's letter. Hebrew might be made an official language, but the Jewish element should not be allowed to form a state within the state, enjoying greater privileges than the rest of the population".<sup>54</sup>

At the end of January 1919, after a disappointing trip to Syria in which he tried unsuccessfully to bring Arab leaders to meet Picot, Sykes arrived at the Peace Conference an exhausted and defeated man. He was discredited for his wartime policy, and no one listened to him. When he contracted influenza on 11 February, he died five days later, at the age of thirty nine. Lloyd George noted that Sykes had no 'reserves of energy', and was exhausted and anxious, and that was the cause of his death. Lloyd George later blamed himself for Sykes' death and was quoted to have said:

"He was responsible for the agreement which is causing us all the trouble with the French...Sykes saw the difficulties in which he had placed us, and was very worried in consequence. I said something to him about the agreement, and at once saw how I had cut him. I am sorry. I wish I had said nothing. I blame myself...".<sup>55</sup>

### 3. Cooperation between Zionism and British Military Intelligence

The next point Ormsby-Gore considered in his minute is the question of Intelligence and the services rendered by the Zionists to the British military during Allenby's campaign in Palestine. He stated that after Mark Sykes had made the first steps to contact the Zionist leaders, it was the Director of Military Intelligence, General George MacDonogh, who took the next step forward.

To explain this point, some light will need to be thrown on the activities of Aaron Aaronson, a wealthy landowning Jew from Northern Palestine (who was brought to Palestine by his immigrant parents in 1882). Aaronson developed, for the benefit of the British Intelligence Unit under MacDonogh D.M.I., (Director of Military Intelligence) a small espionage family network with the code name NILI, (Hebrew

54. Ingrams, op.cit., pp. 42-43.

55. Wilson, op.cit., p. 609.

Gore, who was attached to the Commission as Political Officer. Its object was to pave the way for the carrying out of the Balfour Declaration.<sup>52</sup> In the summer of 1918, when the war was over, Syrian Arab nationalists resident in Cairo strongly protested the division of Arab territory, and demanded a clarification of recent pronouncements in favour of self-determination made in speeches by Lloyd George and President Wilson. Politicians in London tried to reconcile their previous contradictory promises, and the matter was passed to Sykes, who sent a 'carefully worded' reply. The Sykes-Picot Agreement was now for all practical purposes a dead document. Towards the end of June, Sykes and Picot met in order to review the whole situation in the light of recent developments. Sykes tried to impress upon Picot that the agreement should be modified as it contradicted the principle of self-determination, but Picot was adamant that it cannot be abolished. The Foreign Office decided that Allenby should be consulted as to the question of a French administration in Syria, but it was finally decided that Syria should be handed over to the French.<sup>53</sup> Tension was rising all over the region. In Palestine, the Military Administration upheld the announcement of the Balfour Declaration, as mentioned earlier, for fear of an uprising. However, the aggressive policy of the Zionist Commission, which demanded immediate measures to be taken by the administration in favour of establishing a 'national home' for the Jews, brought it into direct conflict with the Military Administration. Sykes' policy of ambiguity and deceit over the last two years was now bearing a bitter harvest. However, Sykes himself, who visited Palestine in September 1918 was showing signs of growing anxiety over the situation. In dismay, he telegraphed to Ormsby-Gore in London, that "Non-Jews want to know whether Zionist objective is an independent Jewish State". At the Foreign Office, Arnold Toynbee, who was in the Political Intelligence Department, commented on this telegram on the 2nd of December, saying that:

"...surely our foundation should be a Palestinian State with Palestinian citizenship for all inhabitants, whether Jewish or non-Jewish. This alone

52. Fromkin, op.cit., pp. 323-24.

53. Wilson, op.cit., pp. 518-19, 532-33.

to "any systematic examination of detail." Even worse, he advocated contradictory policies on successive days with great enthusiasm without even realising that such changes involved rethinking his entire policy. When it was pointed out to him that his policy would raise difficulties in the future, he once stated that he "was not looking so far ahead" and that "to do a good job, one must seek the immediate benefit".<sup>49</sup>

Between August and December 1917, a new factor had entered Sykes' mind. America had just entered the war, and president Woodrow Wilson had declared his famous fourteen points, making it clear that America would not accept a scramble for new colonies when the war ended. After the fall of the Czarist government in Russia in March 1915, the new provisional government under Kerensky adopted a similar policy. Liberal minded English politicians accepted the view that if the war ended in defeat for the Central Powers, Britain would have to renounce her former colonies. It was now evident to Sykes that the still secret Sykes-Picot Agreement was in direct violation to this policy, and it was at this point that Sykes began to experiment with Zionism.<sup>50</sup> It has been suggested earlier that Sykes may have been using Zionism as a way out of the Sykes-Picot Agreement. Thus, as the Sykes-Picot Agreement was dying away, Sykes played a major part in bringing out the Balfour Declaration of November 1917. In January 1918, he tried to influence Arab leaders to moderate their views towards Zionism, and invited Weizmann to meetings in Damascus and Haifa with Arab leaders from Palestine, Syria and Beirut.<sup>51</sup> While British military operations were still in full progress, and while the northern half of Palestine was still in Turkish hands, Mark Sykes, at the Foreign Office, informed Reginald Wingate, the High Commissioner of Egypt, that a Zionist Commission had been created and would soon be despatched to the Middle East. It was to be headed by Chaim Weizmann, and to be placed in charge of William Ormsby-

49. Ibid., pp. 229-30, 405. Wilson also points out that comments in Foreign Office files show that Sykes' activities were regarded with apprehension. See for instance p. 247.

50. Ibid., pp. 441-2, 445. Lloyd George wrote decades later that Sykes "was always ashamed" of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, and defended his action by explaining that he was acting under Foreign Office instructions. See Fromkin, op.cit., p 344.

51. Vereté, From Palmerston to Balfour..., op.cit., p. 177.

Wilson, sensing Sykes' opportunist diplomacy, was apprehensive and reported to Cairo that Hussein would never have consented to this had he known what the real situation in Iraq would be. He added that when he knew that Hussein was pressured by Sykes to declare this, he would have "certainly... tried hard to get some principal facts re our position in Iraq stated at the meeting". Colonel Wilson added that Sykes had "undoubtedly taken a very heavy responsibility on his shoulders".<sup>47</sup> In the course of the next few months, and during the crucial months between April to July 1917, Sykes continued his policy of deception. Upon hearing that a French political officer was to join the British army, Hussein was alarmed, and it was decided to send Sykes again to Jedda for talks. In Cairo as well as in the Hijaz, British officials suspected by now that some kind of arrangement had been reached with the French and expressed their deep concern about the way Sykes handled the whole affair. However, Sykes had no intentions of clearing up any misunderstandings; on the contrary, according to one author, "He remained sublimely confident that the present policy of vagueness and deceit could be continued". British officials expressed their unease on more than one occasion. Captain Wilson wrote that a Franco-British settlement "should not be arranged behind [Hussein's] back", and that he (i.e. Hussein) was "well deserving of the trust of the British Government". Other British officials protested against Sykes' deception and handling of the situation in very strong language, saying that this policy was causing anxiety in several officers' minds, and that it amounts to "hoodwinking the Sherif and his people" and "playing a very false game". However, most deeply distressed by this was Col. T.E. Lawrence, who was about to lead the Arab Revolt out of Hijaz and into Syria. He knew by now that because of Sykes' diplomacy, British officers were expected to keep the Arabs fighting at their side at whatever cost, but that Britain would not keep her word after the war was over. This made British officers deeply aware of their own moral responsibility.<sup>48</sup>

According to one author, (Jeremy Wilson) Sykes' extreme self-confidence disguised a different nature: apart from being politically short-sighted, he was illogical and disorganised, and lacked the ability

47. Ibid., pp. 1076-78

48. Ibid., pp. 403-5, 431.

cupation of Baghdad was that "primarily... it [was] in Mesopotamia that we can inflict the maximum damage upon Turkey at the least cost to ourselves". The report added that the early capture of Baghdad was considered to be "most desirable", as it would "relieve directly the existing situation in Asiatic Turkey, in Persia and in Afghanistan".<sup>42</sup>

Also in October 1915, the famous McMahon letter was sent to Sherif Hussein.<sup>43</sup> A chief concern in the Foreign Office then was that the question of Arab frontiers had to be settled with French approval, and McMahon's letter fell into this line.<sup>44</sup> By December of that year, it was decided that the French and the British would divide the Middle East into two separate spheres of influence, where Britain would enjoy exclusive rights in one, and France in the other. Thus, the Sykes-Picot Agreement was approved by the British Government in February 1916. Sykes and Picot drew the map of the new Middle East in which direct French control would include the Syrian littoral up to the north, (designated the Blue Area) and that of Britain to include the region of Basra and Baghdad. (the Red Area). The interior of Syria and northern Mesopotamia was divided into spheres of French influence (Area A), and British influence (Area B). Palestine and the Holy Places were to be internationalised.<sup>45</sup> However, British officials in Cairo were kept totally unaware of this map, and negotiations with Sherif Hussein continued. This suited Sykes, for it protected his agreement from rejection by Hussein whom he was to meet in a couple of months.<sup>46</sup> The first meeting between Hussein, Sykes and Picot took place in Jeddah on 19 May 1916, in the presence of Emir Faisal, and Hussein's Foreign Secretary, Fuad-al Khatib. Another meeting took place the following day. It seems that Sykes left a negative impact on Hussein, and in order to come out of this standstill, al-Khatib declared something to the effect that relations between France and the Arab Government in Syria, would be the same as between the King and the British in Baghdad. The British representative in Jeddah, Col. Cyril E.

42. PRO. CAB 24 (1). Report of an Inter-Departmental Committee on the Strategical Situation in Mesopotamia. 16 October, 1915.

43. Vereté, From Palmerston to Balfour..., op.cit., p. 5

44. Wilson, op.cit., pp. 217, 234

45. Ibid., pp. 237, 246.

46. Ibid., pp. 238-9. And for more interesting details see pp. 244-48.

In May 1915, the de Bunsen Committee had accepted Sykes' view that most of Palestine lay within the British sphere of influence for two main reasons: (1) Britain needed the area between the Mediterranean and Mesopotamia to secure its communications with the Persian Gulf, and (2) Britain could not allow a French presence along the Suez Canal, the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf.<sup>39</sup>

In June 1915, in his capacity as member of the de Bunsen Committee, which had considered a number of alternatives to set up an independent state in the Arabian Peninsula, Mark Sykes, (a devout Catholic and considered by many as a Francophile), set out on a tour in the Middle East, to ascertain the views of British officials there. At the Residency in Cairo, British officials told Sykes that none of the de Bunsen Committee's proposals seemed entirely satisfactory. They advocated exclusive British control over Palestine, and that Damascus should be included in this British sphere. Sykes' 'dynamic' personality seems to have quickly convinced these officials that he could represent their views in London.<sup>40</sup> Also while in Cairo, Sykes met Syrian Arab nationalists, and brought the surprising news to the Foreign Office that an obscure young Arab from Mosul claimed that his friends could help Britain win the war. Muhammad Sharif al-Faruki, a twenty four year old Ottoman staff officer, who claimed that he was a member of *al-Ahd* secret society in Damascus, had deserted Ottoman forces at Gallipoli in the autumn of 1915 and crossed over to Allied lines. Nothing is known about his motives then, and his motives remain mysterious even today. This young officer caught the attention of British officials in Cairo during 1916, and until his death during the same year, acted as middle-man between British officials and Arab leaders, apparently entirely on his own initiative.<sup>41</sup> It will be noted that until November 1915, the Allies had still not achieved any great success in the war. A report by the Committee of Imperial Defence stated in October 1915 that the reason for attaching so much importance to the oc-

39. Vereté, *From Palmerston to Balfour...*, op.cit., p. 27.

40. Wilson, Jeremy. *Lawrence of Arabia. The authorised Biography of T.E. Lawrence*. London, 1989. pp. 5-6.

41. Ibid., pp. 227-28. See also Fromkin, op.cit., pp. 173, 176. Al-Faruki was killed in a road accident to Iraq in 1920, and quickly disappeared into oblivion.

land alone, and in no wise to the relationship of Jews with the lands in which they lived". Those were the views of Herbert Samuel. In the same meeting Weizmann added that the Jews who went to Palestine would go there to constitute a "Jewish nation, not to become Arabs or Druses or Englishmen". Keeping in mind the international complexities regarding Palestine and the Holy Places, and stressing Sykes' role in promoting the Zionist cause, the Zionist leader went on to say that Sykes "placed all his diplomatic skill at our disposal, and that without it we should have had much heavier going than we did". However Chaim Weizmann also drew attention to the fact that, although Sykes' chief concern at that point was the Powers and international rivalries, the Arab problem did not escape his mind. "Within a generation", Weizmann quotes Sykes as saying, "the movement would come into its own, for the Arabs had intelligence, vitality and linguistic unity". And according to Weizmann, Sykes believed that the Arabs would also come to terms with Zionism, particularly if they received Jewish support in "other matters".<sup>36</sup>

Although not one of the points Ormsby-Gore raised in his minute which is being addressed here, it seems relevant to elaborate on Sykes' role in defining British policy towards the Arab region immediately following the outbreak of World War I. This episode of history started when Arthur Henry McMahon, High Commissioner of Egypt, began in December 1914 negotiating with Sherif Hussein of Hijaz, with the hope of persuading him to throw off Turkish supremacy, in return for independence and autonomy.<sup>37</sup> In March 1915, the Committee of Imperial Defence ( C.I.D.) had decided that among the British principles of the First World War was that "an absolutely safe line of communications must be obtained between the Mediterranean and the Black sea for the remainder of the war", and that "Turkey must at once be freed from German influence".<sup>38</sup>

36. Ibid., pp. 238-40

37. Zeine, op. cit., p.5.

38. PRO, CAB 24 (1). Memo entitled : The War- After the Dardanelles- The next steps- Notes by the Secretary . Secret G10 dated 1, March 1915.

(referring to Sykes) to himself, and to play a "lone hand".<sup>34</sup> And when Weizmann met Herbert Samuel for the first time in November 1914, the Zionist leader asserts that Gaster told him of Samuel's interest in the idea of a Jewish state only after the meeting had occurred. According to Weizmann, Gaster was not enthusiastic about Zionist negotiations with British officials and statesmen, seeing them as "pointless". When the Zionist leader went to meet Samuel, Gaster remarked: "Ho-ho! So you are going to negotiate with Herbert Samuel!" (Weizmann reveals in his memoirs that Gaster never trusted him, and that he himself had always wondered why the Rabbi looked at him with such "distrust" and "roguishness"). In any case, Weizmann confirms that it was Moses Gaster who had first introduced Sykes to Zionism.

Concerning the services 'given with zeal' by Sykes to the Zionist movement, Weizmann states, for instance, that he "cannot say enough regarding the services rendered us by Sykes", and continues: "It was he who guided our work into more official channels." As for the services rendered to Zionism by the War Cabinet Secretariat, including such men as Leopold Amery, W.Ormsby-Gore, and Ronald Storrs, Weizmann noted that:

"If it had not been for the counsel of men like Sykes and Lord Robert Cecil we, with our inexperience in delicate diplomatic negotiations, would undoubtedly have committed many dangerous blunders".<sup>35</sup>

Thus, the first "full-dress" conference leading to the Balfour Declaration took place in Dr. Gaster's house, on 17 February 1917. Present were Lord Rothschild, Herbert Samuel, Sir Mark Sykes, James de Rothschild, Nahum Sokolow, Joseph Cowen, Herbert Bentwich, Harry Sacher, and Weizmann himself. Mark Sykes told his hosts that he attended in his private capacity. According to Weizmann the discussion in Dr. Gaster's house in February 1917 focused on the heart of the Jewish problem, which was to be the main issue for the coming months. First, it was decided that there was going to be no internationalization in Palestine, and second, the term "nation", as applied to the emergent Jewish homeland in Palestine, "referred to the Jewish home-

34. Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, op.cit., p. 229.

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 229-30.

probably assumed that, since Sykes and Kitchener shared similar views and belonged to the same club, the former spoke with the full weight of Lord Kitchener. Thus, the relatively inexperienced Sykes controlled the Interdepartmental Committee. He was opinionated and outspoken, and the only member of the committee with first-hand knowledge of Ottoman Turkey. Hankey quickly became his friend and supporter. Sykes also made friends with MacDonogh, who proved valuable in advancing his career.<sup>31</sup> Whether Sykes was given a free hand under Lord Kitchener is open to question; it seems more likely that he was given broad instructions and left free to work out the details. One incident, however, seems to suggest that he managed to have his own way. During the de Bunsen proceedings, while Sykes demanded that the British port on the Mediterranean should be at Haifa, Kitchener insisted on Alexandretta. In the end, FitzGerald, mediating between the two, let Sykes have his way.<sup>32</sup>

Although it is often implied that Sykes acted on his own even during Kitchener's lifetime; (Sykes himself left no written evidence as to how far he had a free hand and how far he simply followed instructions from his superiors), there is enough reason to believe that, at least during 1915-16, he did not depart from the general line of policy drawn by his chief. During negotiations in 1915 between the British and the French, when the future of Palestine became a stumbling block, Sykes wrote: "I worked... the Franco-British Agreement on Lord Kitchener's lines, every detail of which I discussed with FitzGerald nightly."<sup>33</sup>

After Kitchener's death in 1916, however, Sykes, continuing to regard himself as 'the' expert on Middle Eastern affairs, seems to have increasingly acted on his own initiative.

According to Weizmann, Sykes was first brought in touch with Zionist affairs, and with himself, through Dr. Moses Gaster, Chief Rabbi of the Sephardi Jewish community in England. Weizmann asserts that this was somewhat unusual because Gaster tended "to keep his finds"

31. Fromkin. op.cit., pp. 86, 88; 147-49

32. Ibid. p.149. See also Vereté, Mayir. *Kitchener, Grey and the Question of Palestine. In From Palmerston to Balfour. Collected Essays.* p.41. Vereté however does not mention any part played by, FitzGerald.

33. Vereté, ibid, p.41. Quoting PRO. 30/57/91: Sykes to George Arthur, 12 Sept.1916.

serves that "considering that Hankey must have known about this minute [i.e. the Balfour Declaration], and indeed probably had a hand in drafting it, it is odd that he made no mention of it in his diary". Roskill suggests that it was because of Hankey's profound admiration for Sykes that he allowed the latter's "new born enthusiasm" for a Jewish state in Palestine, as part of his far-reaching scheme for the post-war division of the Ottoman empire, "to go through without any careful consideration of the long term consequences".<sup>29</sup>

## 2. Mark Sykes and Zionism

The second point Ormsby-Gore makes in his minute is about Sykes' early pro-Zionist activities in 1916 and the fact that he acted "on his own initiative", making contact with Jewish leaders, such as Herbert Samuel and Rabbi Gaster, adding that Weizmann himself was "unknown".

Before going into the above details, it is important to give a brief account of Sykes' own background and how he came to be regarded as "expert" on Near Eastern affairs, and of his early encounter with Zionism. As assistant secretary in the War Cabinet Secretariat (1916-19), Sykes won Hankey's affection as the cartoonist of the Secretariat.<sup>30</sup>

When the war broke out in 1914, British officials discovered how little they knew about the Middle East, [it is often alleged that the term itself was coined by Sykes]. Sykes, a member of parliament who had travelled in the Middle East before the war, although an amateur himself, quickly acquired the status of 'expert' on Ottoman affairs. In 1915, he was brought to the War Office by Colonel FitzGerald, Kitchener's personal military secretary. Because of their ignorance about the region, the members of parliament left Middle Eastern matters to Kitchener and his entourage, while Kitchener, in his turn, depended heavily on his staff and was looking for a politician who knew the area. Thus, shortly after arriving at the War Office, Sykes was given his first assignment in the de Bunsen Committee. The other members

29. Roskill, op.cit., p.450.

30. Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 270.

General Smuts", with a "definite war object in mind" at a time "of acute national danger".<sup>27</sup>

In his revealing minute of December 1922 William Ormsby-Gore unveils a number of important issues surrounding the Balfour Declaration and raises at least twelve main ideas which deserve to be seriously addressed. However, and in spite of the fact that this minute is essential to our understanding of the early history of the Balfour Declaration, it was overlooked by distinguished scholars who have had access to it.<sup>28</sup> Thus, if the different elements of the memorandum are analyzed, we shall end up with a wealth of information not only about the Balfour Declaration, but about the whole context of British and even European policy for the period in question. This is an attempt to interpret the whole minute, step by step.

### 1. The Balfour Declaration in British Archives

First, W.Ormsby-Gore mentions that the Foreign Office and Sir Maurice Hankey "both" have material. It has already been seen that whatever material had existed in Foreign Office files seems to have been missing. In fact, that was the precise reason why he himself was asked to submit a memorandum on what he "recollected" from memory about the Balfour Declaration. Furthermore, neither Hankey's diaries, nor his papers in the Public Records Office (CAB 63), contain anything on the question of the Balfour Declaration either (except for another copy of Hankey's secret War Cabinet Paper mentioned earlier and entitled The Zionist Movement. As Maurice Hankey fails to mention anything about the Balfour Declaration in the entry for his diary of 2nd November 1917, his biographer, Stephen Roskill, rightly ob-

27. See, for instance CO 733/ 83 24 Feb.1924 op. cit.

28. Ormsby-Gore's minute has been referred to by Doreen Ingrams, in Palestine Papers 1917-1922 Seeds of Conflict. London, 1972. p. 7. However, Ingrams mistakenly quotes another minute by Shuckburgh printed in the same Cabinet Paper instead of that of Ormsby-Gore. It would also appear that Vital, op.cit., p. 370 has seen an India Office copy of the Cabinet Paper, rather than the original hand-written minute by Ormsby-Gore which is quoted above. Moreover, Vital mentioned the minute *en passant*, without drawing any particular attention to it.

ough consideration".<sup>25</sup> Therefore, it can safely be assumed that Zionist historians, who have provided most studies on the subject of the declaration, albeit some very important and interesting ones, have nevertheless, for obvious reasons, given a largely one-sided story, and consequently an imbalanced one. A statement from Mr. Stein's above-mentioned book demonstrates the point clearly. The Zionist historian asserts on page 196 that:

"There is an absurd myth to the effect that in the autumn of 1916 the British Government caused it to be intimated to Brandeis that it would undertake to do something for the Jews in Palestine in consideration of Brandeis' using his influence with the President to bring the United States into the War. This 'silly nonsense' ....appears to have hatched in the inventive mind of James Malcolm..."

Was this a deliberate move to mislead his readers? Or was Stein not better informed? Whatever the answer may be, Stein was not alone in giving a narration that suits the political needs and requirements of his own party. For, in his political memoirs, Chaim Weizmann, too, wrote the following :

"The deeper meaning of Zionism must not be lost sight of in the record of practical steps, of day-to-day strategic adjustments, which led up to the granting of the Balfour Declaration, and which accompanied future developments. I am reverting now to the common accusation that Zionism was nothing but a British imperialistic scheme, the Balfour Declaration a *quid pro quo*, or rather payment in advance, for Jewish service to the Empire. The truth is that British statesmen were by no means anxious for such a bargain...." <sup>26</sup>

The above words stand in sharp contrast to any one of the numerous memoranda prepared by Colonial Office staff in which it was repeated over and over that the Balfour Declaration was the result of prolonged discussions and deliberations in which "all parties of the State were represented", as well as "the Overseas Dominions in the person of

25. Mallison, W.T. The Balfour Declaration: An Appraisal in International Law. Northwestern University Press, 1971. p.64

26. Weizmann, Chaim. Trial & Error, op.cit., p.224.

to his attitudes in the War Cabinet, and finally it was submitted to Lord Balfour himself.<sup>21</sup>

On 24 January 1923 E.H. Marsh<sup>22</sup> sent out the letters as suggested by his chief. The Admiralty answered on 25 January 1923 that, according to Mr. Amery, the "actual last draft" of the Balfour Declaration was his, "but, of course, it embodied previous drafts". The Foreign Office answer came five days later, informing the Middle East Department that the Secretary of State "has no objection to the circulation to the Cabinet of the memorandum on the Balfour Declaration".<sup>23</sup>

This means that the Foreign Office concurred, in 1923, that W.Ormsby-Gore's minute was the *only* comprehensive record in British archives on the origins of the Balfour Declaration. Moreover, all parties involved admitted that documents had existed on the subject, but no one seems to have been able to find them!

Although Zionist sources have given more than ample and detailed studies of their version of the events leading up to Balfour Declaration, the British story remains, up to this point, seriously lacking in narrative and in detail. Leonard Stein, the Anglo-Jewish lawyer and leading Zionist who witnessed the birth of the Balfour Declaration, and who was intimately in touch with events as Secretary of the World Zionist Organization (1920-29), has written an extensive book on the subject, *The Balfour Declaration*, which has been widely acclaimed and heavily depended upon since its appearance in 1961.<sup>24</sup>

In his important legal interpretation of the Balfour Declaration, W.T.Mallison asserts that Stein's interpretations "should be recognized as reflecting an authoritative Zionist perspective and be given thor-

21. CO 733/ 58 Minute, Shuckburgh to Marsh 22 January 1923.

22. Sir Edward Howard Marsh. Private Secretary to W. Churchill, 1917-22 and 1924-29; to the Duke of Devonshire 1922-24; and to J.H. Thomas, 1924.

23. CO 733/58 Minute. Shuckburgh to Marsh 22 January, 1923.

24. Stein's hypothesis was later challenged by two important works. The first is D.Z.Gillon's, *The Antecedents of the Balfour Declaration*, *Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*. Vol.5. 1969; and Mayir Vereté *The Balfour Declaration and its Makers*, *Middle Eastern Studies*. Vol.6. 1970. Vereté's work continues to be of vital importance to the subject, although he takes his hypothesis too far by discounting any influence by Weizmann and other Zionist leaders on British statesmen, asserting that it was British interests alone that led the British government to support a pro-Zionist policy.

## II. An Interpretation of Ormsby-Gore's Minute of December 1922

Whatever the authors of the Balfour Declaration meant when they were busy drafting it from July to November 1917, the decisive thing seems not the Declaration itself, as already noted, but the 1922-23 interpretation of it.<sup>18</sup> It is important to put things in their historical perspective, and to keep in mind that the political as well as the military situation was far from clear when the declaration was announced in November 1917.

In a secret memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies dated 17 February 1923, the Duke of Devonshire wrote:

"Prior to 1921, no authoritative explanation was ever given of what precisely was meant by a 'National Home' for the Jews."<sup>19</sup>

Thus, because the minute of William Ormsby-Gore assumed such great importance as soon as he drafted it on Christmas eve of 1922 (see p. 48 above), being the only "official" and comprehensive explanation of the events leading up to the Balfour Declaration, and because the Colonial Secretary thought it expedient to print it as a Cabinet Paper for circulation, all the ideas raised in it deserve serious attention, and its various elements will be dealt with separately in the ensuing pages.(pp. 75-121 below)

On the other hand, and because there was no documentary evidence in the official records to prove Colonel Amery's authorship of the Balfour Declaration, Sir John Evelyn Shuckburgh, head of the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office, thought it wise to verify the information in the above-mentioned minute from all the relevant sources before he could print it as a Cabinet Paper for circulation. Thus, in addition to Amery, the memorandum was submitted to the Foreign Office, as it "deals with matters with which they were concerned and quotes their unofficial notes as well as their secret files."<sup>20</sup> It was also submitted to Lord Curzon personally, given that it referred

18. Churchill's White Paper of 1922 was the first official interpretation of that declaration.

19. CO733/58. C.P. 106(23). op. cit.

20. CO 733/ 58 Minute, Shuckburgh to Marsh, 22 January 1923.

and I believe my diary of December 4th 1918 contains the only record....and that was only second hand from Lloyd George, for I was not present."

Hankey added that "Thus and thus is history made".<sup>16</sup> Sir Maurice Hankey also describes another important incident which had taken place at the later date of 14 May 1919 "during completely informal talks" between Lloyd George and [Philippe] Berthelot, [Secretary General of the French Foreign Ministry]. They were discussing the water needs of Palestine, and he [i.e.Hankey], "immediately infiltrated" one of his assistants to "eavesdrop" on the conversation as soon as he realized that something of importance was being discussed.

"It was a near thing ... and is a good illustration of Lloyd George's methods of doing business- to produce a maximum of informality; to get a snap decision at the end of a long meeting on a difficult subject; and possibly to have no record. It is most distracting for the Secretaries, unless one is very-wide awake." <sup>17</sup>

The significance of what Hankey discloses in his diary is twofold: First, it clearly demonstrates what an important figure Hankey himself was in those crucial years, and how closely in touch he was with the centre of decision-making, which leaves us bewildered as to why he failed to make any mention of the Balfour Declaration in his diary. It is difficult to believe that the issue was too insignificant to deserve his attention, and therefore his motives for ignoring the subject remain unknown. The second point regards Lloyd George and his carelessness, whether deliberate or otherwise, over having an official record and minutes of important meetings.

This may partially explain the scarcity of recorded evidence on the origins and early history of the Balfour Declaration. But then again, this may only be one of the reasons; other hidden motives cannot be ruled out.

---

16. Roskill, op.cit., p. 29.

17. Ibid., p. 201.

Lloyd George's second encounter with political Zionism came about in 1914, when his closest friend and political confidant, C.P.Scott, editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, was converted to Zionism by the Russian-born Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann. Through Scott, Weizmann was able to meet Lloyd George, and the young Weizmann made quite an impression on the future Prime Minister. When Lloyd George succeeded Asquith as P.M, on 7 December 1916, he was already a convert to Zionism.

Thus, following the capture of Baghdad in 1917, the British Prime Minister was so high-spirited that he revealed to Weizmann his impatience with French claims in Palestine, telling him that Zionism was "a matter between the British and the Jews".<sup>14</sup>

On one occasion, Hankey recorded in his diary one of Lloyd George's many "unrecorded" conversations and revealed the Prime Minister's way of "doing business". One conversation, which took place on 4 December 1918 between Lloyd George and the French premier, Georges Clemenceau,<sup>15</sup> is of particular importance, and provides us with a rare insight. According to what Hankey had written on that day, Lloyd George and Clemenceau had driven to the French embassy, and, when they were alone, Clemenceau asked Lloyd George what was to be the topic of discussion, to which Lloyd George replied briefly that it was "Mesopotamia and Palestine". The conversation between the two "dictators", according to Hankey, went as follows:

- "Tell me what you want", said Clemenceau.
- "I want Mosul", replied Lloyd George.
- "You shall have it, anything else?" added Clemenceau.
- "Yes, I want Jerusalem too," continued Lloyd George.
- "You shall have it- but Pichon will make difficulties about Mosul."

Hankey wrote that

"...there was absolutely no record or memorandum made at the time,

14. Adelson, Roger. *Mark Sykes: Portrait of an Amateur*. London, 1975 . pp. 224-25.

15. Georges Clemenceau. French statesman. Radical politician and journalist. As persistent opponent of the government during the early years of World War I, he became Premier in 1917, and saw France through to victory in 1918.

itself. He sought the destruction of the Ottoman empire and exclusive British control of the Middle East. Lloyd George's motives can be briefly summarized as follows:

1. He loathed the Ottoman empire for its cruel treatment of its Christian subjects.
2. He sympathized with Greek territorial ambitions in Asia Minor.
3. With his biblical upbringing, Lloyd George supported Zionist aspirations in the holy land, and made it clear that the Jewish national home was to develop under British rule.<sup>12</sup>

David Lloyd George had first come in touch with Zionism in 1903 when he was appointed as the British attorney for the Zionist movement and its founder, Theodor Herzl, in connection with an issue that split the Zionist movement in those years, and which revolved around whether a Jewish state should necessarily be located in Palestine. In 1902, Herzl met Joseph Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, in the hope of securing a piece of land across the frontiers from Palestine, as a temporary measure until Palestine itself should become available, to serve as a Jewish political community. The Zionist leader had two options in mind, either Cyprus or al-Arish, which were both nominally still parts of the Ottoman empire, but were in fact under British control. Chamberlain refused the Cyprus option, but promised to help Herzl in securing the consent of British officials in charge of Sinai. It was in this context that Herzl sought the services of a politically oriented lawyer, and chose David Lloyd George, who personally handled the matter on behalf of his London firm "Lloyd George, Roberts and Co." The plan, however, never materialized. Hence, the Colonial Secretary made the Uganda proposal. Herzl agreed and Lloyd George immediately drafted for the Zionist leader a Charter for the 'Jewish Settlement'. Thus, as a result of his professional representation of the Zionist movement, Lloyd George had a clear idea of its goals and objectives, and when the conquest of Palestine was contemplated in 1917, he was perhaps the only British statesman, as will be seen later, who had a clear idea of what to do with it once it was conquered.<sup>13</sup>

12. Fromkin, op.cit., pp. 234-35.

13. Ibid., pp.273-74.

was blamed for "losing the war" by Northcliffe's press,<sup>7</sup> which succeeded in convincing the British public, through the *Times* and the *Daily Mail*, that it was the government that was preventing the generals from gaining victory), Lloyd George immediately created a War Cabinet and was thus able to carry out his Eastern policy without any serious opposition. The change of government brought a change of Britain's objectives in the Middle East. Kitchener, Secretary of State for War (1914-1916), who had always thought little of Palestine and advocated control of Alexandretta instead,<sup>8</sup> and who had imposed his own views on the cabinet, was now dead. Asquith and Grey, who had opposed the Zionist solution, and doubted the wisdom of acquiring new territories in the Middle East, were out of office. No one [except Curzon and Montagu] seems to have challenged the P.M.'s belief that the East was of primary importance for winning the war. Lloyd George and Milner controlled things as a sort of "dictatorship of two". It was Balfour who noted: "If he [i.e. Lloyd George] wants to be a dictator, let him be. If he thinks that he can win the war, I'm all for his having a try." <sup>9</sup>

As a consequence of the war, hostility to Turkey had much increased, and Lloyd George's principal war aim thus became the disruption of the Turkish empire. Early in 1917 the P.M. told the Imperial War Cabinet that he regarded this as the last of the Western-Christian expeditions to wrest Palestine, Syria and Armenia from the Turk. <sup>10</sup>

Thus, immediately, within days in fact of Lloyd George occupying 10 Downing Street, preparations for a military offensive in the Middle East were stepped up, along with moves to gain the support of the Jewish world for an Allied victory. <sup>11</sup>

It was becoming evident that Lloyd George's interest in the Middle East was not just a means of securing the road to India, but an end in

7. Sir Alfred Charles William Harmsworth. ( 1865-1922), Newspaper proprietor. Founder of *Answers*, *Daily Mail* etc. Proprietor of *The Times*. Director of Propaganda in Enemy Countries, 1918. Anti-Zionist. Through the *Times* and the *Daily Mail*, Northcliffe was said to have controlled the 'classes' and the 'masses'.

8. Vital, op.cit., p. 95

9. Fromkin, op.cit., pp.232-36; 270-71.

10. Vital, op.cit., pp.209-210.

11. Knox, op.cit., p.39.

dorf Astor M.P., Sir Edward Carson, or Frederick S.Oliver. Milner is the real leader of the Group, which includes Amery, Philip Kerr, and the editor of The Times, Geoffrey Robinson ( who has just changed his name ) as well as the various young men associated with this table, Lloyd George sometimes attends".

Sykes and Ormsby-Gore were associated with another group which Hankey described as "far less influential at the moment", along with others, "who dine in a small room of the terrace at the House of Commons also on Mondays".<sup>5</sup>

*The Round Table* was founded in 1910 by Lord Milner and others, including Lionel Curtis and Philip Kerr. It was a cooperative enterprise conducted by people from all parts of the British empire who advocated imperial federalism. It was also known as the Garden Suburb. Its members produced a quarterly comprehensive review of imperial policies and developments and analyzed major international developments. Lionel Curtis, founder of the publication *The Round Table Group*, claimed that the British empire had no choice but federation or disintegration.<sup>6</sup> It is true Hankey makes no mention in his diary whether the men associated with *The Round Table* discussed British-Zionist policy, and does not refer in any way, explicitly or implicitly, to any association between this circle of influential officials and the Balfour Declaration; yet, given the "life-saving" character bestowed upon that declaration by high ranking British officials of the time, as already seen in Part One, it is questionable whether the pro-Zionist declaration was not one of the major topics of discussion among this group of British statesmen. Moreover, Hankey's daily and "securely guarded" diary does not reveal anything about the early history of the Balfour Declaration. However, it does provide invaluable insight into the inner workings of the Lloyd George government, which, in the final analysis, produced the Balfour Declaration, and hence adds a great deal to our understanding of that period.

Following the defeat of the Asquith government in December 1916 (it

5. Roskill, Stephen . Hankey, Man of Secrets. 1919-31. Vol.2. London, 1972. pp. 422-23

6. See Jones., Britain and Palestine .... , op.cit., p.162. See also Fromkin op.cit., pp.232, 234, 280 and Knox., op.cit., p.40.

'Imperial War Cabinet' which has a wider purpose, jurisdiction and personnel." <sup>2</sup>

Amery explains that the new cabinet system was a "complete revolution" in the central organ of the British government. It was composed of five men (as opposed to the 23 in the old system) who met daily, instead of weekly, at times "entirely by themselves". According to Amery, they were free of all routine administrative duties and could therefore concentrate on matters of policy. On Milner's counsel, Amery and Sykes were to be the two Political Secretaries to the War Cabinet.<sup>3</sup> "As such", Amery goes on to say,

"we were to be at the disposal of its members and at the same time free, as a kind of informal 'brains trust', to submit our ideas on all subjects for our chiefs."

Although no such office was formally created, Amery asserts that Sykes and himself had the political status of under-secretaries. They were to be attached as assistant secretaries to Sir Maurice Hankey, secretary to the Committee of Imperial Defence, and now also secretary to the War Cabinet, "to be made use of by him at his discretion". Amery adds that he had to work closely with Milner, whom he regarded as his leader as well as his best friend, and with Hankey, whose "clear head and practical ability" he had long admired. With Mark Sykes, Amery was to produce a weekly summary of the world situation, for the rest, he was to make himself useful "as occasion arose", or as he "might" himself "suggest". <sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, in describing the events of the day, Sir Maurice Hankey wrote in his diary for 15 August 1917 (at a time when discussion of the Balfour Declaration was at its height) that "among the most influential at the present moment", was what he called *The Round Table* group:

"They dine every Monday usually either at the house of Major Wal-

2. Amery, op.cit., vol.2 p. 107.

3. Ibid., p.93; and for more details see pp. 94-96.

4. Ibid., p.92

## I. The War Cabinet

Because the Balfour Declaration was a product of the War Cabinet, it seems relevant to throw some light on the nature of this organ of the British government, as well as on the men associated with it, and to examine how it functioned on the eve of World War I .

In December 1916, following the fall of the Asquith government, new ideas and new systems were introduced into the British system of government. The small War Cabinet, which was rapidly emerging as an extremely powerful tool, became the "political powerhouse of the country". Its staff was composed of the Prime Minister's men. Important political matters could now be practically taken away from the established departments of State, including the Foreign Office, at the will of the new Prime Minister. One such area which the P.M. and his cabinet had "confiscated" from all other departments, and placed under the "exclusive" control of the War Cabinet, at least for a while, was the Near East. Mark Sykes himself was moved from the Foreign Office to the Cabinet Secretariat.<sup>1</sup>

The creation of the War Cabinet thus undertook the supreme direction of the war effort. It was composed of Lloyd George, the Prime Minister, Bonar Law, Lord Curzon, Alfred Milner, Arthur Henderson and Sir Maurice Hankey (its Secretary). In their memoirs both Amery and Hankey provide us with a rare insight into how the War Cabinet functioned, adding to our understanding of this critical period in British politics which produced the Balfour Declaration.

Amery reveals that, for the first time in the history of the British empire, two cabinets were sitting in London,

"...over each of them the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom presided...one of them is designated as the 'War Cabinet', which chiefly devotes itself to such questions touching the prosecution of the war as primarily concern the United Kingdom. The other is designated as the

1. Vital, op.cit., pp. 209 , 211.



## **PART TWO**

---

the inherent ambiguity and ambivalence of the Balfour Declaration, and went a further step in adopting Zionist arguments by stating that Jews were in Palestine "as of right and not on sufferance." This was certainly an additional powerful tool in the hands of the Zionists, who effectively used this text as an argument to further their most extreme interpretation of the Balfour Declaration. Equally important, this Statement of Policy played the role of palliative to the British parliament itself, and was meant to pave the way, on the international level, for the ratification of the mandate by the League of Nations. For it was only after the consent of the British parliament that the League of Nations could ratify the British mandate in Palestine. This Statement of Policy, moreover, guided the British government until 1929, when Palestine witnessed another eruption of violence against the Jews.<sup>134</sup>

---

134. Ibid.

"... unnecessary to enlarge upon the special position occupied by Palestine in the eyes of the world. It is scarcely conceivable that, having reconquered the Holy Land from the Turks, we could have handed it over to the Arabs. It would have been impossible to justify such a step to the League of Nations or to the civilised world as a whole..."<sup>132</sup>

Thus, the controversy surrounding the Balfour Declaration and the McMahon pledge to Sherif Hussein during 1922-24 ended when the Colonial Office, after more than a year's deliberations, decided to stick to its old line of policy of supporting the Zionist cause. The same policy, with the many doubts and uncertainties which accompanied it, was to last until the final days of British mandate in Palestine in May 1948. Scores of White Papers to remedy the impossible situation were produced throughout that period.<sup>133</sup>

It should be noted that the interpretation of the Middle East Department concerning the Balfour Declaration worked out during 1922-23, carried even more weight than the White Paper of June 1922, especially when it is remembered that the mandate was not ratified by the League of Nations and did not come into force until September 1923. In other words, when in 1917 the Balfour Declaration was issued, it was not exactly clear what was meant by it, and hence, the 1922-23 official British interpretation of it, emanating from the Middle East Department, seems to have been much more decisive than the declaration itself. Moreover, the Balfour Declaration, which hitherto had been considered a political and not a legal document, which could have been revoked by any successive government, was now, thanks to the Middle East Department, incorporated in the text of the mandate and hence acquired a 'legal' status.

Samuel had been instrumental in drawing up the policy of the White Paper in June 1922, which was the first official written interpretation of the Balfour Declaration. This White Paper, although asserting that the British government did not contemplate the disappearance of the Arabs, or their national or cultural existence in Palestine, reaffirmed

132. CO 733/ 78 Memo by the Middle East Department 12 Feb. 1924 Printed for the Cabinet.

133. See Huneidi, Sir Herbert Samuel... op.cit.,

Palestine was to be set up after the war ended, seems to have cost him his throne, for when he was attacked by his rival Ibn Saud in the summer of 1924, his British allies failed to come to his rescue. The memorandum stated that:

"Negotiations have been in progress for about a year for the conclusion of a treaty with King Hussein of the Hejaz, who is the person to whom the McMahon promises of 1915 were given. A draft of the treaty was actually initialled in London in April 1923, but difficulties have since arisen, particularly in regard to Article 2 of the draft, which deals with our position in the Mandated State of Iraq, Palestine and Trans Jordan. The point is simply this. The late Government hoped to obtain King Hussein's assent to a formula which would imply his acceptance of the policy pursued by the British Government in the Mandated territories. This would have been an effective answer to those of our critics who assert that the Zionist policy in Palestine is a contravention of the promise given to King Hussein in 1915. It is now fairly clear that this object is not likely to be achieved. King Hussein is at present at Amman in Trans-Jordan, where he has had long discussions with Sir Herbert Samuel. The latter proposes that he should be authorized to clinch matters by concluding a treaty with the King, omitting article 2 altogether. This may prove in the end the best issue from the impasse. But there are strong objections to reaching such a solution at Amman, through the High Commissioner for Palestine. If Article 2 goes, the treaty has little concern for the Mandated territories, and our reasons for acting through the agency of Sir Herbert Samuel would be difficult to explain. The result would be hailed as an open surrender of our position in regard to the Balfour Declaration. It would be represented that the great King of the Arabs had come in person to the gates of Palestine and had imposed his will on the British High Commissioner. The inevitable result would be a revival of Arab agitation which has lately shown some signs of dying down..."<sup>131</sup>

The same memorandum went on to say that it was

131. CO 733/ 58 C.P. 121 (24) Secret. op.cit. For a detailed analysis of the deliberations of the Middle East Department of McMahon's pledge to Sherif Hussein during 1923-24, see Huneidi, S. Sir Herbert Samuel, Zionism and the Palestine Arabs, 1920-25 , Ph.D. Thesis, University of Manchester 1995. pp. 427-440.

tary gave his reasons as to why an early decision was needed. He wrote in February 1924:

"I think it is important that we should come to a decision on the question of policy at the earliest possible date. The situation in Palestine is now calm, but uncertainty is always dangerous, and if the announcement of our policy is delayed there may be a revival of agitation. My own view is that we have no alternative but to adhere to the policy carrying out the terms of the Balfour Declaration as interpreted by our predecessors. I do not underrate the difficulties, but I am satisfied that the difficulties of any alternative course would be even greater..."<sup>129</sup>

Thus, after a long drawn-out controversy, a memorandum by the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office stated in February 1924 that "it has frequently been alleged that the Balfour Declaration was inconsistent with previous pledges given to the Arabs during the war", and, referring to the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, added that:

"Sir. H. McMahon, who was consulted personally in March 1922, stated definitely that his intention had been to exclude Palestine... Whether the actual language to the pledge, if interpreted as a court of law would interpret it, can be held to have given effect to this intention, is more doubtful. The natural meaning of the phrase 'west of the district of Damascus', has to be strained in order to cover an area lying considerably to the south as well as to the west of Damascus city".<sup>130</sup>

In the end, to set the seal on the controversy revolving around the Balfour Declaration as well as the McMahon pledge to Sherif Hussein, a memorandum by the Middle East Department, written before King Hussein's final downfall, gave a hint of the fate awaiting him eight months later. The memorandum implied that, had he approved the Middle East Department's interpretation of McMahon's promises to himself in 1915, an interpretation which excluded Palestine from the area within which the British promised independence to the Arabs, he might have retained his position as King of the Hijaz. His insistence on the original promise, that a single Arab Kingdom including

129. CO 733/58 - Memorandum by Secretary of State for the Colonies, C.P. 121 (24) Secret, entitled Palestine, 19 February 1924.

130. CO 733/83. C.P. 121(24), 19 February 1924.

Samuel's letter on 7th November, he wrote privately, telling him he was "rather against making any further public announcements on this troublesome question", and that he had "always felt it to be one of the weakest joints in our armour". He added that McMahon, in his letter to him (i.e. to Shuckburgh), took "his stand on rather different ground from that of the original draft (as sent to the Arab Delegation)", Shuckburgh therefore advised against publishing, explaining that the Middle East Department used the argument that Damascus in the pledge of 1915 meant the "Turkish Vilayet of Damascus". He referred to Churchill's reply to Ormsby-Gore's Question in parliament on 11 July 1922, saying that :

"The wording of that reply was drawn up with the most meticulous care and represents, I think, the best that can be said on the subject. I doubt whether anything is to be gained by further publication, and indeed it seems to me that our best policy is to let sleeping dogs lie as much as possible."<sup>127</sup>

In January 1924, King Hussein had made assurances to a Palestinian delegation of his "firm wish to continue his endeavours for the complete independence of the Arab countries amongst which is Palestine", and for the realisation of their unity and the fulfilment of pledges made to him by the Allies. Hussein had added that the Arab negotiations with the British had not ended, and that he:

"...would not conclude any treaty contrary to those pledges or to the nation's aspirations for independence. On the conclusion of negotiations, he would call for the nation's opinion prior to the signature of the Treaty. He would not by any means accept but that Palestine should belong to its Arab inhabitants."<sup>128</sup>

The Secretary of State for the Colonies, invited his colleagues to agree that the policy of giving effect to the Balfour Declaration, as interpreted by the late government, be adhered to. The Colonial Secre-

127. CO 733/39 Shuckburgh to Samuel 7 November 1922. Private

128. CO 733/ 65 Report on the Political Situation for the Month of January. 1924. Samuel to J.H.Thomas (Colonial Secretary).

ish supremacy. In return, the British government promised him independence and autonomy.<sup>124</sup> Sherif Hussein wanted to obtain the independence of the whole Arab nation and restore past Arab glories.<sup>125</sup>

The question of precisely what was, or was not promised to Hussein by the British government in respect of Arab independence, has been, and continues to be, a hotly disputed subject. The fact that the British government never fully published the Hussein-McMahon correspondence added to this controversy.<sup>126</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the Colonial Office debate over the Balfour Declaration and the McMahon pledge reached new dimensions between 1922-24, when the Palestine Arab Delegation published in the British press parts of the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, arguing that Palestine was included in the area where Hussein was promised independence. This debate opened a Pandora's box for the British government.

On 6th August 1922, High Commissioner Herbert Samuel wrote to Shuckburgh from Palestine pressing for the publication of McMahon's explanation (to Shuckburgh) on 12 March 1922, in which he stated (i.e. McMahon) that his intention then was to exclude Palestine from the pledge of 1915. It is possible that Samuel was unaware of the doubts expressed in the Middle East Department as to whether Palestine was included or excluded from McMahon's pledge to Hussein, and he seems to have accepted the interpretation that Palestine was so excluded from the pledge of Arab independence. Therefore, by publishing McMahon's letter, Samuel hoped that the controversy might die down, and that the Palestine Arabs would finally accept the fact that Palestine was excluded from that pledge as a *fait accompli*. However, the internal minutes of the Colonial Office regarding this irksome issue reveal a different picture. When Shuckburgh received

124. Zeine, op.cit., The British were driven by other than military or strategic considerations. Having declared war against Turkey, this meant that blockading the port of Jeddah would have meant that the Holy cities of Islam were in the possession of an alien power. With the bulk of the British army being Muslim, whether in India or Egypt, it was seen by Lord Kitchener, Hardinge and Wingate that this was a dangerous situation. pp.5-6

125. Ibid., p. 122

126. Ibid., pp. 7-9. Subsequently, in 1939, the British government published part of the correspondence in Cmd. 5957 ( five out of the ten letters). However, the parts that were published were not the original English texts, but English translations of the Arabic version.

the Jewish Board of Deputies), Dr. Weizmann and Mr. Nahum Sokolow. The remaining three, who were unfavourable, were: Sir Philip Magnus M.P., C.G. Montefiore (President Anglo-Jewish Association) and L.L. Cohen (Jewish Board of Guardians). Hankey noted that Mr. Montagu's [anti-Zionist memorandum, Paper No. G.T.2263] had already been circulated but made no mention of it in his memorandum of October 17th.<sup>122</sup>

#### **d. The Various Alternative Drafts of the Balfour Declaration**

1. The first draft was submitted by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in August 1917.
2. A draft was submitted by Lord Milner to the War Cabinet, on 4 October 1917. This was the draft which was submitted to various Jewish representatives in October 1917.
3. Amendments to No.2 were proposed by the Chief Rabbi, Dr. Weizmann, Mr. Sokolow and Lord Rothschild.
4. An alternative draft was submitted by Mr. Montagu M.P.
5. A draft was submitted by C.G. Montefiore.
6. A draft was submitted by L.L. Cohen.
7. A draft was submitted by Sir Philip Magnus.<sup>123</sup>

It will suffice to mention here that (points 2,3), i.e. Milner's draft, and the Zionist leaders' minor alterations to it, was practically the draft that was finally approved by the War Cabinet and which we all know as the Balfour Declaration.

#### **IV. The McMahon Pledge in British Archives, 1922-24**

In December 1914, the Foreign Office started negotiating with Sherif Hussein of the Hijaz, through Arthur Henry McMahon, High Commissioner of Egypt, with the purpose of persuading him to throw off Turk-

<sup>122</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>123</sup>. Ibid. For full texts of the above drafts see Appendix B.

*Spectator* on 12 August 1916,<sup>120</sup> in which he expressed the view that British Jewry, as opposed to Jewry in Eastern Europe, where anti-semitism was rife, had no reason whatsoever to complain. "Jews now sit in both Houses of Parliament", he stated "...And yet this answer, plausible though it may appear, is far from disposing of the whole question". He referred to a series of published essays entitled Zionism and the Jewish Future as "all the more timely", in that one of the consequences of the war was almost certainly going to be to open the Jewish question. These essays allowed us, he stated, "to gain some insight into the views current in Jewish circles". Cromer went on to say:

"What is it that Zionists want? The idea that they wish the Jews of all races to be congregated together in Palestine may at once be dismissed as absurd. Nothing of the sort is proposed. Neither do they want to establish a mere colony in the sense in which that term is usually employed. Zionism stands for a national revival... It would be both premature and presumptuous to attempt to forecast the future of the Zionist movement".

Lord Cromer concluded by saying that:

"Enough, however, has been said to show that, although possibly the Jewish question will not mature quite so quickly as some of the more enthusiastic Zionists consider probable, it is rapidly becoming a practical issue, and that before long politicians will be unable to brush it aside as the fantastic dream of a few idealists".<sup>121</sup>

### c. Notes by a number of representative Jewish Leaders

According to the instructions given in War Cabinet 245, Minute 18, the draft declaration on Zionism was submitted to nine -"or, including Mr. E.S. Montagu, ten"- representative Jews. The six favourable to Zionism were: The Rt. Hon. Herbert Samuel, M.P., the Chief Rabbi, Lord Rothschild, Sir Stuart Samuel (Chairman of

120. See Appendix B for full text.

121. CAB 24/4 Secret Cabinet memo G-164, op.cit.

lomatic arguments in favour of expressing sympathy", recognizing that "some expression of sympathy with Jewish aspirations would be a valuable adjunct to our propaganda", although still believing that "we should be guarded in the language used in giving expression to such sympathy." The memorandum noted that "The outcome was the famous Balfour Declaration of the 2nd November 1917, the actual text of which was drafted by Colonel L.S. Amery, M.P."<sup>118</sup>

#### a. Lord Curzon's memorandum

It was asserted in the above mentioned secret cabinet memorandum, five years later, in February 1923, that when the Balfour Declaration was being formulated, "It is clear that there was some difference of opinion in the War Cabinet itself at the time when the Declaration was framed", adding that Lord Curzon had written a memorandum on 26 October 1917, in which he laid down "the following propositions as representing the maximum that could properly be aimed at". These propositions were:

1. Set up some form of European administration (it cannot be Jewish administration) in Palestine.
2. Devise a machinery for safeguarding and securing order both in the Christian and the Jewish Holy Places.
3. Similarly guarantee the integrity of the Mosque of Omar and vest it in some Moslem body.
4. Secure to the Jews (but not to the Jews alone) equal civil and religious rights with the other elements in the population.
5. Arrange as far as possible for land purchase and settlement of returning Jews"<sup>119</sup>

#### b. Views of Lord Cromer

Lord Cromer's paper was in the form of an article written in *The*

118. CO 733/58 Secret Cabinet Memo CP 60 (23) Palestine and the Balfour Declaration. 10 January 1923.

119. CO733/58 Secret Cabinet memo CP 106 (23) 17 February, 1923 .

- (9) At this point, Edwin Montagu <sup>116</sup> , Secretary of State for India, objected strongly to the government's pro-Zionist policy, and Lord Curzon opposed the declaration on practical grounds. It was therefore decided that before a final decision was taken, the War Cabinet should hear the views of representative Zionist as well as non-Zionist Jews.<sup>117</sup> In the meantime the draft declaration under consideration was to be referred confidentially to President Wilson, to the heads of the Zionist movement, and to representative persons in Anglo-Jewry opposed to Zionism.
- (10) On 31 October 1917, according to the official records, the question came before the War Cabinet once more, but it is not clear from those records whether President Wilson's views had been received, and the following additional papers were put before the cabinet at this meeting:
- a. "A long memorandum by Lord Curzon on the Future of Palestine, in which he developed his arguments against the policy of converting Palestine into a Jewish State;
  - b. A paper written about a year before by the late Lord Cromer;
  - c. Notes by a number of representative Jewish leaders;
  - d. Seven variants of the proposed draft Declaration."

Balfour stressed once more, according to official minutes, the "diplomatic argument". It was his view that "everyone was now agreed that from a purely diplomatic and political point of view it was desirable that some declaration favourable to the aspirations of the Jewish nationalists should now be made", adding that most American and Russian Jewry were favourable to Zionism, and that if such a declaration were made "we should be able to carry on an extremely useful propaganda both in Russia and America". In the end, Lord Curzon seems to have been overwhelmed by such powerful arguments and had finally to admit "the force of the dip-

116. Secretary of State for India, 1917-22. Anglo-Jewish anti-Zionist.

117. Ten representative Jews were chosen for that purpose, including E. Montagu, with the result that six favoured the declaration and the rest remained unfavourable. Their views are printed in full in Hankey's above mentioned War Cabinet Memo of 17 October, 1917 (See Appendix B below for full document).

been passing behind the scenes to which the official papers give no adequate clue".

- (7) Early in October 1917, further evidence that the Germans were about to make their own pro-Zionist declaration reached the Foreign Office. A despatch from the British consul in Bern, on October 2nd, gave an account of a meeting held between Herr von Kuhlmann, Jemal Pasha <sup>115</sup>, and a leading Zionist in Berlin. Its object was to discuss the Palestine question.

It was believed that some pledges had been given to the Jews in order to obtain their cooperation for a new war loan, and that the German government had given safe passage to Jews proceeding from Palestine to America. The Foreign Office commented on this by saying "we have already heard that the Germans are frightened of our Zionist propaganda".

- (8) The question of the German declaration thus came before the War Cabinet on 4 October 1917, and, according to official minutes, Balfour relied on three arguments as he presented the case to the cabinet :

- a. That the Germans were making great efforts to capture the sympathy of the Zionist movement.
- b. That the Zionist movement, although opposed by the majority of wealthy British Jews, had the support of American as well as Russian Jewry and possibly in other countries.
- c. That the movement was based on the "intense national consciousness" of Jews who had "a passionate longing to regain once more their ancient national home in Palestine".

In the end, Balfour read a sympathetic declaration by the French government and added that President Wilson was also strongly in favour of such a policy. ( see pp. 105-115 below for more details).

---

115. Commander of the 7th Division of the Turkish army situated in Amman.

sirable for the British government to give an open expression of sympathy with Zionist aims, adding that "this would only be a confirmation of the opinion which certain of the most eminent members of his Majesty's Government had expressed to him and to his colleagues and which had formed the basis of his negotiations throughout the last three years". Here, the Colonial Office memorandum draws attention to these last words as being significant, for they indicate that "some form of negotiations" between the Zionists and the British Government had been going on since the outbreak of the war. The memorandum then concluded that "as the official records are silent, it can only be assumed that such discussions as had taken place were of an informal and private character",<sup>114</sup> and that they were mainly conducted by Sir Mark Sykes. Graham, writing to the Secretary of State, agreed that the moment had indeed come for issuing such a declaration.

- (5) On the basis of all the above, Balfour asked Weizmann to submit a formula for such an assurance, and the Colonial Office memorandum reveals that "no doubt Dr. Weizmann complied with this request, but the Foreign Office papers do not show how or in what form". Finally the memorandum confirms that there is "little to indicate the stages by which the negotiations subsequently advanced".
- (6) On 21 August 1917, Philip Kerr, private secretary to the Prime Minister, stated in a note to the private secretary of the Foreign Office that an official statement was "now under consideration" regarding Zionist aims in Palestine. The memorandum went on to say that Kerr's note was written in relation to a letter from the Jewish Congress at Salonica, who had asked that the declaration be addressed to their own congress while it was meeting on 2nd September 1917. The answer of the Foreign Office was that the "Rothschild message should suffice for all purposes". The memorandum then concluded that "it is quite clear that much must have

114. It is indeed curious that negotiations of such magnitude were conducted on a personal level with no official record.

them relating to the year 1916, were able to reconstruct the following account about the origins of the Balfour Declaration :

- (1) The earliest letter documented was one dated 24 April 1917, in which a certain Mr. Hamilton suggested that a Zionist mission should be sent to Russia for propaganda purposes.
- (2) In the same month, Balfour visited the U.S. in an official mission. A Foreign Office note observed that during Balfour's visit to the U.S., the policy of the Balfour Declaration as a war measure seems to have taken "more definite shape".
- (3) In the following months Foreign Office papers show that various conversations took place with Dr. Weizmann and other Zionists, and that much telegraphic correspondence on the subject took place with Sir Mark Sykes, who was then in Cairo, and who proposed that Weizmann should proceed to Egypt, and that Sokolow and Goldberg<sup>112</sup> should go to Russia for the purpose of attending a Zionist Conference in Petrograd.
- (4) On 13 June 1917, an important minute by Sir Ronald Graham <sup>113</sup> was put before the Secretary of State, recording a conversation with Weizmann, in which the latter told Graham there was no doubt now that Germany was about to announce a declaration sympathetic to German Zionists, "aimed at utilizing them for the purposes of a peace agitation". Weizmann agreed that German policy was "calculated to drive a wedge into the Zionist organization, to influence Jewish opinion especially in America and Russia and to utilize it in the interests of German propaganda against the Entente". Weizmann urged very strongly that it was now de-

112. Abraham Goldberg. Journalist and Zionist leader. Co-founder of *Poali Zion* movement (Labour Movement), and one of the leaders of the Hebrew-speaking movement in America.

113. Ronald Graham was Assistant Under-Secretary, Foreign Office 1916-19. He was in the confidence of Mark Sykes and during the time he spent in the FO he was indispensable to Zionists. One author (David Fromkin, op.cit., p.291) suggests that Graham was probably more responsible than anyone else in the government for embodying the commitment to Zionists in an official document.

Century about 2 years ago which has some interesting data".<sup>110</sup>  
WOG 24/12/1922

The second part of the above-mentioned four-page Cabinet Paper is Shuckburgh's memorandum, entitled History of the negotiations leading up to the Balfour Declaration. It was compiled from papers obtained from the Foreign Office and the cabinet secretariat, since the Middle East Department held no records regarding these negotiations, which occurred long before the Colonial Office had any concern with Palestine. The memorandum confirms that "... Such papers as it had been possible to obtain are very meagre and do not afford material for anything like a complete statement of the case"..., adding that "the following explanation is given in an unofficial note furnished by the F.O. for the purposes of this memorandum" :

"Upon the origins of the Declaration little exists in the way of official records; indeed; little is known of how the policy represented by the Declaration was first given form. Four, or perhaps five men were chiefly concerned in the labour - the Earl of Balfour, the late Sir Mark Sykes, and Messrs. Weizmann and Sokolow, with perhaps Lord Rothschild as a figure in the background. Negotiations seem to have been mainly oral and by means of private notes and memoranda of which only the scantiest records are available, even if more exists".<sup>111</sup>

The Foreign Office's 'unofficial' note added that the official papers of Sir Mark Sykes had been "unfortunately dispersed", and that "little referring to the Balfour Declaration has been found among such papers as have been preserved". The staff of the Middle East Department examined the Foreign Office papers, and, although finding nothing in

110. CO 733/28. The last paragraph of Ormsby-Gore's handwritten minute was omitted from the printed version of the above mentioned Cabinet Paper. Ormsby-Gore's minute will be analysed in detail on pp. 72-121 below. ( See Appendix A for original handwritten minute CO733/35). When Ormsby-Gore wrote this minute, he had just been appointed Under Secretary of State for the Colonies. It may be of interest to note that a writer in the Hebrew *Doar Hayom* wrote on 3 Nov 1922 expressing the view that he was optimistic about the future now that Ormsby-Gore was appointed Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, and that this was a very important gain for the Zionist cause.

111. CO 733/ 58. Secret Cabinet Memo. C.P. 60 (23) Palestine and the Balfour Declaration. 10 January 1923.

anything in them to prove his point. Moreover, Shuckburgh added, MacDonogh's name did not appear at all in Foreign Office files.<sup>109</sup> After hearing these arguments, the Secretary of State for the Colonies was convinced: "I think", he wrote on 10 January 1923, that "the time has come when the attention of the Cabinet should be directed to this aspect of the Palestine question and the best way of doing so will be to circulate the memorandum [of Shuckburgh] and Mr. Ormsby-Gore's minute."

Here is the full text of this important minute:

"I think it is very important that the story of the negotiations which led up to the Balfour Declaration of Nov. 2nd 1917 (before General Allenby's first great advance) should be set out for the Secretary of State and possibly the Cabinet. The F.O. and Sir Maurice Hankey both have material. The matter was first broached by the late Sir Mark Sykes early in 1916, and he interviewed Dr. Gaster and Sir Herbert Samuel on his own initiative as a student of Jewish politics in the Near East. Dr. Weizmann was then unknown. Sykes was furthered by General MacDunagh [sic], DMI [Director of Military Intelligence] as all the most useful and helpful intelligence from Palestine (then still occupied by the Turks) was got through and given with zeal by Zionist Jews who were from the first pro-British. Sir Ronald Graham took the matter up keenly from the Russian and East European point of view and early in 1917 important representations came from America. The form of the Declaration and the policy was debated more than once by the War Cabinet, and confidential correspondence (printed by Sir Maurice Hankey as a Cabinet paper) was entered into with leading Jews of different schools of thought. After the declaration, the utmost use was made of it by Lord Northcliffe's propaganda department, and the value of the declaration received remarkable tribute from General Ludendorf. On the strength of it we recruited special battalions of foreign Jews in New York for the British army with the leave of the American government.

The S. of S. [Secretary of State] should have a statement showing similar declarations by other powers up to and including the recent one of the American Senate, and also a summary of what has been done by the Jews already in Palestine, i.e. 4 millions of money, schools etc. Some of the Zionist organizations [sic] election leaflets were really rather effective. The Balfour Declaration in its final form was actually drafted by Col. Amery and myself. I wrote an article on the question in the XIXth

---

109. CO 733/58 - 10 January 1923.

## II. The British 'Official Account' of the Balfour Declaration

In order to reconstruct the story of the Balfour Declaration, and in view of the "discovery" by the head of the Middle East Department, Sir John Evelyn Shuckburgh, towards the end of 1922, that very little existed in government files to show conclusively why the government came to its decision, Shuckburgh sought information from all relevant sources available to him in order to complete his memorandum on the history of the negotiations leading up to the Declaration. On 10 January 1923, he minuted to William Ormsby-Gore, under secretary of state for the colonies, informing him that he had searched through the records obtained from the cabinet secretariat, and that, though these were most important and interesting, they threw no light on the earlier history of the negotiations. He admitted that he feared his own memorandum to be "very inadequate", because the "material available has not been sufficient to enable [me] to compile a complete and connected narrative".<sup>106</sup> But nevertheless Shuckburgh submitted the memorandum "...for what it may be worth as a humble experiment", as he put it, "in the art of making bricks without straw".<sup>107</sup> On the same day, Ormsby-Gore, who had been previously asked to write down a memorandum on what he had remembered, suggested that his own minute and Shuckburgh's memorandum might be worth printing for circulation. Ormsby-Gore also referred to a War Cabinet Paper<sup>108</sup> which, he stated, "gives a great deal of the information on which the Cabinet came to its decision", adding that he could state as a fact "that General MacDunagh [sic] as head of the Military Intelligence was one of the chief advocates of the declaration". Shuckburgh was also certain of MacDonogh's involvement. In the same minute to Ormsby-Gore, he said that he had "strong personal recollection that General MacDonogh used to urge the claims of Zionism in the days of the old 'Eastern Committee' and its predecessors", but added that, after having searched the records of the Committee, he had been unable to find

106. CO 733/58 . Minute, Shuckburgh to Ormsby-Gore; 10 January 1923.

107. Ibid.

108. The War Cabinet Paper referred to is in PRO, G 164, Oct. 17th 1917, Cab 24/4 and also 63/23. Secret Memo. Written by Hankey, entitled The Zionist Movement. It consists of 18 pages and is a highly significant document. It is reproduced in full in Appendix B below.

to expect a decisive victory in 1917...".<sup>100</sup>

This being the situation, the British government under Lloyd George took immediate steps towards launching its great offensive in the East. It sought to secure its aims in Palestine through a combination of military, diplomatic and political pressures.<sup>101</sup> On 25 April 1917, Weizmann met Herbert Samuel. According to the account of Vera Weizmann (Mrs. Chaim Weizmann), Samuel told the Zionist leader that the Sykes-Picot Agreement was unacceptable from the British point of view. He advised Weizmann to see the Foreign Office, and promised to go with him to meet Lloyd George.<sup>102</sup> All through this critical period in the few months preceding the Balfour Declaration, Weizmann received considerable help from Herbert Samuel.<sup>103</sup>

It was also in April of 1917 (when the Sykes-Picot Agreement was still a secret document) that Weizmann was "urged by British official quarters to go to Egypt, whence he was to go to Palestine with the object of raising world Jewish opinion in favour of some kind of nebulous scheme the full terms of which he himself did not know...".<sup>104</sup> However, despite Foreign Office encouragement, Vera Weizmann asserts that his visit to Palestine did not materialize, and instead, "an interlude which Chaim called 'Opera Bouffe intermezzo' divided the year at its middle".<sup>105</sup>

The story and details of the crucial months (April to November) which preceded the final announcement of the Balfour Declaration are the subject matter of a large literature. It is curious that, although the published material, as already noted, is overwhelming, official records in British archives reveal an almost total lack of documented evidence. The following pages will attempt to throw some fresh light on little known aspects of the Balfour Declaration from documents in question.

100. PRO. War Cabinet GT 363 Secret Cabinet memo 63/20 18 April 1917.

101. Herrman op.cit., p.201.

102. Weizmann, Vera. op.cit., p.70.

103. Chaim Weizmann, a Biography., By Several Hands ed. Meyer W. Weisgal, London, 1962 p.149

104. Weizmann, Vera op.cit., p.70

105. Ibid., p.71

proximately two months..."<sup>95</sup>

The situation looked very bleak, and to make matters worse the Russian revolution broke out in March of that year and Russia ceased to be an effective ally. A British offensive in Palestine (in Gaza) and in Mesopotamia had failed. The French and Italian armies had sustained heavy losses.<sup>96</sup> Leopold Amery noted that:

"...All these setbacks sank into insignificance compared with the appalling loss of shipping resulting from the new German policy of unlimited submarine warfare. Every month the figures rose higher. Over half a million tons of British and neutral shipping were sunk in February 1917, and over 600,000 tons in March, not far off a million in April. At one moment, of every 100 long-distance ships which left these shores, twenty-five failed to return. At that rate we could never have lasted out the year".<sup>97</sup>

Thus, disasters on the western front made the eastern front especially crucial.<sup>98</sup> Furthermore, in April 1917, the Imperial War Cabinet Committee on Territorial Desiderata argued that Palestine and Mesopotamia under hostile control would pose a threat to Britain's lifeline eastward. The Committee recommended modification of the Sykes-Picot Agreement in order to give Britain outright control over those two lands.<sup>99</sup> Under Lloyd George's instructions, Sir Maurice Hankey, Secretary to the War Cabinet, submitted a memorandum on 18 April 1917 reviewing the war situation. He wrote that "military and political events of tremendous import have occurred with the result that the situation has completely changed...". The Germans had intensified their submarine warfare, "unhampered by any regard whatsoever to international law or humanitarian considerations". There was also a German military withdrawal on the western front, the entry of the U.S. into the war, and the Russian revolution. Dismissing any military decision as a reasonable probability, Hankey concluded that "it would be unwise

95. CAB 63/ 19 1917. Memo written by A.G.Anderson & Devonport 3 February 1917.

96. Amery, op.cit., p.119.

97. Ibid.

98. Fromkin op.cit., pp.288-291.

99. Herrman I.M., op.cit., p.195.

ministration in this city," said Picot. Wavell noted that Allenby's chin "went up and out a little further than usual", as he replied that "Jerusalem was and would remain under martial law, for which he alone was responsible".<sup>92</sup>

Subsequently, in July 1918, Balfour said in a meeting of the Eastern Committee that "our object apparently now was to destroy the Sykes-Picot Agreement". Later, in August of the same year, he told the War Cabinet that the Sykes-Picot Agreement, though "still remaining as a diplomatic instrument, was historically out of date".<sup>93</sup> Thus, "largely through the efforts of one of its signatories", nothing came out of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, and from that point onwards Sykes became a sincere sympathizer who gave his whole-hearted support to Zionism. It was none other than Chaim Weizmann who described him as "one of our greatest finds".<sup>94</sup>

Did Sykes convert to Zionism in order to get rid of the Sykes-Picot Agreement? Or was it the opposite case? It is difficult to answer this question, but it is tempting to assume, at least for the moment, that by promising Palestine to the Jews on "religious" grounds, Sykes found a way out of the increasingly embarrassing agreement of 1916 which bears his name.

(7) During the course of 1917, the military situation worsened and the war went very badly on all fronts for the Allies. In February, Britain was faced by a near starvation situation. A War Cabinet memorandum, relying on information from the Ministry of Food, stated on 3 February 1917 that "the present stock of wheat in the UK is 7,673,000 quarters, or 12.25 weeks' consumption. Of this stock, 6 weeks' supply represents the irreducible minimum required to avoid local famine in view of the difficulties of distribution". The memorandum continued that to import this quantity for current British consumption would require one voyage each from 307 vessels of 25,000 quarters capacity each. "If these vessels," the memorandum added, "were sent to North America, the nearest supply, the round voyage would consume ap-

92. Wavell, op.cit., p.236

93. Knox, op.cit., pp.178-9

94. Weizmann, Vera. op.cit., pp. 68, 70.

inition of the Jewish nation, and second, for the right of this nation to settle in Palestine with full civic, national and political rights.<sup>88</sup> However, it is significant that when Sykes met Rabbi Moses Gaster (Chief Rabbi of the Sephardic Jewish community in England) early in 1917, the understanding he got from him was that Palestine should be organized on the lines of the Ottoman *millet* system. Gaster seems to have been quite happy for the Jews to be recognized as a 'nation' within such a system and granted the same internal autonomy as other millets or 'nations'. Moreover, Dr. Gaster later wrote in his diary on 30th January 1917 that Sykes was very pleased with the idea.<sup>89</sup>

As Sykes became more committed to the Zionist cause, it was becoming increasingly evident to him that the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 was an obstacle in the way of Zionist aspirations.<sup>90</sup> Also, subsequent events gave ample proof that the British Government no longer wished to commit itself to the terms of that Agreement, which proposed to place Palestine under a Franco-British condominium. It is interesting to note in this respect that Georges Picot<sup>91</sup> himself was attached to Allenby's staff as the French Political Representative when British troops entered Palestine. Sir Archibald Wavell, Allenby's commander-in-chief in the Middle East, described what went on between Allenby and Picot on the day of the official entry into Jerusalem: "And to-morrow, my dear General, we will take steps to set up an ad-

88. Weizmann, Vera. op.cit.. p. 66.

89. Stein, Leonard. The Balfour Declaration, London, 1961, p. 623.

90. In May 1916, a Franco-British-Russian secret Agreement about spheres of influence in Asia Minor, known as the Sykes-Picot-Sazovov Agreement, was concluded between the three powers, negotiations having started over a year earlier, in which the three powers defined their claims in Asiatic Turkey. Under the terms of this secret agreement, France and Britain were prepared to recognise and protect an independent state or confederation of Arab states, in areas designated A and B. Area A was to come under French influence, and B under British. Area A included Damascus, Homs, Aleppo, and Mosul (in northern Iraq), and Area B included the coast of Syria, Alexandretta, Latakia, Tripoli, Sidon and Tyre and other areas in Lebanon and Cilicia. Palestine was to be internationalised. The existence of the Sykes-Picot Agreement only became known following the outbreak of the Russian revolution in November 1917, when it was found in the archives of the Russian Foreign Office and published by order of Leon Trotsky. In the meantime, the negotiations with Sherif Hussein were concluded in June 1916, and the Arab Revolt, under his leadership started. See Zeine Zeine, The Struggle for Arab Independence. Western Diplomacy and the Rise and Fall of Feisal's Kingdom in Syria. 2nd ed. N.Y. 1977, pp. 13-15, 20.

91. Francois Georges Picot. French Foreign Office.

the war, which was Britain's foremost objective, but in which the British had been largely unsuccessful so far.<sup>82</sup> It is not known whether Malcolm was designated by the Zionist Organization for that mission, but he did serve as a go-between between Sykes and the Zionist leaders. In the face of this success, the Zionists took immediate action. Their first request was to be granted permission to use British communication facilities to contact Zionists throughout the world. The request was granted by the cabinet, "thus", in the opinion of one author, "unwittingly establishing a precedent of cooperation with the Zionists and making it impossible to reverse this policy", since the communication facilities were used to proclaim British support of Zionism throughout world Jewry.<sup>83</sup>

In December 1916, Lloyd George, by now a strong Zionist sympathizer, replaced Asquith as Prime Minister. With the appointment of Balfour, another pro-Zionist, at the head of the Foreign Office, "British commitment to Zionism was assured. It was only a matter of time".<sup>84</sup> Towards the end of January 1917, largely through Weizmann's initiative and with the help of his loyal Jewish friends such as Norman Bentwich, Harry Sacher, Dr. Gaster and Ahad Ha'am, a memorandum was submitted to Mark Sykes,<sup>85</sup> entitled: Outline of Programme for the Jewish Resettlement of Palestine in Accordance with the Aspirations of the Zionist Movement. According to Weizmann, this document was "the first approach to the integration of Zionism with the complex of realities".<sup>86</sup> Looking at it retrospectively, Weizmann asserted that it "does seem to have anticipated the shape of things to come".<sup>87</sup> According to the account of Vera Weizmann, the new memorandum mainly emphasized two points: First, it asked for the recog-

---

= the Peel Commission on the origins of the Balfour Declaration are available at the PRO. Another considerable collection exists in the Weizmann archives. ( See Jones, Philip. Compiled) Britain and Palestine 1914-1948. Archival Sources for the History of the British Mandate. Oxford University Press, 1979 p.85).

82. Taylor, op.cit., p.17, see also John and Hadawi, Ibid., p.69.

83. Taylor, Ibid.

84. Ibid, pp.17-18.

85. Weizmann, Vera. op.it., p.66.

86. Weizmann, Chaim. Trial and Error, The Autobiography of Chaim Weizmann Fourth Impression, London 1950, pp.235, 237.

87. Ibid., p.235

alone.<sup>77</sup> Thus, early in 1916, the British government took more practical steps to favour Zionism. In February 1916, Weizmann was appointed to the Admiralty under the supervision of Balfour in connection with the work he was conducting with high explosives, and Balfour, remembering his earlier promise, told Weizmann: "you know, after the war you may get your Jerusalem."<sup>78</sup>

It was also in February that a scheme of what was later to become a firmly established Zionist policy was quickly emerging. On 23 February 1916, Grey stated that "Jewish feeling which is now hostile [i.e. to the Allies] and favours a German protectorate over Palestine might be entirely changed if an American protectorate was favoured with the object of restoring Jews to Palestine".<sup>79</sup>

The idea of drawing world Jewry to the Allied cause was a central theme in British policy during those crucial months. Reaching an agreement with the Allies on the Zionist question was largely the responsibility of Mark Sykes, who had just been appointed as assistant secretary to the War Cabinet. Since only two such positions existed, (the other one was filled by Leopold Amery, as will be seen later), Sykes was put in total charge of Near Eastern affairs, which made him an extremely important figure in Zionist eyes.<sup>80</sup>

By October 1916, a certain James Malcolm, an Armenian-born engineer educated at Oxford, had entered into the picture.<sup>81</sup> Malcolm approached Sykes and revived his interest in Zionism, stressing the fact that Justice Louis Brandeis (a prominent American Zionist) had considerable influence on President Woodrow Wilson, and suggesting to Sykes that winning the American Zionists to the British side by offering Palestine (to the Jews) would pave the way to America's entry into

77. John and Hadawi, op.cit., p.30.

78. Taylor, op.cit., pp.14-15. Another author challenges Weizmann's patent for the production of acetone (which was an essential ingredient in the production of shells) on the grounds that Weizmann was accused of having "lifted" the secrets of the Synthetic Products Company, and that the voluminous official History of the Ministry of Munitions makes no mention of Weizmann's work. (for a more detailed analysis see: Chaim Weizmann's Scientific Work 1915-1918, Arabic and Islamic Garland, London, 1977 pp.228-239.

79. Vereté Mayir. The Balfour Declaration and its Makers. *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 6 - 1970, p.56.

80. Taylor, op.cit., p.15.

81. John and Hadawi, op.cit., p.67.

James Malcolm was a British Armenian pro-Zionist. The papers concerning his evidence to

both belligerents and neutrals are alike interested".<sup>75</sup>

In August 1915, a secret memorandum prepared by the Committee of Imperial Defence, (C.I.D.) entitled The Critical Urgency of the Turkish Campaign, set out to formulate a policy for the next few months. It stated that "...Our present failure to amass really irresistible [sic] numbers against Turkey connotes a stalemate fraught with the possibilities of politico-military disasters". The memorandum disclosed that the coming month of September would be "a great turning point in the European war", adding that "...the odds against the Entente may be vastly, perhaps fatally increased, if we cannot at once convince the doubting world that we shall inevitably crush Turkey's resistance within the next two months". Calling attention to Russia's extremely difficult position, lacking in munitions, the memorandum added that Turkish morale was very high, and that "...only literally overwhelming reinforcements can render mathematically certain a complete solution of the dangers arising for the Entente from the Turkish impasse...". To British decision makers, the future looked very grim indeed. The memorandum concluded by saying that:

"...A lightning blow, delivered with the force of a sledgehammer would crumple up the Turkish resistance, speedily release the bulk of the Entente troops fighting in the Near East, overawe the Balkans, establish our prestige for the carrying out of a crushing offensive, open the granaries of Russia for the Entente, and immeasurably more important, pierce a clear passage through which we could pour in munitions to our gigantic ally who is hourly looking to us for help from the South that never comes...".<sup>76</sup>

(6) With the advent of the year 1916, we get closer to the forces that drove the British government towards a more or less well-defined pro-Zionist policy. The year 1916 was a near catastrophe for the Allies. German submarine activity in the Atlantic was so great that nearly half a million tons of merchant shipping were sunk in that year

75. Ibid.

76. CAB 63/9 CID, Secret 24 August 1915, C.E. Heathcote-Smith to [Hankey?], (CAB 63 being Lord Hankey's Papers at the Public Records Office - Kew).

Mark Sykes as his "personal" (as distinct from his departmental) representative, and, through Sykes, Kitchener dominated the Committee's proceedings.<sup>70</sup> From that point onwards, Sykes was put in charge of Middle Eastern affairs throughout the war.<sup>71</sup> The Committee, which reported on 30 June 1915, recognized the importance of Palestine in the defence of Egypt and Britain's need for a port on the coast of Southern Syria (i.e. Haifa) serving as a Mediterranean terminus for British railway communications connecting the Mediterranean Sea to the Persian Gulf (to enable troops to move to and from India rapidly). The Committee warned that Britain could not guarantee today's friends would not be tomorrow's enemies, and worried about the possibility of a future Franco-Russian threat to the Suez Canal and the Persian Gulf.<sup>72</sup> The safeguarding of Britain's imperial communication lines with India was a major theme in the thinking of Mark Sykes, and he seems to have been the main force behind the Committee's advocacy of British control over Palestine.<sup>73</sup>

Some years later in 1923, mention of the de Bunsen Committee came in a secret Cabinet Paper on Palestine.<sup>74</sup> The Colonial Office wrote that

"It may be of interest, as bearing on the question of what was in the mind of His Majesty's Government in 1915, to call attention to the report of a Committee appointed in that year to consider the question of British Desiderata in Turkey in Asia, ... its report seems to have been the first attempt to formulate a policy for the ultimate disposal of conquered Turkish territory. Its recommendations formed the basis of much that took place subsequently...".

On Palestine, the report argued that it "must be regarded as a country whose destiny must be the subject of special negotiations, in which

70. At the beginning of the war, Kitchener had intended Britain should not be drawn into any involvement in the East. His main view was to disregard the East while focusing on the Western front, on the ground that Turkey did not pose a serious threat. This situation, however, changed later (see Fromkin, op.cit., p.119).

71. Fromkin, op.cit., p.146.

72. Ibid., p.62.

73. Ibid., p.73.

74. CO 733/58 CP149 (23), 13 March 1923.

The enlisting of Jewish support as a war measure is perhaps suggested for the first time in any official record when Samuel stated that "the course which is advocated would win for England the gratitude of the Jews throughout the world." Samuel concluded his memorandum by pointing out that although Great Britain did not enter the war with any territorial designs, yet, having made so many sacrifices, it would be disappointing to the country "if the outcome were to be the securing of great advantages by our Allies and none by ourselves".<sup>64</sup>

Prime Minister Asquith remained unconvinced. Calling Samuel's memorandum "dithyrambic",<sup>65</sup> he wrote in his diary, on 13 March 1915, that Lloyd George was the "only partisan" apart from Samuel.<sup>66</sup> Asquith added in a private conversation that Lloyd George "...does not care a damn for the Jews or their past or their future...". Still he could not comprehend the complex motives behind Samuel's and Lloyd George's advocacy of a British protectorate in Palestine. But in the end it was Kitchener, Secretary of State for War (1914-1916), who stood out against Samuel's proposal. He told the cabinet that Palestine was of little value, strategically or otherwise, and did not even have one "decent" harbour. Samuel's memorandum, therefore, was not adopted; but Lloyd George continued to disagree with Kitchener on the strategic value of Palestine.<sup>67</sup>

(5) In April 1915, a "Committee on Asiatic Turkey" was formed on the instructions of Asquith, and under the chairmanship of Sir Maurice de Bunsen, to advise the cabinet as to what Britain ought to seek in the Middle East.<sup>68</sup> Sir Mark Sykes, who was an adviser to the Foreign Office on Middle Eastern policy during World War I, as well as a member of the War Cabinet as expert on Middle Eastern Affairs, was appointed to the de Bunsen Committee.<sup>69</sup> All the major departments were represented in this committee. Kitchener's War Office was represented by Charles Caldwell, but, in addition, Kitchener placed Sir

64. Ibid.

65. I.e. wild; extravagant.

66. John and Hadawi, op.cit., p.62.

67. Fromkin, op.cit., p.270.

68. Ibid., p.146

69. Herrman I.M., op.cit., pp.56-57.

systematically set out to answer them. The memorandum began by forcefully asking: "If the war results in the break-up of the Turkish Empire in Asia, what is to be the future of Palestine?" Samuel gave five possible solutions and elaborated on each of them:

- (a) "Of the possible alternatives, the one most frequently discussed is annexation by France".
- (b) "A second alternative would be to leave the country to Turkey".
- (c) "A third alternative would be internationalization".
- (d) "Another alternative often suggested is the establishment in Palestine of an autonomous Jewish State".
- (e) "The last alternative is a British protectorate." <sup>62</sup>

Since what concerns us for the purposes of this study are the opinions expressed in points (d) and (e) of Samuel's memorandum, some elaboration is needed. Samuel dismissed the idea of the immediate establishment of an autonomous Jewish state. He said it was doomed to failure at that point in history, and asserted that

"...the dream of a Jewish State, prosperous, progressive, and the home of a brilliant civilization might vanish in a series of squalid conflicts with the Arab population ....To attempt to realize the aspiration of a Jewish State one century too soon might throw back its actual realization for many centuries more. These considerations are fully recognized by the leaders of the Zionist movement". <sup>63</sup>

Towards the end of his memorandum, Samuel concluded that the only feasible solution would be a British protectorate, under which "facilities would be given to Jewish organizations to purchase land, to found colonies, to establish educational and religious institutions, and to cooperate in the economic development of the country", giving preference to Jewish immigration, "so that in the course of time the Jewish inhabitants, grown into a majority and settled in the land, may be conceded such degree of self-government as the conditions of that day might justify".

62. Leaving the country to its Arab inhabitants as one of the suggested possibilities did not occur to Samuel.

63. PRO. Cabinet [CAB] 37/126. Secret Cabinet memo entitled Palestine. March 1915.

ist leaders under the leadership of Chaim Weizmann began their "unrelenting" campaign of approaching British political leaders and policy makers.<sup>58</sup> It was at the suggestions of Lloyd George that Weizmann renewed his contact with Balfour. It was also during this time that Weizmann informed C.P. Scott, pro-Zionist editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, that he had succeeded in producing acetone for use in explosives.<sup>59</sup>

Furthermore, in March 1915 Sir Edward Grey sent a memorandum to Sir Edward Buchanan, the British Ambassador to Russia, in which he outlined British thoughts on the relationship between Palestine and world Jewry. This memorandum, which the British ambassador was supposed to convey to Sazonoff, the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, stated Britain's intention of gaining the support of the majority of the world's Jews for the Allied cause. It expressed the belief that, if Jewish colonists in Palestine could compete with the Arab population, then the administration of that country could be placed in Jewish hands.<sup>60</sup>

(4) Again in March 1915, Herbert Samuel, the talented 'architect' of the Jewish national home, circulated another revised memorandum to the British cabinet, from which the word "annexation" was dropped. In the cabinet, Lloyd George and Balfour, already converts to Zionism, were warmly sympathetic, but Asquith (who was committed to the policy of befriending the Arabs and using them to replace the Turks as friends of Britain in the Near East) remained unconvinced.<sup>61</sup> In his five-page memorandum, Samuel considered five questions and

58. Amery, Leopold. *My Political Life*, Vol. II. *War and Peace 1914-1929* London 1953. p.114.

59. Born in Motel near Pinsk in 1874, Weizmann was a chemist by profession, and in 1904 was appointed lecturer in biological chemistry at Manchester University. In 1916, he became director of the British Admiralty Chemical Laboratories. The theory goes that his discovery of the use of acetone in explosives was an important element in the war effort and helped secure the Balfour Declaration for the Zionists. However, this theory has been challenged. See p. 40 below.

60. Taylor, Alan R. *Prelude To Israel, An Analysis of Zionist Diplomacy*. London 1959. pp.14-15.

61. Herrman I.M. op.cit., p.95. See also Taylor, *ibid.* p.13.

(2) This new policy of destroying the integrity of the Ottoman empire appears to have prompted Herbert Samuel, after having discussed the issue with Lloyd George and Chaim Weizmann, to submit to the cabinet, in January 1915, a memorandum on Palestine, in which he advocated British annexation of that country. The memorandum urged British support for Zionist aspirations. Some members of the cabinet, such as Sir Edward Grey, Lord Haldane, the Lord Chancellor, Lloyd George and the Marquess of Crewe, appear to have been sympathetic, while Edwin Montagu and Prime Minister Asquith gave no encouragement to such ideas. It was Asquith who remarked:

"I confess that I am not attracted by the proposed addition to our responsibilities, but it is a curious illustration of Dizzy's [Disraeli's] favourite maxim that 'race is everything' to find this almost lyrical outburst proceeding from the well ordered and methodical brain of H.S."<sup>55</sup>

Asquith also wrote that, at that moment, Grey and himself "are the only two men who doubt and distrust any such settlement. We both think that in the real interest of our own future, the best thing would be if, at the end of the War, we could say that... we have taken and gained nothing". The Prime Minister told members of his cabinet that when they discussed Ottoman territories, their "discussion had resembled that of a gang of buccaneers".<sup>56</sup>

Thus, in addition to the war consideration, it is possible that at a deeper level in his mind, Samuel, himself a Jew, thought of and was troubled by the rising wave of anti-semitism which was sweeping Poland in 1914-15; and this fact could have strengthened his Zionist argument for Palestine.<sup>57</sup>

(3) The year 1915 witnessed dramatic developments in favour of the government's pro-Zionist policy. Early in that year, according to Leopold Amery, one of the assistant secretaries of the War Cabinet, Zion-

55. Vital, David . Zionism. The Crucial Phase. Oxford, 1987 , p.95.

56. Fromkin, op.cit., pp.142-3.

57. For more details about the wave of anti-semitism sweeping Eastern Europe, see Herrman, IM. Anglo Zionist relations from Herzl to the Balfour Declaration 1902-1917 Ph.D. thesis, Oxford University 1971, pp. 93, 95.

"I spoke to Sir Edward Grey to-day about the future of Palestine. In the course of our talk I said that now that Turkey had thrown herself into the European War and that it was probable that their empire would be broken up, the question of the future of Palestine was likely to arise... Perhaps there might be an opportunity for the fulfillment of the ancient aspiration of the Jewish people and the restoration there of a Jewish State."

Samuel went on to say: "If a Jewish State were established in Palestine, it might become the centre of a new culture. The Jewish brain is rather a remarkable thing, and, under national auspices, the State might become a fountain of enlightenment and a source of a great literature and art and development of science." Samuel continued that his note (for November 9th) proceeded as follows: "Grey said that the idea had always had a strong sentimental attraction for him. The historical appeal was very strong. He was quite favourable to the proposal and would be prepared to work for it if the opportunity arose."<sup>50</sup>

It seems that Grey, however, did not envision the creation of a political entity in Palestine, and considered such views from the angle of establishing a Jewish cultural centre. Grey's views were said to have been conveyed by Weizmann, the chief Zionist negotiator, to the Zionist International.<sup>51</sup>

Also, towards the end of 1914, one of Lord Kitchener's<sup>52</sup> aides wrote to Sir Ronald Storrs<sup>53</sup> for comments on the role of Palestine, and Storrs replied:

"...A buffer state is most desirable, but can we get one up? There is no visible indigenous elements out of which a Moslem Kingdom of Palestine can be constructed. The Jewish State is in theory an attractive idea; but the Jews, though they constitute a majority in Jerusalem itself are very much in a minority in Palestine generally, and form indeed a bare sixth of the whole population".<sup>54</sup>

50. Ibid., pp.12-13.

51. John & Hadawi, op.it., pp. 60-61.

52. Kitchener of Khartoum. Secretary of State for War 1914-1916.

53. Oriental Secretary, British Agency in Egypt, 1909-17. Military Governor of Jerusalem, 1917-20 . Civil Governor Jerusalem and Judea, 1920-26.

54. Fromkin, op.cit., p.143, quoting the Kitchener Papers PRO 30/57 45 Document 0073. The author does not give the exact date of this document.

1935 on the subject of Great Britain and Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel noted that:

"...In November 1914, Turkey joined the Central Powers. It became obvious that, if the war ended in their defeat, the future destiny of the non-Turkish provinces of the Sultan would come up for settlement. They were held precariously. Their populations had been alienated by centuries of misrule. The break-up of the Turkish Empire, long overdue, was now almost inevitable. The future of Palestine would raise a question of the greatest interest. It became plain at once that Zionism had acquired a new actuality-vivid, urgent. ...Events that were unexpected gave me a share in the writing of this chapter..." 49

Herbert Samuel informed his audience that he had developed the Zionist position further in a talk with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Sir Edward Grey, on 9 November 1914. Samuel also reveals that before that date he had had no connection with the Zionist movement, but now, "suddenly, the conditions were entirely altered". He went on to say :

"As the first member of the Jewish community ever to sit in a British Cabinet - (Disraeli had left the community in boyhood and never re-joined) - I felt that, in the conditions that had arisen, there lay upon me a special obligation."

He informed his listeners that he had then made a study of Zionism and its achievements and knew all that there was to know about Palestine. Soon afterwards, he had met Weizmann for the first time, and soon arrived at the definite conclusion that when the war ended in the victory of the Allies, "the opportunity should be taken to facilitate the establishment of a great autonomous Jewish community there". Samuel also read out from his old papers notes of a conversation he had had with Sir Edward Grey on 9 November 1914:

---

49. Lecture delivered by the Rt. Hon. Sir Herbert Samuel, on 25 November 1935 (The Second Lucien Wolf Memorial Lecture). The Jewish Historical Society - University College London. p.11.

Towards the end of the 1870s, the idea of the 'restoration of the Jews' combined with pure imperialist tendencies to produce all kinds of 'secular' projects for colonisation. As the concept of the 'conversion' of Jews to Christianity lost its attractiveness, the vision of the 'return' of the Jews to the land of their fathers lingered, and was a common feature of English literature on Palestine during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. During World War I fascination with this secularised concept of restoration mixed with short-term political considerations and imperial strategies to produce the Balfour Declaration of 1917.

The ensuing pages will attempt to highlight some of the important landmarks in British Zionist policy, tracing its origins to the period immediately following the outbreak of World War I. However, it is not the aim of the present study to give a new account of the events leading up to the Balfour Declaration, but simply to focus on the official British version and interpretation of this document, as they emerge in British archives.

(1) On 9 November 1914, Great Britain abandoned its former and traditional eastern policy of maintaining the integrity of the Ottoman empire when Prime Minister Asquith announced, four days after Britain declared war on Turkey, that the dismemberment of the Turkish empire had now become a war aim, thus overturning the foreign policy of more than a century.<sup>47</sup> After the Asquith announcement, the cabinet discussed the subject, and Lloyd George, mentioning the "ultimate destiny in Palestine", assured Herbert Samuel (Liberal MP and later first High Commissioner in Palestine 1920-25) that "he was very keen to see a Jewish State established in Palestine".<sup>48</sup>

More than twenty years later, at a lecture delivered on 25 November

47. This was a turning point in British policy towards the Ottoman empire. What was known as the Eastern Question had been governed by the need to safeguard the routes to India by keeping the Ottoman empire intact. This policy meant that Britain could not afford to lose the Arab provinces of the Ottoman empire. See Knox, Dennis. The Development of British Policy in Palestine, 1917-1925: Sir Gilbert Clayton and the "New Eastern Question". Ph.D. Thesis. Michigan State University, 1971. p.26.

48. John and Hadawi. op.cit., p.60. See also Knox, *ibid.*, p.40.

beginning of the 19th century, the millenarian doctrine, which had been developed by Anglican Messianism and Evangelism, and accepted by non-governmental movements whose efforts in this direction played a role in shaping the Palestine policy, was almost completely finalised so that no new additions to this idea were added in the course of the century. The basic millenarian concept can be summarised as follows: an integral element for the fulfillment of the prophecies about the Last Day was the return of the Jews to the land of their fathers, to which they had an "inalienable right". The end of their Diaspora, their physical and religious restoration, and their gathering in Palestine and acceptance of the Christian gospel, was thought to be an essential part of the divine plan for human redemption, which would prepare the way for the 'Second Coming' of Christ and the establishment of his Kingdom on earth. The question of whether the conversion of Jews to Christianity must take place before or after their "repatriation" was not settled.<sup>45</sup>

As early as 1840, after Britain had assisted the Ottoman Sultan in regaining control of Palestine from his rebellious vassal Mohammad 'Ali Pasha, the ruler of Egypt, the Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston, had appointed the first British Vice-Consul in Jerusalem, and instructed him to protect the Jews inhabiting Palestine. As Palmerston explained to the British ambassador in Constantinople:

"It would be of manifest importance for the Sultan to encourage the Jews to return to, and settle in Palestine; because the wealth which they would bring with them would increase the resources of the Sultan's dominions ; and the Jewish people, if returning under the sanction and protection and at the invitation of the Sultan, would be a check upon any future evil designs of Mohammad Ali or his successor..."<sup>46</sup>

45. Scholch, Alexander. Palestine in Transformation, 1856-1882. Studies in Social, Economic and Political Development. Institute for Palestine Studies, Washington D.C. 1993. pp.61-62. And for an elaboration on this point see Sharif, Regina. Non-Jewish Zionism. Its Roots in Western History London, 1983. Also See Vereté, Mayir. The Restoration of Jews in English Protestant Thought 1790-1840 *Middle Eastern Studies* 8, no. 1. 1972.

46. Stewart, Desmond. Herzl. London 1974. p. 209.

Wavell also noted that the declaration had been made on the very day the third battle of Gaza was in full swing, adding that "few realized its significance or danger at the time".<sup>42</sup>

Other officials on the spot held similar views. Sir Gilbert Clayton, chief political officer to General Allenby, and later chief secretary in Palestine (1922-25), wrote to Sykes one month after the issuance of the Balfour Declaration, suggesting that it might have been a mistake: "I am not fully aware of the weight which Zionists carry, especially in America and Russia, and of the consequent necessity of giving them everything for which they may ask...".<sup>43</sup>

A few years later, J.M.N. Jeffries, the *Daily Mail* correspondent, who was sent to Palestine to report on the situation there, wrote on 10 January 1923 quoting from a Zionist report, that "...Naturally anxious to avoid any friction which might hinder the freedom of further military operations, they preferred to abstain from any mention of the fact that the British Government had promised to support Zionist aspirations". Jeffries here poses a question: "Now what does that mean, put into plain English? It means that the British Government has issued a Declaration so high-handed, unwarranted and dangerous that it was an impediment to the progress of the British Army, it had to be suppressed", and continued "...has any British Government before been censored by its own forces in the field, as if its pronouncements had been written by the enemy?... It is a strange Magna Charta [sic] which cannot be published in Runnymede".<sup>44</sup>

## II. Origins of British Zionist Policy: A General Background

Britain's interest in Palestine was much older than the strategic considerations which became manifest during the latter part of the 19th Century, and was deeply rooted in her intellectual history and a millenarian concept of the 'restoration of the Jews' to the holy land. By the

42. Sir Archibald Wavell, *Allenby*. London 1940, pp.236-37.

43. Fromkin, op.cit., p.317

44. J.M.N. Jeffries. *The Palestine Deception - Tricks of the Balfour Declaration*, *Daily Mail* 10 January 1923. CO 733/54.

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation. <sup>38</sup>

In Britain, the letter reached the general public on November 9th, when it was reproduced in the *Times* as well as in the *Jewish Chronicle* and other national papers. <sup>39</sup> To inform world Jewry, millions of leaflets were dropped from the air on Austrian and German towns, and over the Jewish belt from Poland to the Black Sea. <sup>40</sup>

In Palestine, the letter was not officially read until three years later. When Palestine came under British military control towards the end of 1917, the Military Administration, well aware of the depth of Arab hostility towards Zionist designs in Palestine, withheld its publication for fear of an uprising. It was not before May 1920, during the final days of the Military Administration in Palestine (known as Occupied Enemy Territory Administration - O.E.T.A. South) that the text of the declaration was officially read out in Nablus by Sir Louis Bols, third and last of the Chief Military Administrators. <sup>41</sup>

Why did Allenby remain silent on the declaration, censoring all mention of it as he launched his great offensive? The best answer to this question can be derived from Allenby's biographer, General Wavell, who noted that:

"...with the entry into Palestine and capture of Jerusalem political as well as military problems began to occupy Allenby. Palestine presented some very thorny and difficult questions. The awkwardness of reconciling our pledges to the Arabs, our undertakings to our Allies (the Sykes-Picot Agreement), and the Balfour Declaration to the Zionists was already becoming evident to those who knew of them... He refused to allow the Balfour Declaration to be published in Palestine".

38. The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann. Vol. VII, Aug. 1914 - Nov. 1917, ed. Meyer Weisgal (Oxford 1975).

39. J.M.N. Jeffries. Analysis of the Balfour Declaration, in Khalidi, op.cit., p.175.

40. John and Hadawi. op.cit., p.90. quoting Cmd 5479 - Palestine Royal Commission Report (Peel Report) 1937. It is also important to note that in 1917, it was Germany, and not Russia, that controlled about 6 million Jews following German conquests in Eastern Europe. See for instance, Tibawi, A.L. Anglo-Arab Relations and The Question of Palestine 1914-1921. London, 1978, p. 213.

41. Presland, John. Deedes Bey, London 1942, p.322.

prising that the Balfour Declaration, in its origins and in its motives, even regarding the identities of those who had a hand in drafting it, remains a controversial issue, even today, more than eighty years since its publication.<sup>35</sup>

This belief is further reinforced when we learn that the Colonial Office was not able to find any material of importance relating to this question in the records of the Foreign Office either. Shuckburgh minuted to Ormsby-Gore on 21 December 1922, telling him that the contents of the Foreign Office papers had been found to be disappointing.<sup>36</sup>

The substance of the Balfour Declaration itself is too well known to need repetition, but for purposes of accuracy it is necessary to remind the reader of the text of this famous document. On 2nd November, 1917, one month before General Allenby's 'historic' advance in Palestine, the Foreign Office sent a message, signed by A.J. Balfour, Foreign Secretary of the British government, to world Jewry. It was addressed to Lionel Walter, Lord Rothschild, at his home in 148 Piccadilly.<sup>37</sup> The letter read:

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of his Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by the Cabinet.

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

35. It may be of interest, in this regard, to mention that Mrs. Weizmann, in her diary entry for November 6, 1930, the day Weizmann met Ramsay MacDonald, quotes the Prime Minister as saying: "Balfour was always ambiguous in his statements, the Colonial Office always speaks of some secret documents in its possession about the Declaration". See Vera Weizmann, The Impossible Takes Longer, Memoirs by the wife of Israel's first President as told by David Tutaev. London, 1967. p.116.

36. CO733/58 History of the Negotiations... op.cit.

37. Bermant, Chaim. The Cousinhood N.Y 1971, p.134

However, by 1923 the Colonial Office had already decided that the policy of the declaration was not susceptible to change, echoing what Churchill had previously told the Arab delegation (in London) in the summer of 1921 : <sup>32</sup>

"The British Government mean to carry out the Balfour Declaration. I have told you so again and again. I have told you so at Jerusalem. I told you so at the House of Commons the other day. I tell you so now. They mean to carry out the Balfour declaration. They do." <sup>33</sup>

More of the arguments developed in the official records in question will be revealed as this study progresses. But before doing so, it is necessary to draw attention to a most unusual phenomenon which these documents expose along the way: namely, *the scarcity of official records on the origins of the Balfour Declaration*. As the Colonial Office (responsible for Palestine since March 1921) sought to review the entire problem, it "discovered" that "very little is recorded", and Captain William Ormsby-Gore, Under Secretary for Colonies 1922-24, had to be asked to add what he remembered to the very "scanty material available". When Balfour was consulted, the official story asserts that he was unable to help. He was suffering from bad memory, and he regretted the death of Mark Sykes, who, he said, "had the whole thing at his finger's ends". From the little material available to him, Shuckburgh was not able to find out what were the "precise reasons" that led His Majesty's Government to issue such a declaration. Furthermore, he discovered that the correspondence previous to the declaration was not available in the Colonial Office, although Foreign Office papers were understood to have been lengthy and to have covered a considerable period. <sup>34</sup> This being the case, it is hardly sur-

32. In the summer of 1921, the Arab Executive Committee, leading the Arab nationalist movement in Palestine, decided to send a delegation to London to seek to convince the British government to abandon the Balfour Declaration. Having spent a year in London, nevertheless returned empty-handed due to the pro-Zionist policy adopted by the Colonial Secretary, Churchill, as well as the staff of the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office under whose authority Palestine was placed. (See note 4. above)

33. Fromkin, op.cit., p.524.

34. CO 733/58 C.P. 60 (23) History of the Negotiations Leading up to the Balfour Declaration December 1922

The significance of the King-Crane Commission is that it was the only international body to ascertain the wishes of the local inhabitants when the future of the Near East was being discussed at the Peace Conference. However, nothing came out of the King-Crane Commission, its only significance being eventually that of a historical document for the use of future researchers. In fact, its findings were kept secret for a very long time to come.

It is likewise ironic that the fate of Palestine seems to have been decided before the King-Crane Commission embarked on its trip to the Near East. About two weeks earlier, on 11 August 1919, Balfour had stated that the four Great Powers were committed to Zionism, and that "Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long traditions, in present needs, in future hopes, of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land..."<sup>30</sup>

More evidence of what was in store for Palestine can be derived from an intriguing conversation which is said to have taken place in Mr. Balfour's house, two years later, on 22 July 1921. Present were Lloyd George, Arthur Balfour, Winston Churchill, Maurice Hankey, Edward Russell and the Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann. Weizmann is said to have asked Churchill: "If you do the same thing in Palestine [i.e. introduce self-government] it means giving up Palestine, and that is what I want to know." To this Lloyd George remarked: "You mustn't give representative government to Palestine"; whereas Churchill answered that he "might have to bring it before the Cabinet". Churchill added that enormous difficulties had arisen owing to the Balfour Declaration, "which was opposed by the Arabs, nine tenths of the British officials on the spot, and some Jews in Palestine".<sup>31</sup>

---

Syrian Congress King of a united Syria, including Palestine. However, his kingdom was short-lived, and it was only three months later that the French forces were allowed by the British to occupy Syria and oust King Faisal. Herbert Samuel, the newly appointed High Commissioner in the Civil Administration in Palestine, realised that recognising Faisal as King of a united Syria "would tend to take life out of Zionist movement" and was instrumental in a British decision to oust Faisal. PRO. Foreign Office [FO] 371/5034 Samuel to Curzon 27 March 1920.

30. Memorandum by Mr. Balfour, August 11, 1919. See Khalidi W., *ibid.*, p.226 .

31. Quoted in John & Hadawi, *op.cit.*, p. 174 .

"definite encouragement had been given to the Zionists by the Allies in Mr. Balfour's often quoted statement", adding that "it can hardly be doubted that the extreme Zionist Program must be greatly modified". The report went on to say that a national home for the Jewish people is not equivalent to a Jewish state, and that the Jewish state cannot be accomplished "without the gravest trespass upon the 'civil and religious rights of existing not-Jewish communities in Palestine'....". Furthermore, the Commission noted, their repeated conference with Jewish representatives indicated that "the Zionists looked forward to a practically complete dispossession of the present non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine by various forms of purchase". The report concluded that "the non-Jewish population of Palestine - nearly nine tenths of the whole - are emphatically against the entire Zionist program... To subject a people so minded to unlimited Jewish immigration, and to steady financial and social pressure to surrender the land, would be a gross violation of the principle just quoted, and of the people's rights"... The Commission thus pleaded with the Peace Conference

"... not to shut its eyes to the fact that anti-Zionist feeling in Palestine and Syria is intense and not lightly to be flouted. No British officer, consulted by the Commissioners, believed that the Zionist program could be carried out except by force of arms.... That of itself is evidence of a strong sense of the injustice of the Zionist program, on the part of the non-Jewish populations of Palestine and Syria".

The Commission also challenged the "initial claim" submitted by Zionist representatives that Jews have a "right to Palestine based on an occupation of two thousand years ago" as a claim that "can hardly be seriously considered". In view of the above considerations, and "with a deep sense of sympathy for the Jewish cause", the Commissioners recommended that "only a greatly reduced Zionist program be attempted by the Peace Conference, and even that, only very gradually initiated ... and that the project for making Palestine distinctly a Jewish commonwealth should be given up". The King-Crane Commission saw "no reason why Palestine could not be included in a united Syrian State".<sup>29</sup>

29. Khalidi, op.cit., pp.213-218.

It should be noted that in March 1920, Faisal, Sherif Hussein's son, was proclaimed by the

It will therefore be essential to go a little bit back in time and to focus attention on this aspect of the case.

Although the covenant of the League of Nations emphasized the notion of self-determination, and that the wishes of the inhabitants must be a principal consideration in the selection of the mandatory power, the Foreign Secretary, Balfour had other plans concerning the future of Palestine. In a secret memorandum to the British cabinet, Respecting Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia, he wrote in 1919:

"... Take Syria first. Do we mean, in the case of Syria, to consult principally the wishes of the inhabitants? We mean nothing of the kind... So whatever the inhabitants may wish, it is France they will certainly have. They may freely choose; but it is Hobson's choice after all.... The contradiction between the letter of the Covenant and the policy of the Allies is even more flagrant in the case of the 'independent nation' of Palestine... For in Palestine we do not propose even to go through the form for consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country" <sup>27</sup>

However, when the inhabitants were consulted by the King-Crane Commission in 1919, the British refused to publish its findings for many years to come. <sup>28</sup> It was at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 that it was agreed by the American, British, French and Italian governments to send an international commission to ascertain the wishes of the Near East peoples. After British, French and Italian refusal to participate, the American team, composed of Mr. King and Mr. Crane, proceeded to the Near East as an exclusively American Commission on behalf of President Wilson. Though a comprehensive treatment of the subject is beyond the scope of the present study, the conclusions and recommendations of the King-Crane Commission, which were submitted to the Paris Peace Conference on 28 August 1919, are sufficiently important to require consideration in some detail here. The report recommended "Serious modification of the extreme Zionist Program for Palestine of unlimited immigration of Jews, looking finally to making Palestine distinctly a Jewish State". It also found out that

27. Khalidi, W. op.cit., see Introduction, also pp. 201-213.

28. Mr. H.C. King was President of Oberlin College, and Mr. C.R. Crane was an American businessman and prominent member of the Democratic Party.

years ago... Further, it has been the basis upon which Zionist co-operation in the development of Palestine has been freely given and upon which very large sums of Jewish money have since been subscribed. Whether this policy has been wise or unwise, the above considerations,<sup>23</sup> which cannot be disputed, possess a cumulative weight from which it is well-nigh impossible for any Government to extricate itself without a substantial sacrifice of consistency and self respect, if not honour. Those of us who have disliked the policy are not prepared to make that sacrifice. Those of us who approved the policy throughout would, of course, speak in much less equivocal terms".<sup>24</sup>

Although the report concluded by stating that "Nevertheless, the alternative of a complete reversal of the policy hitherto pursued is one that, whatever the price that might have to be paid for it, we have not dogmatically refused to consider...",<sup>25</sup> it listed four reasons, in addition to the above, which led them against such a course; strategic considerations being among the listed reasons. Though the Committee of Imperial Defence (CID), when asked early in July 1923 to determine how far, "quite apart from pledges and commitments of every kind" Palestine was to be regarded as of strategic value to the British empire, reported that Palestine was not as important strategically as once thought, the Middle East Department decided :

"Although the strategical value of Palestine is rated by the Imperial General Staff less highly than it had been placed by some authorities, yet none of us can contemplate with equanimity the installation in Palestine of another power ... we see no way of reversing the policy without throwing up the Mandate."<sup>26</sup>

However, it will be later seen that even the strategic importance of Palestine was a controversial matter upon which the major departments consulted were not in complete agreement. On the other hand, and of substantial importance to the above argument is the question of consulting the wishes of the local inhabitants.

23. The report here refers to international consent, the League of Nations resolutions, and Zionist money in developing Palestine

24. CO733/58 - Secret Cabinet Report CP 351 (23), 27 July 1923

25. Ibid.

26. CO 733/58, 2 July 1923.

Whether the British government derived any benefits from their Jewish friends, as official documents reveal, is open to question. On 17 February 1923 another secret memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Duke of Devonshire, entitled Policy in Palestine, noted that:

"...These benefits may or may not have been worth securing, and may or may not have been actually secured; but the objections to going back on a promise made under such conditions are obvious. The Jews would naturally regard it as an act of baseness if, having appealed to them in our hour of peril, we were to throw them over when the danger was past. That is how they would put it, and it is difficult to see what adequate defence could be made" 20

The above-quoted memorandum merely repeated what Shuckburgh, head of the Middle East Department, had minuted to the Secretary of State the previous month. Shuckburgh had already written in January "...Whether these benefits were in fact secured or not, is beside the point. We cannot go back on a promise made under such conditions"<sup>21</sup> This demonstrates that the benefits that the British War Cabinet had hoped to secure by making promises to world Jewry were not, in fact, secured.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, on 27 July 1923 the Cabinet Committee on Palestine under Colonial Secretary Devonshire submitted to the cabinet its report entitled *The Future of Palestine*, which was aimed at advising the cabinet as to the policy to be adopted by the government in this regard. The report admitted that:

"...There are some of our number who think that the Declaration was both unnecessary and unwise, and who hold that our subsequent troubles have sprung in the main from its adoption. But that was nearly six

20. CO 733/58 - Secret Cabinet memo C.P. 106 (23) 17 February 1923.

21. CO 733/54 - Minute, Shuckburgh to Devonshire, 8 January 1923.

22. The authors of one book observe that there is no evidence to suggest the Balfour Declaration had secured for the British government any substantial Jewish contribution to an Allied victory, adding that "...If there were such evidence, it would merely support the Hitlerian assertion that Jewish machinations were the main cause of Germany's defeat and subsequent impoverishment". See John, Robert & Hadawi, Sami. The Palestine Diary 1914-45 Vol. 1. Beirut 1970, p.91.

In December 1922, Shuckburgh had submitted a memorandum to this effect, entitled *Palestine: The Zionist Policy*, in which he wrote:

"In spite of the protests of the Arabs, who form much the largest part of the population of Palestine, and of repeated criticisms in the Parliament and the press, His Majesty's Government have consistently adhered to the position that they are bound to give effect to the Balfour Declaration and intend to do so... whatever may or may not have been our motives, it must always be remembered that the Declaration was made at a time of extreme peril to the cause of the Allies. Our offensive of the previous summer and autumn had failed to achieve any decisive result. Russia had dropped out of the alliance, and the Germans were busy transferring army corps from the Eastern to the Western front in preparation for the grand attack which in the Spring of 1918 was to sweep the British and French armies into the sea. How narrowly the German attack failed in its object is a matter of history. The point is that, having cried out to the Jews in our moment of agony (that is how they would put it), we cannot throw them when the peril is past..... A Jewish National Home will be founded in Palestine. The Jewish people will be in Palestine as of right and not on sufferance...."<sup>18</sup>

Again in a minute to the Secretary of State, Shuckburgh wrote on 8 January 1923:

"We made our promise to the Jews at a time of grave national emergency, because we thought we might obtain some assistance from them. We induced our Allies to become parties to the promise. Finally we had it formally ratified.... It seems to me that, if we are to tear up our pledge, there is only one ground on which we would possibly do so. We should have to announce to the world that we have undertaken a task beyond our strength and that we have no alternative but to put it aside. In that event we must clear out of Palestine altogether. I feel strongly that we should be placed in an intolerable position if, after breaking faith with the Jews, we were to maintain any connection with the country from which we derived, or could be held to derive, any conceivable benefit. We certainly should stand convicted of an act of perfidy from which it is hardly too much to say that our good name would never recover. The real alternative thus lies between complete evacuation or continuing to honour the Zionist pledge."<sup>19</sup>

18. CO 733/35 - Memo by Shuckburgh, 21 December 1922 .

19. CO 733/54 - Minute, Shuckburgh to Secretary of State for Colonies, 8 January 1923.

Palestine from £8 million in 1920 to £4 million in 1921 and to an estimated £2 million in 1922.<sup>15</sup> With Commons voting in favour of the policy, the way was open for the League of Nations to formally approve Britain's mandate for Palestine on 24 July. Although the House of Lords motion was unsuccessful, it had one important effect, for it focused attention on the Jewish question, and the Colonial Office was asked to explain the government's policy and intentions regarding Zionism and the policy to be adopted in Palestine. Under these circumstances, and in order to give a new assessment of the whole situation, the Colonial Office began by asking three important question:

- 1- "Is there anything in the British Government's pledges to the Arabs that precludes effect being given to the Balfour Declaration in favour of setting up a National Home for the Jews in Palestine?"
- 2- "If the answer is in the negative, are we to continue the policy of the late Government in giving effect to the Balfour Declaration on the lines laid down in the White Paper of June 1922?"<sup>16</sup>
- 3- and "If not, what alternative policy are we to adopt?"<sup>17</sup>

The internal minutes and memoranda reveal that as the Colonial Office set out to answer these questions, it faced some thorny issues which it would have preferred not to discuss at all, such as the McMahon pledge to Sherif Hussein in 1915 and the Allenby Proclamation of 1918 (known also as the Anglo-French Declaration of November 1918). Nevertheless, the Colonial Office concluded, after some investigation, that there was 'nothing' in those pledges to prevent the 'national home' policy from being executed, since 'nothing' was promised to the Arabs; and that the policy of the Balfour Declaration, whether justified or not, whether "wise or unwise", was to continue despite many warnings of the danger of this policy and its consequences, and regardless of the wishes of the vast majority of the population of Palestine.

15. Ibid., pp .525-526

16. The White Paper of 1922, known also as Churchill's White Paper, was the first official British attempt to interpret the Balfour Declaration.

17. CO 733/ 58. Secret Cabinet Memo 17 Feb. 1923, C.P. 106 (23) .

## I. Introductory Note to Part One

In January 1923, the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office<sup>13</sup>, headed by Sir John Evelyn Shuckburgh, submitted a memorandum entitled Policy in Palestine to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Duke of Devonshire, for circulation to the cabinet. It was one of a series of memoranda started towards the end of 1922 and lasting well into 1924, expressing the opinion that a definite statement on the government's pro-Zionist policy should be made on behalf of the Government with as little delay as possible. These memoranda, which were of a highly confidential and secret nature, were aimed at setting out the history of the Balfour Declaration, five years after it was issued. The staff of the Middle East Department were prompted to look into the history of the declaration as a result of the great controversy during that period, both in Parliament and in the press, regarding the 'wisdom' of the government's pro-Zionist policy, at a time when public support for the Balfour Declaration, and for the government's Palestine policy, were rapidly declining.

It was also in 1922 that the *Times* published a series of articles attacking Britain's involvement in Palestine, mainly from the taxpayer's viewpoint, and concluded that although it was an "interesting experiment", the question is whether Britain can afford it.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, in June 1922, a motion was introduced in the House of Lords declaring that the Mandate for Palestine, which incorporated the Balfour Declaration, was 'unacceptable'. Although sixty peers voted for, and twenty-five against, it was a non-binding motion, and Churchill, Colonial Secretary at the time, succeeded in reversing its effect when he convinced the House of Commons that he had cut the cost of maintaining

13. On the role played by the Middle East Department of Britain's Colonial Office in shaping Palestine policy from early 1921 to September 1923, see Huneidi, Sahar. Was Balfour Policy Reversible? The Colonial Office and Palestine 1921-23. In *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 27, no. 2 ( Winter 1998) pp.23-41. The article shows the department's efforts to neutralise the growing domestic challenges to the Jewish national home policy, and highlights the contrast between the department's treatment of the successive Arab delegations and the privileged access accorded to the Zionist, and concludes that if there were times during this period that the policy could have been overturned, the efforts of the Middle East Department were largely responsible for keeping it on course.

14. Fromkin, op.cit., p.525.



# **Part One**



laration'. It has been suggested that he may have been driven by a desire to 'correct' his previous deeds, and to annul the charge of 'anti-semitism' he was labelled with. Though it would be useful to gain some more insight about this issue, our sources do not reveal more about the subject.

ommended, *inter alia*, that an alien arriving in Britain might be required to furnish a certificate with respect to his character and antecedents, that 'undesirables' might be refused permission of entry, that power should be given to the Secretary of State to exclude criminals, and that the residence of aliens in a 'prohibited area' might either be prohibited or regulated.<sup>9</sup>

The Bill was heavily attacked by the leaders of Anglo-Jewry. It was also the first instance in which Winston Churchill, a Conservative MP, participated in a public debate opposing the Bill, on the grounds that it was contrary to Britain's traditions to shut its doors against unfortunates who had fled there. Eventually the Bill was modified, and replaced by the Aliens Act of 1905 under Prime Minister A.J. Balfour. However, this, too was received by the Jews of England with deep resentment.<sup>10</sup> Although the Aliens Act of 1905 was considered by its opponents as an improvement upon its predecessor, it was attacked on the grounds that it did not make any exception in the case of victims of religious persecution, that persons refused permission to land had no right of appeal to the ordinary courts of law, that the Act enabled the expulsion of persons on 'trivial' grounds, and that it threw on shipping companies the cost of returning aliens subsequently expelled, which was bound to affect the traffic in immigration.<sup>11</sup>

Balfour was bitterly attacked by the *Jewish Chronicle*, as well as in the Seventh Zionist Congress, and was charged with "open anti-Semitism against the whole Jewish people".<sup>12</sup> Twelve years later, the same Balfour, was to endorse the Zionist cause with his 'Balfour Dec-

---

= is bound to go on with increasing force from Eastern Europe. The Jews of Eastern Europe cannot stay where they are- where are they to go? If you find they are not wanted here, then some place must be found to which they can migrate without that migration raising the problems that confront them here. Those problems will not arise if a home be found for them which will be legally recognised as Jewish". See Rabinowicz, Oskar K. The Aliens Bill and Jewish Immigration to Britain. 1902-1905. in Khalidi, W. op.cit., p. 98.

9. Ibid., pp. 99-100.

10. They argued that the Bill could be taken as a justification "for every Jew hater and Jew persecutor" who might point to this Act and say "if England had to legislate against the Jew, is it not proof that he is right in other circumstances to exercise towards him more violent methods?" See p. 109, ibid.

11. Ibid., p. 108.

12. Ibid., p. 112.

W.Ormsby-Gore; together they succeeded in converting the War Cabinet secretariat to the Zionist cause. Balfour, already a convert to Zionism, was pushed forward by such men within his own department as Ronald Graham and Robert Cecil. Jan Smuts was deeply pro-Zionist.<sup>6</sup> Lloyd George, the Prime Minister, (in 1917) had for a long time planned to carry out a Zionist programme in Palestine.<sup>7</sup> Those in government who opposed the Zionist programme, and at one stage almost brought it to an end, including Edwin Montagu, Secretary of State for India, (and anti-Zionist Anglo-Jew) and Lord Curzon, as member of the War Cabinet, stood little chance in the face of such whole-hearted sympathizers to Zionism.

It is also interesting to mention that Balfour's motives behind supporting the pro-Zionist declaration remain unclear. In 1905, his name was linked with the Aliens Act to control Jewish immigration into Britain. The influx of Jews from Russia and Rumania to Britain during the early 1880s caused the British government to introduce the Aliens Bill of 1904 and the Aliens Act of 1905 to control unrestricted immigration by legislation. The 1904 Aliens Bill was based on the recommendations of a Royal Commission,<sup>8</sup> appointed in March 1902. The Bill rec-

6. There is an interesting South African connection in the advocacy of a British pro-Zionist policy in Palestine. General Smuts was one of the strongest advocates of the Balfour Declaration, arguing from an imperial point of view that a Jewish Palestine under British protection was desirable as a way of linking the British empires in Africa and Asia. In January 1917, Smuts was invited to represent the Union at the Imperial Conference and in the Imperial War Cabinet. Lloyd George thereafter invited him to join the British War Cabinet, which Smuts did in the unpaid capacity as a minister without portfolio. At the same time, he remained a member of the South African cabinet and parliament. During 1917, Smuts emerged as a world figure, and was offered the Palestine command, which he refused. He subsequently got involved with the problems of peace, and proposed the Mandate system in a paper he published in December 1918 entitled The League of Nations: A practical Suggestion, which helped to shape President Wilson's ideas on the subject. See Dictionary of National Biography. 1941-1950, ed. L.G. Wickham Legg and E.T. Williams, Oxford, 1959.

7. Fromkin, David. A Peace To End All Peace. Creating the Modern Middle East. 1914-1922 London , 1989, pp. 193-4

8. 175 witnesses gave evidence to the Commission, among them Theodor Herzl, the founder and president of the World Zionist Organization, who was invited to testify. In his testimony to the Commission he stated that "Nothing will meet the problem the Commission is called upon to investigate and advise upon, except a diverting of the stream of migration that =

'viewed' with favour the establishment of the Jewish national home in Palestine, on condition that the civil and religious rights of 'existing non-Jewish communities' would be safeguarded. Reference by name to the Arab population of Palestine, who then constituted 93% of the population, was avoided. This was consistent with the Zionist view of deliberately avoiding the 'Arab problem.'

The present study is divided into two parts. Part One deals with the official British interpretation of the events which led up to the Balfour Declaration, throwing light on an unknown aspect of it, namely, the *scarcity* of British official records about the declaration. Although there is an overwhelming amount of literature on the events leading up to the Balfour Declaration (from April to November 1917), British archival sources reveal an alarming lack of documentary evidence on its earlier history. In this context, an important minute by the under-secretary for the Colonies in 1922, William Ormsby-Gore, describing *from memory* the events leading to the declaration, is quoted in full (see p.48 below). Part Two is then largely devoted to a detailed analysis of this important minute.

Part Two will also throw some light on the careers of British officials who were instrumental in bringing out the Balfour Declaration. The role played by some of them is already well known, that played by others is less so. Thus, the major figures in this present account of the events leading up to the Balfour Declaration are, in addition to Balfour, Mark Sykes and Lloyd George, such men as: Ronald Graham, William Ormsby-Gore, Alfred Milner, Leopold Amery, Maurice Hankey, Jan Smuts, and Military Intelligence men such as George MacDonogh and others. It will be shown that almost all influential governmental figures were in favor of the declaration .

From September 1917, Milner and Amery, as will be seen later, took charge of it. Milner and his group of influential men, including Philip Kerr, of the Prime Minister's secretariat and editor of the magazine *The Round Table*, advocated a pro-Zionist policy in the light of Palestine's perceived importance to British imperial-strategic interests.

Sykes, the "architect of the government's Zionist policy" as he was described by one author (Mayir Vereté), was supported by

the Hussein-McMahon correspondence of 1915, in which the British promised Sherif Hussein independence. The Arab delegation drew the attention of the British public that the Balfour Declaration was in direct violation to these previous pledges, since Palestine was included in the area in which Arab independence was promised by McMahon to Hussein. In this atmosphere, the Colonial Office was compelled to look into the origins of the Balfour Declaration and its pro-Zionist policy, in order to come to an early decision on whether it should uphold or reverse this policy.

This debate prompted a series of internal minutes and memoranda by the staff of the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office (responsible for Palestine since 1921), which are of a highly significant nature. The documents in question will demonstrate that abandoning the government's pro-Zionist policy was a real possibility during the early 1920s.

Although there is a wealth of published material about the Balfour Declaration, this has not been an impediment, in this case, to further research. On the contrary, it has added to the conviction that there are still more questions to be answered; more puzzles to be solved.

It has often been asserted that the policy of the Balfour Declaration and its inherent ambiguity was beyond the wit of successive British governments to reconcile. That this declaration was a document of 'calculated ambiguity' is beyond question. In his *Analysis of the Balfour Declaration*, J.M.N. Jeffries, a *Daily Mail* correspondent during the early 1920s (who visited Palestine then), wrote that "Drafts for it travelled back and forth, within England or over the Ocean, to be scrutinized by some two score draftsmen ....who erased [this] phrase or adopted that after much thought...". He added that "there is one point upon which there is no doubt. Whatever is to be found in the Balfour Declaration was put into it deliberately. There are no accidents in that text. If there is any vagueness in it this is an intentional vagueness".<sup>5</sup>

The Balfour Declaration contained two pledges, which were later dubbed by the Royal Commission of Inquiry (the Peel Commission) in 1937 as having been "incompatible". The British Government

5. See Jeffries, JMN. *Analysis of the Balfour Declaration*, in Khalidi, Walid. *From Haven to Conquest*. (Ed.) Institute for Palestine Studies, Beirut 1971, pp. 173-4

G.L.M.Clauson, an official in the Middle East Department commented on Lord Sydenham's memo by saying: "Lord Sydenham's insinuation is difficult to challenge unless he will come further out in the open, but Mr. Ormsby-Gore, who was intimately connected with the events referred to is no doubt in a position to say that there was no sinister influence behind the Balfour Declaration".<sup>3</sup>

In the course of preparing my doctoral thesis on the administration of Herbert Samuel in Palestine during the period 1920-1925, I encountered a number of interesting and highly revealing documents concerning both the Balfour Declaration and the McMahon pledge to Sherif Hussein in 1915. The following work is an attempt to provide new insights into these old controversies in the light of the documents in question, and to clarify some of the circumstances surrounding the Balfour Declaration, in the hope of adding a new dimension to debate on this famous document.

Towards the end of 1922, (following the Conservative victory in elections) and throughout 1923, and indeed well into 1924, there was a strong debate in British governmental circles and in the British press over the Balfour Declaration and the government's pro-Zionist policy generally, and an anti-Zionist movement was gaining ground within parliament. Moreover, the British army in Palestine since 1918 had been frankly anti-Zionist. The debate was started when an Arab Palestinian delegation<sup>4</sup> to London published in the British press parts of

3. CO 733/54. Minute by Clauson, 5 January 1923.

It is also significant that in August 1903 Britain offered East Africa to the Jews, and in the 7th Zionist Congress the offer was rejected in favour of Palestine. It was the Zionist leader Max Nordau who coined the term 'national home', *Heimstätt*, to avoid provoking the hostility of non-Zionist Jews

4. The Palestine Arab delegation spent one year in London, from mid-1921 to mid-1922, in the hope of persuading the British government to annul the Balfour Declaration. Although the delegation succeeded in cultivating the support of many British politicians as well as the British press to its cause, the Middle East Department, where the Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann was a regular visitor, was successful in thwarting such interaction. During the mandate years, (1920-48) the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration was received with loud Arab protests and demonstrations. The 2nd of November of each year was a day of 'mourning' in which black flags were flown from the windows of Arab shops and houses. Moreover, all Arab congresses since 1918 firmly rejected the Balfour Declaration.

## Introduction

...it is often represented that the Zionist policy was a mere fad of the late Government, and (to quote Lord Sydenham's words) one of the many legacies of evil which the coalition has "bequeathed". This view cannot possibly be sustained. The policy is a legacy, not of Mr. Churchill or of the coalition, but of the Great War. The Balfour Declaration was a war measure, taken by the War Cabinet (of which Mr. Churchill was not a member) after full deliberation at a time when the military situation was exceedingly critical, and designed to secure certain tangible benefits which it was hoped would contribute to the ultimate victory of the Allies.....<sup>1</sup>

The above statement was triggered by a private letter from Lord Sydenham of Comb <sup>2</sup> to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, on 31 December 1922. In this letter Sydenham expressed his views and fears about the situation in Palestine, suggesting a new course of action in order to avert forthcoming trouble which, as he put it, "might lead to grave consequences". The Middle East Department of the Colonial Office, criticizing Sydenham's argument, replied on 11 January 1923, in a letter signed by the Duke of Devonshire, Secretary of State for the Colonies (excerpt quoted above). On the same day, Sydenham wrote back saying that

"...I am afraid that the Balfour Declaration is, in a sense, the legacy of a period antecedent to the great war. We have fortunately a report of a speech made by Dr. Max Nordau in 1903, which is the key to the Declaration. This speech was an explanation of Zionist policy, which was to lead through a world war [emphasis his] to the occupation of Palestine by the Jews. It was of course never intended to be made public..."

1. Public Record Office, Kew. [PRO] Colonial Office [CO] 733/58 . Secret Cabinet Memo, C.P. 106/23. 17 February 1923.

2. Formerly Sir George Sydenham Clarke, an anti-Zionist spokesman in the House of Lords, 1921.

## CONTENTS

Introduction	9
<b>Part One</b>	
I. Introductory Note to Part One	19
II. Origins of British Zionist Policy: A General Background	30
III. The British 'Official Account' of the Balfour Declaration	47
IV. The McMahon Pledge in British Archives 1922-24	56
<b>Part Two</b>	
I. The War Cabinet	65
II. An Interpretation of Ormsby-Gore's Minute of December 1922	72
1. The Balfour Declaration in British Archives	75
2. Mark Sykes and Zionism	76
3. The Cooperation between Zionism and British Military Intelligence	85
4. Russian and East European Jewry and the Balfour Declaration	88
5. American Jewry and Zionism	94
6. The War Cabinet and the Balfour Declaration	97
7. Northcliffe's Propaganda Machine and the Balfour Declaration	97
8. Germany and the Balfour Declaration	99
9. The Recruitment of Jewish Battalions in America	103
10. Similar Declarations by France, Italy and U.S	105
i. The American Resolution	106
ii. The French Declaration	108
iii. The Italian Pronouncement	114
11. Zionist Funds and the Jewish National Home	115
12. The Final Draft of the Balfour Declaration	117
13. Ormsby-Gore's Article in <i>The 19th Century</i>	119
Summary and Conclusion	122
Appendix A	127
Appendix B	131
Bibliography	151

## Abstract

When the Balfour Declaration, which promised a 'national home' for the Jews in Palestine, was issued by the British Foreign Office in November 1917, it was not clear what the declaration intended or what the policy vaguely outlined in it would eventually lead to. Being a mere letter of intent, it was left for the passage of time to show what would come out of the Balfour Declaration. This ambiguity that was inherent in the wording of the declaration caused considerable confusion in the years immediately following its issuance. When a new Conservative government came to power at the end of 1922, at a time when British public support for the government's pro-Zionist policy was rapidly declining, the British government came under pressure from members of parliament as well as the press to define the meaning of the Balfour Declaration. It was against this background that the British Colonial Office, responsible for Palestine since 1921, set out to give an official explanation of the Balfour Declaration. What resulted was the first 'official interpretation' by any British government of the declaration. This study, based on Colonial Office archives, many previously unknown, aims at shedding some fresh light on this controversial issue. Although the Colonial Office discovered in 1923 that the Foreign Office held very little, if any records, on the origins of the Balfour Declaration, yet through the internal minutes of the Colonial Office, not only does the story of the earlier history of the negotiations that led up to the declaration unfold, but we have a glimpse of how questions of this nature were influenced by Colonial Office staff and high ranking officials. This study will argue that more than the declaration of 1917 itself, it was the interpretations of the Balfour Declaration emanating from the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office, five years after it was issued, that were destined to influence future developments in the area.

### **The Author**

#### **Sahar S. Huneidi**

- Holds a Ph.D in history from the University of Manchester, 1995.
- Director of Publications at the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters in Kuwait, and Editorial Director of the monthly book series *Alam al-Ma'rifah* from 1987 - 1998.
- Her book : *A Broken Trust: Herbert Samuel, Zionism and the Palestinians (1920 - 25)* is forthcoming with I.B. Tauris.

She has also published a number of articles and translated works on the earlier history of British mandate in Palestine and other related issues.

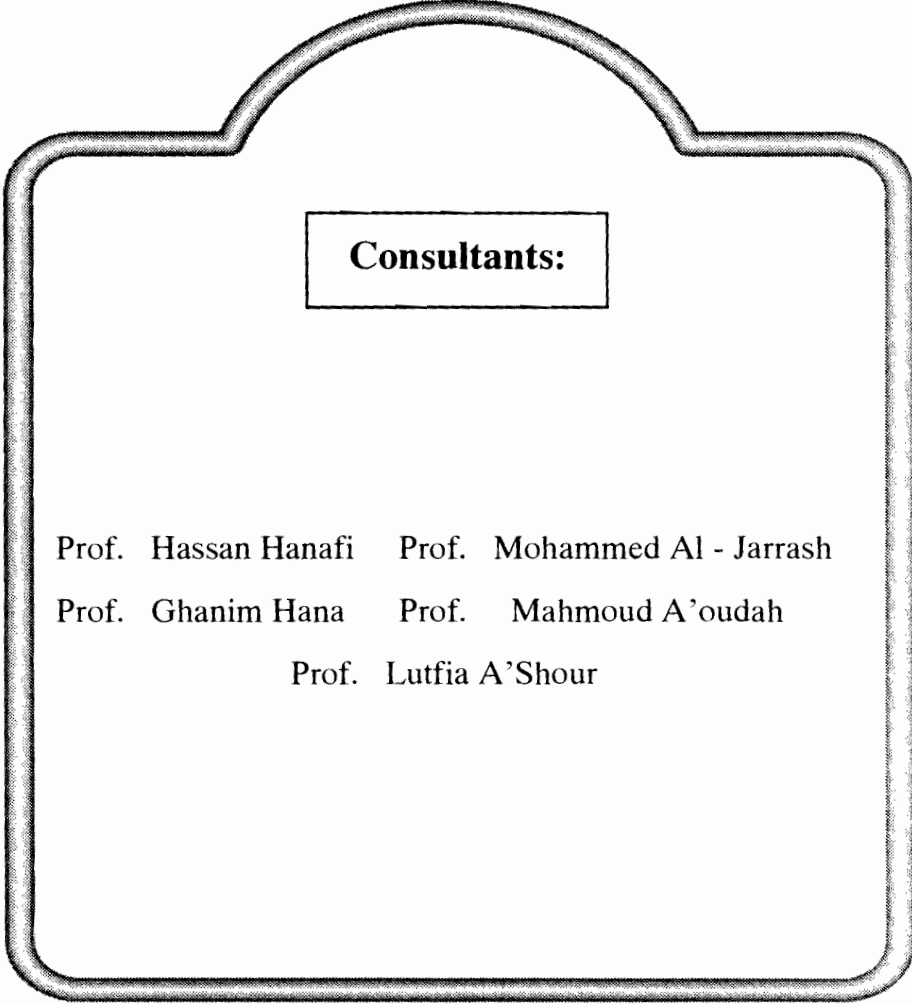
**The Balfour Declaration  
in British Archives, 1922-1923**

**New Insights into Old Controversies**

**Dr. Sahar S. Huneidi**

**Annals of the Faculty of Arts, Volume XIX 1999**





**Consultants:**

Prof. Hassan Hanafi    Prof. Mohammed Al - Jarrash

Prof. Ghanim Hana    Prof. Mahmoud A'oudah

Prof. Lutfia A'Shour



**Editorial board**

Dr. Abdullah Al-Omar  
**(Chairman)**

Prof. M. Rajab Al-Najjar

Prof. Mustafa Torki

Assist. Prof. Fatma Al Abdul Razaq

Dr. Munira Al - Tammar

---

# **ANNALS OF THE FACULTY OF ARTS**

Issued by the Academic Publication Council - Kuwait University

A REFEREED SCIENTIFIC PERIODICAL THAT  
PUBLISHES MONOGRAPHS ON TOPICS RELEVANT  
TO THE SCIENTIFIC CONCERNS OF THE VARIOUS  
DEPARTMENTS IN THE FACULTY OF ARTS

---

**Volume, XIX, 1999**



# **ANNALS**

## **OF THE FACULTY OF ARTS**

**Issued by the Academic Publication Council - Kuwait University**

# **The Balfour Declaration in British Archives, 1922-1923**

**New Insights into Old Controversies**

**Dr. Sahar S. Huneidi**

Volume XIX  
Monograph 136

1419 - 1420  
1998 - 1999