



## WAS BALFOUR POLICY REVERSIBLE? THE COLONIAL OFFICE AND PALESTINE, 1921–23

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*This paper focuses on the role played by the Middle East Department of Britain's Colonial Office in shaping Palestine policy from early 1921 to September 1923, when the Mandate for Palestine took effect. It shows the department's efforts to neutralize 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 Zionists. It 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.*

DESPITE THE LLOYD GEORGE GOVERNMENT'S FIRM EMBRACE of the Balfour Declaration as official policy, the first years of British rule in Palestine were marked by a degree of uncertainty. The Jaffa riots of May 1921, after a year of calm, showed the extent to which the Arabs were unreconciled to the "Jewish national home" called for in the Balfour Declaration. The British army, which had remained in Palestine as a security force after the establishment of the Civil Administration in July 1920, was openly anti-Zionist. The British press, initially favorable to the Jewish national home policy, had by the early 1920s become increasingly skeptical if not hostile, and a movement opposed to the Balfour Declaration was gaining ground within parliament. When, against this background, a Conservative government came to power at the end of 1922, there seemed a real possibility that the pro-Zionist policy could be reversed, and a spate of government inquiries into that policy continued well into 1923. Yet in September of that year, the Mandate for Palestine—which specifically enshrined the Balfour Declaration—officially came into force and became law when it was ratified by the League of Nations. Whatever active lobbying for change within Britain there had been, effectively was over.

This article examines a largely ignored aspect of this early period: the role played by the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office in keeping Britain's pro-Zionist policy on course. In so doing, it also may shed light on the

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interaction in the policy-making realm between political decision makers, permanent civil servants, the parliament, and lobbying groups that is not without relevance today.

### THE MIDDLE EAST DEPARTMENT

The Middle East Department was created in February 1921 at the initiative of Sir Winston Churchill, who had just become colonial secretary, to take over responsibility for the Arabic-speaking areas that came under British rule at the end of World War I. As such responsibility had previously been divided between the Foreign Office (Palestine, Egypt, the Hijaz, and Aden) and the India Office (Mesopotamia and Arabia), a single department in the Colonial Office represented a considerable advance from an administrative standpoint. For Palestine, however, transfer from the aegis of the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office had political ramifications: Whereas the foreign secretary, Lord Curzon, was the sole member of Lloyd George's cabinet with extremely strong reservations about the Jewish national home policy and had fought strenuously to apply the most restrictive interpretation of the term,<sup>1</sup> Churchill was an unwavering supporter of Zionism. Despite Curzon's misgivings, the Balfour Declaration had been endorsed at the San Remo conference of April 1920 and figured in the August 1920 Treaty of Sèvres formally entrusting to Britain the Mandate for Palestine—which awaited ratification by the League of Nations. The declaration was further incorporated in the writ of the Mandate, successive drafts of which were still, at the time of the department's creation, undergoing revision.

With regard to Palestine, the Middle East Department's task was to oversee and carry out Britain's policy there, acting as link between the policy-makers in London and the Civil Administration in Palestine. Headed by Sir Herbert Samuel, the Civil Administration had been established in July 1920 to replace the military rule in place since Britain's conquest of Palestine in 1918 and was specifically entrusted with carrying out the Balfour Declaration's promise of a "Jewish national home." In appointing Samuel—who had helped the Zionists secure the Balfour Declaration and had represented them at the Paris Peace Conference in January 1919 alongside the Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann<sup>2</sup>—Prime Minister Lloyd George "deliberately" had chosen as high commissioner a Zionist sympathizer who "would try to make a success of the Zionist programme."<sup>3</sup>

In contrast to the civil administration in Palestine, where the three most important positions were held by avowed Zionists,<sup>4</sup> the Middle East Department was staffed by traditional career civil servants drawn from various government offices. To head the new department, Churchill brought Sir John Evelyn Shuckburgh from the India Office, where he had served for twenty-one years. Hubert Young, an Arabist and Middle East expert from the Foreign Office's Eastern Department who had served with T. E. Lawrence, was officially joint assistant secretary but in effect the "second in command," and

Lawrence himself joined the department as political adviser. Others came from the Treasury, the War Office, the Mesopotamian section of the India Office, and the Foreign Office.<sup>5</sup> Of the senior staff, only Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen, the military adviser, was a declared Zionist, though his passion was such that the Palin Commission, set up to look into the causes of the 1920 Easter riots in Jerusalem, saw fit to devote long passages to him in its final report of July 1920. Among other things, the report called Meinertzhagen the “chief support of the Zionists” and “Dr. Weizmann’s nominee” whose “definite anti-Arab bias and a prejudice in favour of Zionism . . . reveal him as an agent who, however capable of doing good work in other spheres, is singularly out of place in the East.”<sup>6</sup>

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Meinertzhagen later bragged that soon after joining the department he succeeded in converting Hubert Young and John Shuckburgh from Arabists to Zionists,<sup>7</sup> a claim that both certainly would have disputed. Nevertheless, it is true that in the summer of 1921, within months of the department’s establishment, Young drew up a memorandum, which Churchill circulated to the cabinet, advocating, among other policies favorable to the Zionists, the removal of all anti-Zionist civil officials from the Palestine administration.<sup>8</sup> And while Young apparently was shaken during his visit to Palestine that autumn at the extent to which the Palestinians had lost all confidence in the “straight-forwardness” of the British government,<sup>9</sup> back in London he continued to push strongly the policy he had described as so unpopular.

As for Shuckburgh, he was no Zionist but from the beginning was driven by the conviction that Britain was duty bound to uphold the Balfour policy, insisting that this policy would not lead to a Jewish state.<sup>10</sup> These were undoubtedly sincere beliefs, but there is also no question that he was manipulated by Weizmann, who was ubiquitous in the early years to the point that it was he who informed Foreign Office personnel, in a telegram sent from the San Remo conference, of Britain’s decision to replace the military administration in Palestine with a civil administration.<sup>11</sup> By his own testimony, Shuckburgh saw Weizmann “constantly” when the latter was in England,<sup>12</sup> and Weizmann’s biographer speaks of Shuckburgh’s “unusual deference” to him.<sup>13</sup> Weizmann had only to threaten to resign from the Zionist Organization, thus leaving the movement in the hands of the “extremist elements,” for Shuckburgh to bend over backward to give him his way.<sup>14</sup>

## REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

Whether out of conviction or as a matter of turf, the Middle East Department from the outset seemed intent on downplaying reports from the field, mostly from the British military, concerning Arab anger and discontent. Thus, when preparations were underway for the Cairo Conference called by Churchill in March 1921, Palestine was on the agenda alongside Mesopota-

mia and Transjordan, but the Middle East Department insisted that nothing in Palestine required any attention.<sup>15</sup> Yet, the department had been privy to numerous warnings about the imminent danger of disorder, including a December 1920 report to the War Office by the director of military operations stating that riots were likely to break out in Jerusalem, Jaffa, Haifa, and Nablus.<sup>16</sup>

The Jaffa riots, the intensity of which shocked the civil authorities, broke out scarcely two months later. Asked by Young to comment on the situation in Palestine, General Congreve, commander of the British forces in Egypt and Palestine, wrote in June 1921 that the riots were neither organized nor premeditated and that “unless Arab aspirations are attended to . . . and Zionist aspirations . . . greatly curbed,” it would not be surprising if something yet more serious developed. After noting that Sir Herbert Samuel had “seen and heard only what he wanted to see and hear” and indeed resented warnings of the growing Arab discontent, he concluded:

What we have got to face is the fact that as long as we persist in our Zionist policy we have got to maintain all our present forces in Palestine to enforce a policy hateful to the great majority . . . .<sup>17</sup>

The Middle East Department received at the same time a similar letter from Air Vice Marshal Salmond,<sup>18</sup> and in July another intelligence report warned that the prestige of the government was declining rapidly and that the immediate renewal of disturbances might be triggered at any moment by “any action” of the government.<sup>19</sup>

The Middle East Department appeared to view such reports as an intrusion into its domain. Meinertzhagen dismissed General Congreve, the most senior British military commander in the Near East, as a “partisan provocateur.”<sup>20</sup> Even T. E. Lawrence, the department’s political adviser, conjectured “a personal bias behind [Congreve’s] opinions.”<sup>21</sup>

Commenting on yet another military intelligence report noting that the civil administration in Palestine was “unpopular,”<sup>22</sup> the department’s Gerard Clauson wrote in a minute dated 24 August that it was “most objectionable that ‘poison gas’ of this nature should be produced in Palestine and reach other Cabinet Ministers without this office or the Palestine Government seeing it first.”<sup>23</sup> Not surprisingly, the report was labelled “inaccurate” and quickly passed into oblivion. A month later, Meinertzhagen accused Military Intelligence of “in effect ‘spying’ upon the Government,” adding that the “sooner this department becomes a branch of the civil administration, the better.”<sup>24</sup> Hubert Young had already counseled that the British military force in Palestine be separated from the British army in Egypt.<sup>25</sup>

Tension over the military came to a head when Samuel forwarded to Churchill a copy of a circular dated 29 October 1921 from the general officer commanding-in-chief of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force to the general of-

ficier commanding troops in Palestine. The circular noted, inter alia, that while the army officially was supposed to be apolitical,

In the case of Palestine these sympathies [of the British troops] are rather obviously with the Arabs, who have hitherto appeared to the disinterested observer to have been the victims of an unjust policy, forced upon them by the British Government.

Although the circular also noted that whatever the justice or injustice of the policy, the government's intentions had been honest,<sup>26</sup> the tone was found extremely offensive. Meinertzhagen wanted to make an issue of it with the War Office. Weizmann, who had obtained a copy and sent it to Lloyd George, bitterly commented that it was the worst of all the "wicked" things that had been done to the Zionists in the last six months. Interestingly, Shuckburgh counseled against confronting the War Office with this matter, because "the latter would be sure to ask us what were the particular passages to which we objected and what were the precise grounds of our objections. I do not think that it would be very easy to answer."<sup>27</sup>

In any event, these were the final days of British military opposition to the pro-Zionist policy. Shortly thereafter, Churchill invited the Air Ministry to assume responsibility for the defense of Palestine, a step that prevented any future friction between the military and the Civil Administration.<sup>28</sup> Air Vice Marshal Salmond already had been reported by Hubert Young to be "very anxious that his officers should not interfere unduly in political matters."<sup>29</sup>

### THE FIRST ARAB DELEGATION

In the wake of the Jaffa riots in May and encouraged by an important speech by Samuel on 3 June 1921 asserting that the Balfour Declaration did not mean that Palestine would be taken away from Palestine's Arabs and "given to strangers," an Arab delegation proceeded to London in the hope of bringing about a change of policy.

Even before the delegation arrived, Shuckburgh had spelled out, in a memorandum dated August 1921, the line that was to be taken when dealing with it. The Arabs "must accept as the basis of all discussion" that it was the "fixed intention" of the British government to fulfil its pledges in the matter of the establishment of a national home for the Jews.<sup>30</sup>

Given this basis, it is not surprising that the talks did not make strong headway. In an exhaustive draft statement dated 7 November 1921, Shuckburgh asserted that since the Arabs failed to realize that abandonment of the Balfour Declaration was "out of the question," any discussion with them in London was "a mere waste of time." It had been explained to the Arab delegation "over and over again" that the present policy was a "*chose jugée*." He noted that the government was "deeply pledged to the Zionists

and have always made it clear to the Arabs that there is no prospect of our wavering on this point.”<sup>31</sup> Experience had shown that the Arab delegation was “a hopeless body to deal with”: first, hardly any of them could speak English, and everything had to be translated by an interpreter; second, they were “very slow of understanding, and probably rather suspicious of one another.” After much inconclusive talk, “they go back to their Hotel and wait till one of their English advisers comes and tells them what to say.” He concluded that

the time has come to leave off arguing and announce plainly and authoritatively what we propose to do. Being Orientals, they will understand an order; and if once they realise that we mean business, may be expected to acquiesce.<sup>32</sup>

Shuckburgh’s memorandum of 7 November 1921 provides an illuminating contrast between the Middle East Department’s dealings with the Zionists and the Arabs. After dismissing as “groundless” Arab fears of “Jewish political ascendancy,” Shuckburgh praised the recent Zionist Congress at Carlsbad for its “wise and statesmanlike” language. He did allude to “less responsible” utterances made by some Zionists, but added, in terms strikingly reminiscent of the approach that would hold sway some three quarters of a century later:

Provocative language is bad, but provocative action is far worse. And it is here that I have a plain word to say to the Arab leaders. As you all know, there has recently been a further outbreak of violence in Palestine, after a lapse of six months since the Jaffa disturbances. These outbreaks must stop; and I must hold the Arab leaders responsible for seeing that they stop.<sup>33</sup>

Shuckburgh was, however, willing to placate the Arabs on trivial issues. When two members of the delegation approached him about a question regarding the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Jerusalem, he minuted that it would be worthwhile to convey the Arab suggestion privately to the civil secretary in Palestine, since “If we can conciliate these people on minor points, so much the better.”<sup>34</sup>

The department’s treatment of the Zionists was quite a different matter. True, there were complaints about Zionist “pushfulness.”<sup>35</sup> On occasion, there was a flap about “leaks.”<sup>36</sup> There was also frequent irritation at the tendency of “extreme elements in the Zionist movement” openly to declare their intention to have a Jewish state. In the above-cited 7 November 1921 memorandum, Shuckburgh complained that no sooner had the British given the Arabs “reassuring promises” than somebody “gets up at the Zionist Con-

gress and talks about the privileged position of the Jews in a Jewish State,” thereby “neutralizing” the “effect of our language” and giving the Arabs cause to believe “that our measured statements are mere empty language . . . .”<sup>37</sup>

Yet there was a constant flow of information from the Middle East Department to the Zionists.<sup>38</sup> At the same time that Shuckburgh was dealing so sternly with the Arab delegation, he was keeping Weizmann “privately informed” of the dealings and “solicited his views” on how the Colonial Office should respond to Arab demands.<sup>39</sup> And, during autumn 1921, when a review of immigration policy was called for, Shuckburgh confidentially sent Weizmann a Colonial Office memorandum summarizing the findings of a report on immigration by the head of the Immigration Department in Palestine who had refused to show it to the Zionists. The Zionist Commission in Jerusalem succeeded in obtaining a copy anyway and promptly sent it to its offices in London,<sup>40</sup> but Weizmann was on the inside, and actually appears to have taken part, at Shuckburgh’s invitation, in the Colonial Office’s review of immigration policy from the inception of the Civil Administration.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, Weizmann was given the draft memorandum to “comment” on before it was sent to Samuel.<sup>42</sup>

A clue as to how Shuckburgh could reconcile his behavior with his apparently sincere claim to “complete impartiality and detachment”<sup>43</sup> can be found in that same 7 November memorandum. British policy in Palestine, he wrote, was directed to promote the interests “not of any particular section” but of the Palestinians as a whole, “Palestinians” being understood to mean “not only the existing population of Palestine, but also those future citizens of the country to whom the Balfour Declaration has promised a National Home.”<sup>44</sup>

The Arab delegation, during the months of fruitless discussions with the Colonial Office, did succeed in developing extensive contacts with members of the British establishment. The Middle East Department did what it could to inhibit such interaction, sending numerous letters to highly placed British statesmen whom the Arabs were trying to contact. Letters sent at the end of October 1921 to Lord Robert Cecil, parliamentary undersecretary for foreign affairs, and the Duke of Atholl, for example, stated that negotiations with the Arab delegation were at a “standstill” and that meanwhile, “the Delegation has been canvassing various persons of influence in the hope of receiving their help or support” and Churchill did not advise that they should be granted “any interviews as they ask for.”<sup>45</sup> A letter to Lord Southborough carried the same message.<sup>46</sup>

Around the same time, following a *Times* story on 16 November 1921 about a luncheon given by the Arab delegation at which Lord Sydenham had said that “the Jews had no more right to Palestine than the descendants of the ancient Romans had to this country,”<sup>47</sup> Meinertzhagen dispatched a min-

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ute to Shuckburgh recording the names of the luncheon guests, all high-ranking British officers and administrators, and then commented:

It is idle to suppose that they were not aware of the political significance of the luncheon party, where their presence constituted an act of sympathy with the Arab delegation, and does in fact constitute an act of obstruction to the Government policy.<sup>48</sup>

Shuckburgh, while remarking in a memorandum to the colonial secretary that there was “nothing criminal” in accepting an invitation to lunch, added that the presence of high-ranking officers “at what was, in effect, a meeting to protest against the policy of H.M.G. is certainly unfortunate and cannot fail to produce an undesirable impression.”<sup>49</sup>

### OPPOSITION AT HOME

Domestic opposition to Britain’s policy in Palestine focused on two main themes: its tax implications and the promises made by Britain (as represented by Sir Henry McMahon) to the Arabs (as represented by Sharif Hussein of Mecca) in the famed 1915 correspondence. These promises were argued to be in direct contradiction to the Balfour pledge made two years later.

It was the potential tax burden that was the earlier focus of public scrutiny, being taken up by the press within months of the July 1920 establishment of the Civil Administration in Palestine. On 5 February 1921, for example, the *Daily Express* wrote that the terms of the Mandate made clear the extent of the financial burden at a time when the British people were already “crushed by taxation, oppressed by restricted trade and widespread unemployment,” and that there was no reason why Britain should squander resources in the “arid wastes of the Middle East.”<sup>50</sup> Despite the March 1921 conference convened by Churchill in Cairo aimed at reducing imperial expenditure in the Middle East,<sup>51</sup> the press continued on this theme. The *Times*, which initially had supported the Balfour Declaration, by 1922 was raising the question of whether Britain could afford it.<sup>52</sup>

With domestic opposition to the government’s involvement in Palestine increasing, Churchill telegraphed Samuel on 25 February 1922 requesting a cut in the expenditure on the new Palestine gendarmerie and noting:

In both Houses of Parliament there is growing movement of hostility, against Zionist policy in Palestine, which will be stimulated by recent Northcliffe articles.<sup>53</sup> I do not attach undue importance to this movement, but it is increasingly difficult to meet the argument that it is unfair to ask the Brit-



ish taxpayer, already overwhelmed with taxation, to bear the cost of imposing on Palestine an unpopular policy.<sup>54</sup>

In an effort to quell opposition to the pro-Zionist policy both in Palestine and at home and in preparation for the vote on the Mandate by the League of Nations scheduled for July, Colonial Secretary Churchill issued the White Paper of 3 June 1922, written by Samuel in collaboration with Shuckburgh. The paper, even while stating that the Jews were in Palestine “as of right and not on sufferance,” placed limits on the definition of the Jewish national home and stated that the British government did not contemplate the “disappearance or subordination” of the Arab population. Neither the Arabs nor their supporters in England were mollified, and less than three weeks later, on 21 June, a motion was introduced in the House of Lords rejecting a Mandate for Palestine that incorporated the Balfour Declaration. Lord Islington argued that a Mandate based on the Balfour Declaration directly violated the pledges made by the British in 1915 to Sharif Hussein as well as those made by General Edmund Allenby in his Declaration to the Palestinian people in 1918, after the fighting with the Turks ended.<sup>55</sup> Noting that the great majority of the inhabitants opposed the Balfour Declaration, he urged that acceptance by the League of Nations be postponed until modifications complying with those pledges were made.<sup>56</sup> The motion carried by a vote of 60 to 25, causing Young to minute on 23 June:

Yesterday’s debate in the House of Lords will have encouraged the Arab delegation to persist in their obstinate attitude, and unless the Lords’ resolution is signally overruled by the House of Commons and the Council of the League of Nations, we must be prepared for trouble when the Delegation gets back to Palestine.<sup>57</sup>

In the event, the Lords’ resolution was “signally overruled.” Although opposition in the House of Commons had been mounting, and a number of passionate speeches against the pro-Zionist policy were made during its debate on 4 July, Churchill managed to carry the day by convincing the members of parliament that he had cut the cost of maintaining Palestine from £8 million in 1920 to an estimated £2 million in 1922.<sup>58</sup> With Commons voting in favor of the policy, the way was open for the League of Nations formally to approve Britain’s Mandate for Palestine on 24 July.

## A NEW GOVERNMENT

Shuckburgh and the Middle East Department had consistently maintained that Britain’s commitment to the Balfour Declaration was a closed issue, a “*chose jugée*.” In fact, skepticism within the government had accompanied the policy from the outset: As early as March 1920, when Palestine was still

under Foreign Office control, a minute by Hubert Young demonstrated that the possibility of “abandoning” the government’s pro-Zionist policy was a recurring theme in official circles.<sup>59</sup> Nor did the League of Nation’s ratification of the Mandate close the debate: As Porath points out, if Britain had decided to change its policy on the Balfour Declaration and made changes in the writ of the Mandate, it is “highly doubtful” that the League would have opposed it.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, seldom had Britain’s policy in Palestine seemed less of a *chose jugée* than during the first half of 1923, when the entire government seemed occupied with delving into its very foundations.

The trigger to this deep probing was the October 1922 fall of the government of Lloyd George, who had been deeply committed to the pro-Zionist policy, and the formation of a new government following the overwhelming electoral victory in November of the Conservatives, where an anti-Zionist current was strong. In a debate in the House of Lords on 27 March 1923, Lord Islington remarked that “Zionist policy in Palestine contributed its share, and no small share, I think, to the downfall of the late administration. It assisted correspondingly in the accession to power of the present administration.” Noting that there are “many gentlemen today occupying quite prominent positions in His Majesty’s Government who were last year and the year before among the most active and vehement assailants of Zionist policy in Palestine,” he concluded that this “would constitute a strong ground for early consideration of the whole policy . . . .”<sup>61</sup> Indeed, such a consideration was already underway, and something of the climate that followed the formation of the new government is conveyed in a lengthy secret memorandum entitled “Policy in Palestine” submitted to the cabinet on 17 February 1923, which declared:

If there is to be a change of policy, the sooner it is announced the better. The present state of suspense is fair to nobody. It is not fair to allow the Jews to go on collecting money for their projects in Palestine if there is any question of non-fulfillment of the pledge on which these projects are based. It is not fair to the Arabs, if we mean to maintain our policy, to allow them to continue an agitation which may develop into action for which they will suffer in the long run . . . .<sup>62</sup>

Throughout this period, the Middle East Department, and particularly Shuckburgh, directed a steady stream of memoranda at the new colonial secretary, the Duke of Devonshire, who unlike his predecessor Churchill lacked firm convictions on the subject of Palestine. Two messages in particular were driven home repeatedly: that if Britain failed to honor its pledge “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,”<sup>63</sup> and that the “real alternative” facing the government was between “complete evacuation or

continuing to honor the Zionist pledge.”<sup>64</sup> The influence of such memoranda on Devonshire was considerable.<sup>65</sup>

Not long after the new government took office, Shuckburgh, anticipating new inquiries, took it upon himself to look into the origins of the Balfour Declaration. The inquiry was remarkable especially for the dearth of official documents on the subject that it uncovered. Although he combed the records, he found nothing that shed light on the earlier history of the negotiations leading up to the Balfour Declaration.<sup>66</sup> Balfour himself, pressed by Shuckburgh, pleaded a bad memory and regretted the death of Sir Mark Sykes, who “had the whole thing at his finger ends.”<sup>67</sup> The “most comprehensive explanation” of the origin of the Balfour Declaration that the Foreign Office was able to provide was contained in a small “unofficial” note affirming that “little is known of how the policy represented by the Declaration was first given form. . . . 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>68</sup> Shuckburgh then turned for help to William Ormsby-Gore, undersecretary of state for the colonies, who wrote his own recollection of the events, which he had witnessed, in a one-page memorandum, the last paragraph of which notes that it was he who, together with Colonel L. S. Amery, had actually drafted the Balfour Declaration in its final form.<sup>69</sup> Given the lack of documentation, Shuckburgh was able to develop his own interpretation (certainly influenced by Ormsby-Gore) in his memorandum “History of the Negotiations leading up to the Balfour Declaration,” which emphasized the dire military straits in which Britain found itself at the time the declaration was drafted and its debt to the Zionists for their help in this time of need.<sup>70</sup> Colonial Secretary Devonshire had the 10 January 1923 memorandum printed as a cabinet paper and distributed to the cabinet along with a handwritten note declaring that the time had come when the attention of the cabinet “should be directed to this aspect of the Palestine question.”<sup>71</sup>

A more far-reaching and explicit inquiry was demanded of the cabinet by Devonshire in his covering note accompanying the Middle East Department’s long 17 February report on policy in Palestine. By that time, the long-simmering controversy over the McMahon pledges had reached new levels of public debate, a fact reflected in the secretary’s note to the cabinet. Thus, after urging that “a definite statement” on Britain’s policy be made with “as little delay as possible,” he suggested that the cabinet focus on three questions: (1) whether or not pledges to the Arabs conflict with the Balfour declaration; (2) if not, whether the new government should continue the policy set down by the old government in the 1922 White Paper; and (3) if not, what alternative policy should be adopted.<sup>72</sup>

### THE McMAHON PLEDGES

It was the arrival in London on 24 December 1922 of a second Arab delegation, acting upon advice from English supporters heartened by the change

in government, that brought the issue of Britain's wartime pledges to the Arabs back to center stage. Immediately upon arrival, the delegates set out to meet representatives of the *Morning Post*, the *Daily Mail*, and the *Times* and distributed copies of the Hussein-McMahon correspondence.

The crux of the controversy over the correspondence was whether or not Palestine had been included in the areas Britain had promised the Arabs would become independent after the war. McMahon's letter to Sharif Hussein had explicitly excluded "portions of Syria, lying to the west of Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo." The Arabs and their supporters argued that Palestine lies well south of these areas, which according to them had been excluded because of French interests there.

The Middle East Department, ever since its establishment, had wrestled with this issue, as seen in a flow of minutes and memoranda on the subject as of 1921.<sup>73</sup> Unsuccessful in its efforts to demonstrate persuasively that Pal-

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estine was *not* covered by the promise, the department concentrated on trying to keep the issue from public scrutiny. Thus, five days after a 6 January 1922 minute by S. M. Campbell, assistant principal of the Colonial Office, stated categorically (citing a Foreign Office memorandum) that "geographically Palestine is included in the area within which Britain was to acknowledge Arab independence,"<sup>74</sup> Shuckburgh had minuted that though "the view taken in this Office has been that Palestine was so excluded, but

there is sufficient doubt in the matter to make it desirable not to drag the controversy out into the daylight."<sup>75</sup>

Shuckburgh responded similarly when Sir Herbert Samuel, having heard that Shuckburgh had sought and obtained an explanation of the matter from Sir Henry McMahon himself,<sup>76</sup> pressed the Middle East Department in a letter of 6 August 1922 to publish the explanation so that the Arabs would accept once and for all the fait accompli that Palestine was excluded from the pledge. Samuel's request, coming two months after the White Paper had addressed the McMahon pledges at some length, shows how inadequate the latter's explanation had been. In his belated reply to Samuel dated 7 November 1922, Shuckburgh, who in the meantime had received critical comments on McMahon's explanation,<sup>77</sup> stated that he was "rather against making any further public announcements on this troublesome question," and that "indeed it seems to me that our best policy is to let sleeping dogs lie as much as possible."<sup>78</sup>

The publication in the British press in early 1923 of parts of the correspondence, provided by the second Arab delegation, revived precisely the kind of public scrutiny the Middle East Department had tried so assiduously to avoid. In January, J. M. N. Jeffries, the *Daily Mail* correspondent, published a series of articles calling for an evacuation from Palestine and the abolition of the Balfour Declaration.<sup>79</sup> Soon after, Lord Sydenham proposed

a parliamentary question in the House of Lords asking the government to lay on the table the entire correspondence on which the previous government had based its contention that Palestine was geographically excluded from the pledges, prompting a flurry of memoranda in the Middle East Department. R. C. Lindsay, undersecretary of the Foreign Office, replied to Shuckburgh's urgent query on the subject on 19 February 1923 that "we should not be likely to strengthen our case by publishing the McMahon letters."<sup>80</sup> On 21 February, Sydney Moody, a senior Colonial Office official, minuted that the reasons for not publishing the correspondence "remain good,"<sup>81</sup> while Young minuted on the same day that "the best counterblast to arguments based on the McMahon correspondence would be the signature and publication of a Treaty with King Hussein in which he accepts our position in Palestine."<sup>82</sup>

The debate in the House of Lords took place on 1 March 1923. Lord Sydenham requested publication of the correspondence on the grounds that the public has the right to know "exactly how our national obligations stand" with regard to the Arabs. In an exceptionally cogent summation of the topic, he rehearsed in detail—and with long verbatim quotes from the version of the correspondence that had been made available—the entire history of the McMahon pledges and those that followed. Particularly interesting was his meticulous and scathing deconstruction of the theory "invented" in the White Paper to explain Palestine's alleged exclusion from McMahon's pledge.<sup>83</sup>

Colonial Secretary Devonshire, who was present at the debate, was too shrewd to address directly the arguments raised but confined himself to reaffirming in broad terms his acceptance of the White Paper's explanation. Following the advice of the Middle East Department, he deftly avoided making available ("much as I regret it") any of the correspondence on the grounds that passages not relating to the controversy could be "detrimental to the public interest." When asked whether only those passages relating to the correspondence could be published, he cited parliamentary custom against partial publications.<sup>84</sup> As to Lord Sydenham's request that Devonshire at least comment on the authenticity of the numerous passages cited in the course of the debate, Lord Devonshire quite simply ignored it.

Another aspect of the examination of state policy on Palestine involved the military dimension. In January 1923, the General Staff of the British Army declared that Palestine was of no strategic value in defending the Suez Canal. Doubtless in the aim of countering this view, Shuckburgh requested the department's military adviser, Meinertzhagen, to write a report on Palestine's strategic importance. Meinertzhagen's report, which not surprisingly gave detailed arguments as to why its importance would increase as time went on,<sup>85</sup> was produced in May 1923. Shuckburgh suggested that it be submitted to the Committee of Imperial Defense, which should be invited to fix a day for the discussion of the whole question and to determine to what extent, "quite apart from pledges and commitments of every kind," Palestine was of

strategic value to the British Empire. It was decided that the subject should be discussed with Sir Herbert Samuel when he arrived in London.<sup>86</sup> In the event, the Committee on Imperial Defense concluded that Palestine was not as important strategically as once thought.

### THE CABINET COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE

The future of Britain's involvement in Palestine was, finally, decided by a high-powered cabinet committee appointed on 27 June 1923 by the new prime minister, Stanley Baldwin. Chaired by Colonial Secretary Devonshire, the committee included, among others, Lord Curzon of the Foreign Office; the secretaries of state for war, India, and air; the first lord of the Admiralty; the president of the Board of Trade; and the secretary of the treasury.<sup>87</sup> The committee was charged with advising the government to enable it to make a "prompt and final decision" on Palestine.

The committee deliberated for one month. During that time, opponents of the policy in the House of Lords continued to agitate. Even in the Commons, a group of 110 Conservative members of parliament, "feeling that the matter is one of first class Imperial importance with far-reaching future results," sent a petition to the "Middle East Cabinet Committee now sitting" urging that the "definite PLEDGES" given to the Palestine Arabs be fulfilled and that the "whole population of Palestine, with its 93 percent Arabs, should be consulted, and a form of government agreed upon in harmony with their wishes." According to the petitioners, "to impose on an unwilling people . . . the Dominating Influence of another race is a violation of natural rights" condemned in the covenant of the League of Nations.<sup>88</sup>

It was during that same period that the third Arab delegation, encouraged by the appointment of the committee, arrived in London. Even before they made an official request to be heard by the committee, Ormsby-Gore, an ardent Zionist, wrote to the colonial secretary on 19 July that "I deplore most emphatically the idea that the Cabinet Committee should see those people or make any concessions."<sup>89</sup> Shuckburgh also weighed against receiving them, noting that the delegation was "in no sense an official body and to allow them to appear before a cabinet committee would be giving them too much importance," especially as they represented "the extremist section of the Palestine Arabs, who constitute a majority perhaps, but certainly not the whole of the Arab population."<sup>90</sup> However, Shuckburgh warned in another minute that since the Middle East Department was "constantly represented in the press" as being "wholly under Zionist influence" and "accused of all kinds of Machiavellian designs to prevent any but the Zionist view on Palestinian questions reaching the Secretary of State or the cabinet," care must be taken in refusing to allow the Arabs to see the committee.<sup>91</sup> When Musa Kazim al-Husseini, president of the delegation, wrote from the Hotel Cecil on 24 July 1923 to the chairman of the Cabinet Committee that the people of Palestine regarded the formation of the committee "as a step, on the part of

the British Government, towards a fair and equitable solution of the Palestine problem,"<sup>92</sup> Shuckburgh informed the delegation "that the committee were not hearing oral evidence and accordingly could not receive them."<sup>93</sup>

In the end, Sir Herbert Samuel, who had arrived from Palestine in late June especially for the proceedings, was the sole outside witness. He argued that indecision was inadvisable and that from the standpoint of international security in Palestine, a final decision had to be taken. In his two meetings with the Cabinet Committee on 5 and 9 July, he argued that Arab opposition to Zionism was based to a large extent on a misunderstanding of its goals and that responsible Zionist leaders did not intend to confiscate Arab lands or flood the country with Jewish immigrants. According to Wasserstein, Samuel's "reasonableness" seemed to have won over the doubters on the committee.<sup>94</sup>

Meanwhile, the full details of the Cabinet Committee's deliberations were being leaked by Meinertzhagen to Leonard Stein, the secretary of the Zionist Organization, who in turn urged Weizmann, who was in Europe at the time, to return immediately.<sup>95</sup> As soon as Weizmann arrived in London, on 24 July 1923, he consulted Samuel. The following day, he went to see Shuckburgh, who reported in a secret minute to the colonial secretary that the Zionist leader had been "in a great state of agitation" by what he believed was the Cabinet Committee's intention to propose "fresh concessions to the Arabs," which in his opinion would "further whittle down the Balfour Declaration and the privileges of Jews in Palestine." He told Shuckburgh that "if this apprehension was fulfilled, it would have the effect of breaking up the Zionist Organization and killing Zionist activity in Palestine."<sup>96</sup> On 26 July 1923, Weizmann sent a lengthy letter to the colonial secretary concerning "certain aspects of the situation in Palestine," which he ended by saying: "A fresh re-adjustment, and a re-adjustment involving the abandonment of vital principles, would be a shattering blow which might well prove fatal"<sup>97</sup> to Zionism.

The Cabinet Committee's final report, entitled "The Future of Palestine," was submitted on 27 July 1923. It is difficult to guess what impact the interventions of Weizmann, conveyed by Devonshire, may have had on the committee in buttressing the arguments presented by Samuel. At all events, the committee, even while noting that "it is difficult to blame those who argue . . . that the entire Mandate is built on the fallacy of attempting to reconcile the irreconcilable" (i.e., securing the establishment of a Jewish national home while safeguarding the rights of the country's inhabitants), concluded along the lines of countless Middle East Department memoranda: that whether the policy had been "wise or unwise, it is well-nigh impossible for any Government to extricate itself without a substantial sacrifice of consistency and self respect, if not honour."<sup>98</sup>

Four days later, the committee's recommendations were approved by the cabinet, effectively ending, if not opposition to the policy, at least the prospects of changing it. When the Mandate came into force a few months later, in September 1923, the matter was "settled," and the Balfour Declaration,

which had been a political document—in fact a letter of intent—acquired a legal status.<sup>99</sup>

It will never be known whether the Balfour policy could in fact have been reversed that summer of 1923. The Zionists apparently believed this to be the case. If they are correct, they owe a debt of thanks to the Middle East Department.

## NOTES

1. Churchill (as war secretary) and Curzon had been engaged since mid-1920 in a struggle for control of Britain's Middle East policy. Churchill wanted a Middle East department within the Colonial Office, while Curzon favored either a separate department with its own secretary of state or, failing that, Foreign Office responsibility for Middle East policy. Curzon later called the Balfour Declaration a "striking contradiction of our publicly declared principles." David Gilmour, *Curzon* (London: John Murray, 1994), pp. 522–25. On Curzon's anti-Zionist views, see also Doreen Ingrams, *Palestine Papers 1917–1922: Seeds of Conflict* (London: John Murray, 1989).

2. Bernard Wasserstein, *The British in Palestine: The Mandatory Government and the Arab-Jewish Conflict, 1917–1929* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1991), pp. 75–76.

3. Elie Kedourie, "Sir Herbert Samuel and the Government of Palestine," *Middle Eastern Studies* 5, no. 1 (January 1969), p. 44.

4. In addition to Samuel as high commissioner, Norman Bentwich was attorney general and Wyndham Deedes (a Gentile Zionist) was chief secretary.

5. For the formation of the department, see Hubert Young, *The Independent Arab* (London: John Murray, 1933), pp. 323, 325; Jeremy Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia* (London: Heinemann, 1989), pp. 632–34, 643–45. See also John McTague, "British Policy in Palestine" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1974), p. 235.

6. "Enquiry into Rioting in Jerusalem in April 1920" (Palin Report), submitted Port Said, August 1920, Public Record Office [PRO] Foreign Office [FO] 371/5121 E 9373, pp. 44–46.

7. McTague, "British Policy in Palestine," p. 298.

8. David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: Creating the Modern Middle East,*

*1914–1922* (London: Penguin Books, 1989), p. 524.

9. Ingrams, *Palestine Papers*, pp. 151–52.

10. Shuckburgh was apparently not privy to the views of his superiors. At a small gathering on 22 July 1922 in Lord Balfour's home at the request of Weizmann and attended by Churchill and Lloyd George, among others, Balfour and Lloyd George stated that "by the Declaration they always meant an eventual Jewish state." At the same meeting, Lloyd George told Churchill that "we" must not allow representative government in Palestine. Jehuda Reinhartz, *Chaim Weizmann: The Making of a Statesman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 356–57.

11. See Minute by Hubert Young, 27 April 1920, PRO FO 371/5139. Indicative of Weizmann's access to policymakers is a memo he wrote to Foreign Secretary Curzon advising about the "danger" of Arab personnel in the administration in Palestine and counselling on the advisability of "infiltrating" British Jews into the administration. In the same despatch, Weizmann revealed that the Zionist Organization had already prepared lists of available candidates and that these lists had been submitted to the Foreign Office. 2 March 1920, PRO FO 371/5113 E 1184.

12. Shuckburgh to Secretary of State, 24 July 1924, PRO Colonial Office [CO] 733/86.

13. Reinhartz, *Chaim Weizmann*, p. 377.

14. See, for example, Shuckburgh to Secretary of State, Secret, 25 July 1923, PRO CO 733/54.

15. McTague, "British Policy in Palestine," p. 239.

16. *Ibid.*, 224.

17. Letters from General Congreve and Air Vice Marshal Salmond, through A. M.



Trenchard, "Situation in Palestine," 28 June 1921, PRO CO 733/17.

18. *Ibid.*

19. War Office to Colonial Office, Confidential Report on the situation in Palestine, July 1921, PRO CO 733/13.

20. Minute by Meinertzhagen, 29 June 1921, PRO CO 733/17.

21. Minute by T. E. Lawrence, June 1921, PRO CO 733/17.

22. War Office to Churchill, 15 August 1921 PRO CO 733/13.

23. Minute by Meinertzhagen, 8 September 1921, PRO CO 733/13.

24. *Ibid.*

25. McTague, "British Policy in Palestine," p. 299, quoting PRO CO 733/14.

26. Samuel to Churchill, 10 November 1921, PRO CO 733/7.

27. Shuckburgh to Sir J. Masterton-Smith, 1 December 1921, PRO CO 733/7.

28. Wasserstein, *The British in Palestine*, p. 107.

29. Minute by Young, 29 June 1921, PRO CO 733/17.

30. Quoted in Ingrams, *Palestine Papers*, p. 139.

31. Memo by Shuckburgh, 7 November 1921, PRO CO 733/15.

32. *Ibid.*

33. "Summary of a Statement to be made by Secretary of State," drafted by Shuckburgh in November 1921, PRO CO 733/15.

34. Shuckburgh to Clouston, 28 November 1921, PRO CO 733/15.

35. For example, see Minute by Shuckburgh, 1 February 1924, PRO CO 733/84; Shuckburgh to Lord Arnold, 10 May 1924, PRO CO 733/84; Shuckburgh to Secretary of State, 24 July 1924, PRO CO 733/86.

36. In June 1922, for example, Weizmann was discovered to have gained access to secret telegrams and dispatches coming in and out of the department. Suspicion fell upon Meinertzhagen, though he later wrote in his diary that he suspected a junior member of the department, a Jew, of being the source of the leak. Mark Cocker, *Richard Meinertzhagen: Soldier, Scientist and Spy* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1989), pp. 151-52.

37. Memo by Shuckburgh, 7 November 1921, PRO CO 733/15.

38. Meinertzhagen's biographer maintains that "the flow of information be-

tween the military adviser and his close friend, Weizmann, was far greater" than Meinertzhagen was prepared to admit. Cocker, *Richard Meinertzhagen*, pp. 151-52.

39. Reinhartz, *Chaim Weizmann*, p. 359. Reinhartz notes that the "relationship of trust that Weizmann had carefully nurtured with Shuckburgh paid off."

40. *Ibid.*, 45-47.

41. Moshe Mossek, *Palestine Immigration Policy Under Sir Herbert Samuel* (London: Frank Cass, 1978), pp. 44, 48.

42. Weizmann to Shuckburgh, 7 December 1921, PRO CO 733/16.

43. Shuckburgh to Secretary of State, 24 July 1924, PRO CO 733/86.

44. "Summary of a Statement to Be Made by the Secretary of State," drafted by Shuckburgh, 7 November 1921, PRO CO 733/15.

45. CO to the Duke of Atholl, 27 October 1921, PRO CO 733/17.

46. Eric Mills to the Rt. Hon. Lord Southborough, 29 October 1921, PRO CO 733/17.

47. "Future of Palestine: Arab Plea for Fair Play," *Times*, 16 November 1921, reproduced in PRO CO 733/15.

48. Meinertzhagen to Shuckburgh, 17 November 1921, PRO CO 733/15.

49. *Ibid.*

50. "In the Wilderness," *Daily Express*, 5 February 1921.

51. Young, *Independent Arab*, p. 325.

52. Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, p. 525.

53. Lord Northcliffe, Britain's greatest newspaper proprietor, who owned the *Times* and the *Daily Mail*, wrote a series of highly critical articles during his visit to Palestine in early 1922.

54. Churchill to Samuel, Telegram, Private and Personal, 25 February 1922, PRO CO 733/18.

55. On 9 November 1918, the British and French governments issued a joint declaration, approved by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, assuring the people of Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia that Allied policy aimed at "the setting up of national governments and administrations that shall derive their authority from the free exercise of the initiative and choice of the indigenous populations." (The declaration was reproduced in PRO FO 371/5036).

56. Green to Secretary of State, Telegram, Department of State, Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1910-1929, Microcopy 353, Roll 80, National Archives.

57. Minute by Young, 23 June 1922, PRO CO 733/22.

58. Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, pp. 525-26.

59. "Political Situation in Syria and Palestine," 15 April 1920, PRO FO 371/5034 E 3182.

60. Yehoshua Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement, 1918-1929* (London: Frank Cass, 1974), p. 168.

61. *Parliamentary Debates* (Lords), vol. 53 (13 February to 3 May, 1923), pp. 639-69.

62. "Policy in Palestine," Secret, 17 February 1923, PRO CO 733/58, Cabinet Paper [CP] 106 (23).

63. Shuckburgh to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 8 January 1923, PRO CO 733/54. Interestingly, the arguments used by those opposed to the Balfour policy were almost exact mirror images of Shuckburgh's pro-Zionist arguments. Lord Sydenham, in the debate in the House of Lords on 1 March 1923, declared that the Arabs had "rendered us very great services during the war at a very critical time, and they certainly believed that the pledge to which I have referred was a real pledge that we should honour." Charging that "our pledge has been distinctly broken," he urged the government to restore its "tarnished reputation for good faith." He noted that before the armistice "we were universally regarded as a straight-dealing people whose word was their bond," but that because of the Balfour policy "our prestige in the Near East and far beyond it has undergone a very dark eclipse." *Parliamentary Debates* (Lords), vol. 53 (13 February to 3 May 1923), pp. 226-34.

64. Shuckburgh to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 8 January 1923, PRO CO 733/54.

65. Porath, for example, credits the department with Devonshire's decision to continue the policy of its predecessor. Porath, *Emergence*, p. 168.

66. Shuckburgh to Ormsby-Gore, 10 January 1923, PRO CO 733/58.

67. "History of the Negotiations Leading up to the Balfour Declaration, 10 January 1923, PRO CO 733/58, CP 60 (23).

68. The full text of the note was included in Secret Cabinet Paper CP 60 (23), "Palestine and the Balfour Declaration," January 1923, PRO CO 733/58.

69. Ormsby-Gore's memorandum, dated 24 December 1922, was printed as part of the Secret Cabinet Paper CP 60 (23) in PRO CO 733/58. This version, however, omits the final paragraph. The facsimile of Ormsby-Gore's handwritten minute is in PRO CO 733/35.

70. In fact, subsequent minutes and memoranda suggest that the expected help did not materialize. 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. . . ." (PRO CO 733/54). On 17 February 1923, a secret memorandum by the secretary of state asserted 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. (Secret memo CP 106(23) in PRO CO 733/58.)

71. Secret Cabinet Paper CP 60 (23), "Palestine and the Balfour Declaration," January 1923, PRO CO 733/58.

72. Secret memo, 17 February 1923, PRO CO 733/58, CP 106 (23).

73. See, for example, Forbes-Adam to Shuckburgh, Private, 20 October 1921, PRO CO 733/38; Shuckburgh to Hogarth, Private, 12 October 1921, PRO CO 733/38; Hogarth to Shuckburgh, 17 October 1921, PRO CO 733/38.

74. Minute by S. M. Campbell, 6 January 1922, PRO CO 733/8.

75. Minute by Shuckburgh, 11 January 1922, PRO CO 733/8.

76. On 11 March 1922, Shuckburgh minuted that McMahon had come to see him the previous day and read to him his explanation of his intention, in which he had said that he meant "to exclude the whole of Palestine from the area in respect of which the pledge of Arab independence was given" and that he was

“quite clear” on that point. (Minute by Shuckburgh, 11 March 1922, PRO CO 733/38. McMahon’s letter to Shuckburgh is in the same file, and, curiously, is dated 12 March 1922.)

77. Minute by Eric Mills, the acting principal in the colonial office, 18 August 1922, PRO CO 733/59.

78. Shuckburgh to Samuel, Private, 7 November 1922, PRO CO 733/39.

79. *Daily Mail*, 9, 10 and 11 January 1923.

80. R. C. Lindsay to Shuckburgh, 19 February 1923, PRO CO 733/55.

81. Minute by S. Moody, 21 February 1923, PRO CO 733/57.

82. Minute by Hubert Young, 22 February 1923, PRO CO 733/57. This, in fact, was the course adopted, and negotiations for the Anglo-Hijaz treaty of friendship with Sharif Hussein, which lasted throughout 1923 and into 1924, snagged on this issue. When Hussein balked at Article 2, in which he was asked in effect to recognize Britain’s policy in Palestine, the British decided that anything short of its formulation would be seen as a defeat of the Balfour policy and that without this article the Anglo-Hijaz treaty had no value. The treaty was never concluded, and the British abandoned Hussein to his fate when Ibn Saud attacked Ta’if, the summer capital of Hijaz, in August 1924. See Sahar Huneidi, *A Broken Trust: Herbert Samuel, Zionism and the Palestinians (1920–25)*, forthcoming with I. B. Tauris.

83. For the complete debate, see *Parliamentary Debates* (Lords), vol. 53 (13 February to 3 May 1923), pp. 226–34.

84. *Ibid.*

85. Memorandum by Meinertzhagen, “Strategical Importance in Palestine,” 14 May 1923, PRO CO 733/54.

86. Memorandum on Strategical Importance in Palestine by Meinertzhagen, 14 May 1923, PRO CO 733/54;

Shuckburgh to Secretary of State and Ormsby-Gore, 17 May 1923, PRO CO 733/53.

87. Cabinet Committee on Palestine, Secret Report, “The Future of Palestine,” 27 July 1923, PRO CO 733/58.

88. Petition by Members of the House of Commons, 26 July 1923, PRO CO 733/54.

89. Ormsby-Gore to Secretary of State, 19 July 1923, PRO CO 733/54.

90. Shuckburgh to Masterton-Smith, Ormsby-Gore, and the Secretary of State, 24 July 1923, PRO CO 733/54.

91. Minute by Shuckburgh, 27 July 1923, PRO CO 733/58.

92. Minute by Shuckburgh, 27 July 1923, PRO CO 733/58.

93. *Ibid.* According to Porath, the real reason the delegation was not received was that Samuel objected to it being heard. Porath, *Emergence*, p. 174.

94. Bernard Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel: A Political Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 262–64. Wasserstein calls the cabinet decision “not the least of services rendered by Samuel to Zionism.”

95. Cocker, *Richard Meinertzhagen*, pp. 152–55.

96. Shuckburgh to Secretary of State, Secret Minute, 25 July 1923, PRO CO 733/54.

97. Chaim Weizmann, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, vol. XI, January 1922–July 1923*, ed. Bernard Wasserstein (Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press, 1977), p. 350.

98. Cabinet Committee on Palestine, “The Future of Palestine,” 27 July 1923, Secret Cabinet Paper CP 351 (23) in PRO CO 733/58.

99. Dennis Edward Knox, “The Development of British Policy in Palestine, 1917–1925: Sir Gilbert Clayton and the New Eastern Question” (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1971), p. 359.