

"A LAND WITHOUT A PEOPLE FOR A PEOPLE WITHOUT A LAND": CIVILIZING
MISSION AND AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR ZIONISM, 1880S-1929

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation explores the origins of the “special relationship” between the United States and Israel and documents the early American support for the Zionist project in Palestine from the late nineteenth century through the Arab uprising in August 1929 and illustrates how the West privileged the Zionist narrative over arguments emphasizing the Palestinian Arab right to self-determination. The question central to this dissertation is how and why the United States came to identify with the Zionist movement during the first half century of Jewish colonization in Palestine. This dissertation focuses on how the Zionists presented their arguments for the Jewish colonization of Palestine to the West in pamphlets, books, speeches, petitions, interviews, and meetings with officials. In the early stages, Zionists and their supporters presented their colonial movement to the Western powers as an extension of the Western civilizing mission, adopting the idealistic rhetoric of benevolent imperialism and the Biblical justifications of earlier settler colonies such as the United States. Zionists presented their movement as congruent with the history of white Americans, essentially characterizing Jewish pioneers and the Jewish colonization of Palestine in such a way so as to remind white Americans of how they understood themselves and their history of settlement, conquest, and expansion. Consequently, Zionists and white Americans understood the indigenous population of Palestine as congruous with Native Americans, which simply compounded the already negative attitude Americans often exhibited toward Islam and the peoples of the Orient. The Jewish colonization of Palestine began during the final stage of the U.S. conquest of Native Americans, and white Americans justified the removal, expropriation, and extermination of the natives on the prevailing ideologies of civilization and race. Zionists would adopt a similar ideology and strategy of conquest regarding

the Palestinian Arabs, whose possession of the land and existence represented an obstacle to Zionist goals, primarily the establishment of a Jewish state.

For the memory of my grandpa, Peter Jurski

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INTRODUCTION

Arno Mayer, Professor Emeritus of European History at Princeton University, recently proposed that three main reasons explain why political and popular opinion in the First and Second Worlds has favored the Israeli position rather than that of the Palestinian Arabs. First, Zionism “emerged during the high noon of Western colonial imperialism,” adopted the prevalent “Western-supremacist contempt for and suspicion” of non-white, non-Christian “natives,” and established a Jewish state “in a region seething with anti-imperialist nationalism.” Second, the Christian West supported Zionism and Israel as “atonement for their persecution of Jews through the ages, of which the final solution was the nadir.” While “it was for the Europeans—not the Arabs—to atone, make reparation, and provide a haven for the refugees and displaced persons of the Jewish catastrophe,” the West supported the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. Third, the conflict has been framed as a Manichean struggle between civilization and barbarism as “innocent, imperiled, and peace-seeking Israelis are set against treacherous, swarming, and aggressive Arabs.” Zionism emerged in an era when the industrial powers “delineated borders and bartered sovereignties” without any concern for the rights, wishes, and histories of the colonized peoples. The early proponents of Zionism and Jewish colonization in Palestine understood the movement as a solution to the dangers of anti-Semitism and assimilation in the West, adopted the nineteenth century ideology of liberal nationalism, and believed that the European powers would counter Palestinian Arab opposition to the Zionist project through “transfer” of the indigenous population. The Palestinian Arabs, in their resistance to what they understood as a foreign invasion intent on gaining sovereignty over Palestine, adopted the anti-

imperialist nationalism so pervasive throughout the colonized world in the twentieth century. While this conflict has often been characterized as one between two competing nationalisms, it is also one between European imperialism and the movement of colonized peoples for self-government and self-determination. Importantly, the Zionists gained the patronage of the British government, which understood support for the Zionist project as a means to pursue geostrategic interests in the Middle East, and have had a significant advantage over the Arabs regarding “access to the world’s centers of political, economic, and cultural power.”¹

The chapters that follow explore the origins of the “special relationship” between the United States and Israel and document the early American support for the Zionist project in Palestine from the late nineteenth century through the Arab uprising in August 1929 and illustrate how the West privileged the Zionist narrative over arguments emphasizing the Palestinian Arab right to self-determination. The question central to this dissertation is how and why the United States came to identify with the Zionist movement during the first half century of

¹ Mayer, *Ploughshares into Swords*, 89-94, 118; Tom Segev, *One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000), 5-6.

Segev writes that “for all practical purposes, the British [in the Balfour Declaration] had promised the Zionists they would establish a Jewish state in Palestine” and that “the British kept their promise to the Zionists” despite the “widely held belief of Britain’s pro-Arabism.” As we’ll discuss below, Zionists often excoriated the British for failing to fulfill their ostensible commitment to Zionist aims. In reality, the British policies privileged the Zionists over the Palestinian Arab population.

Israeli historian Benny Morris, whose work in the 1980s was part of the revisionist reevaluation of Zionist historiography, especially in regard to the formation of Israel in 1948, defines Zionism as “the drive for the return of the Jews to, and sovereignty in, Eretz Israel,” which “was rooted in age-old millenarian impulses and values of Jewish religious tradition and in the flourishing nationalist ideologies of nineteenth century Europe.” Morris observes that Jewish colonization and land purchase from the 1880s onward meant “territorial displacement and dispossession” for Arab peasants. Fear of expropriation and expulsion from their lands was the central cause of Palestinian opposition and resistance to Zionism. The conflict was between Arabs who “sought instinctively to retain the Arab and Muslim character of the region and to maintain their position as its rightful inhabitants” and Zionists who “sought radically to change the status quo, buy as much land as possible, settle on it, and eventually turn an Arab-populated country into a Jewish homeland.”

Central to the Zionist movement and the history of the conflict has been, in the words of the Israeli revisionist historian Simha Flapan, the Zionists’ “non-recognition of the existence of a Palestine national entity.” Zionist leaders, such as David Ben-Gurion, privately recognized the development of Palestinian Arab nationalism, but understood that a public acknowledgement of such a force would serve to undermine the Zionist cause.

See, Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 14, 37, 49; Simha Flapan, *Zionism and the Palestinians* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1979), 11-12; Shabtai Teveth, *Ben-Gurion and the Palestinian Arabs: From Peace to War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985)

Jewish colonization in Palestine. A related question is why many Americans ignored and dismissed the arguments of representatives of the Palestinian Arabs stressing the principles of American democracy and self-determination in presenting the Palestinian Arab case to the United States and international forums during and after World War I. This dissertation focuses on how the Zionists presented their arguments for the Jewish colonization of Palestine to the West in pamphlets, books, speeches, petitions, interviews, meetings with officials, and so forth. In the early stages, Zionists and their supporters presented their colonial movement to the Western powers as an extension of the Western civilizing mission, adopting the idealistic rhetoric of benevolent imperialism and the Biblical justifications of earlier settler colonies such as the United States. For example, Representative Hamilton Fish of New York, a sponsor of a 1922 Congressional resolution declaring support for the ‘Establishment of a National Home for the Jews in Palestine,’ understood a Jewish State as:

... a great republic, built on democratic principles standing between the two great Mohammedan worlds—that of Africa and Asia—standing between those warlike races as a guarantee to the peace of the world. They will fashion their government after the ideals of ours and believe in our flag... because it represents freedom, liberty and justice and that is what *we want to see eventually in Palestine*.²

Zionists presented their movement as similar to the sanitized and heroic history of white Americans, essentially characterizing Jewish pioneers and the Jewish colonization of Palestine in such a way so as to remind white Americans of how they understood themselves and their history of settlement, conquest, and expansion. Congressman Albert Rossdale of New York made the comparison between American and Zionist pioneers explicit when he testified before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs in 1922 that

² Fish quoted in *New York Times*, 9 January 1923 as cited in Lawrence Davidson, *America's Palestine: Popular and Official Perceptions from Balfour to Israeli Statehood* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 51-52. Emphasis is mine. It did not matter what the people in Palestine wanted, but what the United States wanted in Palestine.

the resettling of Palestine has created a situation somewhat akin to that of the American colonist in his struggle with the American Indian. For like the early American settler on this continent, the Jewish colonist frequently has to till the soil with a rifle in one hand and a hoe in the other. The Nomadic Arab raiders...are fighting the civilization of the Jewish settler as the Indian fought the American settler on this continent in the early days.³

The scholar Larry Portis refers to this process whereby white Americans projected an image of themselves and their history onto the Zionist pioneers and later the state of Israel as “image transfer.” Both Jewish and American pioneers, who understood themselves as undertaking a divine mission as a chosen people, were intent on colonizing and settling a wilderness sparsely inhabited by nonhuman savages who were simply obstacles to civilization and development. Both Jewish and American pioneers adopted a frontier mythology emphasizing physical, spiritual, cultural, and national regeneration through conquest of the wilderness and its savage inhabitants. Both Jewish and American pioneers conquered barren landscapes with modern technology and agricultural methods in stark contrast to the indigenous population whose agricultural techniques were ignored or characterized as archaic and unchanging. Both American and Zionist pioneers utilized arguments that the indigenous population did not use the land and resources properly as justification for expropriation, removal, and even ethnic cleansing and genocide. Additionally, Zionists capitalized on the American understanding of Palestine as a territory properly belonging to the Christian West and not the Islamic East. Part of the American support for Zionism during this period was due to anti-Semitism and fears of immigrants from Eastern Europe (and indeed established Jewish Americans expressed fears that Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe would exacerbate anti-Semitism and threaten the

³House Foreign Affairs Committee, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 67th Congress, 2nd Session, House Congressional Resolution 52, 18-21 April 1922 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1922), 20.

former's assimilation), but importantly Americans identified with Zionism and Jewish pioneers as mirroring the American experience and representing American values.⁴

On the other hand, Zionists and white Americans understood the indigenous population of Palestine as congruous with Native Americans, which simply compounded the already negative and racist attitude Americans often exhibited toward Islam and the peoples of the Orient. The Jewish colonization of Palestine began during the final stage of the U.S. conquest of Native Americans, and white Americans justified the removal, expropriation, and extermination of the natives on the prevailing ideologies of civilization and race. Zionists would adopt a similar ideology and strategy of conquest regarding the Palestinian Arabs, whose possession of the land and existence represented an obstacle to Zionist goals, primarily the establishment of a Jewish state. Both white Americans and Zionists characterized native resistance to colonization as evidence of savagery and backwardness (and usually the result of foreign incitement) and grounds for violent conquest. As Portis observes, "the Palestinian resistance to colonization and ethnic cleansing is being dealt with in much the same ways as that of the Indians: forced

⁴ Larry Portis, "Zionism and the United States: The Cultural Connection," *Counterpunch*, 24-26 February 2007, <http://www.counterpunch.org/2007/02/24/zionism-and-the-united-states/>; Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier* (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1973); Hersh, "Inconvenient Truths about 'Real Existing' Zionism," *Monthly Review* Vol 61, No 1 (May 2009).

In discussing Zionism with Arthur Balfour, Louis Brandeis acknowledged that Zionism was an alternative for immigration restrictionists who feared an influx of Eastern European Jews. Even in 1939, Stephen Wise testifying to Congress about admitting German children to the U.S. stated that he did not wish to challenge existing immigration laws: "...and if children cannot be helped, they cannot be helped, because we should not undertake to do anything that would be hurtful to the interests of our country...."

Interestingly, while supporters of Zionism argued that the Jewish settlers would bring modernization of the West to Palestine, part of their arguments justifying the movement were based on Biblical history and religious tradition. Additionally, while Zionists based their need for a Jewish state on the existence of anti-Semitism in the West, they recognized the need for the support of an imperial power and asserted that were transplanting Western ideas to the East and would protect Western interests in the region. As a barrier of Western civilization against the barbarian East, the Zionists looked to the West to guarantee the Jewish state's security, when it was Western anti-Semitism that posed the threat to Jews throughout Europe. See, for example, Hersh, "Inconvenient Truths about 'Real Existing' Zionism," *Monthly Review* Vol 61, No 1 (May 2009); Walid Khalidi, *From Haven to Conquest: Readings in Zionism and the Palestine Problem until 1948* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1971), 196; Ibrahim I. Ibrahim, "The American-Israeli Alliance: Raison d'etat Revisited," *Journal of Palestine Studies* Vol 15, No 3 (Spring 1986), 20-21.

evacuation, concentration in ‘reservations’ (which could be called ‘Bantustans’ or ‘autonomous territories’), periodic massacre and racist humiliations.” While white Americans and Jewish pioneers adopted the prevailing Western ideas about race, evolution, and progress and often maintained that they were undertaking civilizing missions, the result in both cases was the violent expropriation of the indigenous populations. The numerous comparisons between the Palestinian Arabs and Native Americans during the early period of Zionist colonization prepared Americans to understand the Arabs as savages and their resistance as irrational and further solidified the American identification with the Zionist project.⁵

Part I attempts to place early official and popular American support for Zionism within the larger discourse on imperialism, civilizing missions, nationhood, citizenship, self-determination, democracy, and migration from the late nineteenth century through World War I and the immediate postwar period.⁶ I focus on what Erez Manela has called the Wilsonian

⁵ Larry Portis, “Zionism and the United States: The Cultural Connection.” It is an intriguing hypothesis that Americans have failed to recognize the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians because they have not wished to reflect on their own history of genocide. As David Stannard relates in his preface to Ward Churchill’s *A Little Matter of Genocide*, early American scholars and politicians celebrated the massacres of Native Americans (from Fort Mystic to Wounded Knee) central to the conquest of the continent, but the celebratory rhetoric was largely discarded following the Judeocide during World War II. Stannard observes that in the second half of the twentieth century, standard accounts dealing with the destruction of Native Americans have focused on an “inevitable” and “unintentional” process, even blaming the natives for their fate. Stannard concludes: “It has been quite an intellectual pirouette to behold: from proudly taking credit for mass murder to blaming the victim—from open celebration of genocide to genocide denial—in just a few short generations.” See David Stannard, “Preface” to Ward Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas, 1492 to the Present* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1997).

⁶ For a thoughtful interpretation on some of these ideas in an international context, see Eric Weitz, “From the Vienna to the Paris System: International Politics and the Entangled Histories of Human Rights, Forced Deportations, and Civilizing Missions,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol 113, No 5 (December 2008), 1313-1343. Even a critical revisionist scholar such as Simha Flapan could maintain that the Zionist movement was morally justified and a “historical necessity” based on “the universal values of democracy and social justice.” Flapan argues in *Zionism and the Palestinians* that the Zionist movement was not an example of settler colonialism and Western imperialism. Such an argument, however, is untenable. Zionism was a pure settler colonial movement based on the removal of the indigenous population. Of course, the Zionist movements differs from other examples of settler colonialism because, as H.S. Haddad and others have noted, Zionism was premised on returning and reconquering an ancient homeland. Not only was Zionism a form of Western imperialism, but the Arab population understood the Zionist movement in such terms from a very early stage. See, for example, Simha Flapan, *Zionism and the Palestinians* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1979), especially 13-14, 194ff; Samih Farsoun and Christina Zacharia, *Palestine and the Palestinians* (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1997); Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press,

moment, the hopeful period when colonized and oppressed peoples looked to Wilson and the United States as the champion of self-determination and national independence.⁷ In many instances, however, Wilson's racism, paternalism, and imperialism undermined his rhetoric regarding self-determination. Part I especially focuses on the period from 1917, when Wilson privately pledged support for the Balfour declaration to 1922, when both Houses of Congress and President Warren G. Harding endorsed resolutions supporting the British mandate and the "Establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine," the League of Nations rubber-stamped the British mandate in Palestine, the King-Crane Commission Report, written in 1919 for the

1996); Shafir, "Settler Citizenship in the Jewish Colonization of Palestine," in Caroline Elkins and Susan Pederson, eds., *Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century: Projects, Practices, Legacies* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 41-57; Edward Said, Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, Janet Abu-Lughod, Muhammad Hallaj, Elia Zuriek, "A Profile of the Palestinian People," in Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens, ed., *Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question* (London and New York: Verso, 2001), 235-296; Abdul-Wahab Kayyali, "Zionism and Imperialism: The Historical Origins," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 6, No 3 (Spring 1977), 98-112; H. S Haddad, "The Biblical Bases of Zionist Colonialism," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 3, No 4 (Summer 1974), 97-113; Walid Khalidi, "The Hebrew *Reconquista* of Palestine: From the 1947 United Nations Partition Resolution to the First Zionist Congress of 1897," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 30, No 1 (Autumn 2009), 24-42; Israel Shahak, "The 'Historical Right' and the Other Holocaust," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 10, No 3 (Spring 1981), 27-34.

⁷ Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). As Manela and others make clear, American propaganda during WWI emphasized Wilsonian rhetoric and many colonized peoples lobbied Wilson to support self-determination during the postwar era. See, for example, Manela, "Imagining Woodrow Wilson in Asia: Dreams of East-West Harmony and the Revolt Against Empire in 1919," *The American Historical Review* 111, No. 5 (December 2006), 1327-1351; Hans Schmidt, "Democracy for China: American Propaganda and the May Fourth Movement," *Diplomatic History* 22, No 1 (Winter 1998), 1-28; Ronan Brindley, "Woodrow Wilson, Self-Determination, and Ireland, 1918-1919: A View from the Irish Newspapers," *E'ire* 23, No 4 (1988), 62-80; Noriko Kawamura, "Wilsonian Idealism and Japanese Claims at the Paris Peace Conference," *Pacific Historical Review* 66, No. 4 (November 1997), 503-526; Naoko Shimazu, *Japan, Race and Equality: The Racial Equality Proposal of 1919* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998); Jonathan Rosenberg, "For Democracy, Not Hypocrisy: World War and Race Relations in the United States, 1914-1919," *The International History Review*, Vol 21, No 3 (September 1999), 592-625; Michael Adas, "Contested Hegemony: The Great War and the Afro-Asian Assault on the Civilizing Mission Ideology," *Journal of World History*, Vol 15, No 1 (2004), 31-63.

There are a number of primary sources containing various appeals to the U.S. and Wilson and illustrating the transnational discourse on the idea of self-determination. Many of the colonized peoples seeking self-determination accepted the prevailing discourse on civilization, meaning that some peoples still required Western colonialism as a means to become developed and civilized. The Chinese and Egyptians, however, referred to their long histories and civilizations when arguing that Western colonial powers did not need to oversee development in China and Egypt. See, for example, The China Society of America, *China's Claims at the Peace Table* (New York: Alliance Printing Company, 1919); *Might or Right?: The Fourteen Points and the Disposition of Kiao-Chau* (New York: Chinese Patriotic Committee, 1919); Henry Chung, *The Case of Korea: A Collection of Evidence on the Japanese Domination of Korea, and on the Development of the Korean Independence Movement* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1921); Chung, *The Oriental Policy of the United States* (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1970); Egyptian Delegation to the Peace Conference, *Collections of Official Correspondence from November 11, 1918 to July 14, 1919* (Paris, 1919)

major powers at the Paris Peace Conference and warning of popular opposition in the former Ottoman territories to European mandates and Zionism, was finally published in the United States, and the Palestine National League, based in New York, published *The Case Against Zionism*. After introducing how Americans perceived the Middle East, the ideas, principles, and realities of Wilson's foreign policy, U.S. interests in Palestine through the Great War and early 1920s, and the early discussion on Zionism in the United States, I examine the rhetoric surrounding the Zionist movement during and after WWI. The discussion in Part I focuses on the Balfour Declaration, the Paris Peace Conference, State Department documents, hearings before the House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs for four days in April 1922, Zionist and anti-Zionist arguments, and coverage in the *New York Times* to illustrate how American political leaders understood Zionism, how many Americans perceived Palestinian Arabs and Jewish settlers, how the Zionists both framed their message for an American audience and privately understood the aims of their movement, and how opponents of Zionism less often and less successfully appealed to avowed American principles, especially self-determination and democracy, in stating their case to the United States.

The Zionists, recognizing the need for Western support for their movement, emphasized appealing to Western audiences and were quite successful in presenting their narrative to the American public, a narrative that portrayed their movement as replicating the American experience and capitalized on the religious and historical connections between Jewish and American pioneers. Jewish and non-Jewish Zionists created institutions throughout the Western world that effectively mobilized adherents in local, national, and international organizations so as to provide support for Jewish colonization in Palestine and lobby Western governments and international institutions to facilitate Zionist aims and grant legitimacy to the movement. On the

other hand, the Arabs identified with Wilsonian rhetoric during World War I, but clearly opposed the presumption of the victors to establish colonial regimes under the guise of the mandate system and grant international sanction for the Jewish colonization of Palestine. While the Zionists understood the need for international (Western) support for their movement and actively sought to disseminate their narrative, the Arabs opposed Western colonialism and imperialism. Even though there are examples of Arab representatives and spokespersons appealing to Wilsonian principles, self-determination, and democracy and warning against Jewish immigration and colonization, there existed among them the belief that the Western world did not have the legitimate right to make decisions regarding Arab territory and that the Zionists did not have any legitimate right to colonize Palestine. In addition, the Arabs in Palestine had little reason to present their case for nationalism to the West prior to the destruction of the Ottoman Empire, the establishment of the mandate system, a transparent cover for colonialism, and the international sanction for Jewish colonization in Palestine. These factors in part help explain why the Arabs focused less than the Zionists on presenting their case to Western audiences during this period.⁸ Even when pro-Arab views were disseminated in the United States, the American identification with the Zionist movement often precluded a sympathetic hearing of the Arab position. The British, with clear imperialist goals in the Near East, often simply ignored peaceful Arab protests against British policy since Arab self-determination ran contrary to British control of an increasingly important strategic region.

⁸ Palestinian and pro-Palestinian voices would increase their efforts to present their case to Western audiences during the latter years of the British mandate and the United Nations debate over the question of Palestine. These voices continued to argue that Zionism, the Balfour Declaration, and the mandate for Palestine were illegitimate forms of colonialism and violations of the rights of the Palestinian people. In addition, the Arab spokespersons concluded that the UN partition of Palestine, undertaken against the wishes of the majority population, was also illegitimate. See for example, Edward Atiyah, *The Palestine Question* (London: The Diplomatic Press and Publishing Company, 1949).

Part II examines the discourse on Zionism and Palestinian resistance during the early mandatory period, concluding with the 1929 Arab rebellion, which again signaled Palestinian Arab opposition to Zionist colonization under the terms of the British mandate over Palestine. Over the three chapters in Part II we will continue to focus on how Americans perceived Palestine during the mandatory era and how the Zionists framed their message for an American audience. We will also briefly mention how opponents of Zionism appealed to avowed American principles, especially self-determination and democracy in presenting their case. Again the Zionists more effectively disseminated their narrative to Western audiences and delegitimized peaceful and violent Arab opposition. During the mandate era, Zionists portrayed their efforts as a civilizing mission benefiting the land and people in Palestine and argued that the international community enshrined the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate for Palestine in international law, legitimizing Zionism and delegitimizing Arab opposition. Whenever Arab resistance to Jewish colonization posed a challenge to the Zionist narrative and project, Zionists and their Western supporters characterized Arab opposition as the irrational actions of frenzied Muslim ‘savages,’ similar to the illegitimate resistance of Native Americans to white settlement and expansion. Instead of understanding Western colonialism as the problem, most Western commentators accepted the Zionist narrative that the Arabs, like the Native Americans, opposed progress, development, civilization, and international law. The bulk of Part II focuses on how different actors characterized the causes and consequences of the Arab uprising in 1929, illustrating how the Zionist narrative portrayed Arab protests of the Balfour Declaration and mandate for Palestine as the fanatical and barbaric undertakings of ignorant and savage Muslims. Importantly, the 1929 uprising and the political and diplomatic war waged in the wake of the August violence represents a key moment in the conflict over Palestine as the Zionists

successfully propagated their narrative about civilization and self-determination in Europe and the United States and many Americans identified with the Zionist movement and portrayed it as congruent with American history and American values.

Throughout this history of the American relationship to Zionism, overwhelmingly negative American perceptions about Arabs and Palestine contributed to popular American support for the Zionist project and the dehumanization of Palestinian Arabs. Since the British captured the Holy Land during the First World War, American support for Zionism has been premised on the notion that the Zionist movement has embodied and defended American principles and values and represented the best of Western civilization. It is to the early period of American support for the Zionist movement to which we now turn.

PART I: CIVILIZING MISSION AND AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR ZIONISM, 1880-1922¹

It shall not lie with American people to dictate to another people what their government shall be or what use they shall have or what persons they shall encourage or favor.

President Woodrow Wilson, 1916²

The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretence but an idea—something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer sacrifice to...

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*³

Our claim to be left in the unmolested enjoyment of vast and splendid possessions, mainly acquired by violence, largely maintained by force, often seems less reasonable to others than to us.

Winston Churchill, 1914⁴

The establishment of a strong, free Jewish state astride the bridge between Europe and Africa, flanking the land roads to the East, would not only be an

¹ As the historian Arno J. Mayer notes, “the Judeocide weighs heavily on how the history of Zionism, the Yishuv, and Israel is told. It is widely assumed and invoked to justify the Zionist project, as well as the establishment and development of the Jewish state.” But political Zionism and the goal of establishing a Jewish state developed in the late nineteenth century. Zionism was influenced by the prevailing imperialist and racial ideologies, and from the early stages, the Palestinian Arabs resisted what they understood as European colonization. While the Zionists “invoked Nazi Germany’s escalating war against the Jews to justify the whole of Zionist policy since 1917, and to vindicate each and every one of emergent Israel’s transgressions of the law,” the Palestinians, in the process of creating their own national identity, “refused to yield what they believed to be their land in expiation for Christian Europe’s latest and most heinous torment of the Jews.” The simple point is that the origins of the conflict lie in the late nineteenth century and center on the incompatibility between the Zionist goal of establishing a Jewish state in Eretz Israel and both the indigenous population’s right to remain in possession of its homeland and the emerging Arab/Palestinian nationalism and drive for self-determination. Arno J. Mayer, *Plowshares into Swords: From Zionism to Israel* (London and New York: Verso, 2008), 1-3; Alan Dowty, *Israel/Palestine, 2nd Edition* (Malden, Mass: Polity Press, 2008), 4

² William Diamond, *The Economic Thought of Woodrow Wilson* (Baltimore, 1943), 154, as cited in Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2nd Edition, 1993), 55. Wilson submitted a draft of a message to Congress containing this phrase to his Secretary of State Robert Lansing. Lansing wrote “Haiti, S. Domingo, Nicaragua, Panama” on the note and returned it to Wilson, who never relayed the message to Congress.

³ Quoted in Edward Said, “The Idea of Palestine in the West,” *Middle East Research and Information Project*, No. 70 (September 1978), 3.

⁴ Churchill quoted in John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830-1970* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 268, and Noam Chomsky, “A Century Later,” *Peace Review* (September 1998) accessed at <http://www.chomsky.info/articles/199809--.htm>

immense advantage to the British Empire but a notable step toward a harmonious disposition of the world among its peoples.

Winston Churchill
1908⁵

The Gentile advocates of restoring Palestine to the Jews either have never investigated the proposition from the point of the inhabitants of the country or are actuated by the principle of political expediency severely denounced by President Wilson.

Dr. Herbert Adams Gibbons⁶

Palestine proper was already inhabited....The alternatives open to the Zionists bent on having Palestine were to drive out the inhabitants by the sword or to grapple with the problem of a large, alien population, mostly hostile Moslems.

Israel Zangwill, 1904⁷

The goal is to revive our nation on its land...if only we succeed in increasing our numbers here until we are the majority.... There are now only five hundred [thousand] Arabs, who are not very strong, and from whom we shall easily take away the country if only we do it through stratagems [and] without drawing upon us their hostility before we become the strong and populous ones.

Eliezer Ben-Yehuda and Yehiel Michael Pines
October 1882⁸

⁵ Quoted in Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-1999* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 72

⁶ Quoted in Palestine National League, *The Case Against Zionism*, H. I. Katibah, editor (New York: Syrian-American Press, 1922), 18.

⁷ Quoted in Richard Stevens, "Zionism as Western Imperialism," in Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine* (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1987), 39. Note how Zangwill characterized the indigenous Arabs as the "alien population," meaning that the Jewish people had a more legitimate claim to Palestine than those inhabiting the land for centuries. Shabtai Teveth quotes Zangwill as stating in a speech in New York in 1904 that "We must be prepared to expel [the Arabs] from the land by the sword, just as our forefathers did to the tribes that occupied it." Both Zangwill and Max Nordau are often credited with coining the phrase "a land without a people for a people without a land," though Benny Morris observes that Lord Shaftesbury jotted down the phrase in his memoirs in the 1850s. Ibrahim Abu-Lughod makes the obvious observation that if Palestine were empty, "the British government would have found no obstacle in carrying out its commitment to the Zionists." Zionists recognized that Palestine was populated. Nahum Goldman acknowledged that "Palestine was not a land without people even in Herzl's time; it was inhabited by hundreds of thousands of Arabs who, in the course of events, would sooner or later have achieved independent statehood, either alone or as a unit with a larger Arab context." The Zionist leadership understood that Zionist aims were dependent upon the expropriation and even expulsion of the indigenous population, yet claiming that Palestine was an empty wasteland was central to the Zionist ideology. Moshe Smilansky, an early pioneer, wrote that "from the inception of the Zionist idea, Zionist propaganda described the country for which we were headed as a desolate and largely neglected land, waiting eagerly for its redeemers."

See, Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 113-114; Erskine Childers, "The Wordless Wish: From Citizens to Refugees," in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 165-202; Shabtai Teveth, "The Evolution of 'Transfer' in Zionist Thinking," *Occasional Papers* No 107 (Tel Aviv: The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 1989), 2; Simhan Flapan, *Zionism and the Palestinians* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1979), 126; Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 42

⁸ Quoted in Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 49

Forgetting...is a crucial factor in the formation of a nation.
Ernest Renan, 1882⁹

⁹ Ernest Renan, "What Is a Nation?" reprinted in Homi Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration* (London, 1990) as cited in Thomas Bender, *A Nation Among Nations: America's Place in World History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006), 179.

CHAPTER 1: AMERICAN AND ZIONIST IMAGES OF THE MIDDLE EAST

From the 1880s through WWI, well-entrenched ideas about the civilizing mission and the white man's burden justified U.S. continental and overseas expansion, restrictive immigration policies, and support for the nascent Zionist movement, which was intent on establishing a "Jewish National Home in Palestine." Zionists and their supporters presented their colonial movement to the Western powers as an extension of the Western civilizing mission, adopting the idealistic rhetoric of benevolent imperialism and the Biblical justifications of earlier settler colonies. Overwhelmingly negative and commonplace American perceptions about Arabs and Palestine, which developed in the nineteenth century as a result of Protestant missionaries, increasing diplomatic and economic exchanges, travel literature, and, perhaps most importantly, traditional Biblical imagery, contributed to popular American support for the Zionist project and the attendant dehumanization of Palestinian Arabs. Many scholars have investigated American perceptions of Arabs and Palestine and the popular and official responses to Zionism during the late nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth. For example, Hilton Obenzinger discusses the American appropriation of Palestine and the late nineteenth century expressions of a historical Anglo-American identification with the Holy Land since the era of British colonization of North America. Importantly, Obenzinger notes, millennialist Christians believed that for the Second Coming of Christ to occur, the dispersed Jews had to migrate back to Palestine. While portraying the landscape in Palestine as unchanged from Biblical times, many American missionaries, scholars, and tourists depicted the indigenous inhabitants as archaic reminders of ancient history and obstacles to progress, development, civilization, and

modernization.¹ Nineteenth century American commentators, Obenzinger concludes, saw Palestine “through the ‘window’ of the New World experience of the rawest, most extreme, most violent settler-colonial expansion in the world, as well as through the lens of the Bible, Crusader myths, and *Arabian Nights*.”² The attitudes of Jewish settlers in Palestine in the

¹ For example, William M. Thomson’s *The Land and the Book; or Biblical Illustrations Drawn from the Manners and Customs, the Scenes and Scenery of the Holy Land* depicted Palestine in the mid nineteenth century as “identical” to the land of the Bible. See, William Thomson, *The Land and the Book: Biblical Illustrations Drawn from the Manners and Customs, the Scenes and Scenery of the Holy Land, 2 Vols* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1859)

² See, for example, Lawrence Davidson, *America’s Palestine: Popular and Official Perceptions from Balfour to Israeli Statehood* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida); Davidson, “Biblical Archaeology and the Press: Shaping American Perceptions of Palestine in the First Decade of the Mandate,” *The Biblical Archaeologist*, Vol. 59, No. 2 (June 1996), 104-114; Davidson, “The Past as Prelude: Zionism and the Betrayal of American Democratic Principles, 1917-1948,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (Spring 2002), 21-35; Davidson, “Historical Ignorance and Popular Perception: The Case of U.S. Perceptions of Palestine, 1917,” *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (1994), 125-147; Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); Said, “The Idea of Palestine in the West,” *Middle East Research and Information Project*, No. 70 (September 1978), 3-11; Hilton Obenzinger, *American Palestine: Melville, Twain, and the Holy Land Mania* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), quoted material on page xvii; Kathleen Christison, *Perceptions of Palestine: Their Influence on U.S. Middle East Policy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Lester I. Vogel, *To See a Promised Land: Americans and the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* (University Park, Penn: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993); Michael Suleiman, ed., *U.S. Policy on Palestine from Wilson to Clinton* (Normal, Ill: Association of Arab-American University Graduates, Inc, 1995), especially 9-26; Cindy Lydon, “American Images of the Arabs,” *Mid East*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (May-June 1969), 3-14; Maryanne Agnes Rhett, “‘Quasi-Barbarians’ and ‘Wandering Jews’: The Balfour Declaration in Light of World Events,” Ph. D. Dissertation, Washington State University, 2008, especially Chapter 3; Janice Terry, “Zionist Attitudes Toward Arabs,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* Vol. 6, No. 1 (Autumn 1976), 67-78; Gisela Renate Ables, “Changing Images of the Arab World in the American Popular Mind,” Ph.D. diss., University of Houston, 1998; Terry Brooks Hammons, “‘A Wild Ass of a Man’: American Images of Arabs to 1948,” Ph.D. diss., University of Oklahoma, 1978; Lori Anne Salem, “The most indecent thing imaginable”: sexuality, race and the image of Arabs in American entertainment, 1850-1990 (Ph D Diss, 1995, Temple); Fuad Sha’ban, *Islam and Arabs in Early American Thought: The Roots of Orientalism in America* (Durham, NC: Acorn Press, 1991); Robert Allison, *The Crescent Obscured: The United States and the Muslim World, 1776-1815* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Naomi Shepherd, *The Zealous Intruders: The Western Rediscovery of Palestine* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987); Linda Steet, *Veils and Daggers: A Century of National Geographic’s Representation of the Arab World* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000); Laurence Michalak, “Cruel and Unusual: Negative Images of Arabs in American Popular Culture,” *ADC Issues*, No 15 (1988), 1-40; Michalak, “The Arab in American Cinema: A Century of Otherness,” *Cineaste* Vol 17, No 1 (1989), 3-9; Fawaz Gerges, “Islam and Muslims in the Mind of America: Influences on the Making of U.S. Policy,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 26, No 2 (Winter 1997), 68-80; Regina Sharif, *Non-Jewish Zionism: Its Roots in Western History* (London: Zed Press, 1983); Sharif, “Christians for Zion, 1600-1919,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 5, No 3/4 (Spring-Summer 1976), 123-141; James Montgomery, *Arabia and the Bible* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1934); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998); Sarah M.A. Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White: Race and Ethnicity in the Early Syrian American Diaspora* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); Mayer, *Ploughshares into Swords*, 13-15. There are also numerous published primary source accounts. See, for example, Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad: Or, The New Pilgrims’ Progress* (New York: The Modern Library, 2003); John Lloyd Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petraea and the Holy Land*, Victor Wolfgang von Hagen, ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma

1880s toward the Arab population were similar to American perceptions of the Oriental Other. Zionist spokespersons would draw on these commonalities when presenting their arguments and narratives to an American audience. A brief examination of Mark Twain's description of the Holy Land in *Innocents Abroad* provides some context for how Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century perceived Palestine, while a discussion of the diary of an early Russian Jewish pioneer to Palestine and an essay by the important Zionist intellectual Ahad Ha'am help illustrate the goals of the Zionist movement and the attitude of early Jewish settlers toward the Arab population, which serves as a useful point of reference for later rhetoric on Zionism and Arab opposition. Following this initial discussion, we will introduce some broader themes about American ideology and foreign policy and discuss how the State Department interpreted American national interests in the Near East in this early period. While the State Department focused on philanthropic and commercial interests in the region and warned against direct support for Zionism, how

Press, 1970); William Wing Loring, *A Confederate Soldier in Egypt* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co, 1884); William Thomson, *The Land and the Book: Biblical Illustrations Drawn from the Manners and Customs, the Scenes and Scenery of the Holy Land* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1859). For an example of the perceptions of an early Jewish settler, see Chaim Chissin, *A Palestine Diary: Memoirs of a Bilu Pioneer, 1882-1887*, Frances Miller, trans. (New York: Herzl Press, 1976). Janice Terry's "Zionist Attitude Toward Arabs," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 6, No 1 (Autumn 1976), 67-78, provides a succinct discussion of Zionist racism toward the Arabs, a theme prominent throughout this dissertation. For an interesting example of American perceptions of the Ottoman empire, Arabs and Muslims before WWI, see a travel account from the archeologist Richard Norton published in *The Graphic* (London) on 7 October 1911, a copy of which can be found as Records of the Department of State (RDS), Record Group 59, 867m.927/137 (18 October 1911). For a late 19th century fictionalized work promoting Zionism and perpetuating common negative stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims, see George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda* (New York: Harper 1961), which was originally published in 1876. For a cogent discussion on the effect of *Daniel Deronda* and Christian Zionism, see Rhett, 139-141.

Negative perceptions of Palestinians persist in the United States and play a central role in the Israeli and American denial of Palestinian rights. In fact, some, such as Newt Gingrich, an early contender for the 2012 Republican nomination for president, continue to argue that Palestinians do not exist and that there are plenty of Arab lands for these non-existent people. A common perception is that the Palestinians are simply "terrorists," completely delegitimizing Palestinian resistance to dispossession and denial of national, political, and civil rights. There is a tendency to ignore that Palestinians understand themselves as the indigenous people of Palestine with inalienable and legitimate national rights. See, for example, Samih Farsoun and Christina Zacharia, *Palestine and the Palestinians* (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1997), 8-12; "Gingrich Calls Palestinians an 'Invented' People," *New York Times Blogs*, 9 December 2011, *LexisNexis*, <http://0-www.lexisnexis.com.maurice.bgsu.edu/hottopics/lnacademic/> (accessed 16 January 2011)

Americans understood themselves and their history as well as the prevailing religious and racial beliefs facilitated identification with the Zionist movement.

While the writings of William M. Thomson and other missionaries working in the Near East reached a wide American audience during the nineteenth century, their popularity perhaps paled in comparison to Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad*, which remained the best-known American travel book decades after its initial publication.³ In the wake of the Civil War, a thirty-two-year-old Twain, who had already experienced some success with the publication of *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*, convinced a San Francisco newspaper to pay for his tour of the Mediterranean, including a significant pilgrimage through Palestine, in return for regular dispatches chronicling his journey and experiences. Twain's observations of his voyage, including criticisms of previous travel literature and the behavior of Western Christian pilgrims, were published as *The Innocents Abroad or, The New Pilgrims' Progress*, which achieved immediate success in the summer of 1869.⁴ Twain's characterization of the land and people in the Near East illustrates both common Western arrogance toward and contempt for Oriental cultures and Islam and the

³ For an excellent treatment of how Western travel literature in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries supported American imperialism abroad and immigration restriction at home, see Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues*, especially Ch. 3. As Jacobson demonstrates, how white Americans characterized the non-white "Other" (as backward, uncivilized, outside of history) elucidated how white Americans saw themselves (as civilized, modern, makers of history).

⁴ See Jane Jacobs' introduction to Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad* (New York: The Modern Library, 2003), xvii-xix.

Twain was especially sarcastic and caustic when commenting on the propensity of his traveling companions to steal souvenirs from Holy Places throughout the Near East. In response to the pilgrims' desecration of a mosque commemorating Jesus' raising of the widow's son from the dead, Twain observed:

Suppose a party of armed foreigners were to enter a village church in America and break ornaments from the altar railings for curiosities, and climb up and walk upon the Bible and the pulpit cushions? However the cases are different. One is the profanation of a temple of our faith—the other only the profanation of a pagan one.

Twain criticized travel literature for romanticizing the Arabs and creating images that included "no desolation; no dirt; no rags; no fleas; no ugly features; no sore eyes; no feasting flies; no besotted ignorance in the countenances; no raw places on the donkeys' backs; no disagreeable jabbering in unknown tongues; no stench of camels...."

tendency for Western observers to perceive Palestine through a Biblical lens. Although Twain was often skeptical of the authenticity of many of the shrines throughout the Holy Land, his group's pilgrimage through the Near East was based on the beliefs that Biblical history would be readily apparent and that Palestine and parts of Syria and Lebanon were essentially unchanged from Biblical times, except for the intrusion of Western travelers:

Here, you feel all the time just as if you were living about the year 1200 before Christ—or back to the patriarchs—or forward to the New Era. The scenery of the Bible is about you—the customs of the patriarchs are around you—the same people, in the same flowing robes, and in sandals, cross your path—the same long trains of stately camels go and come—the same impressive religious solemnity and silence rest upon the desert and the mountains that were upon them in the remote ages of antiquity....⁵

This backward land, which in many accounts had both considerably regressed and remained unchanged since the Roman occupation in the minds of the Western tourists, offered a striking contrast to the developing modern industrial capitalist society and the rhetoric regarding the march of progress in the United States. A brief examination of how Twain perceived Palestine helps illustrate how many Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries understood Palestine and the Turkish and Muslim presence in the Judeo-Christian Holy Land.

Occasionally Twain presented the Arabs in a positive manner. Adopting aspects of the civilizing mission ideology, Twain suggested that if the West liberated the Arabs from the Ottomans and brought them education and liberty, then they “would be a happy and contented race.” More often, however, Twain's disdain for the people and land was quite palpable in *The Innocents Abroad*. As his group is preparing for their pilgrimage through parts of Syria, including Palestine, Twain quipped that he packed “a towel and a cake of

See, Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 404-405

⁵ Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad* (New York: The Modern Library, 2003), 343

soap, to inspire respect in the Arabs, who would take me for a king in disguise.”⁶ For Twain, this region

was a desert, weed-grown waste, littered thickly with stones the size of a man’s fist. Here and there the natives had scratched the ground and reared a sickly crop of grain, but for the most part the valley was given up to a handful of shepherds, whose flocks were doing what they honestly could to get a living, but the chances were against them. We saw rude piles of stones standing near the roadside, at intervals, and recognized the custom of marking boundaries which obtained in Jacob’s time. There were no walls, no fences, no hedges—nothing to secure a man’s possessions but these random heaps of stones. The Israelites held them sacred in the old patriarchal times, and these other Arabs, their lineal descendents, do so likewise. An American, of ordinary intelligence, would soon widely extend his property, at an outlay of mere manual labor, performed at night, under so loose a system of fencing as this.

The plows these people use are simply a sharpened stick, such as Abraham plowed with, and they still winnow their wheat as he did—they pile it on the house-top, and then toss it by shovel-fulls into the air until the wind has blown all the chaff away. They never invent anything, never learn anything.

Not considering if the Arab methods were well-suited for the environmental conditions,

Twain simply emphasized the backwardness and ignorance of the Arab peasants.⁷

In most instances, Twain could hardly stand contact with the indigenous inhabitants.

At a ruin “supposed to have been for the worship of the deity of the fountain or Baalam’s ass or somebody,” was a “wretched nest of human vermin” consisting of “rags, dirt, sunken cheeks, pallor of sickness, sores, projecting bones, dull, aching misery in their eyes and ravenous hunger speaking from every eloquent fibre and muscle from head to foot.”

Acknowledging that he and his companions “refuse[d] to recognize the Arabs names [of places] or try to pronounce them,” Twain offered that Arab villages with their own histories were simply indistinguishable to a Western observer. The pilgrims encountered naked and

⁶ This quip reminds me of the racist Pear Soap advertisements and other cartoons in the 1890s (such as the June 1899 *Judge* cover where McKinley was bathing a black Filipino in a body of water labeled ‘civilization’ in a cartoon called ‘The Filipinos First Bath’) that equated hygiene with civilization and the white man’s burden. Charles Dudley Warner, who authored *The Gilded Age* with Mark Twain, commented on Muslim bathing ritual with the illuminating observation that “it does seem a hopeless task for men of the color of these to scrub themselves.” Warner quoted in Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues*, 111

⁷ Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad* (New York: The Modern Library, 2003), 318, 326-327

impoverished children begging for “Bucksheesh!,” women wearing veils while exposing their breasts, and sick, diseased, and poorly clothed people of all ages ---a decrepit, unseemly, and barely human population in a backward village surrounded by wasteland and desert. At “the ancient village of Magdala,” which was unchanged despite the passing of two thousand years, the American pilgrims were pestered by a small population of “vermin-tortured vagabonds,” children with diseased eyes, and “brown buxom girls with repulsively tattooed lips and chins,” who were all “abject beggars by nature, instinct and education” clamoring for “bucksheesh!” In Endor, the American pilgrims met “the wildest horde of half-naked savages we have found thus far,” who all emerged from their caves to demand charity from the foreign visitors. These savage cave dwellers, who did not mind filth, disease, poverty, “barbarous ignorance and savagery,” objected to the pilgrims drinking from a sacred spring, but Twain and his compatriots rationalized their thirst for water as superseding the sensibilities, “feelings,” and “prejudices” of the Arab villagers. For Twain, much of Palestine was a desert with few inhabitants, most of whom were nomadic Bedouins and impoverished Arab villagers, but he also included a derogatory stereotype of Jews in Tiberias, whom he described as “the long-nosed, lanky, dyspeptic-looking body-snatchers, with the indescribable hats on, and a long curl dangling down in front of each ear.”⁸

⁸ Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad* (New York: The Modern Library, 2003), 334, 344, 358, 361, 372-374, 402-403

Twain, commenting on the Ottoman and Muslim persecution of Christians, expressed the hope that France and Britain cease protecting the Ottoman Empire and allow Russia to chastise the Turks. Twain harshly condemns the Muslim “pagans” for their attitude toward the Christian pilgrims and admits that he “never disliked a Chinaman as I do these degraded Turks and Arabs.”

After they first enter the Holy Land, the pilgrims set up camp in an oasis, an area of trees, vegetation, and “sparkling water,” which Twain described as “a sort of paradise,” if it were not for the nearness of an Arab village.

In another passage, Twain described nineteenth century Arabs as “precisely like [their ancestors from the time of Jesus of Nazareth] in color, dress, manners, customs, simplicity....” See, for example, Twain, 340-341, 346, 350

In one of the most memorable passages about his experience in Palestine, Twain explicitly compared the Arabs to “the noble red man,” foreshadowing a comparison that Zionist spokespersons would make when addressing American audiences in the first decades of the twentieth century:

This morning during breakfast, the usual assemblage of squalid humanity sat patiently without the charmed circle of the camp and waited for such crumbs as pity might bestow upon their misery. There were old and young, brown-skinned and yellow. Some of the men were tall and stalwart, (for one hardly sees any where such splendid-looking men as here in the East,) but all the women and children looked worn and sad, and distressed with hunger. They reminded me much of Indians, did these people. They had but little clothing, but such as they had was fanciful in character and fantastic in its arrangement. Any little absurd gewgaw or gimcrack they had they disposed in such a way as to make it attract attention most readily. They sat in silence, and with tireless patience watched our every motion with that vile, uncomplaining impoliteness which is so truly Indian, and which makes a white man so nervous and uncomfortable and savage that he wants to exterminate the whole tribe.

These people about us had other peculiarities, which I have noticed in the noble red man, too: they were infested with vermin, and the dirt had caked on them till it amounted to bark.

The little children were in a pitiable condition—they all had sore eyes, and were otherwise afflicted in various ways. They say that hardly a native child in all the East is free from sore eyes, and that thousands of them go blind of one eye or both every year. I think this must be so, for I see plenty of blind people every day, and I do not remember seeing any children that hadn't sore eyes. And, would you suppose that an American mother could sit for an hour, with her child in her arms, and let a hundred flies roost upon its eyes all that time undisturbed? I see that every day. It makes my flesh creep. Yesterday we met a woman riding on a little jackass, and she had a little child in her arms; honestly, I thought the child had goggles on as we approached, and I wondered how its mother could afford so much style. But when we drew near, we saw that the goggles were nothing but a camp meeting of flies assembled around each of the child's eyes, and at the same time there was a detachment prospecting its nose. The flies were happy, the child was contented, and so the mother did not interfere.

Writing as the U.S. government and military were in the last stage of conquering Native Americans, Twain's characterization of Arabs and “our Indians” as savages perhaps suggested that the fate of the indigenous population in Palestine would be similar to the fate of Native Americans, who were understood as obstacles to civilization and progress.

Furthermore, while Twain presented the Arabs as not valuing life, his dehumanization of them provided justification for their removal and even extermination.⁹

The assertion that Arab mothers did not care for their children was not the only instance where Twain criticized Arab and Muslim women along with Muslim society. Throughout his description of Syria and Palestine, Twain commented on the conditions of women in Muslim society, purporting both that women in the Near East were treated little better than animals and that Western cultural norms and values were superior and more civilized. For example, in observing that in certain areas of the Near East women “cover their entire faces with dark-colored or black veils, so that they look like mummies, and then expose their breasts to the public,” Twain was sexualizing the exotic other and illustrating the subordinate position of women in Oriental societies. In one short sentence, Twain played upon the common stereotypes of the hyper-sexed, yet repressed Muslim woman. In another instance, Twain proposed that while Westerners depicted Joseph walking alongside the donkey carrying Mary, the reality, in his estimation, was that men rode on the animals with young children while the women walked, again illustrating the subordinate place of women in the Near East. Yet Twain also disparaged Muslim women himself. In describing the teenage daughter of a Sheik—“a poor old mummy that looked as if he would be more at home in a poor-house than in the Chief Magistracy of this tribe of hopeless, shirtless savages,”--Twain observes that this young girl “was the only Syrian female we have seen yet who was not so sinfully ugly that she couldn’t smile after ten o’clock Saturday night without breaking the Sabbath.” Although they were “the most human girls we have found in the

⁹ Ibid., 348-349. For other comparisons to “our Indians,” see Ibid., 359, 381, 406, 441. Twain also criticized the Arabs for allowing animals, such as goats and donkeys, to lodge in their homes, evidence of their lack of civilization. The idea that nonwhite peoples did not value life has been a common justification of Western imperialism and violence, a theme touched upon in other sections of this dissertation. Ibid., 413-414

country yet, and the best natured,” the girls in Nazareth were “homely” according to Twain. While Fennimore Cooper found “beauty in the Indians” and some Western travel writers romanticized the beauty of Arab women, Twain protested that “Arab men are often fine, but Arab women are not.” He explained that Arab men kissed each other “because people must kiss, and a man would not be likely to kiss one of the women of this country of his own free will and accord.” While criticizing the condition of women in Muslim society, Twain also indicated his contempt for these same women.¹⁰

Expressing relief that his pilgrimage through Palestine was at an end, Twain reiterated that the land was desolate wildness:

Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes. Over it broods the spell of a curse that has withered its fields and fettered its energies. Where Sodom and Gomorrah reared their domes and towers, that solemn sea now floods the plain, in whose bitter waters no living thing exists—over whose waveless surface the blistering air hangs motionless and dead—about whose borders nothing grows but weeds, and scattering tufts of cane, and that treacherous fruit that promises refreshment to parching lips, but turns to ashes at the touch. Nazareth is forlorn; about that ford of Jordan where the hosts of Israel entered the Promised Land with songs of rejoicing, one finds only a squalid camp of fantastic Bedouins of the desert; Jericho, the accursed, lies a moldering ruin, to-day, even as Joshua’s miracle left it more than three thousand years ago; Bethlehem and Bethany, in their poverty and their humiliation, have nothing about them now to remind one that they once knew the high honor of the Savior’s presence; the hallowed spot where the shepherds watched their flocks by night, and where the angels sang Peace on earth, good will to men, is untenanted by any living creature, and unblessed by any feature that is pleasant to the eye. Renowned Jerusalem itself, the stateliest name in history, has lost all its ancient grandeur, and is become a pauper village; the riches of Solomon are no longer there to compel the admiration of visiting Oriental queens; the wonderful temple which was the pride and the glory of Israel, is gone, and the Ottoman crescent is lifted above the spot where, on that most memorable day in the annals of the world, they reared the Holy Cross. The noted Sea of Galilee, where Roman fleets once rode at anchor and the disciples of the Savior sailed in their ships, was long ago deserted by the devotees of war and commerce, and its borders are a silent wilderness; Capernaum is a shapeless ruin; Magdala is the

¹⁰ Ibid., 317-318, 350, 356, 394-395, 405

Twain continued: “We can all believe that the Virgin Mary was beautiful; it is not natural to think otherwise; but does it follow that it is our duty to find beauty in these present women of Nazareth?”

It is important to note that a common justification for Western military intervention has long been protecting women in “backward” cultures. Ibid., 395

home of beggared Arabs; Bethsaida and Chorazin have vanished from the earth, and the “desert places” round about them where thousands of men once listened to the Savior’s voice and ate the miraculous bread, sleep in the hush of a solitude that is inhabited only by birds of prey and skulking foxes.¹¹

Twain’s depiction of the people and land in Palestine contributed to popular American perceptions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that the Holy Land was desolate and largely uninhabited due in no small measure to Turkish and Muslim administration. Such descriptions of Palestine supported later Zionist arguments that European Jewish colonizers were introducing Western civilization, modernization, and development to a land and sparse population that had regressed since the Biblical era and was essentially outside of modern history. Zionists would capitalize on comparisons between Native Americans and Palestinian Arabs to solidify the American identification with the Jewish pioneers and understanding of Zionism as replicating the American experience. Moreover, Western knowledge of Palestine based upon the Bible was conducive to the Zionist contention that Biblical history justified the return of the dispersed Jewish population to Palestine and the reconstitution of a Jewish state. The writings of American missionaries and tourists to Palestine in the nineteenth century were important in propagating images of Palestine that Zionists spokespersons would build upon in presenting their case for Jewish nationalism and self-determination to an American audience.

Fifteen years after Twain’s pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Chaim Chissin, a young Russian Jew, joined a nascent movement to recreate the Jewish nation in Palestine through agricultural labor in response to the pogroms¹² in Russia that followed the assassination of

¹¹ Ibid., 456-457

¹² Just as the Dreyfus affair convinced Herzl that assimilation was not possible in the liberal West, the pogroms served as notice to Russian Jewish assimilationists, such as Leo Pinsker, that anti-Semitism was a permanent feature of European society. Pinsker’s solution was “auto-emancipation,” the establishment of the Jewish nation in a territory of their own, possibly in North America. The small Bilu movement, of which

Czar Alexander II and recorded his experiences of his first five years in Palestine in a diary. In the introduction to Chissin's diary, which was published in English in 1976 as the United States celebrated its Bicentennial, Frances Miller quickly established a link between the U. S. and Zionism by equating the Zionist quest for self-determination with the "Pilgrim Fathers" who left England in search of religious freedom. Miller defined Zionism as a modern, secular nationalist movement, observed that these Bilu pioneers constituted "the first organized effort to re-establish a Jewish state in Palestine," and credited the Bilu with developing the ideology (Jewish labor on Jewish land) fundamental to the creation of the Jewish state. Addressing her remarks to an American audience, Miller again emphasized connections between American and Jewish pioneers by stressing that Chissin envisioned that the future Jewish state would be a "democratic republic with an elected president." In her short biographical sketch preceding the diary, Gertrude Hirschler observed that Zionism was a response to European anti-Semitism (evident in the Russian pogroms), which illustrated the fragility of the assimilation of European Jews into their respective nation states, and emphasized the theme that the first Jewish pioneers were attempting to colonize and tame a wilderness, similar to the pioneers that colonized the Americas.¹³

Chissin was a part, wanted "a home in our country" which was "registered [to the Jews] in the archives of history." The Bilu settlers understood Jewish colonization of their ancient homeland through the physical upbuilding of the land as contributing toward both a revitalization of the Jewish nation and the reemergence of Jewish masculinity and virility. Within two decades, twenty to thirty thousand pioneers emigrated to Palestine. While many returned to Russia or migrated to the West, the Bilu settlers paved the way for future aliyahs and the development of the "new" Jew. Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 16-21

¹³ See Frances Miller's introduction and Gertrude Hirschler's biographical sketch in Chaim Chissin, *A Palestine Diary: Memoirs of a Bilu Pioneer, 1882-1887*, Frances Miller, trans. (New York: Herzl Press, 1976), 5-8, 14-15. Miller wrote that these first pioneers "began the long journey that was to end in the birth of the State of Israel 66 years later."

Morris observes that while the Zionists publicly "tried to camouflage their real intentions," the goal from the beginning was Jewish sovereignty in Palestine. One pioneer wrote in 1882 that "the ultimate goal...is, in time, to take over the Land of Israel and to restore to the Jews the political independence they have been deprived of for these two thousand years....The Jews will yet arise and, arms in hand (if need be), declare that they are the masters of their ancient homeland." Menahem Ussishkin, future head of the Jewish National Fund, was also a young member of this movement. In a tribute to Chissin after his death in 1932, Ussishkin observed

that the goal of the Bilu movement was the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. As we will discuss below, Zionist leaders, for various reasons, were quite reticent to publicly admit that the goal of their movement was a Jewish state, but it is clear that this was the ultimate aim from the origins of political Zionism. This is central to an understanding of the conflict: the Zionist goal was a Jewish state in Palestine. A central feature of a state, as Max Weber has illustrated, is a monopoly on violence within a defined territory. (Of course, an issue is that Israel has never defined its borders and the international community has never recognized Israel's borders). A Jewish state, according to the American Jewish philosopher Michael Neumann, the son of German Jewish refugees, meant "a Jewish monopoly on violence in Palestine." For Neumann, if Zionists were simply intent on building settlements and colonies, upbuilding land, restoring Jewish manhood, providing refuge from persecution, and so forth, there were other options, including the United States. The primary aim of the movement, however, was the establishment of a Jewish state for the Jewish people as a whole. Given the violence attendant with settler colonialism and the threat that Zionism posed, Neumann asserts that the Palestinian Arabs "would have been irrational not to resist Zionism as fiercely and effectively as possible." For Neumann, Zionism's attempt to establish Jewish sovereignty over Palestine was illegitimate from the very beginning, making all their arguments in defense of their project irrelevant:

It does not matter if the Zionists wanted peace: of course they did! Who wouldn't want to rob someone's land and dominate their very existence without having to fight for that objective? It does not matter if some of the land was obtained by purchase; it would not matter if every square inch of it had been so obtained. The Israel/Palestine conflict is not about mere land ownership but about its use to establish the sovereignty of one ethnic group over another: that this unacceptable objective is achieved by purchase or by other means does not make it any less wrong. It does not matter if the Zionists achieved wonderful things or "turned the desert green." That I do wonderful things while acquiring the power of life and death over you hardly legitimizes my venture. It does not matter if Palestine was or wasn't a poor, neglected area; this could not possibly give anyone supreme power over its inhabitants. And it does not matter if the Palestinians ever made genuine attempts to achieve peace, because peace was never a live option except by submission to Jewish sovereignty. That was never something to which the Palestinians ought to have consented.

As the early pioneers understood, their goal was dependent on establishing a Jewish majority in Palestine through large-scale immigration of European Jews to Palestine and the removal of the Arab population from Palestine. An early recruit to this movement, a Rabbi Yitzhak Reeief wrote in 1883:

For the time being we are speaking of colonization and only colonization. This is our first objective. We speak about that and only about that. But it is obvious that "England is for the English, Egypt for the Egyptians, and Judea for the Jews." In our country there is room for us. We will tell the Arabs: Move away. If they refuse, if they forcibly object, we will force them to move. We will hit them on their heads, and force them to move.

Herzl himself proposed the "transfer" of the Arab population. As we will see below, Herzl envisioned excluding the Arabs from the Jewish economy, which he hoped would force the impoverished indigenous population to migrate.

While immediately drawn to the movement to create a Jewish state, Chissin needed convincing that Palestine was the only option available for Jewish settlement. He expressed concern that Palestine was unsuitable for agricultural development and that the Ottomans would oppose large-scale Jewish settlement. Yehiel Tschlenow, "the future leader and spokesmen of Russian Zionism," convinced Chissin that the soil in Palestine "was, in fact, very good" and that the Sultan "was well-disposed toward the Jews" and had promised "complete autonomy" for the Jewish settlers, while the United States, Chissin's first choice, had already begun excluding Chinese immigrants in part over growing concern about labor competition and the consequences of nonwhite immigrants entering the white man's republic.

The Sultan, however, understood that granting any autonomy to the Jewish minority in Palestine was a threat to the stability of the Empire because other "nations" would demand their autonomy and independence as well.

See, Hirschler's biographical sketch and Chissin's own observations in Chissin, 12-13, 32-33, 263. For Herzl's private acknowledgement that the goal of Zionism was a Jewish state, see McDowall, *The Palestinians*, 9, 167 n.11. Reeief quoted in McDowall, *The Palestinians*, 9; Michael Neumann, *The Case Against Israel* (Counterpunch and AK Press, 2005), 30-34, 46; Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, eds. David

Chissin's diary is noteworthy for illustrating some of the ideological tenets of the movement to facilitate Jewish migration to Palestine, settlement on the land, and the eventual establishment of a Jewish state. The small group of Bilu pioneers, passionate students who had little to no experience in agriculture,¹⁴ firmly held that Jewish labor on the land in Palestine would regenerate the Jewish people and the Jewish nation. Chissin and his companions understood their movement as a civilizing mission—they were introducing “culture to this uncivilized country.” Chissin observed that the Jewish pioneers often maintained a condescending attitude toward the Jews in Jerusalem who were dependent upon charity for survival, and warned that such a prejudicial attitude resulted in the latter's opposition to the Jewish nationalist movement.¹⁵ Importantly, Chissin did not apply similar logic when considering the pioneers' attitude toward the Arab population. The Arabs were uncivilized, lawless, and criminal enemies who posed a threat and obstacle to Jewish settlement. According to Chissin, it was necessary for the Jewish settlers to use fear, intimidation, and force “to beat the desires to steal out of one's Arab neighbors” and illustrate the unequal relationship between the Jewish settlers and indigenous population. Chissin frequently mentioned incessant violent conflict between Arab shepherds, who allowed their animals to graze on Jewish fields, and the Jewish settlers, who sometimes captured Arab animals and “beat [resisting Arabs] without mercy” and other times “came away badly

Owen and Tracy Strong, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2004), 38; Lenni Brenner, *The Iron Wall*, 38; Mayer, *Plowshares into Swords*, 8; Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 49

¹⁴ The pioneers attempted to harness wagons to camels. Recounting one instance, Chissin wrote that this was “astonishing to the Arabs,” who were “whooping, hollering, whistling, clapping their hands and jumping up and down shouting” at the sight. See, Chissin, 102

¹⁵ Chissin himself had a negative attitude regarding the Sephardic Jews in Jerusalem. See, *Ibid.*, 258
Dependence was a key theme in Chissin's diary. The goal of the movement was the development of an independent Jewish state, but the experiences of the early settlers illustrated their dependence on European capital and the resources of individuals such as Baron Edmond James de Rothschild, who was an early supporter of Jewish colonization in Palestine, and institutions such as the Alliance Israelite Universelle and Hoveve Zion. For one example of Chissin lamenting this dependence, see *Ibid.*, 147

beaten.”¹⁶ For Chissin, these violent confrontations with local Arabs symbolized the revival and regeneration of a Jewish masculinity and virility so fundamental to the development of Jewish nationalism and Jewish defense forces.¹⁷ As the historian Alan Dowty observes, these early pioneers interpreted Arab conflict with the Jewish settlers as endemic to Arab society and not indicative of Arab opposition to the Jews “on an ethnic, religious, or political basis,” which would suggest that Palestine was not a refuge or haven from conditions in Europe. Chissin’s narrative that the Jewish colonists successfully countered Arab trespasses, harassment, and violent attacks through physical confrontation was typical of early settler accounts for it overlooked increasing Arab opposition to Zionism, illustrated that force would gain the grudging respect of the Arab population, and demonstrated both that Palestine was a refuge for European Jews and that settlement on the land was instrumental to the reconstruction of Jewish nationalism and masculinity.¹⁸

¹⁶ As Neville Mandel observes, some of these conflicts were the result of the ignorance of the Jewish immigrants regarding Arab customs. The Jewish settlers were unfamiliar with the custom that “everyone shared natural pasture lands” and consequently interpreted Arab flocks on Jewish land as a grave and punishable offense.

Neville Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism Before World War I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 34-35

¹⁷ This is similar to how white Americans interpreted violence on the frontier. See, for example, Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1973).

¹⁸ Alan Dowty, “Much Ado about Little: Ahad Ha’am’s ‘Truth from Eretz Yisrael,’ Zionism, and the Arabs,” *Israel Studies* Vol 5, No 2 (October 2000), 154-181, which includes a full English translation of Ha’am’s “Truth from Eretz Yisrael.”

Morris observes that the early pioneers downplayed Arab opposition to the early Jewish colonization and emphasized that the Arabs welcomed Jewish settlement and the benefits that would accrue to the land and population. While determining that Jewish colonization would benefit the Arabs, the early Jewish settlers characterized the indigenous population “as primitive, dishonest, fatalistic, lazy, savage” and when possible sought to exclude Arab labor from Jewish lands, a policy that members of the second aliyah would deem instrumental for the success of Zionism. As Dowty notes, it was an ideological necessity for the Zionist movement to ignore the widespread Arab opposition to large-scale Jewish immigration and colonization. Avi Shlaim makes a similar point to Dowty as well:

The early Zionists rarely perceived and never conceded that Arab opposition was grounded in principle, that it was only to be expected, and that it amounted to a root and branch rejection of the entire Zionist enterprise. It was more comforting to think that Arab hostility was the manifestation of specific grievances and that it could be overcome by gestures of conciliation, well-timed compromises, and economic rewards.

Despite his overall negative attitude toward the Arab population and the numerous depictions of conflict between Jewish settlers and their Arab neighbors, Chissin, foreshadowing a theme in Theodor Herzl's *Altneuland*, wrote that "it was not at all unusual to hear an Arab, when he looked at the [Jewish] settlement, say thoughtfully: 'This land once belonged to the Jews and it will belong to them again!'" Such a statement that the Arab population in Palestine welcomed European settlers intent on establishing a Jewish nation-state in Palestine was a common Zionist theme, but the reality was that the Arabs in Palestine quickly understood this Jewish movement as a serious threat and Chissin himself observed that the Ottoman authorities nominally prohibited Jewish immigrants who had no intentions of becoming Ottoman citizens from settling in Palestine.¹⁹ The frequent violent conflict

Part of the Arab concern was the brazen arrogance of many Jewish immigrants, who eschewed learning Arabic or following Ottoman law or local customs while purchasing land, displacing peasants, and "resorting to the whip at the slightest provocation." Despite their efforts to convince themselves and others that any conflict with Arabs was not indicative of Arab opposition to Jewish colonization, some pioneers recognized in the 1880s that "the natives are hostile towards us, saying that we have come to drive them out of the country." For their part, the Jewish settlers, "like white colonists everywhere," lived in fear of the majority population.

Zionists would continue to argue that Arab violence against Jewish settlers was the result of an Arab penchant for violence or the incitement of Arab passions by outside agitators or a small minority within the Arab world. Again, this possibly illustrates the need to obscure the pervasiveness of Arab opposition to the Zionist movement. Ben-Gurion, for one, very quickly understood the causes of Arab animosity toward Jewish settlers (dispossession), but publicly often maintained that Arab violence was simply endemic in Arab culture and often instigated by "Christian clergy and missionaries" or a result of class conflict between Arab workers and their Jewish employers. Once the British occupied Palestine, he blamed the British military for inciting "pogroms" against the Jewish population of Palestine, while privately recognizing the development of Arab nationalism.

Avi Shlaim, *Collusion Across the Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist Movement, and the Partition of Palestine* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 14; Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 43-48, 60-61; Shabtai Teveth, *Ben-Gurion and the Palestinian Arabs: From Peace to War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 13, 14-19, 46-56.

¹⁹ The implication was that the Arabs were interlopers or trespassers on the land. This was a common theme in Zionist arguments, especially in contentions that the Palestinian Arabs had other lands outside of Palestine. As David McDowall writes, "today's Palestinians are almost certainly descended from the earliest recorded inhabitants of the area, who intermarried with later waves of conquerors. Among these were the Philistines..., the Hebrews and the Arabs..." He continues with the observations that "even during the short-lived Jewish apogee in the tenth century BCE, many non-Jewish groups lived in the region," many Jews converted to Christianity, and many Christians later converted to Islam, all suggesting that "many of the forebears of Palestinian Arab refugees today may well have been Jewish." Ben-Gurion himself proposed that the Arab peasants and the Jews shared the same blood; for the Zionist leader, this meant that the peasants would ultimately accept the Zionist movement.

See, David McDowall, *The Palestinians: The Road to Nationhood* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1994), 3-4; Teveth, *Ben-Gurion and the Palestinians*, 31

between Jewish settlers and Arabs that Chissin catalogued undermined his contention that many Arabs supported this early iteration of the Zionist project. Despite assurances from other young leaders of the movement, such as Menahem Ussishkin and Yehiel Tschlenow, that the Ottoman government supported Jewish immigration and autonomy in Palestine, Chissin soon observed that unless Jewish settlers were “willing to subject themselves to Ottoman rule...there [was] no hope that the government [would] ever abandon its position as the worst enemy of our immigration....” Chissin hypothesized that Turkish authorities feared that Jewish immigrants would one day possess Palestine. While Chissin wrote that the Jewish population was too small at the time to warrant such fears, he did not disavow that the ultimate aim of the settlers was a Jewish state and asserted that “the [Jewish] immigration has already had a favorable effect on the country.”²⁰

Although Chissin observed that “the fact that [the Bilu] didn’t know how, what, or when to do anything [was] no impediment” to their colonization effort, the Jewish settlers’ lack of agricultural experience and familiarity with the land certainly impeded their progress.

²⁰ Chissin, 93, 102-104, 114-117, 142, 194-196, 213, 226, 242-246. For some of Chissin’s descriptions of Turks and Arabs and the pioneers’ interaction with the indigenous population, see, 37-38, 42, 51-52, 60, 65.

In one instance, five armed Arabs were chasing a man on a horse. Without any knowledge of the context of the chase, Chissin described how the Jewish settlers attacked the five Arab “murderers.” He observed that “the bestial, bloodied faces [of the Arabs] seemed to throw the crowd into a frenzy and the Arabs were almost torn to pieces right then and there. They were brought back to the settlement, mercilessly beaten, and were tied up and thrown into one of the stables” until the police arrived from Jaffa. Throughout his diary, Chissin introduces a theme common to Zionist thought: force was the only means to deal with the Arabs, who were obstacles to the Jewish movement to settle Palestine.

Chissin also described some aspects of Arab culture; his descriptions provide some insight into how he and other Jewish settlers perceived the Arabs, which parallels early American depictions of Native Americans. For example, after observing an Arab funeral ceremony involving dancing, Chissin wrote:

The Arabs were terrible to behold: their faces were red, they eyes bloodshot and so distended that they seemed about to leap from their sockets. The excitement rose to a climax. There were no more dances, just countless convulsions accompanied by horrible rattles in the throat. At last the time had come to carry the dead man to the cemetery.

Ibid., 140-141, 191-192, 196. Examples abound of how whites described Native Americans and their culture. See, for example, Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Meta-Physics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997)

In describing the failure of their first harvest, Chissin acknowledged condescending attitude of the Jewish pioneers toward the Arab peasants:

Whenever the Arabs told us that it was already too late to sow barley, or that the land was unsuited for it, we never hesitated to tell the “barbarians,” with considerable self-assurance, “Oh, that doesn’t matter. We’ll plow deep, we’ll turn the soil inside out, we’ll harrow it clean, and then you’ll see what a crop we’ll have!” We provided ourselves with big plows, sunk them deep into the soil, and cruelly whipped our horses which were cruelly exhausted. Our self-confidence had no limits. We looked down on the Arabs, assuming that it was not they who should teach us, but we who would show these “barbarians” what a European could accomplish on this neglected land with the use of perfect tools and rational methods of cultivation. The only trouble was that we ourselves knew about European methods of cultivation only from hearsay, and our agriculturalist, too, knew very little [about conditions in Palestine].

While admitting that his Arab neighbors may have accumulated useful knowledge regarding agriculture in Palestine through generations of experience, Chissin held that European methods would prove superior once the Jewish settlers learned more about their local environment and gained training and experience in agriculture, paralleling a common American theme regarding technology and civilization. In another instance, however, Chissin maintained that the Jewish settlers could not “rely on the advice of the Arabs, for these treacherous and clannish people swindle and deceive you at every opportunity. At best the Arab will give you the answer that he thinks you want to hear.” Echoing Twain, Chissin described Arab peasants as “very ignorant” despite “all their experience” and observed that “any kind of initiative is foreign to them, and they have remained on the same level as their ancestors in everything. They cultivate the land with the most primitive tools.” He even provided a “literal translation” of a speech allegedly made by a young Arab that neatly encapsulated common Zionist arguments that the Jewish settlers were upbuilding a land that the Arabs had allowed to deteriorate:

We are a good-for-nothing people! Dogs! Once, long ago, this land flourished, but we have turned it into a wilderness. We haven’t planted a single tree, we have created

nothing—we have only destroyed. Out olive trees, our fields, our wells, and even our mosques we have received ready-made. We, ourselves, have done nothing. Look around you, Moslems! Ruin, neglect, devastation everywhere! For hundreds of years the manure lay here with us, and we didn't use it until the Jews came, and they are fertilizing their fields with our blood. But it's only right; we are pigs and they are people. They improve their fields, spare no work, dig, tear the stones out of their bare, rocky, thorn-covered hills. Where our flocks wandered and our women gathered firewood there are now olive groves and vineyards. The Jews are building houses, digging wells, revitalizing the land, setting it in order and beautifying it. The land wept bitterly because no one cared for it. Then the Jews came and comforted her and she is grateful to them for it, but you, the Moslems, will disappear!

Further echoing the sentiments of Twain about how little Arabs value the lives of women and children and illustrating the propensity of Westerners to interpret the Oriental mind, Chissin observed that “the Arab knows only one remedy for any ailment that afflicts a beast; he burns that affected part of the body with a red-hot iron. A skillful veterinarian could do very well in Jaffa, since an Arab is more anxious about treatment for his horse than for his wife and children.” While recognizing some of the socioeconomic conditions contributing to the poverty of Arab peasants, Chissin ascribed their poverty to the backwardness of their agriculture and remarked on the primitiveness of the fellahin:

The walls of their huts are made of clay and the outer walls are coated with fresh dung which becomes waterproof as it hardens. A series of wooden beams overlaid with a mixture of earth and straw takes the places of a roof. The houses of even the wealthiest farmers have no windows, not a stick of furniture, not even a table, chair, or bed. A small earthen elevation inside the hut serves the master as a place for eating and sleeping. The rest of the hut is occupied by cattle, poultry, etc., and you must understand that there is no partition of the hut; man and beast live together in one stable.

Chissin also maintained that the Arabs had “no patriotism whatsoever and no feeling of solidarity.” In fact, he insisted that “the Arabs do not care about each other—concern for the welfare of the community is foreign to them. They are a people in the process of moral disintegration.” Such a sentiment neatly contrasted with Chissin's contention that the Jewish people were in a process of moral and national regeneration through the colonization of

Palestine; although in moments of weakness and despair, Chissin declared that the Jewish settlers were incapable of self-government. Moreover, for Chissin, the Arabs and the Ottomans failed to develop the land and resources of Palestine rationally. This assessment was central to the civilizing mission ideology and provided a justification for Jewish colonization, just as the supposed deficiencies of the Native American savages in comparison to Western culture justified their expropriation, extermination, and removal.²¹

Ahad Ha'am, the influential cultural Zionist thinker and opponent of political Zionism, offered an early critique of the Jewish settler movement in his writings and warned the Zionists that harsh and condescending treatment of the Arab population was counterproductive because it would only increase Arab and Ottoman opposition to Jewish immigration and colonization. As Dowty observes, Ha'am's first criticisms in the late 1880s and early 1890s emphasized that early Jewish colonization in Palestine "was premature, disorganized, and inadequately conceived," especially due to a lack of a central organizing structure or institution. After his first visit to Palestine in the early months of 1891, Ha'am, like Chissin, was dismayed at the divisions and conflicts among the Jewish settlers, their continued dependence upon outside aid (especially from Baron Rothschild) after nearly a decade of colonization, the failure of the agricultural settlements, the lack of knowledge about agricultural production and colonization in Palestine, the unscrupulous profiteering of Jews and non-Jews alike at the expense of the idealistic immigrants, and the haphazard and unorganized purchase of land. Emphasizing the spiritual benefits of laboring on the land, he

²¹ Ibid., 111-113, 121, 144, 201-205, 208-209, 219, 230-231

Since the Arab peasants had nothing to teach the Jewish settlers, Chissin placed his hopes on the modern, scientific agriculture of the West and argued that "what we need is experienced, educated people who are familiar, both in theory and in practice, with agricultural conditions in this country—people from whom we could learn and who could advise us."

Chissin also asserted that "many [Arab] villages are built in part upon garbage and dung." An indication that the Arabs were backward and uncivilized was the fact that their "needs [were] so minimal."

Ibid., 201, 205-206, 211

strongly supported Jewish colonization in and immigration to Palestine and merely sought to reform the movement so that it could achieve success. Ha'am argued that Eretz Yisrael was the only option to fulfill

the need to create a fixed center for ourselves by settling a large mass of our brethren in one place on the basis of working the land, so that both Israel and its enemies will know that there is one place under the heavens, even if it is too small for all the nation, where a Jew can raise his head like any other person, earning his bread from the land, by the sweat of his brow, and creating his own national spirit.

While Ha'am opposed political Zionism, his suggestion that the movement needed Jews from Western Europe (especially England) and the United States "to provide the leadership, organizational skills, and wherewithal lacking in Eastern European Jewry"²² in order to purchase land more cheaply and in a more surreptitious manner and colonize Palestine in a scientific and rational manner anticipated Herzl's development of the World Zionist Organization, which served as the unifying force and central authority in the Zionist movement, and institutions such as the Jewish National Fund, which purchased land on behalf of the Jewish people. For Ha'am, the lack of coordination between the various societies favoring Jewish settlement in Palestine, the conflicts among Jews themselves, the haphazard Jewish immigration, and the often exaggerated accounts of conditions in Palestine only served to arouse the suspicions of the Turkish government and the Arab population and raise the price of land.

As Dowty relates, a small section of Ha'am's 1891 essay "Truth from Eretz Yisrael" suggested an early Zionist recognition of the "Arab problem." While most Zionist spokespersons would frequently propose that the benefits of Jewish colonization and economic development would ameliorate any Arab opposition, Ha'am accepted that Zionism

²² Ha'am wrote that the "material, moral, and political condition" of Eastern European Jews would "not enable them to do great deeds, much less take the lead."

was a beneficial force for the land and people in Palestine, but expressed some concern about the attitude of Jewish settlers toward the indigenous population and intimated that troubled relations between the natives and European newcomers posed an obstacle to the Zionist movement. Instead of exercising caution “in our conduct toward a foreign people among whom we live once again” and “walk[ing] together in love and respect, and needless to say in justice and righteousness,” the Jewish settlers in Eretz Israel:

walk with the Arabs in hostility and cruelty, unjustly encroaching on them, shamefully beating them for no good reason, and even bragging about what they do, and there is no one to stand in the breach and call a halt to this dangerous and despicable impulse. To be sure our people are correct in saying that the Arab respects only those who demonstrate strength and courage, but this is relevant only when he feels that his rival is acting justly; it is not the case if there is reason to think his rival’s actions are oppressive and unjust. Then, even if he restrains himself and remains silent forever, the rage will remain in his heart and he is unrivaled in “taking vengeance and bearing a grudge.”²³

Such behavior toward the Arabs along with the discord among the Jewish people and the uncoordinated and unorganized colonization effort meant that “instead of finding a complete and lasting answer to *the Jewish question*, we will only add *the question of the Jews* where it did not previously exist—in the land of our fathers....” As Dowty suggests and as Ha’am made clear in his essay, the recommendation for Jewish settlers to treat the Arabs with more dignity and respect was a tactical move to ameliorate Arab hostility and create space for peaceful Jewish colonization. In time, the Jewish presence in Eretz Israel would be large and powerful enough to counter any Arab opposition.

²³ Ha’am would write two years later that “the attitude of the colonists to their tenants and their families is exactly the same as towards their animals.” Morris concludes that the Jewish settlers essentially treated the Arabs as European colonizers treated indigenous populations around the world. Ha’am, for one, expressed concern that if the settlers were treating the Arabs in such a fashion while still a minority, then “how will we behave towards the others if we really reach the position...of rulers of Eretz Israel?” See, Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 48

In supporting the large-scale immigration of Jews to the Land of Israel, Ha'am characterized the Arabs as backward and asserted that the land was quite suitable for agricultural development were it not for "the indolence of the Arabs." Ha'am, though, warned that the land was not empty,²⁴ while again characterizing the Arabs as lazy and short-sighted:

From abroad, we are accustomed to believe that Eretz Israel is presently almost totally desolate, an uncultivated desert, and that anyone wishing to buy land there can come and buy all he wants. But in truth it is not so. In the entire land, it is hard to find tillable land that is not already tilled; only sandy fields or stony hills, suitable at best for planting trees or vines and, even that, after considerable work and expense in clearing and preparing them—only these remain unworked, because the Arabs do not like to exert themselves today for a distant future. And thus it is not possible to find good land for sale every day. Not the peasants alone, but the owners of large properties as well, do not easily part with good land that has no drawbacks. Many of our people who came to buy land have been in Eretz Israel for months, and have toured its length and width, without finding what they seek.

Importantly, Dowty notes that Ha'am did not perceive the Arabs in Palestine as a "*political* problem," but instead believed that Jewish development and introducing of Western civilization would benefit the Arabs, ameliorating any resistance, and that at some point in the future, the Jewish population would outnumber the Arabs. Clearly, though, Aham understood that the collective Arab population inhabiting the land in Palestine posed a problem to the goal of large-scale Jewish immigration and settlement on the land. Indeed, Ha'am warned:

From abroad we are accustomed to believing that the Arabs are all desert savages, like donkeys, who neither see nor understand what goes on around them. But this is a big mistake. The Arab, like all children of Shem, has a sharp intellect and is very cunning. The cities of Syria and Eretz Israel are full of Arab merchants who also know how to exploit the public and to proceed furtively with all those with whom

²⁴ This is an important point considering that Zionists repeatedly proclaimed that Palestine was essentially empty of Arab inhabitants until after Jewish development prompted Arab immigration to the region. We will come back to this issue below.

they deal, exactly as in Europe. The Arabs, and especially those in the cities, understand our deeds and our desires in Eretz Israel, but they keep quiet and pretend not to understand, since they do not see our present activities as a threat to their future. Therefore they try to exploit us as well, to extract some benefit from the new visitors as long as they can. Yet they mock us in their hearts. The farmers are happy to have a new Hebrew colony founded in their midst since they receive a good wage for their labor and get wealthier from year to year, as experience shows; and the owners of large properties are also happy with us, since we pay them a huge price—more than they dreamed possible—for stony and sandy land. However, if the time comes when the life of our people in Eretz Israel develops to the point of encroaching upon the native population, they will not easily yield their place. . .

While Ha'am expressed concern that the Arab population would oppose Zionist aims, he did not question the merits of Zionism itself, which he understood as a movement that would benefit the Jewish people as a whole and bring Western civilization and development to a backward land. One important consequence of this Zionist perception that the Arabs in Palestine did not represent a political problem was that the Zionist movement would continually focus on political actors outside of Palestine "rather than deal with the Arab community in Eretz Israel/Palestine as a political entity" as Dowty observes. For Ha'am, if Jewish colonization (on both sides of the Jordan River) provoked Arab hostility, a more rational and organized movement would, in time, allow "our brothers...to secure their position in Eretz Israel by their large number, their extensive and rich holdings, their unity, and their exemplary way of life." While Ha'am was a prominent opponent of Herzl's political Zionism, his primary goal in criticizing the early Jewish settlers was to help facilitate the development of a more rational, organized, and centralized movement. Arab hostility to this European invasion did not provoke Ha'am to reassess this early iteration of Zionism or consider some compromise, accommodation, or negotiation with the Palestinian Arabs leading possibly to their consent to Jewish immigration and settlement within certain parameters. If need be, Ha'am and other Zionist leaders understood that force could

ultimately ensure the achievement of Zionist goals. Ha'am's strategy (not much different from political Zionist leaders) was to delay that confrontation, allowing the Zionists to build their forces and create the proverbial facts on the ground.²⁵

The writings of Twain, Chissin, and Ha'am discussed above represent three voices on Palestine in the latter half of the nineteenth century and introduce some of the common themes prevalent in the rhetoric on Zionism and Palestine directed to the West (especially the U.S.) by Jewish and non-Jewish supporters of the Zionists movement and illustrate how the Americans and Zionists perceived the Palestinian Arabs, which helps explain why Americans could more easily identify with the Jewish pioneers. Twain's popular travelogue provided Americans with a description of a Palestine that was a desolate wasteland inhabited by backward, dirty, disease-infested, savage, impoverished Others.²⁶ Such dehumanization of the indigenous population directed at a white audience in the midst of conquering the remaining native resistance to white expansion in the western half of the United States contributed to preexisting negative American perceptions of Arabs and Islam and facilitated direct comparisons between Native Americans and Palestinian Arabs (and consequently positive comparisons between American and Jewish pioneers). Twain's understanding of Palestine as the land of the Bible and his depiction of the territory and people as relatively unchanged (or in some cases in worse condition) since the time of Jesus of Nazareth sharply contrasted with the modern industrial world familiar to Americans. Importantly, Americans'

²⁵ Alan Dowty, "Much Ado about Little: Ahad Ha'am's 'Truth from Eretz Yisrael,' Zionism, and the Arabs," *Israel Studies* Vol 5, No 2 (October 2000), 154-181, which includes a full English translation of Ha'am's "Truth from Eretz Yisrael."

For a biography of Ha'am, see Steven J. Zipperstein, *Elusive Prophet: Ahad Ha'am and the Origins of Zionism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993)

²⁶ Zionists continue to use Twain's *Innocents Abroad* to argue that Palestine was an empty wasteland and consequently justify Jewish claims to Eretz Israel. See, for example, "Netanyahu's Embrace of Mark Twain," *New York Times*, 20 May 2009 <http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/05/20/netanyahus-embrace-of-mark-twain/#> (accessed 14 April 2012)

perception of Palestine as the Holy Land for the Judeo-Christian world contributed to beliefs that Palestine belonged to the West and that the Ottoman government and Muslim population were interlopers. Such thoughts played a role in the presentation of the British conquest of Palestine during World War I as a crusade. As representatives of the early Zionist movement, Chissin and Ha'am both illustrate the goals of the Jewish settlers and their attitudes toward the Arab population. Chissin clearly understood that the purpose of Jewish colonization was to eventually establish a Jewish state in Palestine. Ha'am, while a critic of political Zionism, strongly favored large-scale Jewish immigration and settlement in Eretz Israel and the development of Jewish nationalism and essentially disregarded Palestinian Arab opposition. Echoing Twain, Chissin and Ha'am exhibited condescending attitudes toward the Arab population. All three works helped lay the foundation for future Zionists, who would frequently argue that Jewish immigrants to Palestine were introducing Western civilization to the Arab population. Importantly, Twain, Chissin, and Ha'am provide insight into how Americans and Zionists in the late nineteenth century perceived Palestine and the Oriental Other. While Twain would become an outspoken critic of U.S. imperialism at the turn of the century, Chissin and Ha'am understood the Zionist movement within the context of the ideologies of ethnic nationalism and Western imperialism prevalent in the late nineteenth century.

We now turn to an introduction to the broader ideology that would inform Wilson's foreign policy to illustrate how American ideas about American exceptionalism, the civilizing mission, the hierarchy of races, and the white man's burden not only justified U.S. expansion and restrictive immigration policies, but also support for the emerging Zionist movement.

Wilsonian U.S. Foreign Policy

In a series of articles published in the *New York Times* in early 1922, Ray Standard Baker, who accompanied Woodrow Wilson as he sailed on the *George Washington* to the peace conference in Paris, reminisced about the idealistic principles informing the president's vision for the postwar world. Celebrating American Independence Day at Mount Vernon in 1918, Baker reminded his readers, Wilson had outlined those traditional American principles he sought to make universal: "What we seek is the reign of law, based upon the consent of the governed, and sustained by the organized opinion of mankind."²⁷ In the months leading to the Paris Peace Conference, Wilson continued to iterate the centrality of self-determination to his Fourteen Points, asserting that "every territorial settlement involved in the war must be made in the interest and for the benefit of the populations concerned."²⁸ Although Wilson stated in his 1917 "peace without victory" speech that "the nations should with one accord adopt the doctrine of President Monroe as the doctrine of the world: that no nation should seek to extend its polity over any other nation or people, but that every people should be left free to determine its own polity, its own way of development, unhindered, unthreatened, unafraid, the little along with the great and powerful," Wilson's words were betrayed by his actions. By the time the U.S. declared war on the Central Powers in 1917, Wilson had stationed marines in Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti and intervened in the Mexican revolution.²⁹

²⁷ Ray Standard Baker, "An Intimate Story of the Steamship *George Washington's* Voyage and Problems Which Kept the President Busy at Sea—Conferences on Board, Wireless Messages, Plans for Paris," *New York Times*, 19 February 1922, 1-2.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions*, 60; *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)*, 1917, Supplement 1, The World War, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1917Supp01v01>. 29. For an interesting work arguing that Wilson's religious beliefs influenced his intervention in Mexico, see Mark Benbow, *Leading Them to the Promised Land: Woodrow Wilson, Covenant Theology, and the Mexican Revolution, 1913-1915* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2010).

Wilson's attitude toward the Central American Court of Justice further illustrates his commitment to the international legal norms championed in the League of Nations. In 1907 at a conference in Washington organized by U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt and Mexican dictator Porfirio Diaz to settle an escalating war among the Central American states, the participants established a Central American Court of Justice, which would replace the battlefield as the forum for the settlement of disputes. Despite the initial U.S. sponsorship and enthusiasm for the Court, the United States was primarily responsible for its short and inconsequential existence. Twice within nine years of its founding (in 1912 and 1916), the United States "refused to recognize Court decisions that went against its interests in Nicaragua." In 1912, the Taft administration ignored the Court's ruling condemning U.S. intervention. In 1916, El Salvador and Costa Rica challenged Nicaragua's right to lease to the U.S. the Great and Little Corn islands in the Caribbean and allow the U.S. to establish a naval base in the Gulf of Fonseca. The Wilson administration ignored the Court's decision accepting Costa Rica and El Salvador's argument that U.S. claims in Nicaragua "infringed on its territorial rights." LaFeber concludes, "the North Americans destroyed the Court they had helped create, and in doing so vividly demonstrated how the Progressive faith in legal remedies was worthless when the dominant power in the area placed its own national interests over international legal institutions."³⁰

Wilson clearly understood that his liberal principles were meant to serve American economic interests as he privately wrote in 1907,

Since trade ignores national boundaries and the manufacturer insists on having the world as a market, the flag of his nation must follow him, and the doors of the nations which are closed must be battered down ... Concessions obtained by financiers must be safeguarded by ministers of state, even if the sovereignty of unwilling nations be

³⁰ LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions*, 40-42, 50; and Thomas W. Walker, *Nicaragua: The Land of Sandino* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2nd Edition, 1986), 20.

outraged in the process. Colonies must be obtained or planted, in order that no useful corner of the world may be overlooked or left unused.³¹

Because the ‘uncivilized’ did not utilize their resources properly, the ‘civilized,’ according to Columbia University Professor John W. Burgess, had the “transcendent right and duty to establish political and legal order everywhere” to control the natural resources of the world.³² Wilson’s important contribution was providing the ideology necessary to understand an American empire undertaken in pursuit of economic self-interest as American responsibility to help other peoples and nations develop in the American mold. Wilson’s strong belief in American exceptionalism and an American mission shaped his views on foreign policy and “made it possible for him to reconcile the rapid growth of the economic and military power of the United States with what he conceived to be America’s unselfish service to humanity.”³³ Wilson’s achievement was to rationalize American economic expansion by equating it with international order and stability.

Importantly, the Great War itself had undermined the Western world’s pretense at civilization. As Gertrude Bell reflected, “How can we, who managed our affairs so badly,

³¹ Chomsky, “Modern-Day American Imperialism: Middle East and Beyond,” a talk delivered at Boston University on 24 April 2008. Video of the talk can be found at <http://www.bu.edu/phpbin/buniverse/videos/view/?id=224> and an unofficial transcript at <http://www.chomsky.info/talks/20080424.htm>

³² The word ‘civilized’ referred to Western standards of ‘order,’ ‘development,’ ‘responsible government,’ ‘efficiency,’ and ‘democracy’ to mask overtly racist rhetoric regarding the inferiority of nonwhites. Burgess was at the forefront of the academic movement at the end of the 19th century to imagine white southerners as the victims of unjust oppression by both freedmen unfit for self-government and the military occupation of the federal government during the Reconstruction era. Racism against blacks, Native Americans, and immigrants at home reinforced the racism that justified imperialism overseas. Zionist racism toward Arabs fit within the broader Western racism toward non-Western peoples. As Janice Terry observes, late 19th and early 20th century Zionist writing adopted the racist rhetoric prevalent at the time. John W. Burgess, *Political Science and Comparative Constitutional Law*, Vol. 1 (Boston, 1890), 45-6, 37 as cited in Bender, *Nation Among Nations*, 211; Terry, “Zionist Attitudes Toward Arabs,” 69.

³³ N. Gordon Levin, Jr., *Woodrow Wilson and World Politics: America’s Response to War and Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 8.

claim to teach others to manage theirs better?”³⁴ Wilsonian liberal internationalism provided the rationale for continued Western dominance by linking technological progress with democratic ideals.³⁵ Wilson’s League of Nations, according to the historian Walter LaFeber, “created an institutional and political process to bring rational order through reform to a western world destroyed by war and threatened with revolution.”³⁶ N. Gordon Levin added that the League of Nations Mandate program was designed “to make more peaceful and progressive the entire process by which the advanced capitalist powers could expand economically into the underdeveloped world.”³⁷ The mandate system was premised on the prevalent ideas of civilizing mission, and Article 22 of the League of Nations Charter provided the benevolent rationale for colonialism. In part the article read:

To those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilization and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this covenant. The best method of giving practical effect to this principle is that the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations, who, by reason of their resources, their experience, or their geographical position, can best undertake this responsibility, and that tutelage should be exercised by them as mandatories on behalf of the league.³⁸

³⁴ Gertrude Bell, *The Letters of Gertrude Bell* (London, Ernest Benn, 1930), 404, as cited in Scott Atran, “The Surrogate Colonization of Palestine, 1917-1939,” *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (November 1989), 719.

³⁵ Atran, “The Surrogate Colonization of Palestine, 1917-1939.” As the title of his article suggests, Atran argues that Britain supported Jewish colonization in Palestine for the benefit of the British Empire. Jewish immigrants from Europe would be equipped with the tools of Western culture to ‘civilize’ the indigenous Arab population and properly ‘develop’ the land and resources of Palestine. Of course, the British foresaw a time in the distant future when the people in Palestine would be capable of self-government. That time would not come until the Jews had established a majority. See below for a further discussion of these ideas.

³⁶ LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions*, 51.

³⁷ Levin, *Woodrow Wilson and World Politics*, 237.

³⁸ The Covenant of the League of Nations, 28 April 1919, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/6cb59816195e58350525654f007624bf?OpenDocument&Highlight=0,covenant,of,the,league,of,nations> (accessed 25 October 2011) and House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 67th Congress, 2nd Session, House Congressional Resolution 52, 18-21 April 1922 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1922), 68.

While the devastation of the Great War contributed to a reevaluation of Western civilization and imperialism, Wilson and the Allied powers provided a useful justification for continued Western dominance based on Western ideas of efficiency, technology, and good government.

Wilson inherited a long tradition of American empire. William Appleman Williams, Walter LaFeber, Matthew Frye Jacobson, Emily Rosenberg, Michael Hunt, and Thomas Bender, among others have examined the process of American expansion (continental and overseas, territorial, economic, and cultural) as well as the primary justifications and motivations behind U.S. foreign policy during this period. While the effects of industrialization and “the consolidation of capitalism at the center of the international economy” drove expansion for markets and raw materials, ideas relating to manifest destiny, civilizing mission, and the white man’s burden provided the justifications.³⁹ Williams

The Western powers would determine whether or not peoples were ready for self-determination and independence and grant themselves the solemn responsibility of bestowing their civilization on the world’s non-Western peoples.

³⁹ Quoted material from Bender, *Nation Among Nations*, 123. Importantly, in *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, Williams exposes three misconceptions undermining an understanding of U.S. foreign policy. First, Williams contends that Americans traditionally believe that the United States was essentially isolationist until the turn of the twentieth century. Second, Americans hold that the U.S. has been anti-imperialist except for the brief period after the Spanish-American War. Third, Americans trust that the United States, by virtue of its power and ideals, spreads peace and prosperity throughout the world. For an example of an author uncritically accepting these misconceptions, see Frederick Merck’s *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation*. Merck writes that continental and overseas expansion “were never true expressions of the American spirit. . . . Manifest Destiny and imperialism were traps into which the nation was led in 1846 and in 1899, and from which it extricated itself as well as it could afterward.” Instead, “a truer expression of the national spirit was mission,” which “was idealistic, self-denying, hopeful of divine favor for national aspirations, though not sure of it. It made itself heard most authentically in times of emergency, of ordeal, of disaster. Its language was that of dedication—dedication to the enduring values of American civilization.” Examples include Wilson waging war to save democracy, FDR’s Good Neighbor Policy, U.S. support for the creation of the United Nations, and the Marshall Plan. For those with any doubts, mission was “still the beacon lighting the way to political and individual freedoms—to equality of right before the law, equality of economic opportunity, and equality of all races and creeds. It is still, as always in the past, the torch held aloft by the nation at its gate—to the world and to itself.”

William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1962); Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982); Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000); LaFeber’s *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell

observed that “Americans thought of themselves as an empire at the very outset of their national existence,” and consequently, the Founding Fathers established a political system predicated on economic expansion and an activist foreign policy.⁴⁰ Paralleling the development of modern-nation states in Europe and Asia (primarily Japan), the United States became a unified nation following the Civil War and Reconstruction eras, and the consolidation of the nation and the concomitant industrialization contributed to European, Japanese, and American competition for overseas empires.⁴¹ Domestic conditions following the Civil War, primarily the Second Industrial Revolution and significant long-term economic depression, precipitated an expansionist foreign policy in pursuit of foreign

University Press, 1963; LaFeber, *The American Search for Opportunity, 1865-1913* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Frederick Merck, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963).

As Michael Adas notes, Americans understood their technological superiority over non-Western peoples as justification of American expansion and civilizing mission. An important premise underlying American expansion was that the introduction of Western technology to ‘backward’ peoples would facilitate the spread of American culture and American values across the globe. Importantly, Western values included Western gender roles. Americans, from the early European settlers to proponents of the U.S. civilizing missions in Afghanistan and Iraq, have justified expansion and imperialism on the grounds of bringing benefits to non-Western women. As discussed throughout this dissertation, Zionists would also justify their movement as bringing Western development, progress, and modernization to a backward land and people, and gender played a prominent role in justifying the Zionist civilizing mission. See Michael Adas, *Dominance by Design: Technological Imperatives and America’s Civilizing Mission* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006).

⁴⁰ Williams, *Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, 19. The current discussion is based on the work of Williams, LaFeber, and Bender. Williams’ *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* and Walter LaFeber’s *The New Empire* are classic works detailing the economic motivations and ideological justifications behind the development of an American empire. See also, LaFeber, *The American Search for Opportunity*. Michael Hunt, in his *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, considers foreign policy activists and expansionists as inheritors of the Hamiltonian tradition and assumes that Jefferson and his political descendents were focused on creating an ideal agrarian republic. Hunt fails to recognize that Jefferson’s agrarian republic was based upon territorial expansion (and the attendant dispossession and removal of Native American populations) and market expansion (since farmers would be dependent on foreign markets for surplus commodities). Consequently, the Jeffersonian ideology anticipated U.S. both continental and overseas expansion and military supremacy to protect access to markets and liberal trade policies. Bender argues that white “Americans came to associate the meaning of America with an entitlement to unrestricted access to land and markets.” Not only did Americans often fail to understand how others saw the U.S., but Americans often believed that American interests were global interests and American values were global values. See, for example, Bender, Chs. 2 (especially 102-115) and 4.

⁴¹ As Bender relates, the transformation from empires to imperial nation-states was terribly violent, with over 177 wars during the era of the American Civil War. Since the industrial economy was dependent on the relatively free flow of goods, labor, and capital, the development of nation-states was also an international and transnational process. Bender, *Nation Among Nations*, Chapter 3.

markets to accommodate the surplus production of the capitalist system.⁴² The economic crisis of the 1890s especially illustrated the necessity of economic expansion to prevent domestic unrest, maintain the formal structure of democracy, and ensure prosperity. The depression entrenched the power of the capitalist class, increased the unilateral power of the executive (creating the first modern president, William McKinley), and intensified the search for global expansion and opportunity, leading to the building of a modern navy and the establishment of a global American empire and contributing to the development of Wilsonian ideology, which in turn informed twentieth century American foreign policy and international relations. Although expansionists often couched their rhetoric in idealistic terms, economic motives were fundamental to foreign policy decisions. LaFeber argued that “a coalition of businessmen, intellectuals, and politicians” designed the Open Door policy at the turn of the century to economically “dominate all underdeveloped areas of the world” and essentially create and maintain an informal American empire.⁴³

The emerging liberal discourse in the middle of the nineteenth century understood a nation as a homogenous state. With the failure of Reconstruction to radically alter conceptions of citizenship, white Americans turned to a more racialized nationalism, which

⁴² See especially, LaFeber, *The American Search for Opportunity*. The U.S. government extensively intervened in the American economic system, subsidizing capital, controlling labor, protecting the domestic market from foreign competition, and promoting business interests abroad. The U.S. government was instrumental in building the transcontinental railroads, establishing a national bank and currency, protecting industry through tariffs, promoting white settlement through the Homestead Act, and establishing land-grant colleges. Rosenberg concurs, arguing that the U.S. created a “promotional state” during this period, whereby policymakers utilized the power of the U.S. government to promote private economic expansion (development of the navy, open-door policies, extension of executive power) as a means to ensure economic prosperity and sociopolitical stability in the United States. The myths of laissez-faire economic and Social Darwinism “shaped the thought of the era, but not the actual politics, economics, or diplomacy,” illustrating how ideology (like Social Darwinism) justified and rationalized American racism and expansion.

⁴³ LaFeber, *The American Search for Opportunity*, 37-38, 45. If Manifest Destiny justified continental expansion, then the Open Door justified an overseas economic empire. Overall, the Open Door policy was intended to create an informal American empire based upon American economic power instead of military might. Williams emphasizes that the ideology of the Open Door encompasses the ideas of cultural and economic expansion, racism, and anti-revolution.

justified the exclusion of freedmen, the near genocidal campaigns against the Native Americans, immigration restriction, and imperialism.⁴⁴ Historically wary of the U.S. Constitution's limits (regarding the incorporation of other territories populated by non-Anglo Saxon peoples), the U.S. style of imperialism differed markedly from European or Japanese colonialism. Significantly, while the U.S. still harbored designs to annex Canada following the Civil War, the historical racism toward Latin Americans dissuaded policymakers from attempting direct control of any or all of Latin America.⁴⁵ While the U.S. did not desire annexation or formal colonial control of Latin America, the U.S., through the Monroe Doctrine and Theodore Roosevelt's Corollary, made quite clear that the U.S. would not allow any European intervention in the Western Hemisphere. While the U.S. sought overseas economic, military, and cultural (missionary) expansion in the Pacific, Asia, and Africa, the principle of the Open Door did not apply to the Western Hemisphere.⁴⁶

The processes of industrialization, immigration, and expansion were central to questions of economic development and questions about citizenship, national identity, and fitness for self-government.⁴⁷ The hegemonic discourse on civilizing mission and racial

⁴⁴ Charles Francis Adams, Jr. opined in 1869 that “universal suffrage can only mean in plain English the government of ignorance and vice—it means a European and especially Celtic proletariat on the Atlantic Coast, an African proletariat on the shores of the Gulf, and a Chinese proletariat on the Pacific.” Illustrating the racial attitudes of white northern elites, the liberal anti-slavery founder of *The Nation*, Edwin Godkin, mused in 1877 on the heels of the compromise that ended Reconstruction that “the negro will disappear from the field of national politics. Henceforth, the nation as nation, will have nothing more to do with him.” Adams quoted in Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution* (New York, 1988), 497, also cited in Bender, *Nation Among Nations*, 178; Godkin quoted in David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: 2001), 138, also cited in Bender, *Nation Among Nations*, 181.

⁴⁵ On U.S. racism toward Latin America, see Lars Schoultz, *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy Toward Latin America* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998).

⁴⁶ Rosenberg recognizes that the United States preferred indirect means of establishing economic hegemony for American corporations (neocolonialism) over traditional colonialism, but while admirably narrating U.S. economic expansion during this period, Rosenberg ignores the role of military intervention in furthering U.S. goals, especially in Latin America. From 1787 to 1920, according to Bender, the U.S. intervened militarily 122 times on behalf of commercial interests. See the works of Williams, LaFeber, Bender, Rosenberg, and Schoultz cited.

⁴⁷ Unless otherwise noted, this paragraph is based on the work of Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality*

hierarchy justified both an expansive and imperialistic foreign policy in Asia and Latin America and restrictive immigration and cultural homogeneity within the United States. At the top of the hierarchy of race (by virtue of color) and as determiners and purveyors of ‘civilization,’ white, Protestant, Anglo-Saxon Americans were justified in intervening in Native American, Asian, and Latin American societies to impose white norms and consumerist ideals on other peoples, all under the guise of benefitting the ‘other.’ This ideology of race permeated white American society and informed the belief that the Christian West possessed a self-invoked mandate to spread Christianity, technology, efficiency, and good government to backward peoples throughout the world.⁴⁸ While the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 institutionalized the precedent that the U.S. would incorporate new territory into the union on an equal basis with the original thirteen states (although that precluded incorporating Native Americans as U.S. citizens), U.S. military intervention and expansion overseas beginning in the late 19th century precluded incorporation of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines into the United States because these ‘uncivilized’ peoples were incapable of self-government.⁴⁹ Even many of the anti-imperialists who opposed the

(New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), Bender, *Nation Among Nations*, Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues*, and Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, especially Ch. 3.

⁴⁸ Davidson, *America’s Palestine: Popular and Official Perceptions from Balfour to Israeli Statehood*, Ch 1.

⁴⁹ Many Americans understood U.S. intervention in Cuba and the Philippines as a selfless civilizing mission. The U.S. was bringing good government, progress, Christianity, and stability to backward peoples. Early proponents of Zionism in the late 1890s pointed to American colonialism in Cuba and the Philippines as positive examples for the Jews to follow in Palestine. Some Zionists argued that since the U.S. gave redemption to Cuba, it should help redeem Israel. See for example, Dr. Michael Singer, quoted in “Zionist League Meets,” *New York Times*, 30 May 1898, 7; “Altereth Zion Gathering,” *New York Times*, 25 May 1902, 5.

According to William Christopher Hamel, Wilson “first articulated his view of America’s [redemptive] mission in the world in association with the Philippine question.” Hamel argues that Wilson believed that the U.S., as the “redeemer nation,” must export democracy and Americanize the rest of the world. For the Philippines, Wilson essentially adopted a precursor to the post-WWI mandate system. Only after generations under American tutelage could the Filipinos govern themselves. American tutelage, however, required the elimination of all aspects of Filipino culture that, in Wilson’s view, prevented democracy. Of course, one of the inconsistencies with Wilson’s exceptionalist worldview was the illogic in believing that the U.S. was exceptional and that the rest of the world could be molded in the American image. Hamel, however, fails to

war in the Philippines adopted racialist arguments. Arguing that imperialism threatened democratic institutions at home, many anti-imperialists saw the American people as the victims of imperialist policies, not the Filipinos, Cubans, or Puerto Ricans. Expansion threatened American democracy and the U.S. Constitution because the Filipinos were incapable of participating in the American body politic. Since, according to contemporary pseudo-scientific and academic theories based on self-serving racial hierarchies, whites were superior to Native Americans, Asians, Africans, Latin Americans, and Southern and Eastern Europeans, immigrants from these regions threatened American democratic institutions.⁵⁰

consider the consequences of the cultural genocide implicit in Americanization and the relationship between cultural genocide and the physical extermination of ‘uncivilized’ peoples. For Hamel’s take on Wilsonian thought regarding the Philippines, see William Christopher Hamel, “Race and Responsible Government: Woodrow Wilson and the Philippines,” Ph. D. Dissertation, Michigan State University, 2002.

⁵⁰ This was the central argument of Henry Cabot Lodge and the Immigration Restriction League, which was instrumental in the restrictionist policies adopted by the U.S. during and after WWI. Lodge, an immigration restrictionist and opponent of U.S. participation in the League of Nations, was such an ardent supporter of Zionism because he opposed Jewish immigration to the United States. Many American Zionists, both Jewish and non-Jewish, saw Palestine as an alternative destination for Eastern European Jewish immigrants. Lodge and many others who opposed ratification of the Versailles Treaty saw the League as a threat to U.S. laws, especially immigration restriction and segregation. Secretary of State John Hay, most famous for the Open Door notes, expressed concern in 1902 that persecuted and oppressed Jews who emigrated to the U.S. from Romania were simply becoming wards of the state or charitable organizations and were incapable of self-government or contributing to the progress of American society. Justice Louis Brandeis, a prominent American Zionist and Wilson advisor, told British Foreign Minister Arthur Balfour in Paris in June 1919, that he became a Zionist because he was wary of Eastern European Jews immigrating to the United States. While many within the business community long opposed immigration restriction because the infusion of cheap labor was fundamental to industrialization, labor leaders and unions saw immigrants as cheap and unfair competition. Simultaneously, immigrant workers were seen as radical agitators causing labor unrest and docile sheep who would work for pitifully low wages and live and work in abysmal conditions. Although the myth of ‘laissez-faire’ was prominent during the late 19th century (despite the massive intervention of the state in the economy), a key idea within that ideology – the free movement of labor – was not as acceptable. The restrictionist legislation in 1917, 1921, and 1924 succeeded where previous attempts had failed because business interests were no longer reliant on immigrant labor. Postwar depression, reactionary antiradicalism, and the great migration of African Americans to northern cities during the war contributed to business acquiescence in harsh immigration legislation. On 5 August 1922, the U.S. Secretary of Labor published figures illustrating that the 3% limitation immigration law successively ensured immigration from southern and eastern Europe would not exceed the established quotas. During the debates in Paris concerning the League of Nations, the U.S. delegation opposed the Japanese effort to introduce a racial equality clause to the League’s Charter. Australia, South Africa, and the U.S. saw this clause as an infringement on their respective sovereignties to decide policies on immigration, naturalization, voting, land ownership, and marriage. By demanding unanimous consent on the racial equality clause, President Woodrow Wilson ensured its failure, which would have a profound effect on Japan’s future policies.

See “New Immigration Law Bars Flood to America: Southern Europe Uses Up Its Quotas, While Northern and Western Countries Fall Short,” *New York Times*, 6 August 1922, 18; Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global*

Fundamental to the discourse on citizenship, nationalism, expansion, and immigration was the question concerning fitness for self-government. Perhaps because the Reconstruction era ultimately failed in its promise to radically alter American conceptions of citizenship, many Americans understood overseas expansion and immigration as threats to American political institutions, thus contributing to ideas of a white man's government at home and the white man's burden abroad.⁵¹

Wilson, America's first world leader, embodied the ideology of liberal-developmentalism, which Rosenberg defines as the "belief that other nations could and should replicate America's own developmental experience; faith in private free enterprise; support for free or open access to for trade and investment; promotion of free flow of information and culture; and growing acceptance of governmental activity to protect private enterprise and to stimulate and regulate American participation in international economic and cultural exchange."⁵² Not only did the U.S. build the transportation systems and develop

Colour Line; Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, Ch 3; *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1902, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1902>, 42-45; for Brandeis, see Walid Khalidi, *From Haven to Conquest: Readings in Zionism and the Palestine Problem until 1948* (Beirut: The Institute for Palestine Studies, 1971), 195-196; Rhet, 227ff. In a speech in October 1914, Brandeis argued that Zionism was necessary because it allowed for immigrants from Russia and Eastern Europe to find refuge in Palestine instead of the United States. "Seek \$10,000,000 for Jews in Europe," *New York Times*, 26 October 1914.

⁵¹ Lake and Reynolds examine the ideas of a white man's government at home and white man's burden abroad within a transnational context. White men's settler countries (including the United States, Canada, South Africa, and Australia), which required the dispossession of indigenous populations, relied on racial arguments in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to justify severe immigration restriction and imperialism. Only white men were capable of self-government. The book "traces the transnational circulation of emotions and ideas, people and publications, racial knowledge and technologies that animated white men's countries and their strategies of exclusion, deportation, and segregation." Importantly, Lake and Reynolds examine how opponents of white racism appealed to international law, the principle of the equality of imperial subjects, the principle of racial equality, and the rights of manhood.

⁵² Rosenberg, 7. Rosenberg recognizes that elite ideological rhetoric justifying American imperialism "only obscured understanding of the process by which Americans expanded their influence." Rosenberg acknowledges that "a foreign policy based on the exportation of American-style liberalism might itself be illiberal" and concludes that given the economic interests of the U.S. government and business elites, American liberal-expansionists would not tolerate "dissent against the ultimate acceptance of American ways." As Thomas Bender discusses, there is a contradiction between the idea of American exceptionalism and the idea that the U.S. is the model for all other nations to follow, an idea which has justified American intervention into the 21st century. See Rosenberg, 86, 229, 234.

new technologies, products, and marketing techniques necessary to expand trade and open foreign markets, but Americans (especially Wilson) created ideological justifications entwining an ostensibly unique American economic expansionism with the promotion of liberty and democracy abroad. In his message to Congress on 2 December 1919, Wilson observed that “a fundamental change has taken place with reference to the position of America in the world’s affairs.” Arguing against what he considered isolationist tendencies and favoring the Open Door, Wilson asserted that the U.S. must undertake a “great duty and responsibility” by increasing its share in the “expanding world market.”⁵³ U.S. imperialism and economic expansion during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reflected the prevalent ideologies of religious mission, liberalism and racial hierarchy, the growing influence of Progressive “expertise,”⁵⁴ and the economic needs of U.S. manufactures.⁵⁵ World War I and the presidency of Woodrow Wilson expanded the “promotional state” and perpetuated further ideological justifications for American expansion and control of global strategic resources.⁵⁶

⁵³ See, *FRUS*, 1919, Vol I, Wilson’s Message to Congress, 2 December 1919, ix-xix.

⁵⁴ Progressive reform in industrialized countries was a second response, in addition to expansion, to industrialization, urbanization, and their consequences, including domestic unrest. One of the primary goals of progressive reform was to prevent more radical structural changes in the socioeconomic order of the industrial nations demanded by socialists, anarchists, and labor in general.

⁵⁵ Religious ideology helped rationalize economic expansion. Cultural expansion, including the spread of Christianity, paralleled and sometimes preceded economic penetration. Rosenberg develops this argument, which is particularly applicable to areas under Ottoman control prior to the Great War. The ideology of liberalism, predicated on economic expansion, implied that democratic government was suitable only for “white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant Christians,” which justified, for example, U.S. military efforts to prevent Cuban and Filipino independence at the turn of the century, the U.S. refusal to annex these territories into the union, and immigration restriction such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the Immigration Restriction Act of 1921, and the Immigration Act of 1924.

⁵⁶ There is a very extensive literature on Wilson and the legacy of Wilsonianism in American foreign policy. Some of Wilson’s admirers, such as Arthur Link, Thomas Knock, and Tony Smith, see Wilson as a proponent of self-determination and liberal democratic internationalism and an opponent of colonialism. See Lloyd E. Ambrosius, *Woodrow Wilson and the American Diplomatic Tradition : The Treaty Fight in Perspective* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Tony Smith, *America’s Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson: Revolution, War, and Peace* (Arlington Heights, IL: AHM Publishing, 1979); Thomas J. Knock, *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World*

U.S. Foreign Policy and Palestine Prior to WWI

While U.S. interests during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were becoming more global in scope, the Near East, including Palestine, was not yet considered of great importance compared to Latin America or the Far East. Rosenberg argues that during the two decades prior to the Great War, traders, investors, entertainers, missionaries, and philanthropists – all private citizens – precipitated American expansionism along the liberal-developmental model. Generally speaking, the State Department focused on maintaining an open door for U.S. commercial interests and protecting both the significant number of American Protestant missionaries⁵⁷ operating in the Ottoman Empire and the increasing number of American tourists and scholars visiting the Holy Land. Much of the State Department correspondence during the 1880s and 1890s, for example, focused upon protecting the rights of American missionaries.⁵⁸ While the Christian missionaries had little success proselytizing their Protestant religious beliefs (especially to Muslims), American missionaries provided education and health care services for many people within the

Order (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992); Frank Ninkovich, *The Wilsonian Century: U.S. Foreign Policy Since 1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Trygve Thrøntveit, “The Fable of the Fourteen Points: Woodrow Wilson and National Self-Determination,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol 35, No 3 (June 2011), 445-481; Ross Kennedy, “Woodrow Wilson, World War I, and an American Conception of National Security,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol 25, No 1 (Winter 2001), 1-31; David Steigerwald, “The Reclamation of Woodrow Wilson,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol 23, No 1 (Winter 1999), 79-99; Allen Lynch, “Woodrow Wilson and the Principle of ‘National Self-Determination’: A Reconsideration,” *Review of International Studies* (2002), 419-436; Betty Miller Unterberger, “The United States and National Self-Determination: A Wilsonian Perspective,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* Vol 26, No 4 (Fall 1996), 926-941.

⁵⁷ There were also a few Mormon missionaries proselytizing in the Ottoman Empire under the protection of the U.S. government. See, for example, *FRUS*, 1898, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1898>, 1112. For an example of U.S. policy toward commercial interests during the Taft administration, see *FRUS*, 1909, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1909>, 595-596.

⁵⁸ On 1 December 1884, G. H. Heap, the interim *Charge d’ Affairs* in Constantinople, related to Secretary of State Frederick Frelinghuysen that American missionaries failed to comply with Turkish law when opening in 1860 what would become Euphrates college in Armenia. Now that the Ottomans were moving against the school for not acquiring a permit, Heap asserted that Christian sects in Turkey, jealous of American missionaries’ success in opening schools and increasing enrollment, were working to hinder the Americans’ efforts. The U.S. diplomats in Turkey were successful in keeping the school open. *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1885, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1885>, 819ff, 831, 840-841, 844-845.

Ottoman Empire (especially in Lebanon), which improved the American image relative to the overt British and French colonial efforts. Within Palestine itself, however, according to Robert Handy,

with few exceptions, the knowledge that the faithful [American] Protestants sought primarily was about the Holy Land of the Bible, not of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries...[e.g.] The Biblical scholars were professionally dedicated to recovering the Palestine of the past...American Protestants' interest in the Holy Land was primarily a function of their religious sensibilities, and was directed to the land of the Book more than to the land of the living.

Edward Earle, professor of history at Columbia University, noted the somewhat arrogant and imperialist characteristics of the missionary enterprises when he argued in *Foreign Affairs* in 1919 that

for almost a century American public opinion concerning the Near East was formed by the missionaries. If American opinion has been uninformed, misinformed and prejudiced, the missionaries are largely to blame. Interpreting history in terms of the advance of Christianity, they have given an inadequate, distorted, and occasionally a grotesque picture of Moslems and Islam.

He continued:

One can imagine the reception which would have been accorded to Moslem missionaries in this country if the situation had been reversed-that is, if New England had been invaded by Moslem missionaries, supplied with adequate funds to erect mosques and Muslim schools, determined to educate young Americans in the ways of the Orient, and protected by treaties of capitulation preventing regulation by American civil authorities.

While Earle notes that American missionaries helped create and perpetuate prejudicial characterizations of Islam and that missionary efforts are certainly a form of cultural

imperialism,⁵⁹ American missionaries primarily saw their actions as in accordance with the American mission to the world.⁶⁰

U.S. diplomats, beginning in the early 1880s, also helped many Jewish immigrants to Palestine circumvent Ottoman restrictions by claiming these mostly Russian immigrants fleeing the pogroms were protected by the American consular offices in accordance both

⁵⁹ Scholch argues that European missionary movements provided the means for the European powers to increase their presence and intervention in the Near East. By protecting American missionaries and religious minorities in the Ottoman empire, the U.S. was following the European pattern to assert interests in the region. See, Scholch, "Britain in Palestine, 1838-1882: The Roots of the Balfour Policy

⁶⁰ Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream*; Zaha Bustami, "American Foreign Policy and the Question of Palestine, 1856-1939," Ph.D. Dissertation, Georgetown University, 1989, especially Chapter 1; Joseph L. Grabill, *Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East: Missionary Influence on American Policy, 1810-1927* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971); A. L. Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria, 1800-1901: A Study of Educational, Literary and Religious Work* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966); Philip K. Hitti, *Syrians in America* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2005); Robert Handy, "Sources for Understanding American Christian Attitudes toward the Holy Land, 1800-1950," in Moshe Davis, ed., *With Eyes Toward Zion: Scholars Colloquium on American-Holy Land Studies*, 4 vols. (New York: Arno Press, 1977-1987), 45, as cited in Bustami, 32-33; Edward Earle, "American Missions in the Near East," *Foreign Affairs* 7, No. 3 (April 1929), 408, 417 as cited in Lawrence Davidson, *America's Palestine: Popular and Official Perceptions from Balfour to Israeli Statehood* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 4, 225 (note 21).

Importantly, a common theme throughout American history is that because of the assumption that the U.S. acts for the benefit of the world, Americans have not often examined their actions from the perspective of the supposed beneficiaries. Based on the notion of American beneficent imperialism, Americans do not see their actions as threatening even though the U.S. would interpret similar policies of a foreign power in such a manner.

Bustami's work is an admirable examination of U.S. policy toward Palestine prior to WWII. Bustami argues that the U.S. policy toward Palestine from the 1850s through 1939 reflected American interests regarding the Ottomans and the British during their respective control of the region. Strangely positing that the U.S. "had no position on the Arab-Zionist conflict in itself" and that "Zionist ambitions went almost unnoticed in Washington" prior to WWI, Bustami does recognize that U.S. policy toward Zionism was largely benevolent. While the State Department may have had misgivings about Zionism, especially during the interwar period, the United States policymakers clearly identified with the Zionist cause and largely ignored the Palestinians arguments in opposition to Zionism. Hitti observes that many early Arab immigrants (especially Christians from Lebanon) had very positive experiences in the American missionaries' schools.

On occasion, the U.S. would send naval forces to Turkish waters. In 1903, for example, the U.S. sent a small contingent of the navy as a form of pressure in negotiations with the Ottoman government concerning the rights of American educational, charitable, and religious institutions. The Ottomans considered the American institutions, especially among the Armenians, as inciting rebellion. The presence of U.S. naval power did not accelerate the negotiations, and the U.S. government ordered the ships out of Turkish territorial waters in early 1904, while the effort to assert American rights continued. In September 1910, Straus notified Philander Knox, Taft's Secretary of State, that the U.S. received a favorable decision from the Ottoman government concerning American educational, charitable, and missionary institutions. *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1903, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1903>, 733ff; *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1904, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1904>, 818ff; *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1910, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1910>, 860.

with Ottoman treaty obligations under the capitulations⁶¹ and more abstract principles regarding Western human rights under pressure from the “terrible Turk.” This protection of Jewish immigrants represented a departure from the traditional policy of non-intervention in European affairs.⁶² While the Ottoman authorities repeatedly petitioned the United States to refrain from encouraging Jewish immigration to Palestine, U.S. officials often disingenuously claimed that these immigrants were American citizens and merely tourists, not settlers, and argued that the U.S. would not abide immigration restrictions against U.S.

⁶¹ The Turkish government abrogated the capitulations about six weeks after the start of the Great War. Instead of the capitulations, which the Turkish officials described as a hindrance to development and which violated Turkish sovereignty, Turkish officials called for new negotiations to form treaties with the U.S. and the other powers based on European international law. Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, Sr. articulated the U.S. response. He asserted that the Turkish government could not unilaterally abrogate the capitulations, which were formed through various multilateral and bilateral treaties and that American citizens in Ottoman territory retain their rights and privileges under the capitulations. After the allied victory over the Ottomans, the allied powers reasserted to the Turks that the Turkish authorities could not abrogate the capitulations. *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1914, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1914>, 1090ff; *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1914, Supplement, The World War, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1914Supp>, 767ff; *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1915, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1915>, 1301-1306; *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1916, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1916>, 963-975; *FRUS*, 1919, Volume 2, 814-817.

⁶² The principle of noninterference in European affairs largely remained in force during the prewar period. Although Americans were quite sympathetic to plight of the Armenians under Turkish oppression in the years preceding WWI, Secretary of State Elihu Root, who assumed the cabinet post after the death of John Hay, explained to American missionaries that the U.S. could not undertake efforts to organize an international conference on the Armenian question because European powers could then assert the same right regarding the Western hemisphere, thus challenging the Monroe Doctrine. A few years later, during the Young Turk revolution in 1908 and 1909, American missionaries again petitioned the U.S. government to intervene to stop the massacres of Armenians in 1909 and again U.S. officials expressed sympathy and appealed to the principle of nonintervention. Given the relatively recent destruction of the remaining Native American resistance within the U.S. and U.S. intervention in Latin America and the Philippines, U.S. outrage at the oppression of Jews in Eastern Europe and Armenians in Turkey raises the issue of worthy and unworthy victims. Christian victims of Muslim violence and Jewish victims of Russian violence were worthy of sympathy, while the victims of U.S. oppression were not. This is related to the ideas of ‘civilization’ prevalent in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. According to Garrit Gong, since Europeans dominated the world and established the foundation for international law, Westerners determined whether other peoples were ‘civilized.’ Since the Ottomans were not civilized according to Western norms, the Western powers had the right to force the capitulations on the Turkish government, ostensibly to protect Western nationals from non-Western conceptions of justice. The conceptions of ‘civilization’ justified colonialism and imperialism and, as Peter Gran argues, continues to justify Israeli occupation of Palestinian land in opposition to established international law. *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1906, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1906>, 1417-1418; *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1909, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1909>, 557-558; Garrit Gong, *The Standard of ‘Civilization’ in International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984); Peter Gran, *Rise of the Rich: A New View of Modern World History* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2009)

citizens based on religious or racial grounds, ignoring the political threat that the Zionist project posed for the indigenous inhabitants of Palestine and the opposition of the established Jewish residents in Jerusalem against Zionism. Ottoman officials, during the early stages of the political Zionist movement, expressed concern about Zionism and the Jewish colonization of Palestine, fearing that their “settlement [in Palestine]...in preponderating numbers may lead to political complications,” which the government wished to avoid. Other European powers, including France, Britain, and Russia, utilized the capitulations and the protection of religious minorities within the Ottoman Empire to lay the groundwork for colonization of Ottoman territory once an opportunity arose to break apart the decaying empire. This European interventionism and the Ottoman Tanzimat reforms⁶³ laid the groundwork for the “dependent capitalist development” of Palestine, European colonization, the emergence of Arab, Palestinian, and Islamicist consciousness, and the “destruction of Palestine and the dispossession of its people.”⁶⁴

⁶³ Farsoun notes that in 1861 the Tanzimat legalized the selling of state lands and foreign ownership of land, which allowed Europeans (Christians and Jews) to begin colonizing Palestine. Additionally, the Ottoman reforms precipitated the accumulation of lands by urban notables in Palestine and other parts of Syria. Such laws and changes meant that many Palestinian peasants could lose the right to live on their land and pass it onto heirs. Dispossessed peasants became sharecroppers, tenant farmers, or wage laborers, a process that would have significant repercussions as Zionist colonization efforts sought to purchase land from absentee landowners, as we’ll see below. See, Farsoun, *Palestine and the Palestinians*, 38ff; Rashid Khalidi, “Palestinian Peasant Resistance to Zionism Before World War I,” in Said and Hitchens, *Blaming the Victims*, 211; Pamela Ann Smith, *Palestine and the Palestinians, 1876-1983* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1984), 5-37.

⁶⁴ Farsoun, *Palestine and the Palestinians*, 21ff; Bustami, “American Foreign Policy and the Question of Palestine, 1856-1939,” especially Chapter 1. Bustami notes that in 1899, there were 850 U.S. citizens in the district of Jerusalem, 800 of whom were Jewish and that the Ottomans began ordering the restriction of Jewish immigration to Palestine in 1881. The capitulations, however, hindered Ottoman policy because Western powers often protected Jewish settlers. Individual Jewish immigrants were able to settle other areas of the Ottoman empire prior to WWI as long as they became nationalized citizens and accepted Ottoman law. For examples of U.S. policy regarding missionaries, Jewish immigrants, and American commercial interests in the decades prior to WWI, see U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1885, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1885>, 862, 864-867; *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1887, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1887>, 1079-1120; *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1888, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1888>, 1546-1628; *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1889, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1889>, 705-728; *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1892, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1892>, 527-614; *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1898,

A couple specific examples illustrate U.S. policy. In 1885, the U.S. protested the attempted expulsion of two Jewish American citizens residing in Palestine. The U.S. consulate argued that the Ottoman policy was “contrary to humanity and justice” and “in violation of treaty stipulations.” The State Department officials portrayed this as religious discrimination, but the Ottoman policy was not discriminatory against the Jewish faith, but against the nascent Zionist movement. Three years later, beginning in August 1888, U.S. diplomatic officials protested the threatened expulsion of three Jewish Americans citizens from Jaffa. The Ottomans articulated that Jewish tourists were allowed at most three months in Palestine. The policy, from the Ottoman perspective, allowed for Jewish pilgrimages. Western pressure, however, led to the Ottomans clarifying their policy as prohibiting mass Jewish immigration to Palestine as a threat to the indigenous population.⁶⁵ The U.S. position reiterated the principle of nondiscrimination and portrayed the Turkish immigration

<http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1898>, 1086 -1120 (quote below on 1093); *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1901, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1901>, 516-518. For works on social, economic, and demographic conditions in Palestine in the 19th century and first decade of the twentieth, see Farsoun, *Palestine and the Palestinians*; Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800-1914* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1993); Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Doumani, “Rediscovering Ottoman Palestine: Writing Palestinians into History,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 21, No 2 (Winter 1992), 5-28; Scholch, *Palestine in Transformation*; Scholch, “The Demographic Development of Palestine, 1850-1882,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol 17 (1985), 485-505; Scholch, “The Economic Development of Palestine, 1856-1882,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 10, No 3 (Spring 1981), 35-58; Pamela Ann Smith, *Palestine and the Palestinian, 1876-1983* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1984); Neville Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism Before World War I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); Abu-Adnan Abu-Ghazaleh, “Arab Cultural Nationalism in Palestine during the British Mandate,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*. Vol 1, No 3 (Spring 1972), 37-63; Walter Laqueur, *The History of Zionism, 3rd Edition* (London: Tauris Parke, 2003); Yousef Heikal and Imad El-Haj, “Jaffa...as It Was,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 13, No 4 (Summer 1984), 3-21; Nahla Zu’bi, “The Development of Capitalism in Palestine: The Expropriation of the Palestinian Direct Producers,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 13, No 4 (Summer 1984), 88-109; Mark LeVine, “Conquest Through Town Planning: The Case of Tel Aviv, 1921-48,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 27, No 4 (Summer 1998), 36-52; James Reilly, “The Peasantry of Late Ottoman Palestine,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 10, No 4 (Summer 1981), 82-97; Raja Shehadeh, “The Land Law of Palestine,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 11, No 2 (Winter 1982), 82-99. See also, Palestine Royal Commission Report (Peel Report), CMD 5479 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1937), Ch 1; *A Survey of Palestine, Prepared in December 1945 and January 1946 for the Information of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1991), Ch VI

⁶⁵ Theodor Herzl asserted that any “colonization plan calling for scattered, unrelated communities in different parts of the Turkish empire could not have satisfied our national aspirations.” *The Congress Addresses of Theodor Herzl*, Trans. Nellie Straus (New York: American Federation of Zionists, 1917), 34.

restrictions as a violation of the treaty and capitulation rights of U.S. citizens. In response to the American effort in protesting restrictions against Jewish immigrants, the Jerusalem Lodge of the Independent Order of the B'nai B'rith thanked U.S. officials for assisting Russian Jews fleeing persecution.⁶⁶

In 1887, Secretary of State Thomas Bayard wrote a lengthy commentary directed to U.S. personnel in Turkey on the principle of extraterritoriality and the rights of U.S. citizens in the Ottoman Empire. Interestingly, Bayard compares the American Christian position in Turkey to the Native American position in the United States in making the argument that the national minorities ought to be governed by their own national and religious laws. The Dawes Act, which Congress passed in 1887, dispossessed native peoples of over half their remaining land, eroded the communal sovereignty and political structure of native tribes, and criminalized the practice of native religions. After the Ottoman government prohibited foreign Jewish immigrants from entering Palestine in large numbers, French, British, and American officials all protested against this Ottoman policy as a violation of the treaties and capitulations made between Turkey and the Western states. In response to Turkish concerns in the late 1880s, the U.S. minister to the Ottoman Empire, Oscar Straus, asserted to Turkish authorities that Jews around the world were not intent on reestablishing a Jewish kingdom in Palestine. U.S. officials even periodically commented that a majority of resident Jews, dependent on charitable contributions from abroad, resented Jewish immigration into Jerusalem in part for decreasing the contributions for the existing Jewish population and causing the increase in price of basic goods and necessities. Somewhat sympathetic to the Ottoman position, though, Straus suggested that the Zionists offer to colonize Mesopotamia,

⁶⁶ *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1889, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1889,705-728> (especially 716-717)

“the original habitation of the Hebrews.” Straus noted that Mesopotamia was sparsely settled, but irrigation projects would allow the land to accommodate a much larger population. Interestingly, Zionists and their supporters would later promote Mesopotamia as a practical destination for the Palestinians to make room for a Jewish state in Palestine. While expressing sympathy for the Ottoman position in his correspondence with the State Department, Straus, in a letter to Foreign Minister Tawick Pasha, asserted the standard U.S. position during this period that the U.S. did not discriminate “between its citizens based upon religion or race,” and consequently, would not allow the Ottomans to discriminate against American citizens.⁶⁷

Zaha Bustami notes that after the Young Turk revolt, the new leaders of the Ottoman Empire, quite aware of the consequences of nationalism in the Balkans and European interference in Ottoman territories, made compromises with the Zionist movement as a counter to the developing Arab nationalism. Instead of enforcing the restrictive measures against Jewish settlement in Palestine, the Young Turks sought to sell government land in Palestine to Zionists in return for Jewish financial aid to the bankrupt Ottoman treasury. Importantly, Palestinian resistance to Zionism and dispossession, the development of Turkish nationalism after the Young Turk revolt, and the Young Turks initial support for Zionist land purchases in return for financial aid to the empire helped foster Arab nationalism.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ The status of African-Americans in the segregated South during this period, the dispossession and cultural genocide of Native Americans, and a restrictionist immigration policy, illustrated by the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882), posed a challenge to Straus’ assertion. In some instances, at least in internal discussions, the State Department recognized the contradiction. In 1913, for example, Richard Flourney, Chairman of the Bureau of Citizenship, argued, in response to the non-Zionist American Jewish Committee request that the U.S. pressure Turkey to overturn its policy on Jewish immigration, that the U.S., given its own practices, had no right to demand that Turkey cannot determine its own immigration policy. By this point, the Turkish government had not enforced its policies regarding Jewish immigration for a number of years. Flourney to MacMurray, 23 July 1913, NA/59, 867.111/17 as cited in Bustami, 95-98

⁶⁸ Bustami, “American Foreign Policy,” 71-83.

American interests, from the State Department's point of view, did not change much by the early 1920s. Allen Dulles, the future CIA director during the Eisenhower administration, was head of the Near Eastern Affairs division of the State Department in the early 1920s. He wrote in May of 1922 that American interests in the Middle East were still primarily philanthropic and educational (regarding the missionaries) and commercial. Interestingly, the Standard Oil Company had made an agreement with the Ottomans before the war allowing it to explore for oil resources in part of the empire, including Palestine.⁶⁹ After the British took control, by conquest, of Palestine, Dulles thought the State Department should insist on Standard Oil's rights and the open door in the Near East. This was an important issue in the negotiations between the U.S. and Britain regarding American rights in Palestine under a British mandate. Negotiations were necessary because the U.S. refused to join the League of Nations. Importantly, Dulles argued that traditional American interests made it necessary that the U.S. take a neutral stance on Zionism, primarily on the grounds that support for Zionism could mean entanglement in European affairs and Old World politics. Dulles argued that "the department should avoid any action which would indicate official support of any one of the various theses regarding Palestine, either the Zionist, the anti-Zionist or the Arabs." While the Zionists were "an influential and noisy group" whose claims had "a certain sentimental appeal," there was the "cold fact...that the Jews in Palestine constitute about 10% of the population." Thirty years previous, in October 1891,

⁶⁹ For some examples of U.S. interests in petroleum resources in the broader central Asian and North African region, see *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1886, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1886>, 865-869; *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1888, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1888>, 1549, 1556-1557; see also, Bustami, "American Foreign Policy," 248-260.

The Great Powers recognized the strategic and economic importance of oil in the Middle East prior to World War I. Winston Churchill understood the importance of controlling access to oil and transportation routes, bought half the shares of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company for Britain in 1913 when he was serving as First Lord of the Admiralty. See, Mayer, *Ploughshares into Swords*, 95-96

Consul Selah Merrill cautioned the State Department that the endeavor to colonize Palestine with Jewish settlers was a failure because of Ottoman opposition and the reticence of European and American Jews to migrate to Palestine. Writing in response to American supporters of the restoration of Palestine to the Jews, Merrill argues that the land was “impoverished” and despite well-funded colonization efforts, there were only 40, 253 Jews in Palestine. In a report in 1899, Merrill argued that U.S. policy regarding Jewish immigrants to Palestine was essentially advancing Zionist colonization efforts:

By insisting upon the literal sense of the treaty that American citizens shall be freely admitted to this country regardless of any restrictive regulations by the Turks, the United States Government practically becomes the agent of those societies whose object is to re-people Palestine with Jews. Turkey makes laws for her own protection; the Jews find ways to evade them; the United States Government demands that these naturalized Jews be allowed to enter this country; the United States Government is aiding and abetting the “Zionist Movement” and Jewish colonization schemes simply because most of the Jews who come here come as colonists.

As Merrill suggested, many Eastern European Jews wanted to immigrate to the United States and not Palestine. Between 1891 and 1900, for example, over 500,000 European Jews immigrated to the United States. Importantly, many Zionist supporters in the United States, both Jewish and non-Jewish, argued that U.S. policy should divert the immigration of Eastern European Jews to Palestine to prevent masses of Eastern European immigrants from undermining the republic. Jewish immigrants were seen, somewhat contradictorily, as both propagandizers of anarchist and communist ideologies and cheap laborers who would undermine the white American working class. U.S. support for Zionism, then, would prevent the immigration of unwelcome aliens to American shores and expand U.S. strategic and commercial interests in an increasingly important geopolitical region. On the eve of the Great War, however, a high ranking State Department official commented that while Zionist pressure on the U.S. to aid the movement was consistent, the Zionist “project was

chimerical,” since Palestine could not support even a small percentage of the world’s Jewish population.⁷⁰

Many scholars sympathetic to Zionism have argued that the State Department’s policy toward Zionism illustrated the anti-Semitism of State Department officials. While it is important to note that the anti-Semitism argument has often meant anti-Zionism or anti-Israeli policy, the key point, as historian Lawrence Davidson and others have argued, is that the State Department was not anti-Zionist, but merely did not see Zionism as compatible with American interests. By branding anything less than full support for Zionism as anti-Semitism, pro-Zionist interpretations simply ignore the articulation of American national interests underlying the State Department’s positions and dismiss valid and reasonable concerns and arguments of the indigenous inhabitants of Palestine as the irrational opposition of savage and backward people. Just as opposition to Zionism is not necessarily indicative of anti-Semitism, support for Zionism does not necessarily mean philo-Semitism. The ideas of many of the fundamentalist Christians who support Zionism as a precursor for the second coming of Christ are anti-Semitic. U.S. proponents of Zionism during and after WWI saw Zionism as a useful endeavor to prevent Eastern European Jews from migrating to the United States. As Bustami observes, Poland and Germany supported Zionism during the 1930s.

⁷⁰ Davidson, *America’s Palestine*, 55-56, 60, 229 n.43; Selah Merrill to State Department, *Jews and Jewish Colonies in Palestine*, 3 October 1891, NA/59, Jerusalem Despatches, Merrill to State Department, *Naturalized American Jews in Palestine*, 6 March 1899, NA/59, Jerusalem Despatches, and Alvey A. Adee, to Huntington Wilson, 21 February 1912, NA/59, 867.55/13, as cited in Zaha Bustami, “American Foreign Policy and the Question of Palestine, 1856-1939,” 83-102; “Jews in Jerusalem,” 26 March 1892, in *Public Opinion: A Comprehensive Summary of the Press Throughout the World on All Important Current Topics*, XII, October 1891-April 1892 (Washington DC and New York: The Public Opinion Company), 625. Bustami cites Merrill as calculating the number of Jews in Palestine as 40, 353, while *Public Opinion* gives Merrill’s number as 40, 253, 60% of whom live in Jerusalem. Adee, Second Assistant Secretary of State, who depicted the Zionist project as “chimerical” in his memo to Huntington Wilson, the acting Secretary of State, accepted the common viewpoint that in Biblical times, the Holy Land “flowed with milk and honey,” but centuries of Arab habitation made it “barren” and anticipated that the Zionists would require more than Palestine for their project to succeed. For more on Standard Oil, see *FRUS*, 1919, Volume 2, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1919v02>, 250-262; *FRUS*, 1920, 649ff.

Rhett notes that Zionist leaders, including Theodor Herzl and Chaim Weizmann, saw anti-Semitism as useful and even necessary for the Zionist cause.⁷¹ Too often in the U.S. discourse regarding Israel, opposition to Israeli policies makes one automatically an anti-Semite or a self-hating Jew. Clearly this tactic is meant to stifle rationale and comprehensive discussion regarding U.S. policy in the Middle East.⁷² During and after WWI, the United States offered rhetorical support for the Balfour declaration and monetary support for the Zionist project. By the late 1930s, as the British reconsidered their commitment to Zionism, the United States government increasingly identified with Zionist aims, even supported the forced expulsion of the Palestinian population, and put considerable pressure on the British to fulfill the promises of the Balfour declaration for a Jewish state.⁷³

⁷¹ Benny Morris makes this point about Herzl as well. See Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 21

⁷² For a recent example of equating opposition to Israeli policies and Zionism as anti-Semitism, see Yehuda Bauer, "Problems of Contemporary Antisemitism," (2003), <http://web.archive.org/web/20030705131522/http://humanities.ucsc.edu/JewishStudies/docs/YBauerLecture.pdf> (accessed 5 November 2011); for a discussion of the politics of anti-Semitism, see Norman Finkelstein, *Beyond Chutzpah: On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005)

⁷³For examples of pro-Zionist interpretations, see Frank Manuel, *The Realities of American-Palestine Relations* (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1949); Peter Grose, *Israel in the Mind of America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983); Chaim Simons, *International Proposals to Transfer Arabs from Palestine, 1895-1947: A Historical Survey* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Publishing House, 1988), especially 149-153

Bustami notes that pro-Zionist scholars who argue that the State Department was anti-Semitic also wrongly assert that U.S. policy was consequently pro-Arab. Some even argue that American missionaries in the Middle East instigated Arab opposition to Zionism and encouraged the development of Arab nationalism. We'll discuss this idea below, but it is interesting to note the underlying racism – that Arabs were incapable of opposing Zionism or developing a nationalist identity in response without Western instigation. This is certainly not a new argument. Recall that Jefferson, in his Declaration of Independence, claimed that George III "has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions." White Americans claimed the British were instigating the Native Americans to oppose white expansion as if protecting their lands, cultures, and lives from an expansionist and genocidal policy could not explain Native American resistance. Another common argument was the U.S. policy would have naturally supported Zionism since the American Jewish population supported Zionism. As Bustami and others have observed, this argument assumes that American Jews supported the Zionist movement and that the State Department would adopt Zionism as an expression of the American national interests while ignoring their Arab-American constituency. See, Bustami, 6-12.

Historian Cheryl Rubenberg has argued that U.S. support for Zionism and Israel in the post-World War II period has in fact undermined American interests in the region despite the claims of Israeli and American politicians that Israel and U.S. interests are identical. Cheryl Rubenberg, *Israel and the American National Interest: A Critical Examination* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986).

During this period, white American ideas about American exceptionalism, the civilizing mission, the hierarchy of races, and the white man's burden justified U.S. expansion, restrictive immigration policies, and support for the developing Zionist movement. Informed by Protestant missionaries, increasing diplomatic and economic exchanges, travel literature, and traditional Biblical imagery, many Americans adopted negative images of Arabs and Palestine, which corresponded to popular images of nonwhites at home and abroad. The characterization of Palestine as a sparsely populated wasteland and its inhabitants as savages comparable to the Native Americans combined with ideas about race and civilization to facilitate comparisons between Jewish and American pioneers and a growing American identification with the Zionist movement. Early Jewish pioneers described the Arabs in much the same way that their American counterparts described Native Americans, articulated that the conflict with the wilderness and its inhabitants would lead to regeneration of the Jewish people and nation, and illustrated that assimilation into the predominant Arab culture or cooperation with the indigenous population was not an option for the Jewish immigrants. The goal was a Jewish state, and the early pioneers sought to create and maintain a culture, economy, and society separate from the Arabs. Importantly, Zionists and their supporters presented their colonial movement to the Western powers as a civilizing mission and adopted the idealistic rhetoric of benevolent imperialism and the Biblical justifications of earlier settler colonies, a subject to which we now turn.

Erskine Childers notes that Herzl developed a plan in his diary to encourage European politicians to publicly make anti-Semitic statements as a means to gain more Jewish support for Zionism. See Erskine Childers, "The Wordless Wish: From Citizens to Refugees," in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 166, n.3

CHAPTER 2: ZIONISM AS CIVILIZING MISSION

The *New York Times* first reported on Zionism¹ in August 1897 when Theodor Herzl organized the first Basle Conference. Inheriting nineteenth century European ideas about

¹ Most histories emphasize the Jewish origins of Zionism. Seth Tillman, for example, writes that British leaders became interested in Zionism during WWI due to the lobbying of Weizmann and strategic concerns about the Germans gaining the support of Russian and American Jews by actively courting Zionism. Mohameden Ould-Mey argues in “The Non-Jewish Origin of Zionism” that non-Jewish Europeans developed plans for Zionist colonization of Palestine from the time of Reformation onward as Protestants developed a theology based upon a Jewish return to the Holy Land as a necessary precursor to the Second Coming. European powers saw European Jews as useful instruments for the colonization of Ottoman territory. Ould-Mey focuses on the British origins of Zionism (where there were only 25,000 Jews in by the mid-nineteenth century) and British and French competition for European Jewry after Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt and Palestine. During Napoleon’s attempt to capture Palestine, he prepared a proclamation offering the Holy Land to the Jews, but French Jews rejected Napoleon’s offer while welcoming the emancipation of French Jews. As the French and the Russians made moves to gain influence in the Ottoman empire through the “protection” of Catholics and Orthodox Christians respectively, the British made moves to encourage Jewish colonization and gain British protection over Ottoman Jews, since there were virtually no Protestants in the Ottoman empire in the early decades of the 19th century. There were very few Jews in Palestine as well—less than 9700 around 1840, according to British records. The British, therefore, saw the Jewish colonization of Palestine as conducive to British imperial interests and began pressuring the Ottoman Sultan to allow Jewish immigration to Palestine. Interestingly, a memorandum written in the late 1830s addressed to the Protestant powers in Europe and North America called for the restoration of the Jewish people to Palestine to avenge Islamic control of the Holy Land, reestablish the covenant God made with the ancient Israelites, and precipitate the Second Coming. A second memorandum from 1840 to the Protestant powers argues that the Jewish restoration to Palestine would precipitate European peace and maintain the balance of power. (The Peel Commission report observed that in 1840 Lord Shafesbury envisioned Jewish colonization of Palestine “under international guarantee” as a method to develop a “backward area.”) Ould-Mey asserts that the British Jews largely rejected Zionism the British focused their efforts on proselytizing Zionism to Russian and Eastern European Jews. In 1845, Lieutenant Colonel George Gawler, a former governor of South Australia, published *Tranquillization of Syria and the East: Observations and Practical Suggestions, in Furtherance of the Establishment of Jewish Colonies in Palestine, the Most Sober and Sensible Remedy for the Miseries of Asiatic Turkey*. As Ould-Mey observes, Gawler understood British support for the Jewish colonization of Palestine as similar to other British colonization efforts (especially in Australia). Jewish settlement would bring civilization and development to what he characterized as an unpopulated wasteland. Others, such as Thomas Clarke in *India and Palestine: Or the Restoration of the Jews Viewed in Relation to the Nearest Route to India*, argued that a Jewish state would protect the British route to India. Ould-Mey concludes that European anti-Semitism was necessary to convince European Jews of the efficacy of Zionism. In another article, “Geopolitical Genesis of Herzlian Zionism,” Ould-Mey again argues the centrality of British imperial interests in the creation of Zionism. In their *Report on the State of Palestine*, the Executive Committee of the Third Arab Palestine Congress argued that “to the Jew the National Home idea did not appeal much at first. It was England who created it, put life into it, and carried it into execution even before the ratification of the Mandate by the League of Nations.” See, RDS 867n.00/15 (8 July 1921). See also, Abdul-Wahab Kayyali, “Zionism and Imperialism: The Historical Origins,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 6, No 3 (Spring 1977), 98-112; Richard Stevens, “Zionism as Western Imperialism,” in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 27-59; Palestine Royal Commission Report, CMD 5479 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1937), Ch 1.

William Yale, an agent for the Standard Oil Company of New York in Jerusalem during the war, wrote a series of reports for the State Department that determined Zionism was a tool of British imperialism. The British, Yale argued, saw Zionism as a convenient means to protect the Suez Canal, especially from the French in Syria. Yale later would articulate support for Zionism and strong hostility to Arabs, Islam, and Arab nationalism. See Bustami, “American Foreign Policy,” 206-208, 244-247.

The historian Alexander Scholch emphasizes the European intervention in the Near East during the 19th century to illustrate how Zionism succeeded British, German, Russian, and French machinations to gain control of the Holy Land. While Britain's 19th century policy was to prevent the fragmentation of the Ottoman empire, the European powers attempted to gain influence in Palestine through missionary work and the protection of religious minorities (a path the United States would follow in their stead). The Russians laid claim to protecting Orthodox Christians and the French, the Catholics, leaving the British and the Germans to "create...their own protégés: Jews and Protestants." Scholch demonstrates that the European powers understood the "restoration of the Jews" to Palestine as part of European colonization and reclamation efforts. Old and new ideas floated around Europe that the conversion and restoration of Jews to Palestine would precipitate the Second Coming and that a Christian or European Jewish Palestine would prevent European conflict over the Near East and serve as a strategic buffer against the Oriental world. Importantly, the Christian West mentally expropriated the Holy Land from its Arab inhabitants and Ottoman overlords, leading to proposals for the European conquest of Palestine. Within Britain itself, political calls for Jewish restoration to Palestine began in the 1840s, and over time the obsession with the conversion of Jews dissipated. Some Christian Zionists argued that a European Jewish Palestine would benefit the Ottoman empire, while others demanded a Jewish state under British protection to fulfill Biblical prophecy and protect British economic and strategic interests in the region. Toward the end of the 19th century, British elites began to consider seriously direct British control of Palestine. Even before the advent of political Zionism, Europeans presented arguments that Jewish colonization would undertake a civilizing mission that would benefit the Arab peasants, who would willingly sell their land and were "terribly ignorant, fanatic, and above all inveterate liars" according to Claude Reignier Condor, and liberate the Holy Land from the Muslim Turks. Furthermore, many European accounts proclaimed that the Holy Land was essentially empty, a myth that Zionists continued to propagate throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. Some Zionists and their supporters have argued that Arabs migrated to Palestine after Jewish colonization supposedly made the land prosperous. To deal with the indigenous population, Europeans proposed expulsion, "Indian" reservations, or simple exploitation. Only a few European voices observed that the Arabs were represented a large majority of the population in Palestine and had inherent rights to the land they inhabited.

Seth Tillman, *Anglo-American Relations at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961); Mohameden Ould-Mey, "The Non-Jewish Origin of Zionism," *International Journal of the Humanities*, Vol 1 (2003), 591-610; Ould-Mey, "Geopolitical Genesis of Herzlian Zionism," <http://faculty.indstate.edu/melyassini/Geopolitical%20Genesis%20of%20Herzlian%20Zionism.PDF> (accessed 3 June 2011). This paper was accepted for publication in *Political Geography*, but was then withdrawn by the editor, John O'Loughlin (see <http://faculty.indstate.edu/melyassini/research.html> for details); Abdul-Wahab Kayyali, "Zionism and Imperialism: The Historical Origins," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 6, No 3 (Spring 1977), 98-112; Nahum Sokolow, *History of Zionism, 1600-1918* Vol II (New York and London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1919), 231-237; see also, Regina Sharif, *Non-Jewish Zionism: Its Roots in Western History* (London: Zed Press, 1983); David Fromkin, *A Peace To End All Peace: Creating the Modern Middle East, 1914-1922* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1989); Alexander Scholch, "Britain in Palestine, 1838-1882: The Roots of the Balfour Policy," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 22, No 1 (Autumn 1992), 39-56; Scholch, *Palestine in Transformation, 1856-1882: Studies in Social, Economic and Political Development*, William Young and Michael Gerrity, trans. (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1993); Farsoun, *Palestine and the Palestinians*, 48-50. An interesting work claiming that Arabs immigrated in large numbers to Palestine after Jewish colonization is William Ziff's *The Rape of Palestine* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1938). A more recent and well-reviewed example is Joan Peters' *From Time Immemorial* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), which, echoing Ziff argues that a large number of Arabs resident in Palestine on the eve of partition illegally immigrated during the mandate era because of Jewish colonization. (Levi Eshkol stated in February 1969 at the end of his term as Israel's prime minister that after the Jewish pioneers "made the desert bloom," the Arabs "became interested in taking it from us.") Echoing Golda Meir among others, Peters essentially asserted that there were no such things as the Palestinians. This argument was similar to foundation myths of other settler colonies—that the 'virgin' land was virtually unpopulated. The obvious conclusion was that Jews had more right to the territory than the Arabs. Peters' work received laudatory reviews in the American press, but Norman Finkelstein demonstrated *From Time Immemorial* as a complete falsification of the historical record. For Finkelstein's devastating critique, see Norman Finkelstein, "Disinformation and the Palestine Question: The Not-So-Strange Case of Joan Peter's *From Time Immemorial*," in Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens, eds., *Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question* (London

nationalism, imperialism, and Social Darwinism and profoundly affected by the Dreyfus affair in France in 1894 and 1895, Herzl, in *The Jewish State*, and Zionists at the Basle Conference were clear that their goal was the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine as a solution to anti-Semitism in Europe and immigration restriction in Western Europe and the United States and the failure and threat of assimilation.² Understanding that great power

and New York: Verso, 1988), 33-69); Edward Said, "Conspiracy of Praise," in Said and Hitchens, *Blaming the Victims*, 23-31. The Israeli scholar Yehoshua Porath also wrote a critique of Peters' work. See, Yehoshua Porath, "Mrs. Peters's Palestine," *The New York Review of Books*, 16 January 1986, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1986/jan/16/mrs-peterss-palestine/?pagination=false> (accessed 12 March 2012). The Zionists and their supporters ignored that the increase of the Arab population in Palestine was through natural population growth. For other counters to the Zionist mythology, see Justin McCarthy, *The Population of Palestine: Population History and Statistics of the Late Ottoman Period and Mandate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); Walid Khalidi, *Before their Diaspora: A Photographic History of the Palestinians, 1876-1948* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2010); Farsoun, 48-50; Peel Report, Chapter X; Alan George, "'Making the Desert Bloom': A Myth Examined," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 8, No 2 (Winter 1979), 88-100.

The 'virgin land' theme led some observers to make obvious comparisons between Jewish and American pioneers. For example, see John Haynes Holmes, *Palestine To-day and To-morrow: A Gentile's Survey of Zionism* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), which is discussed below. Israel Cohen also suggested that Arabs immigrated in large numbers after WWI. See, *The Progress of Zionism* (London: Zionist Organization, 1929, 1943).

² Herzl inherited a Zionist movement that developed among Eastern European Jews in the 1860s and 1870s. Russian Jews participating in contemporary revolutionary movements understood socialism as fundamental to Jewish integration in Western society and the protection of minority rights and autonomy. Others accepted the ideology of nationalism and proposed the Jewish colonization of Palestine. By the time Herzl arrived on the scene, there were three main branches of Zionist thought. Political Zionists focused on the establishment of a Jewish state (and considered other options beside Palestine in the early years) as the only solution to anti-Semitism. Cultural Zionists, who understood Jews as an exceptionalist people undertaking a unique mission, supported Jewish colonization in Palestine as part of a "Jewish cultural renaissance." Practical Zionists emphasized the regenerative aspects of European Jews using their own labor to rebuild Palestine. Coursing through the different branches was a sense of mission and belief in militarism as a means to reassert Jewish masculinity. Alan Taylor writes that the Zionists understood the Jewish nation as "a history-making people...not subject to the common morality of other men, for their self-realization was of ultimate importance to the world." Such an ideology determined and justified that Zionist goals trumped the rights of others in the Near East who were obstacles to the Jewish mission. This ideology is similar to justifications for American empire. Since the United States is the "city on the hill" spreading American values around the world, international law is often inapplicable to U.S. actions. The Zionist and American ideologies both championed exceptionalism. Interestingly, the American ideology has consistently maintained that while the United States was unique in the world, other peoples ought to become Americanized (even if white Americans expressed doubt that nonwhite peoples were capable of self-government).

Zionists understood their goal as a Jewish state, but publicly used the more ambiguous term "homeland." Herzl, for example, privately acknowledged that "were I to sum up the Basle Congress in a word—which I shall guard against pronouncing publicly—it would be this: at Basle I founded the Jewish State." He added, "Perhaps in five years, and certainly in 50, everyone will know it." Maz Nordau, Herzl's early lieutenant, later admitted:

I did my best to persuade the claimants of the Jewish state in Palestine that we might find a circumlocution that would say all we meant, but would say it in a way that would avoid provoking the

support was fundamental to the success of Zionism, Herzl pursued international legal recognition of the Zionist colonization project. Ignoring the Palestinians, Herzl lobbied the different European powers, including the Ottomans, to provide legitimacy to a Jewish state in Palestine.³ Herzl contended that Zionism promised “an humane and equitable solution of the Jewish question, and at the same time it opens up new vistas in the Near East.” In fact, the Zionist movement was premised on the conquest of Palestine and the expulsion of the indigenous Arab population.⁴ Although alternatives to Palestine, such as a colony in British

Turkish rulers of the coveted land. I suggested “Heimstätte” as a synonym for state...It was equivocal but we all understood what it meant...to us it signified *Judenstaat* and it signifies the same now. Zionists would publicly deny that their aim was a Jewish state, but that this was their intention since the late 19th century is quite clear.

According to historian Lenni Brenner, Weizmann opposed Herzl’s emphasis on “wooing” Orthodox Jewry and, in Weizmann’s words, “the petty bourgeoisie” to Zionism, which alienated radical and nonreligious students. Herzl opposed socialism and other leftist movements, and his courting of Jewish capitalists and governments of capitalist, conservative, imperialists, and even reactionary states meant disavowal of the Zionist movement leading to a socialist Palestine. Brenner argues that the Zionist leadership supported the Turkish government until WWI. In fact, Ben-Gurion proposed that the Turks allow a Jewish militia to police Palestine, alleviating the need for Turkish troops there. Herzl, Brenner writes, even offered to support Turkey’s vicious campaigns against the Armenians in the late 19th century in return for Turkish support for Zionism, while behind the scenes he was offering the Italians support for their designs on North Africa.

See, Alan Taylor, “Vision and Intent in Zionist Thought,” in Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, ed., *The Transformation of Palestine: Essays on the Origin and Development of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1987), 9-26; McDowall, *The Palestinians*, 8-9, 167 n.11; Michael Neumann, *The Case Against Israel* (Counterpunch and AK Press, 2005), 26; Lenni Brenner, *The Iron Wall: Zionist Revisionism from Jabotinsky to Shamir* (London: Zed Books, 1984), 12-14, 38-43; Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 20-26

³ We will develop this point below, but see Alan Taylor, “Vision and Intent in Zionist Thought,” Richard Stevens, “Zionism as a Phase of Western Imperialism,” and W. T. Mallison, Jr, “The Balfour Declaration: An Appraisal in International Law,” in Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, ed., *The Transformation of Palestine: Essays on the Origin and Development of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1987), 9-111.

Mayer observes that the Zionists “were slow to realize” that Great Power support for a Jewish state was problematic due to the rise of “anti-colonial nationalism.” Mayer, *Plowshares into Swords*, 6

⁴ Herzl understood what the creation of the Jewish state meant for the indigenous Arab population. Discussing the process of developing Palestine in *The Jewish State*, Herzl wrote that “supposing, for example, we were obliged to clear a country of wild beasts, we should not set about the task in the fashion of Europeans of the fifth century. We should not take spear and lance and go out singly in pursuit of bears; we would organize a large and active hunting party, drive the animals together, and throw a melinite bomb into their midst.” Despite the public assurances that the Zionist movement would benefit the Arab population, the Zionists saw the Palestinians as obstacles to remove. Interestingly, the Zionists presented their project as a joint-effort with the Western Christian world against Islam, a “clash of civilizations” that ostensibly justifies Western imperialism in the Islamic world in the twenty-first century.

As Taylor observes, the Zionists, in undertaking a massive campaign to gain Jewish and international adherents while simultaneously dealing with the problem of Arab resistance, obscured the primary Zionist goals and strategies for achieving them. Zionists, for example, have never defined the borders of the Jewish state and continue to expand their territory with the building of illegal settlements in the West Bank. Zionists claimed an

extensive territory in the Near East that included Palestine, Transjordan, and parts of Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and Mesopotamia. Zionist leaders planned on accepting a small Jewish state when the opportunity arose, recognizing that international legitimacy for an independent state was the goal and that the Jews would expand their borders over time. While Weizmann publicly accepted the Balfour Declaration, the Churchill White Paper (separating Transjordan from Palestine), and the Peel plan for partition, he understood that such arrangements were temporary and that the Zionists would create facts on the ground in due time. In the decades after partition, the state of Israel would rely on military force to gain control over the West Bank, including Jerusalem, Gaza, the Sinai, the Golan Heights, and southern Lebanon.

Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State* also cited in Ould-Mey, "Geopolitical Genesis of Herzlian Zionism," 30 (note 2). We'll discuss the Zionist plans for the expulsion of the Palestinians below. See Nur Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians: The Concept of "Transfer" in Zionist Political Thought, 1882-1948* (Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992); Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2010); Walid Khalidi, "The Hebrew *Reconquista* of Palestine: From the 1947 United Nations Partition Resolution to the First Zionist Congress of 1897," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 30, No 1 (Autumn 2009), 24-42; Abdul-Wahab Kayyali, "Zionism and Imperialism: The Historical Origins," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 6, No 3 (Spring 1977), 98-112. For one example of how Zionist ideology was premised on Palestinian dispossession and expulsion in the post-1967 era, see Donald Will, "Zionist Settlement Ideology and its Ramifications for the Palestinian People," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 11, No 3 (Spring 1982), 37-57; Norman Finkelstein, "Myths, Old and New," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 21, No 1 (Autumn 1999), 66-89. See also, Taylor, "Vision and Intent in Zionist Thought," in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 19. For an article that discussed 'transfer' beyond 1948 (until 1989), see Israel Shahak, "A History of the Concept of 'Transfer' in Zionism," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 18, No 3 (Spring 1989), 22-37.

For an argument that Zionist policy did not mean "transfer," see Shabtai Teveth, "The Evolution of 'Transfer' in Zionist Thinking," *Occasional Papers* No 107 (Tel Aviv: The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, May 1989). Teveth states that the Zionist Organization did not officially consider "the issues of Arab transfer and population exchange" until after the British proposed partition in 1937. For Teveth, mainstream Zionists did not consider or plan for the "transfer" of Arabs to Arab territory outside Palestine. That is not to say that individual Zionists did not publicly and privately assert that the "transfer" of the Arab population was a precursor for the establishment of a Jewish state, but for Teveth the architects of Zionist policy opposed transfer. Without "transfer" there would not be room for the "transfer" of European Jews to Eretz Israel. Teveth argues that Jabotinsky, because of his "liberalism" and his belief that the Jewish population would vastly outnumber the Arab one, rejected "transfer." Jabotinsky, though, understood force as the means to compel the Arabs to accept an expansionist Jewish state. Teveth even asserts that David Ben-Gurion rejected "transfer," but "history, however, willed differently" because "the 1948 war created hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees." Ilan Pappé's *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006), however, argues that Ben-Gurion was the architect of a planned policy to forcibly expel as many Palestinian Arabs as possible from the future Jewish state. Avi Shlaim notes that "a wide gulf separated Ben-Gurion's public utterances on the Arab question from his real convictions." The same applied to Herzl: Benny Morris observes that publicly Herzl maintained that Jewish colonization did not mean the displacement of Arabs and in fact would bring benefits to the Arab population while privately Herzl spoke of expropriation and transfer.

In an earlier work, *Ben-Gurion and the Palestinian Arabs*, Teveth examines Ben-Gurion's thought regarding the 'Arab question'—namely, the largely internal debate regarding how the Zionists could fulfill their goal in a territory with an Arab majority. Ben-Gurion, who characterized Zionism "as a movement of peace, justice, and progress," understood both that recognition of the political or national rights of the Palestinian Arabs undermined Zionist claims for Palestine and that Zionist tactics needed to be flexible in order to gain a Jewish majority in Palestine and the backing of a world power. Ben-Gurion's goal from the beginning was a Jewish state with a Jewish majority, and he consistently promoted the development of a Jewish economy and society that was wholly separate from Arab Palestine.

Ben-Gurion came into contact with Arabs on his first journey to Palestine in 1906 and referred to them as "big children" in a letter to his father. Upon his arrival in Jaffa, Arab porters carried Ben-Gurion from the ship to the smaller skiffs and again from the skiffs to the shore. He found Jaffa underwhelming and only stayed in the Arab city for a few hours before heading to a Jewish colony.

Teveth, *Ben-Gurion and the Palestinian Arabs: From Peace to War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985). See also, Brenner, *The Iron Wall*; Mayer, *Plowshares into Swords*, 9; Avi Shlaim, *Collusion Across the*

East Africa or the Sinai Peninsula, were discussed to immediately alleviate the oppression of Jews in Eastern Europe, the Zionists were adamant that only “the land of our fathers” was acceptable.⁵ The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs portrays political Zionism as “the national liberation movement of the Jewish people” undertaken to establish “a Jewish national state with a Jewish majority in the historical homeland, thus realizing the Jewish people’s right to self-determination.” Jews from Eastern Europe began migrating to Palestine in the early 1880s in response to pogroms against Jews and an overall escalation of anti-Semitism in Europe. Although there were less than 5500 Jewish colonists in Palestine in 1897, Zionist proponents pointed to examples of ‘progress’ and ‘development’ and declared that the area was severely underpopulated and backward. Advocates also argued that because European powers were competing to dismantle Ottoman territory, a Jewish State would prevent a terrible European conflict. As European powers began taking Ottoman territory in the Balkans in the years before the Great War, Zionists argued that a Jewish State in Palestine would serve as a buffer between competing nations and powers. On a similar vein, Zionists regularly asserted that an enlightened Jewish State would benefit the whole world and “be the only one that could give an unbiased verdict in matters that require arbitration.” Additionally, since the Jewish settlers would bring modern agricultural and

Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist Movement, and the Partition of Palestine (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 14; Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 21-22

⁵ This foreshadows a statement made by David Ben Gurion in 1938. "If I knew it was possible to save all [Jewish] children of Germany by their transfer to England and only half of them by transferring them to Eretz-Yisrael, I would choose the latter----because we are faced not only with the accounting of these [Jewish] children but also with the historical accounting of the Jewish People." See Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), 162. For more on the debate about an East Africa colony, see “East African Zionist Project,” *New York Times*, 14 February 1904, 14; “Zionism Discussed in House of Commons,” *New York Times*, 21 June 1904, 7; “Zangwill Talks about East Africa Zion,” *New York Times*, 23 October 1904, SM8

industrial methods, their colonial project would benefit the Ottoman government and the Arab inhabitants of Palestine.⁶

⁶ “The Jewish State Idea,” *New York Times*, 15 August 1897, 9; “Jews Are Split on Zionism,” *New York Times*, 22 August 1897, 12; “Zionists’ Mass Meeting,” *New York Times*, 22 October 1900, 3; “The Evil of Zionism,” *New York Times*, 19 January 1902, 28; “Jewish State for Jews,” *New York Times*, 24 August 1903, 5; “Favors Zion Movement,” *New York Times*, 26 August 1903, 6; “The Proposed Jewish State,” *New York Times*, 28 August 1903, 2; “England’s Grant to Zionists,” *New York Times*, 30 August 1903, 8; “Zionist Delegates Welcomed Home,” *New York Times*, 4 October 1903, 9; “Zionists Wrangle Over Palestine,” *New York Times*, 14 June 1909; “Magnes Criticizes Rabbis’ Conference,” *New York Times*, 22 November 1909, 18; *The Congress Addresses of Theodor Herzl*, Trans. Nellie Straus (New York: American Federation of Zionists, 1917), see especially, 3, 13-14, 22-24, 36-37; Herzl, *The Jewish State* (New York: Dover Publications, 1988); “International Jewish State to Keep Eastern Peace,” *New York Times*, 29 December 1912, 43; “Palestine and the Zionist Problem,” *New York Times*, 25 July 1920, 47; Theodor Herzl, *The Congress Addresses of Theodor Herzl*, 23, 35-37; Rhett, Chapter 2; Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 14-26; Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Zionism – An Introduction,” adapted from Binyamin Neuberger, *Zionism* (1995), 4 August 1998, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/History/Modern+History/Centenary+of+Zionism/Zionism+-+An+Introduction.htm> (accessed 4 November 2011).

That Zionism was a civilizing mission was a common theme. Rufus Lears, a Zionist historian, wrote in *Fulfillment: The Epic Story of Zionism* that “the Jews, by race and origin an eastern people and by experience and skills a part of the west, were exceptionally qualified to bring the stagnant east into the orbit of western civilization.” Quoted in Stevens, “Zionism as Western Imperialism,” in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 40.

The early *New York Times* articles on Zionism recognized that the movement meant establishing a Jewish State (from the Nile to the Euphrates, from the Litani to the southern desert), but that “the great majority of thoughtful and serious Jews throughout the world” were in opposition to the Zionist scheme and argued that Jews did not represent a nationality, but a religion. In fact, Zionism violated Jewish religious thought that only God could restore the Holy Land to the Jewish people. Early Zionists, such as the Rabbi H. Pereira Mendes, however, argued that “Surely it cannot be the will of God that we wait till the Messiah comes to apply principles of common sense and justice and right to [the Jewish] problem.” Leo Tolstoy, in an essay opposing Zionism, lamented that the Zionists were adopting the European sins of imperialism, nationalism, and militarism. See, “Jews Are Split on Zionism,” *New York Times*, 22 August 1897, 12; “Work of Alliance Israelite Universelle,” *New York Times*, 28 April 1904, 4; “England’s Grant to Zionists,” *New York Times*, 30 August 1903, 8; Leo Tolstoy, “Zionism: An Argument against the Ambition for Separate National Existence,” *New York Times*, 9 December 1906, SM2.

According to Farsoun, most of the Jews in Palestine prior to Zionist colonization were Sephardic (from Spain, North Africa, and other areas in the Ottoman Empire) and assimilated into Arab culture. Between 1882 and WWI, about 50,000 European Jews migrated to Palestine. While a majority moved to urban areas, Jewish agricultural colonies, which precipitated the dispossession of Arab peasants, who were living off the land, and the development of Palestinian organization against and resistance to Jewish colonization (immigration and land ownership) prior to World War I and the Balfour Declaration. While Zionists would portray Palestinian Arab resistance to their movement and the British mandate as illegitimate, perhaps it is important to point out that both the American Declaration of Independence and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man accepted as legitimate resistance to oppression and any government not based on the consent of the governed. McCarthy determined that there were about 40,000 Jews in Palestine in 1914-1915. Morris writes that on the eve of WWI, there were around sixty thousand Jews in Palestine, although “traditional Zionist historiography puts the figures as high as...eighty-five thousand in 1914.”

See, Farsoun, *Palestine and the Palestinians*, 47-60. See also, Neville Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism Before World War I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976. For other population estimates, see Justin McCarthy, *The Population of Palestine: Population History and Statistics of the Late Ottoman Period and Mandate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); Janet Abu-Lughod, “The Demographic Transformation of Palestine,” in Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, ed., *The Transformation of Palestine: Essays on the Origin and Development of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1987);

Herzl's *Altneuland* demonstrates how early Zionists characterized the movement to a Western audience as a civilizing mission. A key theme in *Altneuland* is that the Zionists brought civilization to a backward land. Herzl portrayed Palestine as a desolate wasteland and its inhabitants as dirty, ignorant, backward animals. Twenty years after the protagonists first visit Palestine, they return to find that Jewish colonization had transformed, modernized, and civilized the land. Importantly, Herzl's narrative suggests that this transformation of Palestine involved the expulsion of the indigenous population, whose presence made the land desolate, backward, and uncivilized. While Herzl had an Arab character proclaim that Jewish colonization was a benefit for the Arabs (a major Zionist theme), a Zionist settler intimated the destruction of Arab villages when he stated "do not expect to see the filthy nests that used to be called villages in Palestine" (on both sides of the Jordan). While Herzl iterated the Zionist refrain that Jewish colonization would benefit the Arabs of Palestine, he clearly understood Zionism as dependent upon conquering and expelling the indigenous population, which was an obstacle to modernization and Western civilization. While ignoring the process of expulsion in *Altneuland*, Herzl articulated a specific process for the "resettlement" of Palestinian Arabs outside of what was to be Jewish territory in his plan for a Jewish-Ottoman Land Company written in the same period.

Closely related to the civilizing mission theme in *Altneuland* is the idea that the Jewish colonists were extremely tolerant and welcoming of non-Jews. On their first visit to Palestine, the two protagonists, one a German aristocrat and the other a depressed Austrian

Pamela Ann Smith, *Palestine and the Palestinians, 1876-1983* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 25-26; Palestine Royal Commission Report, CMD 5479 (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1937), Ch 1; *A Survey of Palestine, Prepared in December 1945 and January 1946 for the Information of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1991), Ch VI; Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 37; Mayer, *Plowshares into Swords*, 9-10; *The Declaration of Independence* (1776); *The Declaration of the Rights of Man* (1789).

Jew, traveled across a desolate wasteland, passing “blackened Arab villages whose inhabitants looked like brigands. The children played in the dust, naked.” After the two main characters return to Palestine after a twenty-year hiatus from civilization, the only named Arab in the story explains that Jewish immigration benefited all, especially through the increase in land values. This Arab character, Reshid Bey, explained in the voice of a Zionist:

Those who had nothing could only gain. And gain they did: employment, better food, welfare. There was nothing more wretched than an Arab village of fellaheen at the end of the nineteenth century. The tenants lived in buildings not fit for cattle. The children were naked and uncared for, their playground the street. Today things are changed indeed. Willy nilly, the fellaheen shared in the benefits of the grand welfare institutions we provided—whether they became members of the New Society or not. When the draining of the swamps began, when the canals were built and the eucalyptus groves and avenues were planted, these indigenous labourers were used for the work and well-paid. Look at these fields! I remember very well that all this was swamp when I was a boy. These swamps were bought at low prices by the New Society and the soil below proved to be the best in the land. These fields belong to the pretty village up there on the hill. It is an Arab village—you can see the minaret of the mosque. These people are far better off than before; they are healthy they have better food, their children go to school. Nothing has been done to interfere with their customs or their faith—they have only gained by welfare.

In response to a query about why the “Mohammedans” did “not regard the Jews as interlopers,” Reshid Bey answered that “the Jews have brought us wealth and health; why should we harbor evil thoughts about them? They live among us like brothers; why should we not return their kindly feelings?” At other junctures, Herzl contrasted Jewish modernization and development with Bedouin “caravans, romantic relics of a primitive period.” As Ali Khalidi argues, *Altneuland* was a work directed at Europeans to illustrate how a Jewish state in Palestine would promote European civilization and interests and emphasize that Western support was necessary for the development of Jewish colonization.⁷

⁷ Theodor Herzl, *Altneuland* (Haifa, Israel: Haifa Publishing Company, 1961). For an interesting article arguing that Herzl’s *Altneuland* was meant for a Western audience, see Muhammad Ali Khalidi,

According to the *New York Times*, “only a small number of the Jews in all countries favor[ed]” Zionism at this early stage. Jewish opponents of a Jewish State, representing “the great majority of all thoughtful and serious Jews,” countered that Israel’s mission was religious, that Jews did not constitute a political nation, and that the establishment of a Jewish State would undermine Jewish citizenship rights in other countries, primarily in Europe and the United States. Anti-Semites would utilize Zionism to claim that Jews could never be citizens of England, France, or the United States. Zionist proponents, however, argued Zionist adherents were not disloyal to the countries in which they lived. Jewish opponents of Zionism asserted that because Jews were so heterogeneous regarding language, customs, thought, and culture and only united through religion, Jews did not represent a nation, since the liberal understanding of a nation meant a homogenous people. While Zionists focused on Palestine, some did call for Jewish colonies in British East Africa, and some American Jews who opposed Zionism saw Texas as a destination for Jewish immigrants to the U.S. By migrating to Texas, Jews would alleviate the congestion in New York neighborhoods and more easily assimilate into American political, social, and economic life.⁸

“Utopian Zionism or Zionist Proselytism? A Reading of Herzl’s *Altneuland*,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 30, No 4 (Summer 2001), 55-67.

Interestingly, the Jewish colonists were working to eradicate malaria in Africa not simply to open the great continent to European colonists, but also to solve the “Negro problem” by facilitating the transfer of blacks from the Americas back to Africa to fulfill the aspirations of black nationalism. The implications here are numerous, but one was that the Jewish state would serve all mankind, a beacon on the hill comparable to the United States. The 1961 edition of *Altneuland* was an attempt to illustrate how much of Herzl’s Utopia was evident in the young Israeli state. See, Herzl, *Altneuland*, 32, 94-95, 100.

⁸“Zionism and the African Colony,” *New York Times*, 30 August 1903, 8; “South African Zion Colony,” *New York Times*, 6 September 1903, 8; “Praises Schiff’s Scheme,” *New York Times*, 29 December 1906, 1; “Will People the West with Russian Jews,” *New York Times*, 5 January 1907, 5; “Zionism’s Hope Here Says Jacob H. Schiff,” *New York Times*, 29 July 1907, 9; “Zionists Loyal Citizens,” *New York Times*, 1 July 1907, 7; “Agitators for Zionists,” *New York Times*, 3 July 1907, 3; “Zionists Defend Their Americanism,” *New York Times*, 15 September 1907, 11; “Rousing Farewell Given to Dr. Lewin,” *New York Times*, 11 February 1907, 5; “Turkish Revolt Gives Zionists Hope,” *New York Times*, 13 June 1909, 5; “Judaism Defined as a Gift of Birth,” *New York Times*, 11 November 1909, 6; “Delegates Arrive for Hebrew Council,” *New York Times*, 16

In 1907, the Federation of American Zionists⁹ published a short pamphlet entitled *Zionism: A Jewish Statement to the Christian World*. This pamphlet represents one of the first examples of the Zionist promotional effort directed at the U.S. government and population. The authors characterized Zionism, the creation of, in the words of Theodor Herzl, “a publicly recognized and legally secured home for the Jewish people” in Palestine, as a solution to the Jewish question in Europe, especially Russia and Poland where most of the world’s Jewish population lived at the time. Noting that over a million Jews immigrated to Western Europe and the Americas since the beginning of the Russian pogroms in 1882, the American Zionist Federation pointed to continued Jewish separateness, despite efforts to assimilate and become patriotic citizens in their adopted homelands. Arguing that migration to more liberal states was not the solution for the Jewish problem in the West, the authors referred to an interesting comment by Prime Minister Arthur Balfour as Parliament debated the Aliens Bill, which introduced immigration restriction to Britain in 1905. Balfour, commenting on Jewish immigrants, stated:

January 1911, 20; “What America Means to Jews,” *New York Times*, 18 January 1911, 4; “Schiff Opposes Zionist Movement,” *New York Times*, 8 January 1914, 3; “United Synagogues Clash Over Zionism,” *New York Times*, 3 July 1917, 7.

The Turkish government, however, soon made it clear that it opposed the Zionist project. The Minister of Finance, Djavid Bey, stated that individual Jews would find a home in Turkey as long as they become Turkish subjects. “As for Zionism,” he stated, “I cannot believe that there are any political aspirations behind the movement, because the very idea of securing Palestine for a Jewish settlement upon an autonomous basis is too absurd to be entertained by sensible people.” In part due to the position of the Young Turks and conditions in Europe, by 1911, the Zionist publicly backed away from the idea of a Jewish state and emphasized autonomy within the Ottoman empire in the more ambiguous “national home,” even while remaining a minority in Palestine relative to the majority Arabs. For example, Richard Gottheil, an American Zionist leader, contended that the Young Turks would promote the “national and racial aspirations” of the different peoples throughout the empire. In return for Jewish autonomy in Palestine, the Zionists would benefit the Turkish empire. The private goal, however, remained a Jewish state. “Young Turks Oppose a Zionist State,” *New York Times*, 26 July 1909, 4; “Zion Seeks No More a Separate State,” *New York Times*, 13 October 1911, 18; “Jews Promised Autonomy,” *New York Times*, 13 September 1912, 6; Richard Stevens, “Zionism as Western Imperialism,” in Abu-Lughod, *The Transformation of Palestine*, 33.

⁹ Until WWI, the Federation of American Zionists was the largest Zionist group in the U.S. with a membership of more than 12,000. Total membership in all American Zionist groups in 1914 was under 20,000 out of a total Jewish population of 1.5 million. See Bustami, “American Foreign Policy,” 107 and sources cited.

A state of things could easily be imagined in which it would not be to the advantage of the civilization of the country that there should be an immense body of persons who, however patriotic, able and industrious, however much they threw themselves into the national life, still by their own action remained a people apart, and not merely held a religion differing from the vast majority of their fellow-countrymen, but only intermarried among themselves.

The Zionists further claimed that assimilation was not an acceptable solution because it meant the cultural and even physical genocide of the Jewish people, it was unlikely that Europe and the United States would eliminate the racism and anti-Semitism endemic in their societies, and it was contrary to the scientific racism of the period that the “superior” and “stronger” Jewish race would assimilate into the “inferior” and “weaker” Eastern European “races.” The solution to the Jewish question, therefore, was the emancipation of the Jewish people through the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine for the world’s eleven million Jews.¹⁰ Promising that the Zionists would develop and modernize Palestine and make effective use of its resources to transform an “uncultivated” and “undeveloped” land, the American Zionist Federation claimed that the Zionists did not seek separation from the Ottoman Empire and instead would only benefit the Turkish government. Completely ignoring the indigenous Arab population in Palestine, the American Federation of Zionists presented the Jewish colonization of Palestine as a solution to the problem of anti-Semitism in the West, a solution that would benefit Western civilization.¹¹ This sentiment echoed

¹⁰ As the pamphlet notes, the Zionists would welcome immediate colonization efforts in other regions of the Ottoman Empire (such as Mesopotamia and Egypt) to provide immediate relief to persecuted European Jews, but Palestine was the ultimate goal. Balfour confided to Brandeis in Paris in June 1919 that his concern for Jews from Eastern Europe immigrating to Great Britain made him an “ardent” Zionist. Edward House recorded in his diary on 31 December 1918 that Balfour confided in him that he believed that Jews were responsible for Bolshevism. House claims he recommended to Balfour that “we put [the Jews] in Palestine, at least the best of them, and hold them responsible for the orderly behavior of the rest of the Jews throughout the world,” and that Balfour saw merit in the plan. See Khalidi, *From Haven to Conquest*, 196; Arthur Link, *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966-1994), Vol 53, 576-577.

¹¹ In 1907, *HaShiloah* published Yitzhak Epstein’s speech directed toward the Seventh Zionist Congress in Basle two years prior. Incidentally, *HaShiloah* was a Hebrew journal founded by Ahad Ha’am and published from 1896 to 1919. Importantly, Joseph Klausner, the editor in 1907, clearly stated that he did not agree with many of Epstein’s arguments and promised rebuttals in future issues of the journal. Epstein, who

migrated to Palestine from Russia in 1886, argued that “*the question of our attitude toward the Arabs*” was the most important question for Zionists to debate, but was “completely *hidden*” from them. For Epstein, the Zionist movement had largely forgotten “that there is in our beloved land an entire people that has been attached to it for hundreds of years and has never considered leaving it.” Admittedly, some Zionists who advocated that the Jewish people look to other territories beside Palestine made reference to the Arab problem and others commented on the emerging Arab nationalist movement. Epstein observed that an overwhelming majority of the Arab population cultivated the land, which undermined the prevalent idea that “there [was] in Eretz Israel uncultivated land” due to a lack of population and “the indifference of the inhabitants.” Consequently, Epstein expressed concern about the fate of the Arab peasants if the Zionists purchased the land because Jewish land purchase often meant the eviction of Arabs whose families had lived on the land for generations. Importantly, Epstein declared that the Zionists generously compensate the disposed Arabs; consequently, “from the viewpoint of customary justice and official honesty we are completely righteous, even beyond the strict letter of the law.”

Still, he recognized the historic ties of the Arab peasants to the land where their ancestors were buried, poignantly described a scene of Arab families leaving their homes to make way for Jewish settlers, reminded his audience that the Arabs in Palestine were part of a broader Arab nation, and warned that, even though the Zionist movement was just and innocent, such a process of dispossession (especially the instances that involved force) would only foment Arab resistance and hostility to the Jewish people:

Will those evicted really hold their peace and calmly accept what was done to them? Will they not in the end rise up to take back with their fists what was taken from them by the power of gold? Will they not press their case against the foreigners who drove them from their land?

For those who dismissed Arab nationalism and the Arab problem as wholly subordinate to the Zionist national cause in the ancient homeland of the Jewish people, Epstein cautioned:

It can be said with certainty, *that at the very least there is for now no Arab movement in the national and political sense of that term.* But in truth this people needs no movement; it is mighty and numerous and needs no rebirth, because it never died and never ceased existing for a moment.

For Epstein, the Zionists needed to act with caution and respect the “national rights” of the Arabs so as not to “provoke the sleeping lion.”

Overall, Epstein understood Zionism as an idealistic movement and a civilizing mission whereby the Jewish immigrants “bestowed considerable bounty on the country’s inhabitants.” While warning that the Zionists could not simply conquer and dispossess the Arab population, he argued that Zionists ought to “come to our land to take possession of what is not already possessed by others, to find what others have not found, to reveal for our benefit and for the happiness of all the inhabitants the hidden wealth under its soil and the concealed blessing in its skies and sun.” Zionists would capitalize on Western methods to purchase and develop uncultivated areas, which would cause no conflict with the Arabs. Additionally, Epstein argued that Zionist would purchase cultivated areas and introduce Western scientific methods to improve the lives of the Arabs tenants and allow for Jewish settlement on the land. “As enlightened owners” in the tradition of the civilizing mission ideology, the Jewish population would provide for the moral, physical, and spiritual betterment of the Arabs, gradually ameliorating Arab hostility and resistance to Zionism. In time, “our Arab tenants will recognize us as their benefactors and comforters and will not curse the day when the Jews came to settle on their land, but will remember it as a day of salvation and redemption.” Once the Arabs recognize the benefits of living on land owned by the Jews, Epstein predicted that “hundreds of villages will come to request the Jews to take over their land,” the Turkish government would acknowledge the benefits of Jewish immigration, and opponents of the movement “will have to admit that our settling in Eretz Israel brings only benefit.”

He contended that the Arab nation, which “occupies such a broad swath of territory that it can allow us, an ancient people so close to it in blood, language, and many spiritual traits, to occupy that part of the land of our fathers that it does not yet occupy,” would accept Jewish colonization “because it is powerless to lift itself up alone and to end its poverty and ignorance, but with us alone it can overcome its deficiencies.” Maintaining that Zionism was not dependent upon force and had “no alien thought of subjugation,” Epstein declared that European Jews immigrated to Eretz Israel “with a pure heart...to settle among [the Arabs] in order to better them in all respects.” As the Jewish people sought “to establish our nation,” they would “support the revival of the inhabitants and...reinforce their national feelings.” In order to succeed, Zionists had to reach a “covenant” with the Arab population in Palestine, a recommendation that demanded a departure from a Zionist ideology intent on avoiding negotiations with the Palestinian Arabs and instead seeking legitimacy from the Ottoman government, Western powers, international institutions, and Arab leaders outside Palestine—a tactic

Herzl's early justification for Zionism announced at the Basle Congress in 1897 when he proclaimed that "if the Near East question is partially solved together with the Jewish question, it will surely be of advantage to all civilized peoples."¹²

which Epstein characterized as negotiating with the in-laws instead of the groom. Overall, Epstein suggested that a Zionism committed to a civilizing mission would gain Eretz Israel for the Jewish people with the acceptance of the Arab population.

While recognizing the "Arab problem," Epstein did not question whether Zionism was a civilizing force and instead accepted common Western conceptions that the European settlers were bringing civilization and modernization to an "environment that is now living in the sixteenth century." In order to successfully reach the Arab peasants and teach them the benefits of Western civilization (and solve this great threat to the Zionist movement), Epstein argued that the Zionists needed to study Arab culture, Arabic, and the people themselves. As Dowty observes, while Epstein drew attention to the Arab problem, most Zionists opposed his solution. Although Zionist leaders would continue to expound upon the benefits of Jewish colonization for the land and people of Palestine, most favored the creation of an exclusivist Jewish society in Palestine, opposed negotiations with the Palestinian Arabs, and even envisioned force as necessary to gain control of the land and solve the Arab problem.

In 1908, Moshe Smilansky wrote a response to Epstein's argument in which he argued: "Either the land of Israel belongs in the national sense to those Arabs who settled there in recent times, and then we have no place there and we must say explicitly: The land of our fathers is lost to us. [Or] if the Land of Israel belongs to us, to the Jewish people, then our national interests come before all us...It is not possible for one country to serve as the homeland of two peoples."

Alan Dowty, "A Question that Outweighs All Others': Yitzhak Epstein and Zionist Recognition of the Arab Issue," *Israel Studies*, Vol 6, No 1 (January 2001), 34-54, which includes an English translation of Epstein's "The Hidden Question." For Smilansky quote, see, Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 58

¹² *Zionism: A Jewish Statement to the Christian World* (New York: The Federation of American Zionists, 1907); "Zionists Loyal To Turkey," *New York Times*, 9 August 1909, 4; *The Congress Addresses of Theodor Herzl*, 3, 8, 13-14, 20, 23, 34. At the second Basle Conference, Leo Motzkin, a Russian Jew, warned the delegates of "innumerable clashes" between Jewish settlers and the over 500,000 Arabs who inhabited "the most fertile parts of our land" and indeed owned 99% of the land. In his address to the Second Zionist Congress, Herzl ignored the indigenous Arab population in Palestine and asserted that the Turks did "not possess those qualities which are requisite for industrialization and the cultivation of a country." Herzl, in his initial efforts to gain Ottoman recognition for the Zionist project, often reiterated that Jewish colonization would benefit the Ottoman government. Herzl argued that

Supposing His Majesty the Sultan were to give us Palestine, we could in return undertake to regulate the whole finances of Turkey. We should there form a portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism. We should as a neutral state remain in contact with all Europe, which would have to guarantee our existence.

He claimed in 1903 that his failure with the Ottomans, given the benefits of Zionism for the Sultan, must be attributed to Russian opposition. Herzl had previously attempted to gain German support for the Zionist project by arguing that Jewish colonization would benefit German imperial interests. German support would provide the international and legal legitimacy that the Zionist leader sought. Herzl wrote in 1898:

To live under the protection of strong, great, moral, splendidly governed Germany is certain to have most salutary effects upon the national character of the Jews. Also, at one stroke we should obtain a completely legalized internal and external status. The suzerainty of the Porte and the protectorate under Germany surely ought to be adequate legal underpinning.

In a meeting with the Kaiser in Turkey in 1898, Herzl encouraged the German emperor to convince the Sultan that Jewish colonization would benefit the Ottoman empire, but the Kaiser responded in a cold manner, not wishing to upset the German alliance with the Turks. Interestingly, Herzl made his only visit to Palestine after that meeting, a trip that was quite short and disappointing to him. His failure led to a brief consideration of other territories, beside Palestine, for Jewish colonization and settlement. Importantly, by 1900, Herzl had shifted his

attention toward the British, who had their own interests in supporting Zionism, while pro-German Zionists continued to push for a German-Zionist alliance until after World War I. In the summer of 1902, Herzl, in fact, testified before a British commission (called into existence by Prime Minister Arthur Balfour) investigating the problem of alien immigration to Britain. Although he considered other territories within the British empire for Jewish settlement (Cyprus, Uganda, Sinai—especially in the wake of a Russian massacre of Jews in 1903), Herzl proposed that British support for Zionism in Palestine would benefit British imperial interests:

So far, you still have elbow room. Nay, you may claim high credit from your government if you strengthen British influences in the Near East by a substantial colonization of our people at the strategic point where Egyptian and Indo-Persian interests converge. How long do you imagine that these advantages, now to be seized [the establishment of a Land and Trade Company], will remain unnoticed?

In pursuing his diplomacy with the Kaiser, Herzl was quite clear in private that a Jewish majority would mean Jewish political dominance of Palestine, the borders of which would be quite extensive (from the Nile to the Euphrates).

Weizmann, who replaced Herzl as leader of the Zionist movement, also ignored the indigenous population in Palestine. Speaking at a Zionist meeting in Paris in 1914, Weizmann contended:

in its initial stage, Zionism was conceived by its pioneers as a movement wholly depending on mechanical factors: there is a country which happens to be called Palestine, a country without a people, and on the other hand, there exists the Jewish people, and it has no country. What else is necessary than to fit the gem into the ring, to unite this people with this country [which was owned by the Turks]?

But contrary to Zionist public discourse, Palestine was densely populated with an overwhelming Palestinian Arab population who depended upon the land. Ahad Ha'am acknowledged in 1891:

We abroad are used to believing that Eretz Israel is now almost totally desolate, a desert that is not sowed, and that anyone who wishes to purchase land there may come and purchase as much as he desires. But in truth this is not the case. Throughout the country it is difficult to find fields that are not sowed. Only sand dunes and stony mountains that are not fit to grow anything but fruit trees—and this only after hard labor and great expense of clearing and reclamation—only these are not cultivated.

As the Zionist leadership understood, the Zionist project could only succeed if the indigenous peasants were evicted from their lands and the Palestinians made illegitimate residents in Palestine. Israel Zangwill told an American audience in 1904 that “Palestine proper was already inhabited....The alternatives open to the Zionists bent on having Palestine were to drive out the inhabitants by the sword or to grapple with the problem of a large, alien population, mostly hostile Moslems.” (Notice how Zangwill characterized the indigenous Arabs as the “alien population.” During WWI, Zangwill would write that “there is no particular reason for the Arabs to cling to these few kilometers.” He continued: “‘To fold their tents’, and ‘silently steal away’ is their proverbial habit: let them exemplify it now.” Zionists also understood the significance of portraying Palestine as a desolate wasteland, despite evidence to the contrary, as a means to justify their colonizing effort. Just as low population estimates of the Americas and emphasis on “empty wilderness” before European conquest somewhat hid the demographic disaster and violent nature of European colonization in North America, Zionist negation of the Palestinian people through proclamations that the land was empty and desolate was a means to “disappear” the victims of Jewish colonization. Menachem Begin acknowledged the purpose in denying Palestinian identity and rights in 1969 when he told a Jewish audience that “if this is Palestine and not the land of Israel, then you are conquerors and not tillers of the land. You are invaders. If this is Palestine, then it belongs to a people who lived here before you came.”

Importantly, the Zionists pursued an international mandate asserting Jewish claims to Palestine to counter Arab nationalism (developing in part in response to the Ottomans and Western intervention) and the Arab presence in Palestine (the Arab problem). If the land were empty and undeveloped, then why would Zionists need international legitimacy and a Western power to facilitate the Zionist project – the establishment of a Jewish national home?

Herzl died in the midst of a debate on whether the Zionists should accept the British offer of Uganda. Given the reemergence of vicious pogroms in Russia in the midst of a revolutionary movement against the reactionary Russian regime and the humiliating Russo-Japanese war, a minority of Zionists argued that Uganda would alleviate Jewish suffering immediately. Russian Zionists, such as 30-year-old Chaim Weizmann, favored the majority position that only Palestine would serve as the Jewish national home. This second wave of pogroms precipitated the second aliyah to Palestine. (A third wave of pogroms was largely carried out by

Some Zionists, however, warned that the Zionists, in promoting their movement, had failed to address the Arab question. In 1907, *HaShiloah* published Yitzhak Epstein's speech directed toward the Seventh Zionist Congress in Basle two years prior. *HaShiloah* was a Hebrew journal founded by Ahad Ha'am and published from 1896 to 1919. Importantly, Joseph Klausner, the editor in 1907, clearly stated that he did not agree with many of Epstein's arguments and promised rebuttals in future issues of the journal. Epstein, who migrated to Palestine from Russia in 1886, argued that "*the question of our attitude toward the Arabs*" was the most important question for Zionists to debate, but was "completely *hidden*" from them. For Epstein, the Zionist movement had largely forgotten "that there is in our beloved land an entire people that has been attached to it for hundreds of years and has never considered leaving it." Admittedly, some Zionists who advocated that the Jewish people look to other territories beside Palestine made reference to the Arab problem and others commented on the emerging Arab nationalist movement. Epstein observed that an overwhelming majority of the Arab population cultivated the land, which undermined the prevalent idea that "there [was] in Eretz Israel uncultivated land" due to a lack of population

White Russian forces between 1917 and 1921. The U.S. and British governments, which were instrumental in supporting the Zionist cause, favored the White Russian forces over the Bolsheviks in the Russian civil war.)

See, Desmond Stewart, "Herzl's Journeys in Palestine and Egypt," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 3, No 3 (Spring 1974), 18-38; Klaus Polkehn, "Zionism and Kaiser Wilhelm," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 4, No 2 (Winter 1975), 76-90; Richard Stevens, "Zionism as Western Imperialism," in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 35-36, 39; Abdul-Wahab Kayyali, "Zionism and Imperialism: The Historical Origins," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 6, No 3 (Spring 1977), 98-112. Weizmann cited in Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, "Territorially-Based Nationalism and the Politics of Negation," in Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens, eds., *Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question* (London and New York: Verso, 1988), 200. Ha'am quoted in Khalidi, "Palestinian Peasant Resistance to Zionism Before World War I," in Said and Hitchens, eds., *Blaming the Victims*, 216. Begin quoted in Edward Said, Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, Janet Abu-Lughod, Muhammad Hallaj, Elia Zuriek, "A Profile of the Palestinian People," in Said and Hitchens, ed., *Blaming the Victims*, 235-296. See also, Neville Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism Before World War I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976; Simha Flapan, *Zionism and the Palestinians* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1979); Nur Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians: The Concept of 'Transfer' in Zionist Political Thought, 1882-1948* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2009); McDowall, *The Palestinians*, 10; Mayer, *Ploughshares into Swords*, 104; Avi Shlaim, *Collusion Across the Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist Movement, and the Partition of Palestine* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 2-3; Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 24-25; Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement, 1918-1929*.

and “the indifference of the inhabitants.” Consequently, Epstein expressed concern about the fate of the Arab peasants if the Zionists purchased the land because Jewish land purchase often meant the eviction of Arabs whose families had lived on the land for generations. Importantly, Epstein declared that the Zionists generously compensate the disposed Arabs; consequently, “from the viewpoint of customary justice and official honesty we are completely righteous, even beyond the strict letter of the law.”¹³

Still, he recognized the historic ties of the Arab peasants to the land where their ancestors were buried, poignantly described a scene of Arab families leaving their homes to make way for Jewish settlers, reminded his audience that the Arabs in Palestine were part of a broader Arab nation, and warned that, even though the Zionist movement was just and innocent, such a process of dispossession (especially the instances that involved force) would only foment Arab resistance and hostility to the Jewish people:

Will those evicted really hold their peace and calmly accept what was done to them? Will they not in the end rise up to take back with their fists what was taken from them by the power of gold? Will they not press their case against the foreigners who drove them from their land?

For those who dismissed Arab nationalism and the Arab problem as wholly subordinate to the Zionist national cause in the ancient homeland of the Jewish people, Epstein cautioned:

It can be said with certainty, *that at the very least there is for now no Arab movement in the national and political sense of that term.* But in truth this people needs no movement; it is mighty and numerous and needs no rebirth, because it never died and never ceased existing for a moment.

For Epstein, the Zionists needed to act with caution and respect the “national rights” of the Arabs so as not to “provoke the sleeping lion.”¹⁴

¹³ Alan Dowty, “‘A Question that Outweighs All Others’: Yitzhak Epstein and Zionist Recognition of the Arab Issue,” *Israel Studies*, Vol 6, No 1 (January 2001), 34-54, which includes an English translation of Epstein’s “The Hidden Question.”

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Overall, Epstein understood Zionism as an idealistic movement and a civilizing mission whereby the Jewish immigrants “bestowed considerable bounty on the country’s inhabitants.” While warning that the Zionists could not simply conquer and dispossess the Arab population, he argued that Zionists ought to “come to our land to take possession of what is not already possessed by others, to find what others have not found, to reveal for our benefit and for the happiness of all the inhabitants the hidden wealth under its soil and the concealed blessing in its skies and sun.” Zionists would capitalize on Western methods to purchase and develop uncultivated areas, which would cause no conflict with the Arabs. Additionally, Epstein argued that Zionists would purchase cultivated areas and introduce Western scientific methods to improve the lives of the Arab tenants and allow for Jewish settlement on the land. “As enlightened owners” in the tradition of the civilizing mission ideology, the Jewish population would provide for the moral, physical, and spiritual betterment of the Arabs, gradually ameliorating Arab hostility and resistance to Zionism. In time, “our Arab tenants will recognize us as their benefactors and comforters and will not curse the day when the Jews came to settle on their land, but will remember it as a day of salvation and redemption.” Once the Arabs recognize the benefits of living on land owned by the Jews, Epstein predicted that “hundreds of villages will come to request the Jews to take over their land,” the Turkish government would acknowledge the benefits of Jewish immigration, and opponents of the movement “will have to admit that our settling in Eretz Israel brings only benefit.”¹⁵

He contended that the Arab nation, which “occupies such a broad swath of territory that it can allow us, an ancient people so close to it in blood, language, and many spiritual traits, to occupy that part of the land of our fathers that it does not yet occupy,” would accept

¹⁵ Ibid.

Jewish colonization “because it is powerless to lift itself up alone and to end its poverty and ignorance, but with us alone it can overcome its deficiencies.” Maintaining that Zionism was not dependent upon force and had “no alien thought of subjugation,” Epstein declared that European Jews immigrated to Eretz Israel “with a pure heart...to settle among [the Arabs] in order to better them in all respects.” As the Jewish people sought “to establish our nation,” they would “support the revival of the inhabitants and...reinforce their national feelings.” In order to succeed, Zionists had to reach a “covenant” with the Arab population in Palestine, a recommendation that demanded a departure from a Zionist ideology intent on avoiding negotiations with the Palestinian Arabs and instead seeking legitimacy from the Ottoman government, Western powers, international institutions, and Arab leaders outside Palestine—a tactic which Epstein characterized as negotiating with the in-laws instead of the groom. Overall, Epstein suggested that a Zionism committed to a civilizing mission would gain Eretz Israel for the Jewish people with the acceptance of the Arab population.¹⁶

While recognizing the “Arab problem,” Epstein did not question whether Zionism was a civilizing force and instead accepted common Western conceptions that the European settlers were bringing civilization and modernization to an “environment that is now living in the sixteenth century.” In order to successfully reach the Arab peasants and teach them the benefits of Western civilization (and solve this great threat to the Zionist movement), Epstein argued that the Zionists needed to study Arab culture, Arabic, and the people themselves. As Dowty observes, while Epstein drew attention to the Arab problem, most Zionists opposed his solution. Although Zionist leaders would continue to expound upon the benefits of Jewish colonization for the land and people of Palestine, most favored the creation of an

¹⁶ Ibid.

exclusivist Jewish society in Palestine, opposed negotiations with the Palestinian Arabs, and even envisioned force as necessary to gain control of the land and solve the Arab problem.¹⁷

Epstein, however, represented a small minority of Zionists. In 1908, Moshe Smilansky, representing the majority position, wrote a response to Epstein's argument in which he argued: "Either the land of Israel belongs in the national sense to those Arabs who settled there in recent times, and then we have no place there and we must say explicitly: The land of our fathers is lost to us. [Or] if the Land of Israel belongs to us, to the Jewish people, then our national interests come before all us...It is not possible for one country to serve as the homeland of two peoples."¹⁸

In 1911, the World Zionist Organization translated into English and published in book form a number of articles explaining Zionism, describing Zionist successes, and laying out plans for future Zionist work. Israel Cohen, the editor of the volume, wrote that the goal of the project was to dispel "misrepresentations" and "ignorance" about the movement, including "fantastic legends" that the Zionists were "planning to establish an independent state in Palestine and to settle all the Jews in the world there." Cohen characterized Zionism as "a peaceful movement of an ancient people to revive its national life and culture in the land of its forefathers." David Wolffsohn, the second president of the Zionist Organization, noted in his forward the popularity of Zionism among Jewish populations in the United States, Britain, Canada, South Africa, and Australia and asserted that these Western Jews were central to the "renascence [of the Jewish people] in the Holy Land." This collection of

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ For Smilansky quote, see, Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 58

essays serves as illustration of how the Zionists portrayed their movement to a broad English-speaking audience.¹⁹

A Dr. O. Thon discussed the “practical work” of the Zionists in Palestine and articulated that with the advent of political Zionism, “Palestine became the objective of a national political movement” and would serve as “a home for the Jewish people in a Jewish state.” Thon proposed that there was significant tactical debate between the Herzlian political Zionists, who favored diplomacy with Turkey and the European powers to gain legitimacy for the Zionist project, and the practical Zionists, who favored “practical work” in Palestine as the best means to achieve “systematically” their “national-political goals.” Thon, a proponent of practical Zionism, observed that in addition to securing the larger “national-political goal,” practical work in upbuilding Palestine was valuable “for propaganda purposes” in reaching “fresh adherents” because facts on the ground would appeal to the “masses” more than “articles and speeches.” This practical work included “the revival and development of the Hebrew language,” which was fundamental to Palestine becoming “a centre of specifically Jewish culture.” The practical work in Palestine, including the resurgence of Hebrew, contributed to the process of forming a national identity for current and prospective Jewish immigrants, who spoke different languages and came

¹⁹ Israel Cohen, ed, *Zionist Work in Palestine* (Westport, Conn: Hyperion Press, Reprint 1976), ix-xii Of course, at the same time, there were numerous books and pamphlets published in other European languages as well. For example, in 1908 Jacobus Kann, a member of the Zionist Executive, published *Eretz Israel*, which called for a Jewish majority and Jewish autonomy in Palestine, and sent copies of the French translation to the Ottoman government. Many Zionist leaders criticized this move as “a major political blunder. See, Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism Before World War I*, 93-94; Brenner, *The Iron Wall*, 40

Cohen was also author of a short work on *The Progress of Zionism*, which the Zionist Organization printed six times between 1929 and 1943. Directed toward a Western audience, *The Progress of Zionism* reiterated the major themes of the Zionist narrative (especially that Zionism benefitted the Arabs, that Jewish colonization did not lead to the dispossession of Arab peasants, and that the Arab population increased as a result of immigration to Palestine after the advantages of Jewish colonization became apparent), delegitimized Arab resistance, and clearly articulated that the Zionist goal was a Jewish state. Israel Cohen, *The Progress of Zionism 1st and 6th editions* (London: Zionist Organization, 1929 and 1943).

from different cultural backgrounds.²⁰ Importantly, like Herzl, Thon proposed that the Turkish government would “doubtless recognize the fact that wholesale Jewish colonization will be of benefit to the Ottoman Empire” and consequently encourage Jewish immigration to Palestine. While Thon emphasized the significance of practical work in Palestine, Menahem Ussishkin addressed the question of why the Zionists ultimately chose Palestine instead of other alternatives, including Uganda, Congo, Mesopotamia, Mexico, Australia, and Galveston, which could have provided “immediate relief” to the persecution and poverty of Eastern European Jews. For Ussishkin, only the Holy Land, for historical and religious reasons, offered a national solution to the problems of anti-Semitism and assimilation.²¹

²⁰ Dr. Lazar Grünhut, in an essay on “The Jewish Population in Palestine,” observed that “in speech, dress, and even sometimes in customs, one Jew [was] very seldom like another.” In his description of the various Jewish populations in Palestine, Grünhut was quite critical of Oriental and “Arabised” Jews and depicted them in similar fashion to common Western depictions of Arabs.

Zionists proposed that the establishment of a Hebrew University in Jerusalem would contribute to the development in Palestine and help facilitate the formation of a Jewish national culture. Zionists, such as Dr. Jacob Thon, proposed that Jewish schools in Palestine ought to only use Hebrew because “the national regeneration of our people in the land of our history can only begin with the revivifying of our national language.” For Thon, instruction in Hebrew was necessary to “overcome the confusion of languages under which Palestinian Jewry, collected from all parts of the world, [was] suffering” so as to “fuse into one homogenous people the children of Lithuania, Poland, Roumania, the Crimea and the Caucasus, Morocco, Algiers, Yemen, Mesopotamia, Persia, Asia Minor, etc.” Thon also acknowledged the importance of education to create a Jewish national identity and “implant” in Jewish students “an affection for the land.” While recognizing the value of religious education in fomenting a Jewish identity and combating assimilation, Thon proposed that a “purely national education” would foster “the love of the child for the land, for our people, its history, language and literature.”

Interestingly, Thon hypothesized that education raised students’ expectations and encouraged emigration. Lacking education and “with modest requirements,” the Arabs “find their maintenance in the country and never think of leaving it.” Similarly, “the autochthonous and Oriental Jews in general have little desire for emigration.”

Other essays emphasized the role of education and the dissemination of Hebrew as central to the Jewish nationalist movement. Dr. Heinrich Loewe, for example, argued that Jewish education (in Hebrew) was essential for the development of a nationalist consciousness. He also purported that the Jewish people must have “a territory in which we should be a majority in order to withdraw ourselves from the predominant foreign influence in so far as is necessary to prevent the extinction of our national characteristics.” David Yellin iterated that a revival of the Hebrew language was necessary for a “national renaissance.” For Zionists, Hebrew was the language of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the Bible, “which has become a light and a treasure to all civilized peoples.”

Ibid., 29-42, 54-56, 86-98, 104, 106-107, 143-156

²¹ Ibid., 13-24

Central to this colonization effort, of course, was the purchase of land in Palestine for Jewish settlers. Dr. M. I. Bodenheimer, the chairman of the Jewish National Fund, articulated that the purpose of the institution was “to acquire land for the Jewish people in Palestine, such land to remain the permanent possession of the nation as a whole.” While Bodenheimer focused on purchasing land for the Jewish people, Professor O. Warburg, a member of the Central Executive of the Zionist Organization, emphasized developing the land utilizing Western knowledge and agricultural methods in his essay on vegetation. Warburg discussed the climate and possibilities of agricultural production in Palestine and compared the Holy Land to California, suggesting that the former could be as productive and populous as the latter. Warburg maintained that Palestine, Trans-Jordan, and parts of Syria were thinly populated and open to Jewish settlement so long as the Jewish immigrants capitalized on scientific agriculture and irrigation. He predicted that “in spite of the difficulties that [stood] in the way,” the Zionists would establish Jewish settlements across the Jordan. Jewish settlement on both sides of the Jordan River would rationally develop the land and resources and transform a wilderness through Jewish labor on their ancient homeland. Echoing Warburg, Professor Boris Schatz stressed that Jewish settlers would transfer a “barren” Palestine and argued that developing cooperative Jewish society would offer an alternative to the deplorable conditions of workers in Western industrial countries. His vision, similar to Herzl’s utopia described in *Altneuland*, included a society that was devoid of class conflict and where workers were central to “the renaissance” of the Jewish people. This utopian society would serve as an ideal for the rest of the world, just as the ancient Hebrews’ civilization was fundamental to the development of Western civilization.²²

²² Ibid., 25, 43-53, 58-64

As part of their civilizing mission in Palestine, the Zionists emphasized their campaign to improve sanitation and hygiene and eradicate preventative diseases in Palestine. Such actions would benefit the Arab population and the Ottoman government. Moreover, the draining of swamps, eradication of malaria and other diseases, and the introduction of Western irrigation and agricultural methods would open land for Jewish settlement. There were some concerns that tropical regions in Palestine and Trans-Jordan were unsuitable for Europeans, but Zionists were confident that the introduction of civilization to Palestine would regenerate the land, improve the habits and living conditions of the Arab population, and eliminate many endemic diseases. For the Zionists, their return to their ancient homeland and the “re-establishment of culture” there would “render it healthy and salubrious and enable a vigorous Jewish race to flourish thereon.” In emphasizing that the Jewish settlers were improving the land and living conditions in Palestine, Zionists framed their movement as a civilizing mission bringing Western civilization, progress, and modernization to a backward people and an undeveloped land. Still, the Zionists acknowledged that the Jewish settlers in Palestine were creating exclusive social, political, and economic institutions separate from the “other elements of the population,” which were inferior to the Jews.²³

Publicly, the Zionists would continue to argue that Jewish colonization would not dispossess the Arabs and would in fact bring them the benefits of modernization and development. Privately, the Zionists recognized that their movement was based on dispossession of the Arab peasants. Arthur Ruppin would write: “Land is the most necessary thing for establishing roots in Palestine. Since there are hardly any more arable unsettled lands...we are bound in each case...to remove the peasants who cultivated the land.” Zionists also repeatedly argued that they would not exploit native labor as was the norm in colonial ventures, but as Nathan Weinstock observes, “the Zionist movement intended to *replace* the Palestinian population rather than to exploit it according to the classical colonial pattern.” Zionism was based on Jewish labor on Jewish land, which meant the expropriation and removal of the Palestinian Arabs living on the land. See, Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 61; Nathan Weinstock, “The Impact of Zionist Colonization on Palestinian Arab Society before 1948,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 2, No 2 (Winter 1973), 49-63.

²³ *Ibid.*, 65-85, 154-155. As Morris observes, Ben-Gurion, a member of the second aliyah, was a prominent spokesperson for the “complete separation of Arab and Jewish societies and economies.” Even the Bilu pioneers endeavored to cultivate the land without the aid of Arab labor. As one member of the Arab elite

The collection of essays proposed that Zionism meant the “regeneration of the Jewish people and the Jewish land.” The movement illustrated the historical connection of the Jews to their ancient homeland. Dr. M. Glücksohn, in an essay on the history of Jewish colonization in Palestine, observed that prior to the pogroms in Russia, Jewish intellectuals proffered a return to Palestine as necessary for the development of an independent Jewish nation-state based on “the agricultural colonization” of the Holy Land. Even before the emergence of Herzl as the leader of the Zionist movement, proponents of the Jewish colonization of Palestine sought Turkish consent, perhaps foreshadowing the Zionist tactic of working to gain legitimacy from state and international actors instead of dealing with the Arabs in Palestine. As Chissin and Ah’am observed, the early Jewish colonization movement suffered from lack of central coordination and organization; the development of the World Zionist Organization and institutions such as the Jewish National Fund addressed the weaknesses of the first Zionist societies.²⁴

The final essay in the collection, Dr. Elias Auerbach’s “The Jewish Outlook in Palestine” was the only one to address the “Arab problem” in Palestine, which in and of itself is instructive about how the Zionists perceived the Arab obstacle to their movement. Auerbach acknowledged that Palestine was “not an empty land” for “it has a native, non-Jewish population of 600,000 souls.” Auerbach warned that this population, which was “growing steadily stronger,” “becoming civilized,” and “beginning to work according to European methods,” could “forestall us in the occupation of Palestine.” For Auerbach,

stated: “We see Jews excluding themselves completely from Arabs in language, school, commerce, customs, their entire economic life,” which meant that the Arabs saw the Jewish settlers as foreign invaders. Zionists recognized this as well. Moshe Shertok, who would serve as Israel’s first foreign minister, wrote in 1914: “We have forgotten that we have not come to an empty land to inherit it, but we have come to conquer a country from a people inhabiting it, that governs it by virtue of its language and savage culture.”

See, Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 50-52, 91

²⁴ Ibid., 157-171

Palestine was “an Arabic land,” and if the Jewish people were “to make it a Jewish land, the Jews must become the principal element in the population.” To elaborate his point, Auerbach relayed that Haifa, with “20,000 non-Jews” and “3000 Jews,” was an Arabic town and would only become a Jewish town “when there [were] 30,000 Jews against 20,000 non-Jews.” Moreover, Jews owned very little of the land in Palestine, and Auerbach insisted that “Palestine will only be a Jewish land when the greater portion of the soil is Jewish.” Despite these and other obstacles to the Zionist movement, Auerbach stated that the Jewish colonies were already “on a far higher level than their Arab surroundings” and that the Arabs themselves “were in a very low stage of economic development and...content, for the most part, with a bare minimum of existence, without aspiring to anything higher.” Yet, Auerbach also noted that fully three-fifths of the Jewish population in Palestine, which he estimated at 100,000, was dependent upon the charity of other Jews for their survival and that the Sephardic Jews, who resembled the Arab population, were suspicious of Zionism and its immigrant European Jewish adherents. Dealing with these anti-Zionist and non-Zionist Jewish elements and incorporating them into the Zionist society, Auerbach warned, would be a gradual process. For Auerbach, the solution to the problem of an Arab majority was Jewish colonization of the land, and he proposed that Jewish capital and Zionist institutions would subsidize the Jewish settlement and “furnish the landless agricultural labourer with a dwelling, the protection of civilized society, and finally land as well.” Over time, large-scale Jewish immigration and the facilitation of Jewish labor on Jewish land would lead to a Jewish majority in Palestine. While Auerbach intimated that there would be a “conflict of the nationalities” in Palestine, he asserted that presently “dreams of an independent Jewish state” were subordinate to the practical work of facilitating Jewish immigration and

colonization and warned against Jewish assimilation into Arabic culture, even though the Zionists were intent on forming separate and exclusive institutions and communities from the start. Commenting on the development of Arab nationalism, Auerbach was even confident that the Ottoman government would “support...the creation of a Jewish culture...as a counterpoise to Arabic nationalism.” Although portraying the Palestinian Arabs as an obstacle to Jewish colonization and recognizing the evolution of Arab nationalism, Auerbach offered no moral qualms about replacing an Arab Palestine with a Jewish one and did not discuss any thoughts on what a Jewish Palestine meant for the Arab population, what would happen to Arabs who lost their land, and how the Zionists would react if the Arabs resisted the Zionist project of transforming an Arab land into a Jewish territory. Indeed, the work as a whole offered Zionism as a Jewish nationalist movement and civilizing force, focused on the benefits of Jewish colonization for the land and people in Palestine, and largely ignored important questions about the morality of a project intent on transforming an Arab land into a Jewish one and even creating a Jewish state.²⁵

In 1915, Louis Brandeis gave a speech entitled “The Jewish Problem: How to Solve It” to a council of Reformed Rabbis in the United States, which was later published as a short pamphlet. Declaring that “the suffering of the Jews due to injustices continuing throughout nearly twenty centuries is the greatest tragedy in history,” Brandeis emphasized that the Great War provided an opportunity for the world to solve the “Jewish problem” and the Jewish people to realize justice and liberty. Adopting the prevalent racial and ethno-nationalist ideologies and observing that the ascent of liberalism did not eradicate anti-Semitism, Brandeis determined that the solution to the “Jewish problem” was the international recognition that the Jewish race constituted a nation and had the right to

²⁵ Ibid., 172-181

establish a Jewish state in Palestine based upon the American principles of liberty and democracy.²⁶ The future Supreme Court justice stressed that the Jewish nation along with the Greeks “stand preeminent as contributors” to Western civilization. He sought to make the connection between the Jewish and American principles explicit:

The Jews gave to the world its three greatest religions, reverence for law, and the highest conceptions of morality. Our teaching of brotherhood and righteousness has, under the name of democracy and social justice, become the twentieth century striving of America and of western Europe. Our conception of law is embodied in the American constitutions which proclaim this to be a “government of laws and not of men.” And for the triumph of our other great teaching—the doctrine of peace, this cruel war is paving the way.”

Given the “Jewish problem” in the West, the contribution of the Jewish people to Western civilization, and Biblical history, Brandeis echoed the Zionist argument that “Zionism seeks to establish in Palestine...a legally secured home, where [Jewish immigrants and their descendents] may live together and lead a Jewish life; where they may expect ultimately to constitute a majority of the population, and may look forward to what we should call home rule.” In addition, the idealistic “Jewish Pilgrim Fathers” were conquering and developing a misused “and apparently sterile” wilderness and transforming it into “a land ‘flowing with milk and honey.’” These Jewish pioneers were bringing Western development, technology, education, civilization, and sanitation to this previously desolate and backward territory.²⁷

Importantly, Brandeis addressed the concern about dual-loyalty (an issue during the war for German and other hyphenated Americans). He declared: “Let no American imagine that Zionism is inconsistent with Patriotism.” Furthermore, Brandeis equated being a good

²⁶ In his discussion of nation-states, Brandeis revealingly offered that the American nation “comprises nearly all the white nationalities.” Such an admission illustrated the limits of American democracy, liberty, and citizenship even though Brandeis, Wilson and many white Americans considered American democracy as an example for the world. Brandeis also asserted that “probably no important European race is as pure” as the Jewish race.

²⁷ Louis Brandeis, *The Jewish Problem: How to Solve It* (New York: The Zionist Essays Publication Committee, 1915)

American with supporting Zionism when he insisted that “every American Jew who aids in advancing the Jewish settlement in Palestine, though he feels that neither he nor his descendents will ever live there, will like-wise be a better man and a better American for doing so.” In fact, Brandeis went further and proclaimed that “loyalty to America demands that each American Jew become a Zionist,” implying that opposition to Zionism was anti-American.²⁸ He later elaborated that “a conflict between American interests and ambitions and Jewish aims is not conceivable,” suggesting congruence between the Zionist goal of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine and American interests in the Near East (a congruence that the State Department challenged during this period). Overall, Brandeis clearly linked the Zionist cause with American history and principles and provided a foundation for future arguments that Israel protects American interests and represents American values.²⁹

In addition to presenting the Zionist case to the U.S. government and broader American public, American Zionists recognized the importance of inspiring American Jewish youths. In 1917, for example, Young Judea, a Zionist organization created to educate young American Jews about the Jewish problem and the Zionist solution, published *A Zionist Primer* to foment enthusiasm for the Zionist project, which was characterized as the rebuilding of a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine “based on justice and righteousness.” The nine essays in the primer emphasized the Biblical and historical rights of the Jewish people to Palestine, favorably compared Jewish pioneers to the Pilgrims, and determined that Zionism was congruent with American democratic principles and the fulfillment of Jewish religious beliefs. Jessie Sampter, in the introductory essay “What Our History Means,” developed the themes that Jews were the chosen people who had eternal claim to Eretz-Israel, whose

²⁸ Brandeis concluded with the statement that American Jews needed to declare themselves for Zionism “or prove [themselves], wittingly or unwittingly, of the few who are against their own people.” Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

boundaries extended into Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Arabia, and that the Jewish people had embodied the principles of democracy and progress since the time of Moses, neatly making the connection between American and Jewish values and intimating the large role of American Jews and the United States in the fulfillment of Zionism. Ignoring the Palestinian Arabs (a constant theme throughout the primer), Sampter reiterated Zionist arguments that Jewish settlers, seeking “a publically, legally assured home” would transform a barren wasteland into a blooming and prosperous country and a Jewish Palestine would benefit the world and serve as “a gateway of peace between Europe and Asia.”³⁰ D. de Sola Pool, in his essay “The Jewish Problem,” argued that the solution to the Jewish problem was the “re-creation” of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, ignoring that such colonization could create quite a conflict with the indigenous population, and that support for Zionism was congruent with loyalty to the United States, an obvious rebuttal to claims that Jewish support for a Jewish state would open Jews to charges of dual loyalty.

In a short hagiography about Theodor Herzl, Israel Goldberg described the Basle Congress in 1897 as “perhaps the most significant event in all the post-Biblical history of the Jewish people” and emphasized that Herzl and the Zionists pursued international legal recognition for a Jewish state. Bernard Rosenblatt, an important American spokesperson for

³⁰ John Ruedy observes that “the picture often conveyed in Zionist apologetics of a sparsely settled, largely desert-like land abused or unused by the native population is seriously overdrawn.” For example, Herbert Samuel described the Plain of Esdraelon as a desert wasteland prior to Jewish settlement. In describing Palestine before WWI as backward, underpopulated, uncivilized, “poor and neglected,” the Peel Commission report described Esdraelon as “for the most part...marshy and malarious.” Jewish colonists transformed this “swampy and thinly-peopled area into healthy and highly cultivated farm-land, at the cost of much suffering and mortality from malaria.” In the late 1880s, however, Lawrence Oliphant characterized the same region as “a huge green lake of waving wheat, with its village-crowned mounds rising from it like islands; and its presents one of the most striking pictures of luxuriant fertility, which it is possible to conceive.” Mark Twain, in *The Innocents Abroad*, described the plain of Esdraelon as “checkered with fields like a chess-board, and full as smooth and level, seemingly; dotted about its borders with white, compact villages, and faintly penciled, far and near, with curving lines of roads and trails. When it is robed in the fresh verdure of spring, it must form a charming picture, even by itself.” Ruedy, “Dynamics of Land Alienation,” in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 126 n.20; Palestine Royal Commission Report, CMD 5479 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1937), 6, 47; Twain, *Innocents Abroad*, 386.

the Zionist movement, reiterated the democratic nature of the Zionist movement, introduced his audience to the Jewish National Fund, an institution whose mandate was to purchase land in Palestine for the Jewish people for time-immemorial, and celebrated the accomplishments of Jewish settlers in Palestine, without mentioning the indigenous population, in his essay on “The Zionist Organization.” Louis Lipsky, an important official in the Zionist Organization of America, discussed the debate between political Zionists, those seeking international legitimacy for Jewish colonization, and practical Zionists, those focused on establishing ‘facts on the ground,’ as indicative of the Zionist commitment to democratic principles.³¹

Margaret Glück, in an essay on “What Our Pioneers Have Created,” favorably compared the Jewish settlers to the Pilgrims, whom she described as

that valiant group of men and women who, being denied the freedom to worship God according to their conscience, left their native land and set sail for the bleak and inhospitable shores of an unknown country—America. There they willingly accepted hardships and privations of every nature in order to be free to live true to their ideals. The heroism, self-sacrifice and persistency of these pioneers in their loyalty to an ideal call forth our highest respect and admiration.

³¹ Sundel Doniger, *A Zionist Primer: Essays by Various Writers* (New York: Young Judea, 1917). There are only a few mentions throughout *A Zionist Primer* of other people living in Palestine. A small table accompanying a map of Jewish colonies in Palestine claimed that there were over 600,000 people in Palestine in 1917, including 90,000 Jews, over 80% of whom lived in urban areas. Ittamar Ben-Avi suggested that 150,000 Hebrews were living in Palestine. According to Janet Abu-Lughod, there were 689, 272 people in Palestine in 1914. At most, the Jewish population at this time was 60,000, the estimate of the Zionist Arthur Ruppin, who had an interest in overestimating the number of Jews. Ruppin also estimated that over 30,000 Jews were deported from Palestine during the war, meaning that in 1917, the Jewish population was significantly lower than the 90,000 given in *A Zionist Primer*. According to the British census of 1922, which Abu-Lughod determined significantly undercounted the population, there were over 757,000 people in Palestine, including under 84,000 Jews. To illustrate the demographic transformation in Palestine within a relatively short period, David McDowall observes:

In 1918 Christian and Muslim Arabs still formed over 90 per cent of the population of Palestine. Within half a century they were not only a minority in their own land, but also bereft of political power or authority in any part of Palestine, and in the surrounding lands to which over half of them were condemned to live as refugees.

See, Janet Abu-Lughod, “The Demographic Transformation in Palestine,” in Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, ed., *Transformation of Palestine*, 141-142; David McDowall, *The Palestinians: The Road to Nationhood* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1994), 1

Such a characterization of the Pilgrims ignored their intolerance and their policy of extermination of the Native Americans.³² Building upon the American mythology that the Puritans conquered a wilderness to build a city on the hill to enlighten humankind and that the Native Americans did not develop or utilize the land properly, Glück determined that Jewish pioneers were faced with rebuilding a Palestine that “had been sorely neglected during the long absence of the Jews,” which meant that “large sections of it had become waste swamp land.” Once again iterating that the Zionists would gain Palestine “not by war, but through the purchase of political concessions” and international recognition and that the land would become “the property of the entire Jewish people forever,” Glück asserted that “the colonists have been fortunate in not arousing much antagonism from the native Turks and Arabs in Palestine. The only people who have molested them in any way are the Bedouins, a semi-barbaric tribe.” Such a statement was central to the Zionist narrative that Jewish colonization benefited the indigenous population of Palestine and any resistance was consequently the irrational response of savage people or the work of Arab or European instigators.

In his essay on the land of Eretz-Israel, Ittamar Ben-Avi declared that Israel would be “one and a half times the size of Germany, or equal to about Spain and France put together, certainly larger than both Italy and England.” Mentioning Samson, who “slew thousands of Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass,” Ben-Avi confidently proclaimed that the Jewish pioneers would conquer the “‘desert,’ for fertile land was denied them by the natives,” and transform it into “a paradise” as part of the project to “re-conquer” Eretz-Israel for the Hebrews. The casual mention of Samson suggested that the Zionists would utilize force if necessary to remove the indigenous population from this Eretz-Israel. Ben-Avi’s brief

³² See, for instance, Alfred Cave, *The Pequot War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996)

survey of the land illustrated that Biblical history was still evident in the landscape, which served as proof that the land belonged to the Jewish people, who had the historic right to colonize Eretz-Israel, exploit its resources, and serve as a symbol to humankind at the strategic point “between progressive Europe, populous Asia and dusky Africa.” Such ideas were disseminated to illustrate that the Zionist project was complementary with Judaism and American citizenship and democracy. The primer also introduced the Zionist theme that the Palestinian Arabs were essentially a nonentity, who had no role in any negotiations or decision-making over the future of Palestine. As many of the essays iterated, the Zionists focused on gaining support and international legitimacy from the major powers, illustrating that their project was based upon the predominant ideologies that justified imperialism and colonialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³³

Although there was some internal debate regarding Arab opposition to Jewish colonization and some consideration that Zionism negatively affected the indigenous population, Zionists, who clearly understood their goal as establishing a Jewish state, publicly portrayed their movement as a civilizing mission in their effort to gain Western support and Jewish adherents. Importantly, Jewish and non-Jewish proponents of a Jewish state in Palestine argued such a state would serve the interests of Western civilization and the imperial power that supported Jewish colonization in this important geostrategic region. The Great War provided an opportunity for the Zionists to press their claim to Palestine. During the war, British Zionists and the British government drafted a policy articulating British support for Zionism. Even though the British made irreconcilable pledges to the Arabs, the

³³ Ben-Avi claimed that the Jewish colonizers were transforming Beersheba. At the time of partition, however, Jews in the Negev, which was to be part of the Jewish state, only represented about one percent of the population in the region. See, Walid Khalidi, “Revisiting the UNGA Partition Resolution,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 27, No 1 (Autumn 1997), 5-21.

Zionists, and the French during the war in pursuit of their imperial aims, Zionists would continually refer to the Balfour Declaration as a concrete and binding British commitment to the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish state. While such a commitment ignored the wishes of the Arab majority of Palestine, President Woodrow Wilson would articulate his support for the Balfour Declaration and the mandate system that furthered the imperial interests of the victorious powers at the expense of Wilsonian ideas and the rights and interests of the colonized peoples who took Wilson's rhetoric to heart.

CHAPTER 3: THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

The Great War provided an opportunity for world Zionists to press their claim for Palestine and American Zionists to increase their membership in American Zionist organizations and role in the global movement, especially given some of the organizational difficulties of European Zionists, foreshadowing the centrality of the United States to Zionism and Israel.¹ A Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs formed in New York soon after war broke out in Europe. Future Supreme Court Justices Louis Brandeis and Felix Frankfurter served on the executive committee along with Justice Julian Mack, Jacob DeHaas, and Rabbi Stephen Wise. The Zionist leadership in the U.S. developed a strong relationship with the American government during the war, and, importantly, U.S. diplomats in the Ottoman Empire “became the chief protector of the majority of Jews [in Ottoman territory] who were subjects of Russia, France and Britain” once the war began given U.S. neutrality in the early stages of the conflict and the absence of a U.S. declaration of war against the Ottomans once the U.S. entered the fray in 1917. Importantly, the U.S. never declared war against the Ottoman Empire so as to protect the lives and property of American missionaries (and British, French, Russian, and Italian citizens) in Ottoman territory. Consequently, the Wilson administration would remain somewhat circumspect

¹ Brenner argues that at the beginning of the war, “the immense majority of the world’s Jews were either pro-German or were socialists opposed to both the Entente and the Central Powers.” Many Russian Jews, whether immigrants to Western Europe and the United States or still living in Russia, opposed the war effort and even supported the Germans due to Russian persecution of Jews. Brenner offers that within the WZO, only Weizmann and Sokolow supported the Allied cause. Jabotinsky, intent on establishing a Jewish Legion to fight against the Ottomans, sought collaboration with the Russian government responsible for pogroms and anti-Semitism. For Jabotinsky, anti-Semitism was an insoluble problem and warranted the creation of a Jewish state. The disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of a Jewish state were more important than the conditions of Jews in Russia and Eastern Europe. While Jabotinsky understood a Jewish Legion fighting for the British as a means to gain Palestine, most of the Jewish population in Britain opposed joining such a legion and fight for British imperialism. Even after the Bolsheviks overthrew Czar Nicholas, 20,000 Jews opposed conscription into Jabotinsky’s force and emigrated to revolutionary Russia. Brenner, *The Iron Wall*, 44-49

when Zionists pressured the U.S. government for public proclamations supporting the Balfour Declaration and the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine.²

In 1916, the Zionist leadership in Britain published a collection of essays to explain the origins and goals of the movement to an English-speaking audience. The collection, under the title *Zionism and the Jewish Future*, helped garner popular and political support for the Zionist movement during the negotiations with the British government that resulted in the Balfour Declaration and laid the foundation for Zionism demands at the postwar peace conference.³ The essays, which covered Jewish and Zionist history, the problem of anti-

² By 1919, membership in American Zionist organizations had increased tenfold. See Bustami, "American Foreign Policy," Chapter 2, especially, 107-113, 116, 123. *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1915, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1915Supp>, 40-41; "Zionists Gather for Big Convention," *New York Times*, 26 June 1915, 6; "Asks America to Lead Zionists," *New York Times*, 28 June 1915, 5; "Sees Jews Enslaved by German Victory," *New York Times*, 1 April 1918, 8.

American Zionists capitalized on the war to lobby the U.S. government. For example, in November 1914, Edmund Eliah Frank, "a descendent of the house of David," urged the United States to help restore the Jewish people to their ancient homeland. If the U.S. could not convince the Turks to allow for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, then the American government should ensure a Jewish national home at the peace conference following the war. Frank asserted that it was the God-given mission of the U.S. to restore Palestine to the Jews and help reestablish Jerusalem as a center of peace and civilization. In March 1918, Frank again wrote Lansing and urged the U.S. to support British control over Palestine and Zionism. Frank argued that a Jewish state would protect Egypt from Turkey and would prevent the consolidation of an Arab state that "might become a real danger to the future peace of the world." RDS 876n.01/ ½ (16 November 1914); RDS 867n.01/15 ½ (25 March 1918)

Other Jewish Americans, however, countered the imperialism inherent in Zionist ideology. Mayer Sulzberger, a judge in Philadelphia, opposed Zionism for its anti-democratic philosophy:

Democracy means that those who live in a country shall select their rulers and shall preserve their powers. Given these principles a Convention of Zionists looking to the government of people who are in Palestine would be in contravention of the plainest principle of democracy. It can have no practical meaning unless its intent is to overslaugh the people who are in Palestine and to deprive them of the right of self-government by substituting the will of persons outside, who may or may not ever see Palestine.

Quoted in Stevens, "Zionism as Western Imperialism," in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 40-41

³ H. Sacher, ed., *Zionism and the Jewish Future* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916). While Ben-Gurion was in the United States attempting to raise a volunteer force to fight for the Turks, he developed a proposal for Zionists to appeal to the peace conference to support a "Jewish homeland" in Palestine. He meant a Jewish state with a Jewish majority within a generation, but did not want to antagonize the Ottomans. Importantly, Ben-Gurion maintained that Zionism was not a threat to the Arabs and in fact would benefit them. His arguments that Palestine was relatively empty and largely an uncultivated and undeveloped wilderness was congruent with the arguments presented in *Zionism and the Jewish Future*. Again, Ben-Gurion's main public justification for Zionism was that the Arabs did not develop the land properly and that Jewish settlers would, which would incidentally benefit the indigenous population. (This echoed the sentiment of Richard Harding Davis, the writer and war correspondent, who wrote in 1896 that "there is no more interesting question of the present day than that of what is to be done with the world's land which is lying unimproved, whether it shall go

Semitism, Judaism as a national religion, the revival of Hebrew, and the development of Palestine, presented the Zionist case for a Jewish state as the solution to the Jewish problem within the context of the prevailing nationalist and civilizing mission ideologies. Weizmann, in an introduction to *Zionism and the Jewish Future*, proposed that the Jewish nation had persisted despite two millennia of dispersion and varying degrees of persecution primarily because of the millennial idea of Jewish restoration that was “at the root of the Jewish attitude to life.” Weizmann warned of the dangers of both assimilation and anti-Semitism and proposed that the restoration of the Jewish people to Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish state would preserve the Jewish nation and solve the problem of “the homelessness of the Jewish people.” Weizmann acknowledged that the Jewish home in Palestine could not accommodate all the Jewish people--that emancipated Jews in the West would remain in “the countries of their adoption” and that “the political and economic problems of the Jews in Eastern Europe must be settled, for the great mass of them, in the countries where they live.”

to the great power that is willing to turn it to account, or remain with its original owner, who fails to understand its value.” For Davis, writing specifically about Central Americans, the conclusion was clear: “The Central Americans are like a gang of semi-barbarians in a beautifully furnished house, of which they can understand neither its possibilities of comfort nor its use.” This certainly was not a new idea. Andrew Jackson, in pursuing the removal of Native Americans to lands west of the Mississippi, dismissed Native American claims to “tracts of the country on which they have neither dwelt nor made improvement, merely because they have seen them from the mountain or passed them in the chase.”) As Teveth writes, “Ben-Gurion...regarded the freedom to settle in empty spaces as a natural and moral right,” an argument common to settler colonialism. (Theodore Roosevelt, the archetypal American imperialist, had written in the opening pages of *The Winning of the West*, that “During the past three centuries, the spread of the English-speaking peoples over the world’s waste spaces has been not only the most striking feature in the world’s history, but also the event of all others most far-reaching in its effects and its importance.”) The logic of Ben-Gurion’s and Roosevelt’s ideology was built on the premise that the inhabitants of the “wasted spaces” lacked a humanity and corresponding human rights that the West was bound to respect. A concomitant of Ben-Gurion’s argument was that the Palestinian Arabs had no right to govern Palestine or limit Jewish immigration and settlement, just as the imperialist ideology meant that the colonized peoples had no right to govern themselves or resist imperial domination. The future prime minister of Israel also argued during WWI that the plight of the Jewish people determined that they deserved their own homeland. He privately predicted that no matter the outcome of the war and the resulting peace conference there would be an armed struggle between the Palestinian Arabs and the Jews in Palestine, even though his belief that the Jews and Arab peasants “were of the same blood” meant, in his mind, that the fellah would not exhibit a great deal of hostility toward the Jewish settlers. See, Teveth, *Ben-Gurion and the Palestinians*, Chs 2, 3. For Roosevelt and Davis quotes and commentary on the imperialist ideology, see Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues*, 109-112; For Jackson quote, see, Michael Morris, “Georgia and the Conversation over Indian Removal,” *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* Vol XCI, No 4 (Winter, 2007), 409.

Zionism, Weizmann intimated, was more about creating a Jewish sovereign state in Palestine, which would serve as “the national centre” for the Jewish people, than in addressing the problems confronting European Jewry. For Weizmann, Zionism, “the ideal of the return to the land of Palestine...as the home of the Jewish people,” represented the aspirations of the Jewish nation, which “has stood from time immemorial for the loftiest of spiritual ideals. Additionally, the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish nation would help solve “the age-long problem of East and West” because the Jewish people could act a mediator between the two and the transmitter of Western civilization and values to the Oriental world. Anticipating the establishment of a “new order” following the war, Weizmann argued that the Zionist demand for the establishment of a Jewish nation in Palestine was “based on right and justice alone.”⁴

Professor Richard Gottheil also emphasized that Jewish nationalism was fundamental to Judaism and Jewish history in his essay on “The History of Zionism.” In explaining the development of the movement for the reconstitution of a Jewish state in Palestine in the nineteenth century, Gottheil explained how non-Jewish Europeans periodically articulated that the “restitution of Palestine to the Jews” would further the strategic interests of their respective empires and how Jewish thinkers, such as Perez Smolenskin and Moses Hess,

⁴ Weizmann, “Introduction: Zionism and the Jewish Problem,” in H. Sacher, ed., *Zionism and the Jewish Future*, 1-11

A common theme throughout the essays was that Jewish nationalism had continued to exist throughout the centuries despite the lack of a national territory. In his essay on “The New Jew,” Nahum Sokolow iterated this theme and argued that the “new Jew” would regenerate himself and the land through agricultural labor in Palestine. While the overwhelming majority of Jewish immigrants settled in urban areas in Palestine, the Zionist ideology was predicated on Jewish labor on the land and Sokolow’s depiction of the “new Jew” promoted agriculture and “upbuilding” of the land as central to the success of Jewish colonization. Sokolow also addressed the opposition of some religious Jews to political Zionism by asserting that Zionism and Judaism were compatible. See, Nahum Sokolow, “The New Jew: A Sketch,” in Sacher, ed., *Zionism and the Jewish Future*, 214-234.

Weizmann wrote in his autobiography that during the war, the Zionists worked assiduously to shape “public opinion in our favor.” In 1916, Zionists helped found the British Palestine Committee, “consisting largely of non-Jews,” which propagated the idea that a Jewish Palestine would benefit British interests. See, Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 184

helped craft the ideological foundations for Zionism and the “upbuilding” of Palestine through Jewish colonization. In his essay on “Cultural Work in Palestine,” Dr. Selig Brodetsky emphasized that a cultural and spiritual revival of Jewish life in Palestine was central to the development of Jewish nationalism and quite necessary to check the danger of assimilation in the West. Characterizing the Jewish colonization in Palestine as an idealistic endeavor unique among settler movements, Brodetsky relayed how education and the propagation and modernization of the Hebrew language facilitated the spread of Jewish culture so central to the creation and maintenance of Jewish nationalism. For Brodetsky, a cultural and spiritual revival was instrumental to the maintenance of a Jewish identity and consequently was the prime motive of the idealistic Zionist project.⁵

Samuel Tolkowsky, in his essay on “The Jews and Economic Development in Palestine,” focused on how the Jewish colonists were developing the land through modern agricultural methods. His fundamental point was that the Jewish pioneers, representing the West, utilized the land and resources of Palestine more effectively and efficiently than the Arab population, which served as justification for Jewish colonization. Tolkowsky emphasized that very little land in Palestine, including “immense territories, almost uninhabited” east of the Jordan River, was under cultivation and that the territory supported an exponentially larger population during the Roman occupation and the early Christian era than it did at present and even exported food throughout the Roman empire. For Tolkowsky, all of Palestine was “remarkably fertile for one who takes trouble to work it,” suggesting that the barrenness of the land was due more to the characteristics of the Arabs and their Oriental society rather than the resources and conditions of Palestine. The immigration of an

⁵ Richard Gottheil, “History of Zionism,” and Selig Brodetsky, “Cultural Work in Palestine,” in H. Sacher, ed., *Zionism and the Jewish Future*, 117-137, 171-189

idealistic, “industrious and intelligent population,” therefore, would allow for the proper development of Palestine; so long as the Jewish settlers could “upbuild” Palestine “in peace,” the movement would “succeed in restoring to Palestine its old prosperity, and even more.” Tolkowsky argued that contrary to Arab fears, large-scale Jewish colonization would benefit the Arab population, especially through employment on Jewish plantations, a statement which overlooked that the concept of Jewish labor on Jewish land was central to the Zionist ideology.⁶

In “The Future of Palestine,” Norman Bentwich, who would serve as the first (and somewhat controversial) Attorney General for Mandatory Palestine, echoed the ideas that Palestine was severely underpopulated, that over ninety percent of the land was not fully cultivated, and that Jewish immigrants would develop the land and resources of Palestine to their fullest potential. For Bentwich, “Jewish colonization [ought to] extend to the whole territory which was contained in the Promise,” meaning the area from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River and from Lebanon to the Nile River, because “this Greater Palestine cries for a population to redeem it from the neglect and decay of centuries.” While acknowledging an Arab presence in Palestine, Bentwich predicted that the Arab population would remain small (meaning that there was plenty of room to establish a Jewish majority) and that Jewish colonization would “restore [Palestine] to its former proud place in the annals of civilization” and bring the indigenous population the benefits of civilization, including modernization and Western gender norms. Bentwich proposed that these idealistic Jewish pioneers were similar to the Puritans, illustrating a common theme in Zionist tracts. Also

⁶ Samuel Tolkowsky, “The Jews and the Economic Development of Palestine,” in *Ibid.*, 138-170. Ben-Gurion repeatedly argued that Jewish development of the land justified the Zionist movement more than any historical claims to the land. For Ben-Gurion, much of Palestine was uninhabited and undeveloped. Jewish settlers would gain the land through agricultural labor. See, Teveth, *Ben-Gurion and the Palestinian Arabs* for development of this idea.

echoing common Zionist refrains, Bentwich stated that the Jewish settlers would serve as the bridge between East and West and interpret the Oriental mind for Westerners who had strong economic, political, and geostrategic interests in the region. Similar to the other authors in *Zionism and the Jewish Future*, Bentwich characterized Zionism as an idealistic movement and predicted that a Jewish Palestine would mean “the establishment of [a] social order on the principles of justice and peace” that would serve as an example for humankind. Over, in *Zionism and the Jewish Future*, Zionism was presented as the embodiment of Allied and Wilsonian aims for a new world order following the cataclysmic war.⁷

There has been significant interest in the background to the Balfour Declaration. As Maryanne Rhett notes, traditional explanations for the Balfour Declaration emphasize either concrete British wartime exigencies and British strategic interests⁸ or more abstract notions

⁷ Norman Bentwich, “The Future of Palestine,” in *Ibid.*, 197-209
Ben-Gurion wrote in an article published in New York after the announcement of the Balfour Declaration that the future Jewish state should include territory in present-day Lebanon (the Litani River), Syria, Jordan, and Egypt so as to include land, but not large non-Jewish populations. See, Teveth, *Ben-Gurion and the Palestinians*, 33-35

⁸ There are a few variations of the argument that the Balfour Declaration was of military necessity and countered German efforts to gain Jewish support. With French mutinies and the threat that revolutionary Russia would leave the war, the British and the Zionists, in the words of Mayer, “were agreed that Russian Zionists might strengthen the hand of the non-Bolshevik left...that opposed a separate peace with Germany and favored continuing the war...” The French government had issued their own statement supporting a Jewish Palestine almost half a year before the British. The British saw their own declaration as checking French interests in the region and establishing a justification for a strong British presence in the region following the anticipated Allied victory. By the time that the Declaration was announced, the first U.S. troops were already on the front and would prove decisive in the Allied victory, but both the British and the French believed that a pro-Zionist declaration would convince American Jews to support the American entry into the war and keep the Russians in the war. In some respects, the British and French support for Zionism illustrates the stereotypes about Jewish power—Sokolow promised the French that the Zionists would rally Russian Jews to continue fighting on the Allied side--and overestimates Jewish support for the Zionist movement. David Lloyd George would later write “that it was vital we should have the sympathies of the Jewish community...They were helpful in American and in Russia, which at the moment was just walking out and leaving us alone.” Zionist British politician and diplomat Herbert Samuel, who would serve as the British High Commissioner in Palestine, argued that the “establishment of a large Jewish population [in Palestine], preferably under British protection,” would prevent any future German threat to Egypt and the Suez Canal. C. G. Montefiore, president of the Anglo-Jewish Association, argued instead that since many of the most influential Zionists were German and Austrian, a Jewish Palestine would be open to German machinations. After the announcement of the Balfour Declaration, the Germans and Turks continued to try to gain Zionist support, but American intelligence observed that “the most important Jewish communities in the world live under the Allied governments” and that the success of the Zionist movement will depend on these Jewish populations and government. The Balfour

about the “moral obligation felt by some influential politicians to the world’s Jewry.” The first interpretation often focuses on the conditions of the Allied war effort given the Russian revolution and the French mutinies and how a European Jewish state in Palestine would benefit British imperial interests and fit within the ideology of Western imperialism as civilizing mission since the civilized Jews would bring progress and civilization to the backward Arabs. Zionists constantly presented this argument. For example, Weizmann⁹ wrote in 1914:

We can reasonably say that should Palestine fall within the British sphere of influence and should Britain encourage Jewish settlement there, as a British dependency, we could have in twenty to thirty years a million Jews out there, perhaps more; they would develop the country, bring back civilization to it and form a very effective guard for the Suez Canal.

Declaration and the Russian Revolution made the British the central focus of the Zionist movement. Of course, the Ottoman entry into the war provided Britain with an opportunity to conquer Palestine and other strategic areas within the Ottoman Empire and Zionism would be used as a means to protect British geostrategic and economic interests. Zionists, on the other hand, recognized the importance of an imperialist power to help promote a Jewish state. Brenner concludes, “the Balfour Declaration and the Legion gained [the British] 5,000 troops, nothing more—and the enmity of the Arab world.”

RDS 867n.01/15 (21 February 1918); The National Archives of the UK, CAB/24/4, War Cabinet, “Zionist Movement,” 17 October 1917; Mayer, *Ploughshares into Swords*, 99. For an argument on the historical contingencies that led to the Balfour Declaration, see William H. Matthew, “War-Time Contingency and the Balfour Declaration of 1917: An Improbable Regression,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 40, No 2 (Winter 2011), 26-42; Brenner, 49-50; Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 74-75. See also Pamela Ann Smith’s discussion of the Balfour Declaration in Smith, *Palestine and the Palestinians*, 40ff. Importantly, Smith observes that the Balfour Declaration was not officially published in Palestine until after the British had established control of the territory.

⁹ As Flapan observes, Weizmann’s “ultimate goal” was a Jewish state that included southern Lebanon and territory east of the Jordan River; the Zionist leader pursued this aim through “gradualist, pragmatic and flexible means,” which set him apart from some of his critics, such as Jabotinsky. For all of Weizmann’s public rhetoric that the Zionists were not interested in a Jewish state, Flapan writes that “Weizmann was absorbed with only one problem—the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine.” Even partition was simply a “temporary expedient” to achieve the larger goal of a Greater Israel. Weizmann proposed that the Jewish state would protect British geostrategic interests, that the Zionist movement represented a civilizing mission that would bring economic benefits and development to the Arabs and a backward land, and that these economic benefits would counter any Arab opposition to Zionism, and that some Arabs in Palestine would migrate to live in other Arab territories. Importantly, for Weizmann, who Flapan somewhat unconvincingly argues was “insensitive to the nature of imperialism and the struggle of colonial peoples for self-determination,” the Arabs in Palestine were part of the Arab nation and had no national rights in Palestine itself.

Weizmann visited Palestine for the first time in 1907. While describing it in his autobiography as “one of the most neglected corners of the miserably neglected Turkish Empire,” he barely considered or even mentioned the Arab population.

See, Flapan, *Zionism and the Palestinians*, 17-20, 24-26; Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), 123-131

The second interpretation emphasizes the Christian Zionist and anti-Semitic beliefs of many key political figures supporting the Zionist movement. Many fundamentalist Christians believed that Jews needed to migrate to the Holy Land to precipitate the Second Coming, and anti-Semites saw Jewish migration to Palestine as a solution to the Jewish question in Europe and the United States.¹⁰ Rhett focuses on a broader global context, examining how the international discourse on race, gender, and nation, events within the British Empire (including India, Kenya, and Ireland), and the anti-Zionists (and non-Zionists) influenced British policy. As an example of this broader global context, Rhett refers to Great Britain's Secretary of State for India, Edwin Montagu, who warned shortly after the announcement of the Balfour Declaration that

The Government has dealt an irreparable blow at Jewish Britons, and they have endeavored to set up a people which does not exist; they have alarmed unnecessarily the Mohammedan world, and, in so far as they are successful, they will have a Germanized Palestine on the flank of Egypt. It seems useless to conquer it. Why we should intern Mahomet Ali in India for Pan-Mohammedism when we encourage Pan-Judaism I cannot for the life of me understand.

Montagu was concerned that British policy undermined the citizenship of Jewish Britons, British strategic interests in the Near East, and Muslim support throughout the British Empire, especially in the all-important colony of India. Importantly, Montagu surmised that British support for Jewish self-determination in Palestine and continued denial of self-determination in India, Ireland, Kenya, and so forth would undermine British control over its other colonies. Importantly, Montagu recognized the linkages between the Indian, Irish, and Palestinian nationalist movements during this Wilsonian moment, while many British political leaders, including Lloyd George and Balfour, failed or refused to understand the interconnectedness of various nationalist endeavors for self-determination. Additionally,

¹⁰ Recall Balfour himself supported immigration restriction of Jews while he was Prime Minister before World War I.

Montagu represented the anti-Zionist challenge to the Zionist argument that Jews represented a political nation, which anti-Zionists considered anti-Semitic and a threat to Jewish citizenship in any nation outside the future Jewish state in Palestine. Montagu questioned the logic of the British policy of accepting Jewish nationalism based on religious identity, but denying Irish Catholic and Muslim nationalism on the same grounds. Moreover, Montagu recognized that British acceptance of Zionism was an anti-Semitic policy.¹¹

The Conservative Lord Curzon, who entered Asquith's government as Lord Privy Seal during the war and later served as foreign secretary, opposed the Balfour Declaration on different grounds and inquired whether

a country which cannot within any proximate period contain anything but a small population, which has already an indigenous population of its own of a different race and creed...and which is suited only to certain forms of agriculture and pastoral development, cannot, save by a very elastic use of the term, be designated as the national home of the Jewish people?

Curzon attempted to dissuade Lloyd George and Balfour from making suspect promises to the Arabs in the Near East that the British had no intentions of fulfilling. During British cabinet debates on the Balfour declaration, Curzon dismissed the practicality of the Zionist project and warned that the Arab population "will not be content either to be expropriated for Jewish immigrants or to act merely as hewers of wood and drawers of water for" Jewish colonizers. Recognizing that the Zionists wanted a Jewish state, Curzon warned of Arab revolts against such a policy.¹²

Ultimately, Rhett places the Balfour Declaration and its consequences within the broader Wilsonian moment, illustrating how British policy contributed to the development of

¹¹ Rhett, ; Stevens, "Zionism as Western Imperialism," in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 41; Mallison, "The Balfour Declaration," in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 66-83; Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 73-75

¹² David Gilmour, "The Unregarded Prophet: Lord Curzon and the Palestine Question," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 25, No 3 (Spring 1996), 60-68

(but did not create) nationalist movements in the Arab world (especially Palestine), Ireland, Kenya, and India. Nationalist movements, whether secular or religious, in the colonized world began prior to the British annunciation of the Balfour Declaration and represented growing challenges to imperialism and foreign occupation. The great European war, and the participation of colonial peoples in the slaughter, undermined the ideologies justifying colonialism and the Bolshevik call for self-determination and Wilson's Fourteen Points provided an opportunity in the postwar era to pursue independence.¹³

¹³ Maryanne Agnes Rhett, "Quasi-Barbarians' and 'Wandering Jews' See especially, vi, 1-15, 32-44, 173-180 for Montagu's quote and thoughts about nationalist movements, a discussion on the historiography of the Balfour Declaration, and an elaboration on Christian Zionism. Non-Zionists were primarily Orthodox Jews who opposed political Zionism on the grounds that only God could create a Jewish state. Reformed Jews, on the other hand, opposed political Zionism on the grounds that the Jewish people were a religious community and not a nation. Rhett also discusses assimilationist British Jews such as Lucien Wolf, who supported Zionism to a certain extent, but argued that Palestine was an impractical solution, that Jews did not comprise a political nation, and that Jews should not demand rights in Palestine that would discriminate against the indigenous population. Wolf's Board of Deputies of British Jews warned that Palestine was not Jewish and "the idea of expropriating the native population of Palestine, in order to make way for Jewish would work disastrous results." Moreover, allowing a minority of alien immigrants to govern Palestine would set an alarming anti-democratic precedent and foment significant opposition. Consequently, Wolf proposed to the British government in March 1916 that

In the event of Palestine coming within the spheres of influence of Great Britain or France at the close of the war, the Governments of those Powers will not fail to take account of the historic interest that country possesses for the Jewish community. The Jewish population will be secured in the enjoyment of civil and religious liberty, equal political rights with the rest of the population, reasonable facilities for immigration and colonization, and such municipal privileges in the towns and colonies inhabited by them as may be shown necessary.

While articulating a form of Zionism, Wolf's recommendation certainly fell short of the political Zionist goal of a Jewish state in Palestine. See Rhett, 22ff, 149-150, 184, 188-189.

Importantly, Rhett points out that some anti-colonial nationalist movements also adopted an imperialist component. India, according to Rhett, sought the colonization of East Africa because of Indian civilization, education, and economic interests," which illustrates that many colonized peoples adopted the Western hierarchy of civilization. The Indians, Chinese, Egyptians, and Koreans opposed colonialism in their territories because they were civilized. Colonization and civilizing missions were appropriate for the less civilized or uncivilized peoples, such as black Africans. The various Arab nationalisms, however, were fundamentally anti-imperialist. See Rhett, 54ff.

Rhett's fourth chapter examines how the discourse on Zionism and nationalism influenced the formation of the Balfour Declaration. She discusses the discourse of journalists, fiction writers, Zionist lobbyists, Indian nationalists, and official British government officials within the larger context of the British empire.

For an early example of the concerns of anti-Zionists in Britain, see "The Evil of Zionism," *New York Times*, 19 January 1902, 28.

For a discussion of the development of Palestinian nationalism, see Rashid Khalidi, "The Formation of Palestinian Identity: The Critical Years, 1917-1923," in *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East*, James Jankowski and Israel Gershoni, eds. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 171-190; *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, Khalidi, ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*:

The Construction of Modern National Consciousness (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Khalidi, "Palestinian Peasant Resistance to Zionism Before World War I," in Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens, eds., *Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question* (London and New York: Verso, 1988), 207-233; Walid Khalidi, *Before Their Diaspora: A Photographic History of the Palestinians, 1876-1948* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2010); George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (New York: Capricorn, 1965); Samih Farsoun and Christina Zacharia, *Palestine and the Palestinians* (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1997); Yehoshua Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement, 1918-1929* (London: Cass, 1974); Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement: from Riots to Rebellion, 1929-1939* (London: Cass, 1977); Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, "'Territorially-Based Nationalism and the Politics of Negation,'" in Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens, eds., *Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question* (London and New York: Verso, 1988), 193-206; Ann Lesch, *Arab Politics in Palestine, 1917-1939: The Frustration of a Nationalist Movement* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979); Neville Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism Before World War I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); Adnan, Ghazaleh, "Arab Cultural Nationalism in Palestine during the British Mandate," *Journal of Palestine Studies*. Vol 1, No 3 (Spring 1972), 37-63; Flapan, *Zionism and the Palestinians*, 79-83; Edward Said, Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, Janet Abu-Lughod, Muhammad Hallaj, Elia Zuriek, "A Profile of the Palestinian People," in Said and Hitchens, ed., *Blaming the Victims*, 235-296; Pamela Ann Smith, *Palestine and the Palestinians, 1876-1983* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984); Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Times Books, 1979); Deborah Gerner, *One Land, Two Peoples: The Conflict Over Palestine* (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1991); 'Adel Manna,' "Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Rebellions in Palestine," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 24, No 1 (Autumn 1994), 51-66. See also, *A Survey of Palestine: Prepared in December 1945 and January 1946 for the Information of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, 2 Vols* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1991); Richard Stevens, "Zionism as Western Imperialism," in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 34-35; Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 26-36, 56-66

Palestinian national identity existed in the late 19th century in response to Ottoman rule increasing European intervention (including Zionism). 'Adel Manna' argues that Palestinian uprisings in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries helped forge a Palestinian national consciousness. Overall, most scholars argue that Palestinian nationalism developed in response to Western imperialism and colonialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Rashid Khalidi and Farsoun/Zacharia persuasively maintain that the development of a Palestinian national consciousness accelerated during and after WWI in response to British imperialism and Zionist colonialism, which Palestinians interpreted as a new iteration of the Crusader past. Khalidi, in his essay on "Palestinian Peasant Resistance to Zionism Before World War I," and Mandel illustrate that the development of Zionism was central to Arab political discourse throughout the Ottoman empire before the Great War. As Khalidi observes, Palestinian Arabs recognized the goals and threat of Zionism in the years preceding the start of World War I due to the Zionist dispossession of Palestinian peasants (after absentee landlords – many from Lebanon and Syria – sold property to Jewish colonizers). Dismissing arguments that only Arab elites reacted to Zionism (supposedly because the peasants were politically marginal), Khalidi maintains that Palestinian peasants were central to the struggle against Zionism. The reactions against dispossession (which included violence) facilitated the development of a Palestinian identity against both the Ottomans, who helped enforce dispossession, and the Zionists. The violent opposition to dispossession also facilitated the development of Jewish military forces, precursors to the Haganah.

Mandel, who focuses on Arab political elites, argues that Arab opposition to Zionism and Palestinian Arab patriotism (in reaction to Zionism) existed prior to World War I due in no small part to the large immigration of European Jews, many of whom were proponents of Jewish nationalism, that resulted in an increase of the Jewish population in Palestine "from about twenty-four thousand in 1882 to approximately eighty-five thousand in 1914," a thesis that countered the earlier "conventional view" that "all was well between Arab and Jew in Palestine before" the war and the Balfour Declaration. Because only a minority of nationalist settlers lived in agricultural colonies prior to World War I, Mandel maintains that "only a limited number of Arab villagers and a few passing Bedouin could have directly felt the presence of the Jewish settlers" in this period, but recognized, as did Epstein, that conflicts developed over peasant dispossession resulting from Jewish land purchase. While noting the conflict between Arab peasants and Jewish settlers during the early years of the first *aliyah*, Mandel did also promote the early arguments of the Jewish settlers that Jewish colonization benefitted the Arabs and that Arab peasants migrated close to Jewish settlements for employment and income-earning opportunities. (Paraphrasing an Ottoman official on the eve of WWI who stated that the

Arab peasants “were illiterate and had much to learn from the Jews,” Mandel commented that the official “may have been somewhat tactless, but he was perfectly correct.” Greater resentment toward the new Jewish immigrants existed in the towns, especially in Jaffa, due to the greater concentration of European Jews and their attitude toward the Arabs and the Ottoman government, leading to Arab elite petitions to the Ottoman government within a decade of the start of the first *aliyah* to limit and even prohibit Jewish immigration to and land purchase in Palestine (which remained the Palestinian Arab position through the mandate era). Members of the Arab elite (including Muslims and Christians) in Palestine were well aware of Zionist statements, feared economic competition with the Jewish settlers, sometimes resorted to anti-Semitism (which Mandel attributes to perhaps an influence of anti-Semitic Christian missionaries and European intervention in the Ottoman Empire), and concluded that the Zionists sought a Jewish state in Palestine and would even expel the Arabs from the land. Mandel argues that some of the Arabs writing warnings about Zionism overlooked Jewish opposition to Zionism, misrepresented Zionist goals for territory, overstated Zionist land purchase and immigration, and exaggerated Christian support for the movement in the early 1900s. For Mandel, Arab elites continually made “the unfounded charge that the Zionists entertained political and territorial ambitions which extended far beyond Palestine,” but as Zionist proposals during the postwar peace conference made clear, Zionists did envision gaining control of territory in Lebanon, Syria, Trans-Jordan, and Palestine. Importantly, on the eve of the war, Zionists and Ottoman representatives discussed a mutually beneficial arrangement: the Ottomans would support Zionism in return for a Jewish public relations effort on behalf of the Empire in Europe and Jewish financial aid to the Ottomans (echoes of Herzl’s promises to the Sultan). Around the same time, some Arab nationalists also approached the Zionists as a ploy to gain concessions from the Ottoman government: Zionists would use contribute to a public relations offensive in Europe against the Ottoman government in return for Arab concessions to the Zionist movement in Palestine.

The Arabs faulted the Jewish immigrants for creating separatist institutions and communities within Palestine and feared that a large Jewish population would supplant the Arabs in Palestine. Zionists replied that Palestine was simply one small section of Arab territory and that Jewish colonization in Palestine would benefit the entire Arab world. While the Zionists looked to leaders and governments outside of Palestine to provide legitimacy for the Zionist movement, Mandel faults the Arabs in Palestine from setting the precedent “of not negotiating with the Zionists.” Aside from the intimations that Jewish colonization would benefit the Arabs, Mandel offers no reason why the Palestinians should negotiate with a foreign movement that they understood as working toward a Jewish state. He seemingly overlooks that the Zionist policy was against recognizing the Palestinian Arabs as significant political actors, while acknowledging that the Zionists would not have accepted the Arab demands against further Jewish immigration and land purchase.

Mandel concludes that the Palestinian Arabs understood Zionism as a movement for a Jewish state in Palestine long before WWI; that the Ottomans opposed Jewish immigration and land purchase in Palestine (to forestall another nationalist problem within the Empire), but its policy was a failure; that Arab elite favored Jewish immigration to Palestine so long as the Jewish settlers integrated themselves into the Empire and forsook Jewish nationalism; that Palestinian nationalism was a response to Zionism and existed prior to WWI; that a broader Arab nationalism that opposed Zionism also existed on the eve of WWI (although some Lebanese Christian groups favored Zionism); and that Arab anti-Semitism was often intertwined with anti-Zionism. Overall, Mandel demonstrates that the “Arab ‘case’ against Zionism” was essentially laid out prior to WWI and included demands to prohibit Jewish immigration and land purchases. The main features were that the Zionists sought a Jewish state in territory that extended beyond Palestine and that Zionism was a movement that represented the extension of “Great Power influence” in the region. Mandel asserts that “not all the Arab arguments against Zionism were valid, but they go some distance to make their fears intelligible.” For Mandel, “the Zionists did not seek a state extending from Palestine to Iraq,” and “neither the Russians nor the Germans were using them as a device to extend their respective interests.” A Jewish state was a goal of Zionists regardless of the envisioned territorial boundaries, and Ould-Mey argues that European powers did see Zionism as useful in pursuing their strategic interests in the Near East prior to WWI and Zionists, including Herzl himself, portrayed their movement as benefitting Western interests. But importantly, Mandel demonstrates that Arab opposition to Zionism, which included violent conflict, existed prior to WWI and the Balfour Declaration. The Palestinian Arabs would understand the Balfour Declaration as facilitating Zionist aims for a Jewish state. (Ben-Gurion, for his part, privately recognized the threat of Arab nationalism prior to WWI).

Zionists continually repeated that Jewish settlers were not dispossessing Palestinian peasants and that violence against Jewish settlers simply exhibited the savagery of a people that desired to loot and pillage. In reality, this process of dispossession was a central factor in Palestinian opposition to Zionism and later British

colonialism, which facilitated the Zionist movement. While much has been written about the development of Palestinian nationalism, in some respects I find the issue irrelevant to the Zionist colonization of Palestine. If the Palestinians developed a stronger sense of nationalism before WWI, then would they have successfully challenged the British and Zionist prerogatives? Sure, this is a speculative and counterfactual question. The point is that Zionists have long maintained, in the words of Prime Minister Golda Meir in 1969, that “it was not as though there was a Palestinian people and we came and threw them out and took their country away from them. They did not exist.” Or consider the extremist Rabbi Kahane, who stated in 1988 that “there is no such thing as ‘Palestinian people’ . . . there are no Palestinians.” The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs asserts that the early Zionists did not consider the Arab presence in Palestine as an obstacle because “Arab nationalism did not yet exist in any form, and the Arab population of Palestine was sparse and apolitical.” The Foreign Ministry also claims that Zionists sincerely believed that the Zionist project would benefit the Arabs, and consequently, were somewhat shocked that the Arabs resisted the Zionist movement. The conflict, the Ministry continues, became one between two peoples who regarded Palestine as theirs: “the Jews by virtue of their historical and spiritual connection, and the Arabs because of their centuries-long presence in the country.” The implication is clear: the Zionist claim based on Biblical history is stronger than the Arab’s based on a transitory “presence” in Palestine. Note how the Ministry uses the term Arab instead of Palestinian to denote the indigenous inhabitants. The meaning, of course, was that Arabs could simply migrate to other Arab regions because they clearly did not have as strong of an attachment to Palestine as the Jewish people.

Simply because a minority of the world’s Jewish people manufactured an organized nationalist movement under the aegis of the British Empire before the Palestinians exhibited a strong nationalism did not justify the dispossession of the Palestinians, but perhaps helps explain why the Zionists were successful while the Palestinian Arabs were not. There is a tendency to privilege Western conceptions (in this case nationalism) over the rights of non-Western peoples. (Mayer observes that “when members of the Palestinian elite began to formulate nationalist yearnings and precepts, they were impugned for fabricating a national identity and catechism out of whole cloth—as if the Israelis had engaged in no imagining of their own.”) A similar case can be made regarding Native Americans. Because Native Americans lacked a pan-Indian identity or European-style nationalism did not justify the genocide and dispossession of the Native American population. Importantly, the Balfour Declaration did not recognize the political rights of the “non-Jewish communities” in Palestine, namely, the majority indigenous inhabitants.

See, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, op. cit. For an exceptional work on the non-Palestinian and non-Semitic origins of contemporary Jews, see Shlomo Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People* (London: Verso, 2009). Palestinian historiography emphasized the Arab history of Palestine (and Palestinian rights to the land) in response to Western Orientalism, Western imperialism, and the Zionist threat. As George Antonius concluded in *The Arab Awakening*, “there is no room for a second nation in a country which is already inhabited and inhabited by a people whose national consciousness is fully awakened and whose affection for their homes and countryside is obviously unconquerable. . . . the logic of facts. . . shows that no room can be made in Palestine for a second nation except by dislodging or exterminating the nation in possession.” See Tarif Khalidi, “Palestinian Historiography: 1900-1948,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 10, No 3 (Spring 1981), 59-76 (Antonius quoted on page 75); Antonius, *Arab Awakening*, 409, 412. For an essay on Arab cultural nationalism before and during the mandate era, see Adnan, Ghazaleh, “Arab Cultural Nationalism in Palestine during the British Mandate,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*. Vol 1, No 3 (Spring 1972), 37-63. Ghazaleh argues that with the British occupation and support for Zionism (which sought to establish a Jewish state), “nationalist writing within Palestine developed a specifically Palestinian orientation.” For an article on those who comprised the Palestinian Arab elite during the mandate era, see Bayan Nuweihid, Al-Hout, “The Palestinian Political Elite during the Mandate Period.” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 9, No 1 (Autumn 1979), 85-111. Even the Peel Commission report acknowledged Arab nationalism prior to Jewish colonization in the 1880s. For the authors of the Peel report, American missionaries introduced ideas of self-government and nationalism to the Arabs through education. Furthermore, according to the British inquiry in 1937, Arab secret societies planned for independence from the Ottomans and the creation of a united Arab state prior to WWI. See, Palestine Royal Commission Report, CMD 5479 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1937), 16; Baruch Kimmerling and Joel Migdal, *The Palestinian People: A History* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2003); Mayer, *Ploughshares into Swords*, 72; Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 26-36, 56-66; Teveth, *Ben-Gurion and the Palestinian Arabs*, 14-17

On WWI and its impact on colonialism and colonized peoples, see also, John Morrow, *The Great War: An Imperial History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*.

Bustami argues that the Germans and British both understood support for Zionism as part of the propaganda war directed at the United States and its significant Jewish population.¹⁴ Moreover, the Germans and British saw Jewish support as instrumental in maintaining control over this strategic area after the war's denouement. While traditional British policy (in relation in part to the European balance of power and the historical contest with Russia) was to prevent the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, the Lloyd George government now saw control of Egypt and Palestine as necessary for control of the Suez Canal, the all-important gateway to crown jewel of India. British control over Mesopotamia and Persia would strengthen Britain's empire and provide the British with the increasingly important oil resources in these territories and provide a check to Russian and French expansion. While the British orchestrated early propaganda efforts to foster American

¹⁴ The British orchestrated a much more effective propaganda campaign in the U.S. during the war than the Germans. The Zionists, with British support, even manufactured Turkish atrocities against Jews in Palestine. Ambassador Morgenthau informed Washington that Ottoman policy was to allow Jewish settlers to remain in Palestine if they became naturalized Ottoman citizens. While Morgenthau contested reports of atrocities against Jewish immigrants, the U.S. press often reported Zionist and British propaganda. Bustami refers to a *Washington Post* article on 23 January 1915 with the headline "Destroy Zion Colony. Turks, Under Berlin's Orders, Wipe Out 30 Years' Work. Give Jews' Land to Arab." On 2 February 1915, the *New York Times* headlined an article "Zionist in Peril of Turkish Attack." The source was "a well-known Moscow journalist" named Vladimir Jabotinski, whose name would become associated with Revisionist Zionism. Jabotinski reported that there was the "gravest fear" for fifteen thousand Jewish colonists in "Galilee, Judea, Samaria" because the Turks were 'inciting' the Arabs to violence. On 18 February 1915, Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan cabled Morgenthau that there were reports that the people in Syria and Palestine were "very strong against Jews," and therefore, there was an imminent threat of attacks on Jewish and Christian persons and property. Morgenthau relayed American concerns to the Turkish authorities and cabled Bryan Turkish assurances that the Christian and Jewish populations in those areas were protected. One historian has argued that Jews in Palestine "suffered less than any other minority from persecution, harm in battle, and executions" during the war due to U.S. and German pressure on the Turks. Other reports concluded that the Turkish atrocities against Jews were "entirely unfounded," but the common perception in the American mind was one of Turkish barbarity as an August 1917 article with the headline "Barbarity of Turks Crushing Palestine" implied. Bustami asserts that Ottoman policy saw Zionism as a counter to Arab nationalism, which the Turks attempted to crush. See Bustami, "American Foreign Policy," 130-137; *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1915, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1915Supp>, 979ff; *FRUS*, 1916, Supplement, The World War, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1916Supp>, 850-852, 930ff; Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 87; "Zionists in Peril of Turkish Attack," *New York Times*, 2 February 1915; "Says Turks Desire to Destroy Zionism," *New York Times*, 8 October 1915; "Turk Not Jew's Enemy," *New York Times*, 8 January 1917, 2; "Found Turks Fair to Jews," *New York Times*, 18 July 1917, 11; "Barbarity of Turks Crushing Palestine," *New York Times*, 14 August 1917, 9. For another example of a Zionist account regarding Turkish treatment of Jews in Palestine, see *Bulletins of the Copenhagen Office of the Zionist Organization* in RDS 867n.01/4 (10 November 1917)

participation in the war on the side of the Entente powers, once the U.S. declared war on the Central powers, the British initiated a propaganda campaign to gain American acquiescence in the disintegration of the Turkish Empire.¹⁵ An important consideration for the British and French, who along with South Africa and Japan had clear annexationist goals, was how to convince Wilson to support further colonization, especially after the Bolsheviks publicized the secret treaties¹⁶ and called for self-determination and Wilson proclaimed his Fourteen Points. The British saw Zionism as a useful means to check French imperialism in the region and to gain American support for essentially British control of Palestine,¹⁷ and the

¹⁵ Both Arab nationalists and Zionists understood the war as an opportunity to achieve their respective goals (an independent Arab nation and a Jewish Palestine). See, for example, Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 67

¹⁶ Russia, Great Britain, France, and Italy made secret agreements regarding the spoils of war. For example, Russia wanted Constantinople, Armenia, Kurdistan, and access to the Mediterranean; France claimed Syria (including Lebanon) and parts of Asia Minor; the British wanted Mesopotamia and parts of Asia Minor. Palestine was to be internationalized, although the British had other plans and made agreements with the Zionists and Arabs. In fact, British support for Zionism was a check on French (and Russian) ambitions in the Near East and represented British dissatisfaction with the Sykes-Picot agreement. Other Arab lands (including the Islamic holy sites) would have some autonomy under British oversight. After the Russian revolution, the French and British reiterated their claims to Syria and Mesopotamia respectively and agreed to deal with Palestine at a future date. *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1917, Supplement 2, The World War, Volume 1, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1917Supp02v01>, 169-170, 490-492, 502; David Waines, "The Failure of the Nationalist Resistance," in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 215; Ibrahim I. Ibrahim, "The American-Israeli Alliance: Raison d'état Revisited," *Journal of Palestine Studies* Vol 15, No 3 (Spring 1986), 17-29.

¹⁷ There are also arguments that the British saw Zionism as a means to help counter the Russian Revolution. The British also directed propaganda at Russia, undergoing its revolution in 1917. In mid-June 1917, Rhett observes, British Foreign Office Assistant Under-Secretary Sir Ronald Graham told the Cabinet that the Allies should work

to secure all the political advantages we can out of our connection with Zionism[,] and there is no doubt that that advantage will be considerable, especially in Russia where the only means of reaching the Jewish proletariat is through Zionism to which the vast majority of Jews in the country adhere.

Jacques Hersh writes that the British proposed the carrot of Jewish nationalism "as an attempt to weaken the Soviet experiment from the beginning by weaning Jews away from universalistic socialism." Hersh notes the "political anti-Semitism" underlying the British position. Basing his views on the anti-Semitic belief of the power of international Jewry and adopting the anti-socialism of the British ruling class, Winston Churchill wrote in a published article in 1920 entitled "Zionism versus Bolshevism—A Struggle for the Soul of the Jewish People" that there were "Good and Bad Jews," with the "Bad Jews" being those "International Jews" promoting socialism and the Bolshevik revolution. He acknowledged that the intent of Zionism was to "foster and develop any strongly-marked Jewish movement which leads directly away from these fatal associations" with Bolshevism and argued that British aid in establishing a Jewish state was congruent with British imperial interests. Hersh reminds us that the British supported the White Guards, who were very much involved in massacres of Jews during the Russian civil war and that British support for a Jewish state in the Near East would precipitate Arab opposition, raising challenges to British control of the region following the Great War.

Zionists recognized that their project could only succeed with the assistance and protection of a great power, which was needed to deal with the demographic problem in Palestine. During the British campaign in Palestine in the spring of 1917, the Ottomans forced both Arabs and Jews to evacuate Jaffa. A month after the incident, British propaganda directed at American and Jewish audiences emphasized the brutal experience of only the Jewish evacuees. This successful propaganda operation played a significant role in international Jewish and American support for a British protectorate over a Jewish Palestine.¹⁸

The British conquest of Palestine was often depicted as a crusade against the Moslem Turk and a campaign of liberating territory from Ottoman oppression. For example, the *New York Times* wrote in March 1917 that the British invasion awakened “in the imagination recollections to Richard the Lion-Hearted, Godfrey of Bonillon, Ivanhoe, Peter the Hermit

Rhett, 185-186 and sources cited; Hersh, “Inconvenient Truths about ‘Real Existing’ Zionism,” *Monthly Review* Vol 61, No 1 (May 2009).

¹⁸ Bustami, “American Foreign Policy,” 128-129, 144-145, 147-150, 174ff; Morris, *Righteous Victims*, (1999), 67-73. Bustami also argues that British and Zionists efforts sabotaged an American effort (led by Morgenthau) to negotiate a separate peace with the Turks in the summer of 1917, an effort which Bustami characterizes as the “first significant U.S. effort to influence developments in the Middle East on a major scale.” The British and Zionists saw such a plan as sabotaging their designs on Ottoman territory. By this point, as we’ll discuss below, the British had already made two contradictory agreements about Ottoman territory, the Sykes-Picot agreement and the preceding Hussein-McMahon correspondence, and was in the process of formulating a third, the Balfour Declaration. When all was said and done, the French had control of Syria in violation of British pledges to the Arabs, leading the British to place Feisal on a throne in Iraq and his brother Abdullah on a throne in Trans-Jordan. Bustami observes that contemporary Zionists and future Zionist scholars pilloried Morgenthau for his effort to secure an early peace with the Ottomans. Interestingly, Secretary of State Lansing notified Balfour that Morgenthau had set sail and asked him to ensure that Weizmann meet with Morgenthau on Gibraltar “as it is considered most important that Mr. Morgenthau see Mr. Weizmann.” The conclusion of the meeting, which included Morgenthau, Frankfurter, Weizmann, and Weyl (the French representative), was that “the time [was] not now ripe to open channels of communication with Turkish leaders.” The issue, as Weizmann diplomatically stated, was that the British policy demanded certain areas of the Ottoman empire be removed from Ottoman control. The State Department cabled Morgenthau after the conference with Weizmann to rebuke him for suggesting that his mission was to seek a separate peace with the Ottomans. The State Department reminded Morgenthau that his sole purpose was to work to alleviate the conditions of Jews in Palestine and not send out any feelers to the Ottoman government about peace terms. See, Bustami, 154-173; *FRUS*, 1917, Supplement 2, The World War, Volume 1, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1917Supp02v01>, 109, 121-122, 129. For Weizmann’s account of the Morgenthau episode, see Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 195-199. For more on Abdullah’s relationship with the British, see Shlaim, *Collusion Across the Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist Movement, and the Partition of Palestine* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988)

and the countless knights and men at arms who made up the armies of the seven great crusades from 1090 to 1272....They pledged themselves to rescue the Holy Land...from the grasp of the unbeliever.” Arabs in the British army, of course, were more concerned with defeating the Ottomans than “restoring the Holy City to Christendom,” but the crusader imagery suggested that the British operations in Ottoman territory were part of a Christian war against Islam, which would cause problems for a British Empire that consisted of a very large Muslim population. Interestingly, in September 1914, British Prime Minister David Lloyd George compared the Kaiser to the prophet Mohammed and declared them both lunatics. The British capture of Jerusalem marked “the end, with two brief interludes, of more than 1,200 years’ possession of the seat of the Christian religion by the Mohammedans.” Lloyd George declared “Allenby’s conquest of Jerusalem ‘the last and most triumphant of the crusades.’” Henry Morgenthau proclaimed

The fall of Jerusalem, its capture by the Christian forces after twelve centuries of almost uninterrupted Mohammedan rule, is surely an event of the greatest significance to us all. American Christians, and indeed Christians everywhere, will rejoice that the Holy Land, so well known to them through both the Old and New Testaments, has been restored to the civilized world.

Simultaneously, Zionists continued to press the argument that only Jewish colonists could restore the barren land and civilize the backward Arabs. Additionally, Zionists argued that a Jewish state in Palestine (under an initial British or American protectorate) would protect western strategic interests, especially access to the Suez Canal.¹⁹

¹⁹ “British Invaders Close to Jerusalem,” *New York Times*, 8 March 1917, 4; “British Army is Knocking at Gates of Jerusalem,” *New York Times*, 18 March 1917, SM4; “British in Palestine Rout 20,000 Turks,” *New York Times*, 30 March 1917, 3; “Objects of Advance into Holy Land,” *New York Times*, 15 April 1917, 14; “Zionists See New Hope,” *New York Times*, 25 April 1917, 2; “Peace Army for Palestine,” *New York Times*, 27 April 1917, 11; “Lauds Jewish Unit on Way to Palestine,” *New York Times*, 16 July 1918, 13; “Jews Still Mourn Fall of Jerusalem,” *New York Times*, 30 July 1917, 9; “The Zionists,” *New York Times*, 24 November 1917, 12; “The Future of Palestine,” *New York Times*, 12 December 1917, 14; “Sees Zionists’ Hope in Allied Victory,” *New York Times*, 24 December 1917, 9

One such educational effort was Samuel Tolkowsky's *Achievements and Prospects in Palestine* which was published in 1917. Tolkowsky's work is essentially a brief history of the Zionist movement written to disseminate the Zionist narrative during WWI. He provided a short overview of Jewish colonization efforts in Palestine beginning in the 1880s to illustrate the backwardness of the land and Arab people and the advances made by the Zionists in agriculture, hygiene, infrastructure, and so on. Describing the primitive farming practices of the Arabs, Tolkowsky commented that "it does not need the mind of an expert to understand that centuries of such treatment must have resulted in a heavy strain upon the once proverbial natural fertility of the soil in Palestine." While the yields are "very poor," he continued, they meet the requirements of the Arabs "whose standard of living is extremely low." Tolkowsky reiterated a common argument that while there may have been a debate in the diaspora about whether the Zionist Organization represented the Jewish masses, the Zionist Organization represented the entire Jewish population in Palestine. This assertion is questionable given the opposition of Orthodox Jews in Palestine to political Zionism and its secular policies, but it was certainly part of the Zionist propaganda effort. Additionally, Tolkowsky emphasized that the land of Palestine is underutilized, especially the "almost uninhabited" region east of the Jordan, which, according to Tolkowsky, in Roman times supported a population of nearly two million. Contrary to the indigenous inhabitants, the Zionists would return Palestine back to "a land flowing with milk and honey" and develop the industrial and commercial potential of the strategic region. Acknowledging that Jews, both Zionists and non-Zionists alike, represented only 1/7 of the population and owned about 2% of the land, he concluded with a call for unrestricted Jewish immigration and purchase of land so that Palestine could become a "prosperous," developed, and "Jewish country."²⁰

²⁰ Samuel Tolkowsky, *Achievements and Prospects in Palestine* (London: English Zionist Federation,

Many reports during 1917 asserted that a British victory meant a Jewish State in Palestine. A *New York Times* article “Objects of Advance into Holy Land,” quoted a British military report that “there can be little doubt that we should revive the Jewish Palestine of old and allow the Jews to realize their dreams of Zion in their homeland.” Orthodox Jews in Jerusalem, however, lamented the British conquest of Palestine because British support for political Zionism conflicted with the Orthodox belief that “Zion can only come through God.”²¹ Indeed, the Balfour Declaration was approved by the British cabinet in November 1917 and asserted British support for establishing a Jewish National Home in Palestine.²²

By late spring 1917, Wilson orally assured Brandeis that he supported a Jewish homeland in Palestine under a British protectorate, and in the early days of June 1917, Brandeis provided the State Department a formulation of Zionist plans for Palestine.²³

1917. Despite the constant reports that the land was barren, Western commentators in the 19th century periodically recognized the productivity of wheat and orange cultivation. See, for example, Farsoun, 40ff and sources cited.

²¹; “In Favor of Jewish State,” *New York Times*, 28 April 1917, 14; “Bryce Cables to Jews,” *New York Times*, 7 May 1917, 8; “Says Allies Favor Zionism,” *New York Times*, 21 May 1917, 11; “Says Allies Favor Zionist Movement,” *New York Times*, 29 May 1917, 15; “Jerusalem Falls to British Army,” *New York Times*, 11 December 1917, 1

²² See, for example, “Britain Favors Zionism,” *New York Times*, 9 November 1917, 3; “Sees Great Hope for Zion,” *New York Times*, 11 November 1917, 17; “Zionists Get Text of Britain’s Pledge,” *New York Times*, 14 November 1917, 3; Maryanne Agnes Rhett, “‘Quasi-Barbarians’ and ‘Wandering Jews’: The Balfour Declaration in Light of World Events,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Washington State University, 2008. For Lloyd George disparaging of Mohammed, see 161-162. For Lloyd George quote on the conquest of Jerusalem, see Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India* (New York Columbia University Press, 1982), 52 as cited in Rhett, 162. On 13 December 1917, Democrat George Lunn of New York introduced a resolution to Congress congratulating the British for the Balfour Declaration and their capture of Jerusalem. Stephen Wise responded that Lunn’s resolution “may be said to represent the mind of the American people.” “Lauds British Victory,” *New York Times*, 14 December 1917, 13. With the conquest of Jerusalem and the Balfour Declaration, American Zionists began organizing to “re-occupy” Palestine and establish a Jewish state. “Jews Launch Plans to Occupy Holy Land,” *New York Times*, 17 December 1917, 5; “Declare for a Jewish State,” *New York Times*, 24 December 1917, 9.

²³ Weizmann wrote in his autobiography that the British Zionists solicited from American Zionists and the U.S. Government in April 1917 statements in support of “a Jewish Palestine under a British protectorate” to combat French claims to Palestine. Portraying a British protectorate over a Jewish Palestine as congruent with Wilsonian principles, Weizmann wrote Brandeis in April 1917, that a British protectorate would support the development of democracy and a Jewish commonwealth. In his autobiography, Weizmann declared that only a minority of Jews in the United States opposed Zionism. See, Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 193-194

After receiving American agreement, according to Bustami, the Zionists wrote the first draft of the Balfour Declaration in the summer of 1917.²⁴ While the British War Cabinet debated the Balfour Declaration in September 1917, the British Foreign Office sought the support of Wilson to counter opposition, especially from Jewish anti-Zionists. Montagu, for example, warned that a “national home for the Jewish people,” the common euphemism for a Jewish state in Palestine, meant that the “non-Jewish communities” in Palestine “will be regarded as foreigners, just in the same way as Jews will hereafter be treated as foreigners in every country but Palestine.” C. G. Montefiore, president of the Anglo-Jewish Association, opposed any declaration that presumed the Jewish people represented a nation. He further asserted that Europe was solving the Jewish question through the emancipation of Jews in

²⁴ Herbert Samuel, prominent Zionist and British official who would serve as the first High Commissioner of Palestine under British civilian administration, began promoting a British protectorate over Palestine soon after World War I began on the grounds that British control of Palestine would “enable England to fulfill in yet another sphere her historic part of the civilizer of the backward countries.” After his initial proposal was essentially ignored, Samuel appealed to British imperial interests. A British protectorate or a Jewish state would promote British strategic interests and preclude French or German control of this vital region. An early establishment of a Jewish state was impractical and would jeopardize the development of a “prosperous, progressive” Jewish commonwealth, which would be “home of a brilliant civilisation” because, as Samuel observed:

If the attempt were made to place the 500,000 or 600,000 Mahommedans of Arab race under a Government which rested upon the support of 90,000 or 100,000 Jewish inhabitants, there can be no assurance that such a Government, even if established by the authority of the Powers, would be able to command obedience.

Consequently, the Zionists recognized that a British protectorate would facilitate the development of a Jewish state and protect British interests. Samuel, proclaiming that Jews, both Zionist and non-Zionist, would welcome a British protectorate over Palestine, envisioned that the British would facilitate Jewish immigration, land purchase, and institutional development “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....” In addition to appealing to strategic interests of the British empire, Samuel pointed to the Protestant interest in the restoration of the Jewish people to the promised land, suggesting that the British government responsible for gaining Palestine for the Jews would gain much renown. Interestingly, Samuel asserted that the British “did not enter the conflict with any purpose of territorial expansion,” but observed that the British people would expect some compensation for their sacrifices undertaken to defeat the Central Powers. Warning that the British should be wary of taking German colonies so as not to provoke a future “war of revenge,” Samuel acknowledged that the British would control certain German colonies “for strategic reasons or on the account of the interests of our Dominions,” but proffered “if Great Britain can obtain the compensations, which public opinion will demand, in Mesopotamia and Palestine, and not in German East Africa and West Africa, there is more likelihood of a lasting peace.” Prime Minister Asquith was not convinced, but Balfour and Lloyd George were receptive to Samuel’s arguments.

See Stevens, “Zionism as Western Imperialism,” in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 42-46.

Russia and Eastern Europe. Ultimately, Montefiore still supported Jewish immigration to and colonization of Palestine, arguing that Jews would become a majority and assume power in Palestine. L. L. Cohen, the Chairman of the Jewish Board of Guardians, also opposed any notion of a Jewish nation, which he saw as a threat to Jewish rights and citizenship in any other country, while supporting Jewish immigration to Palestine. The proposed British declaration, Cohen warned, would stimulate anti-Semitism.²⁵

Another British request sent to Wilson a month later focused on the supposed German efforts to make an alliance with the Zionist movement, suggesting that the British declaration regarding Zionism was a strategic war necessity as opposed to a British imperialist policy. As Colonial Secretary Lord Cavendish reminded the British Cabinet in 1923, “the object [of the Balfour Declaration] was to enlist the sympathies on the Allied side of influential Jews and Jewish organizations all over the world...” Cavendish continued:

It is arguable that the negotiations with the Zionists...did in fact have considerable effect in advancing the date at which the United States Government intervened in the war. However that might be, it must always be remembered that the declaration was made at a time of extreme peril to the cause of the Allies....The Balfour Declaration was a war measure...designed to secure tangible benefits which it was hoped could contribute to the ultimate victory of the Allies. The benefits may or may not have been worth securing or 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.

²⁵ At the twentieth convention of the Federation of American Zionists, those present passed a resolution asking the U.S. government to “recognize Palestine as an autonomous home for the Jewish nation.” “Thousand Zionists Meet in Baltimore,” *New York Times*, 25 June 1917, 15. The Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs articulated a number of policies that were necessary for the “Jewish re-settlement of Palestine in accordance with Jewish national aspirations.” The Zionists maintained that Palestine should be recognized as the Jewish national home, that present and future Jews in Palestine would have “full national, political and civic rights,” that there should be unrestricted Jewish immigration to Palestine, that a Charter should assert collective Jewish ownership of the land and other privileges, that Jews would have autonomy in Palestine, and the Hebrew would be the official national language. See, RDS 867n.01/12 ½ (2 June 1917); The National Archives of the UK, CAB/24/4, War Cabinet, “Zionist Movement,” 17 October 1917; Bustami, “American Foreign Policy,” 174-185; *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol 42, 234-235.

Previous British agreements with Arab leaders (the McMahon–Hussein agreement in 1915) promised an independent Arab state encompassing much of the area between Persia and the Mediterranean, including Palestine, in return for Arab aid against the Turks.²⁶ As the British

²⁶ As Pamela Ann Smith notes, many Arabs who fought in the revolt against the Turks and many Palestinians who were unaware of the Hussein-McMahon correspondence believed that Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, and the Arabian Peninsula would form an independent state after the war. Allenby even described the Arab revolt as “invaluable” to the British war effort. The British, however, understood Arab aspirations as a threat to British control over this strategic region and argued that the Hussein-McMahon correspondence did not apply to Palestine. Lord Curzon, however, dismissed this British contention as a false interpretation of the historical record. See, Smith, *Palestine and the Palestinians*, 38ff; Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*; David Gilmour, “The Unregarded Prophet: Lord Curzon and the Palestine Question,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 25, No 3 (Spring 1996), 60-68

For text of the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, see Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 164-183, 413-427. The correspondence makes clear that the Arabs made their entrance into the war on the Allied side dependent on British support for an independent Arab state, which would have included present-day Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Jordan, Kuwait, and the Arabian Peninsula. Hussein clearly opposed any French interests in Syria and Lebanon and emphasized the British pledge to Arab independence after the war. While the British later claimed that the Hussein-McMahon correspondence excluded Palestine from a future Arab state, British propaganda in Palestine during the war encouraged Palestinian Arabs to aid the Allied cause in pursuit of Arab independence and freedom. Morris, for his part, observes that the text of the agreement favored the Arab case, but that the British only promised Arab independence from the Turks and clearly intended to establish British control of the region. Additionally, the British government understood their promises to Hussein as relatively meaningless since the former doubted whether the latter could mobilize a significant revolt against the Turks.

After the proclamation of the Balfour Declaration, the British assured Hussein that “Jewish settlement in Palestine would only be allowed in so far as would be consistent with the political and economic freedom of the Arab population,” which differs markedly from the clause in the Balfour Declaration protecting only the “civil and religious” rights of the “non-Jewish communities.” Additionally, in June 1918, in response to Arab opposition to the Sykes-Picot agreement and the Balfour Declaration, the British government officially and publicly stated that the “future government of those territories [that the Allies liberated from the Turks, which included Palestine] should be based upon the principle of the consent of the governed. This policy will always be that of His Majesty’s Government.” Despite future British and Zionist claims, the British pledged self-government to the Arabs in return for Arab aid in the war effort. In addition, the League of Nations Charter determined that the right of the Arabs to self-government trumped British, French, and Zionist colonialism.

Again, the British and the French were pursuing their imperialist aims in the region and understood agreements with each other, with the Zionists, and with the Arabs as part of the game of pursuing their strategic interests (which especially revolved around the oil resources in the Near East and control over vital waterways, ports, and future land routes for pipelines). The British and French would arbitrarily carve up Ottoman territory after the war, despite the wishes of the populations involved, and exploit ethnic, religious, and tribal differences to weaken the threat of Arab nationalism to their imperial interests.

See, Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 267-274, 433-434; Mayer, *Plowshares into Swords*, 3-5; Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 69-73.

The Peel Commission report accepted the British government’s tortured argument that the Hussein-McMahon correspondence excluded Palestine. For the commissioners, “it was in the highest degree unfortunate that, in the exigencies of war, the British Government was unable to make their intention clear to the Sherif.” Writing in the early stages of the Arab rebellion that began in March and April 1936, the commissioners privileged the Sykes-Picot agreement, which amounted to a division of the spoils among the imperial victors, over the rights of the indigenous population. See, Palestine Royal Commission Report, CMD 5479 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1937), 16-22

Charles Smith observes that the dominant narrative maintained that the British fulfilled their commitment to the Arabs (the Hussein-McMahon correspondence), that the Sykes-Picot agreement did not

proceeded to conquer Ottoman territory, their government gave precedence to the Zionists and claimed that their agreements with Arabs did not include Palestine. The British would continue to argue that the McMahon-Hussein correspondence excluded Palestine from any future independent Arab state. In 1939, another British committee created to address the consequences of British and Zionist policy in Palestine concluded that McMahon did not include Palestine in any agreement with the Arabs. The British stated that in 1915, Palestine “could not be considered...as exclusive Arab territory.” Aside from the relatively small Jewish population, the British observed there was a significant Christian population. Bethlehem, for example, had a population in 1912 of “300 Moslems” and 11,000 Christians, suggesting possibly that all Arabs were Muslim. The British did acknowledge, however, that “the great majority of these Christians were no doubt Arab by race,” recognizing that an overwhelming majority of the population in Palestine then was Arab. To argue that Palestinian Arabs did not have the right to self-determination because foreign Christians and native and immigrant Jews lived in Palestine was a rationalization unacceptable to the

negate or negatively affect the British pledge concerning Arab independence after the war, and that Hussein accepted the terms of the Sykes-Picot agreement and the non-inclusion of Palestine in the future Arab state. Smith deals with the work of Isaiah Friedman (*The Question of Palestine: British-Jewish-Arab Relations, 1914-1918*) and Elie Kedourie (*In the Anglo-Arab Labyrinth: The McMahon-Husayn Correspondence and its Interpretations, 1914-1939*). Smith successfully challenges Friedman and Kedourie’s interpretation of evidence and conclusions such as Friedman’s claim that the Arabs accepted a Jewish Palestine and that “the Jews had an unalienable right to Palestine independently of Arab wishes.” Smith demonstrates that Friedman grossly “manipulate[s] sources...in order to reach his conclusions.” He also observes that Friedman argues that the Zionists promoted “legitimate” European interests in the Near East, which essentially amounts to an apologia for European imperialism and a denial of Palestinian rights in order to justify the Zionist project in Palestine. According to Smith, both Kedourie and Friedman maintain that Hussein accepted the Balfour Declaration, but neglect that the British presentation of the declaration to Hussein differed markedly from its content since the British assured Hussein of “the political and economic freedom of the Arab population” and that the British representative reported that Hussein “would not accept an independent Jew state in Palestine nor was I instructed to warn him that such a State was contemplated by Great Britain.” While the British and Zionist spoke ambiguously about Palestine to the Arabs, they were quite clear that Zionism meant a Jewish state and the expropriation and expulsion of the indigenous population. Overall, Smith concludes that any interpretation that claim that the Arabs recognized a Jewish Palestine during World War I as a mangling of evidence for political purposes, including the defense of Western imperialism and colonialism. Charles Smith, “The Invention of a Tradition: The Question of Arab Acceptance of the Zionist Right to Palestine During World War I,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 22, No 2 (Winter 1993), 48-61.

majority population. The real issue is an imperialist one: the Christian powers had interests in Palestine and consequently the right to assert their claims despite the right to self-determination of the population. From a religious perspective, the British made the claim that Palestine was more important to Christians and Jews than to followers of Islam. The Committee concluded nonetheless that “In the opinion of the Committee it is, however, evident from these statements that His Majesty's Government were not free to dispose of Palestine without regard for the wishes and interests of the inhabitants of Palestine.” In the pursuit of imperialist aims through the support of Zionism, the British failed in their responsibility to the self-determination of Palestinian Arabs.²⁷

The allied powers also made secret agreements regarding the disposition of territory belonging to the Central Powers. With the secret Sykes-Picot agreement signed in May 1916, the British, the French, and the Russians colluded to divide the spoils of the Ottoman Empire. This Allied agreement designated Palestine as an international zone given its religious significance to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.²⁸ On 2 November 1917, Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour²⁹ wrote to Lord Lionel Rothschild that

²⁷ Cavendish quoted in Davidson, *America's Palestine*, 11-12; Bustami, 174-185; *Report of a Committee Set up to Consider Certain Correspondence Between Sir Henry McMahon and the Sharif of Mecca in 1915 and 1916* (H.M. Stationary Office, 1939); *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol 44, 323-324.

²⁸ For map of Sykes-Picot Agreement, see http://www.passia.org/palestine_facts/MAPS/1916-sykes-picot-agreement.html (last accessed 12 November 2011). For text, see <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/232358bacbeb7b55852571100078477c?OpenDocument&Highlight=0,sykes,picot> (accessed 5 August 2011). See also, Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 243-275

²⁹ Balfour stated a month prior to his letter to Rothschild that a “national home” as he understood it meant

Some form of British, American or other protectorate, under which full facilities would be given to the Jews to work out their own salvation and the build up, by means of education, agriculture, and industry, a real centre of national culture and focus of national life. It did not necessarily involve the early establishment of an independent Jewish State, which was a matter for gradual development in accordance with the ordinary laws of political evolution.

Rhett informs us that some British officials who endorsed the Balfour Declaration saw the Jewish entity in Palestine as part of the British empire and consequently, did not support the establishment of a Jewish state. Zionist goals, however, were quite clear. It is worth noting that the British failed to consider the rights and opinions of the indigenous population in Palestine.

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 have been submitted to and approved by the cabinet

"His Majesty's Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use its best endeavors 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 of Jews in any other country."

I should be grateful if you would bring this Declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist federation.³⁰

³⁰ Ould-Mey argues that the British and the Russians had been competing over Eastern European and Russian Jews. British plans for Palestine were based on Jewish colonization, and Russian and Eastern European Jews were to be the settlers (while western Jews would provide the financial resources). When the Bolsheviks ascended to power by October 1917, the British Balfour Declaration, announced on 2 November 1917) was an attempt to attract Russian Jews to Zionism. Ould-Mey, "The Non-Jewish Origin of Zionism" and "Geopolitical Genesis of Herzlian Zionism." The members of the Peel Commission accepted the interpretation that British support for Zionism was undertaken to gain Jewish support for the Allied cause at a critical juncture. Lloyd George testified to the Peel Commission that "Jewish sympathy or the reverse would make a substantial difference one way or the other to the Allied cause" and that the Zionists fulfilled their end of the Balfour Declaration by "do[ing] their best to rally Jewish sentiment and support throughout the world to the Allied cause." The commissioners determined that "the fact that the Balfour Declaration was issued in 1917 in order to enlist Jewish support for the Allies and the fact that this support was forthcoming are not sufficiently appreciated in Palestine." Furthermore, the Peel report complained that "the Arabs do not appear to realize...that the present position of the Arab world as a whole is mainly due to the great sacrifices made by the Allies and Associated Powers in the War" and that the Balfour Declaration helped determine the Allied victory and the "emancipation of all the Arab countries." Such an interpretation ignored the role of the Arabs in the British campaign in the Near East, exaggerated the Zionist role in the war, and masked the imperialist nature of the war itself and the Balfour Declaration. Because the imperialist powers fought a devastating war amongst themselves for colonies and empire, the Arabs should thank the victors and allow them to carve colonies out of their land in contravention of the Allied war aims? While Zionists and their supporters often mentioned that some Arabs fought with the Turks (as a justification for dismissing Arab claims), they seemed to forget that Jews fought for the Central Powers as well or recognize that such a claim was meaningless as it was for the Arabs. Regardless, by what rights did the British and French have to divide the Ottoman empire amongst themselves and by what rights did the British have to promise Palestine to the Zionists? The members of the Peel Commission simply attempted to justify a clearly imperialist policy.

Antonius recognized that such interpretations emphasizing the role of the Balfour Declaration in the Allied victory overlooked British imperial interests. Antonius dismisses certain explanations for the Balfour Declaration, including arguments that Jews were responsible for bringing the U.S. into the war or that the Balfour Declaration was a reward to Weizmann for his contributions to the war effort. Instead, Antonius contends that the British goals were strategic: gain support from Central and Eastern European Jews (before the Germans published their own pro-Zionist declaration) and ensure that Britain would control Palestine after the war (through a European Jewish proxy). Consequently, Antonius understood British and Zionist assertions that the British had no imperial interests in Palestine, but only supported Zionism on humanitarian and idealist grounds as propaganda. For Antonius' discussion of the Balfour Declaration, see Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 260-267. See also, Palestine Royal Commission Report, CMD 5479 (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1937), 22-24

For the wording of the Balfour Declaration, see *FRUS*, 1917, Supplement 2, The World War, Volume 1, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1917Supp02v01>, 317, FN1; "Zionists Get Text of Britain's Pledge," *New York Times*, 14 November 1917, 3

British policy was most certainly an imperialist one as Great Britain promised Palestine to European Jewish settlers and characterized the indigenous Arabs, who represented 90% of the population, as “non-Jewish communities,” undermining Palestinian history and political and national rights and ignoring Palestinian opposition to the Zionist project. By the middle of October 1917, Wilson, without consulting the State Department, had privately endorsed the Balfour Declaration to the British government, raising questions about the effects of Wilson’s endorsement of the Balfour Declaration on future American foreign policy.

Without question, however, Balfour’s short letter to Rothschild helped precipitate one of the most intractable conflicts of the past one hundred years.³¹

³¹ *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol 44, 44, 165, 186, 323-324, 371; Bustami, 161-162, 174-180; House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 158; Edward Said, Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, Janet Abu-Lughod, Muhammad Hallaj, Elia Zurielik, “A Profile of the Palestinian People,” in Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens, ed., *Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question* (London and New York: Verso, 2001), 235-296. For Montagu quote, see Rhett, 195-196. Rhett discusses the complex processes leading to ten drafts of the declaration that preceded the final form sent to Rothschild. Rhett points out that the wording of the Balfour Declaration anticipates the Israeli Law of Return established in 1950. An earlier draft that favored a “National Home for the Jewish Race” stated that “nothing shall be done which may prejudice...the rights and political status enjoyed in any other country by such Jews who are fully contented with their existing nationality or citizenship” (emphasis mine). The final wording of the Balfour Declaration allowed the Zionist iteration of nationalism to be based on Judaism, which meant, as the Israeli Law of Return states, that Jews could have dual citizenship in Israel and any other state. Rhett, Chapter 5, especially 200-204.

For an example of Eastern European Jewish praise for Wilson’s support of the Balfour Declaration, see RDS 867n.01/- (30 November 1917). There were also many telegrams and resolutions sent from all over the world in support of the Balfour Declaration, the British capture of Jerusalem, and Wilson’s policy in favor of Zionism. See, for example, RDS 867n.01/5 (January 1918); RDS 867n.01/11 (8 January 1918); RDS 867n.01/14 (4 January 1918); RDS 867n.01/16 (24 January 1918); RDS 867n.01/17 (18 March 1918); RDS 867n.01/18 (2 April 1918); RDS 867n.01/19 (11 April 1918); RDS 867n.01/20 (16 April 1918). In July 1918, according to the State Department’s reply, the Zionist Organization of America sent a pamphlet to the State Department asserting that the American public unanimously supported the Balfour Declaration. At the same time, the State Department received a letter from Rabbi Henry Cohen declaring that the Jewish people opposed the Balfour Declaration. RDS 867n.01/24 (24 July 1918). One interesting telegram was from the Shanghai Zionist Association celebrating the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration and illustrating the global nature of the discourse regarding Zionism. A letter note from the American consul in Shanghai included a newspaper account of a meeting of Shanghai Zionists which celebrated the terms of the peace treaty. One speaker quoted Stephen Wise, who warned “woe unto those who seek, though it will be vainly, to avert the resettlement of the Jewish land by the Jewish people.” See RDS 867n.01/32 (1 November 1918); RDS 867n.01/74 (9 May 1919). For other Zionist telegrams commending the first anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, see RDS 867n.01/34 (12 November 1918); RDS 867n.01/35 (10 November 1918); RDS 867n.01/44 (14 November 1918); RDS 867n.01/93 (30 November 1918)

The Balfour Declaration did not incontrovertibly commit the British to a Jewish state in Palestine.³² Even Herbert Samuel acknowledged that a Jewish state was “out of the question” while “the great majority of the inhabitants are Arabs.”³³ The Zionist leadership was disappointed with the British expression of sympathy for the Zionist project. Weizmann, for example, feared that the clause referring to the “civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities” was an unnecessary one that could attribute “possible oppressive intentions to the Jews” and could “be interpreted to mean such limitations on our work as completely to cripple it.” While publicly Weizmann, other Zionists, and the British proclaimed that the declaration protected the civil and religious rights of the Arab majority, the Zionists were wary that such protection would prevent their outright conquest of the land and expulsion of the Palestinian Arab population. Zionist leaders, however, promoted the narrative that Balfour Declaration was, in the words of Herbert Adams Gibbons, “an official British sanction to the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine by means of wholesale immigration and buying up of the land.” Zionists sought the approval of the Balfour

Additionally, there were numerous telegrams from around the world supporting Arab rights in Palestine and opposing Zionism. Arab immigrants in Latin America, for example, often sent telegrams to the White House asking Wilson to live up to his principles. See, for example, RDS 867n.01/33 (2 November 1918)

In response to the Balfour Declaration, the Turkish government promised to remove restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine so long as Jewish immigrants agreed to become Ottoman citizens. See RDS 867n.01/6 (19 January 1919); RDS 867n.01/8 (24 January 1918); RDS 867n.01/9 (28 January 1918); RDS 867n.01/10 (23 February 1918). For American intelligence observations on the attitude of the Central Powers toward Zionism, see RDS 867n.01/15 (21 February 1918).

³² An obvious point is that the British were pursuing their own interests and understood Zionism as a possible tool to develop British hegemony in the region. Lloyd George told the Peel Commission:

The idea was...that a Jewish State was not to be set up immediately by the Peace Treaty without reference to the wishes of the majority of the inhabitants. On the other hand, it was contemplated that when the time arrived for according representative institutions to Palestine, if the Jews had meanwhile responded to the opportunity afforded them by the idea of a national home and had become a definite majority of the inhabitants, then Palestine would thus become a Jewish Commonwealth.

Palestine Royal Commission Report, CMD 5479 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1937), 24

³³ Early in the war, Samuel, who served as postmaster general in Asquith’s cabinet, proposed that a Jewish state in Palestine would represent the expansion of Western civilization and protect British strategic interests. He saw a Jewish state after a few generations had passed so that the Jews would gradually become the majority population. See, Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 72

Declaration from the other Allied Powers as providing international legitimacy to the Zionist project. Zionists would repeatedly contend that Allied support for the Balfour Declaration (and later the mandate for Palestine) meant that the Jewish people had a “legal” right to establish a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine. The American Zionist Bernard Rosenblatt articulated the Zionist position at a Zionist meeting in Pittsburg:

after convincing the powerful governments of Great Britain, France, and Italy, and after securing endorsement...from the President of the United States, we feel that we have won our case before the world, and that it is altogether unnecessary to expend valuable energy in order to convert a negligible opposition. The Jewish Commonwealth of Palestine is a fact and we are now fixing the boundaries of the state.

Such Zionist statements represented a concerted effort to determine the meaning of the Balfour Declaration and dominate the public discourse. While the Zionists proclaimed that the Balfour Declaration provided international legitimacy for the Jewish people to reestablish Palestine as the national home of the Jewish people, their interpretation of the British statement of policy was inconsistent with Allied war aims, the Covenant of the League of Nations, and the principles of self-government and self-determination.³⁴

³⁴ Weizmann quoted in Edward Said, Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, Janet Abu-Lughod, Muhammad Hallaj, Elia Zuriel, “A Profile of the Palestinian People,” in Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens, ed., *Blaming the Victims*, 244 and Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 207; Stevens, “Zionism as Western Imperialism,” in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 48-49; W. T. Mallison, Jr, “The Balfour Declaration: An Appraisal in International Law,” in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 61-111.

The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel (14 May 1948) stated:

In the year 5657 (1897), at the summons of the spiritual father of the Jewish State, Theodore Herzl, the First Zionist Congress convened and proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to national rebirth in its own country. This right was recognized in the Balfour Declaration of the 2nd November, 1917, and reaffirmed in the Mandate of the League of Nations which, in particular, gave international sanction to the historic connection between the Jewish people and Eretz-Israel and to the right of the Jewish people to rebuild its National Home.

Flapan writes that Weizmann was “already a legendary figure in his own time, as the architect of the Balfour Declaration.” Weizmann and other Zionist leaders certainly played a role in approaching the British and formulating the Balfour Declaration, but the Balfour’s letter to Rothschild fell short of Weizmann’s hopes. In 1915, Weizmann proposed that the British accept a ten or fifteen year protectorate over Palestine and allow “the Jews [to] take over the country.” A Jewish Palestine would promote Western civilization and protect British interest in the region. For Weizmann, this idea anticipated the mandate system, which was premised on the expansion of civilization and democratic government; he consistently iterated in his autobiography that “Jewish

Theodor Herzl and Chaim Weizmann both assiduously endeavored to fulfill the goal of the First Zionist Congress in Basle in 1897, which was “to establish a home for the Jewish people in Eretz-Israel secured under public law.”³⁵ Consequently, the Zionists consistently proclaimed that the Balfour Declaration (and later the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine) represented the fulfillment of the Basle program and enshrined Western support for the establishment of a Jewish state in international law, adding a legal justification to the Zionists’ historical and moral claims to Palestine. In the negotiations preceding the publication of the Balfour Declaration, the Zionist leadership recognized that they needed to characterize Zionism as beneficial to British strategic and imperial interests, the underlying basis for British policy during the war. Zionists desired that the British declaration of policy emphasize the historic claims of the Jewish people to Palestine (through language such as reestablish or reconstitute the Jewish National Home) and clearly articulate a concrete British commitment to the establishment of a Jewish state. While Zionist policy was based on the perceptual (and eventually real) depopulation of Palestine, the British government recognized that Allenby’s forces could not achieve British goals in the Near East without the aid and support of the Arab population. The early Zionist recommendations to the British cabinet were constructed to achieve the Zionist goal of statehood and consequently emphasized that the British would endorse that all of Palestine would be “reconstituted” as the Jewish National Home, establishing the historical right of the Jewish people to their ancient

Palestine” would serve the interests of democracy, ignoring his rejection of democracy in Palestine so long as the Arab population represented a majority.

Flapan, *Zionism and the Palestinians*, 17; Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 176-178, 186

³⁵ Zionists, their British supporters, and the Arabs all understood that “national home” was a euphemism for a Jewish state. See, for example, Ruedy, “Dynamics of Land Alienation,” and Childers, “The Wordless Wish: From Citizens to Refugees,” in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 127 n.21 and n.22, 165-202.

homeland. Importantly, early Zionist drafts of a British declaration of policy completely ignored the existence of the Palestinians.³⁶

Montagu and other anti-Zionist British Jews opposed Zionism and British support for the Zionist project on the grounds that the British policy was anti-Semitic (and would encourage anti-Semitism around the world) and that Zionism was based on the dispossession and expulsion of the indigenous population in Palestine.³⁷ Both of Montagu's objections

³⁶ This section is based on William Mallison, "The Balfour Declaration," in Abu Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 60-111. For Basle Program, see http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsources/Zionism/First_Cong_&_Basel_Program.html.

The Zionists' first proposal, "Outline of a Program for the Jewish Resettlement of Palestine in Accordance with the Aspirations of the Zionist Movement," stated in part:

The Jewish population of Palestine (which in the programme shall be taken to mean both present and future Jewish population), shall be officially recognized by the Suzerain Government as the Jewish Nation, and shall enjoy in that country full civic, national, and political rights. The Suzerain Government recognizes the desirability and necessity of a Jewish resettlement of Palestine.

This proposal also emphasized Jewish immigration and land purchase in Palestine as fundamental to the project. Claiming no knowledge of the Sykes-Picot agreement and making no mention of the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, Weizmann strongly opposed any French claims to Palestine and the internationalization of Palestine and pointedly stated that "the Jews who *went* to Palestine would go to constitute a Jewish nation, not to become Arabs or Druses or Englishmen."

See, Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 186-189

³⁷ Weizmann argued in his autobiography that the British Cabinet was committed to Zionism for religious reasons and "were completely baffled by the opposition to our plan on the part of assimilated Jews." As for the Arabs, Weizmann quoted Lord Milner as stating that "if the Arabs think that Palestine will become an Arab country, they are very much mistaken." Weizmann at this stage only technically represented English Zionists (he would become head of the WZO after the war), and he asserted that he represented the majority opinion of British Jews. Dismissing the arguments of Montagu and others, Weizmann wrote in 1917 that "whatever happens we will get to Palestine....No amount of talk by Mr. Montagu, or people like him will stem the tide." Illustrating his attitude to the Arab population of Palestine, Weizmann declared that at the time of the debate on the Balfour Declaration "the Arab problem" was not yet relevant.

Regarding Jewish opposition to the Zionist proposal to the British government, Weizmann wrote "the world" was willing in "an act of justice" to restore the Jewish people to "its original homeland," but "a well-to-do, contented and self-satisfied minority, a tiny minority, of the people in question rose in rebellion against the proposal, and exerted itself with the utmost fury to prevent the act of restitution from being consummated." For Weizmann, the Jewish people constituted a nation and "the fundamental cause of Zionism was...the ineradicable national striving of Jewry to have a home of its home—a national center, a national home with a national Jewish life." Montagu and other Jews representing "a small minority" according to Weizmann severely altered the Zionist proposal. A key point is that Weizmann demanded that the British recognize that "Palestine should be reconstituted as the National Home of the Jewish people," while the Balfour Declaration articulated that the British Government only "viewed with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people." Indeed, Weizmann hoped the statement would emphasize that Zionism meant the "reconstitution" or "reestablishment" of the Jewish commonwealth. When Sykes brought the final version to Weizmann and proclaimed, "Dr. Weizmann, it's a boy," Weizmann later recalled that "I did not like the boy at first. He was not the one I had expected. But I knew that this was a great departure." Later, the Zionists attempted to ensure that the mandate for Palestine mentioned the "historic rights" of the Jewish people to Palestine, but the British only recognized the "historical connection" of the Jewish people to Palestine.

illustrated important arguments about the injustice of both the British government's support for Zionism and the Zionist project itself. As the only Jewish cabinet member, Montagu was in a powerful position: he could resign in protest of the anti-Semitism of the British government to challenge British contentions that support for Zionism was a pro-Jewish policy. Because of Montagu's opposition, the British cabinet debated a new formulation of a public declaration that watered down the Zionist demands that the British accept "the principle that Palestine should be reconstituted as the National Home of the Jewish people," reduced the British commitment to Zionist aspirations (for the establishment of a national home) to a simple and nonbinding statement of sympathy, and included safeguard clauses for both the rights of the "non-Jewish" population in Palestine and Jews around the world. Although Zionists (including Brandeis and Weizmann) effected changes in the final publicized form of the Balfour Declaration and immediately propagandized their interpretation of British policy, Zionist leaders feared both that the British statement essentially promised nothing concrete to the Zionists and the safeguard clauses undermined the Zionist colonization and possession of Palestine, which clearly would negatively affect the indigenous population.³⁸

In interpreting the Balfour Declaration, the Zionists commonly ignored the safeguard clauses and privileged the preamble and first clause sympathizing with Zionist aspirations and favoring the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. Weizmann clearly understood that a British protectorate was necessary to establish a Jewish state. In this early stage, Zionists did not have the forces necessary to overcome the opposition of the Arab and

Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 178-180, 192, 200-201, 203-208, 279-280

³⁸ As Mallison observes, Montagu anticipated that a Jewish state would develop discriminatory citizenship and immigration policy, such as the Law of Return. Claude Montifiore, another Jewish opponent of Zionism, emphasized that anti-Semites supported Zionism and proclaimed that the protection of Jewish rights as citizens of nations around the world was much more important than a Jewish national home.

Jewish majorities in Palestine that opposed Zionism and a Jewish state.³⁹ Zionists further misrepresented the intent and substance of the declaration in their interpretation that the British made a legally binding commitment to establishing Palestine as a Jewish state.

Weizmann himself acknowledged a decade later that

The Balfour Declaration of 1917 was built on air, and a foundation had to be laid for it through years of exacting work; 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 Organisation? Where are they, your Zionists?” For these people think in terms different from ours. The Jews, they knew, were against us.

Since the Balfour Declaration fell short of Zionist demands, Weizmann determined that “it would mean exactly what we would make it mean—neither more nor less.” He continued: On what we would make it mean, through slow, costly and laborious work, would depend whether and when we should deserve or attain statehood.” Consequently, the Zionists would consistently argue the supremacy of the favor clause over the safeguard clauses and assert that the British made a binding commitment to the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth in all of Palestine (including Trans-Jordan).⁴⁰

³⁹Childers, “The Wordless Wish,” 170, n.20 and n.21; Flapan, *Zionism and the Palestinians*, 84 n.6. Arthur Ruppin acknowledged that in 1914, two-thirds of the Jews in Palestine opposed Zionism.

⁴⁰With the British announcement of the Balfour Declaration, Ben-Gurion declared that “the greatest state in the world has announced its official recognition of the existence of a Hebrew nation, and has committed itself to aid in the establishment of a National Home in Palestine,” which he understood as a Jewish state, an interpretation that perhaps exaggerated the stated British commitment. Similarly, during the partition debate, the Jewish Agency maintained:

The phrase “the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people” was intended and understood by all concerned to mean at the time of the Balfour Declaration that Palestine would ultimately become a “Jewish commonwealth” or a “Jewish state,” if only Jews came there and settled in sufficient numbers.

But as Mallison illustrates, the British cabinet, the anti-Zionist Jews, and the Palestinians would have challenged such a statement that the Balfour Declaration meant any such thing and that a Jewish state was an acceptable outcome. (Adnan Abu-Ghazaleh notes that Mohammed Yunis al-Husseini would write during the mandate period that the British had no moral or legal right to promise Palestine to the Zionists.) Balfour, Lloyd George, and the Zionists, however, clearly understood that the intent of the Balfour Declaration was a Jewish state, and as Balfour noted later, the opinions of the Palestinian Arabs were inconsequential to the formulation of British policy. Childers argues that the language of the first safeguard clause, especially the use of “non-Jewish communities” and the absence of political rights, allowed the Zionists to delegitimize Arab rights to and in Palestine. He makes an interesting observation regarding the absence of the article “the” before “existing

In his juridical interpretation of the Balfour Declaration, William Mallison challenges the Zionist position and argues that Montagu and the other anti-Zionist Jews would not have accepted an articulation of British policy that supported the political aims of the Zionists. Instead, Mallison suggests that a more accurate interpretation of the favor clause, based on the debate preceding the announcement of British policy, “is that it is a humanitarian measure to allow Jewish refugees to immigrate to Palestine.” Such a juridical and humanitarian interpretation complemented the two safeguard clauses. The “Jewish people” in the favor clause did not mean Zionists because the “purpose of the second safeguard is to

non-Jewish communities.” Recognizing that the Zionists had not written the safeguard clause and had opposed it, Erskine wonders if the wording implied removal of some of the Arabs in Palestine, suggesting that the clause meant the protection of those “non-Jewish communities” that were still in Palestine after expulsion or transfer. Lord Boothby, a friend of Weizmann and supporter of Zionism, told the BBC in 1964 that the “the original Balfour Declaration had made provisions for the Arabs to be moved elsewhere, more or less.” Weizmann’s widow and a senior scholar at the Weizmann Archives supported Boothby’s statement. It is quite clear that Zionists had long understood the expropriation and expulsion of the Arabs as fundamental to the Zionist project and that Herzl and Weizmann repeatedly suggested that the Palestinian Arabs could fulfill their nationalist aspirations in other Arab territories. The program of Jewish labor and inalienable Jewish land ownership were clearly premised on creating an exclusionist Jewish state, and Zionist leaders privately discussed transfer proposals and planned for ridding the territory of Arabs. Until the latter stages of the mandate period, the Zionists looked to the British to remove the indigenous population; only by the late 1940s were the Zionists prepared to effect expulsion and conquer Palestine.

The Israeli historian Benny Morris offers a different interpretation than Mallison and acknowledges that the Zionists were pursuing a Jewish state, despite public pronouncements to the contrary:

The key term, “national home,” was clearly a euphemism for “commonwealth” or “state.” All the declaration’s architects believed that a state would emerge once the Jews had attained a majority in Palestine. In internal correspondence Zionist officials spoke at the time of their hope for “a Jewish state in Palestine.”

Additionally, delegates determined at a conference in December 1918 that the Zionist movement meant a Jewish state. Importantly, the Zionists usually refrained from delimiting the borders of their future state, but Ben-Gurion and Yitzhak Ben-Zvi published a book in Yiddish in 1918 that described the Jewish state as including territory in present-day Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and the Sinai Peninsula. British and Zionist officials would argue that if the Arabs gained their independence from the Turks (through British conquest), then they would not begrudge a sliver of Palestine to the Zionists. As Zionists would reiterate throughout the mandate period, the issue of Palestine was not simply between the present Arab and Jewish inhabitants, but between the world’s Jews and the larger Arab nation. A common argument was that the Arabs had a great territory while the Jewish people had none. This framing of the conflict was designed to delegitimize Palestinian Arab nationalism and forestall any majority-rule in Palestine until the Jewish population was larger than the Arab. See, Teveth, *Ben-Gurion and the Palestinians*, 33, 70-71; Jewish Agency for Palestine, *Book of Documents Submitted to the General Assembly of the United Nations*, ed. Abraham Tulin (New York, 1947), 5 as cited in Mallison, “The Balfour Declaration,” in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 85. See also, Childers, “The Wordless Wish,” 171ff.; Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 75, 78-79; Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 242; Adnan Abu-Ghazaleh, “Arab Cultural Nationalism in Palestine during the British Mandate,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*. Vol 1, No 3 (Spring 1972), 37-63

prevent the involuntary inclusion of Jews in this claimed [Zionist] constituency.” Montagu did not support political Zionism and would not have acquiesced in a British policy that equated the Jewish people with Zionists and privileged Zionist political goals. Just as important, a humanitarian understanding of the favor clause would complement the first safeguard clause which focused on protecting the existing rights of the Palestinians. An interpretation that the British were committed to political Zionism and the creation of a Jewish state, on the other hand, would clearly “prejudice” the existing rights of the indigenous population, which the Balfour Declaration described as the “non-Jewish communities.” Such a humanitarian interpretation of the favor clause was also more consistent with the Covenant of the League of Nations, British pledges to the Arabs, the Anglo-French Declaration, and Wilsonianism. Recall that after the proclamation of the Balfour Declaration, the British assured Hussein that “Jewish settlement in Palestine would only be allowed in so far as would be consistent with the political and economic freedom of the Arab population” and other Arab leaders that the British were committed to the principle of self-government for all the liberated territories in the Ottoman empire. Both pronouncements precluded a Jewish state and again complemented the humanitarian interpretation of the favor clause.⁴¹

Zionists completely dismissed the first safeguard clause in the Balfour Declaration. The existence of the Palestinians was an obstacle to the Zionist colonization project, and as the material in this dissertation illustrates, Zionists have consistently dehumanized the Palestinian Arabs and denied and violated their fundamental human rights. Since the

⁴¹ Mallison, “The Balfour Declaration,” 88-89; Antonious, *Arab Awakening*, 267-268, 433-434. Ahad Ha’am acknowledged that the British did not want “to promise anything which might injure the present inhabitants of Palestine” and consequently “[refused] to make the Jewish people the absolute rule of the country.” Mayer, *Ploughshares into Swords*, 100

Zionists were unable to prevent the inclusion of this safeguard clause in the Balfour Declaration, Zionist propagandists interpreted the protection of the “non-Jewish communities” in such a restrictive way as to make the clause meaningless.⁴² In an interpretation that is inconsistent with the historical record on the Balfour Declaration, the Zionist Leonard Stein proposed in his history of the Balfour Declaration:

It is not quite clear whether the rather curious expression “existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine” was meant to refer to the Arabs or whether this part of the proposed declaration was directed primarily to the position of the various Christian communities, whose traditional rights were of special concern to the French and Italian Governments and to the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches.⁴³

Through his discussion of the debate preceding the pronouncement of the Balfour Declaration, Mallison argues that the anti-Zionist Jews and the British government “believed

⁴² Given Zionist opposition to the inclusion of the first safeguard clause in the Balfour Declaration, Mallison observes, Zionist interpretations limiting the rights of the Palestinians under that clause are suspect.

⁴³ Note that Stein’s construction implies that all Arabs were Muslim, ignoring the significant Christian Arab population in Palestine. The Balfour Declaration was not as ambiguous as Stein pretended. Mallison argues that the only logical juridical position was that the phrase “non-Jewish communities” applied to all the inhabitants of Palestine who were not Jewish. As we’ll see below, most Zionists asserted that the clause regarding the establishment of a Jewish national home was the primary clause that took precedence over the clause protecting Arab rights. Zionists framed their argument as congruent with international law. Many Zionist commentators determined that the indigenous Arab population had no political rights in Palestine and that the Jewish state would protect their “civil and religious rights.” Mallison observes that even accepting the restrictive interpretation of the Zionists regarding the first safeguard clause, Zionist actions and policies during the mandate era were often still clear violations of Palestinian rights. Given that the mandate was still enshrined in international law after the creation of the state of Israel, the Israeli government’s oppression of Arabs both within Israel proper and the Occupied Territories is clear violation of international law and the rights of the “non-Jewish communities.” Despite Zionist claims that international law supported the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine, Zionists and the Israeli government have long violated international law, usually through the aid of a Western power. Zionist leaders clearly violated even the UNGA resolution that partitioned Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state through the conquering of territory beyond the partition agreement. While Israel would consistently refer to the Balfour Declaration to justify Zionist policy, Mallison observes that the Israeli government articulated in 1949 that “it is the view of the Government of Israel that, generally speaking, treaties to which Palestine was a party, or which the Mandatory Government had applied to Palestine, are not in force in relation to the Government of Israel.” As Mallison points out, the Zionists continue to ignore the safeguard clauses of the Balfour Declaration. We’ll discuss below how the UNGA partition plan was a violation of the UN Charter and a violation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian peoples, rights which continue to be ignored despite repeated affirmations by the UNGA that Palestinians, whether in Israel, the Occupied Territories, or refugees around the world, have the right to their home. See Mallison, “The Balfour Declaration”

For Zionist arguments dismissing the safeguard clause, see, for example, Stephen Wise and Jacob de Haas, *The Great Betrayal* (New York: Brentano’s Publishers, 1930) and Louis Gribetz, *The Case for the Jews: An Interpretation of Their Rights under the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate for Palestine* (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1930)

it essential to protect the existing rights of the Palestinians.” Referring to judicial precedent, Mallison asserts that in cases where “the beneficiaries, like the Palestinians in the Balfour Declaration, have no direct negotiating or decisional role,” the “applicable criteria” in interpreting the declaration in regard to the “non-Jewish communities” was the “universally admitted principles of justice and right dealing.” In addition, Mallison observes that in international law, “immoral obligations” in international treaties or agreements are nonbinding. Based on that principle, Mallison concludes that the Zionist project was immoral since it was clearly based on the violation of Palestinian rights. The Covenant of the League of Nations also clearly stated that any agreements in violation of the principles of the League covenant (including the right of self-government) was invalid. Importantly, Mallison concludes that the safeguards “have to be accorded priority over the favor clause since they protected existing rights which the British government had no legal authority to change, or even to “prejudice,” as provided in the declaration.” Contrary to Zionist claims, Mallison concludes that the Zionist interpretation of the Balfour Declaration “has always been inconsistent with both the wording and the meaning of the declaration.”⁴⁴

⁴⁴ The Zionists also opposed the second safeguard clause, which ensured the protection of the rights of Jews in all nations. Mallison argues that “there is no evidence which suggests that the word ‘political’ was employed in the second safeguard to reduce the Palestinian rights which were protect in the first.” Zionists also endeavored to misinterpret the second safeguard clause. Nathan Feinberg, who was a member of the law faculty at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, argued that the second safeguard clause was designed to protect Zionist Jews who were promoting Zionist political goals. Such an interpretation is completely at odds with the formation of this safeguard. The anti-Zionist Jews were adamant that such a safeguard be included in the British statement of policy and the Zionists opposed both safeguards.

While the British had no “legal authority” to make a commitment to the Zionists that was predicated on changing the status quo in Palestine, the mandate for Palestine provided international legitimacy to the Balfour Declaration. Importantly, however, the Zionist program was a clear violation of the League of Nations Covenant, and Zionists consequently iterated that all the Jewish people of the world were included in the clauses of the Covenant protecting the rights of people inhabiting the mandated territories. Weizmann and others often made such an argument when opposing self-government based upon the existing population within Palestine. For Weizmann, since all the Jewish people had the right to live in Palestine, any arrangement for self-government that allowed for an Arab majority was an injustice.

Gibbons warned in early 1919 about the inconsistency between Zionism and the principles of self-government and self-determination:

If the peace conference decides to restore the Jews to Palestine, immigration into and development of the country can be assured only by the presence of a considerable army for an indefinite period. Not only the half million Moslems living in Palestine, but the millions in surrounding countries, will have to be cowed into submission by the constant show and the occasional use of force.

But how can we reconcile such a policy in Palestine with the principles for the *world-wide* maintenance of which we have announced that we are fighting? Is the peace conference to give with one hand and take away with the other? We have made the issues of this conflict the triumph of right over force and the liberation of small nations from the yoke of the foreigner. Each race is to be consulted in regard to its own destinies. If we consult the Palestinian Arabs, the Christian as well as Moslem, we shall find them *unanimous* in their desire, their determination, not to have Zionism foisted upon them. They comprise over eighty per cent of the population of Palestine. Even in the Jewish minority there is strong anti-Zionist element, for Jewry is no more united than are Christendom and Islam....

In the Near East, as in the Far East, arrogance, insolence, indifference to the political and *social* rights of “natives” *in their own countries* will have to go the way of ante-bellum diplomacy. If we do not change radically our attitude toward *all* Asiatic races, the present war is nothing to what is coming, and in the twentieth century, too.⁴⁵

Wilson’s Secretary of State Robert Lansing and close confidant and advisor Colonel Edward House warned Wilson that a Jewish homeland in Palestine meant a denial of self-determination for Arabs. House feared that that British and French extension of European imperialism into the Middle East was “making [it] a breeding place for future war.” On 13 December 1917, Lansing wrote the following to Wilson

There is being brought considerable pressure for the issuance of a declaration in regard to this Government’s attitude as to the disposition to be made of Palestine. This emanates naturally from the Zionist element of the Jews.

My judgment is that we should go very slowly in announcing a policy for three reasons. First, we are not at war with Turkey and therefore should avoid any appearance of favoring taking territory from that Empire by force. Second, the Jews are by no means a unit in the desire to reestablish their race as an independent people; to favor one or the other faction would seem to be unwise. Third, many Christian

⁴⁵ Herbert Adams Gibbons, “Zionism and the World Peace,” *Century*, XCVII (January 1919), quoted in Stevens, “Zionism as Western Imperialism,” in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 52-53.

sects and individuals would undoubtedly resent turning the Holy Land over to the absolute control of the race credited with the death of Christ.

For practical purposes I do not think that we need go further than the first reason given since that is ample ground for declining to announce a policy in regard to the final disposition of Palestine.⁴⁶

According to Lansing, Wilson responded that “very unwillingly he was forced to agree with me, but said that he had an impression that we had assented to the Balfour Declaration regarding delivering Palestine to the Jews.”⁴⁷ The British claimed that their policy merely meant the British would “put the Jews in Palestine on the same footing as other nationalities,” but the U.S. was already well aware that the Balfour Declaration committed Britain to a Jewish state in Palestine. The Zionists themselves were adamant that, in the words of Jacobus H. Kann, Chairman of Committee of the Zionist World organization at the Hague, “we demand that Palestine shall again become the country of the Jews.” On 28 February 1918, Lansing, in response to a request from the Zionist Committee based in New York City for U.S. government support for American Zionists to travel to Palestine with Weizmann⁴⁸ and recognition of a Zionist medical unit to go to Palestine to serve the civilian

⁴⁶ RDS 867n.01/13 ½ (13 December 1917); United States Department of State, *Papers relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States. The Lansing papers, 1914-1920 (in two volumes)*, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS19141920v2>, 71; see also, Bustami, 181-182; Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 73. In mid-November, vice consul Samuel Edelman reported his reservations about the “Zionist agitation,” and included as one of his primary arguments the idea expressed by Lansing that Christians would not acquiesce in the Jewish control of Palestine. Moreover, Edelman also pointed out that Arabs were the predominant majority in Palestine and that many Western Jews did not consider the Jewish people a nation, but followers of Judaism. While opposing the Zionist project and the bestowment of special privileges on Jewish immigrants to Palestine, Edelman determined that the Ottomans should no longer control Palestine and that a “civilized” nation with a “thorough mastery of Oriental governments,” such as Great Britain, should govern Palestine. Edelman noted that American interests in Palestine were “negligible” and predicted that the British would discontinue its support for Zionism once the war was over, suggesting the British pledge was simply a wartime contingency. While Zionists presented their case as fulfilling Wilsonian principles, Edelman warned that creating an autonomous Jewish state in Palestine was a clear violation of government by the consent of the governed. He concluded that “a Jewish state should never be tolerated.” RDS 867n.01/1 (15 November 1917)

⁴⁷ RDS 867n.01/13 ½ (13 December 1917)

⁴⁸ The Weizmann Commission’s goals were to aid and develop the colonies, assist with repatriation, to make a survey and plan for permanent future development, complete land purchases, investigate the establishment of a Jewish university, and to “create harmonious relationships with neighbors [meaning Arabia] and allied interests.” Once in Palestine, Weizmann told the U.S. Hampson Gary that one of the goals of the

population there, again warned Wilson about supporting the Zionist movement. Lansing argued that the U.S. had never officially endorsed the Balfour Declaration and reminded Wilson that the U.S. was not at war with Turkey and that the Zionists had clear political goals for Palestine. Importantly, during the summer of 1918, Zionists continued to press Turkey to accept the charter for a Jewish colonization company, which would allow for unlimited Jewish immigration and virtually autonomous independence for a Jewish Palestine. In August 1918, American Zionists asked Wilson for a public statement supporting the Zionist project. Rabbi Wise represented the American Zionists and promised the president that American support for the Zionist movement and the Balfour Declaration did not limit U.S. policy regarding Palestine's future government at the peace conference. By the end of August, Wilson, again without discussing matters with Lansing's State Department and despite opposition of some Arab-Americans, issued a public statement endorsing the Zionist movement and the Balfour Declaration to the approval of the Zionists.⁴⁹

commission was to explain Zionism to the Arabs and asserted that once the Palestinians understood Zionism, their opposition would dissipate. Weizmann reassured Gary that "nothing in Zionist aims or plans" would negatively affect the indigenous inhabitants.

On this trip, Weizmann began to criticize the British army's hesitancy to support Zionist aims (as counter to international law regarding occupied territories during wartime) as illustrative of anti-Semitism. Weizmann would argue that the British military officials even agitated the Arabs to oppose the Zionist project, a point discussed further below. He even proposed that "the Arab question at the time seemed to give no grounds for anxiety. Such prominent Arab spokesmen as there were had more or less acquiesced in the policy; at any rate, they made no protest."

Weizmann had this to say about diplomacy with Arabs:

The Arab is a very subtle debator and controversialist...and until one has acquired the technique one is at a great disadvantage. In particular, the Arab has an immense talent for expressing views diametrically opposed to yours with such exquisite and roundabout politeness that you believe him to be in complete agreement with you, and ready to join hands with you at once. Conversations and negotiations with Arabs are not unlike chasing a mirage in the desert: full of promise and good to look at, but likely to lead you to death by thirst.

RDS 867n.01/14 ½ (28 February 1918); RDS 867n.01/23 (1 July 1918). For Weizmann's description of the commission's difficulties in Palestine, see RDS 867.n01/82 (20 June 1919). See also, Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 211-239

⁴⁹ RDS 867n.01/2a (15 December 1917); 867n.01/2 (21 December 1917); RDS 867n.01/3 (1 December 1919); RDS 867n.01/7 (12 February 1918); RDS 867n.01/12 ½ (2 June 1917); RDS 867n.01/14 ½ (28 February 1918); RDS 867n.01/25 (20 July 1918); RDS 867n.01/26 (27 September 1918); RDS 867n.01/27 (26 September 1918); United States Department of State, *Papers relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States. The*

One example of early Arab-American opposition to Zionism and the Balfour Declaration was the Palestine Anti-Zionism Society, based in New York City. Dr. F. I. Shatara, the corresponding secretary of the Palestine Anti-Zionism Society, wrote the State Department that Zionism was a violation of Wilson's principles and the Allied powers war aims and that Palestinians feared dispossession and Jewish political and economic

Lansing papers, 1914-1920 (in two volumes), <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS19141920v2>, 107-109; see also, Bustami, 181-183, 185. Throughout the war, Zionists pressured the U.S. government to allow the Zionist Committee to send a medical unit to Palestine and relief efforts for Jews in Palestine were a central component of State Department correspondence during the war years. For example, see *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1916, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1916Supp>, 937; *FRUS*, 1918, Supplement 2, The World War, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1918Supp02>, 547-563. For Wilson's statement supporting the Balfour Declaration, see *Papers of Woodrow Wilson* Vol 49, 31 August 1918. For Kann quote, see RDS 867n.01/15 (21 February 1918).

There was Jewish opposition to Wilson's public statement, which the Zionists simply dismissed as unrepresentative of American Jews. In a letter to Wilson, Louis Grossman, a rabbi from Cincinnati argued that American support for Zionism and the Balfour Declaration violated the Constitution's call for the separation of church and state and raised questions about the citizenship and loyalty of Jewish Americans. Some Zionists went so far as to claim that the British made the Balfour Declaration only after canvassing world Jewish opinion and that Wilson spoke for all Americans when he declared his personal approval of the Balfour Declaration. While recognizing that Zionism was popular in the U.S. and Great Britain, there was hardly any public mention that opposition to Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe and Russia was at the heart of American and British Jewish support for Zionism. See, "Protest to Wilson on Zionist Message," *New York Times*, 6 September 1918, 9; "Rabbis Preach on Lessons from War," *New York Times*, 8 September 1918, 12; "Sees Danger in Zionism," *New York Times*, 14 September 1918, 7; "Zionists Acclaim Downfall of Turks," *New York Times*, 30 September 1918, 7; RDS 867n.01/28 (September 1918).

Interestingly, Lansing warned that the French and the British would pursue their imperial interests at the peace conference and had in fact collaborated with other in pursuit of their goals. Since, Lansing asserted, the U.S. had no selfish interests or territorial ambitions, the U.S. had the upper hand at the negotiating table. The U.S., therefore, ought to be wary of any British and French effort to convince the U.S. to accept a protectorate or mandate over any territory in Africa, the Pacific, Armenia, or Palestine, which would undermine the American terms for peace. In fact, the British High Commissioner in Egypt, Sir Reginald Wingate, unofficially recommended to U.S. consul Hampson Gary that the U.S. take Palestine as a protectorate. In December 1917, Lord Robert Cecil informally told the U.S. ambassador that the European powers would all agree to support a U.S. protectorate over Palestine. House wrote to Wilson along the same lines on 30 October 1918. The British argued that Germany should lose their territories because of their harsh treatment of the native populations, a qualification that would preclude further British control of any colonial areas. Lloyd George queried House about the possibility of the U.S. taking German East Africa as a protectorate. The British demanded German Southwest Africa for South Africa and German South Pacific colonies for Australia to prevent revolutions against Britain. Britain would gain control of Palestine and Mesopotamia, while Arabia could have autonomy. The French may get a part of Syria. House saw British attempts to get the U.S. to accept territory as a means for the British to pursue colonies without any check from Wilson. At a meeting of representatives of the U.S., Great Britain, Japan, France, and Italy on 24 January 1919, representatives of the British dominions in South Africa, New Zealand, and Australia made their cases for the annexation of former German colonies in Africa and the Pacific. Importantly, the *New York Times* reported on 9 January 1919 that House promised Weizmann that the U.S. would support the implementation of the Balfour Declaration during the peace conference. See *FRUS*, 1919, Paris Peace Conference, Volume 1, 296, 407; *FRUS*, 1919, Paris Peace Conference, Volume III, 718-728; "League First Subject of Paris Discussions," *New York Times*, 9 January 1919, 3; RDS 867n.01/21 (25 April 1918); RDS 867n.01/2 (21 December 1917)

domination. Fearing that only the Zionist side had received a hearing since many Arabs did not believe the Zionist plan articulated in the Basle program had any chance of success, the Palestine Anti-Zionism Society pressed Wilson to adhere to his principle regarding self-determination for small nations. Shatara pointed out the injustice of either giving Palestine to the Zionists “outright,” or allowing unrestricted Jewish immigration to Palestine so that the Jewish population would become a majority. He also challenged the religious and historical arguments in favor of establishing a Jewish national home in Palestine, stating that Christians and Muslims had “better and stronger claims” to the Holy Land and that conquest in ancient times was a dangerous precedent for establishing title to land. Shatara further maintained that even if a few million European Jews immigrated to Palestine, that would hardly solve the West’s Jewish problem since a majority of the Jewish people would remain outside of Palestine. In conclusion, Shatara appealed to the “American sense of justice and fair play.” The State Department merely acknowledged receipt of Shatara’s letter.⁵⁰

Palestinian Christians in Chile appealed to Wilson before the peace conference as well. Championing the Arab right to self-determination and independence, the Chilean Pro-Palestine Committee questioned the legitimacy of both the Zionist claims to Palestine and to a Jewish national identity. Appealing to Wilsonian principles, especially noting that “all governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed,” the Chilean Palestinians argued that Zionism was a violation of “the ideas of right and justice.” The Pro-Palestine Committee also appealed to Wilson’s Christianity and American perceptions of Palestine as a Christian holy land, asking how Wilson could support the creation of a Jewish state “in the heart of an essentially Christian country.” Palestinians in Mexico also protested the cession of Palestine to Russian, Polish, French, German, Spanish, and American Jews at

⁵⁰ RDS 867n.01/37 (23 November 1918)

the expense of the rights of the indigenous Palestinian population as a violation of Wilsonian principles. No “ethnic, historical, geographical, or any other rational reasons” justify the Zionist project and the imposition of a Jewish state in Palestine. Despite the logic of the Palestine Anti-Zionism Society’s arguments and the appeals of the Chilean Pro-Palestine Committee, the Zionist religious and historical claims appealed to many Americans, including Woodrow Wilson.⁵¹

Religion helped convince Wilson of the rightness of Zionism. He mused: “To think that I, a son of the manse, should be able to help restore the Holy Land to its people.” By the mid-19th century, prominent American Protestants articulated millennial ideas that the Jews needed to return to Palestine for the Second Coming to take place. In 1891, evangelical Christian and Zionist supporter William Eugene Blackstone petitioned President Benjamin Harrison and Secretary of State James Blaine for the “use of their good offices and influence with the governments of the European world to secure the holding at an early date of an international conference to consider the condition of the Israelites and their claims to Palestine as their ancient home” that was signed by 413 well-known Americans, including the Speaker of the House, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, J. P. Morgan, and John D. Rockefeller. The Zionists themselves claimed the right to colonize Palestine on Biblical grounds. Herzl, in his address to the Second Zionist Congress on 28 August 1898, asserted that “if there is such a thing as a legitimate claim to a portion of the earth’s surface, all people who believe in the Bible must recognize the rights of the Jews.” Wilson’s support for Zionism was discreet because support for the Balfour Declaration obviously meant a British protectorate in Palestine and large scale European immigration to Palestine. Since the U.S. was not at war with the Ottoman Empire, any overt support for the Balfour Declaration

⁵¹ RDS 867n.01/49 (3 December 1918); RDS 867n.01/83 (25 November 1918)

would possibly threaten American missionaries and other interests in the Ottoman Empire. After the war, Zionists interpreted the Balfour Declaration and Wilson's sympathy for the Zionist movement as "assurance of the re-establishment of a Jewish State." At the first Jewish Congress in the U.S., Louis Marshall asserted that "the question of Palestine ... is a settled question. The action of England and the other Allied countries endorsing the project of making a political state out of Palestine will undoubtedly receive the support of the whole civilized world." As Wilson sailed onboard the *George Washington* toward Europe and the peace conference, Rabbi Dr. H. Pereira Mendes appealed to the president's religious views with the statement that "Zionism is a movement not just for a home for the Jews but for the benefaction of the world, according to the Bible, the true source of Zionism."⁵²

⁵² See Davidson, "The Past as Prelude," and *America's Palestine*, Ch 1; Yaakov Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel: American Fundamentalist Attitudes towards Jews, Judaism, and Zionism, 1865-1945* (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing, 1991); Ariel, "An American Initiative for a Jewish State: William Blackstone and the Petition of 1891," *Studies in Zionism*, Vol 10, No 2 (1989), 125-137; Ariel, "An Unexpected Alliance: Christian Zionism and Its Historical Significance," *Modern Judaism*, Vol 26, No 1 (February 2006), 74-100; "Zionists Acclaim Downfall of Turk," *New York Times*, 30 September 1918, 7; "Jews Plan Unity in First Congress," *New York Times*, 16 December 1918, 24; *Congress Addresses of Theodor Herzl*, 13. In a letter to the editor in 1903, Francis J. Clay Moran combined Christian Zionism with warnings about Russian expansion. The establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, Moran argued, would help solve the Russian threat and fulfill Christian prophecy. The United States should play the leading role in ending "Mohammedan oppression" of Christians and allowing the Jewish people to "restore that wasted land" of Palestine. See Francis J. Clay Moran, "The Eastern Question-Degel Zion," *New York Times*, 21 September 1903, 6. For some examples of the continued debate on Zionism in 1918, see "Wedgewood Favors Jewish Homeland," *New York Times*, 4 February 1918, 9; "See Judaism's Hope in Palestine State," *New York Times*, 11 February 1918, 4; "Sees Jews Enslaved by German Victory," *New York Times*, 1 April 1918, 8; "Patriotism Before Zionism," *New York Times*, 15 April 1918, 14; "Americanism vs. Zionism," *New York Times*, 22 December 1918, 40; RDS 867n.01/48 (8 January 1919).

Blackstone was a dispensationalist who believed that the Christian God mandated the United States to restore the Jews to Palestine so as to facilitate the Second Coming. He sought the conversion of individual Jews to Christianity and believed that the majority of Jews who established a Jewish state would suffer under the anti-Christ and only a third would survive God's final judgment. After a visit to Palestine, Blackstone described it as a "land without a people for a people without a land." In 1916, Blackstone sent another petition to Wilson asking the president to strive toward the restoration of Jews to Palestine and worked with American Zionists to lobby the U.S. government to support the Zionist cause. Again Blackstone saw Zionism simply as a means for the Second Coming and believed that the U.S. had a mission to ensure the restoration of the Jews to the Holy Land.

Interestingly, Ariel argues against the contention of Peter Grose that prominent Americans signed Blackstone's 1891 petition because of anti-Semitism and fears of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe corrupting the American body politic and in fact states that Grose's work illustrates that "anti-Semitism almost never inspired support for Jewish national restoration in Palestine." As discussed in this dissertation, State Department officials who opposed Zionism as counter to American interests in the Near East were not basing

their arguments on anti-Semitism, but on their understanding of American interests. To label their opposition to Zionism as anti-Semitism is simplistic. Moreover, American support for Zionism in part reflected nativist and anti-immigrant sentiment during this period, and Ariel overlooks that Blackstone's beliefs (and those of many contemporary Christian fundamentalists) were (and are) anti-Semitic. Blackstone's support for Zionism was to facilitate the Second Coming, which meant the destruction of most Jews. He had very little respect for Judaism, attempted to convert Jews to his version of Christianity, and clearly articulated that Jews could not be 'saved.' Ariel is contradicting his own evidence when arguing that anti-Semitism "almost never" meant support for Zionism.

Ariel, "An American Initiative for a Jewish State: William Blackstone and the Petition of 1891," *Studies in Zionism*, Vol 10, No 2 (1989), 125-137; Ariel, "William Blackstone and the Petition of 1916: A Neglected Chapter in the History of Christian Zionism in America," *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, Vol 7 (1991), 65-85.

The Bible provided a justification for the expulsion and even extermination of any non-"Chosen people" inhabiting the Promised Land and established the Jewish people as an exclusivist and exceptionalist nation. While the Zionists portrayed their movement as an exceptionalist one, Alan Taylor observes that the Zionist "vision of 'return' and regeneration is characteristic of a host of modernizing ideologies which have employed an archaic myth to galvanize a society into futuristic endeavor." See, H. S. Haddad, "The Biblical Bases of Zionist Colonialism," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 3, No 4 (Summer 1974), 97-113; Taylor, "Vision and Intent in Zionist Thought," in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 26; Roger Garaudy, "Religious and Historical Pretexts of Zionism," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 6, No 2 (Winter 1977), 41-52.

For Herzl, Zionism was premised on the expropriation and expulsion of the indigenous Arabs, whose historical claims to Palestine were immaterial. Herzl acknowledged that

We shall try to spirit the penniless population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it any employment in our own country...The property owners will come to our side. Both the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out discretely and circumspectly.

Publicly, however, Herzl maintained that Zionism would benefit the indigenous Arab population and that the Zionists had no thought of expelling them. Other Zionists, from the Revisionist Vladimir Jabotinsky to the Labor Zionist Aaron David Gordon, promoted expropriation and expulsion of the Palestinian Arab population. Gordon, a proponent of practical Zionism and a founder of Labor Zionism, argued that

If mastery of the land implies political mastery, then the Arabs long ago have forfeited their title. Turks rule the country for centuries and now the British are its rulers. If we bar the right acquired through living on the land and working it, the Arabs, like ourselves, have no other than a historic claim to the land, except that our claim beyond question is the stronger; it cannot therefore be said that we are taking the land from the Arabs. As for rights accruing from occupation and from work upon the land, we, too, live and work upon it. Between us and the Arabs the real difference is based on numbers, not on the character of our claim.

Accepting the exceptionalist nature of the Zionist project, Gordon understood the expropriation and expulsion of the indigenous population as a necessary precondition for successful Jewish colonization.

Zionists were certainly influenced by the ideology of race prevalent at the turn of the century.

Jabotinsky, for example, wrote in 1904:

The source of national feeling...lies in a man's blood...in his racio-physical type, and in that alone...a man's spiritual outlooks are primarily determined by his physical structure...For that reason we do not believe in spiritual assimilation. It is inconceivable, from the physical point of view, that a Jew born to a family of pure Jewish blood...can become adapted to the spiritual outlooks of a German or a Frenchman...He may be wholly imbued with that German fluid but the nucleus of his spiritual structure will always remain Jewish...The spiritual assimilation of peoples whose blood is different is impossible...In order to be truly assimilated he must change his body. He must become one of them in blood...he must bring into the world...over a period of many scores of years, a great-grandson in whose veins only a minute trace of Jewish blood remained...There can be no assimilation as long as there is no mixed marriage...All the nations that have disappeared (apart from those...who were massacred...) were swallowed up in the chasm of mixed marriages...autonomy in the Goliath [exile] is likely to lead...to the complete disappearance of the Jewish nation as such from the faith of the earth...Just imagine...when our offspring will be living at peace among a strange people...These conditions will lead naturally and freely to an increased in mixed marriages...this will mean the

inception of complete assimilation... Without those physical roots, the spiritual flower is bound to wither... This will mark the end of the battle waged by the Jewish people for national existence... Only they can call themselves 'nationalists' who desire to preserve national integrity for the everlasting and at all costs...

A preservation of national integrity is impossible except by a preservation of racial purity, and for that purpose we are in need of a territory of our own... If you should ask me in a sense of revolt and outrage: but surely in that case you want segregation at all costs! I would answer that one must not be afraid of words and not of the word 'segregation'. The poet, the scholar, the thinker... must cut himself off and remain alone with himself... No creativeness is possible without segregation... The nation, too, must create... a creative nation is in need of segregation... it will create new values in its segregation... it will not keep them to itself but will place them on the common international table for the general good, and so its segregation will be looked upon with favor by humanity.

Jabotinski's thought was a rejection of liberalism and had clear implications for Zionist relations with the Arab population in Palestine.

Abdul-Wahab Kayyali, "Zionism and Imperialism: The Historical Origins," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 6, No 3 (Spring 1977), 98-112; Taylor, "Vision and Intent in Zionist Thought," in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 24-25. See also, Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians*; Simons, *International Proposals to Transfer Arabs from Palestine*; Erskine B. Childers, "The Wordless Wish: From Citizens to Refugees," in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 165-202; Brenner, *The Iron Wall*, 29-30

CHAPTER 4: THE FAILURE OF THE PEACE

On 22 January 1917, Wilson presented the Senate with his proposal for “a peace without victory.” A just peace, the President stressed, entailed “the just settlement of vexed questions of territory or of racial and national allegiance.” While there never would be “equality of territory or of resources,” there must be an equality of rights between large and small nations, between powerful and weak states. Perhaps most importantly, Wilson declared that “no peace can last, or ought to last, which does not recognize and accept the principle that governments derive all their just powers from the consent of the governed, and that no right anywhere exists to hand peoples about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were property.”¹ The president emphasized that any peace that did “not recognize and accept this principle” would fail, and “the ferment of spirit of whole populations will fight subtly and constantly against it, and all the world will sympathize.” Wilson also contended that a just peace depended upon access to and freedom of the seas, disarmament, the dismemberment of entangling alliances, and nonintervention (ostensibly based on the Monroe Doctrine) because “every people should be left free to determine its own polity, its own way of development, unhindered, unthreatened, unafraid, the little along with the great and powerful.” Almost a year later on 8 January 1918, Wilson presented his fourteen points for peace to a joint session of Congress.² Aside from pursuing the open door policy,

¹ Wilson was echoing the principles that influenced the American revolutionaries. In his Declaration of Independence, Jefferson famously wrote

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

² As many have observed, Wilson’s rhetoric was in part a response to Lenin’s statements on self-determination.

disarmament, open diplomacy, and a League of Nations to ensure the peace and the principle of nonintervention, most of Wilson's points dealt with European territorial issues (especially self-determination for Eastern Europe). Wilson, who sent U.S. troops to Russia in opposition to the Bolshevik revolution, proclaimed that Russia should have an "unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity" to decide its own political future without outside intervention. As for colonial peoples, Wilson declared that "a free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined." In a point specifically relating to the Ottoman Empire, Wilson asserted that the "other nationalities...under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development." In a speech to a joint session of Congress on 11 February 1918, Wilson made a very clear statement on self-determination, one that is certainly applicable to Palestine:

Peoples are not to be handed about from one sovereignty to another by an international conference or an understanding between rivals and antagonists. National aspirations must be respected; peoples may now be dominated and governed only by their own consent. "Self-determination" is not a mere phrase. It is an imperative principle of action, which statesmen will henceforth ignore at their peril. We cannot have general peace for the asking, or by the mere arrangements of a peace conference. It cannot be pieced together out of individual understandings between powerful states.

Aside from the contradictions between Wilson's rhetoric and his foreign policies (including his denial of self-determination to many colonized peoples), Wilson's domestic policies

regarding African-Americans, segregation, lynching, and the Jim Crow South undermined his rhetoric about the consent of the governed.³

³ *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1917, Supplement 1, The World War, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1917Supp01v01>, 24-29; *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1918, Supplement I, The World War, Volume 1, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1918Supp01v01>, 12-17, 110; William Mallison, "The Balfour Declaration," in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 105. Wilson's close confidant, Edward House wrote Wilson in December 1917 about his trip to Britain and France. According to House, the British war aims included "the African colonies, both east and west, an independent Arabia under the suzerainty of Great Britain, Palestine to be given to the Zionists under British, or if desired by us, also under American control, an independent Armenia and an internationalization of the Straits." Clearly, British imperialist aims (including support for Zionism) did not mesh with Wilson's proclamation about "government by the consent of the governed." The British and French, however, did pay lip service to Wilsonian rhetoric. Lloyd George, for instance, in a speech at the Trade Union Conference in London on 5 January 1918, argued that one of the preconditions for permanent peace was "a territorial settlement...based on the right of self-determination or the consent of the governed." *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1917, Supplement 2, The World War, Volume 1, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1917Supp02v01>, 344; *FRUS*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1918, Supplement 1, The World War, Volume 1, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1918Supp01v01>, 12. For discussion of Wilson and African-Americans, see Jonathan Rosenberg, "Democracy, Not Hypocrisy: World War and Race Relations in the United States, 1914-1919," *The International History Review* Vol 21, No 3 (September 1999), 592-625; Clarence Contee, "Du Bois, the NAACP, and the Pan-African Congress of 1919," *The Journal of Negro History* Vol 57, No 1 (January 1972), 13-28; Christine Lunardini, "Standing Firm: William Monroe Trotter's Meetings With Woodrow Wilson, 1913-1914," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol 64, No 3 (Summer 1979), 244-264; Michael Dennis, "Looking Backward: Woodrow Wilson, the New South, and the Question of Race," *American Nineteenth Century History*, Vol 3, No 1 (Spring 2002), 77-104; W. E. B. DuBois, "My Impressions of Woodrow Wilson," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol 58, No 4 (October 1973), 453-459

For an article criticizing comparisons between Pan-Africanism and Zionism, see Michael Williams, "Pan-Africanism and Zionism: The Delusion of Comparability," *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol 21, No 3 (March 1991), 348-371. While demonstrating that Pan-Africanism and Zionism differed on many levels (including the anti-imperialist nature of the pan-African movement as opposed to the imperialism of the Zionist movement), Williams discusses how many pan-Africanists, including W.E.B. Du Bois, made positive comparisons between Pan-Africanism and Zionism. In the spring of 1948, for example, Du Bois stated that Zionism was predicated on "young and forward thinking Jews, bringing a new civilization into an old land and building up that land out of the ignorance, disease and poverty into which it had fallen, and by democratic methods to build a new and peculiarly fateful modern state." Zionist spokespersons could not have described the movement any better to a Western audience. It is quite interesting that Du Bois ignored the imperialist nature of Zionism. Even Marcus Garvey approved of Zionism as quite similar to his Pan-Africanism and ignored that Zionism was based on the expropriation and expulsion of the indigenous inhabitants.

Teddy Roosevelt interestingly proposed that African Americans were unquestionably advanced compared to Africans "untouched, or but lightly touched, by influence." Such an assertion, as Matthew Frye Jacobson notes, justified slavery, racism, and Jim Crow within the United States, but also justified imperialism as beneficial to colonized peoples "untouched...by white influence." See Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues*, 120-121.

For Syrian Christian opposition to Zionism, see "Zionism and Syrian Unity" from the 30 November 1917 *Tribune de Geneve* included in RDS 867n.01/3 (1 December 1917). Looking forward to postwar Arab independence in a unified state, the Syrian Christians argued that "the injustice, a hundred times committed towards the Jews, cannot be repaired in the 20th century by a new injustice and a more subtle one towards an innocent nation."

Some Zionists, however, challenged Wilson for "omitting Jewish rights in Palestine" in his Fourteen Points. By the end of the war, Zionists utilized Wilsonian rhetoric and demanded that the international

For example, James Wheldon Johnson wrote in February 1917 soon after he joined the NAACP:

It is worth while to think about the hypocrisy of this country. Here we are holding up our hands in horror at German ‘atrocities’, at what is being done in Belgium and at what is being done on the high seas, while the wholesale murder of American citizens on American soil by bloodthirsty American mobs hardly brings forth a word of comment. We have a president who still continues to talk about humanity, about bringing peace and righteousness to all the nations of the earth, but who has yet to utter one word against this outraging of humanity within the territory over which he presides. Americans, in their smug hypocrisy, look upon the Turks for their treatment of the Armenians as cruel barbarians; but...the American lynching record makes the Turkish treatment of Armenians look like deeds of mercy...It is our duty to ourselves and to those who come after us to cry out against lynching and every other form of wrong that is practiced against us.⁴

African-American leaders repeatedly asked how the United States could fight a war to make the world safe for democracy if Wilson failed to make the United States safe for democracy as well. In fact, many African-Americans championed Wilsonian principles and participated in the Wilsonian moment, the movement where colonized and oppressed peoples demanded their rights. Along with the Chinese, Koreans, Indians, Egyptians, Africans, and Palestinians, African-Americans would be disappointed with the failure of the peace.⁵

The Russian Revolution and Bolshevik calls for self-determination certainly influenced Wilson and French and British leaders. The French and the British adopted Wilsonian rhetoric when presenting their war aims to a broader world audience. Less than a

community recognize the Jewish people “as a nation” enjoying equal rights within the community of nations. See, RDS 867n.01/13 (24 February 1918); RDS 867n.01/29 (28 October 1918)

⁴ *New York Age*, 15 February 1917, 4, as cited in J. Rosenberg, “Democracy, Not Hypocrisy,” 599.

⁵ J. Rosenberg, “Democracy, Not Hypocrisy,” 592-625. Zionists also maintained that their movement was in line with Wilsonian aims. The creation of a Jewish state in Palestine followed Wilsonian principles, the Zionists argued, because the Jewish people were one of the oppressed nations that deserved self-determination. One of the resolutions of the twentieth Convention of the Federation of American Zionists resolved that “we American citizens hail with gratification the declaration of our president that the world must be made safe for democracy, and that all nationalities, both great and small, must have full opportunity for free self-development.” While paying lip service to Wilsonian principles, the Zionists recognized that “Palestine will be ours only when we constitute the majority in the land,” an outcome that was dependent on the dispossession and expulsion of the Palestinian Arab population. “Thousand Zionists Meet in Baltimore,” *New York Times*, 25 June 1917, 15; “Summons Zionists to Service in War,” *New York Times*, 28 June 1917, 11.

week before the armistice on 11 November 1918, the British and French issued a joint declaration stating

The aim which France and Great Britain have in view in prosecuting in the East the war let loose upon the world by German ambition is the complete and final liberation of the peoples so long oppressed by the Turks, and the establishment of national governments and administrations deriving their authority from the initiative and free choice of the native populations.

In order to give effect to these intentions, France and Great Britain have agreed to encourage and assist the establishment of native governments and administrations in Syria and Mesopotamia, already liberated by the Allies, and in the territories which they are proceeding to liberate, and they have agreed to recognise such governments as soon as they are effectively established. So far from desiring to impose specific institutions upon the populations of these regions, their sole object is to ensure, by their support and effective assistance, that the governments and administrations adopted by these regions of their own free will shall be exercised in the normal way. The function which the two Allied Governments claim for themselves in the liberated territories is to ensure impartial and equal justice for all; to facilitate the economic development of the country by encouraging local initiative; to promote the diffusion of education; and to put an end to the divisions too long exploited by Turkish policy.⁶

The British and the French, however, had historical imperialist aims in the Near East, and U.S. planners understood the strategic importance of Arab territory within the Ottoman Empire. In December 1917, the journalist and Wilson advisor Walter Lippman warned the division chiefs of the Inquiry, the group tasked with planning for the postwar peace, of the economic and strategic importance of the Near East and German imperialism in the region. To prevent German control of this vital area, Lippman asserted, the allied powers ought to control Armenia, Palestine, and Mesopotamia. On 22 December 1917, the Inquiry submitted to Wilson suggested war and peace aims. As for Turkey, the Inquiry proposed that allied powers must “free the subject races of the Turkish empire from oppression and misrule.” To

⁶ *FRUS*, 1919, Paris Peace Conference, 3; *FRUS*, 1919, Paris Peace Conference, Volume III, 1016-1017; see also, Rhett, 213. Lloyd George articulated his war aims after the capture of Jerusalem and claimed that the Allies were fighting for self-determination and not territorial aggrandizement. The peace conference would determine the fate of the former German colonies and Ottoman territories in accordance with the wishes of the populations concerned. “Lloyd George’s War-Aims Speech Now First Published Here in Full,” *New York Times*, 24 December 1917, 1.

achieve this end, the Inquiry recommended “autonomy for Armenia and the protection of Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Arabia by the civilized nations,” meaning the Western allied imperial powers. The Inquiry’s investigations dealing with the Ottoman empire discussed economic and development prospects for the various territories in the Near East and specifically addressed Zionist, British, French, and Arab claims and interests.⁷

Dana Munro, a historian who wrote on the Crusades, headed the Ottoman study group until November 1918, when William Westermann, a professor of ancient history at the University of Wisconsin, replaced him. Selecting such figures to lead the study group inhibited the U.S. from having a competent understanding of the Near East at the peace conference. The Near East study group reflected American biases that Biblical history and Christian imaginations of the Holy Land took precedence over current conditions. One prominent American missionary, James Barton, submitted his recommendations to the Inquiry study group at its request. U.S. control over the former Ottoman Empire, Barton envisioned, would allow Christianity to finally destroy Islam. Other Inquiry reports supported the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine. Westermann’s own report supported the “aspirations of Zionists for a national state” and accepted the Zionist plans for the boundaries of the future Jewish state, with the exception of land east of the Jordan River since only one Jewish settlement existed in that territory. Westermann recommended initial international control over Palestine because Jews represented a small fraction of the population and the Holy Land was significant to western Christians. The Inquiry recommendations, “Outline of the Tentative Report and Recommendations,” built on Westermann’s report. The Inquiry determined that the League of Nations should recognize

⁷ *FRUS*, 1919, Paris Peace Conference, Volume 1, 26-34, 41-53, 69, 86

Palestine as a Jewish state “as soon as it is a Jewish state in fact.” Given the religious significance of the Holy Land and the small existing Jewish population there, Britain should become the mandatory power and implement large-scale Jewish immigration into Palestine and the development of Jewish institutions, creating the foundation for a Jewish state.⁸

Before the peace conference, the American Jewish Congress and other Zionist organizations instructed their delegates and lobbied the Allied Powers to protect Jewish minority rights in Europe and include the Balfour Declaration in the final peace agreement so that a British protectorate would implement policies necessary for the creation of a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine. Non-Zionist Jewish organizations also lobbied the U.S. government to ensure political, civil, and religious rights of Jews in Eastern Europe. Simon Wolf, representing the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Independent Order of B’nai B’rith appealed to American fears of Eastern European immigrants and warned Wilson that “unless you secure those rights for the Jews, immigration will increase,” increasing the “burdens of American citizens.” Palestinians appealed to Wilsonian principles and argued that Zionism, based on unrestricted Jewish immigration to Palestine, was a

⁸ Bustami, “American Foreign Policy,” 188-204, 208; see also, Lawrence Gelfand, *The Inquiry: American Preparations for Peace* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963), 60-62, 244-246, 248-250, 255-256, 327; David Hunter Miller, *My Diary at the Conference of Paris, With Documents* (New York: Appeal Printing Company, 1924), IV, 249-265. According to Bustami, Westermann opposed the creation of a Jewish state in the final report because of growing concern about the Palestinian Arabs. He would later write that Zionism “impinges upon the rights and desires of most of the Arab population of Palestine number five to every Jew in the land, who do not want their country to be made into a ‘homeland’ for the Jews.” Importantly, Samuel Edelman, the U.S. vice consul in Jerusalem, informed the State Department in the latter months of 1917 and the early days of 1918 that the U.S. should not support the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, that Zionist facts on the ground did not come close to approaching the accounts of Zionist achievements, that most British and American Jews opposed Zionism, and that the Arab population incontrovertibly opposed the Zionist project. William Yale warned in March 1918 that “if a Jewish State is to be created in Palestine it will have to be done by force of arms and maintained by force of arms amid an overwhelmingly hostile population.” Later, Yale argued that Jews would undertake a civilizing mission in Palestine and bring Western science and development to the region. Moreover, American Jews would control a Jewish state in Palestine and support American interests in the region. These two considerations outweighed the opposition of the Arab population. For a discussion of Yale’s reports, see Bustami, 206-213, 246-247 and Ussama Makdisi, “‘Anti-Americanism’ in the Arab World: An Interpretation of a Brief History,” *The Journal of American History* (September 2002), 538-557); for Westermann quote, see Bustami, 225-226.

violation of the rights of the Palestinian Arabs. The Palestinians, in fact, referred to American restriction of Chinese immigrants and Australian legislation severely limiting non-white immigration in asking why Palestinians did not have the right to limit European immigration to protect their country. The Palestinians also brushed aside Jewish historical and religious claims to Palestine by arguing that Arab Muslims and Christians had significant religious and historical claims to their land and that the Jewish argument suggested that Arabs had the right to reconquer Spain.⁹

At the preliminary allied consultations that became the de facto peace conference, the major powers determined that German and Turkish misrule in their former empires provided the allies with an opportunity to gain control over these territories.¹⁰ By 29 January 1919, the main powers drafted what would become Article 22 of the League of Nations Charter. Articulating the predominant imperialist civilizing mission ideology that the peoples in these territories were presently unfit for self-government, the allies determined that for the sake of civilization and humanity, those great powers “who by reason of their resources, their experience or their geographical position” were best able to tutor these peoples would govern the former German and Turkish territories as mandatories under League of Nations supervision. Since “certain communities” of the former Ottoman Empire “have reached a state of development” where their independence could be “provisionally recognized,” the mandatory power would serve in an advisory capacity. Importantly, “the wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration” when determining the mandatory power.

⁹ RDS 867n.01/50 (21 January 1919); RDS 867n.01/51 (11 January 1919); RDS 867n.01/52 (18 December 1918); *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol 54, 258; *PWW*, Vol 53, 259-260.

¹⁰ There is an extensive literature on the Paris Peace Conference. See, for example, Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months That Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2001); Arthur Walworth, *Wilson and His Peacemakers: American Diplomacy at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1986)

While the great powers understood this article as legitimizing colonialism, colonized peoples understood it as promoting their independence and self-determination.¹¹

While Wilsonian ideas are often recognized as the foundation of the League of Nations Charter, General Jan Smuts of South Africa had a profound influence on Wilson's thinking regarding the League and the mandate system.¹² Articulating his vision in a short work entitled *The League of Nations: A Practical Suggestion*, Smuts provided the ideological justification for the mandates, claiming that British, French, Japanese, and American control of the former German colonies and Ottoman territories under the legitimating cover of the League of Nations would prepare these backward peoples for self-government while avoiding the stigma of outright annexation and gross imperialism. Importantly, Smuts made a distinction between the territories in Europe and the Ottoman Empire and former German colonies in Africa and the Pacific. "The German colonies in the Pacific and Africa" Smuts maintained, were "inhabited by barbarians," who were incapable of self-government and self-determination. While the great powers would promise self-determination to Arabs in the Ottoman Empire after a period of European administrative oversight, the African and Pacific colonies required direct annexation or colonial administration. Smuts, therefore, created the framework for the classification of former German and Ottoman territories articulated in the

¹¹ *FRUS*, 1919, 795-796.

¹² George Curry, "Woodrow Wilson, Jan Smuts, and the Versailles Settlement," *The American Historical Review* Vol 66, No 4 (July 1961), 968-986. As Curry notes, Lansing saw Smuts' plan as "nothing more than a concert of Powers" and criticized Wilson's secretiveness and stubbornness in dismissing the recommendations of his advisors. Gelfand argues that George Beer, a member of the Inquiry charged with providing recommendations on colonial problems, provided the framework for the mandate system in late 1917 and early 1918. See, Gelfand, 231-239.

For an article outlining the close relationship between Smuts and Weizmann, see Richard P. Stevens, "Smuts and Weizmann," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 3, No 1 (Autumn 1973), 35-59. Stevens argues that Smuts supported Zionism because it was in the British imperial interest and because Zionism was based on the same ideological grounds that justified European expansion over the Americas, Asia, and Africa. The South African Zionist Federation was one of many Zionist organizations that lobbied the peace conference to support the Balfour Declaration. The wording was virtually identical to the other pro-Zionist resolutions. See RDS 867n.01/62 (31 January 1919)

League of Nations Charter. Regarding Palestine, Smuts, who developed a close relationship with Weizmann, argued that the “heterogeneous” Jewish and Arab population with “their incapacity for administrative co-operation” meant that a European power would have to administer the country. Since the future League of Nations lacked the capacity and the institutions to administer these peoples not ready for self-determination, Smuts observed, individual states with colonial experience ought to administer the former Ottoman and German territories under League of Nations supervision. Paying lip-service to the principle of self-determination, Smuts recommended that the mandatory ought to have some voice in determining the mandatory power. In a direct appeal to Wilson, Smuts determined that the policy of the Open Door should apply to all the mandated territories.¹³

In early February 1919, Feisal addressed the Council of Ten to demand the independence and unification of all Arabic speaking peoples within the former Ottoman Empire, except Palestine, which he excluded due to an agreement with Weizmann in early January 1919. Feisal, whose claim to speak for the Palestinian Arabs was weak, promised the Zionists support for the Balfour Declaration and large Jewish immigration to Palestine in

¹³ Jan Smuts, *The League of Nations: A Practical Suggestion* (London, Toronto, and New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1918), 11-23. While the mandates provided legitimacy for colonialism, the ostensible goal was eventual self-determination. In response to the Lansing and House queries regarding Wilson’s views about the Near East and other major issues of the conference (at the behest of classicist William Westermann, the American delegations “expert” on the Near East), Wilson acknowledged the U.S. commitment to the Balfour Declaration. Interestingly, the delegation asked, “is the desire of the Arab national leaders for independence, under European guidance, to be supported, or are the Arab provinces to be dealt with under the mandatory form of control?” Wilson’s reply: Mandate. *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol 61, 21 June 1919, 127-129.

Smuts and the British clearly understood that the mandatory system was simply a form of colonialism to ensure minority white rule in Africa and other colonies. Balfour, justifying minority white rule in South Africa, illustrated the racism underlying the civilizing mission ideology when he observed:

If the races of Europe have really conquered, by centuries of difficulty and travail, great rights and privileges for themselves, they have given some of these rights and some of those privileges to men quite incapable, by themselves, of fighting for them at all, or obtaining them at all. That is the plain, historic truth of the situation, which it is perfect folly for us to attempt to forget. It is this fact of the inequality of the races which makes the difficulty.

Such logic would justify the denial of self-government to the majority Arab population in Palestine. See Stevens, “Zionism as Western Imperialism,” in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 46

return for Zionist support for economic development in the future Arab state.¹⁴ Feisal maintained, however, that any alteration regarding his plan for Arab independence would void his agreement with Weizmann.¹⁵ One British military official in Palestine observed in 1919 that the Feisal-Weizmann agreement was “not worth the paper it is written on or the energy wasted in the conversation to make it.” He added that “if [the Feisal-Weizmann] agreement becomes sufficiently known among the Arabs, it will be somewhat in the nature of a noose around Feisal’s neck, for he will be regarded by the Arab population as a traitor.”¹⁶ Indeed, as Rhett notes, Weizmann rescinded his pledge within months since he was unwilling to support Feisal’s opposition to French control of Syria and risk conflict with the British. Zionists, however, would consistently point to the Feisal-Weizmann agreement as symbolizing Arab acquiescence in the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish state.¹⁷ Other

¹⁴ While Zionists essentially offered bribes to the Arabs through the promise of economic benefits of Jewish colonization, Leonard Stein, a prominent Zionist who would later write a history of the Balfour Declaration, stated in 1921 that Zionist activity to that point had failed “to put enough money into the pockets of the Arabs to make any appreciable impression on their minds.” Quoted in Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 80

¹⁵ Flapan argues that the Feisal-Weizmann agreement illustrates Weizmann’s “earnest desire for peace with the Arabs” and his “tireless efforts to achieve a reconciliation between Zionism and the Arab national movement.” His propensity to negotiate with non-Palestinian Arab leaders also demonstrates his non-recognition of Palestinian national rights, which Flapan interprets as emerging from the British understanding of pan-Arab nationalism and “rejection of a distinct Palestinian national identity.” See, Flapan, *Zionism and the Palestinians*, 32-33, 43-45, 57

¹⁶ This same British officer said of Weizmann:

It is difficult to gauge Weizmann’s attitude, he must be either: (a) ignorant and misinformed as to the actual state of feeling in Palestine (b) convinced that the Moslems and Christians will tamely accept the fait accompli (c) desirous of trying the strength of the opposition, relying on British troops to subdue it if actively hostile...

Overall, Feisal could not accept the separation of Palestine from Syria and Weizmann could not oppose the British and support the ouster of the French from Syria. Obviously, the British were concerned about a pan-Arab nationalism that threatened British geostrategic interests in the region. See Flapan, *Zionism and the Palestinians*, 47-55. For Weizmann’s account of the meeting with Feisal, see Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 234-239

¹⁷ Ignoring that Weizmann failed to fulfill the Zionist pledge to Feisal and that Feisal’s authority to make decisions regarding Palestine was suspect, Zionists repeatedly maintained that the Feisal-Weizmann agreement signaled Arab recognition of a Jewish Palestine. Consequently, any Palestinian resistance to Zionism or the mandate was a violation of this pledge. See, for example, Stephen Wise and Jacob de Haas, *The Great Betrayal* (New York: Brentano’s Publishers, 1930), which presented the common Zionist argument about the agreement between Feisal and Weizmann. The Peel Commission report recognized that Feisal’s qualification made the agreement null and void (due to French imperialism), but maintained that the pact between Weizmann and Feisal illustrated that Arabs and Jews could have worked together and that under

Palestinians lobbied the Allied powers in Paris. In their appeal to the peace conference, Palestinian Christians in Honduras reiterated the argument that the implementation of the Zionist project would violate the inalienable rights of the Palestinian Arabs and repeated the common theme that Arab territories should remain unified in a federated state. The Palestine Anti-Zionism Society, in addition to emphasizing the territorial integrity of Syria (including Lebanon, Palestine, and Trans-Jordan), called upon the Great Powers in Paris to recognize Arab nationalism and the Arab peoples' right to self-determination and self-government and consequently prohibit both the unrestricted immigration of Jewish immigrants and the implementation of other policies necessary for the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. Importantly, Montagu arranged for a delegation from India to speak to Wilson, Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and Orlando on 17 May 1919 about the global impact of their policies regarding the Ottoman Empire. The Indian delegation, representing Hindus and Muslims, reminded their audience of India's role in the Great War and the Wilsonian principles, including self-determination, for which Indians fought and died. The Indians petitioned the Big Four to ensure self-determination in Turkey, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Arabia.¹⁸

certain conditions the Arabs "would concede little Palestine to the Jews." See, Palestine Royal Commission Report, CMD 5479 (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1937), 26-28

¹⁸ RDS 867n.01/53 (February 1919); RDS 867n.01/54 (15 February 1919); *FRUS*, 1919, 889-894; Feisal-Weizmann Agreement, 3-4 January, 1919, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/5bff833964edb9bf85256ced00673d1f?OpenDocument>; *FRUS*, 1919, Paris Peace Conference, Volume V, 690-701; J. N. Camp, "Report on Palestinian-Zionist Relations, 1919," and other sources cited in Rhett, 222-223; Flapan, *Zionism and the Palestinians*, 40-52. Importantly, Feisal's diplomacy for leadership in a pan-Arab state centered in Damascus and his willingness to sacrifice Palestine along with increased Jewish immigration to and colonization of Palestine greatly contributed to the development of a Palestinian and not pan-Arab identity. See Rhett, 225.

Weizmann had pledged to Hussein during the war that the Zionists had no intention of establishing a Jewish government or state in Palestine, but merely wished to help develop the country. See, Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 285-286, 437-439.

The British government would force Montagu to resign his post in India in March 1922 for allowing Indians to publicly call for revision of the Treaty of Sevres and challenging British policy toward the Muslim territories in the Near East. See, "India Now Demands Rights for Turkey," *New York Times*, 9 March 1922, 1; "Montagu Forced To Resign Office by Lloyd George," *New York Times*, 10 March 1922, 1.

Despite arguments identifying American values with Arab self-determination and self-government, American political leaders responded favorably to the Zionist narrative. Foreshadowing Senator Lodge's support for a resolution in favor of Zionism and the Balfour Declaration in 1922, the House of Representatives in Massachusetts determined that in accordance with Wilson's Fourteen Points, the representatives at the peace conference ought to recognize the "national aspirations and historic claims of the Jewish people with regard to Palestine." The Massachusetts legislature recommended that the Americans in Paris endeavor to implement the Balfour Declaration, which would allow for the establishment of political, economic, and administrative conditions necessary for the development of a Jewish commonwealth. While asserting Jewish rights to Palestine, the House of Representatives in Massachusetts reiterated the section of the Balfour Declaration affirming the rights of Jewish people to "life and liberty" in all countries of the world. The fundamental point is that Americans influencing policy at the peace conference accepted Zionist position that their position complemented American principles and values while ignoring the claims of the Arab people, including Arab-Americans.¹⁹

¹⁹ RDS 867n.01/56 (25 February 1919). Other states followed suit and endorsed resolutions supporting self-determination for the Jewish people in Palestine. For example, the Wisconsin, New York, Rhode Island, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and Ohio legislatures passed similarly worded resolutions. Private groups, such as the Chicago Hebrew Mission and individual citizens also sent petitions favoring American support for a Jewish national home in Palestine. The Chicago Hebrew Mission was a Christian Zionist organization, and in addition to supporting the return of the Jewish people to Palestine, their resolution also included a wish that Jews accept Jesus as their savior. See RDS 867n.01/61 (11 March 1919); RDS 867n.01/63 (27 March 1919); RDS 867n.01/64 (2 April 1919); RDS 867n.01/65 (11 April 1919); RDS 867n.01/66 (14 April 1919); RDS 867n.01/67 (17 April 1919); RDS 867n.01/71 (6 May 1919); RDS 867n.01/73 (27 May 1919)

Palestinian Arabs refused to accept that Jewish "historic claims" to Palestine trumped their rights to their homeland. In late 1919, Palestinians protested:

If it is possible for France to establish Alsace-Lorraine as French land, when it had been annexed by the French for only two hundred years, before which it was German, how can it be possible to obliterate our sovereignty over this land, which has lasted for 1,200 years, and while its sons are still masters of it. How can the Zionists go back in history two thousand years to prove that by their short sojourn in Palestine they have now a right to claim it and return to it as a Jewish home, thus crushing the nationalism of a million Arabs?

Quoted in Stevens, "Zionism as Western Imperialism," in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 57-58.

The Zionists distributed a statement to the allied powers regarding their position on Palestine in early February 1919. The Zionists proposed that the powers at the peace conference recognize the “historic title of the Jewish people to Palestine and the right of the Jews to reconstitute in Palestine their National Home.” The Zionist leadership recommended that the boundaries for the future national home for the Jewish people extend from the Mediterranean in the West to a line west of the Hedjaz railway and east of the Jordan River in the East and from immediate south of Sidon (in Lebanon) in the North to the frontier with Egypt in the South.²⁰ In their resolutions forwarded to the peace conference, the South African Zionists emphasized that “the aspirations of the Jewish people will not be satisfied with anything less than an undivided Palestine, coincident in area with its fullest historical extent.”²¹ The Zionists proceeded to demand that the British become the mandatory power in Palestine and implement policies, including promoting Jewish immigration, settlement on the land, and Jewish educational, economic, and political institutions, to secure Jewish self-government and the establishment of an autonomous Jewish commonwealth.²²

At a private meeting with the Council of Five (the U.S., Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan) in the office of French Foreign Minister Stephen Pinchon on 27 February 1919, Zionist Organization leaders including Chaim Weizmann and Nahum Sokolow maintained

²⁰ Controlling water resources in the north, including the Litani River in Lebanon, has long been a strategic goal of Zionists. Mendes wrote the president before the peace conference that Zionism was “altruism” and the Jewish state would be a “spiritual influence and not a political influence,” but the boundaries of the state, according to the Bible, extend from the Nile to the Euphrates and from Lebanon “to the desert on the south.” After the British occupation of Palestine, Zionists pressured British officials to include land east of the Jordan River for “large Jewish mass settlements.” RDS 867n.01/48 (8 January 1919) ; RDS 867n.01/82 (20 June 1919)

²¹ See RDS 867n.01/62 (31 January 1919)

²² Statement of the Zionist Organization regarding Palestine, 3 February 1919, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/2d1c045fbc3f12688525704b006f29cc?OpenDocument> (accessed 9 November 2011). On the eve of the signing of the peace treaty with Germany, Justice Louis Brandeis and law professor and future Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter met privately with Balfour. Brandeis staunchly reiterated the Zionist position regarding boundaries and Jewish privileges in Palestine under the British mandate. Khalidi, *From Haven to Conquest*, 196-198

that the Jewish people came to the peace conference to claim their historical and national rights to Palestine and that the Zionist Organization represented the Jews in Palestine. Sokolow characterized the Zionist project as both a solution to the Jewish problem in the West (especially Eastern Europe) and a civilizing mission to an undeveloped and Oriental land. Weizmann, claiming to speak “for 96% of the Jews of the world,” characterized the postwar Jewish question as an immigration problem for Western Europe and the United States. Western countries, Weizmann maintained, would “naturally scrutinise every alien who claimed to enter their countries, and the Jew would be regarded as a typical wandering alien.” The “equitable solution” to this problem, Weizmann asserted, was the Zionist program to colonize Palestine. While the Western powers had the right to restrict immigration, Palestine, relatively unpopulated in Weizmann’s estimation, was eminently suitable for large-scale Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe, despite the opposition of the Palestinian Arab population. Ignoring the indigenous Palestinian opposition to Zionism, Weizmann promised that the Zionists only “wished to settle...the empty spaces of Palestine.” Lansing asked Weizmann if the Zionist movement sought an “autonomous Jewish government.” Weizmann answered that the Zionist Organization did not want an “autonomous Jewish government” immediately, but Jewish immigration (70,000 to 80,000 annually) and Jewish institutions so that Palestine would be “as Jewish as the French nation was French and the British nation British.” The Zionists only wished to form an autonomous government, in other words a Jewish state, when “the Jews formed the large majority.” This is the crux of the issue: the Zionist movement sought to deny the principle of self-determination in Palestine until immigration from Eastern Europe gave the Jewish population a significant majority. Lansing and other American advisors in Paris recognized that

Zionism was a violation of Wilson's principle on the consent of the governed and that supporting the principle of self-determination in Palestine meant opposing the Zionist movement. Contrary to the warnings of some of his advisors, Wilson thought that Great Britain, the U.S., and even France "were to some extent committed" to Zionist colonization of Palestine. In early March, while Wilson was in Washington, D.C., he reiterated his "personal approval" of the Balfour Declaration and assured Rabbi Stephen Wise and Judge Julian Mack that the U.S. government "agreed that in Palestine shall be laid the foundations of a Jewish Commonwealth" under a British mandate. Mack and Wise were quite clear that the ultimate goal was self-determination once the Jewish population reached a majority in Palestine.²³ Weizmann, in response to Wilson's support for Zionism and the actions of the

²³ Lloyd George later wrote:

It was not [the War Cabinet's] idea that a Jewish State should be set up immediately by the Peace Treaty without reference to the wishes of the majority of the inhabitants. On the other hand, it was contemplated that when the time arrived for according representative institutions to Palestine, if the Jews had meanwhile responded to the opportunity afforded them and had become a definite majority of the inhabitants, then Palestine would thus become a Jewish Commonwealth.

The Zionists were very clear that the "transfer" of the Arab population in Palestine was a fundamental component of the Zionist project. The British Zionist and historian Albert Hyamson, who would later serve in the Palestine Administration as the Chief Immigration Officer, proclaimed that Arab emigration from Palestine was to be voluntary:

There will be a new incentive, and strong one, for a Moslem Arab emigration from Palestine. Close at hand there is to be a Moslem Arab State, organized under its own ruler... This State should of itself be a magnet to the Moslem Arabs settled in other lands... It should be unnecessary to say that no Arab will be disposed or forced by any means to leave his home. If he does so, it will be of his own free will; and his removal will leave no cause for bitterness.

But Israel Zangwill, who in 1904 promoted the expulsion of the Palestinians as a precursor to the establishment of a Jewish state, iterated in February 1919 that force was necessary to expel the Palestinian Arabs to make conditions ripe for a Jewish state:

The whole planet is in the grip of Allied Might and it needs but Allied Right to reshape all racial boundaries and international relations... But a Hebrew Palestine, if it is to exist at all must be a reality, not a sham... The power in every country... always remains in the landowning classes. Yet over 30,000 Arab landlords and some 600,000 fellahin are to continue in possession of the Holy soil... And hence we must suppose that this new system of creative politics... will be carried out in Palestine as elsewhere. Thus the Arabs would gradually be settled in the new and vast Arabian Kingdom... Only thus can Palestine become a "Jewish National Home"... Only with a Jewish majority (not of course a Jewish totality), only with the land nationalized—and Jewish as well as Arab land must be expropriated with reasonable compensation—can Israel enter upon the task of building up that model State, the construction of which American Zionism, in its trustful acceptance of the [Balfour] Declaration, has already outlined. And it is now or never.

peace conference, boasted the “we have obtained full recognition of the historic title of the Jewish people to Palestine and of the Jews’ right to reconstitute their national home there.”

The British mandatory power would allow the Zionists to eventually make Palestine (“from the Lebanon province to the Egyptian frontier and from the sea to the Hedjaz railway”) “as Jewish as America is American.”²⁴

Other voices recognized that Zionism was a violation of Allied principles and would have to be implemented by force. Anstruther MacKay warned:

The existing Jewish colonists would protest at such an experiment [Zionism and large-scale Jewish immigration]; but the Mohammedan and Christian Arabs would do more than protest. They would, if able, prevent by force the wholesale flooding of their country by Jewish settlers whom they consider strangers and Europeans.... The theory that the Jews are to come into Palestine and oust the Moslem cultivators by 'equitable purchase' or other means is in violation of principles of sound policy, and would, if accepted, arouse violent outbreaks against the Jewish minority. It would, moreover, arouse fierce Moslem hostility and fanaticism against the Western powers that permitted it. The effect of this hostility would be felt all through the Middle East, and would cause trouble in Syria, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and India. To this might be ascribed by future historians the outbreak of a great war between the white and the brown races, a war into which America would without doubt be drawn.

Lloyd George quoted in Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 211-212. Zangwill and Hyamson quoted in Richard Stevens, “Zionism as Western Imperialism,” in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 39, 55. For MacKay, see Stevens, 59 and Anstruther MacKay, “Zionist Aspirations in Palestine,” *Atlantic* (July 1920), <http://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/unbound/bookauth/zionism/mackay.htm> (accessed 22 February 2012)

²⁴ *FRUS*, 1919, Paris Peace Conference, Volume IV, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1919Parisv04,159-170>; Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 211; “Action of Conference Satisfies Zionists,” *New York Times*, 3 March 1919, 3. One member of the delegation present, the Jewish non-Zionist Sylvain Levy, an Orientalist, warned about the dangerous precedent of dual citizenship for Jews in Western countries and Palestine and lamented that the Jewish people, on the cusp of gain equal rights for themselves around the world, wanted “to obtain exceptional privileges for themselves in Palestine.” American Jews also cautioned Wilson about supporting a Jewish state in Palestine. For example, Morris Jastrow, an orientalist at the University of Pennsylvania, wrote Wilson on 4 March 1919 that many American Jews supported Jewish colonization efforts in Palestine, but not a Jewish state. Jastrow argued that the attempt to create a Jewish state in Palestine was a misreading of Jewish history and a threat to Jewish rights in western countries. Jastrow asked Wilson to support the principle of self-determination in Palestine as in all other countries. It is instructive to compare Jastrow’s position with that of American Zionists. In early March 1919, Judge Julian Mack urged Wilson to press for “enforceable guarantees of full civil, religious, political, and national rights” for Jews of Eastern Europe. Simultaneously, Mack pressed Wilson to support “the historic claims of the Jewish people in regard to Palestine.” While European Jews justly deserve equal rights in Eastern Europe, the Zionists contended that Jews should have a privileged status in Palestine under a British mandate and the Arabs in Palestine only deserved civil and religious rights, not political or national ones.

In a speech after Wilson made his commitment, Wise claimed that “the rebuilding of Zion will be the reparation of all Christendom for the wrongs done to the Jews.” A more accurate characterization would have admitted that the Arabs were being punished for the crimes of Christians against European Jews. Wilson’s remarks caused some consternation for the American delegation in Paris. Lansing informed the president that his statement increased opposition to American policy in the Near East. The Arab populations vehemently protested against Jewish immigration and the establishment of a Jewish state and demanded that Palestine be included with a unified Syria. On 16 April 1919, in reply to Lansing’s queries about what Wilson meant in the statement attributed to him in the 3 March 1919 *New York Times* article, Wilson claimed that he did not mean “Jewish Commonwealth” and that he merely meant “to corroborate our expressed acquiescence in the position of the British Government with regard to the future of Palestine.” World political leaders recognized, however,

Importantly, the Zionist Martin Buber warned about the relationship between Zionism and Western imperialism evident in the machinations at the peace conference. In an essay published in his journal *Der Jude* in March 1919, Buber expressed concern that the victorious Powers reportedly recognized Jewish nationalism, legitimized the right of the Jews to Palestine, and determined that a British mandate for Palestine would endeavor to help facilitate the development of a Jewish commonwealth. Buber articulated that “like every idealistic movement, Zionism (which, if it did not exist, would have been invented by the Allies) also adapts itself” to the principle of national self-determination, the moral cause underlying Allied wartime rhetoric, but rhetorically asked if Zionist acceptance of political expediency to further their own cause while ignoring the Allied rejection of numerous national claims for self-determination and independence of other peoples undermined the moral claims of the Zionist movement. Buber accepted that the Jewish people had the right to Palestine and would play “a mediating role between the Occident and the Orient,” but warned that the Zionists needed to “make it clear that we have nothing to do with [the League of Nation’s] present system of values, with imperialism masquerading as humanitarianism.” Instead, he advocated that Zionists strive “for the achievement of a lasting and amicable agreement with the Arabs in all aspects of public life” and take “only

that Zionism meant a Jewish state. Curzon, who succeeded Balfour as Foreign Secretary, observed in 1919, that Weizmann “contemplates a Jewish State, a Jewish nation, a subordinate population of Arabs, etc., ruled by Jews; the Jews in possession of the fat of the land, and directing the administration.” At the peace conference, Weizmann warned against democracy in Palestine until large-scale Jewish immigration (70-80,000 annually) provided a Jewish majority. Then, and only then, would it be appropriate to form a democratic government. At the time, over ninety percent of the population was “non-Jewish.” If there were any doubts about Weizmann’s goals, he told a London audience in 1919 that “I trust to God that a Jewish state will come about; but it will come about not through political declarations but by the sweat and blood of the Jewish people.”

Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Vol 55, 368-386, 438; *PWW*, Vol 57, 326, 406; *FRUS*, 1919, Paris Peace Conference, Volume V, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1919Parisv05>, 460; “President Gives Hope to Zionists,” *New York Times*, 3 March 1919, 1. See *FRUS*, 1919, Paris Peace Conference, XI, 150, 155; Bustami, 226-227; McDowall, 14-15; Neumann, 26. For Weizmann’s account of the delegations presentation to the Council of Ten and his reaction to Levy, see, Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 243-245

those steps which would bring about and sustain an all embracing, fraternal solidarity with the Arabs.”²⁵

Judah Magnes, the American-born Reform Rabbi who would head the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and propose a bi-national solution to the conflict between the Palestinian Arabs and the Jewish colonists, echoed Buber’s warnings about political Zionism and his call for reconciliation and compromise with the Arab population. While asserting that the Jewish people constituted a nation--not in the political sense that implied a “divided political allegiance on the part of any Jew,” but because the Jewish people married within the group, shared a common history and religion, and had “a distinctive language”—and advocating “the re peopling” of Palestine and the development there of a spiritual and cultural home from which the exceptional Jewish people could serve humankind “as one of the greatly needed exponents of justice and of peace,” Magnes opposed the creation of a Jewish state. The land of Palestine “beckons to this ancient people, offering it a renewal of its youth, a springtime of re-creation, of cleansing, of quickening, of hope.” Like Buber, Magnes doubted the legitimacy of the League of Nations and the Allied victors to award Palestine to the Jewish people. While advocating self-determination for the Jewish people, he understood that “we stand over against the great Arab democracies as interlopers, as a people seeking favors at the hands of the powerful governments, of the imperialist forces of the world.” Magnes argued that the Jewish workers would demonstrate to the Arabs that the Jewish people were working toward the freedom, liberty, and self-determination of all peoples and that Jewish colonization would benefit the Arabs and not oppress them.²⁶

²⁵ Martin Buber, “Toward the Decision,” in Buber, *A Land of Two Peoples* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 39-41

²⁶ Judah Magnes, “The Rights of the Jews as a Nation,” Speech Given at the Conference of the American Academy of Political and Social Science (Philadelphia, 21 April 1919) in Judah Magnes, *War-time*

Throughout the conference, the French asserted their historical rights to Syria and challenged British policies in the Near East. On 20 March 1919 at a meeting of the Council of Four, the French argued that the Sykes-Picot agreement sought to separate the Arabs from the Ottoman Empire and determine British and French claims. The British conquest of Ottoman territory and other British commitments (namely, the Balfour Declaration), however, made necessary a reevaluation of the terms of the Sykes-Picot agreement. Shortly before the peace conference began, Lloyd George notified Clemenceau that the British wanted Palestine and Mosul. The French were prepared to compromise on Mosul, but asserted that an international body should administer Palestine and that French historical interests in Syria (including Lebanon) and the “geographical and historic unity of Syria” dictated that Syria should remain united under a French mandate. To counter French claims at the 20 March meeting, Lloyd George claimed that the Sykes-Picot agreement was based on the Hussein-McMahon agreement and any future French military occupation of Damascus violated the previous British understanding with the Arabs for an independent Arab state, “excepting portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo, [which] cannot be said to be purely Arab.” Specifically citing Arab military assistance in the Ottoman campaign as “invaluable,” the British stated that accepting French claims in Syria meant “breaking faith with the Arabs” and that “the League of Nations could not be used for putting aside our bargain with King Hussein.” These British positions call into question Churchill’s later rationalization to the Palestine Arab Delegation that the League of Nations determined that Britain carry out the Balfour Declaration and not the

Addresses, 1917-1921 (New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1923), 91-95; Magnes, “The Jewish People—A Spiritual Force,” Speech Given to the People’s Relief Committee (New York, 29 December 1917) in Magnes, *War-time Addresses*, 96-105; Magnes, “Opening Address,” Speech to the Jewish Labor Congress (New York, 16 January 1919), in Magnes, *War-time Addresses*, 106-111; Magnes, “The Workers of Zion,” Speech at a Fundraiser for the Workers of Zion (New York, 31 May 1919), in Magnes, *War-time Addresses*, 112-115

commitments to the Arabs. Wilson interjected that in the American view, the “fundamental principal” was the “consent of the governed” and not the interests of Great Britain and France. While Wilson suggested that the Council of Four should solicit the views of the population in the Arab territories through a British, French, Italian, and American commission, Allenby, the British crusader who conquered Jerusalem, warned of the large-scale Syrian opposition to French control of any Syrian territory. At the end of May 1919, Allenby cautioned that French efforts to take military control of Syria before a commission ascertained the wishes of the population, an Arab revolt would threaten French and British interests in the Near East and North Africa.²⁷

The British clearly understood that the wishes of the inhabitants of the Near East would conflict with British imperialist aims, including the Zionist project. Balfour warned that “I can hardly doubt that [the King-Crane] report will contain a statement...that the present inhabitants of Palestine, who in a large majority are Arab, do not desire to see the

²⁷ *FRUS*, 1919, Paris Peace Conference, Volume V, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1919Parisv05>, 1-14.

The Italians, French, and British, attempted to sabotage Wilson’s commission. Curzon supported a commission, hoping that the British could then extricate themselves from future quagmires in the Near East. Only an American team, the King-Crane commission, would solicit public opinion in Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, and Armenia because the British and the French recognized that self-determination conflicted with imperialist aims. The French refused to send a commission until the French army replaced the British in Syria. Such a move would have precipitated an Arab revolt as Allenby warned. Since the French refused to send members along with the commission, the British followed suit. Clemenceau admitted misgivings to Wilson immediately after the latter suggested a commission to the Middle East. While stating that he would like to agree with Wilson’s principles (regarding the consent of the governed), Clemenceau argued that French and British historical claims in the region and efforts and sacrifices made during the war must have precedence over the wishes of the Arab population. Zionists, interestingly, had long feared that the French would oppose their movement because of long-term French interests in the Near East. An obvious point is that the victorious powers arbitrarily drew lines in the sand in creating the modern Middle East against the wishes of the indigenous populations.

As Morris observes, the British saw the Arab revolt as important to the British campaign against the Ottomans and as a means of “mortally subverting Ottoman efforts to turn the war in the East into an anti-Christian *jihad*.” *FRUS*, 1919, Paris Peace Conference, Volume V, 754-770; *FRUS*, 1919, Paris Peace Conference, Volume VI, 136-137; *FRUS*, 1919, Paris Peace Conference, Volume VIII, 216-217. For Zionist fears about the French, see RDS 867n.01/6 (14 January 1918); David Gilmour, “The Unregarded Prophet: Lord Curzon and the Palestine Question,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 25, No 3 (Spring 1996), 60-68; John Ruedy, “Dynamics of Land Alienation,” in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 119; Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 31-32.

administration of the country so conducted as to encourage the relative increase of the Jewish population and influence.” Such documentation of Arab opinion in Palestine would make the implementation of the Balfour Declaration difficult. Since the U.S. and Britain “have publicly declared their adhesion” to the Balfour Declaration, an abandonment of that project would provide “a shock to Jewish opinion throughout the world,” which would result in “most unhappy results.” As Richard Stevens observes, “the Balfour Declaration, eventually translated into a virtual article of international ‘law,’ demonstrated anew the capacity of a Western power to define the test of legality without regard for the wishes of those concerned and without their consent.” Once the Balfour Declaration became enshrined in international law through the League of Nations approval of the mandate for Palestine, the British and Zionists could portray any Arab resistance as illegal and a violation of international norms, which illustrated that the Palestinians were uncivilized and not yet ready for self-government. The Zionists also opposed any commission soliciting the views of the inhabitants of Palestine for obvious reasons. After Frankfurter expressed concern that the King-Crane commission raised doubt about Wilson’s commitment to Zionism, the president replied that “I never dreamed that it was necessary to give you any renewed assurance of my adhesion to the Balfour Declaration, and so far I have found no one who is seriously opposing the purpose which it embodies.” The president’s reply to the Zionists, given before King and Crane began their efforts, severely undermined the principle of self-determination and precluded any reevaluation of American policy in light of the commission’s report. In fact, as Bustami observes, Wilson promoted Zionism, in part, to combat the spread of Communism and revolution in Eastern Europe and prevent revolutionary ideologies from immigrating to the United States with Eastern European Jews.²⁸

²⁸ Arthur James Balfour Memorandum, 23 March 1923, *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol 56, 203-204,

Balfour himself recognized the contradictions between the rhetoric regarding self-determination and the policies of the Great Powers. Although the Covenant determined that “the wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of a mandatory,” the British, French, and Americans had no intention of recognizing or accepting these wishes, according to Balfour. In Palestine, the Great Powers were committed to Zionism; consequently, “we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country, though the [King-Crane] Commission has been going through the form of asking what they are.” Balfour concluded that “so far as Palestine is concerned, the Powers have made no statement of fact which is not admittedly wrong, and no declaration of policy which, at least in the letter, they have no always intended to violate,” illustrating the overt colonialism of Western policy.²⁹

also cited in Bustami, “American Foreign Policy,” 230-232, 234-236; see also, 237ff; RDS 867n.01/75 (23 May 1919); Richard Stevens, “Zionism as Western Imperialism,” in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 27-28.

Bustami raises questions about the role of domestic politics in influencing Wilson’s decision to support the Balfour Declaration and the Zionist project. Bustami observes that Wilson ignored Irish-American lobbying for Irish self-determination, despite the importance of the Irish vote for the Democratic party in elections and the debate on the League of Nations. Wilson also ignored the opinions of African-Americans regarding the former German colonies in Africa. Bustami, 238-239.

²⁹ Khalidi, “Memorandum by Mr. Balfour Respecting Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia,” *From Haven to Conquest*, 201-211; The historian Seth Tillman argues that “with no material interests at stake,” the U.S. was focused on extending the principle of self-determination in the former Ottoman territories. Tillman asserts that “Palestine was a special case in which both Great Britain and the United States departed from the strict application of self-determination by established populations and strongly supported the Zionist movement for the restoration of the ancient Jewish homeland.” Like the Zionists themselves, Tillman asserts that the “historic claims” of the Zionists trumped the rights of the indigenous Arab population. The conclusion that Great Britain and the U.S. supported self-determination--and that that principle was the “dominant” factor in determining territorial settlements with the exception of Palestine--conflicts with British and American policies. Tillman concludes that the British and Americans pursued “impartial justice,” and not any other interests. Tillman also writes that the U.S. suppressed the King-Crane commission report because neither the U.S. nor Britain wanted the Syrian mandate, ignoring that the report challenged the entire mandate system and the Zionist project, conclusions which also factored into its suppression. Tillman also argues that British and American supporters of Zionism did not understand the movement as pursuing a Jewish state, and that the British “were accorded the mandate for Palestine” at the San Remo conference, implying that the conference was not a division of the spoils among the imperial victors. Seth Tillman, *Anglo-American Relations at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 201-202, 223-228.

In another instance, Balfour told the British cabinet in reference to Palestine that “the Powers have made no statement of fact which is not admittedly wrong, and no declaration of policy which, at least in the

On 28 June 1919, the Germans signed what they considered the punitive Versailles Peace Treaty in the Hall of Mirrors, where the Germans had humiliated the French in 1871 after the Franco-Prussian War. Although the treaty with Turkey would not be signed until August 1920, the Versailles treaty included the League of Nations Charter and the framework for the mandate system, essentially a euphemistic term for continued colonization of Africa, the Pacific, and the Near East.³⁰ Clemenceau, Wilson, and Lloyd George determined that pending the results of the King-Crane commission, France would be the mandatory power over Syria, while Britain would be the mandatory over Mesopotamia and Palestine. The French would continue to press for borders based on the Sykes-Picot agreement in the early months of 1920. While the U.S. was no longer an official participant of the peace talks at this point, Zionists pressured Wilson to ensure that the French plan failed because, in the words of Brandeis, it “divides the country in complete disregard of historic boundaries and of actual necessities.” Zionists argued that the future Jewish state must have the Litani River and land east of the Jordan River for it to be viable. Brandeis asserted that “neither in this country nor in Paris has there been any opposition to the Zionist program” and pressured Wilson to “keep this solemn promise to Israel” made by the Christian nations. The Near East Division of the State Department warned of Arab opposition to Zionism and French encroachment in Syria as preventing a unified Arab state and flatly stated that Brandeis’ recommendation for boundaries of a future Jewish state along with the condescending Zionist belief that bribes would buy Palestine would only create friction and conflict. In supporting

letter, they have not always intended to violate.” Doreen Ingrams, *Palestine Papers, 1917-1922: Seeds of Conflict* (London: J Murray, 1972), 73, as cited in Smith, *Palestine and the Palestinians*, 41

³⁰ The mandate system violated the right to self-government of these territories through the imposition of foreign control against the wishes of the inhabitants. Neumann argues that the imperial victors in the Great War had no right to determine boundaries or sovereignty in these territories and that the affected populations had the right to resist foreign encroachment. Neumann, 45-47

the Zionist view, Wilson wrote Lansing that “all the Great Powers are committed to the Balfour Declaration, and I agree with Mr. Justice Brandeis regarding it as a solemn promise which we can in no circumstances afford to break or alter.” The final agreement, however, proceeded more along the lines of the Sykes-Picot understanding. Britain gained control of Mosul and the French won their claims regarding the border between Syria and Palestine.³¹

While the British and French prepared to protect their imperial interests in the Near East, the American commissioners--Henry Churchill King, the president of Oberlin College, and Charles R. Crane, treasurer of the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief—wrote Wilson in late June 1919 that the peoples in the former Ottoman territories sincerely believed the allied rhetoric regarding self-determination. In Palestine, King and

³¹ *FRUS*, 1919, Paris Peace Conference, Volume V, 770; RDS 867n.01/90 (4 February 1920); RDS 867n.01/91 (11 February 1920); RDS 867n.01/92 (23 February 1920); RDS 763.72119/7398 (18 October 1919); Bustami, 262-265. See also, John McTague, “Anglo-French Negotiations over the Boundaries of Palestine, 1919-1920,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 11, No 2 (Winter 1982), 100-112; See, H. S. Haddad, “The Biblical Bases of Zionist Colonialism,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 3, No 4 (Summer 1974), 97-113. McTague observes that the British and Zionists did not consider that the Palestinians and other Arabs in the region had quite different ideas about boundaries of their territory. Despite the platitudes about self-determination, the imperial and colonial interests of the British and Zionists determined the boundaries of Palestine after World War I. Haddad examines how Zionists and their supporters interpreted the Bible to lay claims for a Jewish state that encompassed parts of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and the Sinai in addition to all Palestine west of the Jordan. In the early 1950s, Ben Gurion illustrated that such logic still dominated Zionism when he wrote that

At the present time we speak of colonization, and only of colonization. It is our short-term objective. But it is clear that England belongs to the English, Egypt to the Egyptians and Judea to the Jews. In our country there is room only for Jews. We will say to the Arabs: ‘Move Over’; if they are not in agreement, if they resist, we will push them by force.

After the 1967 war, General Moshe Dayan declared

If one possesses the Bible, if one considers oneself as the people of the Bible, one should also possess the Biblical lands, those of the Judges and the Patriarchs, of Jerusalem, of Hebron, of Jericho and other places as well. I do not thereby set forth a political programme but, what is more important, the means of realizing the ancestral dream of a people. The foreigner must understand that, aside from all the strategic importance for Israel of the Sinai, of the Golan Heights to the Straits of Tiran, and of the mountains to the west of the Jordan, these regions are situated at the heart of Jewish history.

As issue is the validity of using the Bible to justify colonization and expulsion in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Such an exclusivist, exceptionalist, and racist ideology facilitates the continued Israeli denial of Palestinian self-determination, Palestinian statehood, and the Palestinian right of return.

See, Roger Garaudy, “Religious and Historical Pretexts of Zionism,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 6, No 2 (Winter 1977), 41-52.

Balfour admitted in a memorandum that the mandatory system meant that a mandatory power’s “advice must be followed,” and military force would ensure compliance, illustrating the gross colonial nature of this relationship. See Khalidi, *From Haven to Conquest*, 206

Crane warned, Christians and Muslims had a “united and most hostile attitude towards any extent of Jewish immigration and or towards any effort to establish Jewish sovereignty over them.” King and Crane concluded that no British government or American official in Palestine believed that it was “possible to carry out Zionist programs except through support of a large army.” Weizmann, meanwhile, reiterated the Zionist terms presented at the peace conference to the American commission, emphasizing the historic right of the Jewish people to “reconstitute in Palestine their national home” under the protection of a mandatory power so as to ensure unrestricted Jewish immigration and land ownership (through “compulsory” expropriation)³² and the development of political, administrative, and economic conditions necessary to establish immediate Jewish autonomy and an eventual Jewish commonwealth. Weizmann also forwarded the commission a letter he had written to British authorities in Palestine pressing for Jewish claims to Palestine and warning that “unless [the Jewish people] secure a place which they may call their home in a real sense of the word,” they and world civilization and peace would confront a “terrible catastrophe.” The present “brutal” demographics in Palestine, Weizmann argued, paled in comparison to “the undeniable fact of our historical right to Palestine.” Weizmann declared that the Jewish people were “driven out of Palestine by physical force; the fact that this has happened two thousand years ago does not weaken the contention that a great wrong has been done, which must be redressed.” In case anyone considered this a dangerous precedent, Weizmann emphasized Jewish exceptionalism and the Western understanding of civilization in supporting Jewish rights at the expense of the native population, which would not be capable of self-government in Weizmann’s estimation “for a very very long time to come.” Importantly, Weizmann,

³² As Flapan observes, “Zionist land policy was directed at one aim—to secure the maximum amount of land for Zionist colonization.” Flapan, *Zionism and the Palestinians*, 66

adopting the Orientalist ideology, claimed the ability and privilege to understand, define, interpret, and speak for the “treacherous” Arab people when he advised Balfour that “the Arabs, who are superficially clever and quickwitted, worship one thing, and one thing only – power and success” and warned the British that the “dishonest, uneducated, greedy... unpatriotic...inefficient” Arabs were incapable of democracy and self-determination. Although initially sympathetic to Zionism, King and Crane cabled Wilson on 10 July that the indigenous population, expressing a strong sense of nationalism, called for a unified and independent Syria (including Palestine) with technical and economic assistance from either the U.S. or Great Britain. The American commissioners reiterated the staunch opposition to European colonialism, secret treaties, the Balfour Declaration, Zionism, and Jewish immigration to Palestine.³³

King and Crane presented their final report at the end of August 1919, two months after the signing of the Versailles peace treaty with Germany. The findings clearly indicated

³³ *FRUS*, 1919, Paris Peace Conference, XII, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1919Parisv12>, 748-750; RDS 867n.01/81 (June 1919); RDS 867n.01/82 (20 June 1919). In Weizmann’s letter to Balfour on 30 May 1918, he illustrated the racism toward the people living in Palestine. Asking the British to give the Wailing Wall to the Jews, Weizmann lamented that most of the holy places were “in the hands of Christians or Moslems” and the Wailing Wall was “surrounded by a group of miserable, dirty cottages and derelict buildings, which makes the whole place from the hygienic point of view a source of constant humiliation to the Jews of the world,” and “in the hands of some doubtful Moghreb religious community.” He also described Jerusalem as a “city of dirt and squalor, a home of physical and moral disease, the sorry domain of a corrupt Arab municipality.” The Zionists, in pushing for Jewish autonomy, recommended the British train and assist the Jewish militia to maintain law and order, which would allow the British to remove their occupation troops from Palestine. Pamela Smith notes that Weizmann approached the British about destroying “part of the approaches to the Wailing Wall,” which would have been in complete violation of international norms governing military occupations. Flapan states that “the Jews made attempts to acquire the area of the Wall, often accompanied by expressions of hope and desire to rebuild the Temple,” which provides some context for Muslim Arab fears of Jewish expropriation of the Wall in 1929. As it was, the British facilitated Jewish colonization of the Palestine during this stage despite the British obligations to maintain the status quo. See, RDS 867n.01/82 (20 June 1919); Smith, *Palestine and the Palestinians*, 43-44; Flapan, *Zionism and the Palestinians*, 67.

Zionists sometimes claimed that the Arabs misinterpreted Zionism because the Jewish people had no designs on establishing a Jewish state immediately since that would obviously violate the principles of democracy. Palestinians, however, recognized that the Zionist and British policy was to stave off democracy until there was a Jewish majority in Palestine. The future High Commissioner of Palestine, Herbert Samuel, focused on this theme at a commemoration celebrating the second anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, when expressing his support for Zionism and suggesting that the Zionist project would benefit the British Empire. See RDS 867n.01/86 (5 November 1919)

that the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of Syria and Palestine wanted a unified independent territory possibly under an American mandate, which would aid in the economic and technical development of Syria. A significant number of Christian Arabs in Lebanon, however, desired a French mandate over their territory.³⁴ Appealing to Wilsonian rhetoric, the Arab population opposed any continuation of European colonialism in the Near East. The commissioners observed that the Jewish inhabitants in Palestine represented only about ten percent of the total population, and that the majority Arab population, Christian and Muslim, vehemently opposed Zionism and European Jewish immigration to Palestine. The Zionists, according to the commission, demanded that Palestine become the Jewish “national home” and that Britain act as the mandatory power and implement policies facilitating eventual Jewish political control over Palestine. Referring to the League of Nations Covenant, Wilson’s Fourteen Points, and the Anglo-French Declaration, the commissioners concluded that the Allied Powers had an opportunity and responsibility to implement a just solution based on the principle of self-determination. The obstacles to such a just solution were British and French imperialist interests in the Near East and the Zionist program.³⁵

King and Crane recommended that the future mandatory power encourage the economic and political development of a united Syria with Emir Feisal as head of a constitutional monarchy.³⁶ Importantly, the commissioners advised “serious modification of

³⁴ Lebanese Christian immigrants in the United States lobbied the Wilson administration to support a French mandate in Lebanon. See for example, *Syria Before the Peace Conference: Review of the Syrian Question, with a Sketch of Historic Franco-Syrian Associations* (New York: Syrian-Lebanese League of North America, 1919)

³⁵ For full text of King-Crane commission, see *FRUS*, 1919, Paris Peace Conference, XII, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1919Parisv12>, 745-863. The General Syrian Congress articulated similar demands in their 2 July 1919 “statement of the desires of the people” and asked that a Syrian delegation have the opportunity to travel to Paris to defend their rights. See, King-Crane commission report, 780.

³⁶ King and Crane recommended an American mandate over Syria in accordance with the wishes of the population, who saw American actions in Cuba and the Philippines as exhibiting

the extreme Zionist Program,” of pursuing unrestricted immigration and a Jewish state in Palestine, which would undoubtedly “trespass” upon the rights of the indigenous Palestinians contrary to the Balfour Declaration, especially given the Zionist aim of “practically complete dispossession” of the Palestinian Arabs. While King and Crane began their investigation sympathetic to Zionism, the reality in Syria and Palestine and the principle of self-determination tempered their enthusiasm. Basing their recommendation on Zionism on Wilsonian principles, King and Crane warned that British officers believed that “a force of not less than fifty thousand soldiers would be required even to initiate the [Zionist] program.” The commissioners also observe that the Zionist argument that they have a historical right to Palestine “based on an occupation of two thousand years ago, can hardly be seriously considered.”³⁷ Observing that Palestine was a holy land for all three of the major

her genuinely democratic spirit” in contrast to the overt imperialism of the British or French. If the U.S. declined a mandate, the Arabs desired a British mandate with reservations about British imperialist aims and staunchly opposed any French involvement in the Near East.

³⁷ The Peel Commission would later reinforce the Zionist interpretation that the Balfour Declaration and the mandate “affirmed” the “right of the Jews on historic grounds to re-establish their National Home in Palestine.” In their report, members of the Peel Commission included a disingenuous discussion of the Covenant of the League of Nations. The commissioners suggested that the “wishes of these communities [formerly part of the Ottoman Empire]” were considered. According to the King-Crane commission, the Palestinian Arabs wanted complete independence for a Palestine united with Syria, but would hesitatingly accept a mandate with the U.S. as the first choice and Great Britain as the second. Zionists told the Supreme Council that “the selection of Great Britain as Mandatory is urged on the ground that this is the wish of the Jews of the world, and the League of Nations in selecting a Mandatory will follow, as far as possible, the popular wish of the people concerned.” For the British commissioners in the late 1930s, this “settled” the question of “who was to be the Mandatory” in fulfillment of the Covenant and Wilsonian principles. The Covenant referred to the wishes of the communities “formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire”; Zionists did not fall under this category. It was quite disingenuous to proclaim that the will of the Zionists, who themselves disingenuously claimed to represent the whole Jewish people, trumped the wishes of the overwhelmingly Arab population in Palestine. Ignoring the Arabs, the Peel Commission report simply stated that the French “acquiesced” to changes in the Sykes-Picot agreement and that the “Supreme Council at San Remo allotted” the mandates to France and Britain. While the Arabs based their claims to independence on Article 22 of the Covenant and Wilsonian principles, the commissioners determined that the Allied powers (including the United States) supported the Balfour Declaration and the mandate for Palestine, meaning that the principles of self-government and national independence did not apply to Palestinian Arabs. The imperialist interests of the Western powers, which included support for the creation of a European settler state, trumped the principles expressed during the war, including the Anglo-French declaration, which the Peel Commission report interestingly ignores. For the commissioners, “Palestine was different” because it was the Holy Land (important to Christianity) and “the old historic homeland of the Jews.” The Arabs might have “lived in it for centuries,” but their claim to the land was supposedly weak according to the British and Zionists. Lord Milner proclaimed that since the land was sacred

monotheistic religions, the commissioners hypothesized that Christians and Muslims would not accept the Jewish people as “proper guardians” of the holy places or the Holy Land since those places most holy to Christians and Muslims “are not only not sacred to Jews, but abhorrent to them.” Essentially, the commission report recommended severe limits to Jewish immigration to Palestine and the rejection of the Zionist goal of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine. Palestinian organizations, such as the Islamo-Christian Society in Jerusalem, reiterated the commission’s findings in appeals to the United States government in the fall of 1919 and into the first months of 1920. One such appeal from “the most responsible and respected Moslem organizations in Palestine” according to the American consul (even though the groups represented Christian Arabs as well), reminded Wilson and the American people that the Arabs fought on the side of the Allied Powers during the war in pursuit of Wilsonian principles. The Palestinians, in asking for an American protectorate over a unified Arab nation, argued that “the proposition that the Southern part of this country, Palestine, which has been inhabited by Arabs for the past thirteen centuries,” should become a Jewish homeland given the demographic and land-ownership realities, was “one of the most unjust ever heard of in the history of the world.” Closer to home, the Palestine Anti-Zionism Society wrote the State Department that Palestinians in Europe, the United States, Egypt,

to Christians and Jews, “the future of Palestine cannot possibly be left to be determined by the temporary impressions and feelings of the Arab majority in the country of the present day.” Overall, the commission maintained that since the legal mechanisms created by the victorious imperial powers and the Zionists to deal with Palestine ignored the rights of Palestinian Arabs, then Arab grievances and opposition to Zionism and British policies were illegitimate. Still, the British commissioners asserted that the British government did not believe that the “obligations...undertaken towards the Arabs and the Jews respectively would not conflict.” See, Palestine Royal Commission Report, CMD 5479 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1937), 28-30

While the King-Crane commission observed that Zionist historical claims to Palestine hardly deserved a hearing, some continue to reference the Bible and religion to justify Zionism and support for Israeli policies today. For an interesting book on recent archaeological findings demonstrating that the Jewish history presented in the Bible was “a brilliant product of the human imagination,” see Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology’s New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts* (New York: Free Press, 2001)

Palestine, and Latin America merely asked the United States to fully consider the King-Crane commission report and implement a just policy based on Wilsonian principles.³⁸

The British, Americans, French, and Zionists, however, had other plans for the Near East. The issue was providing some sort of international legitimacy for continued imperialist policies. As historian Lawrence Davidson observes, the British and the Zionists publicized the idea that the international community anointed Britain with the responsibility to implement the Balfour Declaration in Palestine. Stephen Wise helped propagate this interpretation during the early stages of the peace conference itself when he declared that the British had no imperialist designs on Palestine, but would accept the trusteeship over Palestine “because Great Britain must bow before the mandate of the League of Nations, because Great Britain is deeply concerned about the welfare of the Jewish people.” A more accurate interpretation is that the British and the Zionist made use of the League of Nations to legitimize their imperialist interests and colonialist project in Palestine.³⁹

³⁸ *FRUS*, 1919, Paris Peace Conference, XII, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1919Parisv12>, 745-799; RDS 867n.01/85 (16 October 1919); RDS 867n.01/88 (14 November 1919); RDS 867n.01/89 (5 January 1920). A General Syrian Congress resolved in July 1919 that Syrian, Lebanon, and Palestine were indivisible, that Zionism was a threat to the national, political, and economic rights of the Arabs, and that the Balfour Declaration and other treaties that were incompatible with Wilsonianism should be rescinded.

British military officials in Palestine also recognized the centrality of force if the British were to implement the Balfour Declaration. Major J. N. Camp wrote in 1919 that

Practically all Moslems and Christians of any importance in Palestine are anti-Zionists and bitterly so. They openly or secretly support or sympathize with the societies in their anti-Zionist and anti-immigration talk and plans for action. In other words, if we mean to carry out any sort of Zionist policy we must do so with military force.

J. N. Camp, “Report on Palestinian-Zionist Relations, 1919,” as cited in Rhet, 222-223; Mallison, “The Balfour Declaration,” in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 106-107; *FRUS*, 1919, Paris Peace Conference, XII, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1919Parisv12>, 793.

³⁹ “Forecasts British Rule in Palestine,” *New York Times*, 10 February 1919, 7; Susan Pederson argues that the mandate system and nominal League oversight provided legitimacy to the colonial powers that claimed to comply with the ideals detailed in the League of Nations Charter. While the Charter determined that the mandatory powers’ responsibility was to facilitate development and self-determination in the tradition of civilizing mission, the mandatory powers policies illustrated a continuation of colonialism. How else to explain British and French bombing and repression of the populations in Syria, Mesopotamia, and Palestine in response to resistance against colonialism? How else to explain the mandatory powers’ resistance to any protests of their policies to the League of Nations? See Susan Pederson, “The Meaning of the Mandates System: An

What began as a promising year for world peace and the destruction of imperialism devolved into a disappointing return to colonization as peoples in Egypt, China, India, Korea, Africa, and the Near East became disillusioned with the failure of the Wilsonian moment to fulfill the promise of independence and self-determination. Significantly, many leaders of these nationalist movements would increasingly turn to Bolshevism and the Soviet Union to overturn imperialism and colonialism.⁴⁰ By the end of 1919, the U.S. Senate rejected the Versailles peace treaty and U.S. involvement in the League of Nations. With the Senate's rejection of Wilsonian internationalism the British and French met at San Remo in Italy during the last week of April 1920 to divide the spoils of the Ottoman territory. At the San Remo conference, the British awarded itself the mandate for Palestine and the French designated itself as the mandatory power for Syria, both against the wishes of the inhabitants and the professed allied war aims and in violation of the League of Nations Charter. As Mayer observes, the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine, which included the Balfour Declaration, essentially eliminated any "prospect of a self-determined sovereign polity for the Palestinians."⁴¹

Argument," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 32 (2006), 560-582; Pederson, "Settler Colonialism at the Bar of the League of Nations," in Caroline Elkins and Susan Pederson, eds., *Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century: Projects, Practices, Legacies* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 113-134. In the latter article, Pederson discusses how the League of Nations Permanent Mandates Commission continued to press the British to implement the Balfour Declaration even after the British began to reconsider their policy due to Arab opposition, especially in the 1930s. The PMC saw the Zionist project as legitimate nation-building.

Curzon lamented that the mandate for Palestine virtually ignored the majority Arab population as "non-Jewish communities." He observed

Here is a country with 580,000 Arabs and 30,000 or is it 60,000 Jews (by no means all Zionists).

Acting upon the noble principles of self-determination and ending with a splendid appeal to the League of Nations, we then proceed to draw up a document...[that] is an avowed constitution for a Jewish state. Even the poor Arabs are only allowed to look through the keyhole as a non-Jewish community.

See, David Gilmour, "The Unregarded Prophet: Lord Curzon and the Palestine Question," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 25, No 3 (Spring 1996), 60-68

⁴⁰ See Manela, *Wilsonian Moment*

⁴¹ Weizmann was not completely satisfied with the wording of the mandate since it only acknowledged the "historical connection" of the Jews to Palestine and not the "historical right" of the Jewish people to Palestine. Later he would write that "at least Palestine has not so far been placed under a legislative council

with an Arab majority.” Interestingly, Zionists would refer to the Balfour Declaration and the mandate as enshrining in international law the Jewish right to Palestine, but Weizmann admitted:

Looking back, I incline to attach even less importance to written “declarations” and “statements” and “instruments” than I did even in those days. Such instruments are at best frames which may or may not be filled in. They have virtually no importance unless and until they are supported by actual performance, and it is more and more to this side of the work that I have tried to direct the movement with the passing of the years.

In his autobiography, Weizmann excoriated British opposition to the mandate and the Balfour Declaration and wondered if this opposition represented “a vague anti-Jewish sentiment rather than any specific anti-Zionist conviction.”

The French and British decisions to carve the Middle East into colonies precipitated violent protest in Iraq, Palestine, Syria, and Trans-Jordan against what the Arabs understood as a cynical violation of wartime pledges and the Wilsonian promise of self-determination.

The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs states that the San Remo conference “allocated” Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the Jewish state. The actual terms of the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine, however, suggests that the British would not apply the Balfour Declaration to Trans-Jordan, and in fact, the British separated Trans-Jordan from Palestine and placed Abdullah, son of Sharif Hussein, on the throne to restore some British prestige in the Arab world according to Addison Southard, U.S. Consul in Jerusalem. The Arabs, however, would continue to press for the fulfillment of Allied promises for a unified and independent Arab state, including Palestine, Trans-Jordan, Syria, and Mesopotamia. Zionists, Southard noted, very much opposed the British policy. Southard would later report that Abdullah became more cooperative with French and Zionist interests due to financial bribes.

The Zionists saw Trans-Jordan as a vital economic part of Palestine and necessary as a strategic buffer from any Arab invasion. Zionists at the time also propagated that a legitimate international entity awarded the mandate for Palestine to Great Britain. For example, a convention of American Zionists in May 1920 expressed gratitude “for the action of the Supreme Council at San Remo in conferring the Palestine mandate on Great Britain.”

It is interesting how revisionist historian Avi Shlaim characterized the conflict and each side’s case after WWI in his important book *Collusion Across the Jordan*:

The Arab case was clear and compelling. Palestine belonged to the people living in it, and the overwhelming majority were Arab. In language and culture as well as land ownership, the country had been Arab for centuries. Geographical proximity, historical ties, and religious affinity made Palestine an integral part of the Arab world. It was entitled to immediate independence. Jewish immigration and settlement could not take place without the consent of the country’s Arab owners, and this consent was emphatically denied. Neither Britain nor the League of Nations had the right to promise a land that was not theirs so their promise was null and void....

Visions of independence and pan-Arab union left no room for a Jewish Palestine. The possibility of coexistence and compromise were denied. If there were moderates among the Palestinian Arab politicians, they were inhibited from giving public expression to their views [and were not popular regardless]....

The Zionist counter-arguments—that the Jewish people had a right to the land that had been the cradle of the Jewish heritage; that they were entitled to reconstruct their national life on the land of their ancestors after nearly two thousand years of living in exile; that the rights of the Arab majority should be measured not in relation to the Jews already in the country but the whole Jewish people; that the economic development of the country would benefit both peoples; and that no Arab would be expelled as a result of the growth of the Jewish national home—all these claims fell on deaf ears.

Such wording places the onus for rejection of “coexistence and compromise” solely on the Arabs and seemingly accepts Zionist arguments as sincere and legitimate while ignoring that the Arab “claims fell on deaf ears” since the Allied powers supported the Zionist movement and rejected Arab claims. Any Arab acceptance of the Zionist arguments would provide legitimacy or acquiescence to a movement intent on creating a Jewish state at the expense of the indigenous population. Shlaim’s book is noteworthy for countering some of the myths associated with how Zionists have understood partition and the 1948 war (including one that the Arab world was united in its intent to “wipe [Israel] off the Middle East map”) and demonstrating that the Zionists, Abdullah, and the British “colluded” to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state. Interestingly, Shlaim credits the tactical flexibility of the Zionist leadership in pursuing “peaceful coexistence with the Arabs,” but

then points out that “the basic aim of the Zionist movement—a Jewish state in Palestine—in itself rendered the conflict with the Palestinians national movement ultimately inescapable.” For Shlaim, the fundamental conflict was between the “Jewish and Palestinian national movements” and not a struggle between Western imperialism and the self-determination of the indigenous population.

See, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “The League of Nations Mandate for Palestine -1920,” <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/facts%20about%20israel/israel%20in%20maps/the%20league%20of%20nations%20mandate%20for%20palestine%20-%201920>; League of Nations Mandate for Palestine, 24 July 1922; “Allies Threaten New Occupation to Enforce Treaty,” *New York Times*, 27 April 1920, 1; “Zionists Outline Palestine’s Future,” *New York Times*, 10 May 1920, 16; Davidson, *America’s Palestine*, 40-41; “Basis of the Syrian Claims,” *New York Times*, 28 March 1920, XXX1; RDS 867n.00/7 (12 April 1921); 867n.00/9 (April 1921); RDS 867n.00/17 (6 September 1921); RDS 867n.00/25 (14 January 1922); Mayer, *Ploughshares into Swords*, 114-115; Shlaim, *Collusion Across the Jordan* (1988), 4-5, 12-13; Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 280-282. For some interesting background on Abdullah, see Shlaim, *Collusion Across the Jordan*, Chs 1 and 2, where Shlaim refers to the “deviousness characteristic of oriental diplomacy” and observes that “Oriental diplomacy is not usually precise unless compelled to be so.”

CHAPTER 5: AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR THE “ESTABLISHMENT OF A JEWISH NATIONAL HOME IN PALESTINE”

With the disappointment of the Wilsonian moment, British control over Palestine, and the British commitment to the Zionists, the Palestinians offered both nonviolent and violent resistance to foreign colonization following World War I and continued to raise the issue of self-determination and democracy. In the face of this opposition, Zionists worked assiduously to gain the support of the West, especially the United States. To do so, Zionists continued to present their movement as a civilizing mission and made explicit comparisons between Jewish and American pioneers. Understanding Zionism as congruent with the American experience, the U.S. Congress resolved to support the “Establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine” in 1922, which helped legitimize the Zionist project and pressure the British to fulfill their ostensible commitment to Zionism despite the increasing Palestine opposition to British imperialism and Jewish settler colonialism. The debate in the United States over Zionism clearly illustrates that most Americans identified with the Zionist narrative, which presented the Zionist movement as repeating the American experience. Jewish pioneers, like their American predecessors, were a chosen people undertaking a divine mission to conquer a wilderness sparsely inhabited by a savage population and bring civilization and enlightenment to the world at large. For the Palestinian Arabs, however, Zionist colonization under British protection was a threat to their homeland, especially since many Zionists clearly and articulately declared that Palestine belonged to the Jewish people.

While publicly reiterating that Zionism would benefit the Arab population, the Zionist project depended upon the dispossession and expulsion of the Palestinians, an apparent feature of Jewish colonialism that was central to the Palestinian Arab opposition. This goal was periodically acknowledged in the United States. On 20 July 1920, the World Zionist Conference in London adopted a resolution that “all the land in Palestine be declared the property of the Jewish people, and that the control of this property be gradually assumed by the Palestine State,” which would employ “Jewish labor exclusively.” The minority opinion of the Jewish socialists was that “the land be declared immediately the property of the Jewish State.”¹ While the *New York Times* did not draw any conclusions about how Jewish ownership of the land and exclusive Jewish labor would benefit the majority Arab population, the Palestinians had already initiated protests against British policy and Zionism. In a report to the League of Nations on the British administration of Palestine from 1 July 1920 to 31 June 1921, High Commission Herbert Samuel recognized that the Palestinians feared expulsion and unlimited Jewish immigration yet claimed that “agitators” who circulated the “wildest stories” about Zionist goals were responsible for outbreaks in April 1920. A *New York Times* article in April 1920 characterized Arab opposition to Zionists as merely expressions of anti-Semitism. These “riots” began, however, after Jews provoked Muslims with the cry “we won the country by the sword and will keep it by the sword.”² The Palestinians demanded that the British take measures to disband the Zionist project, but

¹ “Would Nationalize All Palestine Land,” *New York Times*, 20 July 1920, 9; Davidson, *America’s Palestine*, 44. For more on the development of a Zionist policy based on Jewish land ownership and exclusive Jewish labor, see Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Shafir, “Settler Citizenship in the Jewish Colonization of Palestine,” in Caroline Elkins and Susan Pederson, eds., *Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century: Projects, Practices, Legacies* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 41-57.

² “Riots in Jerusalem: Recent Disorders Said to Have Been of an Anti-Semitic Character,” *New York Times*, 8 April 1920, 15, “10 Killed in Jerusalem,” *New York Times*, 9 April 1920, 25; Davidson, *America’s Palestine*, 44.

the British government ordered General Allenby “to do everything possible to prevent trouble, but to ignore the Arab proposals.” Samuel declared that the Jewish home in Palestine would “possess national characteristics,” which suggested British support for Jewish exclusiveness and the development of autonomous Jewish political institutions.³ British and Zionist policy, then, did not reassure the Palestinian Arabs, who feared that Zionism meant the dispossession of the indigenous population and opposed large-scale Jewish immigration to Palestine and the British privileging of Jewish labor.⁴

On 1 May 1921, “riots” broke out in Jaffa illustrating Palestinian opposition to the Zionist movement and European immigration. Two months earlier Feisal reminded the British of their promises regarding Arab independence and Wilson’s principle articulated on 4 July 1918 that

The settlement of every question, whether of territory, or sovereignty, of economic arrangement, or of political relationship, upon the basis of the free acceptance of that settlement by the people immediately concerned, and not upon the basis of the material interest or advantage of any other nations or people which may desire a different settlement for the sake of its own exterior influence or mastery.⁵

³ Herbert Samuel, “An Interim Report on the Civil Administration of Palestine,” 30 July 1921, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/349b02280a930813052565e90048ed1c?OpenDocument> (accessed 12 September 2011); “Arabs Take Action Against Zionists,” *New York Times*, 17 April 1920, 1. British colonial policy often meant repression of the native populations. The British used military force against the indigenous population in Palestine and Mesopotamia, exposing the civilizing mission rhetoric of the mandates as merely cover for overt colonialism.

⁴ “Palestine Natives Oppose Zionism,” *New York Times*, 8 May 1921, 34; “Palestine Labor Problem,” *New York Times*, 15 April 1922, 14. Recall that in the United States labor supported immigration restriction since immigrants from Eastern Europe and Asia were seen as a threat to white workers who supposedly required a higher standard of living. In Palestine, Arabs opposed Jewish immigration because the ideology of Zionism and British labor privileged Jewish labor.

⁵ Feisal, “Memorandum Submitted to the Conference of Allied Powers at the House of Commons,” 10 March 1921, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/14f06fe1edd50616852570c00058e77e?OpenDocument> (accessed 12 September 2011). For full text of Wilson’s Mount Vernon speech, see *FRUS*, 1918, Supplement 1, The World War, Volume I, 268-271. Feisal gives the date for Wilson’s speech as 4 July 1919 instead of 4 July 1918 and provides a slightly different wording of the text. I used the wording found in *FRUS*.

The British, however, failed to consider Feisal's appeal for a reconsideration of the Treaty of Sevres and the fulfillment of Arab self-determination, independence, and unity, illustrating to the Arabs the injustice and danger of British policy. The immediate cause of the violence was a demonstration of Russian Bolshevik Jews, who supported the international workers movement as opposed to the much larger Jewish labor movement that emphasized exclusive Jewish labor in Palestine. The American Zionists ignored the provocations of Russian Bolshevik Zionists and instead claimed that the attacks on Jews were "premeditated" by agitators who opposed the British mandate and the Balfour Declaration and consequently precipitated the violence and "fanaticism" of the Arab population, which the British asserted was susceptible to a "sudden access of violence...when aroused to anger by some actual or supposed wrong or provocation." The Zionists argued that the "riots" were not the result of large-scale Arab opposition to the Zionist movement, but instead a consequence of a small number of elites faced with losing their privileges under Ottoman rule collaborating with the French to agitate the Arabs against the Jewish population. Noting the contradictions in British policy, the U.S. consul in Palestine, Addison Southard, warned the State Department in a dispatch on 4 May 1921 that the primary cause of the "Jaffa trouble" was the "alleged Zionist attempt to control the government and politically to dispossess the distinct Moslem majority of the population." In his full report a month later, Southern observed that the "real and underlying cause" of political instability was the "very direct and unmistakable antagonism which the majority Arab population of the country bears against Zionism and its aims." The British found that there was a "universal" understanding among the Arab population that Zionism and Jewish immigration were "a danger to the national and material interests" of the Arabs and that British policy was undertaken to implement the Zionist

project against the wishes of the majority population. The commission found that the disturbances were “due partly to the Government policy with regard to a Jewish National Home in Palestine, partly to Arab misunderstandings of that policy, and partly to the manner in which that policy is interpreted and sought to be applied by some of its advocates outside the Government.” The Arabs were well aware of published Zionist declarations that Jews would make Palestine as Jewish as England was English. The Arab population believed that “the Government is under Zionist influence, and is therefore led to favor a minority to the prejudice of the vast majority of the population.” Without Zionism, the commissioners concluded, the British would not have any trouble governing Palestine. The British inquiry concluded that

The attitude of responsible Zionists is not negligible, as it is one of the irritant causes of the present discontent. It arises perhaps from the habit of regarding Palestine as ‘a deserted, derelict land,’ sparsely inhabited by a population without traditions of nationality, where political experiments may be launched without local opposition.

The British commission declared that the Arabs “should accept implicitly” that British policy was premised on the implementation of the Balfour Declaration, while “Zionist leaders should abandon and repudiate all pretensions that go beyond it.”⁶ Since the British inquiry

⁶ “Scores Are Killed in Palestine Riots,” *New York Times*, 4 May 1921, 7; “27 Jews Killed in Jaffa,” *New York Times*, 6 May 1921, 5; “Palestine Natives Oppose Zionism,” *New York Times*, 8 May 1921, 34; “Blame for Jaffa Riots Put Partly on Jews,” *New York Times*, 9 November 1921, 13; *Palestine Disturbances in May 1921: Reports of the Commission of Inquiry with Correspondence Relating Thereto* (H. M. Stationary Office, 1921). Quoted material from *Reports*, 24, 44-45, 56-58. In his report to the League of Nations on 30 July 1921, Samuel also attributed the Jaffa riots to agitators. Samuel, “An Interim Report on the Civil Administration of Palestine,” 30 July 1921. For Southard’s reporting, see RDS 867n.00/5 (2 May 1921), RDS 867n.00/6 (3 May 1921), RDS 867n.00/11 (4 May 1921), RDS 867n.00/14 (4 June 1921), RDS 867n.00/17 (6 September 1921) and Bustami, “American Foreign Policy,” 278ff. In his initial report, Southard wrote that the Jewish immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe were “of decidedly socialistic or Bolshevistic tendencies and potential trouble-makers.” He stated that the British exacerbated racial conflict by disarming the Arab police in Jaffa and arming Jewish forces. In his second report, Southern indicated that Zionists used their political influence to replace Arab labor with Jewish immigrants in many key sectors of the economy, including shipping and public works. The U.S. consul, exhibiting the common Western perceptions of Arabs, still managed to claim that outside agitators stirred up the passive and submissive Arab population and that the Palestinians exhibited “the ages-old tendency of the Arab blood to loot (and kill when the circumstances make it advisable) as a matter of diversion and of otherwise varying the monotony of a routine and hard-working

recognized that the Palestinian Arabs fundamentally opposed acceptance of the Balfour Declaration and Zionism as violations of their rights and interests, the commission's conclusion illustrates that the British did not consider the Arab grievances legitimate or complementary with British interests.

The British commission also reported on an attack against a Jewish settlement on 6 May 1921, which was a consequence of the Jaffa riots. A British pilot dropped bombs and fired his machine gun as a warning to an Arab force "that appeared to be in an attacking formation." On his second flight, the pilot bombed and fired upon the Arabs forcing the cessation of their attack on and their retreat from the Jewish settlement. The commissioners reported that the Palestinian Arabs voiced strong opposition to Zionism and exhibited knowledge of Zionist speeches, books, and newspaper articles articulating Zionist plans for Palestine. Consequently, the British again dismissed the arguments that a few agitators encouraged the "fanaticism" of the Arab population or that the Arabs merely attacked to loot, both of which imply that the majority of the Arabs have no conflict with Zionism.⁷ The

existence." Additionally, Southard expressed a common imperialist idea when he maintained that the British needed to deal with the Arabs "firmly and severely...as their known tendencies would seem to require." He surmised Arabs would interpret the lack of such firmness as British weakness. Consequently, his advice was for the British to severely punish the Arabs involved in the May riot. Southard also welcomed British immigration restriction of European Jews, although he recognized that the Zionist movement would object most vehemently. Although providing the State Department with some accurate information about the causes of the disturbances, Southard reiterated his support for Zionism as necessary for the development of the land and resources in Palestine, but recommended that the British and Zionists better disguise their policies and reevaluate immigration policy in the short-term to decrease Arab opposition. Southard also notes that the Zionists blamed a small contingent of Bolsheviks for inciting Arab violence to argue that the Arabs were not opposed to Zionism and to separate Zionism from communism. See, RDS 867n.00/14 (4 June 1921) and Bustami, 280-283; for the State Department memo to Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes concerning the violence in Jaffa, see RDS 867n.00/14 (1 July 1921). Summarizing the main points of Southard's report, the State Department highlighted Southard's claim that Arab and French agitators were responsible for the trouble, that the British needed to use a heavier hand against the Arabs, and that the main problem was that Palestine was unable to support the large numbers of Jewish immigrants entering Palestine.

⁷ *Palestine Disturbances in May 1921: Reports of the Commission of Inquiry with Correspondence Relating Thereto* (H. M. Stationary Office, 1921), 5-16; RDS 867n.00/20 (31 October 1921); RDS 867n.00/22 (23 November 1921). Southard approved of later British military actions to collect fines and stolen property from the Arab villages whose inhabitants allegedly took part in the raids against Jewish settlers in May 1921.

commission's superficial attempt at even-handedness and British policies, however, illustrated to the Arab population that the British were intent on establishing a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. For the Palestinians, there could be no compromise with a European colonization project that violated their rights, and their opposition to the Zionist movement continued.⁸

To protest the Balfour Declaration on the anniversary of its announcement on 2 November 1921, Arabs in Palestine planned a general strike and a peaceful demonstration in Jerusalem. Near the entrance to a Jewish street, as police and Jewish residents prevented the Arabs from demonstrating in the Jewish neighborhood, a bomb landed among the Arab crowd. Describing the event for the State Department, Addison Southard, the U.S. consul, opined that "blood having been spilled the Arabs as usual became thoroughly aroused." There were few casualties, but Southard observed that the Arab wounds were from bullets, suggesting that some among the Jewish population were illegally in possession of firearms. The British troops quelled the violence relatively quickly and implemented martial law and a curfew. Southard remarked that the Zionist Commission and the broader Zionist population had adopted a more militant attitude toward the Arabs that only served to increase Arab opposition to the Zionist movement. While Zionists portrayed any Arab violence as a

For Southard's assessment of the British punishment of Arab villages involved in attacking and looting Jewish colonies, see RDS 867n.00/24 (5 December 1921).

The Jewish settlers complained that the British did not follow-through in punishing the Arab raiders. The commissioners recommended that the British ought to use force against armed crowds if a demonstration of force is unsuccessful. The British, however, never used aerial bombardment against the Jewish settlers.

⁸ "Palestine Is Still A Land of Problems," *New York Times*, 10 July 1921, 27. The Chairman of the Zionist Commission in Palestine boasted that when one or two million Jews from Europe and America were settled in Palestine, the Zionists would extend their project into Trans-Jordan without considering the wishes or rights of the people already living there.

Interestingly, many Zionists argued that British policy was opposing the implementation of the Balfour Declaration and the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. See, for example, "Conflict of Policy in Zionist Congress," *New York Times*, 6 September 1921, 15. British policy in Palestine certainly privileged the Zionist position. See, for example, Sahar Huneidi, "Was Balfour Policy Reversible? The Colonial Office and Palestine, 1921-1923," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 27, No 2 (Winter 1998), 23-41.

“pogrom” against the Jews, Southard advised the State Department that the Arab opposition was to the Balfour Declaration and the Zionist movement and that the Arabs feared Jewish dominance under the protection of Great Britain’s military power. The problem was that there were “six Arabs for every Jew, and an appreciable part of the actual Jewish population consists of individuals not native to the country as are all the Arabs.”⁹ Additionally, prominent Zionists continued to make statements such as “the Jews are ready to take Palestine by war, if the outflow of blood is necessary to establish their claim upon the land.”¹⁰ While the State Department was aware of conditions in Palestine, the Zionist characterization of events predominated in the discourse in the United States.

In late March 1922, partially in response to increasing Arab opposition to the Zionist project in Palestine, representatives of the American Zionist Organization met in Philadelphia and resolved to counter domestic and international movements opposing Zionism, urged the League of Nations to vote in favor of a British mandate for Palestine, and appealed to the U.S. government to publically declare sympathy for Zionist aspirations.¹¹ There were a number of issues preventing the League of Nations from ratifying the mandates over the

⁹ RDS 867n.00/21 (7 November 1921); see also, RDS 867n.00/18 (2 November 1921); RDS 867n.00/23 (5 December 1921)

¹⁰ RDS 867n.00/19 (22 October 1921). According to Southard, David Yellin, a member of the British High Commissioner’s Advisory Council in Palestine, made such a statement at a recent international Zionist meeting, which heightened the fears of the Arab population.

In a later report, Southard wrote that the three Jews charged with and convicted of throwing bombs into the Arab crowd were acquitted by a higher court, raising concerns among the Arabs about the justice system in Palestine. See RDS 867n.00/26 (7 February 1922)

¹¹ Zionists continued to solicit American support for their project. See, for example, letter and follow-up from Herman Bernstein of the Zionist Organization of America to Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes in RDS 867n.00/27 (9 March 1922) and RDS 867n.00/28 (21 March 1922) in which Bernstein asked for a meeting with Hughes. The State Department declined since the ZOA had already met with Warren Delano Robbins, chief of the Near Eastern Affairs division. See also “Harding for Zionism Leader Announces,” *New York Times*, 25 November 1921, 8. In March 1922, the American public was learning more about the secret treaties made during the war. See, for example, Ray Stannard Baker, “Turkish Empire As Booty,” *New York Times*, 12 March 1922, 90. For an example of the type of information that the Zionists were combating, see “Finds Unrest in Palestine,” *New York Times*, 10 February 1922, 3. The Zionist effort also challenged the “insidious propaganda” of Jewish opponents of Zionism. See, “Untermeyer Hits Back at Critics of Zionism,” *New York Times*, 3 May 1922, 32.

former Ottoman territory, including negotiations between Britain and the U.S. regarding American rights in Palestine and Vatican concerns regarding Jewish control over Christian holy places in the Holy Land. The British argued that the American determination to have equal rights in the mandated territories without being a member of the League of Nations or a signatory of the Treaty of Versailles contributed to the delay in placing the mandates before the League. The Vatican also expressed opposition to the British mandate granting Jews “a privileged and preponderating position vis-à-vis over other sections of the population.” The Vatican further felt that the rights of Christians would not be adequately protected.¹² Zionists understood a British Mandate as central to the establishment of a Jewish State. Weizmann, the foremost international Zionist leader after the early death of Theodor Herzl, argued that “under [British] direction the whole of Palestine from the Lebanon province to the Egyptian frontier and from the sea to the Hedjaz railway will be open to Jewish settlements, which will ultimately develop into an autonomous Jewish commonwealth.”¹³ Zionists feared that continued delays in the League’s ratification of the British mandate provided space for

¹² “Zionists Uphold British Mandate: Ratification of Plans for Palestine by the League Urged by Convention,” *New York Times*, 27 March 1922, 12; “Palestine Mandate Held Up By League,” *New York Times*, 12 May 1922, 19; “British Guard Palestine,” *New York Times*, 9 March 1922, 8; “Behind the Pope’s Palestine Note,” *New York Times*, 2 July 1922, 30; “Holy Places in Palestine,” *New York Times*, 9 July 1922, 48; “Mandate Favors Jews, Vatican Says,” *New York Times*, 16 June 1922, 10; “Balfour on Palestine: Speech Before the League Council Declaring the Unchanged Policy of Britain on the Mandate,” *New York Times*, 18 June 1922, 79. For a brief discussion on the role of Catholics in the Zionist debate, see Rhett, 155-157, 169. Importantly, Rhett observes, Irish Catholic nationalists identified with Zionism, which successfully linked nationalism with religion. Monsignor M. J. Lavelle of St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York declared that “the rescue of the Holy Land from the awful Turkish power” was a “blessing.” “Gibbons for Zionism,” *New York Times*, 24 November 1918, 12. Southard sent the State Department an announcement from the pope’s representative in Jerusalem that criticized Zionism. Southard warned that such sentiments would further incite opposition to the Zionist movement and British policies. RDS 867n.00/16 (29 July 1921)

The U.S. and Britain would reach a tentative agreement regarding American rights in Palestine by early May 1922, but the two parties would not sign the “American-British Palestine Mandate Convention” until December 1924, which the U.S. and Britain would ratify during 1925. See “Wants Open Door in Sevres Treaty,” *New York Times*, 21 February 1922, 17; “Britain Concedes on Palestine Oil,” *New York Times*, 8 April 1922, 30; “Agreement Reached on Palestine Mandate,” *New York Times*, 10 May 1922, 1; Division of Near Eastern Affairs, Department of State, *The Palestine Mandate*, (Salisbury, NC: Documentary Publications, 1977).

¹³ “Action of Conference Satisfies Zionists,” *New York Times*, 3 March 1919, 3.

opposition movements to undertake, in the words of Dr. Joseph Silverman, “pernicious propaganda” against Zionism.¹⁴

Silverman was referring to an Arab delegation that had proposed to Secretary of State for the Colonies Winston Churchill a draft of a Constitution for Palestine and plans for a national independent government. Earlier, in March 1921, the Executive Committee of the Third Arab Palestine Congress had presented Churchill with their *Report on the State of Palestine*.¹⁵ In this 29-page report, the Palestinians developed legal, historical, moral, and economic arguments against British policy in the Near East, including the separation of Arab lands and the Balfour Declaration, which the Arabs saw as allowing Jewish colonists to become the majority in Palestine through immigration. From a legal standpoint, the Palestinians argued that the British contract with Hussein preceded and took precedence over the Balfour Declaration, especially since the Arabs fulfilled their obligations by playing an instrumental role in the defeat of the Turks. Similar to Native American arguments against dispossession and removal, the Palestinians argued that “the people of Palestine inherited this

¹⁴ Dr. Joseph Silverman quoted in “Silverman Wants Mandate,” *New York Times*, 3 April 1922, 8. For an earlier example of Zionists preparing to lobby Congress, see “Canvassing Congress for Views on Zionism,” *New York Times*, 16 July 1918, 13.

While the Zionist interpretation of the mandate dominated the discourse, Zionist leaders were not fully pleased with the terms. Weizmann unsuccessfully wanted the clause in the preamble that recognized the “historic connection of the Jewish people” to Palestine to recognition of “the historic rights of the Jews to Palestine,” which suggests a much different meaning. The Balfour Declaration was included in the preamble, and the only change was the deletion of the phrase “and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object.” Since the safeguard clauses were intact, the Balfour Declaration’s meaning was not altered. Zionists, however, would continue to claim that “Jews constitute a distinct national entity in the eyes of international law” and that the mandate provided “for the establishment in the country [Palestine] of a national home for the Jewish people,” an argument that violated both the safeguard clauses in the Balfour Declaration. Perhaps more importantly, the Zionist program for a Jewish state in Palestine was a clear violation of the Covenant. When the Permanent Mandates Commission asserted that the British had to fulfill the terms of the mandate through the facilitation of the Zionist project, it was violating the principles laid down in the Covenant. See Mallison, “The Balfour Declaration,” 96ff.

¹⁵ *Report on the State of Palestine* (Jerusalem: Executive Committee of the Third Arab Palestine Congress, 1921) found in RDS 867n.00/15 (8 July 1921). Southard, in supplying copies of the report for the State Department, warned that the report shows the “probable influence or inspiration of French or Franco-Syrian agitators.”

country from their ancestors, as these did from those who had gone before them.

Palestine...is an inalienable possession of the nation, and neither England nor any other Power can bring a foreigner in to share this inheritance.”¹⁶ Regarding the Zionist claim that Biblical history supported their right to Palestine, the Palestinians rejoined that according to such logic the Arabs could claim Spain. While briefly resorting to crude anti-Semitism in characterizing European Jews, the Palestinians warned about the spread of Bolshevism in Palestine due to Jewish immigration and argued that British and Zionist policies (supported by British military occupation) privileged Jewish labor and Jewish economic interests at the expense of the Arab population. Importantly, the Palestinians argued that the mandate was a violation of Wilsonian principles and allied war aims since British policy denied the self-determination of the Palestinian people. Based on these arguments, the Palestinians asked for the formation of a national government, the restriction of Jewish immigration, the renunciation of the Balfour Declaration, and the reunification of Palestine with the other Arab territories.

The Palestinian Arab Delegation presented its case against Zionism and British policy to the larger British public in a November 1921 propaganda pamphlet, which was entitled *The Holy Land: The Moslem-Christian Case against Zionist Aggression*. This pamphlet, utilizing the words of prominent Zionists themselves, illustrated that the Zionist goal was a Jewish state in Palestine, and argued that Palestine should have a national government

¹⁶ In their appeal against removal to the U.S. Congress in 1829, the Cherokee stated:

The land on which we stand, we have received as an inheritance from our fathers, who possessed it from time immemorial, as a gift from our common father in heaven. We have already said, that when the white man came to the shores of America, our ancestors were found in peaceable possession of this very land. They bequeathed it to us as their children, and we have sacredly kept it as containing the remains of our beloved men. This right of inheritance we have *never ceded*, nor *ever forfeited*. Permit us to ask, what better right can a people have to a country, than the right of *inheritance* and *immemorial peaceable possession*?

“Memorial of the Cherokee Indians,” *Niles Weekly Register*, Vol 38, No 965 (13 March 1830), 53

representing the population and controlling immigration. In a 21 February 1922 letter to the British Colonial Secretary, the Palestinian Arab delegation opposed European Jewish immigration to Palestine and warned Churchill that many of the Jewish immigrants were of “a Bolshevik revolutionary type” and declared that the Arab population of Palestine did not want Palestine to become a crown colony, but wanted self-determination in accordance with Article 22 of the League of Nations Charter.¹⁷ Churchill responded that “the non-Jewish population” of Palestine must understand that Britain must keep its pledges (i.e. the Balfour Declaration and not the pledges made to the Arabs during the war). In his reply on 1 March 1922, Churchill asserted that the Treaty of Sevres between the Allies and the Ottoman Empire signed in August 1920 determined that Article 22 conveniently did not apply to Palestine and that the mandatory power was obligated to fulfill the Balfour Declaration.

Illustrating British imperial logic, Churchill rationalized that the British were

bound by a pledge which is antecedent to the Covenant of the League of Nations, and they cannot allow a constitutional position to develop in a country for which they have accepted responsibility to the Principal Allied Powers, which may make it impracticable to carry into a effect a solemn undertaking given by themselves and their allies.

There could not be self-determination for the Arabs in Palestine, Churchill condescendingly explained, because that would “preclude the fulfillment” of the Balfour Declaration and British and Zionist imperialist and colonialist plans for Palestine. Articulating the civilizing mission and white man’s burden ideology, Churchill promised the Zionist colonization would

¹⁷ Article 22 of the League of Nations Charter stated in part that
 Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory.

benefit the indigenous population and inquired how the Arab delegation could “entertain any objection in principle” to British policy.¹⁸

The Palestine Arab Delegation proceeded to attack Churchill’s rationalization for British imperialism in Palestine and reminded Churchill that the professed Allied war aims promised liberation and self-determination for colonized and oppressed peoples. Arguing that the majority of the world’s Jews opposed the Zionist movement, the Arabs observed that the British pledge to the Arabs in the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, which clearly identified Palestine as within the Arab territory which would gain its independence after the war, preceded British promises to the Zionists. This second letter to Churchill also observed that Article 22 of the League of Nations Charter, embodying the civilizing mission ideology of imperialism, referred to the “well-being and development” of the peoples of colonized territories of the defeated Ottoman, German, and Austro-Hungarian Empires and not the “well-being and development” of European settlers immigrating to those territories for the purpose of colonization. As for the British argument that the Balfour Declaration and the Treaty of Sevres determined that the British had to fulfill the promises of the Balfour Declaration, the Palestine Arab Delegation pointed out that Article 20 of the League of Nations Charter abrogated “all obligations or understandings inter se which are inconsistent with the terms of this Covenant.” The Palestine Arab Delegation insisted that Zionism violated the self-determination rights of the Palestinian Arabs and that British imperial policy

¹⁸ Palestine Arab Delegation, *The Holy Land: The Moslem-Christian Case against Zionist Aggression* (November 1921); “Churchill Reply to Arabs,” *New York Times*, 2 March 1922, 2; “Promises the Arabs Rights in Palestine,” *New York Times*, 2 April 1921, 2; *Correspondence with the Palestine Arab Delegation and the Zionist Organization* (H.M. Stationary Office, 1922), Palestine Arab Delegation to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 21 February 1922, and Colonial Office to the Palestine Arab Delegation, 1 March 1922, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/48a7e5584ee1403485256cd8006c3fbe?OpenDocument> (last accessed 2 November 2011); Winston Churchill, White Paper, 3 June 1922, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/f2ca0ee62b5680ed852570c000591beb?OpenDocument> (last accessed 30 October 2011).

violated the League of Nations Covenant. In a curt response, Churchill claimed that supporting Zionism and the Balfour Declaration did not violate the self-determination of Palestinian Arabs, the Arabs did not understand the terms of the Hussein-McMahon agreement, and the British “will not be diverted...from the line of action which they conceive to be in the best interests of the people of Palestine as a whole.”¹⁹ Churchill had told the Palestinian Arabs in April 1921:

It is manifestly right that the scattered Jews should have a national centre and a national home in which they might be reunited, and where else but in Palestine, with which the Jews for 3,000 years have been intimately and profoundly associated? We think it good for the world, good for the Jews and good for the British Empire, and it is also good for Arabs dwelling in Palestine....

Churchill’s White Paper, dated 3 June 1922, further maintained that the Balfour Declaration was “not susceptible of change” and that the British agreement with the Arabs did not include Palestine. British imperial history, however, suggests that concern for the interests of colonized peoples was not the impetus behind British policies. The White Paper reiterated the Zionist right to establish a homeland in Palestine, signaling a sharp defeat for the Palestinian Arabs who fundamentally opposed the British position.²⁰

¹⁹ Palestine Arab Delegation to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 16 March 1922 in *Correspondence with the Palestine Arab Delegation and the Zionist Organization* (H.M. Stationary Office, 1922).

²⁰ “Promises the Arabs Rights in Palestine,” *New York Times*, 2 April 1921, 2; *Correspondence with the Palestine Arab Delegation and the Zionist Organization* (H.M. Stationary Office, 1922); Churchill White Paper, 3 June 1922. For one example of the consequences of British colonial policy, see Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Nino Famines and the Making of the Third World* (Verso: London and New York, 2002). Feisal, himself, appealed to the western powers and argued for Arab self-determination instead of the western colonization of the Near East. “Feisal, Arab King, Appeals to Powers,” *New York Times*, 10 May 1922, 2

In his autobiography, Weizmann wrote that the Churchill White Paper was an attempt to “placate the Arabs as far as possible.” But, Weizmann asserted, “the real opponents of Zionism can never be placated by any diplomatic formula” because “their objection to the Jews is that the Jews exist, and in this particular case, that they desire to exist in Palestine.” Of course, this was a disingenuous argument: the Palestinian Arabs opposed Zionism because it meant a Jewish state at the expense of Arab self-determination. Despite Weizmann’s contention that the White Paper was meant to essentially appease the Arabs, he agreed with Jabotinsky that if the British carried out the terms of the White Paper, then the Jewish people could still establish a majority in Palestine and a Jewish state, signaling that the British policy was a defeat for the Arab population.

The Arab delegation stayed in London for about eleven months without much success. Before leaving in the second week of July 1922, the delegation informed the British and the League of Nations that the Arab inhabitants of Palestine, representing 93% of the population, were against the British Mandate and the Balfour Declaration as were the Jewish population in Palestine prior to the advent of political Zionism.²¹ Once again demanding

Churchill concluded in his White Paper that nothing within it “need cause either alarm to the Arab population of Palestine or disappointment to the Jews.” The Peel report understood that Churchill “intended to conciliate” the Arabs, but did not mean to “prohibit the ultimate establishment of a Jewish State.” The Arab population clearly recognized that British policy would facilitate the development of a Jewish State at the expense of Palestinian self-determination and independence. Twenty pages later, however, the report observed that the British “hoped” that Churchill’s White Paper “while firmly re-asserting the Government’s adherence to the Balfour Declaration, had robbed it of much of its sting by the moderate definition it contained of the National Home.” The British “hope” for better relations between the indigenous Arabs and Jewish immigrants was illogical given their support for the goals of political Zionism. Perhaps Churchill’s primary reason for the partition of Palestine was to create a political entity completely dependent on the British. In the face of Arab nationalist movements, the creation of Trans-Jordan and the crowning of Abdullah meant a British client state in this vital strategic region. See, Peel Commission Report, 33, 53; Mayer, *Ploughshares into Swords*, 115; Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 290-291.

²¹ A common Zionist theme has been to argue that Palestine was virtually empty prior to Jewish colonization. Joan Peters well-reviewed hoax, *From Time Immemorial: The Origins of the Arab-Jewish Conflict Over Palestine* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984) purporting to conclusively show that Palestine was empty is one such example. See Norman Finkelstein, *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict*, 2nd ed. (New York: Verso, 2003); Finkelstein, *Beyond Chutzpah: On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005); Finkelstein, “Disinformation and the Palestine Question: The Not-So-Strange Case of Joan Peter’s *From Time Immemorial*,” in Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens, eds., *Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question* (London and New York: Verso, 1988), 33-69; Edward Said, “Conspiracy of Praise,” in Said and Hitchens, *Blaming the Victims*, 23-31; Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, “Territorially-Based Nationalism and the Politics of Negation,” in Said and Hitchens, *Blaming the Victims*, 193-206; Justin McCarthy, *The Population of Palestine: Population History and Statistics of the Late Ottoman Period and Mandate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); Janet Abu-Lughod, “The Demographic Transformation of Palestine,” in Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, ed., *The Transformation of Palestine: Essays on the Origin and Development of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1987); Alexander Scholch, “The Demographic Development of Palestine, 1850-1882,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol 17 (1985), 485-505; Peel Report, especially Ch X.

In *Beyond Chutzpah*, Finkelstein documents Alan Dershowitz’s plagiarism of Peters (and her demographic ‘analysis’) in *The Case for Israel* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2003), illustrating that within the United States Zionists and their supporters could continue to deny Palestinian history and rights to self-determination. The work of Peters and Dershowitz represent a long history of what Lawrence Davidson calls the American “perceptual depopulation” of Palestine and what Edward Said characterizes as “ethnocide” against the Palestinian people. See Davidson, *America’s Palestine* and Said, “Conspiracy of Praise,” in Said and Hitchens, *Blaming the Victims*, 30.

As Finkelstein notes in his demonstration of the Peters’ fraud, Peters herself plagiarized from Ernst Frankenstein’s *Justice for my People* (New York: Dial Press, 1944), a Zionist pamphlet. See, Finkelstein, “Disinformation and the Palestine Question: The Not-So-Strange Case of Joan Peter’s *From Time Immemorial*,” in Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens, eds., *Blaming the Victims*, 33-69

Peters is not the only person to argue that there were no Palestinian Arabs in Palestine. See Rashid Khalidi’s brief discussion on that theme in Khalid, “Palestinian Peasant Resistance to Zionism Before World War I,” in Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens, eds., *Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the*

self-determination, including the right to determine immigration policy, the Palestine Arab Delegation criticized the British for their unsympathetic interpretation of the Hussein-McMahon agreement and delaying on self-determination for Palestine until the Jewish population reached a majority, primarily through immigration. Churchill, in his 1922 White Paper demanding that the League of Nations assent to the British mandate over Palestine, commented that the Jewish community in Palestine “with its town and country population, its political, religious and social organisations, its own language, its own customs, its own life, has in fact "national" characteristics.” Despite noting the exclusionist and separatist nature of Jewish political, social, educational, and economic policies in Palestine, Churchill contended that the establishment of the Jewish national home in Palestine did not mean “the imposition of a Jewish nationality upon the inhabitants of Palestine as a whole,” that Zionists wished to live with and improve conditions for Arabs, and that the Zionists were “in Palestine as of right and not on sufferance.” For their part, Zionists pressured the British to allow unrestricted immigration to Palestine and promised that Zionist policy would not “prejudice in the smallest degree the civil or religious rights or the material interests of the non-Jewish population.” Noticeably absent were any promises to not violate the political rights of the “non-Jewish population,” representing 93% of people living in Palestine. British policy was based on supporting Zionism and British imperialism. Consequently, Churchill concluded his White Paper by explaining “it is necessary that the existence of a Jewish National Home

Palestinian Question (London and New York: Verso, 1988), 207-233. In discussing these works that ignore Arab sources, Khalidi reiterates a theme emphasized in the work of Said, namely that the Palestinians (and other ‘Oriental’ peoples) cannot represent themselves. Only Westerners, including European immigrants to Palestine and later Jewish Israelis could understand and interpret the “Arab mind” to a Western audience. This is an important theme of the Israeli-Palestine conflict and supports Gran’s argument about the Israeli mandate over the Palestinians and American and Israeli assertions that there are no partners for peace. Overall, the Israelis and the West have the right to label, represent, and interpret the Palestinians and other Arabs while denying the Palestinians to represent themselves. See Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994)

in Palestine should be internationally guaranteed, and that it should be formally recognised to rest upon ancient historic connection.” The Arab population in Palestine and Trans-Jordan implemented a peaceful two-day general strike in the middle of July 1922 to protest the League’s recognition of the British mandate over Palestine and promised continued resistance to the Balfour Declaration, Zionism, and the British mandate. Despite the opposition of the overwhelming majority of the population in Palestine, the Supreme Council of the League of Nations ratified the British mandate over Palestine on 24 July 1922. In celebration, the Jewish paper *Haaretz* wrote that “we have this day become a nation, and are no longer wandering groups. For the first time the nations of the world have met and proclaimed us a nation with a national culture and national aspirations.” Twenty-five years later, the Zionists would again declare that the international community legitimized the Jewish demand for a state in Palestine when the nascent United Nations General Assembly voted in favor of the partition of Palestine. For the past number of decades, however, the Israeli government and international Zionists have rejected the consensus of the international community for a just solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.²²

²² The Peel Commission suggested that the Arab argument was based on “two main legal or quasi-legal contentions”: that Palestine was included in the Hussein-McMahon correspondence and that Palestinian Arabs were included in Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. The British government insisted that Palestine was excluded from the future independent Arab territory promised in the Hussein-McMahon correspondence and that the British opposed self-determination for the Palestinian Arabs because such a step would preclude the establishment of the Jewish national home. The Arabs clearly understood that “the Jewish National Home is the cause of depriving us of our natural right of establishing an independent government” and that the British were withholding self-government until the Jewish population established a majority. The Peel commissioners determined that “we believe that the British Government and Parliament have always maintained the moral assumption on which...the Mandate was based, namely, that in course of time Arabs and Jews could and would sink their differences in a common Palestine citizenship. It was for the achievement of that concord, not merely for the further growth in size and strength of the National Home, that they insisted on delay.” Given the clear Zionist aim of establishing a Jewish state based on the expropriation and expulsion of the indigenous inhabitants, such a statement is merely a whitewash of British policy. “Churchill Reply to Arabs,” *New York Times*, 2 March 1922, 2; “Arabs End Strike Against Mandate,” *New York Times*, 16 July 1922, 14; “League Clears Way to Decide Mandates,” *New York Times*, 18 July 1922, 10; “Council Confirms the Last Mandate,” *New York Times*, 23 July 1922, 9; “Jews Celebrate Mandate,” *New York Times*, 24 July 1922, 30; “2,000 Jews Acclaim Palestine Mandate,” *New York Times*, 1 August 1922, 16; “Disturbances in Palestine,” *New York Times*, 27 August 1922, 10; “Palestinian Crisis Believed Near,” *New York Times*, 3 September 1922,

While the Palestinian Arab delegation was in London, Southard reported to the State Department in March 1922 that there had been no decrease in Arab hostility to Zionism. Consequently, the British government in Palestine prepared for outbreaks of Zionist-Arab confrontation and implemented “The Ottoman Law of Assemblies,” which criminalized the right to assembly. The British would use force to compel the Arab population to accept British policies in Palestine. During July, Southard reported that the British and Zionist feared Arab unrest as the League of Nations prepared to legitimize the British mandate over Palestine and the Balfour Declaration. Given British police measures, few disorders took place as Zionists celebrated the League of Nation’s ratification of the mandate. The U.S. vice consul, George C. Cobb, attributed the lack of disorder in part to an absence of Arab leadership and the “apathetic attitude of the average Arab, unless agitated, towards all things requiring personal effort, initiative and resourcefulness.” Cobb concluded that because of the absence of an Arab uprising, the U.S. could “assume...that the Arabs may be considered to have...accepted the British Mandate for Palestine.” The Palestinians, however, called for global Arab and Muslim opposition to the British mandate, suggesting that Arab opposition and resistance to the injustice of Zionism and the Balfour Declaration would continue. Once the Arab delegation returned to Palestine, the Fifth Arab Congress resolved to implement an economic boycott against the Jewish population and protest any elections that fell short of creating a national government based on majority rule. The Arab proclamation, included in

3; “Arab Delegation to Leave London,” *New York Times*, 10 July 1922, 4; “Promises the Arabs Rights in Palestine,” *New York Times*, 2 April 1921, 2; *Correspondence with the Palestine Arab Delegation and the Zionist Organization* (H.M. Stationary Office, 1922), <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/48a7e5584ee1403485256cd8006c3fbe?OpenDocument> (last accessed 2 November 2011); Winston Churchill, White Paper, 3 June 1922, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/f2ca0ee62b5680ed852570c000591beb?OpenDocument> (last accessed 30 October 2011). Palestinian Muslims also attempted to appeal to global Muslim sentiment. See, “Appeal to Moslem Rulers,” *New York Times*, 5 July 1922, 12; Peel Commission Report, 54-55. For discussion of how the broader Muslim world understood and reacted to British policies in the Near East, see Rhett, 239-244.

the 6 September dispatch to the State Department, contended that any Arab participation in elections and government legitimized the British mandate and the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. Cobb concluded his 6 September memo with his opinion that “it is hard to conceive what the Arab really wants unless it be the life of innocuous desuetude under which he lived with the Turk.”²³

The League of Nations Mandate for Palestine articulated contradictory goals. The preamble charged the British with implementing Article 22 of the League of Nations Charter and the Balfour Declaration. Article 22 determined that the mandatory powers in “certain” of the former Ottoman territories merely provide “administrative advice and assistance...until such time as they are able to stand alone.” The article clearly states that the “wishes of these communities must be a principle consideration in the selection of the Mandatory.” The Balfour Declaration, which contained its own contradictions, meant that the British had the responsibility to “secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home” in Palestine. The British, according to the mandate, had the responsibility to facilitate Jewish immigration and create political, economic, and administrative institutions that privileged Jewish self-determination. Balfour argued that the British and the League sufficiently safeguarded the interests of the Arab population and that the Palestinians would benefit from Zionism and British administration. When the Palestinians increased their resistance following the League’s ratification of the British mandate, Weizmann reiterated the common refrain that

²³ RDS 867n.00/30 (15 March 1922); RDS 867n.00/31 (17 April 1922); RDS 867n.00/33 (19 July 1922); RDS 867n.00/34 (26 July 1922); RDS 867n.00/36 (25 August 1922); RDS 867n.00/39 (6 September 1922). The British response to the Arab Congress Proclamation was to criminalize dissent, especially as many Arabs looked to the Turks, in the process of forcing out the European powers, to promote Arab independence and self-determination. See, RDS 867n.00/41 (19 September 1922); RDS 867n.00/43 (22 November 1922).

We Jews are not going to Palestine to exterminate or expel the Arabs. We have repeatedly offered them our hand in brotherhood for common work in order to rebuild the country, which for hundreds of years past has been a devastated area. We regret that our Arab brethren allow themselves to be induced by unscrupulous agitators to impede the work which would have benefitted them as much as ourselves.²⁴

Six months before Weizmann's comment, the journalist Herman Bernstein declared that "the Jews and Arabs have always lived together in Palestine as friendly neighbors until a campaign of propaganda was launched by various agitators in Palestine, France and England, inciting violence against the Jews and spreading dissatisfaction and unrest among the Arabs."²⁵ Again the parallels with U.S. history and the conquest, extermination, and removal of Native Americans are clear. Since Zionists and European/American colonizers were bringing progress and civilization to the indigenous populations, any resistance was irrational and probably the result of outside agitators. Any native resistance, consequently, justified dispossession, removal, and even extermination, all in the name of progress and civilization. The Palestinians feared that the terms of the mandate meant that the Jewish

²⁴ League of Nations Mandate for Palestine, 24 July 1922; "Jews Celebrate Mandate," *New York Times*, 24 July 1922, 30; "Palestine Crisis Believed Near," *New York Times*, 3 September 1922, 3. The British recognized the contradictions in their policy. One British official in Palestine, Humphrey Bowman, wrote in 1920 that "It is indeed difficult to see how we can keep our promises to the Jews by making the country a 'National Home,' without inflicting injury on the 9/10ths of the population...." Humphrey Bowman, "Diary, 1920," as cited in Rhett, 224.

While the U.S. supported unrestricted Jewish immigration to Palestine, recall that Americans were expressing fears of immigrants from Eastern Europe and Asia, which would result in severe immigration restriction in 1924.

Soon after the League rubber-stamped the British mandate, the Palestine Government asserted that the British would "apply all the articles of the mandate, including those for the furthering of Zionist plans to Trans-Jordania." The Zionists, while pleased with most British policies, began to question Britain's commitment to unrestricted immigration into Palestine, which was fundamental to the establishment of a Jewish state. During the mandate period, the British will unsuccessfully attempt a balancing act between implementing the Zionist project addressing Palestinian resistance. "To Include TransJordania," *New York Times*, 28 August 1922, 26; "British Zionist Policy Backed by Weizmann," *New York Times*, 29 August 1922, 13; "Zionist Congress Uphold Leaders," *New York Times*, 2 September 1922.

²⁵ "Report New Agitation Troubles Palestine," *New York Times*, 17 March 1922, 14; "Arabs Are Incited to Rise in Palestine," *New York Times*, 15 April 1922, 2.

colonists “will possess Palestine” and “dominate it politically and industrially and we will be forced to live as a subjugated people or emigrate.”²⁶

Importantly, the British asserted that the League of Nations would play no role in British colonial policy aside from providing international legitimacy for the mandates. The British implicitly acknowledged that the mandates were essentially a euphemism for colonialism. Balfour told the League of Nations that the “mandates were not the creation of the League, and they could not in substance be altered by the league.” Instead, “a mandate was a self-imposed limitation by the conqueror on the sovereignty which they exercised over the conquered territory.” Consequently, Balfour announced, “no one need...have the least fear, or entertain the least hope, that the broad outlines of [British] policy regarding mandates were going to suffer any alteration.” The Balfour Declaration and Zionist colonization of Palestine were nonnegotiable, illustrating that the war to “make the world safe for democracy” was an imperialist war.²⁷

American Support for Zionism

American Zionists believed that official U.S. government support for the “Establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine” would legitimize the Zionist movement and delegitimize and silence the “noisy notoriety seekers” who opposed Zionism. The United States, despite its military interventions in Latin American and Asia and its history of continental expansion, was a symbol of both democracy at home and a moralistic and disinterested foreign policy abroad. Because the United States was not a member of the

²⁶ “Palestine Arab Strike Against The Mandate,” *New York Times*, 12 September 1922, 4

²⁷ League of Nations Official Journal, June 1922, 546-549,
[http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/b08168048e277b5a052565f70058cef3?](http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/b08168048e277b5a052565f70058cef3?OpenDocument)
 OpenDocument (last accessed 5 November 2011)

League of Nations and not obviously dividing the spoils of the war, American support for Zionism would lend credibility to the movement, help convince any wavering support in Britain for a mandate for Palestine, and convince many American Jews, who were hesitant about Zionism and who would be the prime subsidizers of the Zionist project, to support the “Establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine.”²⁸

Four hundred Jewish leaders met in Philadelphia in late May 1922 to unify American Jews in support of Zionism. Prominent American Zionists, including Samuel Untermyer,²⁹ Nathan Straus, and Dr. Rabbi Stephen Wise, along with international Zionist leaders Nahum Sokolow of the World Zionist Organization and Vladimir Jabotinski, founder of the Jewish League, lobbied for freedom of immigration to Palestine, opposed restrictionist immigration laws in the U.S., and vehemently asserted that supporting Zionism did not prevent American Jews from being loyal American citizens. In fact, Brandeis asserted that “loyalty to America demands...that each American Jew become a Zionist.” Zionists also argued that once the U.S. supported the congressional resolution, then opposition to Zionism would be tantamount to disloyalty to the United States. This was not a new idea. On 11 June 1900, Rabbi Gustav Gottheil, an early leader of the American Zionist movement, argued that “there [was] no such thing as an anti-Zionist.” During the summer of 1922, Jewish groups petitioned Congress and pressured individual senators and representatives to pass the Zionist resolution, believing that American support would “practically insure the success of the Jewish homeland movement.” Speakers at a Palestine Foundation Fund dinner honoring Senator Lodge

²⁸ “Untermyer Praises Work in Palestine,” *New York Times*, 15 May 1922, 6.

²⁹ Untermyer, the head of the Palestine Foundation Fund, characterized “true American Jews” as those who supported a Jewish homeland in Palestine. We will come back to this idea that support for American Jewish support for Zionism meant American patriotism. The Palestine Foundation Fund was instrumental in providing monies for developmental, educational, and agricultural projects in Palestine. “Untermyer Praises Work in Palestine,” *New York Times*, 15 May 1922, 6.

iterated that official U.S. support was fundamental to the success of the Zionist movement. After the Council of the League of Nations ratified the mandates on 24 July 1922, Weizmann, President of the World Zionist Organization, asserted that the U.S. government's support was a "decisive factor" in ratification. At the annual meeting of the WZO in 1922, Weizmann stated that "in the most difficult hour of our struggle for freedom, the American government and the American people came to our aid." Importantly, opponents of Zionism fought against the resolution because it would, in the words of Edward Bliss Reed, "be used as America's approval, as a powerful weapon abroad to say that America believes in this proposition," which would provide legitimacy to the movement given the benevolent image of the U.S. during the period as a nation that stood for just principles and against overt colonialism and imperialism.³⁰

Within a matter of days, both houses of the Massachusetts state legislature unanimously passed a resolution recommending that the U.S. government recognize and support the goals of the Zionist movement, and a Jewish delegation from the state met with Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, who pledged to push for a resolution declaring American support for the "Establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine" in accordance with the Balfour Declaration.³¹ Lodge

³⁰ "Call Jews To Unite For Palestine Home," *New York Times*, 22 May 1922, 14; "Want Palestine Barriers Lifted," *New York Times*, 23 May 1922, 11; "Jews Want British Mandate Recognized," *New York Times*, 14 June 1922, 3; "Lodge's Name Given To Palestine Fund," *New York Times*, 14 June 1922, 2; "Council Formally Approves Mandate," *New York Times*, 25 July 1922, 10; "Zionists Convene, Praising America," *New York Times*, 27 August 1922, 10; House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *The Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 32, 150; "Zionists' Mass Meeting," *New York Times*, 11 June 1900, 7.

³¹ "Zionists Appeal to Lodge," *New York Times*, 31 March 1922, 6. In 1919, Lodge had sent a letter to the Zionist Organization of America supporting the Balfour Declaration and the establishment of Palestine as the Jewish National Home. Senator William Calder of New York informed the *New York Times* that he accompanied a Jewish delegation that met with Lodge on 11 April 1922 because he represented a state with the largest Jewish population in the world per square mile of territory. Jewish delegations from multiple states met with their Congressional representatives to urge support for the resolutions introduced by Lodge and Fish. "Favor Palestine for Jews,," *New York Times*, 29 March 1922, 11; "Lodge To Introduce Zionist Resolution: Tells Delegation of His Plan for Aid of National Home in Palestine," *New York Times*, 12 April 1922, 3.

was an ardent immigration restrictionist, opponent of U.S. participation in the League of Nations, and fervent anti-Muslim. Perhaps Lodge supported Zionism because between 1890 and 1920, only 10,000 European Jews emigrated to Palestine while 1.5 million entered the United States. Illustrating the argument that many white Americans questioned whether Eastern European Jews were capable of self-government and participation in a republic, Lodge had asserted that Jews “lack the nobler abilities which enable a people to rule and administer and to display the social efficiency in war, peace, and government without which all else is vain.”³² Speaking before the Palestine Foundation Fund in June 1922, Lodge illustrated the limits of his religious tolerance to Christians and Jews when he asserted that because of “the rescue of Palestine by Great Britain,” Jerusalem and the Holy Land would never again “be under the control of the Mohammedans as they have been since 1224 with only a brief interval.”³³ On 4 April 1922, Representative Hamilton Fish of New York, at the urging of his own constituents, introduced a resolution in the House supporting the ‘Establishment of a National Home for the Jews in Palestine.’ The Fish resolution, referring to the Biblical right of Jews to reclaim Palestine, read:

Whereas, the Jewish people have for many centuries believed in and yearned for the rebuilding of their ancient homeland; and Whereas, owing to the outcome of the

³² Lodge quoted in Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998), 183. There is a growing body of literature investigating the changing concept of whiteness in American society. Jacobson and others argue that in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and into the early decades of the twentieth century, political, biological and racial ideologies determined that whiteness meant the capacity for self-government. These racial arguments defined citizenship and supported immigration restriction at home and justified imperialism abroad. Many investigations, therefore, examine how certain immigrant groups to the U.S. became white. Jacobson and Karen Brodtkin, for example, argue that Jewish Americans became white in the eyes of white Americans after WWII, the Holocaust, and the establishment of Israel. Jacobson writes that “if racialism had historically been an important component of Zionism, the establishment of a Jewish state ultimately had the opposite effect of whitening the Jews in cultural representations of all sorts: America’s client state in the Middle East became, of ideological necessity and by the imperatives of American nationalism, a white client state.” Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 188 ; Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says about Race in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998).

³³ “Lodge’s Name Given To Palestine Fund,” *New York Times*, 14 June 1922, 2; “Zionism a Fallacy Says Morgenthau,” *New York Times*, 27 June 1921, 4.

World War and their part therein, the Jewish people, under definite and adequate international guarantees are to be enabled with due regard to the rights of all elements of the population of Palestine and to the sanctity of its holy places, to create and reorganize a national home in the land of their fathers: Therefore, be it *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring)*, That the Congress of the United States hereby expresses its profound satisfaction in that outcome of the victorious war which promises the building up of a new and beneficent life in the Palestine, rejoices in this act of historic justice about to be consummated, and on behalf of the American people commends an undertaking which will do honor to Christendom and give to the House of Israel its long denied opportunity to reestablish a fruitful Jewish life and culture in the ancient Jewish land.

Lodge introduced a resolution emphasizing American support for the Balfour declaration eight days later.³⁴

In newspapers, pamphlets, speeches, and testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Relations, proponents argued that Zionism aligned with traditional American principles and values and presented numerous justifications for their movement that would have been familiar to Americans who had utilized similar arguments to justify native dispossession in the Americas and imperialism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. From the first conference in Basle in 1897, Zionists understood the importance of circulating their narrative as a means to further their cause. This effort was aimed at Jews (both those who would be settlers in Palestine and those in Western Europe and the U.S. who would subsidize

³⁴ The Lodge resolution read:

Be it resolved, by the United States Senate and House of Representatives, that the United States of America favors the establishment in Palestine of the national homeland for the Jewish people, in accordance with the provisions contained in the declaration of the British Government of Nov. 2, 1917, known as the Balfour Declaration, 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 or political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country, and that the holy places and religious buildings and sites in Palestine shall be adequately protected.

Text of the Fish resolution found in House Foreign Affairs Committee, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 67th Congress, 2nd Session, House Congressional Resolution 52, 18-21 April 1922 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1922), 1; and "Move to Aid Zionists: Fish Introduces Resolution of Sympathy in the House," *New York Times*, 5 April 1922, 3. The Senate adopted a similarly worded resolution on 3 May 1922. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts introduced the resolution, but prevented any hearings or debates on the issue. Text of the Lodge resolution found in "Zionist Move in Senate: Lodge Offers Resolution for American Approval of Zionist Project," *New York Times*, 13 April 1922, 10.

colonization) and the great powers, without whom the project would never succeed. An important American Zionist, Rev. Dr. H. Pereira Mendes, commented on the importance of influencing public opinion in the United States: “I hope we can educate the American people to the realization that they should give back Palestine to the Jew, because God gave it to him.” Throughout the twentieth century, the Zionists have dominated the discourse on the conflict between the indigenous inhabitants of Palestine and the European Jewish immigrants who sought to make the holy land a Jewish state.³⁵

European settlers in the Americas justified their colonial venture by simply arguing that they found a “virgin land” or an “empty wilderness,” and Zionists commonly echoed that sentiment. Herzl, in his early addresses to the Zionist Congresses referred to Palestine as a “desolate corner of the Orient,” and a barren place “where so little grows.” In fact, Rabbi Maurice Harris reiterated the common idea that the land and the indigenous people in the region had remained unchanged since Biblical times. Harris wrote in an article published in the *New York Times* of gazing on “just such a landscape that Moses gazed on his last day.” In Damascus, “Bedouins came to the fairs riding on asses as of yore, clad in garments that were designed before the days of Abraham.” In front of members of the House Foreign Relations Committee, a Dr. Friendenwald argued that Zionists would “develop Palestine and...convert its barren wastes into fruitful fields and vineyards.” Abraham Goldberg, echoing a common Zionist sentiment, testified that after the complete expulsion of the Jews from Palestine, “Palestine for 1,800 years was not conquered by anybody or settled, but remained in desolation to this very day as if waiting for the return of its people.” Somewhat contradictory, Goldberg testified that the mandate for Palestine was necessary because the

³⁵ See for example, “Federation of Zionists,” *New York Times*, 19 June 1899, 2, “Conference of Zionists,” *New York Times*, 20 June 1899, 3; “Work of Alliance Israelite Universelle,” *New York Times*, 28 April 1901, 4.

Jews “are not yet a majority there. If we were a majority in Palestine, there would be no problem. The problem is due to the fact that we are not in Palestine yet. We want to go there. Palestine is unoccupied.” The meaning for his American audience was clear. Palestine was inhabited with savage barbarians, not civilized human beings who used the land and resources properly. Democracy and self-determination under such conditions would be intolerable for European Jews, and white Americans would have made the proper inferences given their own history with the Native Americans and the darker races of the world.³⁶

Not only was the land empty or underpopulated, but the existing indigenous peoples, essentially children requiring adult supervision, did not develop and utilize the land efficiently.³⁷ In a speech in August 1900, Dr. Stephen Wise claimed that “the fields of Palestine [were] awaiting the magic touch of the Jewish husbandman which shall restore Zion to its native splendor.” Writing a letter to the editor in early 1902, Amos Dushaw argued that Palestine, once developed, could maintain a much larger population and Jews

³⁶ High Commissioner Samuel wrote in his report to the League of Nations in 1921 that Palestine was woefully underdeveloped and underpopulated compared to Biblical times. Representing the Palestine National League, Dr. Fuad Shatara, in his testimony before the committee, countered the common Zionist argument of an uninhabited Palestine, declaring that Palestine had twice the population per square mile as the U.S. Congress, however, accepted the Zionist argument that modernization and development of a ‘backward’ land would easily accommodate Jewish immigration to Palestine. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 44, 49, 161; Herzl, *The Congress Addresses*, 13; “Turkish Revolt Gives Zionists Hope,” *New York Times*, 13 June 1909, 5; “Palestine Land of Promise,” *New York Times*, 24 September 1922, 103; Samuel, “An Interim Report on the Civil Administration of Palestine,” 30 July 1921.

³⁷ European settlers in the Americas and later white Americans often referred to the native population or African and African-American slaves as children. This racist paternalism combined with the observation that these other cultures did not conform to Western standards to justify extermination, dispossession, slavery, and imperialism.

One article in the *New York Times* in January 1922 observed that Trans-Jordan was “peopled by nice Bedouins who spend their time in watching their wives work and planning midnight raids upon the Zionist camps across the sacred river.” The author’s description is reminiscent of common racist stereotypes of Native Americans. He continues with his observations, noting that “to the stranger the majority of the natives in an around Jerusalem appear to spend their time carving all sorts of queer things...” The natives “live in stone houses like caves underground,” but thankfully the British were bringing sanitation and development to these children of Palestine who did not even know how to properly discard garbage. “Tourists to Palestine,” *New York Times*, 8 January 1922, 86.

would make the land as fruitful as it was in Biblical times.³⁸ Zionists contended that Jewish settlers and pioneers,³⁹ backed by the financial resources of the West, would use scientific methods and modern technology to develop the land and its resources and bring industrialization and progress to Palestine. For example, the establishment of a Hebrew University in Jerusalem was central to the civilizing mission and development of Palestine. A symbol of Western progress and enlightenment, the university, according to Weizmann, would help eradicate the diseases plaguing the backward land and people and contribute to the full exploitation of the land and its resources through the implementation of the scientific method and modern methods. Herzl himself proclaimed that Zionists “want to mount a

³⁸ “Zionists Hold a Festival,” *New York Times*, 13 August 1900, 10; “Zionism,” *New York Times*, 5 January 1902, 6. For other examples of this idea, see “Pack Carnegie Hall to Hear Sokolow,” *New York Times*, 16 March 1913, C7.

³⁹ As Jacobson observes in *Barbarian Virtues* and Lake and Reynolds observe in *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, common notions of masculinity were central to ideas of the white man’s burden and white men’s governments. Gender roles had long played in role in justifying European and American imperialism. Because women in many Native American societies were responsible for farming and agriculture, white Americans claimed that native societies did not have agriculture and did not use the land properly. Whites, therefore, had the right to expropriate Native American lands, and ‘civilizing’ the Native Americans often meant challenging native gender roles. Western imperialists consistently justified their right to rule to protect women of other cultures, a process that continues today with U.S. intervention in Afghanistan and other Muslim countries partially premised on improving the lives of women in Islamic cultures. An important theme in the imperialist era of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the characterization of colonies or prospective colonies as women. One implication was that the colonies needed protection, but in an important sense the metaphor illustrates imperialism as manly conquests of women.

Zionists also presented a gendered argument to justify the movement. Israel Zangwill, commenting on anti-Semitism, asked “How dare people of our strength and ancient pride accept the unmanly position of forcing ourselves on people not wanting us?” Additionally, the stereotypical Jewish male was considered effeminate, weak, and intellectual. The Zionist movement was an effort to overturn European stereotypes about Jews and reassert a Jewish masculinity (evident in the Old Testament), which perhaps helps explain the militarism of Israeli society. Colonization and agricultural settlements would reshape the Jewish man and foment Jewish nationalism. Jewish women, similar to the idea of republican motherhood, would transmit these masculine ideas to their sons. A. H. Fromenson wrote a letter to the editor in 1905 arguing that “Zionism is the movement ... teaching the Jew ... to stand up like a man among men and demand the rights which are inalienably his....” The Zionists adopted the “masculine ethos” of the West which implied that only certain men (white and Christian) were capable of self-government. The ‘feminized’ Arabs were consequently incapable of self-determination. For Zangwill quote, see “Zangwill’s Plea for Zionism,” *New York Times*, 18 May 1903, 1; “Zionists Not Weaklings,” *New York Times*, 29 November 1905, 8; “Jews Celebrate Historic Festival,” *New York Times*, 2 January 1911, 3. For more on how gender played a prominent role in the Zionist discourse, see Rhett, Chapter 3; for excellent examples of the centrality of gender and race in the civilizing mission ideology, see Gregory Smithers, “The ‘Pursuits of the Civilized Man’: Race and the Meaning of Civilization in the United States and Australia, 1790s-1850s,” *Journal of World History*, Vol 20, No 2 (2009), 245-272; Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

higher grade of civilization, to spread well-being abroad, to build new highways for the intercourse of people, and to forge an opening for the coming of social justice.” In promoting the movement, Herzl argued that Zionism was compatible with the ideology of the civilizing mission, providing an acceptable justification for the European colonial movement.⁴⁰

Consequently, illustrating the common argument that Western imperialist and colonialist ventures benefitted indigenous populations, Zionists asserted that Jewish settlement would bring civilization and development to a people and land that have lacked both under the misrule of the “unspeakable” and “terrible Turk.”⁴¹ Herzl himself often presented Zionism as a civilizing mission and argued that the Turks did “not possess those qualities which are requisite for industrialism and the cultivation of a country.”⁴² In his Third Congress address, Herzl asserted “we want to mount a higher grade of civilization, to spread well-being abroad, to build new highways for the intercourse of people, and to forge an opening for the coming of social justice.” Nahum Sokolow, chairman of the executive committee of the World Zionist Organization, speaking before the World Zionist Congress in 1921, asserted that “Eretz Yisrael [would] be a guiding light” to the world, but especially to the East, helping to eliminate “misery, neglect, laziness, disease, ignorance, and nomad life,” in favor of “agriculture, industry, technical progress, commerce, law, public security, reform of the transport system, science and art.” Weizmann argued that “it is more important to humanity to transform those years of striving of the Jews into reality becoming an enormous

⁴⁰ See Dr. Chaim Weizmann, *American Addresses* (New York: Palestine Foundation Fund, 1923), “The Hebrew University Address,” 24 July 1918, 62-3; Herzl, *Congress Addresses*, 22..

⁴¹ House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 20. Dr. Joseph Collins, “Paving Way for a New Crusade?” *New York Times*, 30 April 1922, 103. Collins, a neurologist in New York, wrote a commentary on his travels to Palestine for the *New York Times*. He makes a typical Western observation that “the Arabs believe, or, to use a better word, they feel that Palestine belongs to them. They cannot understand how or why Great Britain has the right or power to give it to the Jews.”

⁴² Herzl, *The Congress Addresses*, 13-14.

civilizing power and great spiritual influence than to let Palestine remain a desert.” Such assessments were congruent with Western conceptions about the world’s nonwhite populations. Palestinians did not have any rights that Europeans were bound to respect, and Arab culture and history was simply dismissed because it differed from Western conceptions of civilization, development, and modernization.⁴³

A number of *New York Times* articles focused on development and modernization projects undertaken by Jewish settlers in Palestine. For example, a consulting engineer from General Electric commenting on plans to harness the Jordan River for energy production provided an important justification for Jewish colonization of Palestine when he stated that “the future of the country depends in a large measure on the successful utilization of its proper resources.” Western standards would be used to determine the “successful utilization” of resources, and the implication was that the Palestinian Arabs were incapable of using resources properly without Western supervision and aid.⁴⁴ Herzl combined the civilizing mission ideology with a strategic justification for the Zionist project when he argued:

The Asiatic problem grows more serious day by day, and threatens to become a bloody problem for a time. For this reason it is more and more to the interest of the civilized nations and of civilization in general that a cultural station be established on the shortest road to Asia. Palestine is this station, and we Jews are the bearers of culture who are ready to give our property and our lives to bring about its creation.⁴⁵

On the eve of the Great War, Zionists argued that a Jewish state in Palestine would “serve as a sort of buffer-nation between the various nations and powers who would otherwise clash ultimately.” The British, perhaps, saw a Jewish state as protecting British interests regarding

⁴³ House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 127-8; Dr. Joseph Collins, “Paving Way for a New Crusade?” *New York Times*, 30 April 1922, 103.

⁴⁴ “\$1,000,000 Pledged to Harness Jordan,” *New York Times*, 25 June 1922, E1

⁴⁵ Herzl, *The Congress Addresses*, 22, 24

the Suez Canal, the all-important shortcut to India, and access to the increasingly relevant oil resources in the region. Importantly, Israel continues to portray itself as a bastion of the West in an unstable, but vitally important strategic region.⁴⁶

Americans repeatedly asserted that dispossessing or removing Native Americans was part of a civilizing mission. The argument was that benevolent European and American settlers brought Christianity, civilized gender roles, and agriculture to “savages” who misused the resources of the land. Imposing Western standards on Native American societies, whites continually overlooked or ignored intensive agricultural practices, largely because women in most Native American societies were responsible for farming. Religious arguments justified the genocide of those Native American groups who resisted ‘civilization.’ Adopting Western ‘civilization’ was not an adequate safeguard against dispossession and removal as the Cherokee and other ‘civilized tribes’ found out in the 1830s. The Dawes Act, passed in the early 1880s, justified further dispossession of Native Americans West of the Mississippi, even though those lands were promised to various tribes for “as long as the grass grows and the water runs,” on the premise that the United States would enact policies to educate and ‘civilize’ the Native Americans so that they could become farmers, although not U.S. citizens. Whites understood ‘civilizing’ the Indians as a means to take away tribal lands, while Native Americans understood adopting white ways as a strategy to keep all their land, which they valued for more than economic or productive reasons. Propagating the idea that Palestinian Arabs were similar to Native Americans, Zionists adopted the civilizing

⁴⁶ The Rabbi H. Pereira Mendes argued for American strategic interest in a Jewish state in 1901 when he stated that “Evidently, the future of the Hebrew race is largely in the hands of the American people, and now that America has possession of islands in the Far East, it is clear that this Nation must have more interest in the waterway through the peninsula adjoining Palestine, the Suez Canal.” Others argued that since the U.S. ‘redeemed’ Cuba, it should ‘redeem’ Israel. “Work of Alliance Israelite Universelle,” *New York Times*, 28 April 1901, 4; “Attereth Zion Gathering,” *New York Times*, 25 May 1902, 5; “International Jewish State to Keep Eastern Peace,” *New York Times*, 29 December 1912, 43.

mission rhetoric and claimed that the insignificant Arab population in Palestine was nomadic and failed to cultivate the land. Similar to U.S. efforts to ‘civilize’ the Indians, pro-Zionists asserted that the Jewish settlers in Palestine had “cured” some Arabs “of their nomadic habits” and have taught them to “till the soil.”⁴⁷ Since the American conquest of Native Americans was within recent memory, most Americans would have recognized the significance of the Zionists equating Palestinian Arabs with Native Americans.

In *The Winning of the West*, Theodore Roosevelt reiterated these themes, writing that white Europeans and Americans “had moved into an uninhabited waste...the land is really owned by no one....The settler ousts no one from the land. The truth is, the Indians never had any real title to the soil.” Dismissing the violent history of the genocide and dispossession of Native Americans, Roosevelt, exhibiting another common refrain in U.S. history, claimed that “No other conquering or colonizing nation has ever treated savage owners of the soil with such generosity as has the United States.” Roosevelt’s dissembling notwithstanding, the extermination, dispossession, and removal of Native Americans concomitant with the destruction of their cultures has been the central theme of U.S. policy toward the indigenous population. Violence was a necessary means to carry out this policy and clear the land for whites. Governor William Bradford, for example, wrote of the colonists’ massacre of the Pequots in the 1630s:

It was a fearful sight to see them thus frying in the fire and the streams of blood quenching the same, and horrible was the stink and scent thereof; but the victory seemed a sweet sacrifice, and they gave the praise thereof to god, who had wrought so wonderfully for them, thus to enclose their enemies in their hands and give them so speedy a victory over so proud and insulting an enemy.

Roosevelt, echoing Virginian colonists, the Puritans, Washington, Jefferson, and Jackson, declared that “All men of sane and wholesome thought must dismiss with impatient contempt

⁴⁷ “Zionism Already Begun in Palestine,” *New York Times*, 9 June 1918, 26.

the plea that these continents should be reserved for the use of scattered savage tribes, whose life was but a few degrees less meaningless, squalid, and ferocious than that of the wild beasts with whom they held joint ownership....The most ultimately righteous of all wars is a war with savages, though it is apt to be also the most terrible and inhuman.” Importantly, European colonists and white Americans characterized any Native American resistance as “savagery” or “barbarism,” precursors of today’s “terrorism,” according to Norman Finkelstein.⁴⁸

In “History’s Verdict: The Cherokee Case,” Finkelstein explores the instructive parallels between white dispossession of Native Americans and Zionist dispossession of the Palestinian Arabs. In presenting their narrative to the American public, Zionists in the early twentieth century depicted themselves as God’s chosen pioneers transforming a “wasteland” into an earthly paradise and combating the Palestinian “Indians,” who hindered progress, development, and civilization. The solution was dispossession, removal, and possibly extermination of the “savages.” Despite Zionist assurances that their program would benefit the Arab population, the Zionist leadership understood the expulsion of the Palestinians as central to the success of the Zionist movement.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West*, cited in Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, and Norman Finkelstein, “History’s Verdict: The Cherokee Case,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 24, No 4 (Summer 1995), 32-45; Richard Drinnon, “American Pastime: Rediscovering ‘The Indians,’” *The Massachusetts Review* Vol 25, No 1 (Spring 1984), 97-114; Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997); Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company, 1975); David Stannard, *American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New World* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Alfred Cave, *The Pequot War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996); Perdue, *Cherokee Women*.

⁴⁹ Nur Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians: The Concept of ‘Transfer’ in Zionist Political Thought, 1882-1948* (Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992); Chaim Simons, *International Proposals to Transfer Arabs from Palestine, 1895-1947: A Historical Survey* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Publishing, 1988). In the updated version of his book published on the internet, Simons, an ardent Zionist, acknowledged

The issue of population transfer is a very delicate subject. For this reason, many proposers confined the exposition of their ideas to diaries, private correspondence and closed meetings. In public they

According to Walid Khalidi, Herzl was instrumental in writing a proposed agreement between the World Zionist Organization and the Sultan of Turkey “concerning the privileges, rights, liabilities, and duties of the Jewish-Ottoman Land Company (JOLC) for the settlement of Palestine and Syria.” The early Zionist leaders understood that support from a European power was necessary to implement the Zionist project. Herzl offered the Ottoman Sultan aid for the Turkish debt in return for Ottoman acquiescence in the Jewish colonization of Palestine. The Sultan refused to countenance large-scale Jewish colonization of Palestine, but welcomed Jewish migration to other territories within the Ottoman Empire. Herzl’s Charter, however, remains an important document illustrating that the early political Zionists envisioned the removal of the Palestinian Arab population to make way for the development of a Jewish state. Article III of the Charter grants the Jewish-Ottoman Land Company the right to resettle with some compensation the Arab population on land in other areas of the Ottoman Empire. Additionally, Khalidi observes, that on Herzl’s first visit to Palestine in late 1898, he, to borrow Lawrence Davidson’s phrase, actively participated in the “perceptual depopulation” of Palestine, ignoring the indigenous people and the Muslim heritage of the region while focusing on the Biblical legacy of Jerusalem and Palestine.⁵⁰

Although representing Western civilization and progress, Jewish settlers, Zionists argued, were at a disadvantage. Echoing arguments made by immigration restrictionists

either ignored the subject of transfer or spoke in against it. Even those who did propose various schemes were often reluctant to specifically address compulsory transfer. They relied on various euphemistic expressions to convey their intentions regarding compulsion.

One of the striking things to come to light during this research is the attempt to rewrite history and pretend that the Zionist leaders were completely opposed to the transfer of Arabs, even to the extent of censoring portions of official minutes and amending of documents!

See Simons, *A Historical Survey of Proposals to Transfer Arabs from Palestine, 1895-1947* (2004), <http://chaimsimons.net/transfer.html> (accessed 5 November 2011)

⁵⁰ Walid Khalidi, “The Jewish-Ottoman Land Company: Herzl’s Blueprint for the Colonization of Palestine,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 22, No 2 (Winter, 1993), 30-47; Davidson, *America’s Palestine*, 9. Khalidi’s article includes an English translation of Herzl’s Charter.

against Asian and southern and eastern European immigration into the U.S. from the 1880s through the early 1920s, Zionists contended that Jewish settlers could not compete with the backward Arab farmer, who, because of his low standard of living, and reliance on primitive techniques could undersell his Jewish counterpart.⁵¹ In order to colonize and eventually compete with the indigenous population, the Jewish settlers required massive subsidies from the West and certain privileges. Zionists argued that the British should privilege Jewish contractors in construction projects and that the Zionists and British ought to discriminate against cheaper Arab labor in favor of Jewish immigrants, else Jews from Eastern Europe would have no incentive to emigrate to Palestine.

American Zionists also linked their aspirations to reclaim Palestine with the Puritan idea of America as the “promised land” and with the ideals of the international Progressive reform movement.⁵² Rabbi Maurice Harris asserted that “next to the camel the woman [was] the most popular beast of burden” in Arab society, and that children were forced to labor in Syrian factories under conditions “that would be condemned in any Western country.” Harris, channeling the enthusiasm of the Progressive reformer, concluded that the Jews were bringing Western civilization and “new standards of life” to Palestine.⁵³ In a series of reports

⁵¹ See note 33 above; Davidson, *America's Palestine*. One newspaper article in 1921 stated that the Palestinian Arabs “in the villages live with their animals in mud huts in the midst of dirt and misery and surroundings which have not changed much since the dawn of history.” The writer continued: “It is almost impossible for a man, except an Arab, to exist decently in Palestine on a wage of 75 cents a day.” “Palestine Natives Oppose Zionism,” *New York Times*, 8 May 1921, 34. During the Paris Peace Conference, a non-Zionist Frenchman of Jewish origin, the Orientalist Sylvain Levy, told the Committee of Five that while 600,000 or 700,000 Arabs lived in Palestine, a similar number of European Jews could not immigrate to Palestine at that time because they enjoyed higher living standards than the Arabs and would not survive in the current conditions existing in Palestine. *FRUS*, 1919, Paris Peace Conference, Volume IV, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1919Parisv04>, 167.

⁵² Davidson, “The Past as Prelude: Zionism and the Betrayal of American Democratic Principles, 1917-48,” 22.

⁵³ “Palestine Land of Promise,” *New York Times*, 24 September 1922, 103. Ignoring the harsh living and working conditions of many millions of Americans during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era and the negative aspects of the Progressive Movement in the United States, Harris assumed, of course, that Western standards were universal and in the best interests of the targets of Western benevolence. Progressive reform in

sent to the *New York Times* describing his survey of Jewish colonies in Palestine, Bernard Rosenblatt, a prominent American Zionist, favorably compared Jewish settlers in Palestine in the late 19th and early 20th centuries with the Puritans and their descendants who conquered the wilderness and “face[d] the dangers of Indian warfare” on the way to forming a great nation.⁵⁴ Congressman Albert Rossdale of New York testified that

the resettling of Palestine has created a situation somewhat akin to that of the American colonist in his struggle with the American Indian. For like the early American settler on this continent, the Jewish colonist frequently has to till the soil with a rifle in one hand and a hoe in the other. The Nomadic Arab raiders...are fighting the civilization of the Jewish settler as the Indian fought the American settler on this continent in the early days.⁵⁵

The faith of the early settlers, Rossdale stated before the House of Representatives, “comforted and sustained them in their struggles with the savage and the wilderness and enabled them to conquer a continent and later to found the greatest Republic in the history of man.”⁵⁶

Weizmann told an American audience on 18 March 1923 that “a pioneer people came to America and gave their lives for it. They fought with wolves, they fought with Indians, they fought with the marshes and swamps. It took the sweat and labor of generations to pave the way....And you will have to do the same for Palestine, or Palestine will not be built.” In his

industrialized countries was a second response, in addition to expansion, to industrialization, urbanization, and their consequences, including domestic unrest. One of the primary goals of progressive reform was to prevent more radical structural changes in the socioeconomic order of the industrial nations demanded by socialists, anarchists, and labor in general.

⁵⁴ Bernard Rosenblatt, “The Colony of Hederah: Progress of Jewish Settlement in Palestine That Continues Great Tradition,” *New York Times*, 11 June 1922, 86. In a letter to the editor in late 1902, Samuel Goldstein compared Zionists to Puritans. Claiming that the Puritans found a “barren and wild” land and transformed it into one of the most powerful nations in the world, Goldstein argued that Jewish settlers could do the same in Palestine. “Plea for Zionism,” *New York Times*, 27 November 1902, 8.

In another article, Rosenblatt compared Tel-Aviv to a “booming” Western city in the U.S. Commenting on the progress that the Jewish settlers were bringing to Palestine and the stagnancy of the Arabs, Rosenblatt contends that “from Tel Aviv to the port of Jaffa one passes from the twentieth century into the second.” Rosenblatt even asserts the falsehood that the Zionists were not intent on dispossessing the Arabs, but, in fact, Jewish settlers were “refusing to buy the land from the poor Arabs” and hindering their ability to intensively cultivate the land, “which is only possible through the purchase of machinery.” See “Boom Town in Palestine,” *New York Times*, 25 June 1922, XX7.

⁵⁵ House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 20.

⁵⁶ National Home for the Jewish People,” *Congressional Record*, House Resolution 360, Report No 1172, 30 June 1922, 9799-9820

speeches to Jewish audiences in the U.S., Weizmann incorporated many themes common to Zionist propaganda. In the same speech on 18 March 1923, Weizmann stated:

If [the Jewish pioneer] comes into Palestine he finds a deserted land, neglected for generations. If you look at the hills of Palestine you will see that they have lost their trees, and the good soil has been washed into the valleys and carried to the sea. We must restore the soil of Palestine. We must reconstruct the land, reconstruct the soil, reconstruct the men.⁵⁷

Not only was the land largely unpopulated, but the Arabs and Turks had made it into a wasteland. Jewish settlers would develop the land (according to Western models) and in the process, Jewish men would reassert their masculinity. Rosenblatt reminded his readers that the noble pilgrims fled religious persecution and traveled to an unknown and dangerous world to preserve their religion and culture. The conclusion was inescapable: Jewish settlers and farmers were establishing a New Judea just as the Puritans established a New England.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Weizmann, *American Addresses*, "In Reply to the Critics," 18 March 1923, 12-13. For an interesting article on the pioneering theme and comparisons between white American and Zionist programs to conquer the land and indigenous populations, see S. Illan Troen, "Frontier Myths and their Applications in America and Israel: A Transnational Perspective," *The Journal of American History*, Vol 86, No 3 (December 1999), 1209-1230. Troen argues that "Zionists came to 'discover' America only after World War II and the Holocaust, when they turned their focus from a Europe that had bitterly disappointed them to the promise of the United States as the new model of a productive, benign, and enlightened society." As evident in this dissertation, Zionists utilized comparisons with the American experience long before WWII.

⁵⁸ Rosenblatt, "The Colony of Hederah," *New York Times*, 11 June 1922, 86. On 11 June 1900, the Rev. H. Illozizi, equated Zionism with the Boer who was fighting to keep the land "he won from savages," and the Irishman who demanded home rule. At least in the case with the Boers, we have an example of the idea that the 'civilized' have the right to dispossess those the 'civilized' deem 'savage.' In all three cases (the Boers, the Irish, and the Zionists), the other 'civilized' powers did not have the right to oppress or prevent the success of these movements. During the British conquest of Palestine during the Great War, the *New York Times* reported that the British "found thousands of acres cultivated by immigrant Jews dwelling in a dozen or so communities similar to the townships of New England." These agricultural colonies were "thriving and prosperous" and "far superior, as to scientific cultivation and housing" to Arab settlements. See "Zionists' Mass Meeting," *New York Times*, 11 June 1900, 7; "Zionism Already Begun in Palestine," *New York Times*, 9 June 1918, 26

See also statements made in the House of Representatives when Fish brought his resolution to the chamber in "National Home for the Jewish People," *Congressional Record*, House Resolution 360, 30 June 1922, 9799-9820

Both the United States and a Jewish State in Palestine would be exceptional nations, shining cities on the hill to serve as examples for the rest of mankind.⁵⁹

Additionally, the Zionists presented their movement as similar to the idea of American Manifest Destiny and exhibited a racist nationalism similar to that limited understanding of citizenship that reemerged in the United States after the failure of Reconstruction. In 1890, the journalist Theodore Marburg, celebrating the final conquest of the Native Americans within the continental United States after the massacre at Wounded Knee, observed that “we have brushed aside 275,000 Indians. In place of them [we] have this population of 70,000,000 of what we regard as the highest type of modern man...[We] have done more than any other race to conquer the world for civilization...and we will probably...go on with our conquests.” Zionists adopted similar justifications for the expulsion of Palestinian Arabs necessary to establish a Jewish state in Palestine.⁶⁰ Publically, Zionists argued that the Palestinian Arabs only occupied ten percent of Palestine, and the Zionist movement would develop the barren land so that upwards of five million people could live there. The implication was that millions of Jewish settlers from Eastern

⁵⁹ See, for example, “Work of Alliance Israelite Universelle,” *New York Times*, 28 April 1901, 4; Michael Adas, “From Settler Colony to Global Hegemon: Integrating the Exceptionalist Narrative of the American Experience into World History,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol 106, No 5 (December 2001), 1692-1720.

⁶⁰ Bender, 199. For Zionist’s understanding of “transfer,” see Nur Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians: The Concept of “Transfer” in Zionist Political Thought, 1882-1948* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992). We can understand this racial expansion in the context of white male fears of decline (and the attendant rise of the world’s colored and colonized peoples) in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, especially as a consequence of industrialization (and in the U.S., the ‘closing’ of the frontier). The new imperialism and immigration restrictionist policies of the late 19th and early twentieth centuries were in part responses to these white fears. The discourse on Social Darwinism, civilizing mission, and self-determination revolved around European notions of race and gender. See, Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues*; Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*; Rhett, especially Chapter 3.

For an example of the Zionist iteration of manifest destiny, see Israel Zangwill, “The Jewish Race,” *Papers on Interracial Problems: A Record of the Proceedings of the First Universal Races Congress* (London: P. S. King and Son, 1911), 268-279.

Europe would not displace, but benefit, the indigenous population.⁶¹ Privately, however, prominent Zionists acknowledged that the creation of a Jewish state was dependent upon the expropriation and even removal of the Arab population, similar to the process of American continental expansion. Zionists often claimed that they were not after land owned by the indigenous population, but the barren wasteland, which they would develop and make fertile. By bringing progress and modernization, Jewish colonization, therefore, would benefit the local Arab population and the Ottoman overloads. This idea was prevalent throughout this period. In 1919, a prominent international Zionist leader stated that “at present [Palestine] is barren and practically uninhabited, but with irrigation and cultivation it could be restored to its ancient richness and fertility.” He continued: Zionism was intent on the “restoration of the surrounding country to a state of prosperity and culture which it possessed before centuries of Turkish misrule had ruined it.”⁶²

Some Zionist supporters, such as Representative Walter Chandler of New York, were quite blunt regarding the rights of Palestinian Arabs. Chandler asserted:

The Jews have a natural right to the country and I favor their possession and control of it. Tell the Arabs to get back onto the land that was given to them by the Allies for their part in the war. If they are not satisfied with the Jewish administration, let them sell their land at a reasonable price and retire into Mesopotamia, and if they will not, then drive them out.⁶³

⁶¹ House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 8. Louis Lipsky, a prominent American Zionist and a journalist by profession, testified to the House Committee that Zionists “are not expropriating; we are purchasing.” Zionists repeatedly asserted that the Balfour Declaration guaranteed that “nothing shall be done which may prejudice the *civil* and *religious* rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine,” but never seemed to acknowledge the significance of not mentioning political rights. (My emphasis). House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 4, 9

⁶² See for example, “Zionists Welcomed Back,” *New York Times*, 25 September 1899, 5; “Plans of Zionists for the New State,” *New York Times*, 4 January 1919, 2; “Jews of Russia Eager for Zionism,” *New York Times*, 11 January 1919, 3. See Davidson, “Christian Zionism as a Representation of American Manifest Destiny,” *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol 14, No 2 (Summer 2005), 157-169 for an interesting article on how American Christian Zionists interpreted Zionism as a manifest destiny ideology where the Jewish people had the divine right to colonize Palestine.

⁶³ “Asks Us to Fight for Palestine Jew,” *New York Times*, 11 September 1922, 17. Chandler, in a speech in the House of Representatives when that chamber debated the Fish resolution, made the connection between immigration restriction and support for Zionism. Chandler argued that if the U.S. were to continue to

While championing the principle of self-determination, Chandler told the House of Representatives that “it does not become the American Congress or the American Government to prate too loudly at this time about the sacred rights of the Arabs in Palestine, in the light of our treatment of the Filipinos during the last quarter of a century.” Claiming that the Balfour Declaration protected Arab rights and that British administration in Palestine was more efficient and effective than Ottoman rule or any government that the Arabs “could create and maintain for themselves,” Chandler blamed outside agitators for instigating Arab opposition to Zionism and British policies and strongly supported Jewish control of Palestine. Consequently, if the Palestinians did not wish to live “under Jewish government and domination” without any political rights, then they could simply sell their land and move into Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria, or Arabia “where they can worship Allah, Mahomet, and the Koran to their heart’s content.” If the Palestinians would “not listen to the voice of reason and of justice” and were unwilling to “live peaceably” with the Jewish immigrants or emigrate, then the British and Jews should drive the Arabs out of Palestine using military force. Contradicting his earlier support for religious freedom, Chandler argued that “if the rights of the Jews to their ancient homeland are to be made dependent, as a final question, upon Moslem interests in the holy places around Jerusalem, I am willing and prepared to repudiate these rights entirely and to shut the Arabs out altogether.” Proclaiming to despise race hatred and religious prejudice, Chandler admitted “that feelings of intolerance arise in my mind and heart when I hear any attempted justification of Mahomet, his message, and his mission.” Paying tribute to Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, Chandler

limit Jewish immigration into the U.S., then the government should support the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine because “the plainest dictates of humanity suggest and demand it.” “National Home for the Jewish People,” *Congressional Record*, 30 June 1922.

drew “the line on Mahomet, the military conqueror and robber, the forger of oracles, the polygamist.” Articulating common Western attitudes concerning Arabs and Islam, Chandler supported the European conquest and colonization of Palestine as representing American values and stimulating the expansion and development of civilization.⁶⁴

Although they presented Zionism as complementary to Wilson’s principle of self-determination and in alignment with U.S. war aims during the Great War,⁶⁵ Zionists and their supporters were often quite clear that their policies violated the principles of democracy and self-determination. Weizmann wrote to Balfour in 1918, “but [the British administration’s] only guide in this difficult situation is the democratic principle, which reckons with the relative numerical strength, and the brutal numbers operate against us, for there are five Arabs to one Jew.... This system does not take into account the fact that there is a fundamental qualitative difference between Jew and Arab.... The present state of affairs would necessarily tend towards the creation of an Arab Palestine, if there were an Arab people in Palestine.”⁶⁶ As for the aspirations of the indigenous population, Lord Arthur

⁶⁴ “National Home for the Jewish People.” *Congressional Record*, 30 June 1922

In 1919, Morris Cohen, an American Jewish philosopher, countered claims that Zionism was compatible with Americanism because “nationalistic Zionism demands not complete individual liberty for the Jew, but group autonomy.... A national Jewish Palestine must necessarily mean a state founded on a peculiar race, a tribal religion, and a mystic belief in a peculiar soil....” Cohen continued that Zionism was a nationalist ideology centered on a territory in Palestine that posed “a direct challenge to all those who still believe in liberalism.” See, Neumann, 28

⁶⁵ Stephen Wise, for example, stated that “America is warring for our ideal for the right of the lesser peoples to live, for the sanctity and inviolability of every national life.” Importantly, many within the U.S. saw the war against the Ottomans as a Holy War and the restoration of Palestine to the Jews as fulfillment of Biblical prophecies. See for example, “In Favor of Jewish State,” *New York Times*, 28 April 1917, 14; “Hopes for a Free Zion,” *New York Times*, 30 April 1917, 9; “Zionism Gains, Says Straus,” *New York Times*, 6 May 1917, 14; “Summons Zionists to Service in War,” *New York Times*, 28 June 1917, 11.

⁶⁶ Said, “The Idea of Palestine in the West,” 6; RDS 867n.01/82 (20 June 1919). Recall the debates within the United States about voting rights and the 14th amendment during the Reconstruction era. An important concern was whether many male immigrants were capable of participating in the American political system. Many white women suffragists blasted a policy that provided the vote for supposedly uneducated and ignorant former slaves and immigrants while denying the suffrage to educated middle and upper class white women. As the U.S. later debated annexing Hawaii, Cuba, and the Philippines, a major concern again was that the nonwhite populations of these territories were incapable of self-government. The British also feared the consequences of unrestricted immigration from Eastern Europe in the late 19th century. Rhett notes as well that

Balfour acknowledged in 1919 that “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 than in that of the ‘independent nation’ of Syria.” He continued that “in Palestine we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the present inhabitants... Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long tradition, in present needs, in future hopes, of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit the ancient land.” Balfour observed that Allied policy was “right,” but that he could not “understand... how it can be harmonised with the declaration, the Covenant, or the instructions to the [King-Crane] Commission of Enquiry.”⁶⁷ In 1920, the British Minister of Health Alfred Mond declared

To place a highly civilized world people like the Jews under the sovereignty of the quasi-barbarian and backward Arabs is unthinkable! Nor from a British standpoint, as a question of policy, could such an enhancement of the insatiable lust of domination of Mahomedan Arabs be anything but disastrous.⁶⁸

In June 1918, Wallace Meyer, an American member of Weizmann’s Zionist Commission that visited Palestine for six months near the end of the war, told William Yale, an agent for Standard Oil and the State Department, that “as in the south the white population would

when considering Indian demands for more autonomy and self-determination, the British, illustrating a paternalistic racism, declared that the Indians were simply incapable of self-government. We must also understand Zionist opposition to democratic principles in Palestine along these lines. A ‘civilized’ European race could not be subject to an inferior people, especially since a Palestinian majority opposed the Zionist goals. Rhett, Chapter 3, especially 95-106.

⁶⁷ C. Sykes, *Crossroads to Israel, 1917-1948* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1973), 5, as cited in Atran, 737, note 1; Mallison, “Balfour Declaration,” in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 108-109.

In expressing support for Balfour’s comment, Peter Grose concluded that “Balfour was willing to rise above the principle of self-determination.” See, Grose, *Israel in the Mind of America*, 91

In 1921, a Foreign Office official wrote in a memorandum that the British government recognized that the Zionist goal was a Jewish state, but simply pretended otherwise to deflect Arab opposition to British policy, which was based on “the gradual immigration of Jews into Palestine until that country becomes a predominantly Jewish state.” He acknowledged that “it is questionable whether we are in a position to tell the Arabs what our policy really means.” Cited in Neumann, *The Case Against Israel*, 26

⁶⁸ Alfred Mond, “Alfred Mond to David Lloyd George, 8 April 1920,” David Lloyd George Papers, London, as cited in Rhett, 65.

never submit to a domination by the negroes, so a Jewish minority in Palestine would never submit to a domination by an Arab majority...”⁶⁹ The racism and imperialist interests of the “civilized” precluded British, American, and Zionist consideration for the rights of the “savages.”

Balfour and other British government officials presented interesting arguments to British Parliament justifying support for Zionism and a British Mandate for Palestine. Within Britain proper, opponents to the assumption of a British Mandate for Palestine argued that the Balfour Declaration and the mandate were inconsistent with Allied war principles and unjust to the indigenous Palestinians and Arabs as a whole, who were instrumental in the war effort in the Middle East. Lord Islington, for one, argued that the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate violated the principle of self-determination. Indian nationalists also criticized British policy regarding Palestine and India. In 1921 Mahatma Gandhi wrote that “no canon, however, of ethics or war can possible justify the gift by the Allies of Palestine to Jews.” Illustrating a broad understanding of the relationship between British policy in India and Palestine, Gandhi argued that granting Palestine to the European Jews “would be a breach of implied faith with Indian Musselmans in particular and the whole of India in general” and raised questions about the nature of the relationship between India and the British. Defending his declaration and the mandate before the House of Lords in late June 1922, Balfour referred to American support for both. Specifically, Balfour referred to the Fish hearings and observed that

the whole question came up before the Senate [sic] of the United States. They had before them, if I am rightly informed, witnesses competent to give evidence upon every aspect of the case, and they came to the unanimous conclusion that the policy of a Jewish home was a policy for the benefit of the world, and they certainly, by the

⁶⁹ Bustami, “American Foreign Policy,” 211-212.

very terms of the resolution at which they arrived, were not oblivious of the interests of the native Arab population.

Opponents in the House of Lords condemned the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate over Palestine by a vote of 60-29. Immediately, the Zionist Organization of America downplayed the significance of the opposition to Zionism in the Britain, arguing that the vote in the House of Lords was not indicative of sentiment in Britain, that less than 20% of the members of the House of Lords bothered to vote on this measure, that the House of Lords was insignificant compared to the House of Commons, and that the vote did not affect the Balfour Declaration.⁷⁰

Colonial Secretary Churchill argued in the House of Commons during its debate on the Palestine mandate in July 1922 both that the British must keep their pledges, meaning the Balfour Declaration and ignoring inconvenient British pledges to the Arabs, and that Zionists would benefit the Arabs. Internalizing common western attitudes toward Arabs and ignoring the Arab contribution to the war effort, Balfour stated in 1920 at the English Zionist Federation's celebration of the incorporation of the Balfour Declaration into the peace treaty with Turkey:

So far as the Arabs are concerned...I hope they will remember that while this assembly and all Jews that it represents through the world desire under the aegis of Great Britain to establish this home for the Jewish people, the great powers, and among all the great powers most especially Great Britain, has freed them, the Arab race, from the tyranny of their brutal conqueror, who had kept them under his heel for these many centuries. I hope they will remember it is we who have established the independent Arab sovereignty of the Hejaz. I hope they will remember that it is we who desire in Mesopotamia to prepare the way for the future of a self-governing, autonomous Arab state, and I hope that, remembering all that, they will not grudge that small notch—for it is no more geographically, whatever it may be historically—that small notch in what are now Arab territories being given to the people who for all

⁷⁰ *Speeches on Zionism by the Right Hon. The Earl of Balfour*, edited by Israel Cohen (London: Arrowsmith, 1928), 23-26, 41, 44-45. Rhett, 138.

For an interesting example of British opposition to Zionism and British policies in Palestine, see J. M. N. Jeffries, *The Palestine Deception* (London: Daily Mail, 1923).

these hundreds of years have been separated from it—but surely have a title to develop on their own lines in the land of their forefathers, which ought to appeal to the sympathy of the Arab people as it, I am convinced, appeals to the great mass of my own Christian fellow-countrymen.

Ignoring or dismissing the Arab role in the war, many Zionists and Zionist supporters argued that the Jewish contribution to the Allied war effort justified the fulfillment of the Balfour Declaration. Rosenblatt asserted that “the contract made between Great Britain and the Jews of the world was signed and sealed with the blood of Jewish soldiers.” After the war, Colonial Secretary Lord Cavendish maintained:

whatever may be thought of our case [for separating out Palestine] ... the Arabs as a whole have acquired a freedom undreamed of before the war. Considering what they owe to us, they may surely let us have our way in one small area, which we do not admit to be covered by our pledges, and which in any case, for historical and other reasons, stands on wholly different footing.

Balfour also addressed the issue of self-determination, arguing before the English Zionist Federation that the Jewish case was “exceptional” and that “the deep, underlying principle of self-determination really points to a Zionist policy, however little in its strict technical interpretation it may seem to favor it.” Not only was Arab resistance beside the point since much larger issues were involved, but Arab opposition to Zionism and the British Mandate signaled nothing but rank ingratitude on behalf of the natives to those disinterested Westerners who brought civilization and freedom to the backward peoples of the East and only asked for a sliver of land in return. In responding to Arab and Vatican opposition to the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate for Palestine, Balfour expressed surprise that anyone would “question the good faith of the British Empire.”⁷¹ British history has shown

⁷¹ The *Times* commented in December 1917 that people in Palestine would welcome “beneficent” British imperialism. The British, who were “always progressive” and “fair and liberal” with the natives, would bring reforms, protection, and trade. “Jerusalem and Baghdad,” *New York Times*, 11 December 1917, 14. For source of Balfour quote, see the following citation.

how benevolent and beneficial British imperialism has been for the world and its underdeveloped peoples.⁷²

Zionists and their supporters often painted Arab opposition to Zionism as an illogical, and often anti-Jewish, pathology. Editors at the *Washington Post*, for example, were surprised that the indigenous population favored self-government over enlightened Zionist and British policies in Palestine.⁷³ Zionists argued that Jews and Arabs could live peaceably together in Palestine if it were not for various outside agitators disseminating false

⁷² *Speeches on Zionism by the Right Hon. The Earl of Balfour*, edited by Israel Cohen (London: Arrowsmith, 1928), 23-26, 56-58; Cavendish quote from Davidson, *America's Palestine*, 13; for Vatican opposition and Balfour's response, see "Behind the Pope's Palestine Note," *New York Times*, 2 July 1922, 30; for Churchill's comments to the House of Commons, see "Palestine Mandate Upheld in Commons," *New York Times*, 5 July 1922, 19; "Palestine Mandate Defeated in Lords," *New York Times*, 22 June 1922, 1; "Zionists Not Perturbed," *New York Times*, 23 June 1922, 16.

Balfour also complained:

I must say that the charge that we have been unjust to the Arab race seems to me the strangest. It is through the expenditure largely of British blood, by the exercise of British skill and valour, by the conduct of British generals, by troops brought from all parts of the British Empire—it is by them in the main that the freeing of the Arab race from Turkish rule has been effected. And that we, after all the events of the war, should be held up as those who have done an injustice, that we, who have just established a king in Mesopotamia, who had before that established an Arab king in the Hejaz, and who have done more than has been done for centuries past to put the Arab race in the position to which they have attained—that we should be charged with being their enemies, with having taken a mean advantage of the course of international negotiations, seems to me not only the most unjust to the policy of this country, but almost fantastic in its extravagance.

Lloyd George, ignoring British imperialist aims, also contended that the British made great sacrifices to liberate the Arabs, "although most of the Arab races fought throughout the war for the Turkish oppressors." The British and Zionists often denigrated the Arab contribution to the Allied effort, overlooked Allied imperialism, and ignored the plight of the Arabs during the war. The Zionist Organization remained neutral because German, Italian, Austro-Hungarian, British, French, and American Jews fought for their respective countries. Ben-Gurion initially supported the Turks and the policy of Ottomanization as the only means to ensure the survival of the Jews in Palestine and gain autonomy for the Jews throughout the Empire. Ben-Gurion recommended that Jews demonstrate their loyalty to the Ottomans by fighting for them in the war. Even while in the United States, Ben-Gurion toured the country to raise a volunteer force to fight for Turkey in the war. Once he recognized an Allied victory, however, he joined the British. Moshe Shertok joined the Turkish army. For his part, Weizmann could hardly claim to represent world Jewry in bartering for a Jewish Palestine with the British. Given the goals of British imperialism, the British were disingenuous in dismissing Arab claims for self-determination and emphasizing the cost of British blood and treasure spent to "liberate" the Arabs from the Turks. Lloyd George quoted in Morris, *Righteous Victims* (1999), 82-86. See also, Teveth, *Ben-Gurion and the Palestinians*, Ch 2.

⁷³ *Washington Post* quoted in Davidson, "Past as Prelude."

propaganda and inciting the Arabs to violence.⁷⁴ U.S. leaders from the Founding Fathers onward put forth similar ideas, claiming that European agitators incited the Native Americans to resist U.S. expansion. The racist arguments implied that Native Americans and Palestinian Arabs were incapable of recognizing and responding to the negative consequences of American expansion and Zionism. In fact, Zionists argued that anti-Semitic agitators in Palestine were inciting the 700,000 Arabs to oppose the true interests of Palestine, implying that only the Zionists, not the indigenous population, could know what those interests were.⁷⁵ In the late summer and early fall of 1922, in response to increasing Arab resistance to Zionism after the League of Nations approved the British Mandate for Palestine, Weizmann argued:

We Jews are not going to Palestine to exterminate or expel the Arabs. We have repeatedly offered them our hand in brotherhood for common work in order to rebuild this country, which for hundreds of years past has been a devastated area. We regret that our Arab brethren allow themselves to be induced by unscrupulous agitators to impede the work which would have benefitted them as much as ourselves.⁷⁶

Six months later, Weizmann told American journalists

We are not coming into Palestine as conquerors. We are not coming into Palestine to dominate anybody....The other peoples in Palestine, the *Arabs and the Christians*, have to recognize that we have a right to do what we intend to do. Just as we recognize that Palestine is going to be the common homeland of the Jews and the Arabs, so we want the Arabs to recognize that we have a right to come into Palestine to establish ourselves there.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ See for example the words of Herman Bernstein in “Report New Agitation Troubles Palestine,” *New York Times*, 17 March 1922, 14.

⁷⁵ House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 47, 50.

⁷⁶ Weizmann quoted in “Palestine Crisis Believed Near,” *New York Times*, 3 September 1922, 3. Rebuilding or upbuilding Palestine was a common Zionist theme. In a speech at the Keren Hayesod banquet in New York on 13 March 1923, Weizmann stated that the Zionists were “upbuilding a country from its very rock elements, from the field to the orchard, from the village to the town, from the kindergarten to the university.” Keren Hayesod has served as the fundraising branch of the Zionist movement and the state of Israel. See Weizmann, “The Joy of Creation,” 13 March 1923 in *American Addresses*, 44; “Pack Carnegie Hall to Hear Sokolow,” *New York Times*, 16 March 1913, C7.

⁷⁷ Weizman, “Concerning the Arabs,” 13 March 1923, *American Addresses*, 52-53. Emphasis mine. Note how Weizmann seems to differentiate between Arabs and Christians in Palestine, implying that the Arabs

Weizmann is certainly prevaricating to his American audience about Zionist goals in Palestine, which were premised on the expulsion of the Arab population and consequent Jewish expansion. The fundamental point is that Zionists and their supporters consistently argued that the Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations mandate provided the Zionists with a legal right to Palestine (in addition to the supposedly historical and moral right supplied by the Bible). Zionist rights to colonize Palestine and dispossess the indigenous population, therefore, trumped the natural and self-determination rights of the indigenous inhabitants.

The Congressmen on the House Committee on Foreign Affairs accepted the argument that the Jewish immigrants would cultivate, develop, industrialize, and modernize Palestine, and therefore could not understand why the Palestinian Arabs would oppose such a beneficial civilizing mission. Instigators and agitators, therefore, were responsible for inciting the ignorant and inarticulate masses. The Zionists and their supporter incessantly propagated the key theme of civilizing mission that the indigenous population of Palestine would benefit immensely from Western civilization, technical progress, and economic development. Zionists explicitly compared Palestinian resistance to Native American resistance to European and U.S. expansion and adopted the arguments of Western imperialists and colonizers who consistently characterized resistance to Western imperialism and colonialism as illogical opposition to civilization and evidence of the unfitness of the native population for self-determination and democracy.

Native resistance to European imperialism and colonialism also justified their dispossession and even extermination. After the 1921 'riots' in Palestine exhibited Arab

are all Muslim and allowing his American audience to make the proper conclusion about the Arab population based upon American stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims prevalent at the time.

savagery and similarity to Native Americans, Zionists pushed for immediate British policies to aid Zionist aspirations. Zionists testified to the British Court of Inquiry that “there can be only one National Home in Palestine, and that a Jewish one, and no equality in the partnership between Jews and Arabs, but a Jewish preponderance as the numbers of the race are sufficiently increased.”⁷⁸ The Jewish pioneers, therefore, had the legitimate right to take possession of Palestine along the same lines and with the same justifications that Europeans and white Americans expanded across North America.

Opponents of Zionism also appealed to American principles of self-determination and democracy.⁷⁹ Testifying before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Edward Bliss Reed, the grandson of the founder of the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut, bluntly stated that both the Balfour Declaration and political Zionism were un-American and violations of self-determination, which Wilson promised all people under Turkish rule.⁸⁰ Reed, using published Zionist sources, referred to the Zionist role in formulating the Balfour Declaration,

⁷⁸ House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 83. William Ziff, *The Rape of Palestine* (London: St. Botolph's Press, 1948), 149, 154, 190, as cited in Terry, “Zionist Attitudes Toward Arabs,” 70. According to Terry, Ziff depicts Arabs as violent, barbarous, and fanatical. Islam was characterized as a religion of “debased moral standards, superstitions, and bigoted ignorance.” Jews, on the other hand, are “the best colonizing material on earth.”

⁷⁹ The implication throughout the debate over Zionism was that Jews were capable of self-government, while the Arab population was not. Every now and again, though, such as in a letter to the editor in 1903, people made the argument that Jews were also incapable of self-government. See, “Zionism and Its Enemies,” *New York Times*, 1 February 1903, 33. Recall also Senator Lodge's contention that Jews were incapable of self-government and therefore unable to participate in the republican system of government. For one example in the *New York Times* of the Zionist assertion that Jews were fit for self-government, see “Praise Rabbi Wise in Free Synagogue,” *New York Times*, 12 April 1915, 6.

⁸⁰ Wilson defined self-determination in his Fourteen Points as an “absolutely unmolested opportunity for autonomous development.” House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 22. To make his argument to the committee, Bliss relied on the words of Zionists themselves. Reed also wrote to the *New York Times* immediately before the hearings that “the aims and methods of political Zionism are opposed to the principles of liberty and justice generally held by Americans.” Edward Bliss Reed, “Palestine and the Zionists,” *New York Times*, 16 April 1922, 99. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 24. Edward Bliss's father, Howard S. Bliss, the president of the Syrian Protestant College from 1902-1920, spoke before the Council of Ten on behalf of the Syrian people. Bliss asked the Council to send a commission to Syria to determine the wishes of the population. The British and French military forces had prevented Syrian (including Lebanese) delegations from attending the peace conference and presenting their case. The British and the French would refuse to participate in the King-Crane commission. *FRUS*, 1919, Paris Peace Conference, Volume III, 1015-1021.

a role both the British and Zionists acknowledged,⁸¹ to argue that the declaration was anti-democratic and un-American because representatives of perhaps one-tenth of the population of Palestine were central to the declaration's formulation while the other nine-tenths were not consulted. Zionists rebutted Reed on this point, arguing that since the Palestinian Arabs were "only a part of the Arabian nationality," and since the British negotiated with "representatives of the Arab nationality," "it is sheer nonsense to assert that Arabians were not consulted." Weizmann, in a speech in the U.S. in 1923, makes an interesting point that speaks to the assumptions of imperialists and colonizers during this period. Weizmann stated:

We came to the world and claimed from it a piece of property of which our ancestors were deprived two thousand years ago, and which by the common consent of a great many of our own Jews, we had long ago finished with.. And we pleaded with the world, saying we had prayed for the land, we had suffered for it; we needed it, and we claimed it. And the astonished world began to consider the claim, and the people which made it; and it came to the conclusion that this must be an extraordinary people, with an extraordinary interest in the country. And the world...took us at our word. They said: Here is the land; here is your opportunity.

The world, of course, meant the Western powers, and the underlying assumption was that the Western power had the right to give Palestine to European Jews based on sentimental religious arguments. At another speech, Weizmann presented a slightly different account, proclaiming "do not believe that Zionism came before the world, begged for Palestine as a

⁸¹ Jessie Sampter wrote in his "Guide to Zionism" that "The wording [of the Balfour Declaration] came from the British Foreign Office; but the text has been revised in the Zionist offices of America, as well as in England. The British declaration was made in the form in which the Zionists desired it." Recall that Ould-Mey argued instead that the British worked to create a Zionist movement among Eastern European Jews. The British, not the Zionists, were pulling the strings during WWI. This parallels present debates in the U.S. about the roles of the Israeli and the Israeli lobby in U.S. foreign policy. John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt argue that AIPAC and domestic politics dictate American foreign policy instead of American interests. Other critics, such as Noam Chomsky, assert that Israel dances to the American tune.

Quoted in Palestine National League, *Case Against Zionism*, 38. For the debate on the Israel lobby, see John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2007); Chomsky, "The Israel Lobby?" *ZNET*, 28 March 2006, <http://www.chomsky.info/articles/20060328.htm> (accessed 9 November 2011).

gift, and was given Palestine as a gift. We have only received back the stolen property of which we have been robbed,” an argument based on the idea of Jewish exceptionalism.⁸²

Reed attempted to appeal to American principles. In his annual message to Congress, Wilson, commenting on postwar labor unrest, observed:

There are those in this country who threaten direct action to force their will upon a majority. Russia, today, with its blood and terror, is a painful object lesson of the power of minorities. It makes little difference what minority it is; whether capital or labor, or any other class.... We are a democracy, where the majority are the masters, or all the hopes and purposes of the men who founded this government have been defeated and forgotten.⁸³

Reed illustrated that the Zionists understood a British mandate for Palestine as facilitating substantial Jewish immigration and insuring a Jewish State once the Jews constituted a majority, a program which violated the self-determination of Palestinian Arabs.⁸⁴ As Reed attempted to demonstrate, Zionists recognized that the immediate creation of a Jewish state would violate the principles of self-determination and democracy, and therefore would be a hard sell to the public opinion of mankind. Therefore, Zionists advocated British policies that would transform Palestine “with the minimum of delay” into a Jewish state based upon a Jewish majority.⁸⁵ But, Reed, referring to restrictionist immigration policies, asked why the

⁸² House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 25. Bliss gives British figures from August 1921 listing 64,000 Christians, 76,000 Jews, and 560,000 Muslims in Palestine. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 25. The words are Goldberg’s. See *Ibid.*, 59. See Weizmann, *American Address*, “The Mandate and Its Meanings,” 20 March 1923, 17; “No Transient Phenomenon,” 24 March 1923, 22.

⁸³ *FRUS*, 1919, Vol 1, Wilson’s Message to Congress, 2 December 1919, xviii.

⁸⁴ U.S. congressmen supporting the Fish and Lodge resolutions also recognized that Zionism meant a Jewish state. Chandler proclaimed in the House of Representatives that “England will turn Palestine over to the Jewish people at the proper time,” meaning when the Jews represent a majority. “National Home for the Jewish People,” *Congressional Record*, 30 June 1922

⁸⁵ House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 27. Reed quoting Weizmann. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 27. Weizmann stated on 21 September 1919: “We said we desired to create in Palestine such conditions, political, economic, and administrative, that in a given time, as short as possible, Palestine should become as Jewish as England is English, or America is American.” Katibah makes the point that the Balfour Declaration made a claim to protect the civil and religious rights of Palestinian Arabs, but completely ignored political rights and

population of Palestine did not have the same right to regulate immigration.⁸⁶ Reed also pointed out that the Zionist efforts to establish Jewish-only militias in Palestine violated the civil rights of Palestinian Arabs (including the right to bear arms) and was obviously un-American. Reed asked how a country that rebelled on the slogan of “No taxation without representation,” could support a resolution that precluded Palestinian participation in the economic and political life of Palestine and ensured that a certain minority would have rights superseding the majority. A Jewish State, the goal of the Zionist program, obviously meant “no equality in the partnership between Jews and Arabs.”⁸⁷

In countering Reed’s argument, Congressman W. Bourke Cochran of New York, raised the issue of Jewish exceptionalism. “It is a question of race,” Cochran asserted. “Those Jews are peculiar in the whole human family. They are all descended from one or two individuals. They have kept apart through all these centuries...and are now as different and easily distinguishable as when Abraham was moving with his flocks to Canaan.” The restoration of the Jews to the land “assigned to them by the act of the Creator himself,” “can not be carried out under the ordinary rules that govern international relations,” and therefore, the principle of self-determination did not apply. Lumping Palestine Arabs with all Arabs in the region, Louis Lipsky argued that “the self-determination principle certainly [had] no application to the self-determination of every little group of a race or of a nationality....Self-determination had to do not with groups of people who happened by accident to be

asks how Jews in Britain or the U.S. would react to both states denying Jews political citizenship. Quoted in Palestine National League, *Case Against Zionism*, 30, 31.

⁸⁶ Weizmann declared that “the regulation of immigration should be in our hands, and not in anyone else’s.” See Palestine National League, *Case Against Zionism*, 30.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 31-32, 36, 40. Reed was quoting Dr. Eder, a member of the Zionist executive in Palestine. Eder’s quote is from *Palestine Disturbances in May 1921: Reports of the Commission of Inquiry*, 57. Publicly, the Zionists continued to insist that they sought cooperation with the Arabs for a mutually beneficial development of Palestine, but Eder and other prominent Zionists sometimes publicly acknowledged that their goal was Jewish predominance in a Jewish state.

occupying a certain territory; it had to do with races, with nationalities.” Lipsky, other Zionists testifiers, and many Congressmen on the committee repeatedly asserted that Arab nationalist aspirations were fulfilled in Arabia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Transjordan, and even Egypt.⁸⁸

As discussed above, the conclusions of the King-Crane Commission fundamentally differed from the arguments of the Zionists. Although undertaken in the summer of 1919, the King-Crane Report was not published in the U.S. until December 1922, when the *New York Times* printed it in two installments, much too late for it to have any impact on American policy.⁸⁹ The report reaffirmed that the people in Syria and Mesopotamia wanted self-determination, preferably an Arab confederation containing largely autonomous local governments in Syria, Palestine, and parts of Lebanon.⁹⁰ Arabs overwhelmingly opposed Zionism in Palestine, seeing it as undermining Arab rights and self-determination to make way for European immigrants. As for the mandates, the Arabs wanted technical and economic assistance from the U.S. The Arabs saw a British mandate as representing British

⁸⁸ House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 34, 133-136. In response to the contention that “the Arabs cannot understand how or why Great Britain has the right to give Palestine to the Jews,” Zionists iterated the argument that Great Britain was merely “keeping with the solemn mandate of the civilized world given at San Remo” or that “England was charged by the League of Nations with the administration of Palestine.” Recall that Balfour exposed the real power behind the mandates in 1922, however, when he warned the Council of the League of Nations, “remember a mandate is a self-imposed limitation by the conquerors on the sovereignty which they obtained over conquered territories. It is imposed by the allies and associated powers themselves in the interests of what they conceived to be the general welfare of mankind.” Balfour pointedly lectured the League of Nations Council that it “could not change the decision of the Allies on the mandate.”

James Waterman Wise, “Letter to the Editor,” *New York Times*, 8 May 1922, 15; “American in Accord on French Mandate,” *New York Times*, 18 May 1922, 3; “Balfour on Palestine: Speech Before the League Council Declaring the Unchanged Policy of Britain on the Mandate,” *New York Times*, 18 June 1922, 79; Dr. Arthur Ruppin, “Palestine Industries Thriving, Capital and Settlers Needed,” *New York Times*, 26 November 1922; League of Nations Official Journal, June 1922, 546-549.

⁸⁹ An article in August discussed some of the main points of the report, but the report itself was not published until December. See “The Crane-King Report,” *New York Times*, 20 August 1922, E4

⁹⁰ H. I. Katibah also emphasized the Palestine was part of Syria in the Palestine National League’s pamphlet against Zionism. Katibah wrote that “No historic, geographic, geologic or ethnologic proof could be furnished to justify” Palestine’s separation from Syria. Additionally, Katibah referred to a Syrian-Palestinian Conference in Geneva that reiterated the conclusions of the King-Crane Commission that Palestine should remain within Syria. See Palestine National League, *The Case Against Zionism*, 3, 13.

colonial exploitation, and were very much against any French mandate or presence in the region. The commission reported that the mandates and Zionism were counter to American principles regarding self-determination and democracy and the League Charter ensuring that the voices of the indigenous inhabitants in Syria and Mesopotamia would be heard. Article 22 of the League Charter maintained that the indigenous populations would have a say in determining the mandatory power. The commissioners reported that the “Zionists looked forward to a practically complete dispossession of the present non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine.” Crane, one of the commissioners, had told the *New York Times* in May 1922 that ‘Moslems’ were displaying hostility toward the west because the promise of independence was unfulfilled.⁹¹

Abraham Goldberg, an immigrant from Eastern Europe, attempted to belittle Reed’s testimony (at one point comparing it to the anti-Jewish “Protocols of the Elders of Zion”) and appealed to the emotions and prejudices of his audience. Goldberg iterated that passage of the resolution “will yet add to [America’s] glorious record the achievement of having helped another oppressed race to get its homeland.” Countering Reed’s evidence and expressing surprise “that a Christian should come and try to prevent the Jews from getting into their own land, which is in accordance with the prophecies and fundamental justice,” Goldberg merely pointed to the Bible, “a book you all know,” as justification for the Zionist project. Critics, though, argued that a book, written by the “chosen people” themselves, was hardly justification for Zionism.⁹² Goldberg also acknowledged that the Zionists wanted a British

⁹¹ “Says Moslems Threaten: Crane Tells Mandate Officials of Danger to Missionaries,” *New York Times*, 27 May 1922, 2; “The Crane-King Report,” *New York Times*, 20 August 1922, E4; “Against Palestine as Jewish State,” *New York Times*, 20 August 1922, XX4; “Crane and King’s Long-Hid Report on the Near East,” *New York Times*, 3 December 1922, 33-35. For the full report, see *FRUS*, Paris Peace Conference, 1919, Vol XII, 745-863; “Palestine Arabs Bitter,” *New York Times*, 18 May 1922, 3.

⁹² Palestine National League, *The Case Against Zionism*, 10-12.

mandate until Jews were a majority in Palestine; at that point, the Zionists would establish a Jewish State. Although Zionists often used ambiguous language when presenting their case to the American public, U.S. supporters of Zionism well-understood that the major goal was a Jewish state in Palestine. For many Americans, this goal represented the expansion of civilization and decreased the threat of Eastern European Jewish immigration to the United States.⁹³

In addition to arguing that the Zionist project was anti-democratic, witnesses also pointed to the socialist aspects of the Zionist movement as representative of the Jewish colonists at large.⁹⁴ Since the United States was vehemently opposed to socialism, American Zionists worked assiduously to hide any socialist features of Zionism from the American population. Goldberg declared that there were more Bolsheviks proportionally in the U.S. and Britain than there were among the Jews in Palestine. Furthermore, Goldberg asserted that Bolshevism was incompatible with Zionism and with nationalism. At the prodding of Congressman Cochran, Goldberg contended that the Jewish settlers in Palestine were lovers of property. When Doctor Fuad Shatara, a Palestine immigrant and American citizen commented on Bolshevik Zionists and Zionism's incompatibility with capitalism and private property, Congressman Henry Cooper of Wisconsin illustrated American stereotypes of Jews when he asked, "Do you think the Jew, the owner of private property and proverbially a

⁹³ House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 41-50. Goldberg also referred to the myth of the Jewish expulsion from Palestine. For a recent work that counters both Cochran and Goldberg's arguments and exposes the myths behind Zionism and Jewish nationalism, see Shlomo Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People* (London and New York: Verso, 2009)

⁹⁴ Lawrence Davidson argues that "there can be no doubt that Zionism in Palestine from the 1920s onward was increasingly dominated by socialists." See Davidson, "Zionism, Socialism, and United States Support for the Jewish Colonization of Palestine in the 1920s," *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 18, Issue 3 (Summer 1996), 1-16; "Jewish Socialists Acclaim Zionism," *New York Times*, 30 November 1917, 6.

believer in private property, would circulate any law that would destroy private property?”⁹⁵

Zionists, however, were largely successful in erasing the role of Bolsheviks and socialism in the movement. Fish, speaking for his colleagues and many Americans, understood a Jewish State as:

a great republic, built on democratic principles standing between the two great Mohammedan worlds—that of Africa and Asia—standing between those warlike races as a guarantee to the peace of the world. They will fashion their government after the ideals of ours and believe in our flag...because it represents freedom, liberty and justice and that is what we want to see eventually in Palestine.⁹⁶

Importantly, Fish determined that what the U.S. wants in Palestine trumps what the Palestine want in Palestine and that Zionists represented American values. Reed emphasized that the policies of the Jewish National Fund and the mandatory power violated sacred American principles concerning individual rights and private property, but committee members, adopting prevalent stereotypes of Jews during the period, quickly dismissed his arguments and evidence.⁹⁷

The historian Lawrence Davidson argues that international and American Zionist organizations and the U.S. press presented an image of Zionism as working toward the capitalist development and industrialization of Palestine. For example, Dr. Arthur Ruppin, who was in charge of Zionist economic policies in Palestine, wrote in the *New York Times*

⁹⁵ House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 54, 156-7.

⁹⁶ Fish quoted in *New York Times*, 9 January 1923 as cited in Davidson, “Zionism, Socialism, and United States Support.” The *Los Angeles Times* asserted that “the Jewish State in Palestine may become one of the notable examples of democracy in the world of popular governments.” House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 13.

⁹⁷ House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 29. Goldberg responded that the policy Jewish immigrants advocated was to settle “unoccupied” land was identical to the homestead law that allowed Americans to settle “unoccupied” western lands. Additionally, Zionists aimed that a Jewish council, “representing the Jews of Palestine and the world,” would have “priority in any concession for public works or for the development of the natural resources of Palestine.” Although this concession was similar to the type of monopoly capitalism prevalent in the United States, monopolies, as Reed intimated, violated the free market tenets of capitalism. *Ibid.*, 32-33, 56.

See also, Walter Lehn, “The Jewish National Fund,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 3, No 4 (Summer 1974), 74-96

that there were plenty of profitable investment opportunities for American capital in Palestine. Davidson outlines four reasons why the socialist aspects of Zionism did not undermine American support for the Zionist project. First, from the State Department's perspective, American interests in Palestine had nothing to do with Zionism, and since the U.S. sought to avoid foreign entanglements and since Palestine was under British control, socialists and Bolsheviks among Zionists was not an American concern. Second, Zionists framed their message to the American audience and consequently emphasized the capitalist aspects of the Zionist project. Third, although Jews in the U.S. took part in various socialist movements, most Americans internalized the stereotype of the Jew as a money-making capitalist. It was too much against the grain to believe that Zionists were socialists. Fourth, the State Department and the press was ignorant of the World Zionist Organization and the intellectual foundations of Zionist leaders, such as David Ben Gurion, in Palestine. Elihu Stone, an Assistant United States Attorney in Massachusetts, postulated that "a Hebrew Palestine, the creation of a people who are themselves oriental in origin and possessed of the culture of the West, will constitute a symbol and serve as a demonstration of the harmonizing powers of both of them."⁹⁸

Jewish opponents of Zionism in the United States argued that a national home for the Jews in Palestine would weaken the citizenship rights of Jews elsewhere and invalidate Jewish efforts for equal rights.⁹⁹ Critics opposed the resolution because it was a religious

⁹⁸ Davidson, "Zionism, Socialism, and United States Support"; Ruppin, "Palestine Industries Thriving, Capital and Settlers Needed," *New York Times*, 26 November 1922; House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 13.

⁹⁹ See also "Object to Zionist Plans," *New York Times*, 24 May 1917, 18; "Palestine Not a Solution of Jewish Problems," *New York Times*, 10 June 1917, 66-7. British Jewish organizations opposed to Zionism observed that Jewish settlers instigating for a Jewish State would claim to have rights superseding others, which would violate the Jewish campaign for equal rights everywhere. The Jewish opposition to Zionism largely focused on how the Zionist project would negatively affect Jews living in other countries and often ignored how the Zionist movement would negatively affect the Palestinians. This is similar in some respects to the argument

question and because they felt that members of the U.S. Congress were pandering for “the Jewish vote,” both of which would set dangerous precedents for the future, especially in a climate where many Americans questioned the loyalties of immigrants and “hyphenated citizens.”¹⁰⁰ Zionism fuelled anti-Semitic assertions that Jews were aliens and not loyal citizens.¹⁰¹ The main debate among American Jews was whether the Jews constituted a nation. Jewish opponents of Zionism, while supporting the development of Palestine, declared that Judaism was a religion and insisted that Jews were loyal citizens of the countries in which they lived.¹⁰² In fact, many argued that a majority of the “so-called” Jewish nationalists were atheists or agnostics.¹⁰³ Accordingly, they argued that Jews were not a people without a country and Jews did not constitute a political nation.¹⁰⁴

Although a couple Palestinian Americans testified before the House Committee on Foreign Relations, the Congressmen on the committee treated them with skepticism and

of many American anti-imperialists who opposed the U.S. colonization of the Philippines. In fact, this represented a long strain in American thought that expanding into nonwhite territories (Cuba, Mexico, Central America, the Philippines) would undermine the white man’s republic at home because these uncivilized peoples were incapable of self-determination.

¹⁰⁰ “A Dangerous Movement,” *New York Times*, 28 May 1922, 28; “Jews Ask Wilson to End Persecution,” *New York Times*, 22 May 1919, 5.

¹⁰¹ “Jewish Nation Not Wanted in Palestine,” *New York Times*, 25 November 1917, XX3.

¹⁰² Pro-Zionists clouded the fundamental issue by asserting the Jews in the U.S. would “be loyal citizens just as Catholics [were] loyal citizens.” “Rabbis Preach on President’s Note,” *New York Times*, 7 September 1918, 5; “Rabbis Ask World Field,” *New York Times*, 6 July 1920, 10.

¹⁰³ “Mr. Schiff Not for Zionism,” *New York Times*, 21 May 1917, 11.

¹⁰⁴ House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*, 2,3,65, 99, 104. Lipsky acknowledged during his testimony that there were less than 40,000 members in the Zionist Organization of America. For earlier examples of these arguments against Zionism, see “Zionism Attacked by Rabbi Silverman,” *New York Times*, 24 November 1902, 9; “Arguments against Palestine,” *New York Times*, 27 September 1903, 15; “Kahn Opposes Zionism,” *New York Times*, 6 February 1919, 24; “Why Most American Jews Do Not Favor Zionism,” *New York Times*, 16 February 1919, 70; “Protest to Wilson Against Zionist State,” *New York Times*, 5 March 1919, 7; “Most Jews Oppose Zionism, Says Kahn,” *New York Times*, 9 March 1919, 9.

H. I. Katibah echoed the argument that outside of a common religion, Jews were “separated by every other barrier of climate, culture, race and language” and consequently did not represent a nation. See Palestine National League, *Case Against Zionism*, 9.

disrespect, attitudes noticeably absent when pro-Zionist witnesses had the floor.¹⁰⁵ While not given the opportunity to present their full opposition to Zionism during the hearings, members of the Palestine National League published a propaganda pamphlet, entitled *The Case Against Zionism*, which argued that Zionism fundamentally contradicted American principles regarding self-determination and democracy. Echoing Wilson's criticism of the prewar politics that led to the Great War, the pamphlet pointed out that Herzl's negotiations with the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire and European powers, including Britain and Germany, represented the Old World politics undertaken to benefit imperialist interests at the expense of the rights and opinions of the indigenous population in Palestine. The editor of the pamphlet, H. I. Katibah, argued that the Balfour Declaration meant "Palestine, under false pretenses and contrary to all the principles for which the Allies fought, was given to a minority of acute nationalistic Jews to be the National Homeland of all Jewry!" Katibah asserted that the Balfour Declaration and Zionism violated the joint British and French declaration of Allied war aims in the Middle East. On 7 November 1918, the British and French declared that their aims included:

The complete and final liberation of the people so long oppressed by the Turks, and the establishment of governments and administrations deriving their authority from the initiative and free choice of the native populations.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Establishment of a National Home in Palestine*. For an account of Arab-American opposition to Zionism in this early period, see Lawrence Davidson, "Debating Palestine: Arab-American Challenges to Zionism, 1917-1932," in Michael W. Suleiman, ed., *Arabs in America: Building a New Future* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 227-240. As Davidson notes, many scholars have argued that there was virtually no Arab-American opposition to Zionism before 1948 worth mentioning. As illustrated in this chapter, there were noteworthy Arab-American protests against U.S. support of Zionism. See also, Davidson, *America's Palestine: Popular and Official Perceptions from Balfour to Israeli Statehood* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida)

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 14. Katibah references other Allied agreements and declarations insisting upon independence and self-determination for the Arabs under Ottoman rule. For the full text of the joint British-French declaration, see *Foreign Relations of the United States, Paris Peace Conference, 1919, Volume II, 274.*

The British supported the colonization effort, Katibah continued, to protect the Suez Canal, “the spinal cord of England’s colonial empire.” Since the Zionist goals were incompatible with Palestinian national rights, however, the British (or some outside power) would have to protect the Zionist project.¹⁰⁷ Arguing that Zionism violated Palestinian Arab self-determination and Wilsonian liberal internationalism and represented Western imperialism and colonialism, Katibah mentioned that the Fourth Palestinian Congress, representing the native Christian and Muslim population, sent petitions, delegations, and appeals to the League of Nations, the British government, and the United States demanding that the Western powers renounce Zionism and allow for self-determination and independence for a Palestine joined together with the neighboring Arab states.¹⁰⁸ Essentially, Katibah asserted, the aspirations of the Palestinian Arabs were compatible with Wilsonian principles and American standards of justice, while the Zionist movement was nothing more than a refutation of American values and the noble war aims of the Allied powers.

The U.S. House of Representatives, however, understood Zionism as compatible with American values, including religious and political freedom and independence, and national interests. Ignoring centuries of Arab and Muslim history, Congressman Theodore Appleby (R-NJ) declared that Palestine “is a Jewish country. Every name, every landmark, every monument and every trace of whatever civilization remaining there is still Jewish.” Appleby continued with the “perceptual depopulation” of Palestine:

No other people has ever claimed Palestine as their national home. No other people has ever shown an aptitude or indicated a genuine desire to make it their homeland. The land has been ruled by foreigners. Only since the beginning of the modern

¹⁰⁷ Palestine National League, *The Case Against Zionism*, 8, 13-17, 18. Katibah iterated that Zionism represented imperialism and violated the democratic principles ostensibly behind the Allied war aims and the League of Nations. Discussing Arab ‘riots’ in Palestine, Winston Churchill told Parliament that without British military forces in Palestine, the Zionists could not continue their project.

¹⁰⁸ Palestine National League, *Case Against Zionism*, 20-21.

Zionist effort may it be said that a creative, cultural, and economic force has entered Palestine.... To my mind there is something prophetic in the fact that during the ages no other nation has taken over Palestine and held it in the sense of a homeland; and there is something providential in the fact that for 1,800 years it has remained in desolation as if waiting for the return of the people.... It should be the privilege of any Christian nation to help make the cradle of Christianity again the center of civilization instead of permitting it to remain a land of devastation and epidemics, which it has now been for centuries.

Simeon Fess (R-Ohio) also articulated Christian Zionist sentiments when he declared that the Allied conquest of Palestine meant the fulfillment of the prophecy that the Jewish people would be restored to their ancient homeland. Fess proclaimed that the Congressional resolution was “eminently sound in diplomatic relations, correct in principle, humanitarian in design, elevating in sentiment and commendable from the viewpoint of policy and expediency.” A Congressman Burton reiterated sentiments that the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine would not injure the Arab population, but would bring progress, modernization, and the benefits of civilization to the indigenous population. Repeatedly, congressmen invoked the sentiments that the colonization of Palestine was the solution to the persecution of Jews in Eastern Europe, that the Jewish people had the right to reconquer and redeem their ancient homeland, that an overwhelming majority of the world’s Jews supported political Zionism, and that Arabs had Arabia, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Syria and did not need or have claim to Palestine. While most dismissed concerns that British policy and Zionism violated the self-determination of the Arab population, some, such as Michael Hogan (R-NY) even argued that supporting Zionism and the Balfour Declaration meant supporting the principle of the “consent of the governed” and the “American spirit.” Congressman Albert Rosedale (R-NY) perhaps best articulated the ideology and racism underlying American support for the Zionist project and the parallels between the American and Jewish colonizing experience:

The colonist Jew is bringing Western culture and civilization into the country and it is natural that the Moslem Arabs, steeped in ignorance and extreme poverty, would occasionally clash with the newcomers. This is especially true of the Bedouin Arabs, who have no civilization worth the mention. These Bedouins live in the open and have the same objection to the land being fenced in by Jewish farmers as the American Indians had in the early days of the white settlers; hence it is sometimes necessary for the Palestinian colonist Jew to labor in the fields with a hoe in one hand and a rifle in the other.¹⁰⁹

The ideology of civilization and civilizing mission justified the conquest, dispossession, and removal of Native Americans and Palestinian Arabs while allowing European and American colonists to define themselves as pursuing liberty, progress, modernization, and God's manifest destiny.

The petitions, pamphlets, propaganda, and testimony of the opponents of Zionism and the debate among American Jews over definitions of citizenship and nation, however, failed to alter the preconceptions and prejudices of the members of the House Committee on Foreign Relations. In fact, most of the committee members essentially dismissed the witnesses who challenged the merits of Zionism and the propaganda of the Zionists. At the end of May 1922, Fish submitted a short report to the House of Representatives iterating support for Zionism and asserting that Palestine had been "a comparatively sterile country" and "a devastated and sparsely settled land" due to the misrule of the Turks and the backwardness of the Arab population. Bringing with them Western values, capital, and technology, Jewish settlers, however, gallantly undertook a civilizing mission to transform and develop the land and resources in Palestine. Declaring that Zionism was consonant with American ideals, Fish anticipated the creation of a Jewish State in Palestine.¹¹⁰ Fish declared to the House of Representatives

¹⁰⁹ "National Home for the Jewish People," *Congressional Record*, 30 June 1922, 9799-9820

¹¹⁰ "National Home for the Jewish People in Palestine," 67th Congress, 2nd Session, Report 1038.

The passage of this resolution does not commit us to an entangling alliance or to any obligation to use military or naval force or the expenditure of any money. It is merely an expression of our sympathetic and favorable attitude in establishing in Palestine a refuge for the persecuted Jews of the world where they can develop their own culture, law, and ideals in the ancient land of their fathers, given by Jehovah to Abraham and consecrated in the hearts of the Jewish people as the birthplace of their traditions.¹¹¹

On 21 September 1922, ten days after Congress had passed the joint resolution expressing American support for the Balfour Declaration and the “Establishment of a National Home for the Jewish People in Palestine,” President Harding added his signature, giving official U.S. sanction to Zionism and setting the precedent for future U.S. support for Zionism and the state of Israel, a support that was and continues to be premised on the notion that the Zionist movement and Israel has embodied and defended American principles and values and represents the best of Western civilization. Significantly, white Americans saw themselves and their history reflected in the Jewish pioneers and the Zionist movement, which contributed to and facilitated an American identification with Zionism and concomitant rejection of the Palestinian Arab arguments regarding self-determination and democracy.¹¹²

¹¹¹ “National Home for the Jewish People,” Congressional Record, House Resolution 360, 9799-9820

¹¹² “Harding Signs Palestine Motion,” *New York Times*, 22 September 1922, 2. Harding had previously expressed sympathy for the Zionist cause. See for example, “Harding for Zionism, Leader Announces,” *New York Times*, 25 November 1921, 8. The Senate passed a resolution endorsing the Jewish state in early May 1922. See, “Endorses Jewish State,” *New York Times*, 4 May 1922, 15.

**PART II: THE DISCOURSE ON ZIONISM AND PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE
DURING THE EARLY MANDATE PERIOD**

[The Palestinians] look upon Palestine with the same instinctive love and true fervor that any Aztec looked upon Mexico or any Sioux looked upon his prairie. Palestine will remain for the Palestinians not a borderland, but their birthplace, the center and basis of their own national existence.

Vladimir Jabotinsky
1923¹

The Arabs are in the majority, but they have nothing to give to the world comparable to the Jews either in energy or intellect.

Dr. William Rappard
August 1925²

From the standpoint of all hopes of human kind I seriously think that Zionism is the greatest thing the world has seen since the early settlement of America, and incomparably the greatest thing in the world today.

Rev. Dr. John Haynes Holmes
March 1929³

¹ Quoted in Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-1999* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 36. Morris observes that Jabotinsky recognized that the Zionists would resort to force if the Zionist movement were to be successful. See, *Ibid.*, 108

Jabotinsky, who firmly held that armed might would be decisive in gaining Palestine for the Zionists and defeating Palestinian Arab nationalism, argued that the Jewish colonists would “thoroughly sweep out of Eretz Israel all traces of the Oriental... and Islamic soul.” See Arno Mayer, *Ploughshares into Swords: From Zionism to Israel* (Verso: London and New York: 2008), 124-125

² “Declares Zionism a Great Success,” *New York Times*, 11 August 1925, 23. Rappard was a member of the League of Nations Permanent Mandates Commission.

³ “Success of Zionism a Matter of Time,” *New York Times*, 17 March 1929, N2.

CHAPTER 6: THE ZIONIST NARRATIVE AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY DURING THE EARLY MANDATE PERIOD

During the early mandate period, Zionists presented the Jewish colonization of Palestine as a civilizing mission benefiting the indigenous population of Palestine and developing the land and resources according to Western conceptions of progress and modernization. Whenever the British seemingly hedged on their commitment to Zionism in the face of Arab opposition, Zionists lobbied the United States to pressure the British government to fulfill the terms of the mandate, which the Zionists interpreted as establishing a Jewish state. The State Department, however, focused on ensuring that British policy did not discriminate against American citizens and companies or prejudice U.S. philanthropic, educational, and commercial interests in the Near East and consequently worked to ensure the open door in British-controlled territory in the former Ottoman Empire in the face of American rejection of the Versailles Treaty and participation in Wilson's League of Nations. To pursue these interests, the State Department appealed to the tradition of avoiding entanglements in Old World conflicts and recommended American neutrality regarding Zionism. Importantly, the Zionists were much more active in the campaign to influence public and political opinion than their opponents and the State Department and effectively convinced many Americans that the Zionist movement was congruent with American history, values, and interests.

The Zionist Narrative during the Early Mandate Period

The Zionist narrative during the early mandate period focused on the civilizing features of the Zionist program. In the spring of 1923, Henrietta Szold, the Honorary

President of the Women's Zionist Organization and former Acting Director of the Medical Unit, returned from Palestine and spoke before a crowd of 3,000 at the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York. Szold's comments underscore a number of themes common to Zionist lobbying efforts in the United States during the mandate era. Encouraging Zionist supporters to remain patient because the Zionist project would take multiple generations to reach its goals in Palestine and the Zionist pioneers would "not see with our own eyes the consummation of our hope," Szold iterated the familiar Zionist civilizing mission narrative that "we are going to fructify the earth with our ideas, with our bodies, with our hopes." Zionists consistently argued that Jewish colonizers were bringing civilization, progress, development, and modernity to a backward land and people. Participating in the Zionist Congress in Vienna in 1925, Rabbi Stephen Wise declared that "the Jewish resettlement of Palestine is lifting up social and industrial standards not only in Palestine, but throughout the entire Near East." Upon his return to New York, Wise appealed to American Jews to provide \$50,000,000 to the Palestine National Fund charged with purchasing land in Palestine to be held perpetually by the Jewish nation and reiterated the Jewish immigration to Palestine was making the country "flourish again."¹

Zionists and their supporters repeatedly asserted that there was little Arab opposition to Jewish colonization. Szold reiterated the common theme that Arab opposition to Zionism was the result of a few agitators exciting the fears of "the ignorant

¹ "3,000 Greet Woman Palestine Leader," *New York Times*, 1 May 1923, 4; "Dr. Wise Denounces Vienna Violence," *New York Times*, 20 August 1925, 7; "Wise Sees Politics in Vienna Rioting," *New York Times*, 8 September 1925, 16.

Zionist educational material in the 1920s also included motion pictures "depicting the efforts and sacrifices of the pioneers in the Holy Land." See, "Zionism Is Defended at Women's Meeting," *New York Times*, 8 December 1926, 9; "Zionist Colony Work Expands in Palestine," *New York Times*, 29 April 1928, XX11; "Finds Palestine Gaining," *New York Times*, 30 September 1928, 62

Arab peasant.” The U.S. politician and diplomat Oscar Straus argued that the Turks encouraged Christian Arab agitators to oppose the British occupation of Palestine because these Arabs supposedly preferred “baksheesh government” instead of the more civilized British constitutional rule. Straus asserted that there was very little conflict between Arabs and Jews in Palestine, and even the Christian Arab agitators opposed the French and British more than the Zionists. The philanthropist Nathan Straus declared after a trip to Palestine that there was “absolutely no dissension among the Jews and the Arabs. The only trouble comes from a minority of ‘hot air’ people, agitators that one finds everywhere. They do not count. The Jews and the Arabs are in complete harmony, and the Arabs are profiting as much by the development of Palestine as the Jews.”

Campaigning for the Zionist cause in the United States in late 1926, Chaim Weizmann, president of the World Zionist Organization, claimed that “there is absolutely no friction” between Jews and Arabs in Palestine. Zionist speeches and publications in the United States emphasized progress in the supposed restoration of Palestine and attempted to obscure any opposition or obstacles to Zionism as well as the goals and consequences of British and Zionist policy in Palestine. Emphasizing the importance of spreading the Zionist narrative, Szold exhorted Zionists to “succeed in getting the huge world to the east to realize that our desires are just and we must insist that the Christian world support us if only to right the wrongs that it has inflicted upon us.” While Zionists presented Western support for Zionism as a solution to the Jewish problem, including the issue of Jewish immigration to the U.S. and overcrowding in New York, even though only a small percentage of the world’s Jewish population could migrate to Palestine, and recompense for anti-Semitism long before the Nazi persecution and Holocaust of European Jewry

during the 1930s and World War II, Palestinian Arabs failed to comprehend the “justice” of a European colonization movement premised on the denial of Palestinian history and rights and the dispossession and displacement of the Palestinian people. For Zionists and many Americans, Palestinian opposition to Zionism was as illegitimate and irrational as Native American resistance to the manifest destiny of European and white American settlers and colonizers. Military force was understood as necessary to deal with the indigenous opposition.²

² “3,000 Greet Woman Palestine Leader,” *New York Times*, 1 May 1923, 4; “Fears for Future of Jews,” *New York Times*, 1 January 1923, 2; “Denies Radicalism is Rife in Palestine,” *New York Times*, 18 February 1923, 10; “Notes Prosperity in the Holy Land,” *New York Times*, 1 January 1923, 10; “Balfour Greets Zionists,” *New York Times*, 23 November 1923; “Weizmann to Push Zionist Cause Here,” *New York Times*, 3 December 1923, 13; “Dr. Silverman Joins Zionist Ranks,” *New York Times*, 13 March 1924, 20; “Zion Gifts Revealed by Nathan Straus,” *New York Times*, 13 May 1924, 8; “Palestine Gaining Says Oscar Straus,” *New York Times*, 1 May 1924, 11; “Hadassah Seeking 5,000 New Members,” *New York Times*, 11 November 1924, 11; “B’nai B’rith to Help the Zionist Plan,” *New York Times*, 28 January 1925, 8; “Student Zionists Form New Body,” *New York Times*, 8 July 1925, 20; “Dr. Wise Denounces Vienna Violence,” *New York Times*, 20 August 1925, 7; “Zionist Campaign Opens in Baltimore,” *New York Times*, 29 November 1926, 13 .

According to Michael Hunt, Benjamin Franklin opined that white Americans must periodically use force to keep the Native Americans in their place because the latter would interpret any weakness of the former as license to attack innocent whites. Franklin described the indigenous population as “barbarous tribes of savages that delight in war and take pride in murder,” ignoring that the natives were defending themselves from the foreign invaders who often openly called for their extermination and removal so as to gain control of their lands. An important parallel between white American and Zionist pioneers was the idea that the native population was an obstacle to the settlers gaining control of the territory. Both white Americans and the Jewish colonists adopted racial and civilizational justifications for expropriating and removing the indigenous peoples. White Americans often understood treaties with Native Americans as “expedients by which ignorant, intractable, and savage people were induced without bloodshed to yield up what civilized peoples had a right to possess....” The words are those of the governor of Georgia in 1830 in the midst of the removal of the Cherokee. Force still was a necessary tactic for gaining territory. As Hunt observes, “colonial New Englanders and Virginians...regarded the Indians as dangerous barbarians, to be segregated for better supervision or altogether removed beyond range of contact. A mailed fist and a readiness to use forceful if not brutal methods were essential to keeping them in check.” As the U.S. forced the remaining natives onto reservations to allow for white expansion and ensure white ‘security’ from the savages, white Americans adopted the ideology that the destruction of the indigenous population was a consequence of the march of progress and civilization. The Indians were simply the victims of natural law because they were not equipped to survive in the modern world. Such an ideology justified and concomitantly absolved white Americans of genocide.

While publicly promising that the Zionist movement would not infringe on Arab rights and that Jewish colonization would bring economic and civilizational benefits to the indigenous population, Zionist leaders understood that Zionism meant the denial of Palestinian Arab national rights and would provoke resistance. The Zionist goal of immigration and land settlement meant Jewish political dominance, despite public assurances to the contrary. See, for example, Mayer, *Ploughshares into Swords*, 126-128

Dr. William Rappard, a member of the Permanent Mandates Commission for the League of Nations, also contended that the “civilized world” owed the Jewish people “compensation” for anti-Semitism and

Western politicians, travelers, journalists, and scholars reiterated the idea that the Jewish colonization of Palestine was based on historical and Biblical claims and represented the expansion of Western values, progress, and modernization. Reporting on Lord Arthur Balfour's tour of Palestine in 1925, the *New York Times* observed that the eponymous author of the Balfour Declaration proclaimed that the American and European peoples representing the civilized world supported the Zionist project in Palestine and would not reverse this policy.³ According to the *New York Times*, Commander Joseph Montague Kenworthy, a labor member of Parliament, told an audience at the Waldorf Hotel in early January 1927 that the "most praiseworthy" consequence of World War I "was the opportunity presented to Zionism to make Palestine a national home for the Jewish race." Referring to the Jewish development and modernization of Palestine, Kenworthy announced that the Jewish colonists "were making a Western oasis...among the Eastern sluggishness of the surrounding lands." Kenworthy claimed that the Arabs were not hostile to Jewish colonization, but observed that Arab population growth, due in his estimation to the Jewish eradication of malaria,

support for Zionism provided "them very real gratification." See, "Declares Zionism a Great Success," *New York Times*, 11 August 1925, 23, and discussion below.

Interestingly, Straus stated that there were 150,000 inhabitants of Palestine, while a January 1923 *Times* article reported the British census numbering a total population of 750,000, with about 11% being Jewish (primarily immigrants). See, "83,794 Jews in Palestine," *New York Times*, 13 January 1923, 15. The British reported to the Permanent Mandates Commission in December 1922 that there were 758,182 people in Palestine, "of whom 78 per cent. were Moslems, 11 per cent. Jews and 9.6 per cent. Christians." See, "Report on Palestine Administration," 31 December 1922, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/a682cabf739febaa052565e8006d907c?OpenDocument> (accessed 10 October 2011); *Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August, 1929*, CMD 3530 (London: H. M. Stationary Office, 1930), 8; Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), 46ff

³ Periodically, the British attempted to backtrack from a commitment to a Jewish state in Palestine. In May 1925, former Prime Minister David Lloyd George promised that the British would support Jewish immigration to and the establishment of a national home in Palestine, but would supposedly not countenance the expropriation and expulsion of the Arab population. Of course, this did not mesh with the Zionist goal of creating a Jewish state, which was premised on expelling enough of the indigenous Arab population to maintain a Jewish majority. See, "Tells Jews England Will Keep Word," *New York Times*, 26 May 1925, 4

threatened the Zionist project since the Arabs would occupy land that the Jewish colonists would need in the future.⁴ After a visit to Palestine, Emil Vandervelde, a Belgian Socialist leader, praised the Zionist achievements of transforming wasteland into productive colonies and proclaimed that the Zionists' restoration of Palestine and "fraternal tendencies toward the Arabs" contributed to world peace and the emancipation of Arab workers and peasants.⁵ At a banquet in Cleveland to raise money for the Palestine Foundation Fund on 14 January 1923, Selden Palmer Spencer, a Republican Senator from Missouri, championed

the opportunity of rebuilding and re-peopling and re-establishing the Holy Land of Palestine—the land that while the Jew possessed it thrived with its industry and teemed with the fruit of the ground; the land that, during the two thousand years from which the Jew has been absent from it, has become a deserted, mournful desert, or marsh, the abode of sadness, without prosperity or fertility; the land that will again prosper and thrive and bring forth as it did in the centuries gone, and furnish a home for those whose eyes have been turned longingly toward the land of their fathers, eyes that will never close in peace until they themselves abide there.⁶

⁴ "Praises Work of Zionist," *New York Times*, 6 January 1927, 19.

⁵ "Vandervelde Praises Palestine Colonizers," *New York Times*, 22 April 1928, 60. The Socialist and Labor International soon resolved to support Zionism, which was "based on work, on Socialist transformation and international solidarity," soon after Vandervelde's visit to Palestine. The organization's resolution failed to note the exclusivist nature of Zionism, and the *Times* interestingly did not comment on the socialist aspects of the Zionist movement. See, "Socialist Leaders Form Zionist Group," *New York Times*, 19 August 1928, 33.

⁶ "Spencer Aids Jewish Drive," *New York Times*, 15 January 1923, 8. Zionists repeatedly dissembled to the American public that the Arabs supported Jewish settlement in their ancient homeland. See, "Zionist Congress Getting Together," *New York Times*, 12 August 1923, 26.

As part of the denial of Arab history in Palestine, Westerners continued to focus on the Biblical history of the Holy Land. Not only did travel increase to see the places referred to in the Bible, but Western scholars enthusiastically endeavored to excavate Palestine to rediscover Biblical history. See, for example, "Invite Excavation of 'City of David,'" *New York Times*, 22 January 1923, 7.

The Israeli government has long supported archaeological excavations to attempt to solidify Jewish claims to Palestine and suppressed finding that challenge Zionist precepts. See, for example, Nur Masalha, *The Bible and Zionism: Invented Traditions, Archaeology and Post-Colonialism in Palestine-Israel* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2007); G. W. Bowersock, "Palestine: Ancient History and Modern Politics," in Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens, eds., *Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question* (London and New York: Verso, 1988), 181-191. See also, Albert Glock, "Cultural Bias in the Archaeology of Palestine," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 24, No 2 (Winter 1995), 48-59.

After his trip to Palestine, Carveth Wells, a scholar employed by the American Museum of Natural History, relayed to the *New York Times* that “I found villages of Zionists—Jews with bobbed hair and New York clothes, saloons, shoe-shining stands and something of a Wild West appearance, with machine guns mounted in concrete blockhouses at the corners of the villages to keep away the Arabs.”⁷ Such a description explicitly made connections both between the praiseworthy white American pioneers and the Jewish settlers in Palestine and the savage Native American and Arab obstacles to civilization. Ignoring centuries of Arab history and denying the rights of the Palestinians to their native homeland, Spencer and Wells accepted the arguments that European Jews were justified in colonizing Palestine and dispossessing the indigenous population because the Zionists would develop the land and resources properly according to Western conceptions of civilization and progress. The arguments echoed common interpretations and justifications that white European and American pioneers had justly dispossessed the Native Americans on the grounds that the uncivilized indigenous population did not use the land properly, deviated from Western norms, and prevented the advancement of Christianity and civilization.⁸

⁷ “Sells View of Caruso in Tomb for 5 Cents,” *New York Times*, 7 January 1926, 25; Davidson, *America’s Palestine*, 65

⁸ “Spencer Aids Jewish Drive,” *New York Times*, 15 January 1923, 8; “Zionists Attack Zangwill’s Views,” *New York Times*, 3 November 1923, 8; “Balfour Says Zion Has World Backing,” *New York Times*, 27 March 1925, 3; “London Cheers Balfour,” *New York Times*, 25 April 1925, 2.

Balfour’s visit to Syria and Palestine provoked Arab protests against the Balfour Declaration, Zionism, and the British refutation of the Hussein-McMahon agreement. The *New York Times* portrayed these protesters in Damascus as “mobs” participating in “riots,” a characterization which encouraged Americans to interpret Arab resistance as irrational, barbaric behavior. See, “Mob Stones Hotel Housing Balfour,” *New York Times*, 9 April 1925, 2; “2 Killed, 11 Injured in Damascus Riot,” *New York Times*, 10 April 1925, 2; “Sees in Riot an Attack on the French,” *New York Times*, 13 April 1925, 4; “One Killed in Damascus,” *New York Times*, 16 April 1925, 8

Further articulating the implied comparisons between the primitive Palestinian Arabs and the savage Native Americans, *New York Times* special correspondent T.

Walter Williams surmised that

The Arabs do not know when they have malaria because it is no novelty for them to have a tired feeling. They are always ready to lie down and rest beside their camels or their goats. There are no doctors among them and they do not believe in medicine. When an Arab is sick with fever he has hot needles pressed down on his temples three or four times and drinks potions made from vile tasting herbs.

Williams proceeded to educate his American readers about the barbaric gender norms in Arab society by observing that Arab women “work about fifteen hours a day and carry water on their heads in great clay pitchers from the wells while they are resting.”

Comparisons to the American experience were obvious. European settlers justified the dispossession and conquest of Native Americans because the role of women in Native American societies ostensibly illustrated their barbarity compared to the ‘civilized’ Europeans, and Western Jewish pioneers had the same right to justify the dispossession and removal of the indigenous Arab population along similar logic.⁹ While acknowledging some of the problems facing the Jewish colonists, Williams presented the Zionist settlers as pioneers developing and modernizing Palestine. The Arabs, on the other hand, “look at the comfortable stone, red-roofed houses with glass windows in which the newcomers live with their families and then go back to the mud and wattle hut in the squalid villages where their own folks dwell.” Such a characterization of the Jewish colonization of Palestine as a civilizing project appealed to an audience that

⁹ See, for example, Gregory D. Smithers, “The ‘Pursuits of the Civilized Man’: Race and the Meaning of Civilization in the United States and Australia, 1790s-1850s,” *Journal of World History* Vol 20, No 2 (June 2009), 245-272; Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998). The West still makes reference to gender norms to justify military intervention. Both the George W. Bush and Barack Obama administrations have justified the continued occupation of Afghanistan as promoting women’s rights.

interpreted the historical American mission as spreading civilization and progress and understood non-white indigenous populations as barriers to development.¹⁰

After a visit to Palestine, Dr. William Rappard, a Swiss member of the Permanent Mandates Commission characterized Zionism as “one of the most extraordinary political phenomena.” Illustrating that the civilizing mission ideology trumped the principle of self-determination, Rappard asserted that “the Arabs are in the majority, but they have nothing to give to the world comparable to the Jews either in energy or intellect.” Rappard observed that the British mandate over Palestine was exceptional because the British were charged with establishing “a homeland for the Jewish race.” The Swiss representative on the Permanent Mandates Commission postulated that the British assumed “their present responsibilities in Palestine” because of their “desire to control both banks of the Suez Canal, desire to regain prestige in the Arab world, renaissance of the Crusader spirit and desire to establish a national home for the Jews.” Three weeks later, Rappard postulated that Europeans who supposedly sympathized with the Arabs and opposed the Balfour Declaration and Zionism as a violation of the principle of self-determination were “uninformed of the fundamentals of Zionism, the historic rights and claims of the Jewish people to Palestine.” Rappard concluded that “only those who have given consideration and have made a study of the Zionist problem,” such as himself, understood the necessity of supporting a policy that privileged “the special interests of a minority” in Palestine at the expense of democratic and liberal principles. Without the Balfour Declaration, Rappard acknowledged, the British would have ostensibly administered Palestine “according to the wishes of the majority of the population” and

¹⁰ “Refuge, Not Nation, Sought by Zionists,” *New York Times*, 3 May 1925, E16; Davidson, *America’s Palestine*, 66.

implemented an immigration policy similar to the restrictionist measures adopted recently in the United States. The Balfour Declaration and the terms of the mandate, according to Rappard, committed the British to promote Jewish immigration to Palestine and adopt other policies furthering Jewish colonization in opposition to the wishes of the Palestinian Arabs, who understood Zionism as a threat to their homeland. Colonial and imperial interests, based on the expansion of civilization, took precedence over the principle of self-determination.¹¹

Many secondary and somewhat contradictory themes permeated the conversation on Zionism during the early mandate period. Some Zionists argued that establishing a Jewish home in Palestine was necessary to stave off assimilation and preserve a distinct Jewish racial identity. This argument often raised the issue of Jewish citizenship and loyalty of Jews to their home nations, echoing debates during World War I and the Paris Peace Conference. Zionists continued to emphasize that American Jews could support Zionism while maintaining their loyalty to the United States. Other Zionists, fearful of continued large-scale Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe, promoted Zionism as the solution to the immigration problem. At the same time that many Americans supported Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe to Palestine, the United States congress was severely restricting immigration to the United States from Asia, Africa, and southern and eastern Europe. Additionally, prominent non-Zionist Jews continually declared that Jews

¹¹ “Declares Zionism a Great Success,” *New York Times*, 11 August 1925, 23; “Dr. Rappard Denies Attack on Zionism,” *New York Times*, 1 September 1925, 10. In the August article, Rappard also relayed an anecdote suggesting that Weizmann convinced Balfour of the rightness of Zionism during a conversation the two had in 1906. For an interpretation arguing that the British undertook the creation of Zionism to pursue British imperial interests in the Near East, see Mohameden Ould-Mey, “The Non-Jewish Origin of Zionism,” *International Journal of the Humanities*, Vol 1 (2003), 591-610; Ould-Mey, “Geopolitical Genesis of Herzlian Zionism,” <http://faculty.indstate.edu/melyassini/Geopolitical%20Genesis%20of%20Herzlian%20Zionism.PDF> (accessed 3 June 2011).

comprised a religious community, not a nation, and that the overwhelming majority of American Jews were not Zionists and criticized the secular nationalism of political Zionism while supporting the development of a Jewish cultural home in Palestine. Zionists, such as Rabbi Joseph Silverman, countered with arguments that “any Jew who willfully hinders the movement to rebuild the Jewish homeland is injuring his people and his faith. Any Jew who remains aloof from the movement at this critical period in our history lays himself open to the charge of indifference to the fate of a large part of Israel.” Presenting the Zionist movement as a nationalist one, Zionists claimed that nationalism was one of the “great gifts of the Jews to the world” that was “developed in Palestine.” As evidenced by the reconstitution of the Jewish Agency to include non-Zionists in the late 1920s, many non-Zionists who opposed political Zionism (meaning the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine) supported Jewish immigration to and the upbuilding of Palestine, and one of the major goals of the Zionist movement was to present an image of a unified Jewish nation to the international community.¹²

¹² “Fears for Future of Jews,” *New York Times*, 1 January 1923, 2; Rabbi Norman Salit, “Americanism and the Jews,” *New York Times*, 4 February 1923, XX8; “Would Bar Asiatics, Reduce All Quotas,” *New York Times*, 6 February 1923, 5; “Two Rabbis Defend Zangwill’s Speech,” *New York Times*, 5 November 1923, 7; “Dr. Silverman Joins the Zionist Ranks,” *New York Times*, 13 March 1924, 20; “Non-Zionists to Aid in the Holy Land,” *New York Times*, 2 March 1925, 10; “Rabbi Criticizes Hebrew University,” *New York Times*, 13 April 1925, 22; “Sees Jews’ Hope in Zionism,” *New York Times*, 27 April 1926, 8; “Liberals Neutral Toward Zionism,” *New York Times*, 14 July 1926, 11; “Issues Palestine Appeal,” *New York Times*, 25 January 1927, 10; “Palestine ‘Peace’ Hailed by Leaders,” *New York Times*, 7 February 1927, 3; “Accord on Zionism Hailed at Dinner,” *New York Times*, 23 March 1927, 15; “Progress for Zionism Seen in Council Vote,” *New York Times*, 29 July 1928, 14; “Non-Zionists Heal Split on Palestine,” *New York Times*, 22 October 1928, 32; “Zionist Congress in Favor of Agency,” *New York Times*, 28 July 1929, 5; “Zionists Get Motion to Reform Agency,” *New York Times*, 31 July 1929, 4; “Warns of Decline of Jewish Culture,” *New York Times*, 30 July 1929, 6; “Weizmann Urges All-Jewish Agency,” *New York Times*, 29 July 1929, 7; “Zionists Ratify Pact for Jewish Agency,” *New York Times*, 10 August 1929, 5; “Weizmann Heads Palestine Council,” *New York Times*, 15 August 1929, 31; Peel Report, 172. For Weizmann’s account of the development of the Jewish Agency, see Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), 304-314

In a short article in the April 1926 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, Jacob Lustig discussed the development of autonomous and separatist Jewish institutions in Palestine under the aegis of the Jewish Agency. Lustig maintained that according to the terms of the mandate, the Zionist Organization “was regarded as the Jewish Agency that should be consulted by the Mandatory Administration in all matters affecting the

Consequently, prominent Zionist leaders consistently criticized efforts that undermined Zionist efforts in Palestine by diverting important resources from colonization in the Holy Land or providing alternatives to Palestine and even ameliorating conditions for Jews in Europe, which would possibly decrease the appeal of Palestine for European Jewry. At a meeting of American Jews in Philadelphia in September 1925, prominent Zionists opposed efforts to help the persecuted Jews in Russia colonize agricultural land in Soviet territory. Julius Rosenwald, a Chicago philanthropist who contributed to colonization efforts in the Soviet Union, argued “that the only way to help our co-religionists in these benighted lands is to help them where they are” instead of subsidizing immigration to Palestine, which he considered “impracticable.” Zionists criticized the Russian colonization plan and other initiatives that threatened to take away resources from the Zionist project in Palestine and undermine the unity that Zionists wished to present to the international community. At the twenty-ninth Zionist Organization of America convention, Louis Lipsky attacked the Russian colonization scheme as anti-Zionist propaganda. Throughout the 1920s, Zionists

welfare of Palestine.” Despite opposition among a significant number of Palestinian Jews to Zionism, Lustig maintained that these developments illustrated unity among the Jewish people and represented a significant step toward predominance and autonomy in the national home. Zionist and non-Zionist Jews would continue to negotiate regarding the Jewish Agency for a few more years. With the agreement between Zionists and non-Zionists ratified through the formation of the Jewish Agency in the summer of 1929, David Brown, chairman of the United Jewish Campaign, claimed that now all Jews were united to rebuild Palestine. The Peel Commission even declared that the Jewish Agency represented the sixteen million Jews in the Diaspora, inaccurately suggesting that all the world’s Jews were united behind the goals of political Zionism and giving credence to the Zionist argument against Arab majority rule in Palestine on the grounds that the National Home included all the Jewish people, not simply those in Palestine. See, Jacob Lustig, “The New Constitution of the Palestine Jews,” *Foreign Affairs* Vol 6, No 3 (April 1928), 505-506; “Lauds the Jewish Agency,” *New York Times*, 18 August 1929, N4; Peel Report, 182

The terms of the mandate for Palestine recommended that non-Zionist Jews participate in the establishment of the Jewish home in Palestine. Zionists undertook negotiations with non-Zionists, especially those from the United States, because the financial support of the non-Zionists was necessary for the successful establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. See, “Report by his Britannic Majesty’s Government on the Administration under Mandate of Palestine and Trans-Jordan, 1924,” <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/a87d21f4e57f2d0f052565e8004bac0?OpenDocument> (accessed 10 October 2011)

would continue to criticize the oppression of Jews in the Soviet Union, lobby the U.S. government to protest Soviet policy, and oppose plans that focused on alleviating the sufferings of European Jews at the expense of the Jewish colonization of Palestine.¹³

The main concerns for the Zionists centered on Jewish immigration and land purchases and the British commitment to the Balfour Declaration and mandate policy.¹⁴

¹³ “Debate \$15,000,000 Jewish Relief Plan,” *New York Times*, 13 September 1925, 26; “Gives \$1,000,000 for Jewish Relief,” *New York Times*, 14 September 1925, 21; “Reach Agreement on Palestine Fund,” *New York Times*, 30 November 1925, 4; “Zionist Convention Opens in Buffalo,” *New York Times*, 28 June 1926, 7; “Coolness to Drive Denied by Zionists,” *New York Times*, 7 July 1926, 15; “Russia Is Denounced As Jews’ Oppressor,” *New York Times*, 19 August 1927, 5; “Opposes Russian Colony,” *New York Times*, 10 November 1928, 22; “Soviet Wars on Zionism,” *New York Times*, 15 July 1928, N5; “Borah Asked to Aid Zionists in Russia,” *New York Times*, 3 June 1928, 6; “Zionists Condemn Soviet Persecution,” *New York Times*, 3 July 1929, 48

In early 1934, the Soviet government declared that Biro-Bidjan, a district in the Far East, would become an autonomous Jewish republic. The region, twice the size of Palestine, offered opportunities for agricultural and industrial development according to the *New York Times*. The *Times* reported:

The entire territory, which can take in millions of people, has now a population of only about 50,000, of whom 12,000 are Jews who have settled there recently. There is...room for settling units large enough to form their own national Jewish culture. What is more, the Jews can be settled there without raising the opposition or animosity of a native population having claims of its own to the land.

The Soviets presented the region as a haven for Jews in Europe and the Americas and offered to facilitate and finance Jewish migration and development. While some Jews supported the Soviet plan, others opposed it, noting that eastern Siberia was isolated from European civilization “with which Jews have been connected for thousands of years,” that the land demanded the “toughest kind of pioneering,” and that Jewish settlers would face a threat from the Japanese in case of another Russo-Japanese war. Zionist leaders in Western Europe and the United States vehemently opposed the Soviet project on the grounds that it would take resources from the building of the national home in Palestine. In light of the growing Nazi threat and immigration restriction throughout the western world, some Zionists opposed the facile rejection of this opportunity to alleviate Jewish suffering. Importantly, although the Soviet intent was to decrease support for Zionism, the Soviet colonization project recognized that the Jewish people constituted a nation, which aided the Zionist cause.

On a side note, the Soviets accepted nearly two million Jewish refugees from 1935-1943 (over 75% of the Jewish refugees) while the United States and Great Britain accepted 6.6% and 1.9% respectively.

“The Biro-Bidjan Project in Eastern Siberia Stirs Opposition as a Possible Rival of Palestine,” *The New York Times*, 26 August 1934, XX13; “Soviet Colony is Held No Blow at Zionism,” *New York Times*, 20 December 1934, 20; Hersh, “Inconvenient Truths about ‘Real Existing’ Zionism,” *Monthly Review* Vol 61, No 1 (May 2009)

¹⁴ In the mid 1920s, Zionists predicted 50-60,000 European Jews would immigrate to Palestine annually. See, “Palestine Appeal Opens with \$581,000,” *New York Times*, 18 January 1926, 6

The British reported to the League of Nations that Zionists acquired 100,000 dunams of land in 1921, 45,000 in 1922, 34,440 in 1923, roughly 84,000 in 1924, and 129,366 in 1925. The British equated 100,000 dunams with 25,000 acres, and reported that Zionists were in the process of acquiring 50,000 additional acres of land at the time of the 1924 report to the Permanent Mandates Commission. The British reported that 82% of the Jewish population in Palestine in 1923 lived in urban areas. A year later, the British reported that Tel Aviv had grown from 2,500 people to over 25,000 since 1920. The Jewish population was still over 80% urban, and 80% of the Jewish urban population was concentrated in

While recognizing that Palestine could “never house the entire Jewish people,” some Zionists and supporters of Zionism consistently criticized the British and the Zionist leadership for not effectively promoting unlimited Jewish immigration to the mandate territory. During the early stages of Herbert Samuel’s tenure as the British High Commissioner of Palestine, many Zionists accused him “of leaning backward in his efforts to maintain a perfect neutrality between Jews and Arabs” and consequently violating the Balfour Declaration and League of Nations mandate. The Zionists consistently understood any signs of British neutrality in the conflict between the Palestinian Arabs and the Zionists as a reneging of British pledges to establish a Jewish national home in Palestine. The criticism of the British was especially vehement whenever the Zionists disliked British immigration or land policy. George Cobb, the American Vice Consul in Charge in Palestine in the summer of 1923, commented on rumors and official denials of British and Zionist negotiations with and possible concessions to Emir Abdullah of Trans-Jordan, such as nominal political sovereignty for

Jerusalem and Tel Aviv/Jaffa. To become naturalized, an immigrant had to live in Palestine for two “out of the three years preceding application,” have “good character,” and declare “to settle in Palestine.” As the report suggests, the Permanent Mandates Commission was primarily concerned with how British policy furthered the establishment of the Jewish National Home in Palestine through immigration and land ownership as well as the development of exclusive Jewish political, social, economic, and educational institutions. See, “Report by his Britannic Majesty’s Government on the Palestine Administration, 1923,” (Colonial Office, 1924), <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/cc87d3bf6e0759f3052565e800573851?OpenDocument> (accessed 10 October 2011); “Report by his Britannic Majesty’s Government on the Administration under Mandate of Palestine and Trans-Jordan, 1924),” <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/a87d21f4e57f2d0f052565e8004bae0?OpenDocument> (accessed 10 October 2011); “Report by his Britannic Majesty’s Government to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the Year 1925,” 31 December 1925, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/be6c3644411da3ed052565e7006e9af3?OpenDocument> (accessed 10 October 2011)

Education was an important tool to unite Jewish immigrants and create a common identity, language, and culture while preparing students for agricultural work in the Jewish colonies. As a *Times* article indicated, “particular emphasis [was] put on home geography. Frequent hikes and observation lessons serve to bind the pupils to the land.” Virtually all Jewish students attended exclusively Jewish schools, and a majority of these schools were Zionist in orientation. See, “Palestine Schools Cover All Grades,” *New York Times*, 5 August 1928, 36

Trans-Jordan under Abdullah's rule. The British and Zionists both sought Arab acceptance of the Balfour Declaration and League of Nations mandate and continued to approach Arabs outside of Palestine, such as Hussein, Feisal, and Abdullah, to provide that needed legitimacy. Considering that Abdullah lacked his own legitimacy in Trans-Jordan and even faced a revolution of tribesmen in opposition to his tax policies and unrepresentative government in the fall of 1923, a revolution which required British forces to put it down, the value of his acceptance of Zionism and British policy would be questionable at best. Cobb reported that "moderate" Jewish opinion in Palestine lamented that "the Arab nation now possesses no leader who could point the path to peace" by acquiescing to the Balfour Declaration and Zionism, which would bring benefits and development to the entire Near East. The problem was Palestinian Arab resistance to Zionism, and the Zionists feared that the British would not undertake the necessary measures to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. As Cobb's comment suggests, in the early mandate era, Zionist leaders had already created the idea that "there were no partners for peace," which has allowed Zionists and Israel to pursue expansionist policies while rejecting a just solution to the conflict.¹⁵

¹⁵RDS 867n.00/45 (17 May 1923); RDS 867n.00/47 (23 October 1923). While attempting to present a united Jewish front, American Zionists disagreed on the efficacy of including non-Zionists in decision-making on Palestine and the best methods for pressuring Britain to cater to Zionist interests. When Samuel left office in 1925, he contended, according to the Peel report, that "thoughtful Arabs, particularly those whose economic interests were not in conflict with the economic interests of the Jews, were beginning... to think that Jewish immigration might after all promote the welfare of the Arab as well as Jew."

See, "Palestine's High Commissioner," *New York Times*, 23 May 1925, 14; "Zionists Protest Palestine Policy," *New York Times*, 21 August 1925, 14; "New Zionist Split as Dr. Wise Resigns," *New York Times*, 30 March 1928, 31; "Report by his Britannic Majesty's Government on the Administration under Mandate of Palestine and Trans-Jordan, 1924)," <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/a87d21f4e57f2d0f052565e8004bac-e0?OpenDocument> (accessed 10 October 2011).

For some background on Abdullah, see Avi Shlaim, *Collusion Across the Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist Movement, and the Partition of Palestine* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988)

Many Zionists were quick to criticize British policies. As the allied powers were carving out colonies at the San Remo conference, Sir Louis Bols, the Chief Administrator of Palestine, reported that “it appears impossible to convince a Zionist of British good faith and ordinary honesty. They seek not justice from the military occupant, but that in every question in which a Jew is interested discrimination in his favour shall be shown.” While British policy “has firmly and absolutely convinced the non-Jewish elements of our partiality [on behalf of the Zionists],” Bols continued, “the Zionist Commission accuse my officers and me of anti-Zionism.”¹⁶ At the Zionist Congress meeting in Vienna in 1925, a rabbi from South Africa proclaimed that “the British government treats the Balfour Declaration as a scrap of paper” and demanded that the Zionists inform the world that the British were failing to fulfill the terms of the mandate.¹⁷ Recognizing that Zionism meant an “independent state” with a “Jewish government” and arguing that Palestine was not a “panacea” to the Jewish problem, Rabbi Nathan Krass warned a few months before the congress in Vienna that “the Balfour Declaration postponed for a long time, if it did not destroy, the political implications of Zionism” because Palestine was a British colony and could not become an independent Jewish state “as long as British suzerainty prevails.” At the twenty-ninth annual convention of the Zionist Organization of America in Buffalo in the summer of 1926, Louis Lipsky, the chairman of the ZOA,

¹⁶ See, Jeffries, *Palestine Deception*, 52, 55

¹⁷ “Zionists Attack British Methods,” *New York Times*, 22 August 1925, 4; “Predict 2,000,000 in Palestine Soon,” *New York Times*, 24 August 1925, 4; “Zionists Get Motion to Reform Agency,” *New York Times*, 31 July 1929, 4

The U.S. diplomats in Palestine reported to the State Department that the Zionists were concerned that the British were reneging on their commitment to the Balfour Declaration and the terms of the mandate. Vice Consul George Cobb reported in May 1923 that the British were moving toward the policy that “the Zionists “will in the future have such influence as the principal religious minority in Palestine might reasonably expect,” a position which the Zionists vehemently opposed. The Zionists iterated that the British commitment to Zionism trumped any ambiguous and vague commitments made to the Arabs during the war and warned that if the British abandoned Zionism, then the French or the Turks would control the Near East and much of it would “go back to the desert and the jungle.” See, for example, RDS 867n.00/44 (10 May 1923)

criticized the British administration in Palestine for failing to cooperate fully with the Zionists to establish a Jewish national home. Rabbi Wise criticized the British for not adequately fulfilling the pledge of the Balfour Declaration to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine at a Zionist conference on Palestine in Cleveland in late October 1927 on the eve of the tenth anniversary of the Balfour Declaration. While complimenting Britain for facilitating Jewish immigration to Palestine, Wise lamented that the British had not fulfilled the terms of the mandate, which determined that the Jewish people should control the land and resources of Palestine as a collective entity and have exclusive claim to any concessions granted in Palestine.¹⁸

Six months later, Wise resigned from his leadership position in the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA). Echoing the Brandeis faction's split from Weizmann in 1921, which resulted in Brandeis' removal from his position as head of the ZOA, Wise strongly criticized Weizmann's quiet diplomacy with the British and gradualist approach to the "upbuilding" of Palestine, which he characterized as a "surrender" of Jewish rights in Palestine, and instead favored strong pressure to force the British to more directly and intensively support the Zionist project in Palestine. Wise vehemently opposed inclusion of non-Zionists because he doubted their commitment to the independence of Palestine. When Weizmann and the non-Zionists reach an accord in the final months of 1928 to establish a Jewish Agency responsible "for all types of rebuilding work, such as colonization, immigration, sanitation, irrigation, agriculture and buying of land," Wise

¹⁸ "New Zionist Split as Dr. Wise Resigns," *New York Times*, 30 March 1928, 31; "Dr. Wise Assails Zionist Leaders," *New York Times*, 2 April 1928, 15; "Thinks Palestine Fails as Panacea," *New York Times*, 6 April 1925, 22; "Zionists to Meet Today," *New York Times*, 28 June 1925, E7; "Zionist Convention Opens in Buffalo," *New York Times*, 28 June 1926, 7; "Zionist Resolution Criticizes Britain," *New York Times*, 31 October 1927, 8.

predicted “the death of the Zionist organization.” Interestingly, Wise condemned the “secret diplomacy” that led to the agreement and made the ahistorical claim that “the Balfour Declaration and the mandate for Palestine were openly obtained through public opinion and should not be endangered through secret deliberation.” Jacob de Haas, a former high-ranking member of the ZOA, stated that Zionism was “founded for the political purpose of establishing a political Jewish home in Palestine.” Haas opposed the policies of the World Zionist leadership, especially the efforts to incorporate non-Zionists into the Jewish Agency, for ostensibly renouncing the political aims of Zionism. Ultimately, Wise, Hass, Julian Mack, and other prominent activists in the American Zionist movement asserted that the Zionists should have the control of developing Palestine for a Jewish state without any hindrances from non-Zionists, the British, or the League of Nations. Resistance from the Arab population was not worth considering or mentioning.¹⁹

Representing the viewpoint of the world Zionist leadership, Louis Lipski, while mildly criticizing the British policy himself, responded to the criticism by maintaining

¹⁹ “New Zionist Split as Dr. Wise Resigns,” *New York Times*, 30 March 1928, 31; “Dr. Wise Assails Zionist Leaders,” *New York Times*, 2 April 1928, 15. Wise’s criticism and resignation led to a challenge against the ZOA leadership and ultimately Weizmann’s policies. Weizmann defended his gradualist approach as the only feasible method to implement Zionism and develop Palestine. Louis Lipsky, the chairman of the ZOA simply accused his critics of undermining Zionism and the ability of organizations in the U.S. to raise funds for the Zionist project. Lipsky ultimately resigned on the eve of the ZOA meeting in the summer of 1928, but his leadership was confirmed at the convention as Zionists called for unity within the American Zionist ranks as a precondition for establishing the Jewish national home in Palestine. Criticism of Weizmann and Lipsky continued apace, however, as more radical Zionists called for immediate revisions in British tax, immigration, education, security, and land policies in Palestine. See, “Demand Removal of Zionist Heads,” *New York Times*, 30 April 1928, 21; “Defends Zionist Policy,” *New York Times*, 4 May 1928, 21; “Zionist Leaders Upheld at Meeting,” *New York Times*, 21 May 1928, 22; “Lipsky Withdraws as Zionist Leader,” *New York Times*, 26 June 1928, 52; “Thousand Zionists Gather for Session,” *New York Times*, 1 July 1928, 27; “Lipsky Again Wins at Zionist Meeting,” *New York Times*, 3 July 1928, 22; “Cheer Lipsky Plea for Zionist Unity,” *New York Times*, 10 September 1928, 33; “Call for Changes in Zionist Policies,” *New York Times*, 15 October 1928, 29; “Seeks a Shake-up of Zionist Group,” *New York Times*, 3 December 1928, 10; “Dr. Wise to Press His Zionist Fight,” *New York Times*, 24 December 1928, 5; “Dr. Wise, Back, Decries Zionist Action Abroad,” *New York Times*, 4 January 1929, 52; “Zionists Here Back New Jewish Agency,” *New York Times*, 7 January 1929, 20; “Wise ‘Disillusioned,’ Says Zionism is Dead,” *New York Times*, 7 January 1929, 20

that true Zionists recognized that “the task of upbuilding Palestine is not specifically and exclusively the task of the Zionist Organization.” Lipsky reassured Wise and others dubious of non-Zionist participation in the Jewish Agency that the non-Zionists accepted the terms of the mandate, collective Jewish ownership of the land, and the “idea that Palestine is to be built up through Jewish labor,” which meant the exclusion of the indigenous population from the developing economy. Essentially, Zionists recognized the need for American Jewish financial support for the Zionist project and were willing to compromise with non-Zionists who were dubious of the political goals of Zionism, but committed to aiding Jewish settlement in Palestine.²⁰

The World Zionist Organization leadership and the British maintained that present political, economic, and social conditions in Palestine made necessary a gradualist immigration policy,²¹ but some, such as Israel Zangwill, suggested that British policy

²⁰ “Zionists Here Back New Jewish Agency,” *New York Times*, 7 January 1929, 20; “Report by his Britannic Majesty’s Government to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the Year 1925,” 31 December 1925, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/be6c3644411da3ed052565e7006e9af3?OpenDocument> (accessed 10 October 2011)

²¹ In their report to the Permanent Mandates Commission in 1923, the British maintained that the administration in Palestine worked with the Zionists to develop immigration policy, but that economic conditions dictated that sometimes the British would limit immigration. The British reiterated annually that the administration regulated immigration “so as to ensure that it shall not exceed the capacity of the country to absorb the new arrivals” and that Zionists should focus on consolidating their gains and developing Palestine before pressing for unrestricted immigration. See, “Report by his Britannic Majesty’s Government on the Palestine Administration, 1923,” (Colonial Office, 1924), <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/cc87d3bf6e0759f3052565e800573851?OpenDocument> (accessed 10 October 2011); “Report by his Britannic Majesty’s Government on the Administration under Mandate of Palestine and Trans-Jordan, 1924,” <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/a87d21f4e57f2d0f052565e8004bae0?OpenDocument> (accessed 10 October 2011); “Report by his Britannic Majesty’s Government to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the Year 1926,” 31 December 1926, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/f7f634d2cacb2c76052565e7006b9db9?OpenDocument> (accessed 10 October 2011); “Report by his Britannic Majesty’s Government to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the Year 1927,” 31 December 1927, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/d0523c86855faa6e052565e700693905?OpenDocument> (accessed 10 October 2011); “Weizmann Urges All-Jewish Agency,” *New York Times*, 29 July 1929, 7.

benefitted the Arabs more than the Zionists. Zangwill bitterly complained that Zionists ought to formulate immigration policy in Palestine, but instead the British intended to control Palestine to protect the Suez Canal and were allowing Jewish funds “for the development of the land so that the Arabs may have it.” Countering the criticism of Israel Zangwill that Palestine was an unacceptable Jewish home because the land could not accommodate the world’s Jews and the presence of “another civilized, or semi-civilized people” would prevent the full development of Jewish civilization and an exclusive Jewish citizenry in the Jewish national home, Judge Julian Mack argued that the Jewish people must take advantage of the British mandate, which the *New York Times* contended provided “Jewry the right to establish a homeland in Palestine,” to save oppressed Jews from European anti-Semitism because immigration restriction limited other options. Carefully avoiding discussing Zionist intentions in Palestine and Palestinian opposition, Mack asserted that

The Arabs and Jews are not naturally antagonistic. All through history, they got along, not only well, but exceedingly well. There has been no conflict. I will not say there is not some conflict today, but I do say that conflict is highly exaggerated. It is exaggerated by Zangwill because of his intents and desire. It is exaggerated by other peoples because they have definite purpose in exaggerating conditions there. And it is exaggerated by Arab leaders for the effect it will have on their following.²²

Not only did European Jewish immigrants have the “right” to colonize Palestine because of Biblical history and Western anti-Semitism, but, according to the logic of altruistic

²² “Zionist Congress Getting Together,” *New York Times*, 12 August 1923, 26; “83,794 Jews in Palestine,” *New York Times*, 13 January 1923, 15; “Notes Prosperity in the Holy Land,” *New York Times*, 1 January 1923, 10; “Judge Mack Gives Views on Zionism,” *New York Times*, 29 October 1923, 10; “Zangwill Berates Jewish Congress,” *New York Times*, 4 November 1923, S6; “Thinks Palestine Fails as Panacea,” *New York Times*, 6 April 1925, 22; “Zionists Protest Palestine Policy,” *New York Times*, 21 August 1925, 14; “Weizmann Defends Zionist Policies,” *New York Times*, 24 August 1925, 4; “Zionist Denounces Hungarians’ Stand,” *New York Times*, 25 August 1925, 2; “Zionist Resolution Criticizes Britain,” *New York Times*, 31 October 1927, 8.

imperialism, Jewish settlement benefitted the Arab population just as Western settlement of the Americans benefitted the indigenous population.

Despite the debates on the efficacy of current British policy, Zionists continued to depict Zionism as similar to the European development of North America. Bernard Rosenblatt was an exemplary proponent of the Jewish pioneer theme. Speaking about the establishment of a Jewish colony near Nazareth, Rosenblatt maintained that Jewish colonists were developing “waste lands...that had been devastated by the war and stricken by the neglect of eighteen centuries” and founding settlements that paralleled Jamestown and Plymouth. Echoing the pioneering and progress themes, Oscar Straus observed that in the Jewish settlements “modern scientific methods” were replacing the “archaic methods” of the Arabs, which were the same as those used 2,000 years ago.²³ Speaking in New York to raise funds for land purchases in Palestine for the Jewish nation, Weizmann, the leader of the international Zionist movement, underscored the importance of developing Jewish economic, educational, social, and political institutions in Palestine so that the Jewish home could accommodate a larger number of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe and the settlers could “upbuild” the supposed wasteland that was the Holy Land. Attempting to establish links between American history and the Zionist project, Weizmann compared Jewish immigrants in Palestine to American pioneers and argued that the Zionists were developing the land and resources in Palestine just as European and American settlers did in North America.²⁴

²³ “Zionists Attack Zangwill’s Views,” *New York Times*, 3 November 1923, 8; “Hadassah Seeking 5,000 New Members,” *New York Times*, 11 November 1924, 11; “Palestine Gaining, Says Oscar Straus,” *New York Times*, 1 May 1924, 11.

²⁴ “Ovation by Zionists to Dr. Weizmann,” *New York Times*, 17 February 1925, 14; Chaim Weizmann, *American Addresses* (New York: Palestine Foundation Fund, 1923)

The Peel Commission reported that despite the advances in Palestine due to British administration and Jewish colonization, “the Arabs were still living in the atmosphere of the past, still separated, almost, it

While Weizmann and other Zionist leaders often made ambiguous public pronouncements about the goals of Zionism and promised that the Zionist “upbuilding” of Palestine would not infringe “a hairbreadth on legitimate Arab interests” because the Arab “claim to Palestine is just as good as [the Zionists’],” Zionists continued to develop plans for the expulsion of the Arab population in Palestine. The organizer of the Jewish Legion Vladimir Jabotinsky, whom Weizmann and other Zionist leaders sometimes characterized as “extremist,” articulated at the 1925 Zionist Congress in Vienna that the Zionist project was based on creating a Jewish majority in Palestine through the immigration of 40,000 annually. Jabotinsky, the leader of Revisionist Zionism, which represented a right-wing nationalist faction within the Zionist movement, vehemently opposed the British separation of Trans-Jordan and Palestine and adamantly asserted maximalist territorial goals for the Jewish state through immediate large-scale Jewish immigration and the expropriation and expulsion of the Palestinian Arabs.²⁵ Presenting a

might seem, by centuries, from the educated, resourceful, Western-minded section of the Jews now entering the country in increasing numbers.” Peel Commission, 46

²⁵ Weizmann more quietly asserted Zionist aims for territory beyond mandate Palestine and promoted Jewish colonization in Trans-Jordan and Syria. In 1922, the British separated Trans-Jordan from Palestine, specifically determining that the terms of the League of Nations mandate dealing with the establishment of the Jewish National Home did not apply to Trans-Jordan. The British reports to the Permanent Mandates Commission subtly stated that Jewish colonization meant the expulsion of Arab peasants from the land.

Although publicly consenting to Churchill’s 1922 White Paper, Zionists very much opposed the separation of Trans-Jordan from Palestine. Leonard Stein, a close associate of Weizmann, wrote in *Foreign Affairs* in 1926 that Palestine included territory east of the Jordan. Interestingly, Stein criticized Trans-Jordan for its economic and military dependence on Britain and suggested that such dependence illustrated that Trans-Jordan was most likely incapable of self-government, especially considering its supposedly “sparse and backward population.” While implying that his verdict was finalized, Stein allowed that “it would be premature to pronounce it a failure.” The Zionists were very much dependent on British military forces and economic subsidies from abroad, yet Stein failed to make any parallel assessments about the ability of the Zionists to create and maintain an independent state. Stein promoted the Zionist narrative that the British artificially separated Trans-Jordan and Palestine and that the Jewish colonists, if given the opportunity, would develop the “half empty tracts of especially fertile soil” east of the Jordan. Aside from prohibiting Jewish colonization in Trans-Jordan, other British policies, Stein asserted, privileged the Arabs over the Jewish settlers. Yet overall, Stein recognized the important role the British played in facilitating the development of the Jewish national home and presented the common theme that Zionism would benefit the Arabs and that Arabs and Jews could coexist. Claiming that public

challenge to Weizmann's policies and leadership, Jabotinsky demanded that the Zionists have a larger role in determining British policy in Palestine and argued for the creation of an exclusive Jewish garrison in Palestine to defend Zionism because the British "did not understand the necessity for defending Jews against Arabs," which suggests a much different relationship between the settler immigrants and the indigenous population than the Zionist narrative about their civilizing mission maintained. Although characterizing the Jewish garrison as a "self-defense corps," Jabotinsky clearly understood and articulated that Zionism could succeed only through the use of force against predictable

opinion in Palestine was reconciling with Jewish immigration, Stein blamed agitators for any Arab opposition to Zionism (since "the simple-minded folk who compose the bulk of the Arab population take little or no interest in public affairs") and offered that an overwhelming Arab majority in Palestine was no argument against Jewish colonization. Stein argued that the obstructionist policy of Arab leaders "delayed indefinitely the development of self-governing institutions" and that the majority of Arabs benefited from British administration and Zionist colonization. Ignoring the reality of Jewish colonization and Zionist designs for the expulsion of Arabs from the future Jewish state, Stein offered that "the Jews have a powerful motive for cultivating the goodwill and promoting the prosperity, not only of their Arab fellow-countrymen in Palestine, but of the Arab world at large." The Arabs, lacking capital, "enterprise, efficiency, and a capacity for sustained and organized effort," must recognize, Stein continued, that the Jewish immigrants would develop and civilize the land and people in Palestine. After assuring his audience of the benefits of Zionism for the development of civilization in the Near East, Stein returned to a discussion of Trans-Jordan and Zionist expansion and argued that Jewish settlers would "not only flow into Trans-Jordan, but will make themselves felt further afield." He even predicted that Israel would struggle for "survival as an isolated oasis." Overall, Stein framed the Zionist project to a select American audience as a civilizing mission that would benefit the economic and strategic interests of the West, but also suggested that the Zionists were intent on expansion.

See, "Zionists in London Plan Syrian Work," *New York Times*, 25 July 1926, 18; Leonard Stein, "The Jews in Palestine," *Foreign Affairs* Vol 4, No 3 (April 1926), 415-432; "Report on Palestine Administration, 1922," 31 December 1922, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/a682cabf739febaa052565e8006d907c?OpenDocument> (accessed 10 October 2011); "Report by his Britannic Majesty's Government on the Administration under Mandate of Palestine and Trans-Jordan, 1924)," <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/a87d21f4e57f2d0f052565e8004bac0?OpenDocument> (accessed 10 October 2011)

For more on Jabotinsky and Zionist Revisionism, see Lenni Brenner, *The Iron Wall: Zionist Revisionism from Jabotinsky to Shamir* (London: Zed Books, 1984). For an article-length discussion on Jabotinsky and Fascism, see Brenner, "Zionist-Revisionism: The Years of Fascism and Terror," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 13, No 1 (Autumn 1983), 66-92.

and rational Palestinian Arab opposition and that the Zionists could not necessarily depend on the British to exert such force.²⁶

Given the British and Zionist aims for Palestine and French designs in Syria, the broader Arab world continued to oppose Zionism and press for an independent and autonomous Arab federation more in accordance with the British wartime pledges, the Allied war aims, the League of Nations Charter, and Wilsonian principles. In reporting British efforts to gain Hussein's support for Zionism and an autonomous Palestine, the *New York Times* presented an interesting interpretation of the British agreement with the Arabs during the war and British policy in the Near East in the postwar period. The *New York Times* maintained that the Hussein-McMahon correspondence committed the British to acknowledging Hussein as the titular head of a "Confederation of Arab States" and that the British "on securing her Asiatic mandates, created the States of Irak and

²⁶ "Zionists Attack British Methods," *New York Times*, 22 August 1925, 4; "Says Zionism Declines," *New York Times*, 22 November 1923, 3; "Request Jewish Defense Force," *New York Times*, 22 August 1925, 4.

In some instances, international Zionist leaders spoke to American audiences about creating a Jewish state in Palestine. Dr. Nahum Sokolow, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the World Zionist Organization, stated at a reception in New York near the end of 1925 that Palestine was "the sole-solution of the age-long Jewish problem" and once Palestine was a "national unit...accepted into the League of Nations," the Zionists will have solved the problem of pogroms and anti-Semitism. See "Views Palestine as Jews' Panacea," *New York Times*, 14 December 1925, 8.

Sometimes the *New York Times* itself published articles that acknowledged the Balfour Declaration meant a Jewish state. See, "Balfour to Attend Zionist Congress," *New York Times*, 18 June 1925, 10; "Weizmann Defends Zionist Policies," *New York Times*, 24 August 1925, 4; "Faith in Weizmann Voted by Zionists," *New York Times*, 27 August 1925, 7.

At the 1925 Zionist Congress, Jabotinsky's extreme nationalist faction and a leftist socialist group voiced opposition to Weizmann's leadership. Weizmann symbolically offered to resign his position, but the American and British Jewish populations that financed Zionism wholly supported Weizmann, forcing his opponents to back down. See, "Zionist Executive Offers Resignation," *New York Times*, 28 August 1925, 7; "Zionist Deadlock Suspends Meetings," *New York Times*, 29 August 1925, 4; "Dr. Weizmann Urged to Keep Zionist Post," *New York Times*, 31 August 1925, 10; "Weizmann to Name Zionist Executive," *New York Times*, 1 September 1925, 9.

For an article illustrating that the Jewish colonization of Palestine was dependent on financial contributions from Europe and especially the United States, see "To Put \$5,000,000 into Palestine," *New York Times*, 27 September 1925, E16.

Zionist leaders often asserted that Arab opposition resulted from the impolitic statements of extremists such as Jabotinsky and not from the Zionist movement itself. See, "Zionist Convention Opens in Buffalo," *New York Times*, 28 June 1926, 7

Transjordan, but was prevented from proceeding further, because the Arabs of Palestine declined to endorse the Balfour Declaration for a Jewish home-land, or to unite with the Jews of Palestine in the formation of an autonomous State.” The British and the *Times* revised the fundamental agreement in the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, ignored the wishes of the Arab population as articulated in the published King-Crane commission report, and placed the onus of rejectionism on the Arabs, foreshadowing Zionist arguments justifying territorial expansion after the Palestinians rejected partition, and ignored the fact that the Arab population understood Zionism and the Balfour Declaration as illegitimate colonialism and argued that the British rescinded on their commitment to the Arabs. The Arabs interpreted the Hussein-McMahon correspondence as the British recognition of an independent Arab federation encompassing Syria, Mesopotamia, and Palestine as compensation for the Arab contribution during the war. The Arabs rejected the Balfour Declaration, which came after the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, because it meant acceptance of what they understood as a settler colonial project intent on dispossessing the Palestinian Arabs. Aside from revising the terms of the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, the British and the *Times* blamed the Arabs for rejecting the Balfour Declaration. Viewing the Arabs through an Orientalist lens, the *Times* correspondent questioned the ability of the Arabs to govern themselves and echoed unfounded assertions that many Arab Christians would choose to remain under British rule rather than accept Muslim Arab authority. Reporting on his own tour of the Near East, Oscar Straus, a former U.S. diplomatic official stationed in the Ottoman Empire, observed that the Arabs were incapable of self-government and that “Palestine under the British mandate had made more progress economically, industrially and governmentally

in five years than in the preceding 500 years under Turkish and Arab rule.” Straus further asserted that the British government in Palestine “accords all that is best and practical for Jews and Christians alike,” notably omitting the majority of the Palestinian population.²⁷

An article published in August 1927 on the eve of the fifteenth World Zionist Congress in Basle, Switzerland, characterized Zionism as an idealistic movement dedicated to “the establishment of [the Jewish] people on land that once belonged to them.” Ignoring British commitments to the Arabs made during the war and not questioning the legitimacy of British pledges regarding an inhabited territory of the Ottoman Empire, the *New York Times* presented the Balfour Declaration as a legitimate and noble British pledge to the Jewish people living throughout the world. According to this narrative, the French and Italians consented to the Balfour Declaration at the Peace Conference, presumably providing legitimacy to the imperial project, and later the League of Nations mandated that Great Britain administer Palestine with the goal of establishing a self-governing Jewish home. By emphasizing international sanction of this idealistic endeavor, the narrative neglected to consider interpretations that the Balfour Declaration and Zionism were manifestations of European imperialism and colonialism in the Near East. Although highlighting the supposed Zionist progress in the “upbuilding” of Palestine thanks in large part to American capital, the *Times* acknowledged severe problems regarding unemployment and economic hardship, but

²⁷ “Amman Conference Fails in Unity Aim,” *New York Times*, 17 February 1924, E2. Oscar Straus echoed the British contention that Palestine and Syria were not included in any British agreement with Hussein and asserted that the U.S. government supported the Balfour Declaration. Additionally Straus argued that the British had established good government and fostered development in Palestine, which he implied the Arabs were incapable of doing on their own. See, “Palestine Gaining, Says Oscar Straus,” *New York Times*, 1 May 1924, 11. For a different perspective on the wartime agreements, see the discussion below on Consul General Paul Knabenshue’s reports to the State Department after the Arab rebellion in 1929.

concluded with an optimistic assessment of the Zionist restoration of their ancient homeland.²⁸

Whenever criticism of Zionism entered the conversation during the early mandate period, leading Zionists and their supporters immediately responded by questioning the legitimacy and credibility of opinions undermining the Zionist project. In late 1926, Dr. Henry S. Pritchett, a trustee for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, reported after a visit to Palestine and discussions with Arab and Jewish leaders that the Jewish colonization of Palestine would cause “bitterness and unhappiness to both Jew and Arab” and that the “well-meaning” supporters of Zionism did not understand “the interests of the existing native population.” Pritchett warned that settling large numbers of European Jewish colonists in Palestine would result in the displacement of the indigenous population and increase misguided and dangerous Jewish exceptionalism, “the illusion” that the Jews were “a chosen people” enjoying the “favor of the Almighty beyond all other peoples.” If the Zionists expelled the Arabs, he predicted, the resultant exclusivist and exceptionalist Jewish state “would develop an aggressive, egotistic national character without capacity for cooperation with the rest of the world.” Drawing parallels between Egyptian and Arab nationalist movements, Pritchett reminded Americans that the Arabs fought with the Allies during World War I and believed that their contribution combined with Allied war aims and Wilsonian principles meant independence and self-government instead of occupation by a foreign power committed to the Jewish colonization of Palestine. While sympathizing with the sentiment

²⁸ “Zionist Congress to Discuss Loan,” *New York Times*, 21 August 1927, X14. The U.S. Consular Office also reported that Jewish unemployment was a problem. In late 1927, 5,000-6,000 Jewish immigrants were receiving financial assistance from funds received from the United States. See, RDS 867n.00/63 (29 December 1927)

underlying Zionism, Pritchett concluded that the Zionist project was an impractical, “unfortunate and visionary effort” destined to create conflict in the Near East.²⁹

In response, Weizmann dismissed Pritchett’s report as “the usual stock-in-trade of anti-Zionist agitators” and reiterated the common refrain that Arab fears of dispossession were groundless and irrational because the Zionists were protecting Arab rights and bringing educational, health, and economic benefits to the indigenous population. While Pritchett warned that Palestine could not economically support a large immigrant population or improve upon the “backward” methods of Arab cultivation in Palestine given the environmental conditions, Weizmann rejoined that modern scientific methods would restore Palestine to “a land flowing with milk and honey” and raise the living standards of the indigenous population.³⁰ Weizmann also endorsed the common Zionist theme that Zionist modernization, industrialization, and rational exploitation of resources would allow for a much larger population in Palestine. Ignoring Arab opposition to British and Zionist policies, Weizmann proposed that Zionism was “one of the most potent stabilizing forces for the peace of” Palestine. Questioning Pritchett’s motivation in reporting “superficial and biased observations,” Weizmann appealed to Americans to recognize both the historical rightness of the Zionist effort and that the Zionists were benefiting Palestine and the Palestinians.³¹

²⁹ “Pritchett Reports Zionism Will Fail,” *New York Times*, 29 November 1926, 1; “Pritchett Defends Report,” *New York Times*, 5 December 1926, E1; “The Zionist Enterprise,” *New York Times*, 30 November 1926, 28

³⁰ Eighteen months later, a *Times* article reinforced the Zionist narrative by observing that Arabs were “tilling the soil with wooden harrows such as were used in Bible times, while, near by, the Zionist pioneers make use of the latest products of European and American plow manufacturers.” The overall tone was sympathetic to the “idealism” of the Zionist settlers and laudatory of Zionist colonization efforts, even when recognizing that Zionism was dependent on contributions from European and American supporters. “Zionist Colony Work Expands in Palestine,” *New York Times*, 29 April 1928, XX11

³¹ “Zionist Heads Deny Pritchett Charges,” 30 November 1926, 11

Rabbi Stephen Wise characterized the Pritchett report as the ranting “that can be heard from the lips of any Arab politician, absentee landlord or Mohammedan renegade,” suggesting that Americans should quickly dismiss Pritchett’s study of the realities of Zionism. Echoing Weizmann, Wise claimed that an unbiased observer would have recognized that the Zionist settlers regarded the interests of the Arabs with “scrupulous care.” Wise absurdly stated that “a referendum today of the Arab population of Palestine would result in a great majority in favor of Jewish settlement in Palestine, because of what Jews have brought to and done for Palestine within a generation, transforming waste places and denuded hillsides into richly flourishing settlements which have brought new standards of life to Arab, Christian and Jew in Palestine.” Samuel Untermyer denigrated Pritchett’s report by alleging that Pritchett’s conclusions differed radically from “scores of trained students who have spent years in intimate contact with Palestine.” Untermyer asserted that Pritchett’s argument that the Zionists aimed to expel the Arabs and establish a Jewish state was delusional and that the Jewish pioneers were “cultivating the confidence and friendship of the Arab population.” Congressman Emmanuel Celler’s contribution to the disparagement of Pritchett’s report was to characterize the scholar’s claims as “childish” since the League of Nations sanctioned Zionism and the Balfour Declaration. Bernard Rosenblatt simply maintained that Pritchett was “woefully ignorant” and that Palestine could accommodate many Jewish immigrants without negatively affecting “a single Arab.” Significantly, Weizmann, Wise, and other Zionists separated Arabs and Christians, implying that all Arabs were Muslims when in fact most of the Christian population in Palestine was Arab as well. Since the West characterized the British conquest of Palestine as a Christian crusade against the Muslim Turks and

understood the Holy Land as belonging to Western Christians and Jews, it was necessary, as Lawrence Davidson argues, to equate all Arabs with Islam in order to “perceptually depopulate” Palestine and appropriate the Holy Land for the West.³²

In a speech to Rabbi Stephen Wise’s congregation at Carnegie Hall on 5 December 1926, Weizmann further excoriated Pritchett’s report as representing the interests of forces in Moscow, Rome, and New York that preyed “on the fears of a backward people” in order “to keep the Near East in a state of tutelage.” Again adamantly insisting that Jewish colonists would benefit the Arabs and not displace them, Weizmann upheld the common Zionist refrain that “the agreement to give the homeless and persecuted Jewish people an opportunity to rebuild a homeland... was approved by every signatory to the League of Nations and by the United States,” representing “the civilized people of the world.” Weizmann’s contention, however, ignored the imperialist nature of the Balfour Declaration, League of Nations mandate system, and Zionism and the widespread global opposition of colonized peoples to the postwar reassertion of colonialism as a violation of Wilsonian principles and the publicized Allied war aims. Importantly, while reiterating that Zionists protected the rights of the indigenous population in Palestine, Weizmann consistently referred to the Palestinians as Arabs, subtly dismissing their historical rights to their homeland and suggesting that as Arabs, they already had states in Mesopotamia, Arabia, and Trans-Jordan. Dismissing Arab nationalism and opposition to European colonialism in the Near East, Weizmann presented the Zionist project as an economic and civilizing mission to bring “the methods

³² “Zionist Heads Deny Pritchett Charges,” 30 November 1926, 11; “Zionism Is Defended at Women’s Meeting,” *New York Times*, 8 December 1926, 9; “Denies Arab Opposition,” *New York Times*, 13 December 1926, 40; Lawrence Davidson, *America’s Palestine: Popular and Official Perceptions from Balfour to Statehood* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001).

of the progressive West into a land [stretching from the Nile to the Euphrates] languishing in ignorance and neglect.” Introducing Weizmann, Wise also took the opportunity to criticize Pritchett’s report. Wise purported that British and American support provided moral justification and legitimacy for the Zionist program, ignoring that the support of two imperial powers for a European settler colony in the Near East was not a convincing argument from the perspective of the victims of colonialism. Wise concluded his introduction with a statement striking for its idealistic characterization of Zionist aims and realities in Palestine:

As a people who love peace, we have made every sacrifice in the interest of peace and understanding in Palestine, and we have achieved it. We have peace with the Arabs, save among the renegade Mohammedans, and in the group of absentee landlords in Egypt and Syria, whose bitterness against us arises, not out of our oppression of the Arabs, which they know does not exist, but because, under God, we are doing a mighty thing. They know we are liberating the serfs of Palestine. We are helping to free the Arabs, to lift them to new levels of life.

Both the language and sentiment are perhaps consciously reminiscent of how European and white American settlers justified the expropriation, removal, and even genocide of indigenous populations as a civilizing and liberating mission and characterized indigenous resistance, which was considered irrational by definition, as simply the result of the instigation of outside agitators or aggrieved elites.³³

After spending a few months in the Near East, Baptist minister Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick praised the accomplishments of the Zionists in Palestine, but warned that “extreme nationalism” and economic dependence on American funding were undermining the Zionist project. Fosdick’s primary concern was that extreme factions within the Zionist movement intentionally antagonized and threatened the Arab population with aggressive manifestations of Jewish nationalism. Predictably, Stephen

³³ “Weizmann Denies Jew-Arab Hostility,” *New York Times*, 6 December 1926, 20

Wise immediately criticized Fosdick's assessment of Zionism as "unjustified." Wise maintained that the "Zionist extremists" represented an insignificant minority within the larger Zionist movement and that the majority of Jewish colonizers were restoring Palestine by "draining the swamps, planting trees, establishing farm settlements, building suburbs and industries and seeking to establish a home for themselves and a homeland for their people." While presenting the "upbuilding" of Palestine as a moderate and benign project beneficial to the Arab population, the reality was that the Zionist movement sought to create a Jewish state in Palestine once the Jewish population comprised primarily of European immigrants numbered a majority and that the Palestinian Arabs understood this fundamental aspect of Zionism as a palpable threat.³⁴

Although publicly asserting that Zionism benefited the Arabs and did not infringe on their civil and religious rights (the only rights of the "non-Jewish communities" enumerated in the Balfour Declaration), Zionist leaders privately planned on removing the Arab population to facilitate the creation of a Jewish state. Even though the Zionist ideas about Arab removal sometimes entered the public discourse, the mainstream Zionist leadership pursued a more discrete diplomacy with British policymakers and Arab

³⁴ "Fosdick Sees Ruin Ahead for Zionism," *New York Times*, 25 May 1927, 8; "Defends Zionism in Reply to Fosdick," *New York Times*, 26 May 1927, 15. In the fall of 1927, John Walter Houck, pastor of the Pilgrim Congregational Church in New York, spoke about his tour of Palestine. While admiring Zionist success in "building a garden spot upon a barren desert," Houck warned the Zionism was an aggressive nationalist movement, not a religious one, and that many Russian Jewish immigrants were devout followers of Marxism. As we saw with the hearings on "Establishing a National Home for the Jews" in the House Foreign Relations Committee discussed in Part I, most Americans, however, failed to equate Zionism with socialism. See, "Criticizes Zionism as Nationalistic," *New York Times*, 26 September 1927, 21

Other examples further illustrate the point that whenever criticism of Zionism was published in the *Times*, Zionists were given ample opportunity for rebuttal. When the British *Daily Express*, which the *New York Times* characterized as "avowedly hostile to British commitments to Zionism in Palestine, emphasized the declining economic and political conditions in Palestine and the dependence of Zionists on funding from the United States in January 1928, Louis Lipsky, president of the Zionist Organization of America, was allotted space to refute the allegations and claim that American Jews were providing substantial funds to the movement and that Jewish colonizers were making progress in developing Palestine. "Zionism Fails Here, Says London Paper," *New York Times*, 28 January 1928, 4

leaders outside of Palestine. Dismissing Palestinian Arab national identity and ties to the land, Zionists consistently claimed that Arabs had multiple homelands and that Palestine was more important to the Jews than to the Arabs. Additionally, if the Palestinians were simply part of a larger Arab world, the Zionists need not negotiate with them. Realizing that negotiations with Arab leaders outside of Palestine were more conducive to achieving Zionist aims, Zionists determined that the Palestinians had no role in negotiations. Certainly, the Zionist ideology denied the existence of a Palestinian people and Palestinian nationalism. Ultimately, Zionist leaders such as Weizmann and David Ben-Gurion believed that the indigenous population in Palestine was simply like “the rocks of Judea, . . . obstacles that had to be cleared on a difficult path” through bribery or force. Ben-Gurion, Jabotinsky, and Weizmann all understood Zionism as an expansionist ideology predicated on the removal of the Arab population to make way for Jewish labor and Jewish ownership of the land. While publicly maintaining that Zionism benefited the Arab population, Zionists from Herzl onward believed that dispossessing the Arabs and denying them employment would force them to leave Palestine. The goal was not to recreate the conditions existing in South Africa where white settlers exploited black laborers, but instead follow the American path where the white population dispossessed and expelled the indigenous population that survived the American holocaust³⁵ to make room for white settlers and white labor. Despite arguments that Zionism was a *mission civilisatrice*, Zionist leaders understood that the creation of a Jewish majority and a Jewish state was based on the forced removal of the indigenous population. In fact, many prominent Zionists favored the removal of Transjordanians, Syrians, and Lebanese from

³⁵ This is David Stannard’s term for the demographic collapse of the Native American population that was a result of European conquest. See, David E. Stannard, *American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New World* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992)

areas that the Zionist considered part of Eretz Israel. Despite this reality and the “facts on the ground” in Palestine, Zionists and their Western supporters continued to argue that Jewish colonization of the Holy Land benefited the “non-Jewish communities.”³⁶

The Arab Narrative and American Perceptions of the Near East

While not as pervasive as the Zionist position, the Arab narrative and propaganda regarding Zionism and the British mandate was periodically published in the *New York Times*. While visiting the United States in January 1925, Prince Habib Lotfallah, a diplomatic representative for Hussein in Italy and Central Europe, suggested that the British ignored certain provisions of their agreement with Hussein, predicted that the Balfour Declaration would “seriously endanger the peace of the Near East,” and asserted

³⁶ Nur Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians: The Concept of “Transfer” in Zionist Political Thought, 1882-1948* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992), 14-48; Chaim Simons, *A Historical Survey of Proposals to Transfer Arabs from Palestine, 1895-1947* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Publishing, 1988) ; Erskine Childers, “The Wordless Wish: From Citizens to Refugees,” in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 165-202. This is a fundamental theme: Zionists publicly emphasized the benefits that Jewish colonization would bestow on the Arab population, while privately acknowledging that Zionism was premised on the expropriation and expulsion of the indigenous population.

Even today, Israel rejects negotiations with democratically elected Palestinian leaders, such as members of Hamas, and prefers to deal with Palestinian collaborators or non-Palestinian parties. Zionists recognized that an Arab population inhabited Palestine, but simply denied that the Palestinians had any national identity or right to the land. From the early days of Zionism, Zionists argued that Palestine “was a land without a people for a people without a land.” This theme has been pervasive throughout the Israel-Palestine conflict. Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol stated in 1969, “what are Palestinians? When I came here—there were 250,000 non-Jews, mainly Arabs and Bedouins. It was desert—more than underdeveloped. Nothing.” In 1969, Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir argued that “there was no such thing as Palestinians....It was not as though there was a Palestinian people and we came and threw them out and took their country away from them. They did not exist.” More recently, historian and Republican candidate for the 2012 nomination for president of the United States, called Palestinians an “invented” people. In an interview, Gingrich stated: “Remember, there was no Palestine as a state. It was part of the Ottoman Empire. And I think that we’ve had an invented Palestinian people, who are in fact Arabs and were historically part of the Arab community. And they had the chance to go many places.” See, Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens, eds., *Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question* (London and New York: Verso, 1988), 241; Barbara McKean Parmenter, *Giving Voice to Stones: Place and Identity in Palestinian Literature* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), 21; “A Man of the Past,” *New York Times* (online), 15 December 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/16/opinion/a-man-of-the-past.html>

that only a minority of the world's Jewish population supported Zionism. Maintaining that the Arab ambition was the establishment of an independent United States of Arabia (including the Arabian peninsula, Mesopotamia, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine), Lotfallah appealed to American principles and history, emphasized that Arabs aspired to adopt American values (such as the open door) and a constitutional government to govern a democratic, pluralistic and decentralized society, and challenged the imperialistic features of the British and French mandates in the Near East. Lotfallah criticized the separatist and exclusionist Balfour Declaration and called for "an Arabia for the Arabians, whether Jew, Christian or Mohammedan." Reiterating the Arab position, Lotfallah asserted that the British reneged on the stipulations of the Hussein-McMahon agreement and that both Zionism and Great Power political maneuverings leading to the divvying of former Ottoman lands at the peace conferences violated Wilson's principle of self-determination. Lotfallah emphasized the contributions of Arabs to western civilization to challenge the French, British, and Zionist claims that the mandatory system was necessary to bring civilization to the Near East and maintained that the Arabian people would successfully modernize and develop their resources once the European powers terminated their colonial projects. A united Arabia, Lotfallah concluded, would alleviate the threat of a holy war "between the religious fanatics in the East and the West" and contribute to the "peace and prosperity of Europe" and the "development of Western culture."³⁷

Negative perceptions of Arabs and Islam, however, meant that Americans need not seriously consider the Arab position. The *New York Times* commentary on Ibn

³⁷ "Prince Here, Scores Homeland for Jews," *New York Times*, 17 January 1925, 8; "Arab Prince Wants Arab Buffer State," *New York Times*, 1 February 1925, XX4. Acknowledging Lotfallah's expertise in Near East politics in the February article, the *Times* illustrated its orientalist bias by stating that Lotfallah was "so much of a cosmopolite that he would not be taken for an Arab. Here he might be identified as a New York businessman."

Saud's campaign to unify the Arabian peninsula under his rule cogently illustrates the anti-Arab and anti-Islam bias prevalent in American thought. In case the article's title, "Arabia Aflame for Holy War," was too subtle, P.W. Wilson began his report with the prejudicial comment that "Arabia-that furnace of fanaticism in which, for a thousand years, Islam has forged her thunderbolts-has been fanned once more into a flame of religious war." Wilson characterized Ibn Saud's campaign as "an explosion wholly in the manner of Mohammed himself" and asserted that the Saudi king "flung his wild Wahabi tribes" against the British in a holy war aimed at establishing an Arab empire from the Mediterranean to Persia. While the forces of Islam were successful in spreading their faith and conquering territory through force of arms in centuries past, Wilson observed that Western military superiority served as a necessary check to supposed Arab expansionist tendencies. The savage, whether Native American or Arab, evokes sentiments of nostalgic romanticism concomitant with the image of barbarous ferocity. Ibn Saud, consequently, was described as "the perfect sheik, [who] spent his youth in the saddle, riding madly over the desert and, with his rifle, achieving fame as a marksman" and as an Islamic fundamentalist and fanatic whose rule was "puritanical" and in opposition to the West and western collaborators such as Hussein, who quietly capitulated to the Wahabis. Ibn Saud's forces, Wilson explained, presented a threat to the British position in the Near East. The Egyptians were adamantly demanding their complete independence from British rule and the Arabs were suspicious of British and Zionist policy in Palestine. Characterizing Ibn Saud's adherence to a fundamentalist faith and reliance on force as anachronisms in the twentieth century, Wilson condemned what he perceived as "the limitation of Islam" and postulated that the British, who had

experience understanding the Oriental mind, would respond to Ibn Saud's reactionary challenge "with a minimum use of force" if possible.³⁸

Reporting on conditions in Palestine on the eve of the departure of Field Marshall Lord Plumer, who served as High Commissioner for a three-year term following the retirement of Sir Herbert Samuel, Joseph Levy, a special correspondent for the *New York Times* praised the British efforts in Palestine and concluded that "few countries under the control of Great Britain, whether under a mandate or as crown colonies, can boast of such rapid development and progress as has been made since 1920." Levy also emphasized the conditions of peace and stability in Palestine, supposedly in marked contrast to Syria and Egypt, and assured Americans that "Palestine has enjoyed absolute freedom from internal disturbances" and there was very little friction between the Jewish and Arab communities because of the just and efficient rule of the British administration. In another article, British officials contended that "the principal factor that has kept our Arabs quiet ... is that they have seen how their co-religionists have been treated in Syria. On the Syrian side villages and towns have been destroyed and fired and the fertile land has been laid waste. They are getting to understand the newly arrived Zionists have ... raised the standard of living [and] this has benefitted the native laborer because he still lives on the same scale as his ancestors have done for centuries." Noting that the Arab population "seemed unable to rid themselves of the belief that [Samuel's] administration must in some obscure manner be leading to an era of Zionist domination," thus dismissing the fears of the Arab population about the true aims of the Zionists, Levy insisted that the appointment of Plumer allayed any Arab concerns. The financial hardships in Palestine during the latter 1920s, according to the *Times* observer, moderated

³⁸ "Arabia Aflame for a Holy War," *New York Times*, 11 March 1928, 129

Zionist demands and illustrated “to the more intelligent and understanding Arabs that their economic prosperity is to a large extent dependent upon the ultimate success of Zionism.” This narrative about conditions in Palestine, however, ignored Arab opposition to British administration and Zionist colonization, disregarded the exclusivist policies of a movement determined to create a Jewish state in a territory with a majority Arab population, and overlooked the serious economic difficulties confronting the Zionist endeavor. Disturbances at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem during Yom Kippur in September 1928 and the major outbreak in Palestine a year later, however, posed a challenge to the dominant narrative about peaceful conditions and progress in the Holy Land.³⁹

U.S. Foreign Policy during the Early Mandate Period

During the early mandate period, the State Department’s priority regarding Palestine was to assert that British policy did not discriminate against American citizens and companies or prejudice U.S. national interests in the Near East, which Allen Dulles, head of the Near Eastern Affairs division of the State Department in the early 1920s,

³⁹ “Palestine Awaits New Commissioner,” *New York Times*, 26 August 1928, 30; Davidson, 64-72. The economy in Palestine fluctuated unpredictably during the 1920s. The British reported that economic conditions in 1926 caused significant Jewish emigration from Palestine. “Report by his Britannic Majesty’s Government to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the Year 1926,” 31 December 1926, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/f7f634d2cacb2c76052565e7006b9db9?OpenDocument> (accessed 10 October 2011).

Through immigration, the Jewish population numbered 147,687 at the end of 1927 and 149,554 at the end of 1928, 19% of the total in Palestine, not including the Bedouins. “Report by his Britannic Majesty’s Government to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the Year 1927,” 31 December 1927, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/d0523c86855faa6e052565e700693905?OpenDocument> (accessed 10 October 2011); “Report by his Britannic Majesty’s Government to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the Year 1928,” 31 December 1928, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/1f42f479cc2b94a1052565e7006500ab?OpenDocument> (accessed 10 October 2011)

characterized as primarily philanthropic and educational (regarding the missionaries) and commercial. The United States Senate rejected the Versailles Treaty and balked at American membership and participation in the League of Nations; consequently, the United States did not officially participate in the San Remo conference or the treaties which dealt with the territories of the former Ottoman Empire. Policymakers in the State Department sought to maintain American capitulatory rights and an open door in Palestine until the British and Americans ratified a treaty governing American rights in the mandate territories.⁴⁰

To protect traditional American interests in the Near East, including U.S. companies' rights to oil resources in British mandatory territories and the open door throughout the region, Dulles argued that the U.S. take a neutral stance on Zionism, primarily on the grounds that support for Zionism could mean entanglement in European affairs and Old World politics. Additionally, Dulles and other officers in the Near East Division saw both British and Zionist economic policies in Palestine as incompatible with American commercial interests since the British were treating its mandated territories as colonies and the Zionists were seeking to establish conditions in the mandated territory that favored Jewish economic development. Already fearing that Britain was treating its mandatory territories as crown colonies and restricting access for American commercial

⁴⁰ *FRUS*, 1923, Vol II, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1923v02>, 218ff; *FRUS*, 1924, Vol II, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1924v02>, 197ff. The treaty was signed on 3 December 1924. *FRUS*, 1924, Vol II, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1924v02>, 201-222; *FRUS*, 1922, Vol II, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1922v02>, 337ff; *FRUS*, 1925, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1925v02>, 214-238; "Report by his Britannic Majesty's Government to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the Year 1925," 31 December 1925, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/be6c3644411da3ed052565e7006e9af3?OpenDocument> (accessed 10 October 2011); Zaha Bustami, "American Foreign Policy and the Question of Palestine, 1856-1939," Ph.D. Diss., Georgetown University, 1989, Chapter 4; Lawrence Davidson, *America's Palestine: Popular and Official Perceptions from Balfour to Israeli Statehood* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), Chapter 3.

interests, the Division of Near Eastern Affairs opposed the Congressional Resolution supporting the “Establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine” as intervention in internal British affairs and counter to American interests in the region. Dulles observed in late May 1922

It is most unfortunate that the [Congress Resolution] has come up at all, and that it has come up before our Mandate Treaty is settled. For it is a species of intervention in the Near Eastern settlement, at a point where we really have no interest at all and where we stir up the very active sensibilities of the Moslem majority, to say nothing of the Catholic Church....Note, however, that the Joint Resolution more or less commits us not only to the protection of the Holy Places but to that of the National Home itself—if a turn of the whirligig should turn the British out.⁴¹

American Zionists and their supporters have argued that the State Department was hostile to Zionism during the mandatory period and that State Department policymakers were anti-Zionist and even anti-Semitic. Peter Grose, for a typical example of the pro-Zionist view, concluded that U.S. “policy toward Palestine was hung up on a contradiction”: the president and Congress would issue statements supporting Zionism, while the State Department implemented a “more guarded” policy regarding “Jewish aspirations.” Grose’s assumption was that the U.S. government ought to have strongly supported American Jewish interests in Palestine. Indeed, Grose argued that American Jewish economic interests in “upbuilding” Palestine logically fell under U.S. economic interests in the Near East. Referring to the 7,644 Jewish settlers in Palestine in 1939 who were American citizens and the enormous financial contributions of American Jews to the Jewish colonization project, Grose maintains that “Palestine was far and away the largest American interest in the entire Middle East during the interwar decades” and that “U.S. citizens residing in Palestine...were entitled to the protection of the flag,” if not for State

⁴¹ Dulles quote from RDS 867n.01/199 as cited in Bustami, “American Foreign Policy,” 297-298; Bustami, “American Foreign Policy,” 274-277; Davidson, *America’s Palestine*, 55-63.

Department officials who dismissed Jewish American interests as “promoting their own narrow and parochial nationalistic aspirations” and not U.S. national interests. Ignoring the interests of Arab Americans and the State Department’s understanding of American national interests, Grose simply assumes that support for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine was in the U.S. national interest, an assumption that underscores arguments that U.S. support for Israel today is a key component of American national interests. Lawrence Davidson argues that the State Department advocated neutrality on Zionism as necessary to pursue more important and traditional American interests in the region, but Zaha Bustami contends that American neutrality favored the Zionists because the British mandate for Palestine included the Balfour Declaration and explicit directions that the British were to establish conditions favorable to the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine.⁴²

The State Department opposed direct intervention on behalf of Zionism during the early mandate era, especially when Zionists lobbied the U.S. to pressure the British to allow for unrestricted Jewish immigration to Palestine in the 1920s. In the fall of 1923, for example, Rabbi Simon Glazer asked President Calvin Coolidge to notify the British of American support for unlimited Jewish immigration. Glazer argued that since the British were governing Palestine as a mandate territory, the U.S. had a right to advocate for the fulfillment of the terms of the mandate, especially given the Congressional resolution supporting the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. Dulles enumerated

⁴² Peter Grose, *Israel in the Mind of America* (New York: Knopf, 1983), 99-100; Davidson, *America’s Palestine*, 55-63; Zaha Bustami, “American Foreign Policy and the Question of Palestine, 1856-1939,” Ph.D diss., Georgetown University, 1989, 274-275

For works criticizing State Department policy as anti-Zionist or anti-Semitic, see Frank Manuel, *The Realities of American-Palestine Relations* (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1949); Peter Grose, *Israel in the Mind of America* (New York: Knopf, 1983); Naomi Cohen, *The Year after the Riots: American Responses to the Palestine Crisis of 1929-1930* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988).

a number of reasons for the Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes and Coolidge to diplomatically and firmly reject any such American effort. In addition to the fact that the U.S. and Great Britain were still negotiating over American rights in the mandated territories, Dulles argued that the only legitimate interests the U.S. had in Palestine concerned British treatment of American nationals, that there was no indication that the British were not fulfilling the terms of the mandate based on the capacity of Palestine to accommodate immigrants, and that it would be hypocritical for the U.S. to lecture the British on immigration considering American restrictionist policies.⁴³ By the late 1930s, however, as the British reconsidered their commitment to Zionism due in part to continued Arab opposition, the United States government increasingly identified with Zionist aims, even supported the forced expulsion of the Palestinian population, and put considerable pressure on the British to fulfill the promises of the Balfour declaration for a Jewish state.

While the Near East Division favored a neutral policy toward Zionism during the early mandate period, State Department officials in the region reported on political conditions in Palestine, especially Zionist concerns about the British commitment to the Balfour Declaration and the terms of the League of Nations mandate. U.S. diplomats in Palestine recognized Arab opposition to Zionism and the British mandate. Vice Consul in Charge George Cobb reported in 1923 that the Arab population refused to participate

⁴³ Bustami, "American Foreign Policy," 298-300; Davidson, *America's Palestine*, 55-58. While concerned about protecting American citizens and property during the Arab uprising in 1929 (discussed below), the State Department protested British dismissal of American rights regarding the presentation of bids for the development of Haifa harbor as a violation of the mandate and the treaty with the United States and focused on clarifying an extradition treaty with Great Britain and its dominions and mandate territories. See, *FRUS*, 1929, Volume III, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1929v03> (accessed 20 December 2011), 61-70; *FRUS*, 1931, Volume II, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1931v02> (accessed 20 December 2011), 337-360

in recent elections, recognizing that Arab officials would have no power relative to the Executive authority, which “was influenced by a Zionist policy, by Zionist officials, and by those who are enthusiastically pledged to a Zionist form of government in the country.” Although the Arabs initially refused to form a British appointed Advisory Council to the Executive, again protesting the lack of real political power, Cobb noted that five Arabs, “under the leadership of Suleiman Bey Nassif, a Christian Arab,” agreed to serve on the Council despite the protestations of the “extremist” majority. As U.S. diplomats in Palestine recognized, the overarching goal of the Palestinian Arabs was to force the British to abandon the Balfour Declaration and concede self-determination in Palestine based on the principle of majority rule, but different tactics were advocated to achieve those ends. While most Arabs supported boycotts of the British government, Zionist developmental projects, and Jewish-produced goods to illustrate complete opposition to the Balfour Declaration and the mandate, others advocated participation in the British administration as a tactical necessity to pressure the British for self-determination. Those who agreed to participate in the government in a nominally advisory capacity propagandized that their only goal was to open a dialogue with the administrative authorities for the benefit of the Arab population, and Cobb commented that these “moderates” have recognized that it “was impracticable to change the present political situation in Palestine by protest or by extreme action.” Contradicting his earlier observation that the Arab population had legitimate and rational reasons to boycott the British government, Cobb concluded that “self-seeking politicians” were “stimulating the rabble to boycott these things calculated to be for their own good,” since from the Western perspective the British knew what was best for the Arabs in Palestine. The Arab

majority, however, forced the Arab members of the Advisory Council to resign, leading to the dissolution of that body. Commenting on the development and activities of Arab political parties, primarily the Moslem-Christian Association representing 90% of the population, the U.S. consulate reported the unified opposition to Zionism during the early mandate period.⁴⁴

The U.S. consular officials in Palestine also reported on opposition to Zionism within Britain itself. In 1923, *The Daily Mail* published in book form a series of articles by the vehement critic of Zionism and British policy J. M. N. Jeffries under the title *The Palestine Deception*. Forwarding a few copies to Washington, Cobb characterized Jeffries pamphlet as representing the “strength of the Anti-Zionists” and relayed to his superiors in Washington that “while many of the author’s statements are ‘half-truths’ the most of the pamphlet contains many pertinent and authentic facts which will tend to throw a light” on conditions in Palestine.⁴⁵ Jeffries argued that the British policy supporting the establishment of the Jewish national home in Palestine violated the Hussein-McMahon agreement, the Anglo-French declaration of 1918, and the principle

⁴⁴ RDS 867n.00/44, 10 May 1923; RDS 867n.00/46 (28 August 1923); RDS 867n.00/48 (30 December 1923); RDS 867n.00/49 (30 December 1923); RDS 867n.00/51 (31 December 1923). The British merely reported to the Permanent Mandates Commission that the majority of the Arabs abstained from elections without providing any commentary on the underlying reasons for the Arab opposition to the elections, namely that the Arabs would not have real self-government. See, “Report by his Britannic Majesty’s Government on the Administration under Mandate of Palestine and Trans-Jordan, 1924,” <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/a87d21f4e57f2d0f052565e8004bae0?OpenDocument> (accessed 10 October 2011).

While expressing negative views of the Arabs, Vice Consul George Fuller also reported in late 1927 on the unity of Arab opposition to Zionism and the Balfour Declaration:

The Christian Arab Population is more Arab than Christian, and sympathizes strongly with Arab nationalistic aspirations...and looks forward to a time when Palestine shall be independent of European control....The Arabs have shown surprising unity and obstinacy in their opposition towards every government measure. While much of this is undoubtedly due to the agitation of political leaders, there is no doubt that these have the almost unanimous support of their people....The entire opposition is directed towards the Balfour Declaration and the form of the mandate.

RDS 867n.01/392 (15 December 1923) as cited in Bustami, “American Foreign Policy,” 302-303.

⁴⁵ RDS 867n.00/44 (10 May 1923)

of self-government. The anti-Zionist journalist vehemently criticized the Balfour Declaration as consciously granting political rights to European Jewish immigrants, a small minority of the population, while concomitantly denying that the majority indigenous Arab population, the “non-Jewish communities,” had any political rights. Aside from his main criticism of British policy, Jeffries sought to challenge some of the major arguments that supposedly justified British support for Zionism. One such argument, quite relevant to the present debate on the Israel-Palestine conflict, was that the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine would protect British strategic interests, namely protection of both the route to India and oil resources in Mesopotamia. Jeffries, however, argued that the Arabs would have supported British interests were it not for British support of Zionism and the British government’s failure to fulfill its commitments to the Arab people. In fact, Jeffries maintained that British support for the establishment of a Jewish state undermined British geo-political and economic interests.⁴⁶

Aside from an awareness of anti-Zionist forces, the State Department also learned of Bolshevik elements in Palestine. A report from Vice Consul George Fuller written in late December 1923 commented on the “small” number of communists in Palestine consisting “almost solely of immigrants from Russia and Eastern Europe.” Fuller assured the State Department that the communists “will probably never be a serious factor in the future of Palestine” and had “no political aspirations.” The Vice Consul noted, however, that the communist agricultural settlements helped the new immigrants learn how to work the land and without that agricultural education, many of the immigrants would not be able to survive in Palestine. While disregarding the socialist component of Zionism, Fuller warned of a Palestinian Communist party that supported Arab nationalism and

⁴⁶ J. M. N. Jeffries, *The Palestine Deception* (London: Daily Mail, 1923)

self-government and opposed British imperialism and “bourgeois” Zionist colonialism. Fuller concluded, however, that the Palestine Communist party would not develop a large following because “the Arab population cannot be reached by modern economic theories and the majority of the Jewish immigrants are either interested in building up a religious and cultural home, or in improving their individual economic conditions” and “have little interest in social experiments.” Adhering to an Orientalist characterization of the Arab population as backward and anachronistic, Fuller ignored the Zionist goal of creating an exclusively Jewish state and accepted the Zionist arguments directed toward Americans that Jewish immigrants simply represented American values and were undertaking the capitalist development of a backward land.⁴⁷

Socialism was central to the labor Zionist ideology.⁴⁸ The historian Lawrence Davidson observes that “there can be no doubt that Zionism in Palestine from the 1920s onward was dominated by socialists.” Even non-socialist Zionist leaders understood socialism as the most effective means to create an exclusively Jewish state in Palestine. The central problem was incorporating the European Jewish working-class immigrants into the economic life of Palestine. Capitalism was premised on exploiting the cheapest

⁴⁷ RDS 867n.00/50 (31 December 1923). The U.S. legation in Riga, Latvia, forwarded a “Report of the Representative of the Palestine Communist Party” to the State Department around the same time. The report argued that the small contingent of communists in Palestine was combating Zionist labor, which was of a “nationalist-chauvinist bent” focused on the “national ‘regeneration’ of the Jewish nation,” and the illiterate, “fanatical and religious” Arabs in order to develop a class-based labor movement in Palestine. Additionally, the report acknowledged support for Arab nationalism as a means to combat British imperialism and political Zionism. The Eastern Bureau of the Communist International proceeded to declare that the British were using Zionism to oppress Arab nationalism. Collusion with Arab landowners allowed the Zionists to dispossess the Arab peasants. Such communist propaganda raised fears of Soviet designs on the Near East. On the eve of the 1929 Arab rebellion, some Soviet Jews continued to assert that Zionism was a weapon of British imperialist efforts to control the Near East and oppress the Arab peasants. RDS 867n.00/B (22 December 1923); RDS 867n.00/B/1 (25 February 1925); RDS 867n.00/B/2 (23 May 1927); “Americans Gain in Jewish Agency,” *New York Times*, 8 August 1929, 19.

⁴⁸ In the early mandate period, David Ben-Gurion led *Ahdut Ha'avodah*, a labor party that supported the creation of a Jewish socialist republic in Palestine and sought “the transfer of Palestine’s land, water, and natural resources to the people of Israel as their eternal possession.” See Shabtai Teveth, *Ben-Gurion and the Palestinian Arabs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 99

labor, and in Palestine that meant the Palestinian Arabs. Since most of the Jewish immigrants lacked resources, the Zionist leadership needed to provide employment and “artificially high European-level wages in Palestine.” Not to maintain a European standard of living for the Jewish immigrants would precipitate European emigration and not further expansion of the Jewish population. Davidson notes that Louis Brandeis, who portrayed Zionism as an iteration of Progressivism, was ousted from his leadership position of the Zionist Organization of America in 1921 because he refused to accept the dominance of socialism in the Zionist movement. Since the Jewish colonization of Palestine was dependent upon financial contributions from Americans, Zionist publications and pronouncements disregarded the socialist nature of the movement, a logical position given the Red Scare and anti-communist ideology permeating the United States. Perhaps the most important example of the socialist nature of Zionism is that the Zionists, through the Jewish National Fund, was determined to control the land in Palestine collectively and eternally on behalf of the Jewish people in violation of the basic tenets of private property. Although many Americans advocated restriction of Eastern European Jews because of the threat of Bolshevism and anarchism, as the testimony during hearings before the House Committee on Foreign Relations in 1922 discussed in Part I illustrated, American congressmen characterized Jews as prototypical and ardent capitalists.⁴⁹

Overall, the State Department was aware of conditions in Palestine and promoted American neutrality in the region as complementary to American interests and in line with the traditional policy of noninterference in European affairs. While the State Department did not lobby the American public, the Zionists and their supporters,

⁴⁹ Davidson, *America's Palestine*, 52-55; RDS 867n.00/73/- (22 December 1923)

however, continued to publicize their project as an historic and altruistic mission comparable to the American experience. Opposition to the Zionist discourse periodically appeared before American audiences, but the Zionist position dominated the narrative in the propaganda campaign and helped make Arab opposition unintelligible and irrational in the mind of America. Consequently, when Palestinian Arab opposition to Zionism and British administration erupted in violence in August 1929, Zionists were able to publicly frame the uprising as a pogrom undertaken by irrational, savage, and fanatical Muslim hordes. Portraying Zionism as a civilizing force, Zionist spokespersons characterized the violence as a religious and racial conflict and insisted that Muslim leaders incited the masses in pursuit of their own self-interests. The Zionist narrative effectively presented the Arab violence as irrational and illegitimate and symbolic of a conflict between the civilized and the non-civilized, between the Jewish pioneers introducing Western values, technology, and civilization to Palestine and the Arab Muslims, who were simply obstacles to progress and development. Importantly, the Zionist narrative overshadowed Arab and pro-Arab voices arguing that the violence was a consequence of the continued denial of self-determination and democracy in Palestine. Zionists, however, opposed the introduction of democracy in Palestine and argued that the violence illustrated that the Arabs were incapable of self-government. Ignoring the Palestinian Arab grievances and opposing any 'appeasement' of the perpetrators of the violence, the Zionists determined that the appropriate response to the Arab uprising was increased Jewish immigration and colonization and a determined and forceful British effort to demonstrate their commitment to the Zionist project.

CHAPTER 7: THE 1929 ARAB UPRISING: Pogrom OR INTIFADA?

Incidents at the Wailing Wall were the immediate factors precipitating the August 1929 violence in Palestine, but Palestinian Arab opposition to clear Zionist goals for a Jewish Palestine and British rejection of self-determination and self-government in Palestine were important underlying causes. While spokespersons for the Arab position emphasized self-determination and opposition to Western colonialism with the hopes of gaining American support for their position, Zionists presented the violence as the actions of irrational, savage, backward, and inherently violent Arabs who were cynically manipulated by agitators, including the Grand Mufti himself. This Zionist narrative echoed how white Americans interpreted Native American violent resistance against white expansion and manifest destiny, which facilitated white American identification with the Jewish pioneers, who, Zionists argued, were bringing civilization and progress to a savage wilderness and would continue their project despite this native resistance. Although State Department officials in Palestine provided a more sympathetic representation of the Palestinian Arab position to superiors in Washington, the Zionist spokespersons more effectively presented their narrative to the American government and public in their effort to gain American support for Zionism in the face of any change in British policy that would privilege the Palestinian Arabs over the Jewish settlers. The U.S. government would officially maintain a policy of neutrality, but white Americans and the Hoover administration identified with the civilizing mission of the British and Zionists in Palestine.

*Background*¹

As a thousand Jewish worshippers participated in prayer at the Wailing Wall on Yom Kippur in late September 1928, the British ordered the removal of a partition separating men and women. Facing resistance, the police utilized force to take down the wooden partition, which created quite a controversy as Jewish organizations around the world criticized the British actions and petitioned the League of Nations to return to the Jews “the western wall of the temple, now belonging to the Moslems.” The *New York Times* commentary on the Wailing Wall incident presented the British and the Arabs as denying “the sacred right of Jewish worshippers to do penance on Atonement Day along the Wailing Wall, one of the last remaining citadels of prayer in the Holy City.” Two months after praising the British administration, the progress of the Zionists, and the amicable relations between Arabs and Jews, Joseph Levy lamented that religious and racial conflict between Jews and Muslims meant that Palestine was not yet fit for self-government. Levy reported that Muslim authorities in Jerusalem requested that the

¹ Mary Ellen Lundsten observes that mainstream Zionists, including Weizmann, made moves to appropriate the Wall and surrounding territory soon after the British gained control of Palestine. In 1918, Weizmann wrote to Balfour complaining about the “miserable dirty cottages and derelict buildings” near the Wall, suggesting that the Zionists would pay a good sum for “the handing over of the Wailing Wall,” which he characterized as “in the hands of some doubtful Moghreb religious community.” Jabotinsky and some of his militant followers also staged marches to the Wall and started fights with Arabs. Tourist cards displayed Herzl next to the Dome of the Rock, which was under the Zionist flag. Zionist fundraising efforts also promised that money would be used to purchase the Holy Places in Jerusalem. As part of these efforts, Weizmann, from the first stages of the British occupation, authorized funds to divide Muslim and Christian Arabs, discredit the Grand Mufti, and train Hagana forces. Throughout the 1920s, Jewish religious leaders attempted to introduce new appurtenances at the Wall, challenging the status quo. Understandably, the Arab leadership vehemently protested these Zionist moves to gain control of the Wailing Wall and surrounding land. Ultimately, both Zionist and Arab leaders understood that the conflict over the wall was part of the struggle over the whole of Palestine. Importantly, the Zionists presented the conflict over the Wall as a religious issue; instead of addressing the underlying political conflict over land and property in Palestine, the Arabs defended their rights on religious grounds as well, meaning that Muslim leadership, instead of the broader Arab political leadership, was central to the defense of the Wall and surrounding territory, a tactic that limited the Arab options. On the eve of Yom Kippur, segments of the Hebrew press in Jerusalem called for the Jewish National Fund to purchase property around the Wall, which heightened tensions before the Jewish worshippers attempted to again introduce appurtenances to challenge the status quo and lay claim to the Wall. See Mary Ellen Lundsten, “Wall Politics: Zionist and Palestinian Strategies in Jerusalem, 1928,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 8, No 1 (Autumn 1978), 3-27.

British remove the partition because the frame was attached to the pavement and signaled a Zionist attempt to lay claim to the Wailing Wall. Levy commented that “even admitting the justice of such a claim,” the partition had been in place for over a week and the British could have waited until the next day to remove it instead of disrupting Jewish worship. In response to the British actions, Levy observed, Jews, regardless of their religious or political beliefs, demanded that the Wailing Wall was the “rightful property” of the Jewish people. Muslim authorities declared that the wall was “an organic part of the Mosque of Omar” and voiced opposition to any changes to arrangements made during Ottoman suzerainty. Levy chose to qualify the Muslim claim by asserting that “it may be explained that the Wailing Wall adjoins the land on which the Mosque of Omar is situated.” Levy’s reporting, however, provided an incomplete depiction of events for he failed to note the existing Muslim fear of Jewish designs on gaining possession of the Wailing Wall, a fear that was central to the development of the Palestinian national movement.²

² “Jews at Wailing Wall in Class with Police,” *New York Times*, 25 September 1928, 22; “Jews Protest Action of Jerusalem Police,” *New York Times*, 27 September 1928, 24; “Plead for Wailing Wall,” *New York Times*, 28 September 1928, 36; “Urges Holy Land Pact,” *New York Times*, 1 October 1928, 20; “Deplores Ban on Worship,” *New York Times*, 17 November 1928, 26; “Jews Seek Redress for British Action,” 28 October 1928, 58; Yehoshua Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement, 1918-1929* (London: Frank Cass, 1974), 258ff

As Porath observes, “if Zionism was seen as an attempt to change the demographic and national *status quo* in the country, it is no wonder that the above-mentioned Jewish attempts [to take chairs, benches, and other appurtenances to the Wailing Wall] were regarded as a first step towards taking over the area of *al-Haram al Sharif*.” Throughout the 1920s, the British essentially favored the Arab position regarding the Wailing Wall. See Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement, 1918-1929*, 261-262

Ignoring the long-term Zionist designs on the Wall and the provocations toward the Arabs, Zionists presented the events at the Wall as an egregious violation of the religious rights of Jewish worshippers and blamed Arab ‘agitators’ for the conflict. Jabotinsky asserted that the British action at the Wailing Wall in 1928 “was not imaginable even in czarist Russia.” On the eve of the Arab rebellion in 1929, Weizmann characterized the 1928 incident at the Wailing Wall “as a violation of our right to worship at this wall,” misrepresenting what really happened. The Muslims did not protest the Jewish right to worship at the wall, but Jewish actions that violated the status quo and suggested that the Jewish population was attempting to assert their claim to the land. As Lunsten notes, the Zionists took advantage of the situation to demand possession of the Wall, knowing that such a demand could precipitate Arab violence.

Despite Levy's claim that the partition had been in place for over a week, the U.S. consulate office reported that Orthodox Jews attached the partition to the pavement on the eve of the Day of Atonement. Muslims complained to the British authorities that the partition represented a change from the status quo and prevented Muslim residents from traveling through their neighborhood. J. Thayer Gilman, a vice consul at the U.S. consulate in Jerusalem, reported to the State Department that the Wailing Wall was "Moslem religious property," but since it was "considered by orthodox Jewry as one of its holiest places," many Jews were determined to lay claim to the Wall and surrounding territory. While Muslim authorities had long allowed Jews to worship at the Wailing Wall, Gilman noted that they were "very careful not to permit the introduction of any innovations or fixtures [by Jewish worshippers] which might create a precedent that might later become firmly established and form the basis of a claim to the privilege of conducting services or even erecting a synagogue on the site as a matter of right." In other words, Muslim authorities, recognizing Zionist designs on the land, feared that Jewish groups would attempt to establish "facts on the ground." As a result of the Muslim complaint, the British ordered the Jewish religious official on site to remove the partition before the services began the next day for the Jewish holy day. The Jewish official ignored the order, resulting in the incident the next day when the British took action to remove the partition during religious services. While the Muslim authorities

The Zionist move was to gain broader Jewish support for Zionism (during the debates over the formation of a Jewish Agency comprised of Zionist and non-Zionist Jews). The Zionist leadership understood that if there were any violence, the international community would sympathize with the Jews and not the Arabs. The Muslim leadership recognized that any Arab violence would undermine their push for self-government and consequently relied on the British to maintain the status quo despite the British tendency to accommodate some of the Zionist demands. See, "Zionists Get Motion to Reform Agency," *New York Times*, 31 July 1929, 4; "Weizmann Urges All-Jewish Agency," *New York Times*, 29 July 1929, 7; Lundsten, "Wall Politics: Zionist and Palestinian Strategies in Jerusalem, 1928," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 8, No 1 (Autumn 1978), 3-27.

interpreted the British action as upholding traditional and historic Muslim rights, Jewish groups around the world demanded that the British and League of Nations give the site to the Jews; anything less was simply evidence of a prejudicial British policy that prevented the fulfillment of the Balfour Declaration and League mandate. Notably, while the U.S. consul provided a rational explanation for Muslim opposition to the partition, Levy's account in the *New York Times* characterized the Muslim demands and British actions as unreasonable responses to the Jewish provocation, which Levy portrays as the Jewish worshipers exercising a "sacred right."³

The American journalist Vincent Sheean, writing about the Arab rebellion in 1929, stated that in 1837 and 1912, authorities in Palestine forbade Jews from making any sort of changes to the physical infrastructure (such as paving the ground in front of the Wall or bringing chairs, screens, or other furniture) because Muslims feared that the Jewish goal was to claim ownership of the territory and build a synagogue. Sheean argued that even non-religious Zionists supported moves to gain control of the Wailing Wall as a means to gain the backing of non-Zionist Orthodox Jews to the Zionist project. All the incidents at the Wailing Wall, Sheean asserts, centered on the obvious Jewish goal of owning it and the surrounding territory. A member of the Palestine Zionist Executive,

³ Lawrence Davidson, *America's Palestine: Popular and Official Perceptions from Balfour to Israeli Statehood* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 83-82-86; "Jews at Wailing Wall in Class with Police," *New York Times*, 25 September 1928, 22; "Jews Protest Action of Jerusalem Police," *New York Times*, 27 September 1928, 24; "Plead for Wailing Wall," *New York Times*, 28 September 1928, 36; "Urges Holy Land Pact," *New York Times*, 1 October 1928, 20; "Deplores Ban on Worship," *New York Times*, 17 November 1928, 26; "Jews Seek Redress for British Action," 28 October 1928, 58; Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement, 1918-1929*, 258ff

Porath describes the introduction of a partition as a "more serious" departure from the *status quo* than earlier practices. While many argued at the time and after that the Mufti capitalized on the conflict regarding the Wailing Wall to revive a moribund nationalist movement and solidify his power at the expense of his opposition, Porath proposes that a largely united Palestinian Arab community capitalized upon what it considered a Jewish provocation "to intensify the struggle against the Jews" through the introduction of "a religious dimension" to gain more popular support. See Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement, 1918-1929*, 265-266

for example, stated to the Zionist Congress in Zurich in the summer of 1929 that “our rights under the Mandate are more complete and more extensive than those embraced within the principle of the status quo,” illustrating the common Zionist refrain that the rights of Jewish immigrants to Palestine trumped the rights of the indigenous population, calling into question the sincerity of Zionist claims about benefiting the Arabs and not infringing upon their rights.⁴

A couple months later, Levy wrote about a Zionist proposal to make Palestine a British dominion instead of a mandate territory. The revisionist leader Vladimir Jabotinsky argued that such a move would ensure the protection of Jewish rights and claims in Palestine and insisted upon a Jewish high commissioner and unrestricted Jewish immigration and colonization of Palestine and Trans-Jordan. Levy observed that Jews would remain a minority in Palestine despite unlimited immigration because “the 600,000 Moslems have not as of yet adopted, and will not for centuries to come adopt the modern idea of birth control.” Other Zionists recommended that the British give the Sinai Peninsula to Jewish colonists as compensation for the loss of the Trans-Jordan. Since the Egyptians only “nominally” controlled the “barren and deserted” peninsula and the

⁴ The British commission investigating the August uprising emphasized Muslim ownership of the Wailing Wall and surrounding territory, the significance of the holy site to Muslims (which Zionists repeatedly denied), and the British maintenance of the status quo, which included the enforcement of policy forbidding Jewish worshippers from bringing seats, benches, and screens to the Wall. See, *Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August, 1929*, CMD 3530 (London: H. M. Stationary Office, 1930), 26-29. A second British commission specifically investigated the rights and claims of Muslims and Jews concerning the Wailing Wall. The report, published in December 1930, reasserted Muslim ownership of the Wall, the pavement in front of the Wall, and other surrounding territory and attempted to place restrictions on Jews and Muslims so as to prevent future conflict. Notably, the commission denied that Jewish worshippers had the right to bring appurtenances such as partitions or screens to the Wailing Wall. See, *Report of the Commission appointed by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, with the approval of the Council of the League of Nations, to determine the rights and claims of Moslems and Jews in connection with the Western or Wailing Wall at Jerusalem* (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1930), <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/59a92104ed00dc468525625b00527fea?OpenDocument> (accessed 22 December 2011). See also, Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement, 1929-1939: From Riots to Rebellion* (London: Frank Cass, 1977), 1-19

British had offered the Sinai to Herzl, Zionists argued that the Egyptians would not oppose Zionist control over the peninsula east of the Suez Canal. Although supporting the dominionization of Palestine, Levy warned that “in view of its policy, centuries old, of pleasing the majority of the population over which it rules,” Great Britain would not accede to the Zionist proposition given the opposition of the Arab population.⁵

In the months preceding the 1929 Arab rebellion, Western commentators and Zionist leaders continued to publicize the benefits, successes, and ideals of Zionism while demonizing and criticizing Islam. At a fundraising conference at the Hotel Ambassador in New York in January 1929, Rabbi Joseph Silverman presented the Zionist narrative when he claimed that “the world has given Palestine back to us again. After 2,000 years, that land which once belonged to the Jews is ours for the taking again, without a quarrel, without the firing of a single gun.”⁶ Also fundraising in the United States, Dr. Nahum Sokolow, chairman of the World Zionist Executive, trumpeted the impending development of the Haifa harbor as “the first great work of civilization in Palestine” and declared that world peace depended upon the restoration of Palestine, according to the *Times*.⁷ The *Times* reported that the Hadassah, the Women’s Zionist Organization of America, was transforming and modernizing health and sanitation in Palestine. Jane Grant, the author of the article, claimed that the Palestinian “natives” were “steeped in a belief in myth and magic” and “practiced all kinds of ancient rites-conjurings, smearings, amulet-wearing, weird incantations and the application of hot irons to affected portions of the body—to drive ‘the devil of illness’ away.” The work of Hadassah, Grant explained, improved the health of the “natives” and introduced them to modern science and

⁵ “New Status Urged for Palestine Rule,” *New York Times*, 6 January 1929, 55

⁶ “Non-Zionists Join in Palestine Drive,” *New York Times*, 14 January 1929, 10.

⁷ “Reports Palestine on Eve of New Era,” *New York Times*, 11 March 1929, 35

hygiene.⁸ Reverend Dr. John Haynes Holmes of the New York Community Church trumpeted the ideals of Zionism after a visit to Palestine in 1929. Holmes asserted that in Palestine:

Heroic men are striving to establish an ideal society in which men of all races, creeds and colors can live as brothers....From the standpoint of all hopes of human kind I seriously think that Zionism is the greatest thing the world has seen since the early settlement of America, and incomparably the greatest thing in the world today.

While the *New York Times* characterized Holmes as promoting “harmony and peaceful relations among the peoples of different races and sects,” the pacifist and founding member of both the NAACP and ACLU propagated the accepted ideas about civilization by asserting that “the land [in Palestine] has been wasted for hundreds of years, and is now largely barren as the desert,” but the Zionists were making the desert “blossom like the rose.” While criticizing the British for not adequately assisting the Zionist movement, Holmes declared that Arab opposition posed the major obstacle to the success of this idealist project. “There is open hostility and deliberate and determined attack,” Holmes claimed, because “the Arabs hold Palestine to be their own, and regard as invaders the Jews now toiling on the soil.” Despite the challenges, Holmes expressed confidence about the success of Zionism and advocated self-government in Palestine

⁸ “Palestine Health Making Big Gains,” *New York Times*, 7 April 1929, X17. In their reports to the Permanent Mandates Commission, the British often claimed that British and Zionist policies improved the health of the indigenous population and sanitary conditions of Palestine, illustrating the benefits of altruistic imperialism. The wording in the British report suggests that the Zionist health institutions almost exclusively served the Jewish population in Palestine. See, for example, “Report by his Britannic Majesty’s Government on the Administration under Mandate of Palestine and Trans-Jordan, 1924),” <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/a87d21f4e57f2d0f052565e8004bac-e0?OpenDocument> (accessed 10 October 2011)

based on the American constitutional structure that checked the problem of majority rule.⁹

In June 1929, P. W. Wilson renewed his assault on Islam, characterizing the Muslim faith as inherently backward, violent, stagnant, fatalistic and fanatical. While the Western powers were introducing Muslims to civilization, education, and modernization, Wilson lamented that the “humiliated Moslem” under the administration of the West had yet to disavow Islam, which was “paralyzed” and “stupefied,” and accept Western values and standards. Instead Muslims were bewilderingly resisting the enlightened and beneficial *mission civilisatrice* undertaken by the European powers, which clearly illustrated the backwardness and irrationality of Islam and its adherents. Wilson asserted that the irrational Palestinians, “though they have derived immense economic benefits from Zionism, are consumed with the fear that ultimately they will become a subordinate element in the population.” That conclusion, however, illustrated Wilson’s acceptance of the Zionist narrative and his ignorance of the reality of the Zionist project. Interestingly, in the very next paragraph, Wilson assailed Muslims in India, representing a minority population, for demanding “on a separate franchise and other political safeguards,” but failed to criticize the Zionists for wanting to establish a Jewish state in a land with an

⁹ “Success of Zionism a Matter of Time,” *New York Times*, 17 March 1929, N2. The *Times* did not prominently cover the declining Jewish immigration to and the increasing Jewish emigration from Palestine during the 1920s, which may have challenged the dominant Zionist narrative. For example, the *Times* published a 30-word blurb underneath an article on Nicaragua in January 1929 mentioning that more people were leaving Palestine than immigrating to it. “Palestine Loses on Migration,” *New York Times*, 3 January 1929, 8. For examples of articles detailing the successful development of Palestine, see “Palestine Industry is Found Profitable,” *New York Times*, 14 January 1929, 10; “Palestine Season Brings Prosperity,” *New York Times*, 20 January 1929, E6; “Cites Palestine Progress,” *New York Times*, 20 February 1929, 31; “Holmes, Back, Extols ‘Heroism’ in Palestine,” *New York Times*, 20 March 1929, 12; “Finishing Hebrew Library,” *New York Times*, 1 April 1929, 21; “Jerusalem En Fete for the Passover,” *New York Times*, 26 April 1929, 9.

At the Zionist Congress in Zurich in 1929, Dr. Arthur Ruppin reiterated the argument that Zionism would benefit the whole world. See, “Warns of Decline of Jewish Culture,” *New York Times*, 30 July 1929, 6

overwhelming Arab majority. Wilson posited that Islam only spread through violence against weak civilizations, but since the West experienced scientific and industrial revolutions, the superior Western civilization has been able to conquer and dominate the Islamic world, with the aid of modern weapons.¹⁰

There were indications, however, that Zionism was not as beneficial to the Arab population or as successful as the Jewish and non-Jewish Zionists proclaimed. Less than 2200 Jewish immigrants entered Palestine during 1928, an insignificant number compared to earlier years and an indication of economic and social problems confronting Jewish colonization.¹¹ Joseph Levy, in an article marveling at the development and modernization of Palestine, mentioned that Jewish laborers attacked Jewish employers and colonies that employed Arab labor and that the Zionist Organization maintained artificially high wages and unemployment benefits for European Jewish immigrants. Levy observed that capitalism and the development of the Jewish national home in Palestine were not necessarily complementary since Jewish capitalists were pressured to hire Jewish labor at “nearly double the wages that the Arabs receive.” Aside from privileging Jewish labor in Palestine, the Zionist goal of establishing a Jewish state meant

¹⁰ “Waning of Crescent Watched by Muslims,” *New York Times*, 9 June 1929, X22. In an article after the 1929 Palestinian uprising, Henry Kittredge Norton assured his Western audience that although Islam was a violent religion that spread through warfare, the Muslim world did not pose a challenge to the more developed and advanced West, which now controlled much of the world’s Muslim population. Characterizing Islam as “more comparable to the superstitious religions of savage tribes than to any other modern faith,” Norton warned of Muslim hopes for renewed warfare against Christianity, but concluded that Muslim disunity and Christian superiority in industrialization and arms made any Muslim challenge to the West destined to defeat. Norton proceeded to claim that “the major part of the Moslem world is apparently incapable of supporting a modern civilization.” A consequence was that the Islamic world, in Norton’s estimation, lacked the “scientific knowledge and technical skill” to build modern weapons, such as the battleships necessary to control sea lanes, which meant that Western navies controlled the Muslim territories. See, “Moslem World Reaches over Many Countries,” *New York Times*, 8 September 1929, XX4

¹¹ The British estimated that by the middle of 1928, the total population of Palestine, excluding the Bedouins, was roughly 898,000, which included 660,000 Muslims, 150,000 Jews, and 79,000 Christians (primarily Arabs). See, *Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August, 1929*, CMD 3530 (London: H. M. Stationary Office, 1930), 8

the expropriation of Arab land. Despite the claims in the speeches and publications of the Zionists in the United States, Zionist educational and health institutions almost exclusively benefitted the Jewish population in Palestine. Other short articles mentioned in passing that the Zionist colonies were dependent upon financial contributions from Europe and the United States. Evidence abounded that the Zionists were establishing an immigrant settler colony in Palestine and the frequent comparisons to the American experience only highlighted this facet of Zionism. An interpretation that the European colonization of North America and white American expansion across the continent brought progress and civilization to Native Americans combined with manifest destiny and racism to justify the genocide, removal, and expropriation of Native Americans. Zionism, premised on similar ideologies and messianic interpretations of the past, presented itself as an idealistic effort to civilize a backward land and people, and perhaps many Americans, unwilling to honestly grapple with their own nation's colonialism and empire-building, celebrated Zionism and ignored the reality that the Zionist project was based on the expropriation and expulsion of the indigenous population in Palestine. Consequently, many Americans interpreted Arab resistance to Zionist colonization as the irrational fanaticism of a savage race, just as previous generations understood Native American, Cuban, or Filipino resistance as evidence illustrating the backwardness of these nonwhite peoples and their unfitness for self-government.¹²

¹² "Palestine Mandate Reviewed by Britain," *New York Times*, 4 July 1929, 5; "Palestine Season Brings Prosperity," *New York Times*, 20 January 1929, E6; "Palestine Chief Urges Private Enterprise," *New York Times*, 30 March 1929, 11; "More Jobs for Jews," *New York Times*, 21 July 1929, 52. The British reported to the League of Nations in 1925 that "Jewish employers, for sentimental and political reasons, engage and pay Jewish workmen, skilled and unskilled, who are well-organized and demand approximately the same conditions as regards wages, standard of living and labour legislation as exist in a modern and homogenous state." While not elaborating on this observation, the British administration report suggests that the Zionist policy privileged expensive immigrant labor at the expense of the indigenous population, illustrating that Zionism was premised on creating an exclusivist Jewish state and not on benefiting the

The Arab population in Palestine continued to press the British for self-government. The British tactic was to obfuscate and delay any significant establishment of majority rule in Palestine. In January 1929, the *New York Times* published an 80-word paragraph reporting that the new British High Commissioner in Palestine, Sir John Chancellor, promised an Arab delegation petitioning for self-government that he would discuss the matter with the British Colonial Secretary when he travelled to London during the following summer and then continue negotiations with the Arabs on his return, effectively delaying any British commitment to the will of the majority population. That summer, Chancellor testified to the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations that Palestine was not yet ready for self-government, effectively precluding any negotiations with the Palestinian Arabs about creating a Parliament and representative government. Chancellor argued that “the international obligations imposed upon the mandatory Power by the League of Nations and...the importance of Palestine to hundreds of millions of people throughout the world as the home and birthplace of three great religions” meant that the British could not allow representative government in Palestine. In his statement to the Permanent Mandates Commission, Chancellor acknowledged Arab hostility to the Balfour Declaration and Arab fears that the Jewish immigrants would gain control of Palestine, but claimed that “the more intelligent [Arabs] are realising the advantage accruing to all sections of the population from the influx of Jewish capital and

Arab population. “Report by his Britannic Majesty’s Government to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the Year 1925,” 31 December 1925, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/be6c3644411da3ed052565e7006e9af3?OpenDocument> (accessed 10 October 2011)

At the Zionist Congress in Zurich in summer 1929, Dr. Arthur Ruppin, an “agricultural expert” in Palestine, acknowledged the recognition of Jewish rights around much of the world, but warned of the extinction of the Jewish people through conversion, intermarriage, and assimilation. Although containing about one percent of the world’s Jewish population, Palestine, Rupin insisted, was the only hope for the Jewish people. See, “Warns of Decline of Jewish Culture,” *New York Times*, 30 July 1929, 6

industry.” Reporting on the British testimony to the League of Nations, the *New York Times* asserted that the Zionist organizations made substantial gains in the colonization of Palestine during 1928 and that the Arabs were willing to cooperate, ignoring the British rejection of representative government, which was the basis for any Arab participation in the British administration.¹³

A month later, Levy, reporting for the *Times*, replied to the Palestinian Arab observation that Trans-Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, and Syria all had some form of self-government by suggesting that “they apparently forget or ignore the shortcomings of each of these governments and fail to realize that not one of them has been successful.” Levy concluded that Chancellor “proved himself an excellent strategist and a wise administrator” for determining that the British would not bestow self-government on Palestine yet. Commenting on economic developments in Palestine, Levy maintained that the Arabs have “done comparatively little to contribute towards the economic development of the country.” While “the Arabs, or at least a large number of them, claim that the land rightly belongs to them, and should not be given to the Jews for a National

¹³ Permanent Mandates Commission, *Minutes of the Fifteenth Session*, 19 July 1929, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/0bca96a75252ec7b052565f0004e57c4?OpenDocument> (accessed 8 December 2011). In earlier reports to the Permanent Mandates Commission, the British administration acknowledged that Arab opposition to the Balfour Declaration precluded any real moves toward a representative government. In response to an Arab petition for self-government a year before the uprising, Rappard, a member of the Permanent Mandates Commission, argued that “it seems obvious that a form of democratic and parliamentary Government is not provided for either by the Covenant or by the mandate, and that it is not even compatible with the obligations devolving upon the mandatory Power under those engagements.” Recognizing that democracy in Palestine would preclude the establishment of the Jewish national home, Rappard insisted that the terms of the mandate did not demand the establishment of democratic government under present conditions. See, for example, “Report by his Britannic Majesty’s Government to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the Year 1925,” 31 December 1925, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/be6c3644411da3ed052565e7006e9af3?OpenDocument> (accessed 10 October 2011); “Palestine Mandate Reviewed by Britain,” *New York Times*, 4 July 1929, 5; “Sees Arabs Willing to Aid in Palestine,” *New York Times*, 6 July 1929, 5; “Offsets Palestine Deficit,” *New York Times*, 7 July 1929, 5; League of Nations Permanent Mandates Commission, *Minutes of the Fifteenth Session*

Home under the Balfour Declaration,” Levy continued, “they themselves do not develop the land.” Levy’s commentary illustrates the racism and colonialism underlying the civilizing ideology that the Western powers had the right to determine when these nonwhite peoples were capable of self-government. Given the negative perceptions of Islam and Arabs, the colonial powers would not need to seriously consider self-determination for a significant period of time. The *Times* gave no indication about the underlying reason for rejecting self-government in Palestine: the British and the Zionists determination that there could be no self-determination in Palestine until the Jewish population represented a majority. Additionally, Levy’s criticism of the governments in the other Arab territories neglects the fact that Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Trans-Jordan, and Palestine were all under colonial occupation, which makes any assessment of their experiments at self-government speculative at best. Interestingly, Levy also predicted in an article written in late July, but not published until mid August, that any effort for an Arab state was complicated by Egyptian, Syrian, and Palestinian Arab nationalism and European colonization over Arab territories.¹⁴

*The August 1929 Uprising*¹⁵

In August 1929, the U.S. consulate in Jerusalem reported renewed conflict between Arabs and Jews over the Wailing Wall. While focusing on protecting American

¹⁴ “To Consider Arab Demands,” *New York Times*, 13 January 1929, 62; “Palestine Report Leads to Unrest,” *New York Times*, 4 August 1929, N32; “Attempts at Unity Fail in Near East,” *New York Times*, 18 August 1929, E8; Davidson, 90

¹⁵ Lundsten notes that in the weeks prior to the violence in August 1929, Zionists clearly demanded possession of the Wall, with the more militant followers of Jabotinsky determined to use violence if necessary. One rabbi stated that the Jewish people could not accept that “such dirty and ugly lanes and houses which are breeding places for all sorts of filth and disease” could surround their holy place. Lundsten, “Wall Politics: Zionist and Palestinian Strategies in Jerusalem, 1928,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 8, No 1 (Autumn 1978), 3-27

citizens in Palestine, Paul Knabenshue, the Consul General, cabled the State Department that “it is my opinion that the Moslem attacks were precipitated by provocative acts of the Jews” and that the violence would expand if the British failed to immediately transfer troops from Egypt. Dispatches over the next few months illustrated growing concern over organized Arab resistance to Zionism and prejudicial British policies that favored Zionists while assuring the State Department that British forces in Palestine were sufficient to repress any Arab rebellion and that Zionist accounts greatly exaggerated the violence and unrest in the Holy Land. The Zionists, however, saw British policies in a much different light. After the British authorized Muslim construction near the Wailing Wall in late July, Jewish organizations around the world protested British policy. Rabbi Wise, speaking to the Zionist Congress meeting in Zurich at the time, asserted that “I would not say that the British Government is opposed to the establishment of the Jewish national home in Palestine. However, instead of facilitating it, as it is pledged to do, the mandatory power adopts a non-cooperative attitude in relation to the achievement of this object.” Zionists and the *New York Times* characterized the conflict as revolving around the right of Jews to worship at the Wailing Wall when the underlying issue was Jewish nationalism and provocative gestures of Jewish ownership of the Wall. On 14 August, approximately 6,000 Zionists marched in Tel Aviv while chanting “The Wall is Ours.” The next day, 2,000 young Jewish nationalists “march[ed] to the wall carrying Zionist blue and white flags” while promising “to sacrifice all for the Western Wall.” While failing to comment on the provocative march of the Jewish nationalists and the insulting display of Jewish nationalism at the wall of the Dome of the Rock, the *Times* reported the next day that an “Arab mob” inexplicably attacked Jewish worshippers at the Wall.¹⁶

¹⁶ “Wailing Wall Permit Stirs Palestine Jews,” *New York Times*, 1 August 1929, 8; “Wailing Wall

In the opening paragraph of the article reporting on the violence at the Wailing Wall, the *Times* established an interpretation of events that raised questions regarding the prevailing narrative about amicable relations between Zionists and the indigenous Arab population, but ignored the Arab understanding of their actions as resistance to British and Zionist colonialism and failed to consider that nonviolent political protest had proved ineffective. Referring to the recent agreement in Zurich to establish a Jewish Agency with Zionist and non-Zionist members “to build up the Jewish national home in Palestine,” the *Times* asserted that “the rights of the Jews in the Holy Land are coming

Plea Vain,” *New York Times*, 7 August 1929, 6; “10,000 Jews Guarded at the Wailing Wall,” *New York Times*, 16 August 1929, 2; “Arab Mob Invades Wailing Wall Lane,” *New York Times*, 17 August 1929, 16; *FRUS*, 1929, Volume III, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1929v03> (accessed 20 December 2011), 46-70 ; Mayer, *Ploughshares into Swords*, 128; Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement, 1918-1929*, 267.

In November 1928, the Colonial Secretary officially reported to Parliament that the British government essentially accepted the Arab position regarding the Wailing Wall, which committed the British “to maintain the *status quo*, which they have regarded as being . . . that the Jewish community has a right of access to the pavement for the purposes of their devotions, but may bring to the Wall only those appurtenances of worship which were permitted under the Turkish regime.” Porath argues that since the British failed to enforce the stated policy, the Muslims began construction projects and enacted other policies to force the government’s hand. For Porath, the Muslim leadership understood the controversy regarding the Wall as one that could unify the Muslims in Palestine (and beyond) without precipitating conflict with the British government, which officially declared support for the Muslim position. See Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement, 1918-1929*, 267-269

In response to Knabenshue’s reports, Secretary of State Henry Stimson reminded the British of their responsibility to protect American lives and property.

Sheean testified to the British commission of inquiry that on 14 August, a Zionist journalist and teacher told him that hundreds of Jewish settlers were on their way into Jerusalem to precipitate a conflict with the Muslims over the Wailing Wall so as to solidify the recent pact between non-Zionists and Zionists at the Zurich Congress and increase the contributions of non-Zionist Jews to the Zionist project. Sheean considered the Jewish actions as extremely provocative. Bustami, “American Foreign Policy,” 309-311

In an article published in the *Times* in early September, Felix Warburg, banker and head of the Jewish Agency, acknowledged that Jewish demonstrations at the Wailing Wall contributed to the violence, but this view did not receive much consideration or emphasis in the Zionist and *New York Times*’ narrative. “Warburg Invites Cooperation,” *New York Times*, 5 September 1929, 19

Jabotinsky wrote in October 1929 that if the Zionist nationalist march and flag-waving were the cause of the violence, “I should heartily congratulate the promoter, because it’s the main thing in all strategy to force the enemy to attack before he is ready.” Also in October 1929, Jewish worshippers began blowing the Shofar, which had long been prohibited. Although the Zionists were granted concessions at the Wall, they continued to press their advantage and vehemently complained to the British that any proscriptions of the use of the Shofar were violations of Jewish religious liberty. Zionists accused the British of persecuting the Jewish worshippers and facilitating more Arab violence against them. See, Lundsten, “Wall Politics: Zionist and Palestinian Strategies in Jerusalem, 1928,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 8, No 1 (Autumn 1978), 23 n.61, 25

into greater conflict with those of the Mohammedans,” and that the British failed to protect traditional Jewish rights at the Wailing Wall. According to the *Times*, on the Jewish holy day commemorating the destruction of the temple, “a mob of thousands of Arabs invaded the area,” disrupting worship, attacking worshippers, and destroying “sacred objects.”¹⁷ The report concluded that “the public is highly incensed by today’s occurrence, considering it unfortunate that Jewish rights should be so little protected under such a great mandatory power as Britain, in which the Jews had placed great hope and confidence.” On 17 August, according to the *Times* report published the next day, “Arabs, without apparent provocation, attacked Jews in various parts of” Jerusalem. Soon the Arab revolt spread throughout Palestine, and the British declared martial law. In response to the violence, Jewish groups appealed to Christians, “who know and realize the meaning of religious sanctity” and “know how to respect century-old traditions and painful longing for sacred religious shrines,” to “intervene and help us recover the Western Wall.” The prevailing account focused on the supposed religious conflict between Jews and Muslims as the factor that precipitated the violence and ignored Arab opposition to Zionism and the Balfour Declaration. Samuel Untermyer criticized the British for failing to prevent and put down the “anti-Jewish uprising” and characterized the rebellion as a “fanatical religious war of a semi-savage race.” Untermyer chastised Britain for supposedly failing to protect American Jews, who have been providing many benefits to “Palestine and its Arab population.” Untermyer claimed that since “hundreds

¹⁷ Sheean wrote in his diary that a large crowd of Muslims entered the Wailing Wall area and “tore up the sacred books, pulled petitions out of the stones of the Wall, etc. Might have been expected; was, in fact, inevitable. No Jews there; nobody hurt. Jews will be in terrible state of excitement, just the same.” The British commission also concluded that there was no violence against Jews at the Wailing Wall in the Muslim demonstration on the 16th, countering Zionist accounts and reports in the *New York Times*. See, *Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August, 1929*, CMD 3530 (London: H. M. Stationary Office, 1930), 54-56

of thousands of Arabs have profited and are daily profiting” from Zionism, the rebellion demonstrated that “we are dealing with a race of fanatical barbarians who can be governed only by the sternest of repressive measures.” Morris Rothenberg, a vice president of the Zionist Organization of America, insisted that “no cause existed or grievance on the part of the Arabs” because “they have benefited in every way from the Jewish immigration.” In fact, Rothenberg claimed, “Jewish activities in Palestine have resulted in improved health conditions, new schools and economic gains for the Arabs even more than for the Jews.” The *American Hebrew* magazine repeated the claim that urban Arabs recognized “that the millions spent by the Jews on the economic rehabilitation of Palestine have benefited them and the whole population” and concluded that “unscrupulous Moslem agitators” encouraged “the hillmen of the villages and the Bedouins of the desert” to attack the Jewish population. George Young, a British diplomat speaking in the U.S., characterized the conflict in Palestine as a clash of civilizations between the industrial West expanding eastward and Islamic forces attempting to establish Islamic culture throughout Asia. Without British forces in Palestine, Young warned, the Arabs would sweep the Zionists into the sea. A *New York Times* editorial even referred to Western fears “that the Moslems may unite again as they did ten centuries or more ago and overthrow white dominion” throughout the colonial world. This narrative complemented American perceptions about Islam as a violent religion and Muslims as uncivilized extremists and fanatics, while reinforcing the theme that Zionist colonization was benefitting the indigenous population. Consequently, any Arab opposition, instead of raising doubts about Western colonialism in the Near East,

merely illustrated the irrationality and barbarity of the uncivilized Arabs who opposed Jewish and British colonizers supposedly only on religious grounds.¹⁸

¹⁸ “Arab Mob Invades Wailing Wall Lane,” *New York Times*, 17 August 1929, 16; “Arrest Ten Arabs for Attack on Jews,” *New York Times*, 18 August 1929, 24; “Ask All Christians to Save Wailing Wall,” *New York Times*, 19 August 1929, 17; “Arabs Attack Jaffa, Thirty Are Killed,” *New York Times*, 26 August 1929, 6; “Use Aircraft Carrier to Rush More Troops,” *New York Times*, 26 August 1929, 6; “Parade of Protest is Planned Here,” *New York Times*, 26 August 1929, 6; “British Are Urged to Quit Palestine,” *New York Times*, 27 August 1929, 2; “\$25,000 Straus Gift Sent to Palestine,” *New York Times*, 28 August 1929, 4; “Rothenberg Wants Palestine Reform,” *New York Times*, 28 August 1929, 4; “Urges Taking Over of Russian Railway,” *New York Times*, 28 August 1929, 16; “Boston Jews Raising Funds for Palestine,” *New York Times*, 29 August 1929, 3; “Two Add \$50,000 to Palestine Fund,” *New York Times*, 29 August 1929, 3; “Good-Will Body of Church Council Appeals to Christians to Give to Palestine Relief,” *New York Times*, 30 August 1929, 4; “Straus Gives Again to Palestine Fund,” *New York Times*, 1 September 1929, 2; “Unrest in Islam,” *New York Times*, 1 September 1929, E4; Davidson, *America’s Palestine*, 92-96; Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 111-112; Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 330-331

The Central Committee of the Palestine Socialist Union argued that instigators used religion to agitate Muslims to “massacre” Jewish laborers “without any cause or reason” to divide and conquer the Jewish and Arab working classes. Their program called for the unification of Jewish and Arab labor against the British colonizers, Zionist leadership, and the Arab elite. See RDS 867n.00/76 (19 December 1929)

Echoing the sentiments that the Arabs were uncivilized barbarians, Rabbi Samuel Kaplan declared at a service in New Jersey that “it will be 500 years before even the lowest forms of morality can be lifted up among the Arabs of the desert. They have low mentality and long teaching will be required.” See, “East Orange Jews Protest,” *New York Times*, 1 September 1929, 5

Zionists continually reiterated the supposed benefits that the Zionist project bestowed on Arabs. Nathan Straus asserted that “everything the Jews have done in Palestine the Arabs have benefited by. The development of the homeland has given them work, enriched many of them, reduced the menace of typhoid and tuberculosis and taught them higher standards of living.” Consequently, the Arabs should have been grateful to the Jewish colonizers and resisted the “agitators,” who exhorted violence against the “peaceful Jews.” See, “Straus Gives Again to Palestine Fund,” *New York Times*, 1 September 1929, 2

Some Zionists depicted the violence as “pogroms,” which served useful purposes in garnering sympathy for the Jewish victims and avoiding discussions on the ultimate causes of the violence. Judge Bernard Rosenblatt proclaimed that Palestine was experience “a duplicate of Russian massacres under the British flag.” The Zionist Organization of America even formed a “committee on public information” to publicize the Zionist narrative. This narrative, aside from presenting the violence as a religious war, sought to portray the Jews as victims of Arab butchery and barbarism and present the establishment of the Jewish national home as the solution. Some groups, such as a meeting of the United Hebrew Trades, blamed the British administration for its “conniving approval of the work of barbarous marauders.” Revisionist Zionists even asserted that the Jewish national home should include Trans-Jordan for to ensure the security of Palestinian Jews. Despite describing the violence as a pogrom, Zionists would publicly argue that a few instigators precipitated the revolt and that the majority of the Palestinian Arabs were not opposed to the Zionist movement. Again, the question was: if the Arab population strongly opposed Jewish colonization, then how could Palestine serve as a refuge and solution to the persecution of Jews in the West? For Zionists, the goal was to publicly articulate the revolt as the work of religious fanatics or effendis fearing the supposed benefits of Jewish colonization and the characteristic desire of Arabs to loot and pillage and not representing large-scale opposition to Zionism. This entailed the denial of a Palestinian nationalist movement (and the continued assertion that the Arabs in Palestine were part of the Arab nation outside Palestine)—if the Palestinians represented a nation, did they not have the right to self-determination within Palestine?

Morris argues that conflict between the Nashashibis and the Husseinis “in part prompted Amin al-Husseini’s campaign against the Jews and the violence in August 1929. By exploiting religious passions,

A few days after the incident at the Wailing Wall, police forces, fearing an outbreak of violence between Arabs and Jews, violently prevented a Jewish funeral procession for a Jew youth killed in the violence on the 17th from marching through a predominantly Arab sector of Jerusalem.¹⁹ Jewish nationalists, who had arguably precipitated the incident at the Wall by provocatively marching to the Wailing Wall and chanting nationalist slogans, participated in the funeral procession and exhorted the marchers to protest against the British, who supposedly disregarded Jewish rights and supported the Arab position, and exact vengeance against the Arabs. Nationalist groups, including the Jewish Legion and Jabotinsky's Revisionists, planned demonstrations against the Arabs for the incident at the Wailing Wall and the British for failing to carry out the terms of the mandate. American Jewish groups also organized to protest supposed British weakness in fulfilling the Balfour Declaration and the mandate and crushing the Arab opposition and lobbied the U.S. government to "use its good offices in the interests of those ideals of justice and humanity which are the essential characteristics of the American people" so as to protect American citizens in Palestine and prevent a "religious war" that could spread to other parts of the world. Some American Zionists

he hoped to sway the Muslim masses to back his camp." While Zionist leaders focused on religious causes of the conflict, Ben-Gurion and others privately recognized the development of Palestinian nationalism. See, "Situation Reported Quieter," *New York Times*, 27 August 1929, 2; "Zionists to Raise Relief Fund Here," *New York Times*, 27 August 1929, 4; "\$25,000 Straus Gift Sent to Palestine," *New York Times*, 28 August 1929, 4; "London is Anxious about Syrian Arabs," *New York Times*, 1 September 1929, 2; "Straus Adds \$25,000 to His Relief Gifts," *New York Times*, 9 September 1929, 4; Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-1999* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 111-117; Shabtei Teveth, *Ben-Gurion and the Palestinian Arabs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 82-87, 92-94

¹⁹ Sheean wrote that the Jewish boy was killed "by an Arab after a row in the football field (it seems to have been a row started by the Jewish boys, or so they tell me.)" The British commission determined that a Jewish youth, who went to retrieve a ball from an Arab garden, became involved in a quarrel with the owner of the garden and was stabbed. Although ignored in the *Times*' coverage in August 1929, the British commission reported that between August 17 and the uprising a week later, there was significant violence by Jews on Arabs and Arabs on Jews. *Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August, 1929*, CMD 3530 (London: H. M. Stationary Office, 1930), 56-57

charged the British administration with “laxity, inefficiency, incompetence and criminal neglect” for preventing the rebellion. Future articles published in the *Times* completely omitted the Jewish nationalist parade to the Wailing Wall and instead focused on the Arab attack on Jewish worshippers lamenting the destruction of the temple and the resulting violence as well as emphasizing the supposed British failure to protect Jewish rights. The iterated themes were that Arabs and Jews were “engaged in serious religious warfare” and that the British failure to fulfill the terms of the Balfour Declaration and the mandate dealing with the establishment of the Jewish national home was the major cause of the Arab rebellion because the “equivocal” British policy has made the Arabs “bold, arrogant and intolerant” according to Louis Lipsky. Rabbi Stephen Wise echoed this sentiment, arguing that the British ought to have prevented the Arabs from pursuing what he considered “a seditious and incendiary propaganda.” The British had a responsibility to fulfill the Balfour Declaration, Wise proclaimed, which took precedent over “appeasing the Indo-Moslems and the Arabs.” Ignoring interpretations that the terms of the declaration and mandate nominally protected the rights of the indigenous population, Wise reiterated that only a firm British commitment to establishing the Jewish national home in Palestine would end Arab opposition. Weizmann echoed sentiments that the British failure to actively promote the establishment of the Jewish national home was the ultimate cause of the Arab uprising and argued that the British administration in Palestine was anti-Semitic and that only a “strong Jewish National Home” in Palestine would protect British imperial interests in the strategic Near East. Behind the scenes, Weizmann assiduously lobbied the British government to implement immigration,

economic, and political policies conducive to the establishment of the Jewish national home.²⁰

²⁰ “Funeral Causes Jerusalem Clash,” *New York Times*, 22 August 1929, 9; “Protest Arab Brutality,” *New York Times*, 23 August 1929, 10; “Jews Allege Arabs Desecrate Wall,” *New York Times*, 25 August 1929, 5; “Parade of Protest is Planned Here,” *New York Times*, 26 August 1929, 6; “Situation Reported Quieter,” *New York Times*, 27 August 1929, 2; “15,000 Jews March in Protest Here,” *New York Times*, 27 August 1929, 3; “Zionists Go to Capital for Formal Protests,” *New York Times*, 27 August 1929, 4; “Zionist Executives Called to London,” *New York Times*, 27 August 1929, 3; “Riots Preventable, Rabbi Wise Asserts,” *New York Times*, 30 August 1929, 8; “Albany Jews Protest,” *New York Times*, 28 August 1929, 3; “Washington Meeting Protests Massacres,” *New York Times*, 2 September 1929, 2; *Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August, 1929*, CMD 3530 (London: H. M. Stationary Office, 1930), 57; *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Vol I, Series B, August 1898-July 1931*, Barnet Litvinoff, ed (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books and Rutgers University, 1983), 563-564, 567; *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Volume XIV, Series A, July 1929-October 1930*, Camillo Dresner, ed.(New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books and Rutgers University, 1978), 15-16, 44-46.

A Jewish resolution was given to British diplomats during the Jewish protest march in New York. The resolution stated in part:

We, the Jews of New York, including the legionaires who fought under the British flag for the liberation of Palestine, and the Jewish war veterans of the United States, . . . declare to mankind before God that the responsibility for this frightful tragedy rests directly upon England, the Arabs and the Palestine Administration. England, which solemnly assumed and accepted from the League of Nations the duties and obligations of the mandate of Palestine, the chief of which was and is to place the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home, has flagrantly ignored and violated these duties and obligations from the very beginning and has instead maintained in Palestine an administration which has shown persistent hostility to the Jews and neglected even to accord them the elementary protection of a civilized government.

Instead of any concern that such a policy may have precipitated the Arab rebellion, American Jewish organizations involved in the protest called upon the British to repress the rebellion and institute policies in Palestine that would result in the establishment of the Jewish national home.

Another common theme complementing the idea that the British and Zionists could only deal with the Arabs through force (a common refrain of colonial powers dealing with colonized peoples) was that the British needed to demonstrate its power to Muslims to maintain control in Palestine and throughout the Muslim territories of the British Empire. Any sign of British weakness, the argument went, would only encourage Muslims throughout the British empire to revolt. Force and renewed British determination to implement the Balfour Declaration were necessary against the Palestinian Arabs, Zionists argued, because, as Chaim Weizmann postulated, “the Arab understands realities and facts and clear directions” and “the mentality of the East requires that justice, to be effective, should be swift and strong” and must target the instigators of the fanatical mob. To Ramsay MacDonald, Weizmann argued that “the Arab[s] must realise that we have come *to stay*. Only when this realisation has penetrated into their minds they will be prepared to negotiate with us.” We have an example of the Zionists claiming the ability and the right to interpret the Arab mind and the idea that creating “facts on the ground” was the accepted method to establish Jewish sovereignty over the land and resources. The *Times* reported that Muslims in India and other British colonies expressed their criticism of British policy and that the British were quite concerned about any large-scale rebellions throughout the empire. Additionally, the *Times* maintained that the mandate dictated that the British were responsible for “protecting the Jews against Arab violence.” British military forces did not hesitate to use heavy fire from air, naval and ground forces against the Arab resistance. While the British used a great deal of force against the Arabs, the Zionists continued to assert that the British actions showed sympathy with the Arab position. It is doubtful that the West would have accepted with equanimity the British bombing of Jewish forces anytime during the mandate period, but the harsh repression of Arab resistance was the only way to keep the barbarians in check. See, “Situation Reported Quieter,” *New York Times*, 27 August 1929, 2; “18 British Warships Are Speeding to Palestine; Infantry,

Discourse on the Arab Uprising

Altogether 133 Jews and 117 Arabs were killed during the rebellion and 339 Jews and 232 Arabs were wounded.²¹ Western media reports and Zionist accounts focused on the “premeditated” Arab “terrorism and violence” against the Jewish population and

Artillery, Tanks and 100 Planes on Way,” *New York Times*, 27 August 1929, 2; “British to Uphold Prestige in East,” *New York Times*, 28 August 1929, 3; “All British Armed After Sykes Death,” *New York Times*, 28 August 1929, 2; “London Sees Peace as Troops Attack,” *New York Times*, 29 August 1929, 2; “British Jews Weep in Prayer for Zion,” *New York Times*, 2 September 1929, 2; “Palestine Relief Gets \$60, 527 in Day,” *New York Times*, 5 September 1929, 9; “26 Arab Casualties Listed After Attack,” *New York Times*, 6 September 1929, 3; “British Cease Raid on Moslem Towns,” *New York Times*, 6 September 1929, 3; “Moslem World Reaches over Many Countries,” *New York Times*, 8 September 1929, XX4; *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Vol 1, Series B, August 1898-July 1931*, Barnet Litvinoff, ed (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books and Rutgers University, 1983), 560-566; *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Volume XIV, Series A, July 1929-October 1930*, Camillo Dresner, ed.(New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books and Rutgers University, 1978), 45.

Jewish groups also demonstrated in Warsaw, Paris, London, Buenos Aires and other major cities to protest British policy and the Arab “riots” and “massacres.” Some went so far as to call British policy “anti-Jewish.” Polish Zionists declared that the solution was to make Palestine Jewish. The World Zionist Organization petitioned the British to compensate victims of the riots, allow Jews to arm themselves, remove British officials responsible for not preventing the violence and adequately punish those involved in the violence, and clearly articulate British policy regarding the Jewish national home. Rothenberg, for example, demanded that the British replace “unfit” officials in Palestine with those favorable to establishing the Jewish national home in Palestine and willing to demonstrate to the Arabs that the “civilized world” supported Zionism. Lipsky iterated these demands and claimed that the British needed to increase Jewish immigration to Palestine and hand the Wailing Wall to the Jews. Jewish organizations in Poland, Canada, and the U.S., for example, also volunteered to form Jewish military groups to fight in Palestine.

See, “Jews Demonstrate in Paris and London,” *New York Times*, 30 August 1929, 4; “3,000 Jews Parade in Warsaw,” *New York Times*, 29 August 1929, 4; “Assails British Officials,” *New York Times*, 27 August 1929, 4; “Warsaw Jews Close Shops in Protest,” *New York Times*, 28 August 1929, 2; “Reparation Plea Made by Zionists,” *New York Times*, 28 August 1929, 3; “Rothenberg Wants Palestine Reform,” *New York Times*, 28 August 1929, 4; “Jews Here Offer to Raise Legions,” *New York Times*, 28 August 1929, 4; “London Sees Peace as Troops Attack,” *New York Times*, 29 August 1929, 2; “Zionists in London Raise \$250,000 Fund,” *New York Times*, 29 August 1929, 3; “Urge Recall of Officials,” *New York Times*, 30 August 1929, 2; “Ask Jewish Defense Body,” *New York Times*, 30 August 1929, 3; “Plan Washington Protest,” *New York Times*, 30 August 1929, 4; “Argentine Jews to Raise \$400,000,” *New York Times*, 31 August 1929, 4; “St. Louis Jews Protest,” *New York Times*, 31 August 1929, 4; “Dobbie Gives Jews Promise of Action,” *New York Times*, 31 August 1929, 4; “French to Check Arabs in Syria,” *New York Times*, 2 September 1929, 2; “British Jews Weep in Prayer for Zion,” *New York Times*, 2 September 1929, 2; “Philadelphia Jews Aid Palestine Fund,” *New York Times*, 9 September 1929, 4.

Groups from all over the world sympathetic to both the Zionists and the Arabs protested British policy and appealed to the League of Nations to support their positions. Additionally, countries such as Argentina expressed opposition to the mandate system and any great power intervention in weaker nations. Argentina, the *Times* reported, feared any precedent that would justify U.S. intervention in Latin America. See, “Petitions to League Ask Aid in Palestine,” *New York Times*, 28 August 1929, 2; “Argentina Blames League,” *New York Times*, 30 August 1929, 2; “5,000 in Baghdad Protest,” *New York Times*, 31 August 1929, 4; “Cairo Hears of Attacks,” *New York Times*, 1 September 1929, 2.

²¹ Morris writes that “the upshot of August 1929 was that the Zionists were persuaded of the need for a powerful militia.” Not only was more effort devoted to the development of the Haganah, but right-wing Zionist forces also formed the Irgun militia. See Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 120

consistently characterized the Arabs as “fanatical and untamed tribesmen” bent on rape and murder and the Arab “riots” as undermining the Jewish civilizing effort in Palestine.²² Donating money for relief efforts, the philanthropist Nathan Straus lamented the conditions of “the men and women who have dedicated their lives to building up a land where Jews are to know peace at last, and who have now fertilized the land with their blood and made it more holy than ever to the Jewish people.” David Brown, the chairman of the Palestine Emergency Fund, described the Arab rebellion as “one of the most brutal and cowardly massacres that has ever been perpetrated in the world’s history.” Robert Wagner, member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, stated in a radio address that “in the long history of Palestine, from the day when the patriarchal Abraham first turned his eyes toward the Promised Land, through all the civilizations that have come and gone to the present day, there is not recorded a more shameful event than the present slaughter of defenseless men, women and children by murderous hordes of fanatical Arabs.” Revisionist Zionists in the United States characterized the violence as “the brutally savage and uncivilized actions of the nomad Arabs” and called for the formation of a “permanent Jewish legion” in Palestine to defend the Jewish settlers from the Arabs. Even the British High Commissioner, Sir John Chancellor, stated on his return to Palestine at the end of August that “I have learned with horror of the atrocious acts committed by bodies of ruthless and blood-thirsty evil-doers, of savage murders

²² The British commission reported 133 Jews killed and 339 wounded and 116 Arabs killed and 232 wounded. The report observed that the Arab numbers were probably higher since the statistics only included those admitted to the hospitals. Many Arab families did not report casualties to the authorities since the British military and police forces were primarily responsible for shooting and killing Arab protestors. The British reported incidents of Jewish groups attacking and killing Arabs. One noted incident was the desecration of the Mosque of Okasha in Jerusalem. The Zionists and *New York Times* ignored such violence in their accounts as counter to the Zionist narrative. See, *Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August, 1929*, CMD 3530 (London: H. M. Stationary Office, 1930), 65-66

It would be interesting to compare how American newspapers covered race riots and lynchings in the U.S., especially during and after WWI, with their coverage of the violence in Palestine in August 1929.

perpetrated among defenceless members of the Jewish population regardless of age or sex, accompanied...by acts of unspeakable savagery, of the burning of farms and houses in town and country and of the looting and destruction of property.” The depictions of Arab “savage attacks and inhuman massacres” during the rebellion were similar to descriptions of Indian massacres of white settlers throughout American history. Just as the Native Americans had no right to resist white encroachment, so the Arabs had no right to resist British and Jewish colonization. A couple articles even asserted that there was evidence that Communists incited the Arab violence against British imperialism and the Jewish population. Not all Jewish coverage of the violence in Palestine portrayed all the Jews as innocent victims. The *American Hebrew* editorialized

The arrogance of the so-called Zionist revolutionaries is doubtless a causative factor behind the unhappy Moslem outbreaks against the Jews. The bravado with which they claim Jewish Palestine against the Arabs, the aggressive zeal with which they demand an exclusive Jewish nationhood in Palestine, the inflammatory political harangues with which they demonstrate their foolhardy assertiveness, are in no little measure to blame for the ill will and recurrent clashes between Moslem and Jew in the Holy Land.²³

Although ignoring the opposition of Christian Arabs to Zionist and British policy (or simply making the common mistake of equating all Arabs with Islam), the *American*

²³ “\$25,000 Straus Gift Sent to Palestine,” *New York Times*, 28 August 1929, 4; “Straus Adds \$25,000 to His Relief Gifts,” *New York Times*, 9 September 1929, 4; “London Sees Peace as Troops Attack,” *New York Times*, 29 August 1929, 2. The *Times* editorialized that “whatever may be thought of past mistakes or present responsibilities in Palestine,” there is no doubt that the only response to the violence was “a recrudescence of horror” at the reports of “rapine and massacre” and “ferocity and fanaticism.” The *Times* effectively dismissed any concern about causes and historical context to simply condemn that Arab violence. See, “A Shock to the World,” *New York Times*, 28 August 1929, 18; “Militant Zionists Seek Jewish Legion,” *New York Times*, 5 September 1929, 8; *Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August, 1929*, CMD 3530 (London: H. M. Stationary Office, 1930), 68

Even though Chancellor told the League of Nations that Palestinian Arabs were not yet fit for self-government earlier that summer, he argued in late August 1929 that he was breaking off any discussions with the Colonial Secretary and the Arab Executive. While the Arabs may have hoped that the violence would force the British to reconsider their policy and establish self-government in Palestine, the end result was British delay and obfuscation in developing democratic institutions so long as the Arabs maintained a majority. While political and nonviolent means had previously failed to force a change in British policy, violent actions only solidified a rejection of Arab goals as the MacDonald letter would clearly illustrate. See Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement, 1918-1929*, 273

Hebrew acknowledged that Zionist racism and claims to Palestine created Arab resistance to a project that the Arabs understood as a threat to their homeland. A former British official in Palestine posited that the conflict stemmed from the contradictory British promises made to the Arabs and the Jews during the war and surmised that Americans would not support the colonization of Central European Jews in the United States on the same terms that Palestinian Arabs were being forced to accept Jewish immigration and the establishment of the Jewish national home. These perspectives, however, received scant treatment and virtually no commentary compared to the Zionist narrative, which dominated the pages of the *New York Times*.²⁴

The Zionist Organization of America declared that the Grand Mufti's statement in early September that the British enforcement of the Balfour Declaration threatened the

²⁴ "Urges Taking Over of Chinese Railway," *New York Times*, 28 August 1929, 16; "3 Religions Join in Protest in Syria," *New York Times*, 29 August 1929, 3; "Palestine Relief Gets \$27,000 in Day," *New York Times*, 30 August 1929, 4; "Wagner Says Arabs Planned 'Murders,'" *New York Times*, 2 September 1929, 1.

In the wake of the uprising, Martin Buber continued to warn against extreme Jewish nationalism and called for a bi-national state in Palestine. Interestingly, in calling upon Zionists to reject the predominant ideology of nationalism, Buber accepted that the Jewish case was exceptional because the Jewish people were undertaking a special mission for the world. While supporting better relations with the Arabs, Buber maintained that the Zionists had the right to their ancient land, not because of some historical right which he dismissed, but because the Jewish people in Palestine would benefit humanity (through the development of new socialist communities) and the Jewish pioneers transformed an undeveloped and underutilized wasteland (echoing the arguments of European and American settlers in what is now the United States).

For Hans Kohn, one of Buber's disciples, the violence in 1929 precipitated a break with the Zionism movement. Kohn had considered Zionism an idealistic movement "within which we could realize our most fundamental humane convictions: our pacifism, liberalism, and humanism." While acknowledging that he "was not concerned with the Arabs but with the Jews," Kohn recognized that the characterization of the Arab violence as the result of the instigation of a very small minority was a common tactic as imperial powers sought to dismiss "the national movements of oppressed peoples" because they "threaten the interests of the colonial power." Kohn observed that the Zionists and the British vehemently condemned the Arab violence as barbaric and noted that "since they have no armies, they could not obey the rules of war," a point that remains relevant today. He criticized the Zionists for failing to have "even once made a serious attempt at seeking through negotiations the consent of the indigenous people," relying on British military power, and establishing "goals which by their very nature had to lead to conflict with the Arabs." Finally, Kohn predicted that the Zionists would gain Palestine through military force (both British and Jewish), which undermined arguments that Zionism was beneficial to the Arab population.

See Paul Mendes-Flohr, ed., *A Land of Two Peoples: Martin Buber on Jews and Arabs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 81-91, 95-100

peace and security of Arab Muslims demonstrated both the “hidden motives...behind the Arab uprising” and the Grand Mufti’s culpability for “one of the greatest crimes against civilization that history has ever witnessed.” According to the *Times*, the ZOA asserted that “the motive behind the Arab uprising” was “enmity toward the Zionist movement to rehabilitate Palestine as a Jewish homeland.” The Zionists interpreted the Grand Mufti’s statement as an admission that the Muslim leaders feared “not oppression by the Jews, but the ultimate success of the rebuilding of Palestine.” Zionist “upbuilding” of Palestine presumably illustrated to the Arab masses that their leaders were responsible for the “backwardness of Palestine for so many centuries.” This interpretation was part of a concerted effort to present Zionism as a benevolent civilizing effort to raise living standards in Palestine, obscuring that opposition to Zionism was not based on irrational opposition to improvements in living standards but upon the clear understanding that Zionism was an attempt to colonize a land inhabited by Palestinian Arabs. The ZOA concluded that “the civilized world must see from the Grand Mufti’s public declaration that premeditation and a studied policy are behind the Arab outrages. How unjust his position is must be admitted by all those who know of the many benefits Jewish reconstruction work in Palestine has brought to the Arabs.” In another article, the *Times* reported Weizmann’s contention that a primary cause of the riots was “the jealousy among the wealthy Moslems who felt they were losing control over the Arab workers through the English and Jewish policy of paying better wages and raising the standard of living.” This argument was well-constructed for an American audience versed in the discourse of manifest destiny and benevolent imperialism. Carefully avoiding discussing the reality of Zionist colonization under British protection, the Zionists reiterated

arguments that the Jewish “upbuilding” of Palestine benefited the indigenous population, which meant that any Arab opposition or resistance was a barbaric challenge to civilization instigated by agitators fearful of the transformation of the desert into a “land of milk and honey.”²⁵

The Jewish Agency for Palestine published a number of pamphlets and speeches in the wake of the August uprising to propagate the Zionist understanding of events and counter any challenges to the Jewish colonization of Palestine. The first pamphlet, titled *Palestine and the British Taxpayer*, dealt with arguments that the British taxpayer was

²⁵ “Zionists Accuse Moslem Council,” *New York Times*, 3 September 1929, 21; “Warburg Invites Arab Cooperation,” *New York Times*, 5 September 1929, 10; “British Cease Raid on Moslem Towns,” *New York Times*, 6 September 1929, 3; Vincent Sheean, “Holy Land, 1929” in Walid Khalidi, *From Haven to Conquest: Readings in Zionism and the Palestine Problem until 1948* (Beirut: The Institute for Palestine Studies, 1971), 273-301

Knabenshue cabled Washington during the early days of the uprising that the “mob violence” did not “have the support” of Arab religious or political leaders. See, *FRUS*, 1929, Volume III, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1929v03> (accessed 20 December 2011), 50-51

Weizmann repeatedly asserted sentiments to the effect that “there is nothing that need cause apprehension to the Arab population in Palestine. Through our labors in the past they have profited greatly, and they have much to gain from them in the future, although in such a scheme of peaceful development the agitators who have been chiefly responsible for the present outrages may see no very pleasing prospect.” See, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Vol 1, Series B, August 1898-July 1931*, Barnett Litvinoff, ed (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books and Rutgers University, 1983), 564

Sheean was an American journalist sympathetic to Zionism before visiting Palestine in the summer of 1929. His experiences there caused him to reevaluate the Zionist and British policy. On one visit to a Jewish colony, a Zionist acquaintance baldly asserted that those opposed to Zionism “want to see the children of this country brought up in filth and neglect, as you can see in any Arab village.” Zionism was introducing civilization and progress to Palestine, the argument went, and any resistance to Zionism illustrated opposition to civilization and progress. Sheean responded that such arguments were absurd and “the only reasonable opposition” to Zionism was “based upon the fact that Zionism proposes to settle or colonize a country that is already inhabited by another people.” Sheean’s Zionist tour guide responded that the Arabs had no nationalist feelings and would support Zionism as long as they were offered bribes. Sheean was quite dubious of such a racist interpretation and came to understand the strong Palestinian bond with the land (despite the Zionist proclamations that the Arabs had Syria, Trans-Jordan, Iraq, and Arabia). Sheean warned that the implementation of the Balfour declaration meant the permanent British occupation of Palestine.

The Arab uprising also convinced other Americans, such as the Rev. John Clark Archer, professor of Missions and Comparative Religion at Yale, that “Zionism was a mistaken policy,” dependent upon British power and American financial contributions. Additionally, Archer argued that the Zionists had “no right to a State in so predominantly a Moslem community.” See, “Zionism Called Unsound,” *New York Times*, 8 September 1929, N5

Peter Grose repeats the Zionist contention that the Grand Mufti instigated the violence in the one sentence he devotes to the 1929 uprising: “In August 1929, the anger of Palestinian Arabs broke into the open under the inflammatory leadership of the Mufti of Jerusalem, and a wave of terror attacks against the Jewish settlements raised serious doubts about the viability of the Zionist effort.” See, Peter Grose, *Israel in the Mind of America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983)

subsidizing the administration in Palestine and the Zionist movement and proposed that Jewish development and finances paid for Jewish colonization and the civil administration and that the British military expenses were largely incurred because of British strategic interests in the region, not primarily because of providing military forces to implement the Balfour Declaration and provide security for the Jewish colonists. This short publication emphasized that the Jewish colonizers were undertaking a civilizing mission in Palestine and argued that the pioneers:

have made roads, drained marshes, reafforested hills, introduced electricity, founded a large number of useful industries, built the city of Tel-Aviv and new parts of other cities, established a network of schools and hospitals throughout all districts, introduced co-operative methods in connection with agricultural settlements, labour, credit and stores, and generally raised the social, economic, and cultural level of the country.

Such “splendid” colonization and development, the Agency proposed, did not cost the British taxpayers “even a single farthing a year” and benefited the Arabs who sold “their land to Jews at an enormous profit,” found work in the Jewish settlements, learned about modern agriculture, and profited from the Jewish market for Arab agricultural produce. Another pamphlet, *The Palestinian Arabs under the British Mandate*, also emphasized how British administration and Jewish colonization contributed to the increase in the population of the “non-Jewish communities,” the raising of living standards, improvements in working conditions, and the development of a working class consciousness in Palestine, allowing for the conclusion that there was “little truth...in the allegation that Palestine as a whole and the Arabs in particular have suffered in any way as a result of the policy of the Jewish National Home.” The Jewish Agency further iterated that Jewish land purchase was beneficial to the Arab landowners and only rarely resulted in the dispossession of Arab peasants. In such cases, the Agency argued,

Zionists “gave [the dispossessed peasants] compensation in every case of eviction and *offered alternative land.*” Such arguments supported the common theme that agitators were responsible for inciting the religious passions of the Arab peasants against the Jewish population; in the absence of religious fanaticism, the Arab masses would recognize all the benefits that Jewish colonization brought to Palestine.²⁶

Building on this civilizing mission theme, *Financial Aspects of Jewish Reconstruction in Palestine: How the Arabs Have Benefited Through Jewish Immigration* proposed that Jewish colonization and land purchase provided the Arab population and Palestine with much needed capital, modern infrastructure, employment, and civilization. Again the Jewish Agency argued that British administration and Jewish colonization benefited the exploited Arab masses and threatened the privileged position of the Arab effendi. According to this logic, the effendi instigated the Arab fellaheen to oppose the sale of land to the Jewish pioneers simply as a means to raise land prices, which would allow the Arab absentee landlord to sell “all the more dearly to the Jews.” While the Jewish Agency suggested that Arabs were quite willing to sell land to Jewish colonists, the Jewish population owned less than seven percent of the land on the eve of the UN vote on partition in 1947, although that small percentage represented a significant portion of the best agricultural land. Without Jewish colonization and development, the Agency offered, “the bulk of the population would once more become poor, fall into debt, and become a prey to the exploitation of the effendis,” who then would purchase “large blocks of land at cheap prices and later offer them to the Jews.” The Jewish Agency even suggested that if the ignorant Arab masses understood the motives behind the agitators

²⁶ *Palestine and the British Tax-Payer* (London: Jewish Agency for Palestine, 1929); *The Palestinian Arabs under the British Mandate* (London: Jewish Agency for Palestine, 1930)
Emphasis in original.

against Jewish immigration and land purchase, then they would “not tolerate” the anti-Jewish demonstrations and riots, but support Jewish colonization as congruent with their interests. In *Jewish Achievements in Palestine*, the Jewish Agency emphasized the backwardness of Palestine and declared that “for a thousand years the Arabs, except for the period in which it was held by the Crusaders, made nothing of the country, and the Turks could show them no better way.” This pamphlet, which included sixteen photographs illustrating Jewish achievements, emphasized that the Jewish pioneers brought modernization, industrialization, development, and Western civilization to backward Palestine, a civilizing mission program congruent with Western values and interests.²⁷

The Jewish Agency also published a number of speeches supportive of the Zionist cause. In mid January 1930, General Jan Smuts spoke to the Zionist Organization of America at the Ritz Carlton in New York City. In his address, Smuts stated that “in South Africa all Jews are Zionists, and the Christians are pro-Zionists,” perhaps intimating the close relationship between Smuts and Weizmann and even foreshadowing the close relationship between South Africa and Israel in the future. Smuts was confident in his view “as one of the original projectors of this [Balfour] Declaration that Great Britain, which made the solemn pledge, and the United States and international community, which ratified it, would fulfill their obligations to the Jewish people and carry out the terms of the Declaration and the mandate. He rhetorically asked “Why should [the Jews] not have their ancient homeland—the country where they laboured, the country where they worked not only for themselves but for the good of the human race?”

²⁷ *Financial Aspects of Jewish Reconstruction in Palestine: How the Arabs Have Benefited Through Jewish Immigration* (London: Jewish Agency for Palestine, 1930); *Jewish Achievements in Palestine* (London: Jewish Agency for Palestine, 1930)

The British, Smuts asserted, had the responsibility to protect the Jewish population in Palestine and facilitate “an orderly and free immigration.” While warning that Palestine could not “absorb a large population” because of its size and resources, Smuts argued that Jewish immigration needed to be large enough to counter the demographic disparity between Arabs and Jews, which posed a threat because there was the possibility that the “great majority” would “be unjust and unfair” in their treatment of the present “small” and “insignificant” Jewish population. For Smuts, British policy was not anti-Arab. In fact, he proposed that the British fulfilled their commitments to the Arab people and that “if any nation came out of the Great War with flying colours it is the Arab people.” Consequently, he stated that the British had the responsibility to fulfill their pledge to the Jewish people and implicitly suggested that Arab opposition to the establishment of a Jewish National Home “in their ancient homeland” was not legitimate. Smuts concluded that the creation of the Jewish National Home was “a great reparation for [past] injustice” and predicted that the Jewish people would have the opportunity to make great contributions to civilization from their national homeland.²⁸

The Jewish Agency published four of Weizmann’s speeches in a pamphlet called *The Position in Palestine*. At a protest demonstration in London on 1 September 1929, Weizmann harshly criticized the British administration in Palestine, not only for allowing the Arabs to commit atrocities against the Jewish population, but primarily for failing to fulfill the terms of the mandate and “creating the political, social and economic conditions necessary to secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home.” Weizmann offered that “the Arab understands realities and facts and clear directions” and

²⁸ Jan Smuts, *A Great Historic Vow: An Address on British and Jewish Responsibilities in Palestine* (London: Jewish Agency, 1930)

insisted that the British failure to clearly demonstrate to the Arabs the British government's firm commitment to the mandate and the Balfour Declaration allowed the Arabs to violently oppose the Zionist project. Doubting whether the British were willing to use necessary force against the Arabs, Weizmann reminded the mandatory power that "a strong Jewish National Home" was "indispensable" to British strategic interests in the Near East. Aside from the agitators of the "pogrom," the Arab population had nothing to fear and "much to gain" from Jewish colonization. For the Arabs to accept Zionism, however, the British needed to severely punish the leaders whom Zionists claimed instigated the rebellion by appealing to the "fanaticism" and "ignorance" of the Arab masses. For their part, the Zionists needed to redouble their efforts in reconstructing Eretz Israel, which Weizmann offered as a symbol of peace and civilization for the entire world.²⁹

In mid November 1929, Weizmann spoke in London before the Central Asian Society. Presenting a short history of the Zionist movement, Weizmann suggested that the British, aside from strategic aims, developed the Balfour Declaration in part because of their "deep-rooted belief that the Jews would return to Palestine" and hope that the British people "might have a hand in bringing about this return." In a discussion of the Balfour Declaration and the mandate for Palestine, Weizmann noted that the British policy protected "the legitimate interests of the people already in Palestine," without articulating what those "legitimate interests" were, asserted that the "historic connection of the Jews with Palestine" meant that the Jewish people were "in Palestine not on sufferance, but by right," and suggested that Feisal (and by implication the Arabs)

²⁹ "The Atrocities in Palestine," in *The Position in Palestine: Speeches by Dr. Chaim Weizmann, President of the Jewish Agency for Palestine* (London: Jewish Agency for Palestine, 1930)

accepted Zionist aims, without discussing Feisal's conditions for acceptance of the Zionist project and questioning his authority to speak for the Palestinian Arabs. Describing Zionism as a civilizing mission and "a democratic movement based on the sympathies of the vast masses of Jews all over the world," Weizmann proposed that Jewish immigration, land acquisition, colonization, and development of Palestine did not negatively affect the Arabs, but instead "contributed rather to improve their condition" because the idealism underlying Zionism made it imperative that Jewish colonists not cause injustice to the Arabs. The land that the Jewish agencies purchased "was a neglected country, an eyesore, a sandy, marshy waste" where the Arabs died from disease. Jewish development transformed this wasteland into a productive and healthy environment, which allowed for increases in population. Such a civilizing mission meant that the Jews and Arabs could successfully and peacefully "live together in Palestine."³⁰

Speaking before the Anglo-Palestinian Club in London in early December 1929, Weizmann echoed the theme that the British saw Zionism as rectifying a "Jewish wrong" and emphasized that the British also supported Zionism as congruent with their strategic interests in the Near East. Weizmann stated:

Well, it was vital to have this key position populated by a friendly and intelligent and civilised people ready to pour out their money and use their intelligence and their efforts to transform Palestine from what was a reproach to humanity into a country which could enter into the comity of civilised peoples.

Importantly, Weizmann declared that "the meaning of the Balfour Declaration is what we shall make of it," suggesting that other interpretations of the British policy challenged Zionist goals. Acknowledging that "the Arabs were not ready to receive us with open arms," Weizmann argued that "civilised humanity" provided a legal foundation for the

³⁰ "The Zionist Movement under the Palestine Mandate," in *Ibid.*

Zionist movement through the ratification of the mandate for Palestine. Consequently, “in a fight of the desert against progress and civilization,” Jewish pioneers “drained marshes; they broke stones; they built roads; they created villages and schools, and the University, and everything you see to-day that is modern and progressive in Palestine.” Pro-Arabs who challenged the Zionist movement wanted to “preserve [Palestine] as a Museum, as a National Park” and romanticized and privileged “stagnation against progress, efficiency, health, and education.” Pointing to a resolution of the Twelfth Zionist Congress that pronounced the willingness of the Zionist to cooperate with the Arabs in the development of Palestine and assuring his audience that the Jewish Agency adopted that policy, Weizmann warned that there were no Arab partners for the Zionists and that the “self-appointed” Arab leaders “endeavour[ed] to drive [the Jews] into the sea.” At the same time, however, Weizmann was privately discussing with the British government the “transfer” of the Arab population from Palestine to other Arab territories, a point that we will return to below.³¹

Despite the overall disparity in coverage favoring the Zionist narrative, Arab groups attempted to present their case to the public as well. Arab-Americans, including members of the Palestine National League, denied that religion caused the violence in Palestine. Abbas M. Abushakra, general secretary of the New Syria party, argued that the problems were political and economic and stemmed from an unjust policy of establishing

³¹ “The Jewish National Home and Its Significance,” in *Ibid.* In a speech to German Zionists in late December 1929, Weizmann reiterated the historical rights of the Jewish people to “build up our National Home in Eretz-Israel, rights that were based on “the promise of God to Abraham.” He also reinforced the idea that “not a hair of the native population has been touched” because of Jewish colonization. In fact, Weizmann argued that Jewish colonization was exceptional because it was carried out peacefully without the force of arms. He also echoed his earlier speeches when he declared that the Zionists sought cooperation with the Arab population, but that so far the Arabs had rejected those offers. See, “The Jewish People’s Right to Its National Home,” in *Ibid.*

the national home in Palestine for Jewish immigrants primarily from Europe at the expense of the political and national rights of the Arab majority. In a message to Hoover and Secretary of State Stimson, representatives of various Arab-American groups proposed that the “application of the Balfour Declaration under British mandate deprives Arabs of all their rights.” Consequently, the Arab-Americans emphasized to Hoover and Stimson that the “abrogation of [the] declaration is [the] only means to ensure permanent peace.” The message iterated the theme that “Arabs world over look to American sense of freedom and justice to uphold Arabs in their struggle for national independence.” The Arabs asserted that Zionism was premised on the dispossession and expulsion of the Palestinians and that the British administration ought to govern in the interests of the majority population instead of a minority immigrant community. In the Arab propaganda effort, Arab resistance, therefore, was presented as a rational response to Zionist and British colonialism, and periodically the *Times* acknowledged that the Arabs demanded “immediate abolition of the Balfour Declaration, prompt cessation of Jewish immigration and the establishment of a democratic Arabian government.” In early September, Stephen Haboush, a Christian Arab American, proposed to the *Times* that the revolt demonstrated Palestinian resentment to the British policies that granted political power to “radical” and “arrogant” Jewish immigrants from Southeastern Europe although these settlers only comprised a small minority of the population in Palestine. The Executive Committee of the Palestine Arab Congress reminded the world that Arabs fought in the Great War for independence, not the replacement of the Ottoman Turks with British, French, and Zionist colonial forces. Iterating complete opposition to the establishment of a Jewish government in Palestine, the Palestinian Arabs demanded representative

government. Auni Abd-el-Hadi Sij, secretary of the Arab Executive, petitioned the British government to “grant us immediately a democratic government based on the de facto majority of the population as it is now composed,” and warned of future Arab uprisings to protest any further Jewish colonization of Palestine. In response to Arab references to British wartime agreements and Allied declarations of principles as the basis for Arab independence and self-determination, American Zionists suggested that British pledges for Arab independence did not include Palestine “since the whole of that country west of the Jordan was specifically excluded” and argued that Palestinian Arabs did not fight against the Ottomans while Jewish forces did. Furthermore, American Zionists continued to claim that the Jewish people had “historic” rights to Palestine and that Zionism would not infringe upon the “religious and civil” rights of the “non-Jewish communities,” but bring them the benefits of development and progress.³²

Zionists even excoriated Rabbi Judah Magnes, chancellor of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, when his proposal for a bi-national state in Palestine reignited the debate on the merits of political Zionism.³³ Even though the proposal was based on

³² “Says Palestine Riots Are Purely Political,” *New York Times*, 4 September 1929, 9; “British Cease Raid on Moslem Towns,” *New York Times*, 6 September 1929, 3; “Riots Part of Plan, Says Arab Leader,” *New York Times*, 7 September 1929, 3; “Rights in Palestine of Jews Debated,” *New York Times*, 27 October 1929, N3

In the wake of the Arab uprising, American Zionists increased their efforts to disseminate their views within the United States. Some American Zionists resolved to start a corporation to further the economic development of Palestine. Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis participated in this business venture to create a “Jewish Palestine” and argued that “it was as much for British interest as for our interest that Palestine should be developed by Jews.” In fact, Brandeis claimed that the Balfour Declaration was “consistent with the interests of all the European powers and consistent also with the interests of the Allies.” Declaring that the Arab threat was insignificant against Jewish self-defense forces, Brandeis predicted that hundreds of thousands of Jewish pioneers were ready to immigrate to Palestine and make it “the safest place in the world.” See, “Plan Corporation to Aid Palestine,” *New York Times*, 25 November 1929, 20; “Lipsky Makes Plea for Zionism’s Ideal,” *New York Times*, 2 December 1929, 5

³³ In 1925, cultural Zionists founded Brit Shalom, a short-lived organization based on bi-nationalism and parity (equal rights and representation no matter the demographic imbalance between Jews and Arabs). Members of Brit Shalom argued that both Jews and Arabs had legitimate and equal claim to Palestine and that Zionist leaders needed to negotiate and compromise with Palestinian Arabs to peacefully solve the “Arab question” and disarm Arab opposition to Zionism. In the wake of the 1929 violence, some

continued Jewish immigration and an eventual Jewish majority, Magnes declared that Jewish colonizers must renounce the goal of political dominance in Palestine. American Zionists especially criticized Magnes' support for the establishment of a Parliament based on representative democracy and characterized his offer of compromise with the Arab population as a "hysterical yielding to the importunities of rioters and murderers" that countered "the first principle of order, of civilized human behavior," which was "to grant nothing under a threat of violence, for such a grant merely increases the appetite of the bully." Zionists postulated that democracy in Palestine would mean oppression for the Jewish minority and failure for Zionist goals. Postulating that only the Jews wanted peace in Palestine, Zionist critics of Magnes asserted that there were no Arab partners for peace, a claim that remains central to Israeli and America rejection of the international consensus and recognition of Palestinian self-determination.³⁴

members of Brit Shalom became disillusioned with Zionism. Hans Kohn left Palestine, lamented that the Zionists had failed to attempt to gain the consent of the Palestinian Arabs for the Jewish nationalist movement, characterized the events of August 1929 as a "colonial revolt," and predicted that Zionism would only succeed through force. It is important to keep in mind that bi-nationalists were quite marginal and really offered no alternative to the mainstream Zionist goal of establishing Palestine as a Jewish state. See, Arno Mayer, *Ploughshares into Swords: From Zionism to Israel* (London and New York: Verso, 2008), 118-121, 135-136; Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 108-109; Neumann, *Case Against Zionism* (Petrolia and Oakland: Counterpunch and AK Press, 2003), 38-40; Mendes-Flohr, *A Land of Two Peoples*, 72-78.

³⁴ See, "Urges Palestine as World Holy Land," *New York Times*, 21 November 1929, 7; "Dr. Magnes Scored in Jewish Press," *New York Times*, 22 November 1929, 6; "Magnes Criticized by Jewish Leaders," *New York Times*, 25 November 1929, 10; "Backs Magnes Plan as Aid to Accord," *New York Times*, 26 November 1929, 8

In October 1929, H. St. John B. Philby proposed a compromise for democratically elected government in Palestine under the ultimate control of the High Commissioner. Magnes initially supported the Philby proposal, but recanted in the face of non-Zionist and Zionist Jewish pressure. Arab leaders privately expressed willingness to accept the proposal as a solid basis for discussion with the British government leading to self-governing institutions in Palestine. The Jewish leadership (Zionist and non-Zionist) and the Colonial Office (including Colonial Secretary Passfield) opposed the establishment of self-governing institutions based on Arab majority-rule as a threat to the mandate and Zionism, whereas High Commissioner Chancellor essentially proposed a reconsideration of British policy and the mandate for Palestine itself. Chancellor's recommendation influenced the Shaw Commission's report, the Hope-Simpson report, and the Passfield White Paper.

Magnes and other cultural Zionists (such as Ahad Ha'am) raised concerns about the Zionists' attitude toward the Palestinian Arabs. Magnes warned:

The time has come for the Jews to take into account the Arab factor as the most important facing us. If we have a just cause, so have they. If promises were made to us, so were they to the Arabs.

Even Western commentators that attempted to provide some historical context for the Arab uprising presented the conflict as ultimately a religious one. Elizabeth MacCallum, a research assistant on the Near East for the Foreign Policy Association, reminded her audience that the Anglo-French declaration and the Hussein-McMahon agreement promised independence for the Arab territories within the Ottoman Empire, including Palestine. Although the British and the French secretly agreed to divide Ottoman territory and add the spoils to their imperial domains, MacCallum asserted that Woodrow Wilson and Jan Smuts opposed traditional imperialism and established the mandatory system at the Paris Peace conference to ensure that the “advanced nations” on the allied side would benevolently administer the former colonies of the central powers in the interests of civilization and the populations of these territories. Referring to the League of Nations Charter, MacCallum iterated that the territories of the Ottoman empire were fit for self-government and that a mandatory power, chosen according to the wishes of the population, would simply serve in an advisory capacity. At San Remo, however, the French and British divided Ottoman territory without any regard for the League of Nations Charter or the wishes of the inhabitants of the Near East; later, the League of Nations ratified and legitimized the French and British decisions.³⁵

If we love the land and have a historical connection with it, so too the Arabs. Even more realistic than the ugly realities of imperialism is the fact that the Arabs live here and in this part of the world, and will probably live here long after the collapse of one imperialism and the rise of another. If we, too, wish to live in this living space, we must live with the Arabs.

Such an attitude was not popular among most Zionists. When Magnes visited the United States in March 1931, he spoke to a Jewish audience at an event sponsored by the Society for the Advancement of Judaism. Zionists in the audience heckled Magnes and caused some disturbances because Magnes’ solution to the conflict between Jews and Arabs in Palestine would result in “merely a Jewish spiritual centre and not a Jewish state.” See, “Fist Fights Arouse Judaism Meeting,” *New York Times*, 22 March 1931, N2; Alan Taylor, “Vision and Intent in Zionist Thought,” in Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, *The Transformation of Palestine* (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1987), 25; Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement, 1929-1939*, 20ff.

³⁵ “Background of Unrest in Ancient Palestine,” *New York Times*, 1 September 1929, XX4

Complicating matters was the development of Zionism, the Balfour Declaration, and the inclusion of special provisions in the mandate that facilitated the establishment of the Jewish national home in Palestine. The British publicly pledged that the Balfour Declaration did not mean that Palestine would become a Jewish state at the expense of the Arab population, but the Palestinians believed that Zionism was premised on the dispossession and expulsion of the indigenous population and resisted both the Balfour Declaration and the mandate as a violation of the League Charter and the rights of the majority population of the Arab territories. Shortly before the uprising in August 1929, the Palestinians unsuccessfully petitioned the British administration and the League of Nations to replace colonial rule with representative government. Despite presenting this historical background, MacCallum concluded that religious conflict over the Wailing Wall, and not colonization and the denial of Palestinian rights, precipitated the violence in August.³⁶

The *New York Times* editorialized that the British had the responsibility to implement the Balfour Declaration, support Zionist endeavors in Palestine, and keep the Arab population cowed. Ignoring that the Balfour Declaration and the League mandate violated Arab rights, the League of Nations Charter, the Hussein-McMahon agreement, and the Anglo-French declaration, the *Times*' editors maintained that "England has made herself responsible both morally and legally [for the commitment to Zionism], and must be prepared to go every necessary length in showing that she intends to live up to her solemn obligations undertaken in the eyes of the whole world." The editors, however, did not address how a commitment to establishing a Jewish settler colony in Palestine trumped the rights of the Arab population to self-government and

³⁶ Ibid.

independence. Instead of emphasizing the Allied failure to fulfill the wartime promises to the Arabs, the *Times* proposed, the Arabs should happily accept that about 75% of the Arab population had gained some form of self-government by the late 1920s.³⁷

American Zionists and their supporters appealed to the American government to intervene in Palestine to protect American citizens and property, the Jewish American investment in the “upbuilding” of Palestine, and Western civilization. Lipsky posited to the American public that Woodrow Wilson was instrumental in “drawing up the formula of the Balfour declaration,” that the U.S. Congress approved unanimously “the ratification of the mandate by the League of Nations, which placed Palestine under the authority of Great Britain,” and that “all Presidents since Wilson have without exception, time and again, expressed a positive and official interest in the upbuilding of Palestine through Jewish effort.” Hamilton Fish, author of the House resolution supporting the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine, lobbied the Hoover administration to send American forces to protect American citizens from “fanatical and lawless mobs.” At a fundraiser in New York in mid September for Jewish victims where American Christians emphasized the “historic kinship between Judaism and Christianity,” resolved

³⁷ “Horrors of Rioting in Palestine Told,” *New York Times*, 27 August 1929, 3; “See Hand of Reds in Riots,” *New York Times*, 27 August 1929, 4; “Arabs Here Assail Jewish Riot Views,” *New York Times*, 29 August 1929, 2; “Indians Score British,” *New York Times*, 29 August 1929, 2; “Jews Demonstrate in Paris and London,” *New York Times*, 30 August 1929, 4; “British Responsibility,” *New York Times*, 29 August 1929, 14; “A Firm Hand in Palestine,” *New York Times*, 27 August 1929, 20; “All British Armed After Sykes Death,” *New York Times*, 28 August 1929, 2; “Student Slaughter Shocks Jerusalem,” *New York Times*, 28 August 1929, 2; “Riot Death Total Now Placed at 119,” *New York Times*, 28 August 1929, 3; “\$25,000 Straus Gift Sent to Palestine,” *New York Times*, 28 August 1929, 4; “London Sees Peace as Troops Attack,” *New York Times*, 29 August 1929, 2; “Wounded at Safed Saved Before Fire,” *New York Times*, 1 September 1929, 2; “Wrongs of the Arabs,” *New York Times*, 6 September 1929, 17

Hebert Lehman, founding member of Lehman brothers and prominent Democratic politician in New York and national politics, encapsulated the Zionist narrative when he stated that “I am sure that the whole world sympathizes with the Jews of Palestine in their desperate plight, and that everybody, Jew and non-Jew alike, will feel called upon to lend their aid to the succoring of those devoted pioneers who have been struggling to build the Jewish homeland.” See, “Two Add \$50,000 to Palestine Fund,” *New York Times*, 29 August 1929, 3

to support the Jewish “rebuilding” of Palestine, and urged Britain to fulfill the pledges of the mandate, Fish asserted that he was now “more convinced” in his support for Zionism because of the “cold-blooded murder of more than 100 defenseless Jews in Palestine, which has aroused both Christian and Jew alike to protest and denounce this offense against civilization.” Furthermore, Fish argued, the Jewish “upbuilding” in Palestine—the “new roads, new schools, better water supplies, the planting of forests and the increased productivity of the soil”—benefited the Arab population. Wagner, in his radio address on 1 September, emphasized the necessity of American intervention to eliminate the Arab threat to the Jewish development of civilization in Palestine, which was countering 2,000 years of decline. Observing that “we cannot make representations to the savages who committed the atrocities,” Senator William King of Utah declared that the U.S. government had the right and responsibility to ensure that the British adopted measures to protect U.S. citizens and the Zionist project. The Hoover administration expressed sympathy for the Jewish victims, support for the “upbuilding” of Palestine, and confidence in the British ability to restore order and protect American lives and property, but opposed intervention as counter to the axiom of traditional American foreign policy that mandated against entanglements in European affairs. The ZOA interpreted the president’s noncommittal message as confirming American approval of Zionism and illustrating “the mind of America and the resolve of the civilized world” to continue to support “the great work of reconstruction” in Palestine despite the “onslaught of fanaticism and savagery.” American Zionists even promised that “tens of thousands of new immigrants” would settle in Palestine as soon as the British restored order.³⁸

³⁸ See, “\$25,000 Straus Gift Sent to Palestine,” *New York Times*, 28 August 1929, 4; “Two Add \$50,000 to Palestine Fund,” *New York Times*, 29 August 1929, 3; “Wagner Says Arabs Planned

An Arab American delegation representing the Palestine National League, the New Syria party, and the Young Men's Moslem Society met with Secretary of State Stimson in early September to articulate Arab opposition to the Balfour Declaration and Zionism. The representatives emphasized that the British have "given the Jews the right and the assistance to build a national home in a country which is essentially and historically Arabian," contravening Allied wartime commitments and the principle of

'Murders,'" *New York Times*, 2 September 1929, 1; "Hoover Message of Sympathy Read at Garden," *New York Times*, 30 August 1929, 5; "British Jews Weep in Prayer for Zion," *New York Times*, 2 September 1929, 2; "Washington Meeting Protests Massacres," *New York Times*, 2 September 1929, 2; "Zionists Telegraph Thanks to Hoover," *New York Times*, 4 September 1929, 8; "Palestine Unchanged, Knabenshute Cables," *New York Times*, 4 September 1929, 9; "LaGuardia Decries Low Library Wages," *New York Times*, 5 September 1929, 2; "Fish and Celler Urge Action in Palestine," *New York Times*, 5 September 1929, 8; "Christians Appeal for Palestine Fund," *New York Times*, 16 September 1929, 18.

Samuel Untermyer even stated that "the fact that American lives and the property of Americans have been sacrificed entitles us to demand that our government shall make friendly representations to Great Britain" to ensure Jewish representation on the commission investigating the uprisings. "In that way alone," Untermyer asserted, can world Jewry be satisfied with the findings of the British commission." See, "Demands Jews Share in Palestine Inquiry," *New York Times*, 10 September 1929, 6

In the early days of the uprising, the State Department responded to a Zionist delegation's request for U.S. intervention that Stimson was sympathetic to the plight of Jews in Palestine, had urged the British to protect American lives and property, and was confident that the British were in fact restoring order and protecting American citizens and their interests. Once the British announced plans for a commission, American Zionists approached the U.S. government to aid in presenting the Zionist position before the inquiry. The Near East division told American Zionists that "to argue that because eight American citizens had been killed in Palestine therefore the American Government was under some sort of obligation to assist in presenting the Zionist side... was clearly fallacious reasoning." See, *FRUS*, 1929, Volume III, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1929v03> (accessed 20 December 2011), 51, 59

In his protest of the Arab attacks against Jews in Palestine, Senator Harry Hawes (D-MO) presented the conflict as one over religion and argued that he was supporting democracy by firmly committing himself to the protection of minority religious rights. He warned that since "in Palestine the Moslem outnumbers the Jew ten to one," any change in administration or British withdrawal would precipitate a "regime of carnage, which was the very thing which the post-war agreement sought to end." Claiming that the Balfour Declaration did not mean a Jewish state, Hawes determined that Zionism benefited the Arabs. Hawes also declared that "the civilized world view Palestine as a place separate and distinct from any other spot in the world," indicating that the principle of self-determination and majority rights did not necessarily apply and that the U.S. had a right and interest to press the British to support the Zionist project. See, "Gentiles Join Jews in St. Louis Area," *New York Times*, 9 September 1929, 3

The *Times* expressed sympathy for "the thousands forced to flee their homes because of the danger of attacks" and those refugees "who were left absolutely homeless and destitute, their houses, farms, cattle, crops and all personal possessions having been destroyed, burned and stolen." While the *Times* was sympathetic to the plight of Jewish refugees in 1929, how did the newspaper characterize Arab refugees in 1948? "Refugees Number 9,200 in Palestine," *New York Times*, 8 September 1929, 22; "Relief Fund is Told of 4,200 homeless," *New York Times*, 8 September 1929, 23

self-government. While the Arabs had consistently petitioned the British, French, and League of Nations to recognize Arab aspirations for political independence and representative government, the West has supported the European Jewish colonization of Palestine, which was based on violating “the rights of the overwhelming Arab majority” and “putting the Arabs out of their own homes.” The “fundamental cause” of Arab uprisings had nothing to do with religion or race, but rather was the “conflict between the Arab nationalism of the native majority and the Zionism of a small minority of foreign Jews.” To ensure peace in the Near East, the Arab American delegation lobbied the U.S. government “to use its good offices to secure” the abrogation of the Balfour declaration, restrictions on Zionist immigration, and the establishment of representative government in Palestine. Ignoring the substance of the delegation’s appeal, Stimson proceeded to lecture his audience that “the cause of civilization, the cause of better understanding among peoples of different races and religions is never served by violence and recrimination.” Stimson continued

It is my earnest hope that, as soon as order has been fully restored, the competent and responsible authorities animated by a sincere desire to do justice to all parties concerned, will be able to bring about peace and cooperation. If your delegation can play a part in emphasizing those qualities of moderation and thoughtfulness which are so needed in any approach to the present problems of Palestine, you will have served an eminently useful and an eminently American purpose.”³⁹

By expressing support for British policy, which was premised on implementing the terms of the Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations mandate regarding the establishment of the Jewish national home in Palestine, the U.S. government confirmed

³⁹ “Arabs Ask Stimson to Aid in Palestine,” *New York Times*, 7 September 1929, 3; *FRUS*, 1929, Volume III, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1929v03> (accessed 20 December 2011), 56 . The Arab American delegation also met with the British ambassador to the U.S., who dismissed the concerns of the delegation and ridiculously echoed Prime Minister MacDonald’s comments that the uprising was the result of the “acts of lawless mobs.”

that its neutral position favored the Zionists and that the imperialist ideology of civilization trumped the principle of self-determination.

In the immediate wake of the Arab uprising, the Zionist narrative that the conflict was a religious one received a wide hearing in the United States. The British journalist Henry W. Nevinson penned an article for *Foreign Affairs* compared the rebellion to pogroms in Russia and the Armenian genocide and declared that the whole civilized world condemned “the massacres of the Jews.” Nevinson postulated that the Mufti incited the violence and the British administration was complicit. Claiming that religious feeling best explains the interests of the British people in the Palestine mandate, Nevinson wrote that the modern Christian crusaders would not “abandon [Palestine] again to Moslems without a struggle.” Palestine did not belong to the indigenous population that had inhabited it for centuries because it was the land of the Bible, the land of “Bethlehem, Nazareth, Galilee, Capernaum, the Mount of Olives, the garden of Gethsemane, the probable site of Calvary and the Holy Sepulchre.” The Jewish people, Nevinson continued, had an even stronger attachment to their ancient homeland. Zionists were happily purchasing “inalienable land bought as a rule from big Arab owners incapable of putting it to use” and developing it with Jewish labor. Nevinson even asserted that the Arabs were “always willing to sell more land than the Zionists could purchase.” He also repeated Zionist claims that the British administration favored the Arabs because, in his estimation, “British officials favor uncivilized or partially civilized peoples as being easier to govern.” Nevinson reiterated the common themes that Arabs were willing to work for much less than the Jewish immigrants and that the conflict

between Arabs and Jews was based on the clash between an ancient Eastern and a modern Western civilization.⁴⁰

Nevinson presented a novel rebuttal to Arab claims to Palestine. While recognizing that the McMahon-Hussein agreement included Palestine as part of the future independent Arab state, Nevinson argued that “Sir Henry in the confusion of the war either went beyond his instructions or forgot Palestine,” suggesting that Britain was not bound by the pledge. More importantly, “the course of events [including British and French imperial arrangements] swept that agreement away.” So did Feisal’s March 1919 letter to Felix Frankfurter, which expressed sympathy for the Zionist movement and declared that there was “room in Syria for...both” the Arab and Zionist nationalist movements. Nevinson argued that Feisal’s statement recognized Jewish claims to Palestine, but Feisal’s letter to Frankfurter suggests that he would support Jewish immigration to a Palestine that was part of a larger, independent Syria. Feisal’s oft-quoted agreement with Weizmann, also made in 1919, was dependent on a unified and independent Syria. Nevinson’s use of this letter to suggest the Arabs had rescinded their claim to Palestine was disingenuous. More importantly, Feisal lacked the authority to barter Palestine; the Palestinian Arabs had the right to self-government and national independence and consequently the right to reject Zionism and the British mandate. For Nevinson, the British commitment to Zionism was sacrosanct and the violation of Palestinian self-determination was a necessary sacrifice in the pursuit of establishing Palestine as the Jewish national home. As Balfour wrote in the wake of the 1929 rebellion, the British and Allied Powers “have solemnly declared their intention of again

⁴⁰ Henry W. Nevinson, “Arabs and Jews in Palestine,” *Foreign Affairs*, January 1930, 225-236.

rendering Palestine the National Home of the Jewish People. That policy is in harmony with the best opinion of Western civilization,” and the British Empire has pledged to fulfill that promise. The Western commitment to establishing a Jewish settler colony, therefore, outweighed the Allied commitment to the League of Nations Covenant and the principles of self-government and self-determination.

Even the Belgian Socialist Louis Pierard, a co-secretary of the Second International’s Pro-Palestine committee, emphasized that Palestine was not included in the Hussein-McMahon correspondence as part of a future independent Arab state. Moreover, only the Balfour Declaration was enshrined in the treaty and, therefore, the British government and the international community were only committed to fulfilling that pledge to the Jewish people. Pierard expressed disbelief that the fulfillment of the Zionist project was “an injustice against the Arab population” and boasted that Zionism was based on “social justice” and not capitalist ideology. Arab grievances, Pierard claimed, was simply jealousy of Jewish pioneers who made the desert bloom. Claiming that the absentee landowners allowed Palestine “to lie in an uncultivated and arid condition,” Pierard ignored the Arab peasants who lived off the land. Instead, he asserted that the absentee landlords sold the land to the Jewish National Fund “for many times its true value,” which allowed Jewish colonizers to “beautifully” develop the land. In Pierard’s estimation, jealous former landowners agitated the “ignorant and fanatical” Arab masses against the Jews. Pierard maintained that the Jewish colonization of Palestine was raising the living standards of the Arab peasants and that Western ideas of economic and social freedom were emancipating the indigenous population. Only outside agitation prevented friendly relations between the Arab peasants and Jewish

pioneers because the peasants recognized “their debt to the Jews for the great increase of prosperity, modern ideas of sanitation and health, public works and the general progress of what was before a sadly neglect and backward country. All that the Zionists have taken away from the Arabs are the swamps, malaria and poor roads which formerly characterized Palestine.” This interpretation was essentially propaganda that had little in common with the reality of Jewish colonization in Palestine, but Western audiences accepted that Zionism and British administration were introducing civilization, development, and progress to a backward and savage people. Periodically, a *Times* article would report that Zionist “leaders have failed to realize that Palestine is not a new country and that there is an existing population of more than 600,000 Arabs to contend with” and conclude that Zionists had “made no efforts to reach an understanding” with the Palestinians. Such interpretations were too few and far between to offer a significant challenge to the Zionist presentation of conditions in Palestine. Importantly, the consul general in Jerusalem was providing a much different perspective about the situation in Palestine to the State Department, but his interpretation did not enter the public discussion and compete with the Zionist narrative.⁴¹

⁴¹ “Sees Zionism Safe under Laborites,” *New York Times*, 28 October 1929, 12; “Arabs Close Ranks Against Zionists,” *New York Times*, 4 November 1929, 10

International labor organizations and Jewish labor in Palestine celebrated Zionism and repeatedly asserted that “there is no war, no struggle, no enmity between the Jewish and Arab masses.” The small number of Arab landowners was the problem, not the masses of Arab peasants, according to the interpretation of Jewish labor. Jewish labor, in fact, benefited the Arab population. See, “British Labor Hails Palestine Workers,” *New York Times*, 30 November 1929, 15

The State Department and the Arab Uprising

By the middle of October, Paul Knabenshue, the consul general in Jerusalem, warned of an imminent and well-organized uprising of Palestinian and Trans-Jordan Arabs “against the Jews and the Balfour Declaration policy.” While publicly stating in July that the Jewish immigrants to Palestine were instrumental in the development of Palestine since the end of the war, Knabenshue’s report to the State Department after the Wailing Wall incident illustrates a deeper awareness of conditions in the Holy Land. In early November, Knabenshue sent a lengthy report on the “political crisis in Palestine” to the State Department, detailing the causes of the recent disturbances and presenting the Arab perspective. Knabenshue argued that while the Zionists based their claim to Palestine on “certain moral or sentimental grounds,” which had “no legal validity,” and the Balfour Declaration and League of Nations mandate, the Arabs based their claim to “the land and representative government” on “the right of possession by early settlement, by conquest, and by continuous residence in the country over a period of many hundreds of years,” religious grounds, and Allied promises made during World War I. Referring to scholarship on the inhabitants and history of Palestine, Knabenshue asserted that the “present population of Palestine” has “an even greater right to the land than the Jews, from the point of view of ancient settlement therein and the validity of their claim is made even stronger by virtue of their continuous residence.” Additionally, despite Zionist claims that Palestine was sparsely settled by uncivilized nomads comparable to Native Americans--“a land without a people for a people without a land”--, Knabenshue suggested that the cultivatable land in Palestine was completely occupied by Palestinian Arabs. Consequently, any significant Jewish immigration and colonization would result

in the expropriation of the Arab population, which was a violation of the Balfour Declaration's commitment to protect the civil rights of the "non-Jewish communities" in Palestine. Knabenshue concluded that the Palestinians had a much greater claim to Palestine based on "ancient settlement and continuous possession" than the Zionists and reminded the State Department that Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations determined that the mandatory power was simply to provide assistance and advice until the Arabs were ready to stand alone as independent nations, implying that the Balfour Declaration was a violation of the Covenant and Wilsonian principles.⁴²

As for the Arab arguments based on religious grounds, Knabenshue acknowledged that Palestine was as significant to Muslims as it was to Christians and Jews. Additionally, he argued that Christians and Muslims around the world expressed concern about Zionist control over the holy sites in Palestine. Finally, Knabenshue gave his thoughts on the Allied commitments made to the Arabs during World War I, namely the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, and concluded that "the Arabs were justified in claiming that Palestine was one of the countries which was intended to be under Arab rule in accordance with the promises of the British" to Hussein and that later British interpretations of the boundaries of the promised Arab state were suspect. While noting that the British and French divided the spoils of the Ottoman Empire in the Sykes-Picot

⁴² "4th in Jerusalem Brings out Throngs," *New York Times*, 5 July 1929, 7; 867n.00/65 (23 August 1929); 867n.00/66 (2 October 1929); 867n.00/67 (5 October 1929); 867n.00/68 (8 October 1929); 867n.00/69 (16 October 1929); RDS 867n.00/70 (28 October 1929) ; RDS 867n.00/71 (2 November 1929) ; RDS 867n.00/72 (25 November 1929) ; RDS 867n.00/73 (9 November 1929) ; RDS 867n.00/74 (23 November 1929); The American Consulate General, Despatch No. 87, 6 November 1929; *FRUS*, 1929, Volume III, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1929v03> (accessed 20 December 2011), 46-70

Knabenshue also wrote a report on the political crisis that dealt with the Jewish perspective. He warned the State Department that both Zionists and non-Zionists wished to create a Jewish state in Palestine, the difference between the two being that the non-Zionists "fear that it is not in the realm of practical realization." See, Bustami, 315ff

agreement of 1916, Knabenshue argued that the Anglo-French Declaration of 1918 renounced any imperialist aims. The Anglo-French Declaration stated that the allied war aims in the Near East centered on “the complete and definitive emancipation of the peoples so long oppressed by the Turks, and the establishment of governments and national administrations deriving their authority from the initiative and free choice of the indigenous populations.” Knabenshue asserted that the Anglo-French Declaration trumped any prior agreements the British or French made regarding Ottoman territory since the prior pledges and secret pacts, including the Balfour Declaration, violated the Anglo-French commitment to self-determination.⁴³

The Palestinians, Knabenshue observed, asserted their right to independence based on the Hussein-McMahon agreement and the Anglo-French Declaration as well as the Wilsonian principles propagated around the world and argued that the Balfour Declaration was a clear violation of Palestinian rights. The Zionists, British, and French based their claims to territory and other interests in the Near East on agreements made during the war, even if they were inconsistent with the Anglo-French Declaration, but Knabenshue reasoned that Article 20 of the League of Nations Covenant meant that these prior agreements that violated the Covenant were simply null and void. Article 20 stated:

The Members of the League severally agree that this Covenant is accepted as abrogating all obligations or understandings inter se which are inconsistent with the terms thereof, and solemnly undertake that they will not hereafter enter into any engagements inconsistent with the terms thereof. In case any Member of the League shall, before becoming a Member of the League, have undertaken any

⁴³ RDS 867n.00/73 (9 November 1929) ; The American Consulate General, Despatch No. 87, 9 November 1929

Zionists and the British repeatedly asserted that the British could not rescind its commitment to the Jews made during the war. Churchill made such a claim in early September 1929. Knabenshue found such logic unacceptable. That the British privileged the Balfour Declaration over other commitments perhaps illustrated that the British saw Zionism as important to British imperial interests. For Churchill defense of the Balfour Declaration, see, “Demands New Stand on Debts for Britain,” *New York Times*, 5 September 1929, 46

obligations inconsistent with the terms of this Covenant, it shall be the duty of such Member to take immediate steps to procure its release from such obligations.

Noting that the League of Nations Covenant did not mention the Balfour Declaration and that Article 22,⁴⁴ which promised self-determination and independence for the Arabs in the former Ottoman Empire under the tutelage and supervision of a mandatory power, did not explicitly exclude Palestine, Knabenshue concluded that the Palestinians had every right to assert their independence under a representative government. Furthermore, Knabenshue argued that the Balfour Declaration was an “innocuous document” since the British clarified in Churchill’s 1922 White Paper that “a Jewish home may be established in Palestine,” which signaled a reversal from the Zionist interpretation that Palestine was to become the national home for the Jewish people, and the Balfour Declaration promised not to harm the civil rights of the existing population in Palestine. Nothing in the Balfour Declaration itself, Knabenshue maintained, prevented the establishment of representative government in Palestine. Any provisions in the League of Nations mandate for Palestine that interpret the first clause of the Balfour Declaration as meaning the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, the U.S. consul offered, violated the second clause of the Declaration and, more importantly, the League of Nations Covenant. Knabenshue’s lengthy report to the State Department sympathized with the Palestinian Arabs’ argument that their claim to self-determination in Palestine trumped the Zionist claim to a Jewish state.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Article 22 of the League of Nations Covenant reads in part:

Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory.

⁴⁵ RDS 867n.00/73 (9 November 1929) ; The American Consulate General, Despatch No. 87, 9 November 1929.

In late November 1929, the Jerusalem Consulate reported on two Arab general strikes that took place on 16 October and 2 November 1929. The Arab population successfully implemented the first general strike to protest both the Zionist movement and the British heavy-handed response against and collective punishment of Arabs during the August uprising. Taking place on the anniversary of Balfour's letter to Rothschild, the second strike was a demand for the renunciation of the Balfour Declaration and the immediate establishment of a representative constitutional government. Arabs and Muslims from around the world protested British policy and the Zionist project, and Muslim, Christian, and Druze groups in Palestine appealed to the U.S. government to oppose Zionism as a dangerous project designed to expel the Palestinian Arabs to make room for "scattered and communistic Jews" and challenge British policies that allowed Jewish worshippers to modify the infrastructure at the Wailing Wall, which the Palestinians interpreted as the initial effort to build a synagogue on the site.⁴⁶

The consular office in Jerusalem reported to Washington that five or six Arab congresses, representing all the Palestinian Arabs including women, peasants, and students, met within a couple months of the August uprising, resulting in unanimous demands for the abrogation of the Balfour Declaration and the establishment of representative government and protests against the severe and collective British punishment of the Arab population in the wake of the August uprising and lack of funds for Arab refugees. These congresses, the two general strikes, the boycott of Jewish

⁴⁶ RDS 867n.00/74 (23 November 1929); RDS 867n.00/75 (16 November 1929). The Palestinian Arabs implemented a general strike every year on the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration to protest British policy. The Jewish population in Palestine implemented a boycott against Arab produce and goods once the uprising began in August. The *Times* periodically printed accounts of Jewish settlers destroying Arab produce. See, "Clashes Continue Palestine Unrest," *New York Times*, 10 September 1929, 5; Palestine Eager for Inquiry Start," *New York Times*, 11 September 1929, 4

goods, and the mobilization of the peasant population demonstrated, according to the American consulate, the Palestinians' "growing capacity for organization." The consular report doubted the veracity of those "claiming to know the Arab well," who argued that "organization and perseverance of purpose are not an outstanding part of [the Arab] temperament and character." Aside from demanding the abrogation of the Balfour Declaration and the establishment of a national government based on majority rule, the All-Palestine Arab Congress, which included delegates from Lebanon, Syria, and Trans-Jordan, passed a resolution maintaining that the Wailing Wall was Muslim property and that post-uprising British policy violated the status quo and swore against selling any land to Jewish settlers. The Congress of Arab Villagers protested British tax policy, which the Congress argued, forced the Arab peasants into debt to pay for projects that benefited Jewish colonization, and labor policy, which benefited Jewish labor at the expense of Arab labor. Consequently, the peasant delegates demanded that the British implement legislation to protect peasant ownership of the land, eliminate their tax and debt burdens, employ more Arabs in public works, assist in agricultural development, and abrogate the Balfour Declaration. Noting that British policy supported Jewish colonization and declaring that Zionism did not in fact benefit the Arab population, the Arab peasants demanded that the British administration improve infrastructure and sanitation and provide health care and educational opportunities for the Arab population. Both the Arab Villagers Congress and the Arab Economic Congress protested the British tariff policy, which they asserted benefited Jewish industry in Palestine and harmed Arab agricultural interests. Overall, Palestinian Arabs determined that British policy privileged European

Jewish immigrants at the expense of the economic and political interests of the indigenous Arab population.⁴⁷

U.S. diplomats in Palestine forwarded to the State Department a speech made in Cairo by Captain Robert Gordon-Canning, “a strong protagonist of the pro-Arab viewpoint in England,” anti-Semite, and future fascist imprisoned during World War II, that illustrated both the Arab opposition to Zionism and a criticism of British policy.⁴⁸ In the speech, Gordon-Canning emphasized the unified Palestinian Arab opposition to the Balfour Declaration and Zionism while asserting that the Arabs continued to place their faith in the British public to change British policy. Gordon-Canning argued that “the fundamental cause of the UNREST in PALESTINE and the HATRED of the JEW by the ARAB—is---POLITICAL and neither RELIGIOUS nor RACIAL.” Arab women put “aside the costumes of CENTURIES” and played an important role in the anti-Zionist movement, and the Arab peasants vehemently opposed Jewish colonization. Recognizing that the Zionist narrative dominated the Western discourse, Gordon-Canning proclaimed that Jewish colonization was completely dependent upon financial support from the West, especially the United States, and recommended that the Zionists give up their political goals and “cooperate with the [Arab] majority as citizens of Palestine, receiving the accepted safeguards and rights of minorities.” He held the British government responsible for privileging the pledge to Zionists over promises to the Arabs, a policy which has meant the prevention of democracy so as “to place a minority in political and economic control over a majority.” The Balfour Declaration violated the pledge made to the Arabs in the Hussein-McMahon agreement and contradicted the Covenant of the

⁴⁷ RDS 867n.00/76 (19 December 1929).

⁴⁸ “British Captain Jailed,” *New York Times*, 14 July 1940, 26; “British Fascist Pays £500 for Hitler Bust in London,” *New York Times*, 28 November 1945, 12

League of Nations. Furthermore, Gordon-Canning argued that Zionism was dependent on British military force, that the British population was opposed to paying for the garrisons to protect Jewish colonists, and that support for Zionism undermined British imperial interests since the Arab and Muslim regions of the empire opposed British policy in Palestine and the Zionist colonization project. He recommended that the British establish and advise a constitutional and representative government in Palestine, comprised of Arabs and Jews, according to the terms of the League of Nations Covenant and predicted the eventual creation of a United States of Arabia. Overall, Gordon-Canning argued that the British had the moral responsibility to fulfill the pledge made to the Arabs during the war and that such a policy promoted and protected British interests in the Arab and Muslim world.⁴⁹

The U.S. Consul General in Jerusalem also forwarded a report on Zionist accounts about the Arab uprising to the State Department. This dispatch included an illustrated pamphlet depicting Arabs as bloodthirsty and fanatical anti-Semites attacking innocent Jewish pioneers and condemning the British authorities for complicity in the violence. Reinforcing the theme that the Arab peasants were not in conflict with Jewish pioneers and benefited from Jewish colonization, Zionist cartoons portrayed the Arab effendi and Muslim leadership as bribing and instigating the peasants into an anti-Jewish frenzy. One recurrent theme in the pamphlet was that the Jewish settlers defended themselves from Arab attacks. Since the British allegedly sided with the Arabs and failed in their responsibility to protect Jewish colonists and since Arab policemen were incompetent, ineffectual, or complicit in the uprising, Zionists emphasized that Jewish forces would be instrumental in establishing the Jewish state and fulfilling Zionist territorial goals. A

⁴⁹ RDS 867n.00/78 (18 December 1929)

second pamphlet was a “collection of statements made by the victims of Palestine pogroms” lying in one Jewish hospital in Jerusalem. This pamphlet provided descriptions of “brutal” Arab attacks and included profiles and before-and-after pictures of Jews wounded and murdered in “cold blood” to humanize the victims. The accounts portrayed Jewish settlers as comparable to white American pioneers protecting their settlements from Native American attacks. One Jewish survivor’s description of “multitudes of Arabs descending...towards our colony, firing rifles as they came, their shouts echoing through the hills” paralleled accounts of Indian attacks on settlers familiar to white Americans. In early September, the Palestine Zionist Executive published a pamphlet in English contending that the immediate cause of the violence was the Arab demonstration at the Wailing Wall on 16 August. Claiming that on the previous day, “Jewish youths had been officially permitted to read at the Wall resolutions of protest against” British authorities for allowing Muslim construction on the site, the pamphlet distributed by the Palestine Zionist Executive ignored the provocative nature of the Jewish nationalist demonstration on ground considered holy to Muslims. The Zionist pamphlet provided detailed accounts of “undescrivable” Arab atrocities against Jews during the uprising, including rape, pillage, torture, and murder. According to the pamphlet, one British officer characterized “these atrocities as unparalleled in history.” The general theme was that the attacks were organized and premeditated and that the Arabs were fanatical, uncivilized savages.⁵⁰

Overall, the analysis of American diplomats in Palestine during the Arab uprising in 1929 raised questions about Zionism’s compatibility with American principles and American interests. Perhaps ignoring the history of the dispossession and removal of

⁵⁰ RDS 867n.00/79 (2 December 1929)

Native Americans that paved the way for American democracy, Knabenshue argued that the Arab demand for representative government was more akin to American principles than the Zionist demand for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.

Knabenshue's recommendation that the U.S. government refrain from any policy statement on Palestine until the British government evaluated its own policies after considering the Shaw commission's report on the causes of the Arab uprising complemented the Arab American narrative and competed with Zionist position that the Arab uprising threatened American citizens, property, and civilizing and economic interests. The U.S. government, while sympathizing with the civilizing imperialism of British and Zionist policy in Palestine, maintained a policy based on non-intervention. Since U.S. economic and philanthropic interests were protected through a treaty with Great Britain, any active promotion of establishing the Jewish national home in Palestine meant intervention in European affairs and an abrogation of Washington's dictum to avoid entangling alliances abroad.⁵¹

⁵¹ Davidson, *America's Palestine*, 96-107; Bustami, "American Foreign Policy," 323
Bustami concluded that "through passive quiescence, the United States clearly stood on the side of Zionism. That it did not go as far as Zionists desired is no evidence of bias."

In her *The Year After the Riots* (published in 1988 after the start of the Palestinian *intifada*), Naomi Cohen criticizes the U.S. and British governments for supposedly pursuing a pro-Arab, anti-Zionist, and even anti-Semitic policy and argues that the disunity between non-Zionist, anti-Zionist, and Zionist Jews prevented the Zionists from effectively presenting their case to the court of public opinion. (Morris, however, argues that "the riots ultimately failed to hurt the Zionist enterprise" and "well-applied Zionist pressure in the press and lobbying by Weizmann in London bore fruit." For Morris and the Zionists, British restriction of Jewish colonization in Palestine "was of questionable legality, given the terms of the Mandate." Consequently, the Zionists threatened to pursue their case at The Hague.) Cohen repeatedly claims that the British were "appeasing" the Arabs in the wake of the 1929 riots and intimates that the U.S. hostility toward Zionism and Jewish victims of the Arab rebellion in 1929 paved the way for a policy of inaction during the persecution and destruction of European Jews in the 1930s and 1940s. Cohen clearly intends to equate the Arab rebellion in 1929 with the Nazi Holocaust of the European Jews, which allows her to dismiss any interpretations that fell short of fully supporting Zionism and a Jewish state in Palestine. Perhaps the Palestinian Arabs, the British, and the Americans share the blame for the Holocaust for failing to foster the development of a Jewish state. Cohen clearly faults the Jewish leadership for failing to take advantage of the Arab rebellion to pressure the British, the U.S., and the League of Nations to implement a pro-Zionist program and supposedly relying on law and reason to convince the international community and the Palestinian Arabs to accept the legitimacy of the Zionist claims to Palestine. It is also clear that

Cohen wishes to draw parallels between the 1929 “riots” and the contemporary Palestinian *intifada* in an attempt to delegitimize the latter. A brief consideration of her interpretation is warranted given the obvious bias of her argument and the overwhelmingly positive reviews of her work in scholarly journals such as *The Journal of American History* and *The American Historical Review*.

Both reviews only mention the Jewish victims in the “riots.” Saul Friedman, writing in *The American Historical Review* accepts the Zionist argument that the Grand Mufti “orchestrated” the riots. The parallels with accounts regarding Native American resistance to European and white American expansion and conquest are apparent. Just as Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. government in the Early Republic blamed the British for “inciting” the savages, who, from the white American perspective, had no reason to resist continued dispossession and cultural and even physical genocide. White Americans were introducing civilization, Christianity, and development to a backward land and people, so outside agitators must be responsible for Native American opposition to white expansion. The Zionists proffered similar arguments: Zionism was bringing modernization, civilization, and development to Palestine and the Palestinian Arabs, so agitators, such as the Grand Mufti, were responsible for Arab resistance to Zionism and the British mandate. According to this logic, arguments that the Zionists wanted to dispossess and expel the Arab population to create a Jewish state and concerns that the Zionist program of Jewish labor on Jewish land negatively affected the Arab peasants were simply anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic propaganda and not based on a realistic assessment of Zionism and actual events within Palestine. Friedman concludes that Cohen demolishes myths that “British officials or any American Secretary of State... favored the Zionists during the interwar period,” a conclusion that conveniently ignores the reality that British policies benefited Zionism and that U.S. neutrality ultimately favored the status quo, which included support for the Balfour Declaration and the mandate.

Cohen argues that American society and the British government were anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic. In her campaign to equate opposition to Zionism with anti-Semitism, Cohen maintains that the U.S. government and public was pro-Arab in the wake of the 1929 rebellion. (When dealing with anti-Semitism, she also ignores that there has long been an anti-Semitic aspect of those favoring Zionism as well.) Ultimately, Cohen’s work is premised on the argument that support for Zionism is the only acceptable position, and consequently, even Judah Magnes is seen as an enemy because of his proposal for a bi-national state “undercut Zionist influence.” Cohen develops the “outside agitator” theme at an early stage, arguing that Christian missionaries in the Near East encouraged Arab anti-Semitism. It is quite interesting that Zionist racism toward Arabs is not anti-Semitic, but that the Arabs were only anti-Zionist because of their “long history of Jew hatred,” an ahistorical generalization that ignores Arab history and is premised on a racist contention that the Palestinian Arabs did not understand the real consequences of Zionism. While not labeling the Zionist attitude toward the Palestinian Arabs as racist, Cohen unquestioningly accepts Zionist arguments that the Palestinian Arabs were murderous savages (akin to the Nazis), who responded only to force and were incapable of self-government. Cohen concludes that Paul Knabenshue, the U.S. consul in Jerusalem, was anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic, ignoring both the substance of his argument that Zionism was a form of colonialism that violated the rights of the indigenous population and his commentary that he favored equal rights for Jews in Palestine and Arab acceptance that “the Jews can settle in Palestine as of right and not of sufferance.” For Cohen, recognition that the Palestinian Arabs had rights and had legitimate reason to oppose Zionism was anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist, an argument that fit within the Zionist narrative that the savage and backward Arabs had no legitimate cause for resistance. Cohen contends that those with views not complementary to hers were pro-Arab haters of Jews. Importantly, Cohen accepts the Zionist narrative that the British were pro-Arab, that Arab nationalism was nonexistent, that opposition to Zionism was “an artificial creation” of instigators, that the Arabs did not develop Palestine and were incapable of self-government, and that Zionists would benefit the Arab population and were not planning the dispossession and expulsion of the indigenous population. Even Cohen’s act of referring to Palestinians as “Arabs” denied Palestinian identity and ties to the land.

Cohen also makes statements that undermine her thesis. For example, she observes that the State Department, which “may have agreed with Arab sympathizers on the inequities of the Jewish claims,” still supported the Balfour Declaration and the terms of the mandate. Acknowledging that the State Department’s main concern was maintaining of policy of nonintervention, Cohen still characterizes U.S. policy as anti-Zionist because the U.S. did not actively pressure Britain to fulfill the terms of the mandate and the Balfour Declaration. She completely overlooks the point that this U.S. policy favored the Zionists at the expense of the Arabs. Additionally, some of her interpretations are questionable, including her

Facing Arab and Zionist opposition to their policies, the British would once again send an official commission to Palestine to investigate the causes of the violence and

assertion that pro-Arab positions dominated the discourse and her conclusion that American public opinion after the 1929 rebellion was anti-Zionist and pro-Arab. Aside from repeated claims that the British “appeased” the Arabs, Cohen presents as fact the strange argument that British recognition of Arab grievances was somehow a violation of the principle of fair play. There is no assertion throughout her book that unqualified support for Zionism was a violation of fair play in regards to the Palestinian Arabs.

Cohen clearly dismisses the British commissions and reports in the wake of the rebellion as anti-Zionist whitewashes of Arab crimes and British malfeasance. She accepts the Zionist argument that “not only did the Shaw Commission misinterpret the causes of the riots, but out of political motives and prejudices it criticized Jewish immigration and land policies, which ‘explained’ Arab hostility.” Hope Simpson “hardly qualified as an expert” for “he knew virtually nothing about Palestine and understood less about the Zionist cause,” making him a biased observer in Cohen’s estimation. She even argues that the British were using the Hope Simpson investigation to cause a rift between Zionist and non-Zionist Jews to lessen opposition to the British “appeasement” of the Arabs. Without grappling with the substance of Palestinian grievances and the effect of Zionism on Palestinian Arabs, Cohen simply claims that the Hope Simpson report was extremely biased in favor of the Arabs and that the British policy had the unintended consequences of uniting non-Zionist and Zionist Jews. Given her argument that the Zionists were unable to dominate the narrative on the “riots” and prevent the British government’s articulation of a pro-Arab policy, Cohen strangely concludes, without any discussion, that public pressure forced the British to rescind the Passfield White Paper through the MacDonalld letter to Weizmann. She continues to claim that British policy during the 1930s was anti-Zionist, even though the plan for partition was a pro-Zionist one and British policies helped facilitate a large increase in Jewish immigration to Palestine in response to Nazi persecution in Europe. Cohen ends with the observation that the Jewish people would have to take matters into their own hands to create the Jewish state. Missing from the entire work is even a superficial recognition that the Palestinian Arabs had rights.

Overall, Cohen maintains that arguments that Zionism was an imperialist and anti-democratic project that negatively affected the Palestinian Arabs were anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic. Such a position stifles debate. Her contention that the pro-Arab position dominated public discussion after the 1929 rebellion and her narrative supporting Zionist contentions that the Jewish people had legitimate historical rights to Palestine, that Zionism benefited the Arabs, that the Zionists wanted amiable relations with the Arabs and were not violating Arab rights, that the Arab claims to Palestine were weak, and that the British had the responsibility for facilitating Jewish immigration and landownership serve more as propaganda than historical analysis. The prevailing themes that the Zionists had special rights to Palestine, that Arab rights need not be respected, and that any opposition to Zionism was anti-Semitic barely mask an underlying racist ideology. Importantly, Cohen fails to discuss the Zionist goal of expelling the Palestinian Arabs to make room for a Jewish state and the import of Zionist opposition to self-government with an Arab majority, while accepting public statements of Zionist leaders that Zionists were willing to work with the Arabs and improve the Arab standard of living. Her contentions that anti-Semitism was the impetus behind American policy and that the U.S. was pro-Arab are flawed. Her comparisons of the Arab rebellion with Nazi atrocities serve more as weapons against Arab resistance to Western imperialism than historical analysis. That such a work was well-reviewed in *The American Historical Review* and *The Journal of American History* illustrates that the Zionist narrative has held a privileged position in the American understanding of the Israel-Palestine conflict.

For Knabenshue quote, see Davidson, *America’s Palestine*, 98-99, and 236, n.53. Cohen also characterizes the *New York Times* correspondent Joseph Levy as anti-Zionist for some of his reports on the violence. Compare her assessment with the discussion of some of Levy’s articles in this dissertation. It is an oversimplification to paint Levy as anti-Zionist given his obvious anti-Arab views, praise for development in Palestine, and sympathy for the Jewish/Zionist position on numerous occasions.

For Morris quotes, see Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 117

offer recommendations for the British government. As usual, the British government hoped that the commission would decrease tensions and signal the British commitment to addressing the concerns of both the Zionists and the Palestinian Arabs. The resulting reports (Shaw Commission and Hope-Simpson reports) and articulation of British policy (the Passfield White Paper) failed to appease either the Zionists or the Palestinian Arabs, who separately hoped that British policy would privilege their respective positions. The Zionists lobbied for the British to fulfill their commitment to Zionism as articulated in the Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations Mandate, while the Palestinian Arabs argued that the British ought to rescind the Balfour Declaration, restrict Jewish immigration and land ownership, and support the principle of self-determination in Palestine. When the British attempted to appease both sides and recommended limits on Jewish colonization in Palestine while still pledging their commitment to the Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations mandate for Palestine, the Zionists and their supporters (including the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations) were able to create enough pressure on the British government to force a retraction of the Passfield White Paper. Although the Zionists continued to assert that the Jewish colonization of Palestine benefited the Arabs, Weizmann and other Zionist leaders privately discussed the 'transfer' of Palestinian Arabs and the partition of Palestine with the British government as a means to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish state.

CHAPTER 8: THE SHAW COMMISSION, HOPE-SIMPSON REPORT, PASSFIELD WHITE PAPER, AND MACDONALD LETTER

In the wake of the uprising, the British announced that a commission of inquiry would investigate the causes of the Arab rebellion, but the Secretary of State clearly articulated that the British government would not alter the Balfour Declaration or the terms of the mandate, precluding a serious consideration of Arab grievances. An ailing and retired Balfour wrote to Weizmann

The British Empire and all the powers with whom it has been so closely associated have solemnly declared their intention of again rendering Palestine as the national home of the Jewish people. That policy is in harmony with the best opinion of Western civilization in all parts of the world. To its fulfillment is promised the support of the British Empire. That pledge has been given. Depend upon it, it is not going to be withdrawn.¹

British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald assured the League of Nations in early September 1929 that the Arab rebellion was “no conflict between Moslem and Jew,” but “simply an uprising of lawlessness and disorder,” the causes of which were relatively unimportant. Dismissing Arab opposition to British imperialism and Jewish colonialism, MacDonald self-righteously proclaimed that “no nation, no civilized nation, no nation with any political responsibility, no nation cooperating with other nations to do their best for all the peoples of the world, will ever yield to outbursts of criminality and murder,” such as occurred in Palestine. In response to the Arab uprising, the British implemented collective punishment of Arab villages, further indicating that British policy served Zionist interests, despite the protestations of Zionists that the British favored the Arabs.

¹ “Balfour Says British Back Jewish Cause,” *New York Times*, 31 August 1929, 4
Within days of the outbreak, Weizmann met with Colonial Secretary Lord Passfield and recommended that the British government suspend and punish Henry Luke, Acting High Commissioner, for incompetence. Weizmann took the opportunity to argue that unrestricted Jewish immigration would have precluded any Arab uprisings in Palestine and blame “unscrupulous agitators” for the “pogroms.” See, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Vol 1, Series B, August 1898-July 1931*, Barnet Litvinoff, ed (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books and Rutgers University, 1983), 557-560

Essentially, MacDonald declared that the British Empire would not countenance challenges to its rule from the Palestinian Arabs. Still, the British sent a commission of inquiry to investigate the causes of the Arab uprising and determine, according to the *New York Times*, “how far Zionism can succeed here and how the Arabs may be pacified, in their discontent with the ever-growing Jewish strength in the country.” On the eve of the arrival of the British commissioners to Palestine, the *Times* reported that “the fundamental cause of these riots was a revolt by Arabs against Zionism and the alleged Zionist policy of the government” and that the Arabs wanted the abrogation of the Balfour Declaration and the establishment of democratic government. The Arabs reiterated their belief that Zionism was a threat to the indigenous population that had inhabited Palestine for centuries, while the Zionists asserted that the international community has mandated the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine and feigned puzzlement at arguments that Jews and Arabs could not live peaceably after the successful completion of the Zionist project.²

² “British Commission to Visit Palestine,” *New York Times*, 4 September 1929, 10; “Text of Premier M’Donald’s Speech at League Assembly on Disarmament and Peace,” *New York Times*, 4 September 1929, 14; “Peace and Empire,” *New York Times*, 5 September 1929, 20. “League Reassured by Britain on Arabs,” *New York Times*, 7 September 1929, 3; “British Are Scored by Jews and Arabs,” *New York Times*, 8 September 1929, 22; “Clashes Continue Palestine Unrest,” 10 September 1929, 5; “Palestine Eager for Inquiry Start,” *New York Times*, 11 September 1929, 4; “Palestine Snipings Keep Fears Alive,” *New York Times*, 6 October 1929, E8.

A *Times* editorial praised MacDonald for warning “extremists” in Egypt, India, and other British colonies that if they resort to arms to gain self-government from Britain, then the British would quash their revolutionary movements with any force necessary. Considering that 13 American colonies fought a revolution to gain independence from the British empire, the *Times* opposition to independence movements in Asia and the Near East would seem extraordinary if not for the accepted premise that non-whites were incapable of self-government. Winston Churchill surmised that without “the protecting and guiding hand” of British troops in Egypt and India, there would be violence exponentially greater than what took place in Palestine. Arab-Americans, however, lamented that the British Prime Minister characterized a “defense of our national rights, our country, our homes” as “ordinary crime.” See, “Demands New Stand on Debts for Britain,” *New York Times*, 5 September 1929, 46; “Arabs Here Appeal to MacDonald for Aid,” *New York Times*, 9 September 1929, 22

In March 1930, Sir Walter Shaw, chairman of the commission charged with investigating the August 1929 uprising, presented a report to Lord Passfield, the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The commissioners provided some historical context for the August uprising, emphasizing that the Balfour Declaration, League of Nations mandate for Palestine, Jewish immigration, Jewish landownership, and lack of representative government were the long-term causes of the violence, but concluded that the political and religious conflict existing over the Wailing Wall was the proximate factor that exacerbated the Arab grievances against British policy and Jewish colonization. After the incident at the Wailing Wall on the Day of Atonement in 1928, where the British forcibly removed a partition separating the women from the men, Zionists (regardless of religious beliefs) and religious Jews (regardless of attitude toward Zionism) protested British policy and declared that the British were accommodating the Muslims at the expense of Jewish rights to worship at the Wailing Wall. A few weeks before the uprising in 1929, Zionists proclaimed that the mandate governed Jewish rights at the Wailing Wall, not the status quo that had existed for centuries, and that Jewish “rights under the Mandate are more complete and more extensive than those embraced within the principle of the *status quo*.” While absolving Zionist leaders of any blame, the British commission determined that the provocative actions and rhetoric of moderate and extremist Zionists, who insisted that the Wailing Wall belonged to the Jewish people and that the British government wrongfully and consistently favored the Arab population, precipitated the Arab uprising.³

³ *Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August, 1929*, CMD 3530 (London: H. M. Stationary Office, 1930)

After providing some historical context and description of the uprising, the commissioners dealt with the Zionist and Arab grievances. The commission determined that the Zionist allegations that the Grand Mufti and Arab Executive organized and precipitated the uprising through agitation of the Arab masses were unsubstantiated. In fact, the commission observed that Arab fears of future Jewish encroachment on the Wailing Wall and adjoining territory once Jews gained a majority were not irrational or unfounded. Although Zionists especially criticized Moslem construction in the area in the summer of 1929 (and British acquiescence in this construction), the British observed that the Muslim actions reinforced ownership of the Wailing Wall and surrounding territory and were retaliatory measures for Jewish attempts to violate the status quo. Zionists also argued that the Palestine Arab Executive “stirred up Arab feeling over such matters as Jewish immigration, Jewish land purchase, and Government taxation,” implying that the Arab masses had no issues with Zionism and would not have participated in the uprising except for the agitation of Arab leaders. Again the commission concluded that the Arab Executive did not plan or instigate the violence in late August. Aside from blaming Palestinian Muslim leaders for the uprising, the Zionists challenged British policy for not only allegedly failing to prevent or suppress the uprising but also for obstructing the Balfour Declaration and the mandate and privileging the Arab population at the expense of Jewish colonization and rights.⁴

⁴ Ibid., 70-96

Porath, however, argues that the Mufti’s “systematic policy” from the early 1920s onward (to make an issue of the Wall) made the Shaw commission’s conclusion that the violence was not premeditated suspect. The Muslim leadership understood that the Wailing Wall was a “concrete symbol” to gain popular support against Zionism when “abstract nationalist slogans about self-determination, majority rights etc.,” were inadequate. This issue also allowed the Palestinians to gain support from a larger pan-Arab and pan-Muslim world. See Yehoshua Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement, 1918-1929* (London: Frank Cass, 1974), 270-273

While dismissing most of the Zionist accusations, the British Commission concluded that Arab economic and political grievances regarding Jewish immigration, land ownership, and constitutional government were the main causes of the uprising. The Arab population contended that the Jewish colonization of Palestine meant the dispossession, unemployment, subordination, and even expulsion of the Palestinians for the sake of a foreign immigrant population. At the same time, the Zionists complained that any immigration restriction pandered to the Arab population and violated the Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations mandate for Palestine. The British commissioners observed that the Churchill White Paper of 1922 determined that Jewish “immigration should not exceed the economic capacity of Palestine to absorb new arrivals and that it should not have the result of depriving any section of the present population of their employment.” The reality in Palestine, however, was that the Zionists essentially controlled immigration contrary to British policy. Consequently, crises developed periodically during the 1920s because “immigrants have come into Palestine in excess of the economic absorbing power of the country,” according to another British report cited in the commission’s inquiry. Zionist testimony before the commission clearly illustrated that they understood British policy as responsible for actively facilitating a large Jewish immigration so that the Jewish population would soon constitute a majority in Palestine. With full government support for the scientific development of Palestine, Zionists argued, the economic capacity of the country would exponentially increase and allow for a much larger Jewish immigration, which would solve the Jewish problem in the West and benefit the Arab population in the Near East. Jabotinsky testified that under the terms of the Balfour Declaration and the mandate, the British administration ought to

facilitate the establishment of a Jewish state, which meant “first of all a majority of Jewish people in Palestine so that under a democratic rule the Jewish point of view should always prevail.” The revisionist leader further maintained that “it must be iterated and stressed that the ‘moderates’ are no less extreme in their conceptions of the ultimate goal than the ‘extremists’ themselves, for both ardently desire a Jewish State or Commonwealth in Palestine, but they differ substantially as to the road that must be travelled for the next decade or two.” Since Zionist policy was premised on unrestricted Jewish immigration to Palestine as a precondition for the establishment of the Jewish state, the Zionist leadership vociferously protested any British policy limiting Jewish immigration. Concluding the Zionist policy violated the 1922 White Paper (which the Zionist leadership pledged to support) and was obviously based on the goal of creating a Jewish state and acknowledging that the Arab population rationally feared the consequences of Zionist policy, the commissioners recommended that the British government “issue a clear and definite declaration of the policy which they intend to be pursued in regard to the regulation and control of Jewish immigration to Palestine.”⁵

The Palestinian Arabs also expressed grave concern that Zionist colonization meant their dispossession and expulsion from their homeland. The Arabs asserted that the exclusivist ideology of Jewish labor on Jewish land was based on the expropriation of Palestinian peasants and discrimination against Arab labor, resulting in the serious development of a landless and unemployed Arab proletariat despite British policy ostensibly implemented to protect tenants who have subsisted on their land for

⁵ Ibid., 96-112

The migration statistics contained in the report illustrated that 67.5% of Jewish immigrants to Palestine from 1919-1928 came from Poland and Russia. Fourteen hundred (1%) immigrated to Palestine from the United States. Ibid, 101-102

generations if an absentee landowner sold property to the Jewish National Fund. Jewish expropriation of Arab peasants often meant the destruction of tribal communities and identities and also disrupted the lives of Bedouins in the region who pastured their animals on harvested land. The commissioners argued that dispossessed peasants had little chance of finding land and that the feudal relationships established in the Ottoman empire in the late eighteenth century meant that absentee landlords gained title to lands that “for generations and in some cases for centuries had been in the undisturbed and undisputed occupation of peasants,” who still had strong moral claims to their land. Countering Zionist claims about the capacity of Palestine under scientific agricultural methods, the commission reported that Palestine could not presently support a larger population on the land, especially after factoring for natural population growth, due in part to the sanitary and health measures implemented during the mandate era.⁶

The third Arab grievance dealt with the continual denial of self-government for Palestine because of the Balfour Declaration and Zionist opposition to any representative government based on an Arab majority. Originally dubious that “the less educated Arab people” had any interest in self-government because they “would derive little direct benefit from the institution of representative government in Palestine,” the commissioners observed that the politically informed peasant population strongly supported representative government. The commissioners reiterated the British claim that Palestine was excluded from the Hussein-McMahon agreement promising independence and self-determination for the Arabs within the Ottoman Empire while acknowledging that the Palestinians had a wholly different interpretation. Testifying before the commission, Arab representatives strongly declared that the Palestinians

⁶ Ibid., 113-124

would not have allied with the British against the Ottomans if they understood British policy as establishing a homeland in Palestine for European Jewish immigrants at the expense of the majority population. Pointing to the development of representative constitutional governments in neighboring Arab territories, the Palestinian Arabs protested the mandate as a denial of self-determination of the indigenous population and a violation of the League of Nations Covenant and vehemently demanded representative government in Palestine based on majority rule.⁷

Based on their discussion of Arab grievances, the British commissioners determined that the Zionists' pursuit of unlimited immigration and a Jewish state in Palestine and opposition to self-government violated Churchill's 1922 White Paper. Although the commissioners acknowledged Arab fears, sympathized with the Zionist position, and recommended that the British government clearly articulate policy objectives for Palestine, Zionists strongly contended that the British policy in Palestine contravened the Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations mandate and the Palestinian Arabs criticized the British for violating previous pledges and the principle of self-determination enshrined during the war and in the League of Nations covenant. The Zionists asserted that anything less than unquestioned British support for the Zionist project was a violation of the British commitment, while the Arab population contended that any British support for the establishment of the Jewish home in Palestine without the consent of the majority population was a gross violation of Palestinian Arab rights. For the British commissioners, criticism from both Zionists and Arabs demonstrated that the

⁷ Ibid., 124-135. The report dismissed other "minor" Arab grievances out of hand. Palestinians opposed, for example, the British administration's granting of concessions for the development and exploitation of Palestine's resources to foreign Jewish interests and high taxation, which the Arabs argued disproportionately benefitted Jewish settlers.

British administration had maintained a neutral and impartial middle course balancing between Arab and Jewish interests in Palestine. The reality, however, was that the British commitment to the Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations mandate (as well as British and French colonialism in the Near East) was premised on the denial of Arab self-determination, as Balfour himself so clearly stated. The commissioners understood the contradiction between a Jewish national home and Arab nationalism and clearly stated that the recognition of one meant the denial of the other. Such an acknowledgement makes their conclusion that the British had implemented a neutral policy somewhat baffling if not for the recognition that the British were simply attempting to appease both the Arabs and the Jews in pursuit of larger British imperial interests and that the British understood Zionism and British colonialism as introducing civilization and development to Palestine. Zionism would have been palatable to the Arab population (and perhaps would be so in the future) if certain extremist Zionists were not so outspoken about immediately establishing conditions for a Jewish state.⁸

Establishing that Arab concerns about the consequences of Jewish immigration and land purchases and the Zionist demonstration at the Wailing Wall were the long-term and immediate causes of the Arab uprising, the commissioners reiterated that Zionism and British administration benefited the indigenous population and simply recommended that the British government articulate a clear formulation of policy regarding Palestine and clamp down on the more extreme Zionist demands. One member of the commission, Labor Member of Parliament Harry Snell, argued in an addendum to the report that Muslim religious leaders incited the uprising. The solution, Snell claimed, was for the Arabs to disabuse themselves of the belief “that they have suffered a great

⁸ Ibid., 136-168

wrong and that the immigrant Jew constitutes a permanent menace to their livelihood and future.” Instead, Snell maintained contrary to the commission’s evidence that “Jewish activities have increased the prosperity of Palestine, have raised the standard of life of the Arab worker and have laid the foundations on which may be based the future progress of the two communities and their development into one State.” Consequently, Snell declared that “the Arabs can have no legitimate complaint against the introduction into Palestine of a people whose activities may lead to the development” of the land and the raising of living standards for the indigenous population. Indeed, the British M.P. accepted the Zionist contention that the Jewish colonization of Palestine would not dispossess or harm the Arab population, but would bring development, progress, and civilization to a backward land and people. Harkening back to European and white American justifications for the dispossession, removal, and genocide of Native Americans, Snell argued that because the indigenous population of Palestine, whether farmers or nomads, did not use the land properly, Jewish settlers should have to right to cultivate this supposed “wasteland” and “make the desert bloom.” Snell recommended that the British government fulfill the obligations of the mandate and make the Zionists and Arabs understand that Palestine would become a Jewish and Arab nation.⁹

As the commission began its inquiry, both Zionists and Christian and Muslim Arabs were optimistic that the British would favor their respective position and determine

⁹ Ibid., 172-183. In his addendum, Snell quoted Jabotinsky as claiming that Zionists would not infringe upon the rights of the indigenous population. Jabotinsky, however, was very clear that Zionist colonization, even the most restricted, must either be terminated or carried out in defiance of the will of the native population. This colonization can, therefore, continue and develop only under the protection of a force independent of the local population—an iron wall which the native population cannot break through. This is, in toto, our policy toward the Arabs. To formulate it any other way would be hypocrisy.

See Lenni Brenner, *The Iron Wall—Zionist Revisionism from Jabotinsky to Shamir* (London: Zed Books, 1984), 74-75, cited in Nur Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians: The Concept of ‘Transfer’ in Zionist Political Thought, 1882-1948* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992), 28

to either create the Jewish national home or abrogate the Balfour Declaration and the mandate. British, Zionist, and Arab representatives all expressed disappointment at the findings and recommendations of the British commission. Within Britain itself, the debate over the report centered on whether the government should fulfill the terms of the League of Nations mandate dealing with the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people. If so, critics asserted, then the government ought to simply dismiss the commission's report and determine how to facilitate the creation of the Jewish national home in Palestine. Zionists both criticized the report for supposedly challenging Jewish colonization on flimsy evidence and praised it for supposedly demonstrating that "many Arab complaints are unjustified." The Zionist Organization of America minced no words when characterizing the report as a "concession to criminality" and the commissioners as overtly political with the exception of Snell's pro-Zionist addendum. The ZOA rebuttal to the report maintained that the commission acknowledged Arab culpability for the riots and that Shaw report "seems to base itself on the idea that Jews have been given an unexpected and exceptional privilege in settling in Palestine, that their claim to a homeland is dependent on the generosity of Arab effendis." Countering what they considered as pernicious propaganda, the members of the ZOA claimed that Jews had a right to Palestine due to "an organic, indissoluble connection between the identity of the Jewish people and the country from which it was ejected long ago" and that the international community recognized this right and legitimized it through an "international agreement." Additionally, the ZOA argued that neither the Zionist demonstration at the Wailing Wall nor Jewish land policy were causes of the uprising. *The American Hebrew* editorialized that Arab political and economic fears about Jewish colonization were

unjustified propaganda “from the exaggerated minds of Arab politicians.” A conference of Jewish organizations in the U.S. even met in New York to protest the “unjust” findings of the commission. Under the aegis of the American Jewish Congress, the conference reiterated WZO protestations that the commission’s findings were based on “insufficient evidence,” misrepresented the reality on the ground in the Holy Land, and threatened to abrogate British promises to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine while absolving the Grand Mufti for inciting the riot and the British administration for failing to properly disarm the Arab threat to Jewish colonization. American Jewish organizations opposed any restrictions on Jewish immigration and the introduction of a more representative government in Palestine. To completely undermine any substantial debate about the consequences of British and Zionist policy, Zionists, such as Louis Lipsky, simply characterized the commission’s report as “anti-Semitic propaganda.”¹⁰

In a private meeting with Passfield before the publication of the Shaw report, Weizmann challenged the commission’s conclusion that Zionist policy dispossessed Arab peasants and argued that the few Arabs affected were better off due to Jewish compensation, but admitted that some Arabs had probably moved into towns “after having blown the money which they received from us.” Further illustrating his attitude toward the Arab population, Weizmann stated that

¹⁰ “Palestine Eager for Inquiry Start,” *New York Times*, 11 September 1929, 4; “Jews Score Report of Palestine Board,” *New York Times*, 2 April 1930, 10; “Riot Inquiry Report Said to Favor Arabs,” *New York Times*, 10 March 1939, 6; “Score Shaw Report on Palestine Riots,” *New York Times*, 3 April 1930, 8; “Shaw Report is Assailed,” *New York Times*, 15 April 1930, 36; “Jewish Conference Scores Shaw Report,” *New York Times*, 16 April 1930, 9

Joseph Levy, the *Times* correspondent in Jerusalem, reported on the developing Arab nationalism in Palestine and the unity of Christian and Muslim Arabs in pursuit of democratic government and an end to the Balfour Declaration. Women also were active in protesting Zionism and British policy. See, “Arabs Close Ranks Against Zionists,” *New York Times*, 4 November 1929, 10

the development of Palestine could not be held up by squatters who did nothing to the land except superficially scratch it, whereas there were thousands of Jews ready to sink their energies and their money and convert sands and marshes into flourishing villages. Apart from our historic right to do so, it was the service to the soil which determined the right in our favor.

Aside from postulating that the Jewish settlers were creating a paradise out of a backward wasteland, Weizmann argued that the British made an egregious mistake when Churchill's White Paper separated Trans-Jordan from Palestine in 1922, precluding Jewish colonization east of the Jordan River. Weizmann diplomatically recommended that the transfer of Arabs from Palestine to Trans-Jordan and Iraq would alleviate problems in Palestine and benefit the undeveloped and underpopulated Arab lands and warned that the Zionists opposed any democratic constitution in Palestine as a barrier to the establishment of a Jewish national home. In a meeting with Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald after the publication of the Shaw report in late March 1930, Weizmann argued that "it was a lie that [Jews] ever over-stepped the limits of the economic possibility of Palestine, and a lie that there was no land in Palestine." Ignoring Arab agriculture (just as European settlers and white Americans ignored Native American agriculture) and the fact that many Jewish colonies were based on dairy farming, Weizmann maintained that "it's a fight between a Jew and a goat," suggesting the nomadic Arabs were improperly utilizing the land and preventing development and modernization. Weizmann encouraged MacDonald to explain to Parliament that the British supported enough Jewish immigration to establish a Jewish Palestine "whether the Arabs want it or not."¹¹

¹¹ *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Vol 1, Series B, August 1898-July 1931*, Barnet Litvinoff, ed (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books and Rutgers University, 1983), 590-593

Interestingly, on 1 September 1929, Weizmann wrote to Prime Minister MacDonald that the commission of inquiry "should not be limited merely to recent outbreak but should embrace whole question

The entire Arab population expected that the report would criticize Zionism and consequently foster British support for immediate self-determination in Palestine and the creation of a representative government based upon majority rule. The “mildness, balance and caution” of the report disappointed the Arabs and Snell’s strident criticism of the report’s findings increased Arab fears that British policy would continue to support the Zionist project. Zionists argued that Snell’s statement illustrated “a clearer penetration of the facts of the situation” and demanded that the British fulfill the terms of the Balfour Declaration and the mandate, meaning the fulfillment of the clauses dealing with the creation of the Jewish state in Palestine and not the protection of the civil and religious rights of the “non-Jewish communities.”¹²

The *New York Times* editorialized that the British administration in Palestine was ultimately responsible for the “savage outbreak of Arab hostility” due to ignorance or incompetence that prevented the British from using police or military force to deal with any disturbances in a quick and decisive manner. Disagreeing with the central findings of the Shaw commission, the *Times* editors determined that “the riots last year were not due to Jewish immigration but to the religious and political quarrels and agitations for which the Shaw commission properly calls both sides to account.” Consequently, the

of manner in which Palestine has been administered under Mandate.” Once the Shaw report was published, however, Zionists complained that the commissioners overstepped their bounds when investigating more than the immediate causes of the uprising – Muslim provocations at the Wailing Wall, according to the Zionist perspective. In prefacing Weizmann’s discussion with Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald in late March 1930, the editor of Weizmann’s papers suggested that the “ambiguity” of the Balfour Declaration and the mandate’s “dual obligation to Arabs and Jews” were irrelevant to the 1929 uprising. Further dismissing the Shaw report for acknowledging Arab fears of Jewish immigration and colonization, the editor argued that Jewish settlement brought “great advantages to Palestine.” See, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Vol 1, Series B, August 1898-July 1931*, Barnet Litvinoff, ed (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books and Rutgers University, 1983), 594-595; *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Volume XIV, Series A, July 1929-October 1930*, Camillo Dresner, ed.(New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books and Rutgers University, 1978), 14-15

¹² “Jews Score Report of Palestine Board,” *New York Times*, 2 April 1930, 10; “Riot Inquiry Report Said to Favor Arabs,” *New York Times*, 10 March 1939, 6; “Score Shaw Report on Palestine Riots,” *New York Times*, 3 April 1930, 8

Times ignored long-term Arab grievances against the Balfour Declaration, League of Nations mandate, and Jewish immigration and colonization of Palestine and repeated calls for self-government and simply concluded that “the really basic causes of racial enmity in Palestine must be studied.”¹³

After the publication of the report, Labor Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald immediately assured the House of Commons that Great Britain would continue to administer Palestine according to the League of Nations mandate because His Majesty’s government made “an international obligation.” Ignoring that the Balfour Declaration violated the political and national rights of the Palestinian population, MacDonald suggested that governing Palestine according to the Balfour Declaration would “give equal justice to Arabs and Jews.” A week later, a Palestine Arab delegation, which included the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, addressed both houses of Parliament to lobby for self-determination in Palestine. Reminding his audience of British and allied pledges to the Arabs during the war, the Grand Mufti argued that British denial of self-government in Palestine, which included taxation without representation, violated the rights of the majority population. The Palestine Arab delegation claimed that Jewish colonization of Palestine and Zionist designs for the creation of a Jewish state precipitated the uprising in August 1929 and pressed for the self-determination of Palestine and the abrogation of both the Balfour Declaration and the British mandate. In response to the Arab demand for a Palestine Parliament in which Arabs and Jews would have proportional representation based upon the current demographics in Palestine, the British government determined that self-government on democratic terms was “wholly unacceptable” because that would make “it impossible for his Majesty’s Government to carry out its

¹³ “The Palestine Report,” *New York Times*, 2 April 1930, 23

obligations under the terms of the mandate.” Despite British pretenses about maintaining a neutral policy in Palestine benefitting the indigenous population and the European Jewish immigrants, the British government once again articulated that platitudes about the rights of the Arab population and the principle of self-determination were wholly unrelated to British imperial and Zionist colonial goals in Palestine. After the British once again dismissed Palestinian concerns and rights, the Palestine Arab delegation made it clear that the Arab population recognized that the British administration served British imperial and Zionist interests and warned that “every Arab in Palestine prefers to die in defense of his natural rights and existence than to submit to the oppression inflicted by any measure of coercion.” If neither the British nor the League of Nations would address Palestinian grievances, then the indigenous population would use violence in self-defense of their homeland from the foreign colonial threat.¹⁴

Despite the clear articulation of British policy against the Arab grievances, the British statement to the Permanent Mandates Commission in late May 1930 suggested that the British government desired to improve relations between Arabs and Jews in Palestine and was reevaluating how to maintain a neutral policy benefitting the entire population of the mandate area, while introducing security measures to protect Jewish

¹⁴ “Britain Repledges Palestine Mandate,” *New York Times*, 4 April 1930, 8; “Arabs Address Parliament,” *New York Times*, 11 April 1930, 13; “Britain Rebuffs Palestine Arabs,” *New York Times*, 14 May 1930, 13; “Grand Mufti Presents Arab Views at Geneva,” *New York Times*, 30 May 1930, 7

The British told the Arab delegation that “the effect of meeting the wishes of the Arab Delegation as regards democratic government would have been to render it impossible” to carry out the terms of the mandate, a clear illustration that the mandate for Palestine was a violation of democratic principles. See, Peel Report, 76

Referring to British interests in India and the Muslim world, some commentators argued that the supposed British appeasement of Arabs was undertaken to maintain Muslim support throughout the British empire. See, for example, “Britain Hits Back at Mandates Body,” *New York Times*, 13 August 1930, 5

colonists.¹⁵ In hearings before the Permanent Mandates Commission in early June, representatives of the British government maintained that “a national home [for the Jewish people] can be established without detriment to the non-Jewish interests” and emphasized that Jewish colonization brought the benefits of civilization and development to Palestine. While British policy favored the interests of the European Jewish colonizers, his Majesty’s government promised that the British administration protected the “civil and religious” rights and interests of the majority “non-Jewish communities.” In reality, however, as the consistent use of “non-Jewish communities” to describe the overwhelming Arab majority suggests, the British, Zionists, and Permanent Mandates Commission understood that the national and political interests and rights of the Palestinian Arabs were subordinate to the international community’s commitment to the Jewish national home. Despite British support for Jewish colonization, the Permanent Mandates Commission accepted the Zionist narrative (and Snell’s criticisms of the Shaw report), criticized the British administration for failing to prevent or at least immediately repress the Arab violence in August 1929, and dismissed the Shaw report as an apologia for British actions.¹⁶ Interestingly, the Permanent Mandates Commission censured the British for failing to both “redeem the pledge of self-government made to the Arab” and facilitate the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine, ignoring that the commitments were contradictory and that the Commission itself favored the Zionists and

¹⁵ According to Weizmann, sympathetic commissioners, such as the British representative Lord Lugard, kept the Zionist leadership abreast of any developments in the Permanent Mandates Commission. See, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Vol 1, Series B, August 1898-July 1931*, Barnet Litvinoff, ed (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books and Rutgers University, 1983), 585-588

¹⁶ Faulting the British for failing to recognize that an uprising was brewing, the *New York Times* editorialized that the British with their experience with imperialism and “knowledge of the mind of the East” ought to have understood that “weakness or hesitation” was fatal when dealing with Orientals. See, “Britain in Palestine,” *New York Times*, 26 August 1930, 17

privileged Zionist testimony. Responding to Zionist accusations that the British stopped all Jewish immigration to Palestine, British representatives argued that the Zionists violated British policy through large-scale immigration that exceeded the capacity of Palestine. Since immigration and land ownership were fundamental to the conflict, the British imposed a temporary hold on future Jewish immigration and argued that a thorough reevaluation of policy was dependent upon the findings of another British commission charged with investigating if Palestine could immediately accommodate and support further Jewish colonists. Even though the British government favored Jewish colonization, American Zionists continued to pillory British policy “as a violation of the spirit and letter of the mandate,” which has stirred doubt “in the sincere intention of the mandatory power to carry out the promise which it made and which was sealed by the nations of the world, including the United States government.” The Permanent Mandates Commission echoed this assessment and faulted the British for failing to implement policies actively promoting the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine.¹⁷

Sir Thomas Drummond Shiels, parliamentary undersecretary for the colonies, represented the British position at the hearings. A supporter of Zionism and consequently an opponent of representative government in Palestine while the Jewish population was a

¹⁷ “London Upholds Palestine Report,” *New York Times*, 28 May 1930, 13; “Palestine Inquiry Starts Tomorrow,” *New York Times*, 2 June 1930, 10; “League Discusses Palestine Rioting,” *New York Times*, 4 June 1930, 6; “Questions British on Palestine Riots,” *New York Times*, 5 June 1930, 8; “Committees Blamed for Palestine Influx,” *New York Times*, 6 June 1930, 6; “Says Palestine Policy Depends on Simpson,” *New York Times*, 7 June 1930, 6; “Zionists Act Today to Close Breach,” *New York Times*, 29 June 1930, 42; “Palestine Report Held Sensational,” *New York Times*, 12 July 1930, 5; “Britain in Palestine,” *New York Times*, 26 August 1930, 17; League of Nations Permanent Mandates Commission, *Minutes of the Seventeenth (Extraordinary) Session*, 3-21 June 1930, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/5f21f8a1ca578a57052566120067f658?OpenDocument> (accessed 22 December 2011)

Harry Charles Luke, Acting High Commissioner in Palestine during the riots, was reassigned less than a year later. Zionists vehemently charged Luke with failing to take forceful action in the initial stages of the uprising. See, “Palestine Official Moved,” *New York Times*, 13 June 1930, 15

minority, Drummond Shiels was charged with articulating and defending British policy in Palestine, which was based on fulfilling the terms of the mandate dealing with the establishment of a “National Home for the Jewish people” and the protection of the “civil and religious rights of the non-Jewish communities.” Echoing the Shaw report, Drummond Shiels argued that the establishment of a Jewish national home would not negatively affect the “non-Jewish communities,” but would instead benefit the Arab population so long as Jewish immigration did not exceed the “absorptive capacity of the country.” The British government and the Permanent Mandates Commission accepted the Zionist position that Jewish colonization brought civilization, development, and higher standards of living to the indigenous population.¹⁸

The Permanent Mandates Commission questioned the British representatives about the conflict between Muslims and Jews over the Wailing Wall. Although Harry Luke, the Acting High Commissioner during the 1929 uprising, maintained that Muslim authorities implemented measures to emphasize Muslim ownership of the Wailing Wall and surrounding territory in response to the Balfour Declaration, Zionism, and Jewish actions to gain control over the holy site, the members of the Permanent Mandates Commission maintained that the British policy regarding the Wailing Wall favored the Muslims at the expense of the Jews and that the Muslim actions were only undertaken after the 1928 incident to “annoy” the Jews. Echoing the conclusions of the Shaw report, Luke iterated that the Jewish nationalist demonstration at the Wailing Wall was the immediate cause of the August 1929 uprising. The Commissioners, however, blamed the Muslim counter-demonstration as the cause of the violence and questioned why the

¹⁸ League of Nations Permanent Mandates Commission, *Minutes of the Seventeenth (Extraordinary) Session*; Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians*, 32

British authorities did not prevent or immediately repress the Muslim demonstration. Indeed, the commissioners repeatedly argued that the reduction of British troops in Palestine during the 1920s created space for an Arab uprising and left the Jews vulnerable to “pogroms.” Luke, however, argued that the use of force against “fanatical” Muslims near the holy sites would only have exacerbated the violence and reminded the Permanent Mandates Commission that large numbers of British forces failed to prevent and easily repress earlier Arab uprisings in 1920 and 1921.¹⁹

Commissioners challenged the Shaw report’s conclusion that Jewish immigration and land ownership were the fundamental causes of the 1929 uprising and instead contended that the British denial of Arab independence and self-determination was the significant factor. One commissioner, a Daniel Francois Willem van Rees, went so far as to argue that if the British had granted independence to Palestine “on the condition that the Balfour Declaration were accepted in its true sense,” the Arab uprisings against the British mandate would not have occurred. Van Rees argued that since the British had accepted the responsibility of establishing a Jewish national home in Palestine, Arab opposition to that policy also implied opposition to the British administration despite the Shaw report’s assertion that the Arab uprising was not a symbol of anti-British sentiment. In fact, van Rees found dubious the Shaw report’s contention that the “riot” was a consequence of the Arab fear that Jewish immigration and land ownership meant Jewish political and economic domination in Palestine. Arab hostility, van Rees argued, was directed at the British mandatory power for denying Arab independence and was not “provoked by the immigration and subsequent activities of the Jews.” Despite the British

¹⁹ League of Nations Permanent Mandates Commission, *Minutes of the Seventeenth (Extraordinary) Session*

contentions that the Arab population of Palestine was politically literate and active, van Rees blamed the violence against Jews on the “illiterate classes” who “were much more easily moved by religious, racial or economic considerations than by political claims, which were generally not very highly appreciated by a population which, as in Palestine, was fairly at ease under the existing system of government.” In addition, van Rees stated that the elite Arabs in Palestine were “threatened by the gradual rise in the standard of living in the country,” which was “an inevitable consequence of the activities of the Jews.” The Arab elite certainly feared any threats to their position in society, but the argument that Jewish colonization raised the living standards of the Arab masses was a questionable one. Van Rees assessment was that violence in Palestine in 1920, 1921, and 1929 was simply resistance of a feudal, backward, and Oriental society “to the invasion of a European civilization” that was bringing progress, modernization, and development to the poor Arab masses and challenging the power and privileges of the Arab elite.²⁰

Van Rees proceeded to challenge Arab arguments that the British had no right to administer Palestine or establishment a national home for the Jewish people there. Simply dismissing Arab historical claims to Palestine with the pithy remark that “it was not in accordance with most elementary facts of ancient history,” Van Rees observed that the British conquered Palestine from the Ottoman Turks, who ruled Palestine since the early sixteenth century. Consequently, van Rees argued that “there could be no reference...to an Arab nation in Palestine, nor could it be claimed that the territory formed part of the patrimony of that nation. The Bible provided adequate justification for

²⁰ Ibid. Other commissioners, such as William Rampard, accepted the Zionist position that religion, not politics or economics, was the cause of the uprising.

The Peel Commission concluded, however, that Arab violence in 1920, 1921, 1929, and 1936 was a consequence of the failed promise of national independence and self-determination and the concomitant threat of Jewish colonization to Palestinian society. Peel Commission, 50.

Jewish rights to Palestine. Van Rees also dismissed Arab claims that the British reneged on their promises made to the Arabs in the Hussein-McMahon agreement by accepting the British argument that the British-Arab accord did not include Palestine and arguing that the secret Sykes-Picot agreement guaranteed an international administration over the Holy Land, which “excluded any possibility that there might have been formal promises given assuring the independence of the Arabs inhabiting this territory.” Since the League of Nations Covenant abrogated “all obligations or understandings” inconsistent with the terms and principles of the covenant (such as the Sykes-Picot accord) and the Anglo-French declaration promised self-government for the liberated Arab territories, Van Rees’ argument, as a representative of the League of Nations, served as an apologia for an imperialist policy that violated the avowed principles of the League, illustrating that the mandate system was colonialism justified as a civilizing mission. Van Rees rejected Arab arguments that the mandate for Palestine violated Article 22 of the League of Nations Covenant, which “provisionally recognized” the independence of “certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire” under a Mandatory power that provided “administrative advice and assistance...until such time as they are able to stand alone,” by asserting that the Palestinian Arabs could not have self-government until they accepted the “international obligations of Great Britain,” meaning, of course, that the Arabs accept the Balfour Declaration and the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine and ultimately a denial of Arab self-determination and political rights. Instead of considering why the Arabs opposed the mandate and the Balfour Declaration, Van Rees simply characterized Arab opposition to the legal and legitimate terms of the mandate as irrational and fanatical. The British government also argued that self-

determination for the Arabs in Palestine was inconsistent with the terms of the mandate since the Arabs opposed Zionism and the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. Most of the other commissioners reiterated Van Rees' view that Arab self-government was dependent on their recognition and acceptance of Zionism. The Italian Count Theodoli, the Chairman of the commission whom the Zionists characterized as an anti-Zionist, put forward the idea that the establishment of a Jewish national home "be made compatible with the introduction of autonomous institutions," but the other commissioners disagreed since Arab self-government precluded the fulfillment of Zionism. Considering that the Zionist goal of establishing a Jewish state was an open secret and that transfer proposals were being quietly discussed, the argument that Zionism and Arab self-government were compatible was logically flawed, as was Drummond Shiels contention that Arab fears of Jewish political and economic domination were grossly exaggerated and essentially baseless.²¹

While dismissing Arab grievances and blaming the Arab leadership for the lack of autonomy or self-government in Palestine and the "premeditated and organized" violence against the Jewish population, Van Rees emphasized the rights and demands of Jewish settlers as more legitimate than Arab rights given the terms of the mandate. Arguing that the Balfour Declaration, the mandate, and history determined that the Jewish people were "in Palestine as of right and not on sufferance," Van Rees proclaimed that the goal of British policy and Zionism was not to oppress the Arabs, but instead to establish "a social and economic order corresponding to the principles and requirements of European civilization, while...respecting the rights and interests of the existing inhabitants." In

²¹ Ibid.

other words, the British mandate and Zionist project were undertaken as civilizing missions to benefit a backward land and people. Jewish immigration, land ownership, and other privileges articulated in the mandate, according to Van Rees, were undertaken to “upbuild” Palestine and benefit the indigenous population. Accepting Zionist arguments and Snell’s observations on the 1929 uprising, Van Rees argued that Arab leaders provoked the uprising and that the Arab peasants did not have political or economic grievances against the mandate or Jewish colonization. Since Westerners knew what was in the best interest of backward peoples, the League of Nations and the civilized nations could simply ignore Arab opposition and resistance. The problem for Van Rees was not that the British, Zionists, or League of Nations infringed on Arab rights, but that the British had not fulfilled the terms of the mandate and fully facilitated and positively aided the establishment of the Jewish national home.²²

Van Rees and the other commissioners expressed concern that that British were not properly facilitating Jewish immigration to Palestine in accordance with the mandate. While acknowledging that the Arabs “very naturally” feared becoming a minority in Palestine due to unrestricted Jewish immigration, Commissioner William Rappard criticized the British administration for ostensibly basing its immigration policy on Arab “apprehensions” instead of the economic capacity of Palestine to support Jewish immigrants. Such a policy would only encourage Arab uprisings and protests as an effective means to limit Jewish immigration. Zionists, on the other hand, would pressure

²² Ibid. Although a staunch supporter of Zionism and the civilizing mission and opponent of Arab self-government (until the Arabs recognized the legitimacy of the Zionism), Commissioner William Rappard acknowledged that, contrary to popular belief, the League of Nations “had, in fact, received the mandate from the mandatory Power. The League of Nations could not be held responsible for the terms of the mandate, which had been drafted by the mandatory Power and conveyed to the League.” While the British and the Zionists presented the British government as simply fulfilling the will of the international community, the reality was that the British were pursuing imperial aims and used the League of Nations to legitimize British colonialism in the Near East.

the British government and warn of political costs of restricting Jewish immigration to Palestine. Rappard lukewarmly accepted immigration restriction based on scientific economic considerations, but feared that the British were not relying on such criteria to determine the capacity of Palestine to accommodate Jewish immigrants.²³

As for the issue of Jewish land ownership and Arab dispossession, Van Rees argued that Arabs wanted to sell their land to Jewish colonists and any British measures to protect Arab landownership were contrary to Arab interests. Additionally, Van Rees claimed that if Arab peasants lost their land because absentee Arab landowners sold it to Jewish colonists, the peasants should blame the landlords and not the Jewish National Fund or other Zionist organizations that legitimately bought the land for Jewish agricultural settlement. Another commissioner, Mlle. Valentine Dannevig of Norway, inquired whether “evicted Arab tenants” could settle across the Jordan River, but Drummond Shiels reported that the Palestinian Arabs “were attached to Palestine” and “would be somewhat sensitive to any suggestion that a good method of advancing the Jewish National Home would be for them to move to Trans-Jordan.” The British representatives also warned the commissioners that Trans-Jordan had little cultivable land, that Palestinian Arabs did not consider other parts of the Arab world as equivalent to Palestine (despite Zionist assertions that since the Arabs had various states, they could give Palestine to the Jews), and that the 1922 British White Paper determined that Trans-Jordan would not be included in the Jewish national home, precluding large-scale Jewish colonization in east of the Jordan River despite Zionist claims that Trans-Jordan was part of historical Eretz Israel.²⁴

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

The British representatives and members of the Permanent Mandates Commission determined that Arab opposition to the British administration and terms of the mandate demonstrated that Palestinians were not yet ready for democracy or self-government. From the perspective of the British and the League of Nations, indigenous resistance to colonialism and imperialism was illegitimate. Criticism of the British in the Arab press and “sedition” against British authority allegedly illustrated that Oriental peoples “mistook liberty for licence” and justified British policies curbing free speech and other civil liberties so as to protect “law and order.” The British government and representatives on the Permanent Mandates Commission characterized Arab leaders who spoke of self-government and challenged British policies and Zionism as inciting violence and disorder. Given Arab opposition to the mandate and Zionism, the commissioners questioned whether the British could count on any Arab leaders or collaborators to administer Palestine.²⁵

Overall, the commissioners failed to recognize how Jewish immigration and land ownership precipitated Arab resistance to Zionism and the mandate. Van Rees went so far as to quote Zionist Revisionists’ assurances that Jewish purchases of land were not negatively affecting Arab peasants in the least. Since “the Jews...did not admit that the question [of Arab dispossession] was of any importance,” Van Rees continued, Arab fears were exaggerated and unjustified. Van Rees was confident that the majority of Zionists were not interested in establishing a Jewish state in Palestine, but were in agreement with the British policy of simply establishing a vague “Jewish National Home.” Ignoring Arab peasants’ rights to their homes and asserting that Jewish colonization would improve the land, Count de Penha Garcia argued that since Zionist

²⁵ Ibid.

representatives of the Jewish National Fund legitimately purchased land from absentee landowners, there could be no accusations of “eviction, dispossession and expropriation.” Referring to the Balfour Declaration and the terms of the mandate, Rappard contended that “it was neither a civil nor a religious right to be a peasant, to have land, and that fact did not limit the duty of the Mandatory to place the country ‘under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home.’” Sympathizing with Jewish grievances against the British, Rappard emphasized that Britain was legally obligated to actively promote Jewish immigration and colonization to facilitate the establishment of the Jewish national home and challenged the British commitment to the terms of the mandate. While acknowledging Arab opposition to the mandate, Rappard claimed that the Permanent Mandates Commission could not consider the “existence of the mandate, but only its application” and concluded that only Jewish grievances were “justified by the terms of the mandate,” demonstrating that Arab appeals to the Permanent Mandates Commission would not receive a fair hearing. The British, however, maintained that Arab and Jewish criticism of the British administration in Palestine was evidence that the British government was “dealing fairly with both sides.” In response, Rappard reiterated that Arab grievances against the mandate as incompatible with their “national aspirations” was immaterial since the “only task” of the Permanent Mandates Commission “was to see that the mandate was carried out” and consequently accused the British of failing to fulfill the terms of the mandate dealing with Jewish colonization.²⁶

In the hearings before the Permanent Mandates Commission in the summer of 1930, the British government reiterated its commitment to the Balfour Declaration and

²⁶ Ibid.

the terms of the mandate for Palestine regarding the establishment of a Jewish national home and the protection of the “civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities” and argued that Jewish colonization undertaken on a scientific basis would benefit the Arab population. Despite evidence to the contrary, the British claimed that the administration in Palestine would “be amenable to argument and reason [from Arab delegations], but not to actions [such as the August uprising] abhorrent to the spirit of civilisation and progress.” While the majority of the Permanent Mandates Commission pressed the British to actively facilitate the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine, the British government hesitated to articulate any changes in policy until Sir John Hope-Simpson submitted his report on prospects for Jewish immigration and land settlement in Palestine at the end of August 1930.²⁷

Contrary to the claims of Zionists and their supporters that Jewish settlers were transforming a barren wilderness into a productive land of milk and honey and that a great deal of land was available for Jewish colonization, Hope-Simpson argued that there was much less cultivatable land in Palestine than Zionists supposed, insisted that there was little available land for Jewish settlers beyond what Jews had already purchased, concluded that further Jewish colonization would be based on dispossession of Arab peasants, and recommended that the British administration protect Arab rights to the land in congruence with Article Six of the mandate, which stated that Jewish immigration and

²⁷ Ibid.; Sir John Hope-Simpson, *Palestine: Report on Immigration, Land Settlement and Development, CMD 3686* (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1930), <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/e3ed8720f8707c9385256d19004f057c?OpenDocument> (accessed 22 December 2011)

Weizmann met with Lord Passfield before the Simpson report was published for a briefing on the main points of Simpson’s inquiry. Weizmann again “pointed out the great unfairness and injustice” to Zionism caused by the separation of Trans-Jordan from Palestine. See, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Vol 1, Series B, August 1898-July 1931*, Barnet Litvinoff, ed (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books and Rutgers University, 1983), 599-603

land settlement would not prejudice “the rights and positions of other sections of the population.” Hope-Simpson criticized both the exclusivity of the Zionist project, which was based on Jewish labor and Jewish landownership, and the dependence of Jewish settlers on economic aid from European and American Jews, which illustrated that Zionism was not based on capitalist principles and that Jewish colonization was not self-supporting. While Zionist leaders presented the movement as the reclamation and restoration of the land, Hope-Simpson observed that more than two-thirds of Jewish immigrants to Palestine settled in urban areas. Hope-Simpson criticized those Jewish immigrants who did settle on the land for believing that “they have the right to be established in Palestine at the expense of others.” While Jewish settlers received capital and subsidization from foreign investors at no cost, Hope-Simpson reported, Arab peasants lacked capital and were forced into debt peonage due to high taxes, rents, and interest rates. Noting that the Zionists claimed that Jewish colonization benefited the Arab population, Hope-Simpson countered that Zionist policies, based on exclusive Jewish labor (a concept that extended to industrial operations in Palestine) and communal Jewish landownership which precluded Arab labor in Jewish colonies and any future Arab ownership or settlement on Jewish land, seriously undermined the pretense of the Zionist civilizing mission and argued that Arab fears of Jewish colonization could not “be dismissed as baseless in the light of the Zionist policy.” Contrary to Zionist claims that there was much land available for settlement in Palestine, Hope-Simpson argued that the existing Arab population, which was growing due “in large measure to the cessation of [Turkish] conscription,” did not have enough land for subsistence. Importantly, Hope-

Simpson challenged Zionist contentions that Arab agriculture was backward and inefficient and that Arab peasants were lazy and ignorant.²⁸

Overall, Hope-Simpson criticized British policy that privileged Jewish colonization (contrary to basic capitalist principles), warned against illegal Jewish immigration, and challenged British support for a Zionist project premised on exclusive Jewish labor and communal land ownership.²⁹ Hope-Simpson warned the British government that Zionists were quite clear that Zionism was premised on the unrestricted and “inalienable Jewish right of return to Palestine,” a policy still central to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the twenty-first century since Israel recognizes the right of all Jews to return to Israel while denying the right of return for Palestinian refugees of the wars and ethnic cleansing of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s and their descendants. Arguing that Zionist claims for unrestricted Jewish immigration were not based on the “benefits which the Jewish influx confers upon the other elements of the population,” Zionist leaders,

²⁸ Sir John Hope-Simpson, *Palestine: Report on Immigration, Land Settlement and Development*, CMD 3686 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1930); League of Nations, *Mandate for Palestine*, 24 July 1922, <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/2FCA2C68106F11AB05256BCF007BF3CB> (accessed 1 January 2011)

Hope-Simpson also commented on the Bedouin in Palestine, “an attractive and picturesque element in the life of the country.” Characterizing the Bedouin as an “anachronism” blocking development, Hope-Simpson postulated that the Bedouins could be forced onto a “reserve, which will be apart and excluded from the area designated for development.” The civilizing mission ideology accommodated the removal of the indigenous population to make way for “progress” and “development.” The British attitude toward the Bedouins was comparable to the European and white American attitude toward Native Americans, who were forced onto reservations as anachronistic museum pieces of a historical era.

Benny Morris writes that the Hope-Simpson report “(mistakenly) stated that there was no room for further settlers so long as Arab agriculture was not developed, and opposed further immigration destined for agricultural settlements.” Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-1999* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 117

²⁹ The Constitution for the Jewish Agency, written in 1929, included provisions that “land is to be acquired as Jewish property...and shall be held as the inalienable property of the Jewish people” and “the Agency shall promote agricultural colonisation based on Jewish labour, and in all works or undertakings carried out or furthered by the Agency, it shall be deemed to be a matter of principle that Jewish labour shall be employed.” The Zionist policy contradicted pronouncements that Jewish colonization was not contributing to the expropriation and unemployment of Palestinian Arabs. See, Ruedy, “Dynamics of Land Alienation,” in Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine* (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1987), 130

Hope-Simpson reported, iterated that Jewish colonization meant higher employment and standards of living for the Arab population and argued that the Jewish Agency, and not the British administration, should determine immigration to Palestine. While acknowledging that Jewish colonization benefited the Arabs in some respects, Hope-Simpson warned that Arab unemployment and dispossession was a serious problem confronting the British administration and recommended that the British government curb Jewish immigration and land purchases and promote agricultural development and education because the expansion of Jewish colonization on land inhabited by Arab peasants would negatively affect the Arab population in contravention of the mandate.³⁰

Based on the Shaw and Hope-Simpson reports, Colonial Secretary Lord Passfield reaffirmed the British commitment to the terms of the mandate for Palestine in his policy statement to Parliament in October 1930.³¹ Asserting that the British “may be trusted to safe-guard and promote the interests” of the Arabs and Jews in Palestine, Passfield emphasized that British policy was based on Churchill’s 1922 White Paper, which determined that the Jewish people were “in Palestine as of right and not on sufferance” and that “the existence of a Jewish National Home in Palestine should be internationally guaranteed...and...formally recognised to rest upon ancient historic connection.”

Passfield noted that the Arab Delegation rejected Churchill’s policy without recognizing

³⁰ Sir John Hope Simpson, *Palestine: Report on Immigration, Land Settlement and Development*, CMD 3686 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1930)

At the Seventeenth World Zionist Congress in the summer of 1931, Weizmann described the Simpson report as “a worthless document, a jumble of groundless assumptions and of misunderstood or distorted statistics.” See, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Vol 1, Series B, August 1898-July 1931*, Barnet Litvinoff, ed (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books and Rutgers University, 1983), 627

³¹ In the months following the Arab uprising, Weizmann maintained close communication with members of the British government, lobbying the British to fulfill the terms of the mandate dealing with the Jewish national home, allow for unrestricted immigration, and prevent any sort of democratic self-government in Palestine. See, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Vol 1, Series B, August 1898-July 1931*, Barnet Litvinoff, ed (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books and Rutgers University, 1983), 557ff

that the Arabs understood Zionism as a violation of the principle of self-determination and that the Zionist leadership accepted the White Paper, declaring that Zionism was premised on cooperation with “all sections of the people of Palestine” and respect for the civil and religious rights and “material interests” of the “non-Jewish population,” without acknowledging that Zionist policy of Jewish labor on Jewish land violated these sentiments.³² Emphasizing the British commitment to both the establishment of a Jewish national home and the indigenous Arab population in Palestine, Passfield argued that the two responsibilities were not incompatible or irreconcilable, but simply premised on mutual cooperation between Jews, Arabs, and the British administration, a position that the British government would challenge within the decade. Passfield articulated, however, that Arab petitions for a representative government based on majority rule were incompatible with the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people and commented that the Arab population had rejected British offers for Arab “self-government” and participation in the British administration, again without acknowledging that the Palestinian Arabs considered the British administration under the mandate as an illegitimate violation of prior pledges and Wilsonian principles. The British proposal for the establishment of “a measure of self-government compatible with

³² A central theme of Zionist historiography is that the Arabs have continually rejected compromise, while the Zionists have diligently pursued cooperation and diplomacy. A prime example is the UN partition plan, which the Arab population rejected as a violation of the principle of self-determination. The Zionists publicly accepted partition, but privately planned to expand the borders of the future Jewish state and expel as many Arabs as possible from Jewish-held territory. The dominant narrative, therefore, is that the Arabs rejected partition (and their own state) and have deserved the consequences of that decision. Israeli and American officials continue to claim that the Arabs have rejected a peaceful solution to the conflict when in reality the U.S. and Israel have rejected any settlement that would prevent continued Israeli expropriation of Arab land and resources.

the terms of the Mandate” was simply a piece of legerdemain badly disguising the continued denial of self-determination for the majority Arab population.³³

To the displeasure of the Zionists, Passfield accepted Hope-Simpson’s conclusions that cultivatable land in Palestine was “considerably less” than Zionist estimates and that “at the present time and with the present methods of Arab cultivation there remains no margin of land available for agricultural settlement by new immigrants with the exception of such undeveloped land as the various Jewish agencies hold in reserve.” Passfield also rejected Zionist claims that there were large swaths of

³³ Secretary of State for the Colonies Lord Passfield, *Palestine: Statement of Policy by His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom CMD 3692* (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1930), <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/1942d93e9658c5ce85256d44006d8764?OpenDocument> (accessed 22 December 2011)

On 20 September 1930, Weizmann warned against forming a Legislative Council in Palestine because the Arabs rejected the mandate and the only purpose of such a council would be to advise the British in fulfilling the mandate, meaning the establishment of the national home for the Jewish people. Recall that the Permanent Mandates Commission also rejected any moves toward self-government in Palestine so long as the Arab population opposed the mandate. Interestingly, Weizmann proposed negotiations between Arabs and Jews with the British acting as “the honest broker” so that agreement on major issues could occur before allowing Arabs in Palestine to participate in a Legislative Council. But Weizmann meant a conference of all Arabs, not just Palestinians, as a means to circumvent Palestinian opposition. A recurring theme throughout the conflict has been the Zionist attempt to negotiate with parties outside of Palestine. Discussing the idea of a conference with MacDonald in late September 1929, Weizmann stated that “I told him that the attitude of the Palestinian Arabs is important, but not all important, that we should use Feisal, who is made into a great man by the British—to help us in this task.” In a letter to Felix Warburg about this meeting with MacDonald, Weizmann elaborated that a round table conference would be between Jews and Arab leaders, “meaning by Arab leaders not merely a few Palestinian Effendis, but the representatives of the Arab people in Baghdad, or Damascus, or Cairo.” Once these Arab leaders recognized that the British had “practically” granted independence to Egypt and Iraq, then they would be willing to accept the British and Zionist plans for Palestine. At the Seventeenth World Zionist Congress in the summer of 1931, Weizmann asserted that the Zionists “assumed... that the national sentiments of the Palestinian Arabs would centre in Baghdad, Mecca and Damascus, and find their natural and complete satisfaction in the Arab kingdoms which resulted from the Peace Treaty settlement in the Near East.” Zionists, therefore, could ignore the political and national rights of the Palestinian people, since such rights did not exist in Palestine. Proclaiming that he had sought cooperation with Arab and Muslim leaders and remained true to the treaty of friendship with Feisal, Weizmann suggested that Arab leaders outside of Palestine were the key to Zionist goals in Palestine and that the Palestinian Arabs need not be consulted since their national rights existed in the other Arab territories in the Near East.

See, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Volume XIV, Series A, July 1929-October 1930*, Camillo Dresner, ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books and Rutgers University, 1978), 44-46; 370-374; *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Vol 1, Series B, August 1898-July 1931*, Barnett Litvinoff, ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books and Rutgers University, 1983), 634-636

government-owned “wasteland” available for Jewish colonization on the grounds that most government land was “occupied and cultivated by Arabs.” Ultimately, Passfield reiterated Hope-Simpson’s findings that there was not enough land to support the growing Arab population and determined that Zionist claims that Jewish colonization did not expropriate Arab peasants as “unconvincing, if not fallacious.” Passfield found that the Zionist determined commitment to Jewish labor and Jewish land, which was the “inalienable property of the Jewish people,” was incompatible with Zionist assurances regarding “the desire of the Jewish people to live with the Arab people in relations of friendship and mutual respect, and, together, with the Arab people, to develop the homeland common to both into a prosperous community which would ensure the growth of the peoples” and violated Article Six of the mandate. Further echoing Hope-Simpson, Passfield argued for investment in agricultural development and greater British control over Jewish immigration during the current economic depression since the “well founded” Arab concerns about the consequences of Jewish immigration prevented “any improvement in the mutual relations of the two races” on which depended “the future peace and prosperity of Palestine.” The British, while recognizing some problematical consequences of the Jewish colonization project, appealed to the Arab population to accept the Balfour Declaration and to the Zionists to make “some concessions...in regard to the independent and separatist ideals...in some [Zionist] quarters” and accept that British policy must also promote the interests of the Arab population. The Passfield White Paper and the MacDonald Letter, however, only exacerbated Arab and Zionist opposition to British policy in Palestine.³⁴

³⁴ Secretary of State for the Colonies Lord Passfield, *Palestine: Statement of Policy by His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom* CMD 3692 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office,

The Zionist Response

In the wake of the Arab uprising in August 1929, Weizmann quietly began recommending transfer to British officials. Weizmann argued that there would not have been any conflict over land between Arabs and Jewish immigrants if the British had not separated Trans-Jordan from Palestine in Churchill's 1922 White Paper. Zionists firmly believed that Trans-Jordan was part of Eretz Israel and planned to eventually gain control of that territory for the future Jewish state. According to Weizmann, Drummond Shiels proposed to the Zionist leader in a private meeting in early March 1930 before the publication of the Shaw commission report that Palestine ought to become a national home for the Jews and that the Arab population could occupy land in Mesopotamia or

1930). See also, Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement, 1929-1939*, 27ff.

With the publication of the Passfield White Paper, Ben-Gurion interestingly proposed an alliance with the Arabs and war against imperialist Britain. After MacDonald's letter to Weizmann expressing the British commitment to Zionism, Ben-Gurion reverted to a pro-British policy and "abandoned the notion of a Zionist-Arab alliance to rid the Middle East of imperialism." Interestingly, in the lead-up to the Passfield White Paper, Ben-Gurion articulated opposition to home-rule in India because he did not wish for the principle of self-determination to be applied to Palestine so long as the Arabs maintained a majority. By this point, Ben-Gurion had recognized that a Palestinian people did exist and had the right to self-determination.

The Peel Commission findings maintained that the earlier Shaw and Hope-Simpson reports made practical suggestions for the further immigration and settlement of Jews, but that the Passfield White Paper ignored those recommendations. On this point, the Peel commissioners sided with the Zionists and argued that "further settlement was possible, particularly on land hitherto regarded as uncultivable, without injury to the Arab population." Such an argument ignored acknowledgements in the Peel report that the Palestinian Arabs opposed Zionism on principle as a violation of Palestinian independence and self-determination. That there were lands available for Jewish immigrants to settle was immaterial from the Arab perspective given the goal of the Zionists to establish a Jewish state. Since all independent states had the right to determine immigration policies, continued Jewish immigration against the wishes of the Palestinian Arabs was a denial of self-determination.

The Peel commissioners, however, did acknowledge that there was significant displacement of Arab peasants due to Jewish colonization and that the Zionists clearly emphasized a policy of Jewish labor on Jewish land. Still, the commissioners accepted as sincere Zionist pronouncements that they had no intention of expropriating Arab peasants and iterated the common belief that Zionism benefitted the indigenous population. Such public Zionist declarations, however, contradicted the reality of Jewish colonization, which was clearly based on the expropriation and expulsion of the Palestinian Arabs. Zionist leaders lobbied the Peel Commission to include the "transfer" of Palestinian Arabs in their report. In fact, the Peel report recommended the "transfer" of almost a quarter-million Palestinian Arabs even though the commissioners recognized "the deeply-rooted aversion, which all Arab peasants have shown in the past to leaving the lands which they have cultivated for many generations. They would...strongly object to a compulsory transfer, even from one part [of Palestine] to another..." See Peel Report, 75-76, 240-241, 248; Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians*, Chapter 2; Shabtai Teveth, *Ben-Gurion and the Palestinian Arabs: From Peace to War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 109, 112-115.

Trans-Jordan. Weizmann characterized the proposal as a “courageous and statesmanlike” solution and asserted that the “Arabs would certainly not suffer” if the Zionists were able “to develop their National Home in Palestine unhindered.” Shortly thereafter, Weizmann discussed with Lord Passfield the transfer of the Palestinians to Trans-Jordan or Mesopotamia as the solution to Jewish dispossession of Arab peasants, which was creating a possibly rebellious “landless proletariat.” Weizmann offered Jewish financial assistance to resettle Palestinian Arabs in Trans-Jordan, so long as Jewish immigrants could colonize the land east of the Jordan River as well. While Weizmann and other Zionist leaders discussed transfer proposals behind the scenes, other leading Zionists were not so discrete. In an address to journalists on 28 April 1930, Menahem Ussishkin, chairman of the Jewish National Fund and executive member of the Jewish Agency, argued that

We must continually raise the demand that our land be returned to our possession. If the land is empty of inhabitants—Good! If, however there are other inhabitants there, they must be transferred to some other place, but we must receive the land! We have an ideal greater and more elevated than standing guard over hundreds of thousands of fellaheen [Arab peasants].

Ussishkin concluded that the “transfer” of the Palestinian Arabs was just because Arabs had other territories, such as Trans-Jordan, Iraq, and Syria, whereas the Jewish people required a national home. Despite private Zionist lobbying on behalf of transfer, by late July, the British government recognized the pervasiveness of Arab opposition to Zionism and the clear consequences for the Palestinians and summarily rejected Weizmann’s plan as economically and politically unfeasible. In fact, with the publication of the Passfield White Paper in October 1930, the British threatened to limit Jewish immigration to Palestine to decrease the Jewish expropriation of Arab peasants. During meetings with

British officials over the interpretation of the Passfield White Paper, Weizmann continued to argue that the British should strongly consider the transfer of Palestinians to Trans-Jordan, which Weizmann described as “practically an empty country.” The Zionist leadership continued planning for the expulsion of the Palestinian Arabs, and by 1932, they secretly proposed the partition of Palestine, so long as the plan included the transfer of over 100,000 Arabs from the designated Jewish area.³⁵

Zionists complained that this “pro-Arab” policy of the Passfield White Paper “was inconsistent with the terms of the Mandate” and the Balfour Declaration and continued to press for the transfer of the Palestinian Arab population across the Jordan River to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish State. At a demonstration in New York to protest the White Paper, Felix Warburg argued for the transfer of Palestinian Arabs to Jordan and claimed “it is unjust to speak of such an offer of land in Transjordan as expatriation of the Arabs, as Transjordan is distinctly Arab territory and is only separated from Palestine by the Jordan [River].” Weizmann faulted the Passfield White Paper for ignoring

the fact that Transjordan is legally part of Palestine; that it has a cultivable area equal to that of Palestine; that it has a population of only 300,000; that in race, language and culture its people are indistinguishable from the Arabs of Western

³⁵ Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians*, 30-38; *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Vol 1, Series B, August 1898-July 1931*, Barnet Litvinoff, ed (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books and Rutgers University, 1983), 590-593; Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement, 1929-1939*, 27ff.

In his book on transfer proposals, Chaim Simons concluded that “in 1929, there were serious Arab pogroms in many places in Palestine, resulting in the murder of well over a hundred Jews and this made the transfer of Arabs from Palestine more attractive to the Jewish and even non-Jewish public.” The obvious implication is that the Palestinian Arabs have no say in the matter, but Jewish colonizers and civilized Westerners have the right to make such determinations. After the 1929 uprising, Simons notes that the Jewish National Fund, Weizmann, Ben-Gurion, Warburg, and Drummond Shiels proposed the transfer of Arabs to Trans-Jordan. See, Chaim Simons, *A Historical Survey of Proposals to Transfer Arabs from Palestine, 1895-1947* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Publishing, 1988), 12, 35-38, 76-77

In the wake of the Arab uprising in 1929, Wallace Murray of the Near East division in the State Department, considered partition and the creation of a binational state as possible solutions to the Palestine problem. Knabenshue rejected partition out of hand, arguing that the Zionists would want more than any partition plan allowed and that the Arabs would obviously rejected any such measure. See, Bustami, 347ff

Palestine; that it is separated from Western Palestine only by a narrow stream; that it has been established as an Arab reserve, and that it would be just as easy for landless Arabs or cultivators from congested areas to migrate to Transjordan as to migrate from one part of Western Palestine to another.

Condemning British “hostility toward the Jewish National Home,” Weizmann lamented that the Passfield White Paper ignored the “rights” to Palestine “of the whole Jewish people.” Weizmann, symbolically resigning from his position in the World Zionist Organization in protest to British policy (and demonstrating that more extreme personalities would replace him), characterized the Passfield White Paper as “an unjustified attack on the Zionist work in Palestine” and continued to argue that Jewish colonization did not infringe upon the “civil and religious rights of the non-Jewish communities,” but benefited the Arab population. Arguing that the British had no legal right to reverse its policy in Palestine, Weizmann petitioned the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations to overturn the Passfield White Paper. Although the British clearly declared that a Legislative Council in Palestine would not affect the establishment of the Jewish national home, Weizmann proclaimed that the Jews would not participate in any such council. In offering his resignation from the chairmanship of the Jewish Agency, Lord Melchett described the British White Paper as “an act of almost unparalleled ingratitude and treachery committed by a government toward a credulous and harassed people who believed they had found a haven under the broad aegis of the British flag and the guaranteed word of British statesmen,” suggesting that the British commitment to the Jewish people was more sacrosanct than the British pledges to the Arabs. Reiterating the theme that the Zionists were willing to cooperate with the Arabs if only British policy would acquiesce, Melchett asserted that British policy prevented eager

Arabs from selling their lands to Jews at more than fair prices, suggesting that Jewish policy benefitted Arab landowners and did not dispossess Arab peasants.³⁶

On the eve of the British publication of the Hope-Simpson report and the Passfield White Paper, the *New York Times* reported that Revisionist Zionists condemned what they characterized as “the negation of the Balfour Declaration and the mandate” and the abandonment of “all [the British] international obligations toward the Jewish people in connection with building up a Jewish national home.” Revisionists charged the British with proposing an Arab-dominated Legislative Council that would mean the end of the Jewish national home. While Labor leader and Member of Parliament and member of the Shaw commission, Henry Snell, argued before a meeting of the American Jewish Congress that the British government would fulfill its international responsibility to establishing a Jewish national home in Palestine, the Congress resolved that the Hope-Simpson report and Passfield White Paper was a breach of the British pledge to the Jews and the League of Nations mandate (and the 1922 joint resolution of the U.S. Congress supporting the establishment of a Jewish national home) and criticized any cessation of Jewish immigration to Palestine and the overall British failure to establish the Jewish national home. American Zionist leaders, such as Rabbi Stephen Wise, vehemently protested both the Hope-Simpson report and the White Paper and proposed that the “primary and supreme obligation of Great Britain is to facilitate the establishment of the national Jewish home.” Bernard Rosenblatt even declared that Congress “adopted the

³⁶ Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians*, 35; *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Vol 1, Series B, August 1898-July 1931*, Barnet Litvinoff, ed (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books and Rutgers University, 1983), 604-607; “Weizmann Explains Quitting Leadership,” *New York Times*, 21 October 1930, 22; See, Chaim Simons, *A Historical Survey of Proposals to Transfer Arabs from Palestine, 1895-1947* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Publishing, 1988) ,12, 76

Balfour Declaration and the Palestine Mandate and entered into a treaty with Great Britain...based upon the representations made in America that Great Britain would facilitate in the establishment of a Jewish national home,” suggesting that the United States had an interest and responsibility in ensuring the British facilitated Jewish colonization in Palestine. Ignoring that the Passfield White Paper reiterated the British commitment to the Jewish national home and dismissed Arab petitions for self-government and disregarding the terms of the mandate dealing with Arab rights, American Zionists characterized the British policy as “pro-Arab” and a rejection of British pledges. Zionists argued that the British policy was in opposition to the Permanent Mandates Commission. Since the Zionists maintained that Jewish colonization benefited the Arab population, Zionist leaders asserted that the British policy inhibiting Jewish immigration and “upbuilding” in Palestine would harm the Arabs. Importantly, American Zionists characterized the British as an enemy occupier of Palestine, while Weizmann intimated that the World Zionist Congress should perhaps look to the United States instead of London to facilitate Zionism. Interestingly, Zionists in the United States argued that the British government had no right to change policy in Palestine because the League of Nations had “permitted” Great Britain to administer Palestine based on the Balfour Declaration and terms of the Palestine mandate. Ignoring that the British had simply allowed the League of Nations to legitimize British imperial policy in the Near East, the Zionists declared that the British could not deviate from establishing the Jewish national home in Palestine and asserted that the Passfield White Paper “was based on the false assumption that Palestine was an Arab country.”³⁷

³⁷ “Britain to Declare Palestine Policy,” *New York Times*, 20 October 1930, 7; “Survey Situation of Jews in World,” *New York Times*, 20 October 1930, 44; “Jews Here to Protest,” *New York Times*, 21

After the publication of both reports, the *New York Times* editorialized that political Zionism's pursuit of Jewish dominance in Palestine at the expense of the Arab majority was never the intention of the Balfour Declaration. The editorial insisted that Zionists had been too hasty in colonizing Palestine and that the Passfield White Paper merely proposed an acceptable framework for the gradual Jewish "upbuilding" of the Holy Land so as not to infringe upon the rights of the indigenous population. Contrary to Zionist claims, the *Times* editorial staff recognized that the British policy favored Zionism at the expense of Arab self-determination. Zionists, however, continued to present the Passfield White Paper as a renunciation and betrayal of the Balfour Declaration and the Palestine mandate, mobilized the Jewish people, and organized major protests as well as diplomatic and lobbying efforts to reverse any policy that allegedly privileged the interests and rights of the Palestinian Arabs and undermined Jewish interests. A major purpose of the Zionist effort was to constantly stress that Jewish

October 1930, 22; "Jewish Congress Assails Britain," *New York Times*, 21 October 1930, 22; "Zionists Assail Palestine Ruling," *New York Times*, 22 October 1930, 14; "Weizmann Explains Quitting Leadership," *New York Times*, 21 October 1930, 22; "Leaders Urge Work in Palestine Go On," *New York Times*, 23 October 1930, 2; "Zionists Put Faith in British Nation," *New York Times*, 27 October 1930, 11; "4,000 Zionists Protest," *New York Times*, 3 November 1930, 5; "Zionists in Basle Protest," *New York Times*, 5 November 1930, 4

American Jews recruited U.S. politicians, such as Rep. Hamilton Fish and Sen. Robert Wagner, to investigate how 1924 British treaty with the United States and the 1922 joint Congressional resolution on Palestine allowed the U.S. government to pressure Great Britain to establish the Jewish national home in Palestine. The State Department undertook a study of the U.S. rights and obligations in Palestine as consequence of the 1924 treaty with Great Britain. Anticipating Zionist pressure for U.S. intervention in the conflict over the mandate, the State Department concluded that the U.S. could maintain a policy of nonintervention so long as any changes in the mandate did not interfere with U.S. rights in Palestine as defined in the treaty. Members of the Near East division determined that the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine did not affect U.S. interests. Additionally, the State Department observed that since the U.S. implemented strict immigration restriction, the U.S. government could hardly force Britain to open immigration in Palestine. See, "Jews of City to Meet for Protest Tonight," *New York Times*, 2 November 1930, 18, Bustami, "American Foreign Policy," 332-359.

David Ben-Gurion, head of a Socialist Jewish labor organization in Palestine, told an American audience that the Passfield White Paper was "an anti-Semitic document which has no equal" and argued that Jewish pioneers were restoring Palestine for the benefit of Jews and Arabs. See, "Says Britain Erred in Palestine Policy," *New York Times*, 30 November 1930, 16

In Warsaw, Zionist groups attacked the British consulate in protestation of the Passfield White Paper. See, "British Consulate is Attacked," *New York Times*, 24 October 1930, 11

colonization benefited the Arab population contrary to the conclusions of the British inquiries. Within Britain itself, the Liberal and Conservative parties took advantage of Zionist opposition to the Passfield White Paper to challenge MacDonald's Labor government. Lloyd George, for example, stated that the British government made a solemn pledge to the Jewish people after consulting with the Allies, including the United States, in order to gain the support of world Jewry for the war effort. The Passfield White Paper, Lloyd George continued, was not only a renunciation of the commitment to the Jewish people, but also a rejection of a British pledge to the former Allied powers and international community. Characterizing Zionism and British policy in Palestine as examples of altruistic imperialism, Lloyd George proclaimed that the Balfour Declaration did not infringe upon Arab rights. In fact, according to the former Prime Minister, the Arabs were not expropriated from land that they were "adequately cultivating," and, more importantly, the Jewish people had the Biblical right to restore Palestine to a land of "milk and honey."³⁸

While the Zionist reaction to the Passfield White Paper dominated the coverage of the *New York Times*, the paper acknowledged in an article on Christian support for the Jewish position that the Arab Congress observed that the British government "had at last recognized 'some of the inalienable rights of the Arabs.'" The majority of the article, however, focused on the efforts of the Good-Will Union to persuade Christian ministers to preach on the Jewish restoration of Palestine and the alleged British violation of the "sacred covenant" made to the Jews in the Balfour Declaration, a violation "abhorrent to any Christian who demands that justice and righteousness shall govern in the affairs of

³⁸ "The Palestine Report," *New York Times*, 22 October 1930, 23; "Zionists Here Plan Huge Protest Nov. 2," *New York Times*, 24 October 1930, 11; "Zionists Defended by Lloyd George," *New York Times*, 25 October 1930, 7; "Nathan Straus Jr. Takes Zionist Post," *New York Times*, 28 October 1930, 12

the world.” Toward the bottom of the article, the *Times* printed the statement of the Arab Congress without providing any commentary. The Arab Congress asserted:

Both the Shaw and Simpson reports have vindicated the demands repeatedly made by Arabs at home and abroad concerning the fundamental rights of the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of the land. We hope that these rights will be completely achieved eventually, and that in the future, independent and fully representative government, Arab and Palestinian Jew will enjoy equal rights.

Instead of discussing the Arab viewpoint, the remainder of the piece focused on American Jewish opposition to British policy and the observations of Henrietta Szold, the founder of the Women’s Zionist Organization, who lamented that any British restrictions on Jewish immigration would mean a Jewish minority in Palestine without considering at all how a majority of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe would affect an indigenous Jewish population and Arab minority.³⁹

In an article published the next day, the *Times* included excerpts from the Balfour Declaration, Treaty of Sevres, the British Mandate, the Hope-Simpson report, the Passfield White Paper, and two Zionist responses, but failed to include any Arab perspective. While the Passfield White Paper simply emphasized that development was necessary to both deal fairly with the Arab population and accommodate more Jewish immigrants, Weizmann and Warburg argued that the British policy was a renunciation of the Balfour Declaration, which was premised on providing the national home for all the Jewish people in the Diaspora. The only purpose of the mandate, from the Zionist perspective, was to establish a Jewish majority in Palestine. Pointing to the Jewish introduction of civilization, science, modernization, and development, Zionists proclaimed that Jewish colonization benefited the Arabs and simply ignored the relevant

³⁹ “Christian Pulpits Asked to Aid Jews,” *New York Times*, 25 October 1930, 7

conclusions of the Shaw and Hope-Simpson reports that challenged the results of the Zionist civilizing mission. Although the *Times* provided no commentary on the debate within the article itself, two accompanying photos and captions neatly juxtaposed the backward Arab peasant with the civilized and modern Jewish settlement. One picture shows a barren landscape with only “an Arab with his donkeys and primitive plow,” while the second reveals a much more picturesque, productive, and Western Jewish agricultural settlement. The choice of photographs supported the Zionist narrative that Jewish settlers were transforming a barren wasteland into a land of milk and honey using scientific methods and Western technology while the primitive Arab was simply an anachronism comparable to the American Indian.⁴⁰

Although Passfield explained that the Zionists grossly misinterpreted the British White Paper, members of his own Labor party pressured him to publish another statement of policy, including a proposal to encourage Palestinian Arab migration to Trans-Jordan to facilitate Jewish immigration to and landownership in Palestine. Within a few weeks of the publication of the White Paper, the British government publicized the issuance of 1500 permits for Jewish immigrants to Palestine over the following six-month period to illustrate that British policy was not barring Jewish immigration. Zionists continued to strongly pressure the British government to accede to Jewish demands, including the abrogation of the Passfield White Paper and the appointment of an administration in Palestine “absolutely in agreement and in sympathy with the Jewish national home policy.” Non-Zionist and Zionist Jews emphasized that British policy must support Zionist aims, completely discounting any British responsibility for the interests of the

⁴⁰ “Britain’s Palestine Dispute: The Documents in the Case,” *New York Times*, 26 October 1930, XX3

Arab population in Palestine. Before Parliament, MacDonald reassured Zionists and their supporters that the Passfield White Paper was premised on Great Britain's continued commitment to the Balfour Declaration, the Palestine mandate, and Jewish permanent rights in Palestine. The Zionist Organization of America, however, continued to press for the annulment of the Passfield White Paper, which the ZOA characterized as a threat to the Jewish national home, even though the British Labor Party reaffirmed support for the Zionist project and praised Jewish colonization for emancipating the Arabs.

Representing the World Zionist Organization, Weizmann clearly stated his rejection of the Passfield White Paper as in opposition to the Zionist project in Palestine. Even Albert Einstein published a criticism of the British White Paper and declared that the only solution to the growing anti-Semitism in Europe was the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine and the reconstruction of the Holy Land through modern scientific development.⁴¹

The Zionist Narrative

In the wake of the 1929 Arab rebellion and the British reconsideration of their policy in Palestine, Zionists and their supporters strove to reiterate the Zionist narrative to

⁴¹ "Passfield Defends Palestine Policy," *New York Times*, 31 October 1930, 10; "British Labor Asks New Palestine Paper," *New York Times*, 1 November 1930, 2; "British Bar Leaders Score Jewish Policy," *New York Times*, 4 November 1930, 7; "Passfield Defends Policy on Palestine," *New York Times*, 6 November 1930, 12; "Britain Explains Palestine Permits," *New York Times*, 9 November 1930, 13; "Arabs Protest Bid for Jewish Parley," *New York Times*, 16 November 1930, 13; "Palestine Debate to Open Tomorrow," *New York Times*, 16 November 1930, 13; "Palestine Clarified," *New York Times*, 19 November 1930, 18; "British Stand Fails to Satisfy Zionists," *New York Times*, 24 November 1930, 12; "British Labor to Aid Jewish Homeland," *New York Times*, 29 November 1930, 10; "White Paper is Issue in Palestine Voting," *New York Times*, 1 December 1930, 2; "Wise, in New Book, Assails Passfield," *New York Times*, 2 December 1930, 12; "Einstein Attacks British Zion Policy," *New York Times*, 3 December 1930

In a speech at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, Einstein stated that he wanted a "cultural center" in Palestine for the Jewish people, not a political one. See, "Arab Heads Threaten to Quit in Palestine," *New York Times*, 17 February 1931, 10

a Western audience, justify Jewish colonization in Palestine, and demand that the British and the “civilized” international community fulfill the obligations of the Balfour Declaration and the mandate according to the satisfaction of the Zionists. This narrative emphasized the legal, historical, and moral rights of the Jewish people to an expanded Palestine, the civilizing mission of Jewish colonization, and almost insurmountable divide between the Westernized Jewish immigrants and the backward Arab population.⁴² The prominent American Zionists Stephen Wise and Jacob De Haas quickly published *The Great Betrayal* in response to the 1929 rebellion and the Passfield White Paper, which criticized the British for privileging the clause of the Balfour Declaration “safeguarding the civil and religious rights of the non-Jewish communities” at the expense of “the major purpose” of the British and Allied policy—the establishment of the Jewish national home. The “heavily documented” work, according to a *Times* review, charged the authors of the Passfield White Paper as being anti-Semites. British policy under MacDonald and Passfield, Wise and Haas charged, was a “great betrayal” of the solemn responsibility that the League of Nations and international community bestowed on Great Britain. Wise and Haas excoriated Britain for failing to fulfill the Balfour

⁴² Zionist leaders understood Palestine to mean much more than the territory west of the Jordan. Ussishkin acknowledged that the map of Eretz-Israel in his office consisted of territory from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates. David Ben-Gurion pronounced at the Seventeenth Zionist Congress in 1931:

In eastern Palestine, there are broader and emptier acres, and Jordan is not necessarily the perpetual limit of our immigration and settlement... Without amending the Mandate, we are entitled the right to enter and settle in Transjordan; its closure in our faces neither accords with the Mandate as it stands, nor considers the crying economic needs of a fertile but underpopulated and impecunious region.

Not only did Ben-Gurion press a legal right to Palestine, Transjordan, and other territories, but he presented arguments quite familiar to Westerners in laying claim specifically to Transjordan: the land was “empty” and the small existing population failed to develop the land properly. Both arguments were propagated to justify the English conquest of North America and white American continental expansion. As we have seen, the Zionists emphasized to an American audience the similarities between Jewish and American pioneers.

Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians*, 85, n.5.

Declaration and the terms of the mandate and accused the MacDonald government of appeasing the Arabs in order to maintain the loyalty of the Muslims within the British Empire. Louis Gribetz, in *The Case for the Jews: An Interpretation of their Rights under the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate for Palestine*, presented a legal argument justifying the Zionist claims to Palestine. Maurice Samuel's *What Happened in Palestine: the Events of August, 1929, Their Background and Their Significance* and *On the Rim of the Wilderness* elaborated on these Zionist themes and presented the Jewish colonization of Palestine as developing a "wilderness" and improving the living conditions of the backward and savage Arabs. A brief examination of these representative works illustrates the consistency of the Zionist narrative in response to Arab opposition and fears that the British were not fully committed to implement the policies necessary for the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish state.⁴³

⁴³ Howard Grief's *The Legal Foundation and Borders of Israel under International Law: A Treatise on Jewish Sovereignty over the Land of Israel* (Jerusalem: Mazo Publishers, 2008) is a recent iteration of the theme presented in *The Case for the Jews* and *The Great Betrayal*. Born in Canada, Grief moved to Israel in the late 1980s. He is a lawyer and constitutional scholar. His argument is that the international community (at San Remo) enshrined the Balfour Declaration in international law and consequently recognized "the legal title of the Jewish People to the mandated territory in Palestine in all its historical parts and dimensions." Grief writes:

The term "Israel" appearing in the title of this book is used to denote all areas of the Historical Land of Israel, including both Cisjordan and Transjordan that were part of the mandated area of Palestine. It also includes those parts of the historical Land of Israel that were illegally excluded when the boundaries of Palestine were determined by Great Britain and France in 1920 and 1922: Southern Lebanon up to the bend of the Litani River, the Bashan (including the Golan) north of the Yarmuk River, and at least half of the Sinai Peninsula.

This land "was reserved exclusively for the self-determination of the Jewish People." For Grief, the victorious imperial powers had the right to grant this expanded Palestine to a foreign population. Consequently, the separation of Trans-Jordan from Palestine and the partitioning of Palestine were illegitimate. Grief has repeatedly opposed any Palestinian Arab sovereignty in any part of Palestine as a violation of international law. Janet Abu-Lughod argues, however, the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish state was based on the "virtually complete supplanting of the indigenous population of a country by an alien stock," and Ilan Pappé argues that the demographic transformation of Palestine was the result of ethnic cleansing and armed force. These arguments pose a challenge to Zionist claims to Palestine based on historical, moral, and legal rights.

See also, Grief, "Legal Rights and Title of Sovereignty of the Jewish People to the Land of Israel and Palestine under International Law," *Nativ Online* (February 2004), (<http://www.acpr.org.il/ENGLISH-NATIV/02-issue/grief-2.htm>); This paper is Ariel Center for Policy Research (ACPR) Policy Paper #147, available at <http://www.think-israel.org/grief.legalrights.html> (accessed 1 March 2012); Janet Abu-Lughod,

In *The Case for the Jews: An Interpretation of their Rights under the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate for Palestine*, Louis Gribetz, a lawyer and spokesperson for American Zionists, promoted the increasingly popular idea that the League of Nations awarded the mandate for Palestine to the British and presented the common Zionist argument that the Balfour Declaration and the mandate were established tenets of international law, meaning that the British and the “civilized” international community had the obligation to fulfill those pledges by facilitating the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. Based on this understanding of the Balfour Declaration, the mandate, and international law, Gribetz articulated another prominent Zionist theme that only the Jewish people had the right to establish a national home in Palestine and that the Palestinian Arab demands for national rights in Palestine were illegitimate since the Arabs already had Mesopotamia, the Arabian Peninsula, and other territories. Insisting that the Balfour Declaration only referred to the religious and civil rights of the non-Jewish communities, he concluded that the Arabs had no political rights in Palestine and that the protection of the Arab rights was subordinate to the clauses of the declaration emphasizing the establishment of a Jewish national home. Although utilizing the ambiguous “Jewish national home,” Gribetz understood and acknowledged that the Zionist goal was a Jewish state with a Jewish majority.⁴⁴

As discussed in Part I, William Mallison argues that the Zionist interpretation of the Balfour Declaration contrasted with the original intent of the anti-Zionist Jews, who opposed the political goals of Zionism, and the British cabinet. Zionists, however,

“The Demographic Transformation of Palestine,” in I. Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 139, 154; Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: Oneworld Press, 2010).

⁴⁴Louis Gribetz, *The Case for the Jews: An Interpretation of their Rights under the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate for Palestine* (Bloch Publishing Co, 1930); “Four Who Plead for Zionism,” *New York Times*, 8 March 1931, 67.

reiterated throughout the mandate era that the British had committed to the establishment of the Jewish national home in Palestine. Gribetz presented the Zionist interpretation of the Balfour Declaration:

Its brevity was matched by its seeming simplicity in purpose and explicitness in meaning. The obviousness of its aim evoked from representatives of the British Government and from contemporary statesmen and the press of the world interpretations and constructions in conformity with the Jewish understanding that the object of this Declaration was the recreation of an autonomous National Home for the Jewish nation in Palestine. . . . In time, however, . . . its opponents commenced to read into this pronouncement a meaning different from what it appeared to possess and sought to ascribe to it a purpose completely at variance with the accepted interpretation and in accord with their own desires.

Mallison, however, argues in his essay on the Balfour Declaration and international law that the Zionists and their supporters immediately ascribed a meaning to the declaration that was “completely at variance with the accepted interpretation” and intent of the authors of British policy because anti-Zionists Jews, such as Montagu, vehemently opposed the Zionist claims that the Jewish people comprised a nation and political Zionism. Mallison contends that the safeguard clauses of the Declaration protected the existing rights of the Palestinians and precluded the creation of a Jewish state. Zionists, such as Gribetz, however, adopted the interpretation that the Balfour Declaration signaled a British contract to establish a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine.⁴⁵

Gribetz maintained that the Balfour Declaration illustrated the Wilsonian and Allied principle of self-determination and represented “the noblest manifestation of a great stride forward in the fulfillment of international justice” that was “essential to the permanence of international peace.” Based on their historical claims to Palestine, Gribetz argued that the Jewish people sought legal sanction for their retaking possession of

⁴⁵ Quoted material in Gribetz, *Case for the Jews*, xiii. For Mallison’s argument on the Balfour Declaration and International Law, see William Mallison, “The Balfour Declaration,” in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 60-111, and Ch 2 of this dissertation..

Palestine and reestablishing “national independence and self-government” in the restored Jewish Commonwealth. In his reading of the Balfour Declaration, Gribetz asserted that the British government could only mean “a national home for an entire nation,” which overlooked the anti-Zionist Jewish opposition to the idea of a Jewish nation and political Zionism. Importantly, Zionists consistently iterated that the Jewish commonwealth was “intended for the *whole Jewish people*,” that the favor clause represented an inviolable British commitment to the “achievement” of a Jewish state in Palestine, and that the safeguard clauses were subordinate to Zionist goals.⁴⁶

Gribetz meant *The Case for the Jews* to be a definitive “legal” interpretation of the Balfour Declaration. He maintained that that the phrase “declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations” in the first part of Balfour’s letter to Rothschild “constitute[d] an endorsement of the political aims of Zionism, a positive sanction, direct recognition and general approval of the Zionist ideal,” which meant the restoration of Palestine to the Jewish people. Dismissing the anti-Zionist arguments of Montagu and the role of anti-Zionist British Jews in formulating the declaration and claiming that the “great mass of Jews the world over...supported national restoration and independent political existence,” Gribetz promoted the Zionist contention that Jews were a political nation “seeking the reconstruction of the Jewish nation into an autonomous Jewish commonwealth in the fullest sense of the word.” Additionally, Gribetz quoted a spatter of newspaper clippings to establish popular support for Zionism and propagate the theme that Zionism was a civilizing mission. An August 1917 piece in the liberal *Westminster Gazette* determined that the Jewish people had “no desire to dispossess any other people.” Instead, “they point to a land, to the land which is historically theirs, which today is lying vacant for

⁴⁶ Ibid., 2, 17, 21, 23-25

want of a people to rejuvenate it.” The Jewish people would restore this wasteland “which has languished for centuries” into a land of milk and honey serving once again as “a granary for other nations.” Gribetz himself postulated that Palestine had been a wasteland for almost two thousand years and that the Zionists would “rebuild abandoned cities, recultivate wasted fields, irrigate uninhabited deserts, conquer pestilential climates, drain marshes, clear neglected soil, reclaim sand dunes, create and improve resources, increase industry, promote productive power, provide activity for the employment of capital and labor.”⁴⁷

A chapter heading in *The Case for the Jews* asked “Does the right of the Jewish people to establish a national home in Palestine preclude the establishment of any other national home in the mandated territory?” Presuming that the Jewish people had the right to establish Palestine as a Jewish state, Gribetz proceeded to proclaim that the “inhabitants of Palestine” lost their political rights with the British conquest of the territory. While the British government accepted that international law determined that the British military administration maintain the status quo until a treaty or international conference dealt with the territories in question, Gribetz asserted that “the conquering power was free to make any changes in the laws or political institutions of the extinguished state which it deemed expedient.” The author underscored the Zionist interpretation that only the Jewish people (as a whole) had the right to create a national home in Palestine and that the international community granted legitimacy to the establishment of a Jewish state. Arguments that such an outcome would “prejudice” the rights of the “existing non-Jewish communities” were dismissed on the grounds that the declaration “limited the rights” of the Palestinian Arabs to religious and civil ones and

⁴⁷ Ibid., 28, 32, 35, 51-52

that the safeguard clauses were subordinate to the favor clause and “applied only to *aliens* to the Jewish home.”⁴⁸ Gribetz argued that “the Arabs in Palestine do not, like the Jews, constitute a nation,” that the Arabs had Mesopotamia and other territories, that Palestine could only serve as the national home for the Jewish people, and that only the Jewish people had political rights in Palestine. Such an interpretation was a rejection of Palestinian Arab claims for political and national rights and illustrated an early iteration of Zionist opposition to a Palestinian state. Importantly, the Zionist interpretation that the Balfour Declaration promoted political Zionism challenged the understanding of prominent anti-Zionist British Jews of the original intent and meaning of the British policy since the anti-Zionist Jews vehemently opposed the establishment of a Jewish state and the Zionist assertion that the Jewish people represented a nation.⁴⁹

Despite promoting an autonomous Jewish state in Palestine, Gribetz reinforced the Zionist theme that the Jewish national home and the rights of the “non-Jewish” populations were compatible and that “Arab agitators” were to blame for inflaming “the credulous Eastern mind” and “the ignorant Arab peasantry.” There was no conflict between the limited rights of the “non-Jewish communities” and the National Home

⁴⁸ Emphasis mine. A common theme for many Zionists was that the people living in Palestine for centuries were aliens and that the European Jewish immigrants had a “historic right” to Palestine. According to Mallison, Weizmann himself feared that the safeguard clauses precluded a Jewish state and worked assiduously to propagate an interpretation of British policy that favored Zionist colonization. Mallison, “The Balfour Declaration,” in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 60-111, and Ch 2 of this dissertation.

⁴⁹ Gribetz, *Case for the Jews*, 41-42, 46, 48, 55. Gribetz declared that the “Arab was not represented in the conference and negotiations preliminary to the issuance of the Declaration,” which illustrated that only the Jewish people had rights in Palestine to establish a state and the British statement was “not intended for the relief of the Arab or any other inhabitants of Palestine.” As Mallison argues, the fact that the Palestinians did not participate in the development of the Balfour Declaration in no way prejudiced their existing rights. For Gribetz, the safeguard clause simply meant that the future Jewish state would protect the civil rights of the non-Jewish population, which was a questionable interpretation of the intent and meaning of the declaration. Mallison also argues that the Israeli state has repeatedly violated the rights of the non-Jewish populations in Israel and the Occupied Territories despite even the restricted understanding of the safeguard clause.

Gribetz, *Case for the Jews*, 59; Mallison, “The Balfour Declaration,” 91ff.

because the political goals of the Zionists took precedence over the rights of the Palestinians. Moreover, Gribetz maintained that the “non-Jews” in Palestine had no previous political rights and that neither the Balfour Declaration nor the mandate “intended...that non-Jewish communities of Palestine should participate in the political powers of the home or share in its government.” Aside from the fact that Montagu and other anti-Zionist Jews clearly opposed the development of a Jewish state in Palestine, such an interpretation about the intentions of the Balfour Declaration and the mandate was counter to the Arab populations’ understanding of Wilsonian principles and the Covenant of the League of Nations, which stated that the members of the League of Nations had the responsibility to rescind all “obligations or understandings...inconsistent with the terms of the Covenant.”⁵⁰

Gribetz articulated that the goal of the Zionists was a Jewish state, which was based on the supposed historical and legal rights of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland. According to this common Zionist argument, the Jewish people have always claimed “an exclusive right to Palestine” and have not “acquiesced in the occupation or possession of Palestine by any other people.” Gribetz then repeated another common pro-Zionist argument: the Biblical contention that God exiled the Jews for breaching the covenant and that prophecy predicated Jewish restoration. The author suggested that the recognition of the “historic connection of the Jewish people with Palestine” meant acceptance of the Jewish right to Palestine and implied that “since no other people has been recognized as possessing historical connection with Palestine, no other people could claim a connection similar to that of the Jewish people.” As discussed in Part I, Weizmann unsuccessfully lobbied to have the preamble to the mandate categorically state

⁵⁰ Gribetz, *Case for the Jews*, 64, 72

that the international community recognized the “historic rights of the Jews to Palestine,” a statement that the British rejected at the time as counter to the safeguard clauses. Still, the Zionists promoted the idea that the Jewish people had a historic and Biblical right to Palestine; this idea appealed to the religious beliefs of many Western Christians.⁵¹

The overall argument in *The Case for the Jews* was that the British and international community had pledged to facilitate the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish state. With this in mind, Gribetz explained the justification for using the term “National Home.” First, the term “national home” illustrated that the Allied powers rescinded the old imperialist aims of annexing territories and gaining colonies as a result of the war. For Gribetz, the use of “national home” instead of “Jewish state” signified that the British recognized that a protectorate in Palestine would not be a British colony. Secondly, Gribetz acknowledged that the Zionists were not yet ready to govern Palestine as an independent Jewish state. The implication was that the Zionists needed a Western power to ensure that the Jewish population would reach a majority in Palestine and facilitate the development of Jewish state-building institutions.⁵²

Zionists proposed that the declaration and the mandate provided legitimacy for the goal of political Zionism—the creation of a Jewish state for the entire Jewish people. This was not an injustice to “the Arab,” Gribetz proclaimed, because the British had liberated Arab territory and promoted the development of independent Arab states in Mesopotamia and the Hedjaz. Written in the wake of the 1929 Arab rebellion and published in the midst of a British inquiry into British policy regarding Zionism and

⁵¹ Ibid., 84-85. See also, Mallison, “The Balfour Declaration,” and discussion above.

⁵² Gribetz, *Case for the Jews*, 72-78

As Mallison argues, the British Jewish anti-Zionists understood the national home as meaning a safe haven for Jewish refugees, but not a Jewish state. See, Mallison, “The Balfour Declaration”

Palestine, *The Case for the Jews* incorporated numerous themes common to the Zionist narrative. While Zionist leaders publicly asserted their willingness to cooperate with the Arabs, Gribetz acknowledged that Zionism was based on the rejection of Palestinian Arab national rights and that the Zionists would not accept an Arab state in Palestine:

The world must know that the Jewish right to Palestine is the fruit of no bargain, the result of no compromise or intrigue, but is founded upon the immutable principles of natural justice, confirmed in international agreements of unusual solemnity. That the mandate for Palestine assures the Jewish National Home perpetuity of existence and operates as a decree of perpetual exclusion to any other national home in Palestine. That neither the validity of the Jewish home nor its continuance depends upon the consent of the Arab or the will of its sponsor, the Mandatory. That the grant to the Jew to establish in Palestine his national home is both an honorable provision to end the tragic martyrdom of a great and noble people and an act of civilization and progress promotive of world peace and betterment.

Demanding that the British demonstrate to “the Arab” that the Jewish national home was an established fact, Gribetz concluded that “what the Jew sought, and the Declaration pledged, was *the creation of an independent National Home in Palestine for the whole Jewish people,*” and that such an endeavor, based on “justice and humanity,” would “promote the peace of the world.”⁵³

⁵³ Ibid., 95, 98. Arguments that the Balfour Declaration and the mandate legitimized the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine are still quite prevalent. See, for example, Alan Dershowitz, *The Case for Israel* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2003). See also, Eli E. Hertz’s *Myths and Facts* tax-exempt organization (<http://www.mythsandfacts.org/>). Hertz’s mission is “devoted to research and publication of insightful subject matters regarding global U.S. interests, including the promotion of Democracy, Freedom and Human Rights, particularly in the Middle East. The objective being to provide policymakers, national leadership, the media and the public-at-large with information and viewpoints that are founded on factual and reliable content.” Hertz’s argument is simply a restatement of Gribetz’s: the Jewish people have the right to all of Palestine (including the Occupied Territories) and any resistance to that right is a violation of international law. There is no such thing as Occupied Territory, consequently, because the Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations determined that the Jewish people had “historic rights” to that land. Hertz also argues that the Palestinian people do not exist, that “most Palestinian Arabs were newcomers to British Mandate Palestine, and that Palestinians did not assert their national identity until after 1967. Hertz references Joan Peters’ *From Time Immemorial*. In his discussion delegitimizing Palestinian peoplehood, Hertz quotes the Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels that “repeat a lie often enough and people will begin to believe it” to suggest that the Palestinian Arabs have been distorting the historical record to support their case for national independence.

In *The Great Betrayal*, the prominent American Zionists Stephen Wise⁵⁴ and Jacob de Haas determined that Palestine was excluded from the British pledges to the Arabs during World War I and that the Balfour Declaration represented a British obligation to the reconstitution of a Jewish national home, which in their interpretation was a fulfillment of the principle of self-determination and Allied war aims regarding the small nations, in return for Jewish assistance in the war effort. Countering Arab opposition to the Zionist project and the findings of the Shaw Commission and Hope-Simpson investigation, Wise and Haas argued that Jewish immigration and colonization developed a desolate wasteland, benefited the Arab peasants, and helped them “revolt against the bondage thrust upon them by rapacious Arab Effendis.” The problem was that British administrators and corrupt Arab effendis instigated opposition to Jewish colonization, which encouraged the British government to rescind on its “solemn vow” and “contract” with the Jewish people. For Wise and Haas, British pronouncements regarding the safeguard clauses of the Balfour Declaration illustrated the Macdonald’s government “obtuseness” and “moral delinquency” and signaled a “legal violation of contractual obligations.”⁵⁵

⁵⁴ The *New York Times* often reported on Wise’s sermons. In one such sermon in early May 1931, Wise determined that Zionism was a solution to “the Jew’s feeling of inferiority.” Criticizing intermarriage between Jews and Gentiles, Wise stated that “the Jew always has been persecuted by inferiors who feared and loathed his superiority,” but “we never persecute inferiors.” In a sermon in late September 1931, Wise promised that the Jewish people were “resolved to re-establish itself within the historic borders of the ancient Jewish land.”

See, “Inferiority Complex of the Jew Decried,” *New York Times*, 11 May 1931, 14; “Wise Asks Plain Talk on Injustice to Jews; Denounces British for ‘Betrayal’ of Them,” *New York Times*, 28 September 1931, 15.

⁵⁵ Stephen Wise and Jacob De Haas, *The Great Betrayal* (New York: Brentano’s, 1930); “Four Who Plead for Zionism,” *New York Times*, 8 March 1931, 67. Wise and Haas quoted a resolution passed at a meeting of 3,000 Zionists in New York in response to the threatened reassessment of British policy illustrating the Zionist claim that Jewish colonization was beneficial to the indigenous population:

We denounce as utterly unfounded the suggestion that Jewish development in Palestine has been prejudicial to the welfare of the Arabs. The contrary is the truth. Improvement in Arab life, as the

Wise and Haas concluded that the British commitment was to a Jewish state and that the British had fulfilled the pledges to the Arabs through the creation of Mesopotamia and other Arab territories. Zionists purported that Jewish rights superseded “Arab claims” and that the call for the establishment of a Jewish state represented a rejection of imperialism. Such a policy was justified as a civilizing mission. Even Ramsay MacDonald acknowledged after a visit to Palestine in 1922:

The Arab population do not and cannot use or develop the resources of Palestine. This is not disputed by any one who knows the country. The total population of Palestine today...is less than was that of Galilee in the time of Christ. Official reports state that ‘the country is now undeveloped and under-populated’,...’largely cultivable areas are left untilled’...of the twelve thousand square miles fit for cultivation less than four thousand are cultivated...What is cultivated is badly worked. ‘The area of land now cultivated could yield a far greater product’;...’there are no forests’; the Jordan and Yarmuk offer an abundance of water power, but it is unused. Already Jewish immigration is changing that. To the older Jewish settlements and agricultural schools are owing, to a great extent, both the Jaffa orange trade and the culture of vines; to the newer, agricultural machinery, afforestation, the beginnings of scientific manuring, the development of schemes of irrigation and of agricultural cooperation. Palestine not only offers room for hundreds of thousands of Jews, it loudly cries out for more labor and more skill.⁵⁶

Despite the rhetoric regarding self-determination and Allied war aims, colonized peoples understood the result of the war and the peace as a continuation of imperialism and colonialism. The victorious Powers and their clients continued to justify expansion and colonialism on the grounds of the white man’s burden and civilizing mission ideology—namely, that Western administration would bring civilization to backward peoples and develop the land properly according to Western norms. While the Zionists based their

proceedings before the Mandates Commission have conclusively proven, steadily followed in the wake of Jewish effort.

Importantly, Wise and Haas propagated the notion that Arabs immigrated to Palestine in response to Jewish colonization and British administration, an argument that Joan Peters, Alan Dershowitz and others would later iterate.

Quoted material in Wise and Haas, *The Great Betrayal*, 9-10, 13-15

⁵⁶ Wise and Haas, *The Great Betrayal*, 49-50

claims on the principle of self-determination, historical rights, moral justice, and international law, the Palestinian Arabs and their supporters would argue that the aim of creating a Jewish state in all of Palestine was counter to Allied declarations about self-government and the Covenant of the League of Nations.

The authors were quite critical of British policy during the military occupation and civilian administration. They excoriated Allenby for ignoring the Balfour Declaration (meaning the establishment of the Jewish national home), while British officials argued that the existing international law dictated that the British military maintain the status quo until the necessary treaties were signed. Wise and Haas also declared that the Zionists were shocked when the Palestinians rebelled against Zionism and the mandate in 1920, which signaled, according to the Zionists, that the British military administration opposed Zionism and instigated the Arab violence. Similarly, Wise and Haas characterized the 1929 rebellion as “the first real pogrom in Palestine,” which was “incited by cultivated Islamic fanaticism” and British agitation or at best “neglect of duty.” These arguments were consistent with the predominant theme that either the British were responsible for agitating violence or violence was simply a feature of Islam.⁵⁷ Wise and Haas proposed

⁵⁷ At a dinner celebrating Gandhi’s sixty-third birthday in absentia, Wise undiplomatically criticized the Indian nationalist’s characterization of Zionism given in an interview published the day before. Gandhi had supported the “spiritual” meaning of Zionism, but warned against the “reoccupation” of Palestine through military force. Wise vehemently disagreed with Gandhi’s use of “reoccupation” and asserted that British arms liberated Palestine from the Ottomans and “that there were virtually no British bayonets in Palestine until Arab bayonets perpetrated the massacre of August-September, 1929.” The Jewish pioneers were not “resting their case on bayonets,” but on their historic and moral right to Palestine. Comparing Zionism with the Indian struggle for independence and stating that Gandhi ought to support Zionism if he really supported “peace and freedom for all peoples,” Wise declared “that Jews have no desire for military occupation or forcible re-entry, that they seek peaceably and . . . non-resistently to live and labor and serve and sacrifice for Palestine.” It is interesting that Wise favorably compared Gandhi’s nationalist movement to free India from British control with Zionism, a settler colony movement backed by British power. Nahum Sokolow, who replaced Weizmann as head of the World Zionist Organization, stated at the end of December 1931 that Gandhi was quite sympathetic for the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

that Feisal's agreement with Weizmann meant Arab support for a Jewish state, but did not mention Feisal's conditions for his support for Zionism, namely Zionist support for an independent state including Syria. The two authors wrote that Wilson did not understand the "malignly anti-Zionist aim" of those pushing for a commission to investigate the interests and opinions of the inhabitants of the Near East and that "the work of this [King-Crane] commission proved abortive as soon as President Wilson understood the spirit of partisanship in which the commission had moved," which intimated Wilson's support for the Zionist movement.⁵⁸

Importantly, Wise and Haas also presented the view that opposition to Zionism was equivalent to anti-Semitism. The authors characterized a British administrator in Palestine, a C. R. Ashbee, as someone who "frankly dislikes the Jews." Therefore, the Zionists could easily dismiss Ashbee's statement that "the policy of the Balfour Declaration is an unjust policy and Zionism as understood and as sometimes practised in Palestine is based upon a fundamental injustice and therefore dangerous both to civilisation and to Jewry." Finally, Wise and Haas described the British policy articulated in the Passfield White Paper challenging the Zionist contention that the safeguard clauses were "merely secondary considerations" to the establishment of the Jewish national home as the "*Great Betrayal*" and a willful misrepresentation of the meaning of the Balfour Declaration. Following in Weizmann's footsteps, Wise and Haas propagated that the Zionist interpretation of the meaning of the Balfour Declaration was the only acceptable one and proceeded to blame opponents of Zionism for

"Dr. Wise Rebukes Gandhi on Zionism," *New York Times*, 3 October 1931, 14; "Gandhi Gets a Week to Reconcile Sects," *New York Times*, 2 October 1931, 11; "Zionist Head Here; Hails New Regime," *New York Times*, 30 December 1931, 14.

⁵⁸ Wise and Haas, *The Great Betrayal*, 60-61, 83-84

misrepresenting the British commitment to the Jewish national home. The two authors proposed that “the Zionist leadership suggested, drafted and helped to redraft the subordinate and protective clauses of the Balfour Declaration,” a statement meant to illustrate the Zionist commitment to the rights of the Arabs but in direct contravention of Zionist opposition to both safeguard clauses.⁵⁹

The two American Zionists concluded that the Arabs in Palestine only opposed the British presence, not Jewish colonization, and that the British adopted a pro-Arab policy to protect its imperial interests in India and throughout the Islamic world. According to these Zionist spokespersons, the Arabs wanted to sell their lands and only pretended “attachment to any given piece of soil” to raise the selling price. If the British restricted Jewish immigration, then “the Arabs in Palestine will be impoverished beyond redemption.” Arab politicians, according to Wise and Haas, wanted to sell all the land to the Jews, including Muslim holy sites, while limiting Jewish immigration so that the Arab elite could “amass wealth and govern the country.” The Arab population, moreover, was incapable of democratic government since “the Arabs do not want to pay for good roads, hygiene, etc. They have no interest in these matters. The condition of any Arab village or municipality where there is no Jewish settlement betrays the Arab unconcern for improvement and amelioration.” Given the negative attitude toward Arabs and Islam prevalent in the West, Wise and Haas portrayed Zionism as congruent with Western civilization and Western interests and repeatedly claimed that Jewish colonization and land purchase benefited the Arab population.⁶⁰ Wise and Haas’

⁵⁹ Wise and Haas, *The Great Betrayal*, 105-107, 147

⁶⁰ As David Waines asserts, the Jewish Agency rejected any British policies benefiting Arab peasants (i.e. aid in more intensive farming methods) unless such policies resulted in making more land available for Jewish settlers. Again the parallel with the U.S. government’s efforts to ‘civilize’ Native

understanding of the British obligation to the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine certainly superseded pledges to backward and corrupt Arabs. While basing their claim on the “inviolability of all public and international obligations,” Wise and Haas accepted Balfour’s argument that the principle of self-determination did not apply to Palestinians because the Jewish case was exceptional and “none but pedants or people who, prejudiced either by religion or racial bigotry, none but those who are blinded by one of these causes, would deny for one instant that the case of the Jew is exceptional, and must be treated by exceptional methods.” As Erez Manela argued in *The Wilsonian Moment*, however, the great Allied principles of self-government and self-determination appealed to the world because of their universality.⁶¹

Maurice Samuel, a prominent Zionist intellectual, published two works in the wake of the 1929 rebellion that propagated Zionist themes and presented the Jewish colonization of Palestine as developing a “wilderness” and improving the living conditions of the backward and savage Arabs. *What Happened in Palestine: the Events of August, 1929, Their Background and Their Significance* was a first-hand investigation

Americans is striking. From the Washington administration onward, the U.S. government argued that teaching the natives to farm properly would make more land available for white settlement, especially since the savages would no longer require large areas for hunting. Native Americans and Palestinian Arabs defended their rights to their land on grounds other than Western conceptions of proper land use and productivity. See, David Waines, “The Failure of Nationalist Resistance,” in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 227

⁶¹ Wise and Haas, *The Great Betrayal*, 147, 158-159; Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*. Recall that Balfour was anti-Semitic and proposed immigration restriction against Jews while prime minister.

Wise and Haas also made the claim that the British restricted Jewish immigration while allowing unchecked Arab immigration into Palestine. That large numbers of Arabs immigrated into Palestine in response to Jewish development of the territory has long been a Zionist theme. In the midst of the Arab rebellion in the late 1930s, Zionists repeatedly claimed that hundreds of thousands of Arabs illegally immigrated to Palestine during the mandate era. Such an argument delegitimized the Palestinian rights to their homeland. Even some members of the Permanent Mandates Commission echoed the Zionist idea that large numbers of Arabs were illegally entering Palestine because of Jewish development.

For example, see League of Nations Permanent Mandates Commission, *Minutes of the Twenty-Third Session*, 19 June -1 July 1933, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/49984b1f39ed3a1805256616005641af?OpenDocument> (accessed 10 March 2012).

of the Arab “riots.” Published in October 1929, Samuel’s *What Happened in Palestine* emphasized the idealism underlying the Zionist project and argued that Jewish colonization and the ‘upbuilding’ of Palestine benefited the Arab population. Samuel determined that the Arabs in Palestine were uninterested in politics and did “not constitute a nationality” and argued that the Zionists would welcome Palestinian Arab nationalism. Assuring his readers that the Arab masses were politically apathetic and ignorant, Samuel suggested that Arab and British instigators created a religious controversy between Muslims and Jews to precipitate violence against the Jewish population in Palestine. By focusing on religion as the cause of the 1929 rebellion, Samuel and other Zionists ignored the Palestinian Arab concerns about Jewish immigration, land ownership, and nationalism. While the Arabs characterized the violence throughout the 1920s as in opposition to Zionism and the British mandate, Samuel presented the incidents at the Wailing Wall in 1928 and 1929 as manufactured controversies due to the agitation of Arab elites and the acquiescence and even encouragement of the British administration. Moreover, he accepted that the area was of no religious significance to the Muslims and ignored that the Arabs understood the Jewish nationalist demonstration as symbolic of the Zionist colonization of Palestine. Samuel further propagated common Zionist themes that the civilized world sanctioned the establishment of the Jewish home, that Jewish pioneers were idealistic and beyond criticism, that Jewish immigrants harbored no animosity toward the Arab population and actually endeavored to raise the living standards of the backward indigenous inhabitants of Palestine, and that Jewish colonization was introducing modernization, development, and civilization to a wilderness.⁶²

⁶² Maurice Samuel, *What Happened in Palestine: The Events of August, 1929, their Background*,

Samuel's description of Zionist colonization and Jewish self-defense against the Arab "savages" is reminiscent of both English settlers' characterization of their project as a civilizing mission and accounts regarding violent conflicts with Native Americans. While English expansion and violence against Native Americans precipitated violent resistance, the British settlers portrayed their treatment of the indigenous population in benign terms and characterized native resistance as irrational savage behavior, which justified the extermination of Native Americans and the further European (and later white American) expansion. For example, Edward Waterhouse, a British official, described Opechanough's war in Virginia in 1622 in similar terms to how the Zionist portrayed the events in the 1929 rebellion. Ignoring English violence and ill-treatment of the natives, Waterhouse wrote that the treacherous, "perfidious and inhumane" natives killed and mutilated 347 men, women, and children "contrary to all laws of God and men." Declaring that the British had treated the natives fairly and humanely to this point, Waterhouse concluded that the native resistance allowed the English "by right of war, and law of nations" to exterminate the Native Americans and expropriate their land. Both the English colonizers in North America and the Jewish settlers in Palestine considered any native resistance to colonization as the irrational actions of a barbarous people, which justified further expropriation, removal, and even extermination. The Zionist narrative delegitimized any Palestinian Arab resistance to Jewish colonization. Consequently, Zionists determined that religion was the cause of the violence, claimed that the Arabs were not opposed to Jewish colonization, and often blamed Arab or British

and their Significance (Boston: The Stratford Company, 1929); "Four Who Plead for Zionism," *New York Times*, 8 March 1931, 67

Quoted material in Samuel, *What Happened in Palestine*, 38

instigators. While the Zionist blamed British officials for encouraging the Arab violence and failing to adequately repress what they described as a pogrom, the British High Commissioner Sir John Chancellor adopted the Zionist perspective when he declared upon his return to Palestine:

I have learned with horror of the atrocious acts committed by bodies of ruthless and bloodthirsty evil-doers, of savage murders perpetrated upon defenceless members of the Jewish population, regardless of age or sex, accompanied, as at Hebron, by acts of unspeakable savagery, of the burning of farms and houses in town and country and of the looting and destruction of property.

Such an interpretation of events, which supported the British and Zionist contention that the Arab population was not yet civilized enough to warrant self-government, fit within the civilizing mission ideology that indigenous populations had no right to resist colonization undertaken by people who claimed to be more civilized.⁶³

On the Rim of the Wilderness is an example of Zionists interpreting the Oriental mind for a Western audience.⁶⁴ Samuel denigrated Arab culture and society and determined that there was no Arab nationalist movement in Palestine.⁶⁵ He described the Arabs as living in “mud huts huddled against one another between lanes of filth,” where the “unwashed bodies of men and animals...sleep under one roof.” Maintaining that the mortality rate for Arab children was extremely high due to “malaria, neglect, ignorance and undernourishment” and observing that many of those who remain were afflicted with

⁶³ For Chancellor quote, see, Samuel, *What Happened in Palestine*, 133. For Waterhouse quote, see Susan Myra Kingsbury, ed., *The Records of the Virginia Company of London*, III (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1933), 550-551, 556-557, as cited in Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman and Jon Gjerde, eds., *Major Problems in American History*, I (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2007, 2nd edition), 34.

⁶⁴ Unless otherwise noted, the following discussion is based on Maurice Samuel, *On the Rim of the Wilderness: The Conflict in Palestine* (New York: Horace Liveright, 1931). In fact, Samuel wrote that because the Arab elite exploited the Arab peasants, “the Jew is placed in the uncomfortable position of having to speak for the Arab masses.”

⁶⁵ Arguing that the Oriental mind did not understand nationalism, Samuel wrote that “it would perhaps be better for this book if I were to *invent* a democratic leader—just for the sake of verisimilitude. In all honesty, I cannot do it.”

blindness, due to lack of hygiene and sanitation, Samuel dismissed “sentimental” Westerners for questioning “the right of advanced races to intrude their jarring modernities on ancient cultures and civilisations” in the case of the Arabs because the inhabitants of Palestine were barely above animals. Relying on Zionist sources, Samuel reported that the backward Arabs even failed to utilize fertilizer in their fields, meaning that “heaps of dung are allowed to accumulate near every village unused....” Not considering the efficiency or utility of Arab agricultural methods in that particular environment, the Zionists determined that the Arab peasants utilized agricultural practices and tools more apt for the Biblical age than the twentieth century. Samuel’s description of Arab living conditions bears quoting at length:

In the dirty malodorous lodgings of baked mud covered with straw, serving in the rainy season for cattle and human beings, the fires are built for cooking and baking; the smoke swirls round till it escapes at the windows. It blackens the walls and attacks the eyes of the inmates. Washing is seldom done. One *tarboush* (head cover), dirty and sweaty, lasts an individual for years. An *abaya* (cloak) is used for decades, and sometimes becomes a family heirloom. Bugs, cockroaches and other insects contaminate clothes and dwelling alike, and the stink of refuse fills the corners. There are no sanitary arrangements even of the most elementary kind. In most instances the regulations laid down by Moses for the Jewish soldiery is not observed....There is no medical help. The fellaheen still tend their wounds by the application of fresh dung, and for the cure of eye disease apply bandages soaked in camel urine. The entire picture is one of such revolting wretchedness that the visitor who wanders through an Arab village almost begins to understand why these villagers are looked upon by wealthy Arabs as a sort of sub-human species.

Fortunately, Jewish colonization brought modernization, development, and Western civilization to the Arabs. Arab villages near Jewish colonies

...break into a new life, as if a freshening wind had passed across the people. Houses are built of stone and roofed with tiles. Cattle no longer live under the same roof with the owners—and the health of both improves. There are several wells in the village, worked by motor-driven pumps. Trees will be found in and around the village. There are irrigated vegetable gardens and orange groves *owned by fellaheen*. In almost every village there is a flour mill. Manuring and

ploughing follow the Jewish methods. Children are better clothed and cared for, and eye disease is less frequent. The regular Jewish doctor extends his work to the Arabs. Smilansky, the agricultural expert, . . . adds: ‘The position of the women is much better here, and many a young fellah limits himself nowadays to one wife and even abstains from beating her.’

Overall, the descriptions complemented the pervasive Western stereotypes about Arabs and Muslims. Racial discourse regarding the backwardness and savagery of nonwhite ‘others’ justified imperialism and civilizing missions.⁶⁶

A recurring theme is that the Arabs had no understanding of democracy because the Arab masses were simply ignorant of it and the leaders were fearful of this “Western impiety,” while the Zionists embodied the principle of democratic government. Samuel argued that the Zionists opposed self-government in Palestine not because they recognized that the Arab majority opposed the British mandate and the Zionist project, but because the backward and ignorant Arab population—consisting of “serfs in their mud hovels, or in the stinking shacks of the towns, the children blinded by preventable

⁶⁶ Quoted material in Samuel, *On the Rim of the Wilderness*, 14-15, 28-29, 190-192. The idea that Arabs do not value life, including the lives of their children, is a prominent theme in the Zionist and Western narrative. Golda Meir told the National Press Club in Washington D.C. in 1957 that “peace will come when the Arabs will love their children more than they hate us.” The United States has long asserted that its enemies did not value life. From the Puritans’ justifications of the genocide of the Pequots and Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence to present rhetoric on the War on Terror and Obama’s criticism of Syria and China, American officials and media have long maintained that Americans value human life and human rights while enemies of the United States do not. The historical record of American aggression and genocide and Israeli aggression, ethnic cleansing, and human rights violations suggests other interpretations than American and Israeli commitment to human rights and the sanctity of human life.

The idea that Western intervention and imperialism benefitted women in nonwhite societies has also been a prominent theme in the civilizing mission ideology. Early English settlers to North America consistently justified conquest and dispossession of the Native Americans because native gender roles differed from those established in Europe. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton continues to profess that American intervention in Afghanistan has benefitted Afghani women. Humanitarian intervention has been premised on protecting women in “backward” cultures. Given the realities and consequences of Western intervention and conquest and the historic lack of equality for women in the United States and the current attacks against women’s reproductive rights and health, the Western commitment to women’s rights remains somewhat suspect.

See, Golda Meir, *A Land of Our Own: An Oral Autobiography*, Marie Syrkin, ed (New York: Putnam, 1973), 242. A British representative before the Permanent Mandates Commission in the summer of 1937 maintained that Arabs did not value life and concluded that “that was one of the difficulties of the situation.” See, League of Nations Permanent Mandates Commission, *Minutes of the Thirty-Second (Extraordinary) Session*, 30 July to 18 August 1937.

disease, the women aged before their time, the agitators preaching religious hatred against the Jew, and the well-fed, well-housed group at the top"-- was still unfit for the right of self-determination. Overall, Samuel determined that life was "cheap" for the Arabs, an idea still prevalent, which justifies continued Israeli rejection of Palestinian rights.⁶⁷

Without providing any citations, Samuel used quotations from Arab sources that present the Arabs as ignorant and Arab opposition to Zionism as baseless anti-Semitism and irrational ravings of elites who feared that Jewish colonization would educate the Arab masses against the exploitation of the effendi class. Arab concerns that the Zionist project meant the expropriation and the expulsion of the indigenous population were dismissed as outrageous and unfounded accusations. Instead, Samuel blamed the Arab elite for the condition of the peasant and argued that the Jewish settlers and British administrators were working to better the lives of the Arab masses. In fact, Samuel alleged that "a genuine national movement among the Arabs of Palestine has everything to gain from an alliance with the Jews" and predicted that the Arab masses would develop a national consciousness in conjunction with Jewish colonization and form "an alliance with the Jews." The problem, in Samuel's estimation, was that the Arab elite more effectively presented their case to the Western world than the Zionists since the latter focused on the upbuilding of Palestine while the former merely propagandized.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Samuel, *On the Rim of the Wilderness*, 41, 51-52. See, for example, Dov Waxman, "Freeing Gilad: An Ethical Conundrum," *Mideast Matrix*, 18 October 2011, <http://mideastmatrix.wordpress.com/2011/10/18/freeing-gilad-an-ethical-conundrum/> (accessed 12 February 2012). Waxman argues that the exchange of over 1,000 Palestinian prisoners for Gilad Shalit "suggests that Palestinians do not value human life as much as Israelis do, and in doing so reinforces the already prevalent belief among Israeli Jews that Palestinians life is cheap, much cheaper than Jewish life."

⁶⁸ Samuel, *On the Rim of the Wilderness*, 126

Samuel argued that the Zionist colonization of Palestine represented Western civilization and would prove beneficial to humankind as the new city on the hill based on a more humane form of social organization. Claiming that Zionism was essentially “an exceptionally powerful and progressive labor movement” bereft of “reactionary, chauvinistic” elements, Samuel contrasted the Western and modern Jewish colonizers with “an oppressed and backward people in a part of the world which has changed less in the last three thousand years than the Western World in the last three hundred” and determined that Jewish colonization would both eradicate the “physical backwardness of the country” and the “social backwardness of its inhabitants.”⁶⁹ As part of the Jewish civilizing mission in Palestine, Samuel proclaimed that the Jewish settlers were intent on raising the living standards of the Arab masses since “Jewish workers could not descend to the almost subhuman level of subsistence occupied by Arab labor.” While acknowledging that Zionism was based on the privileging of Jewish labor, Samuel maintained that Jewish colonization increased opportunities and living standards for the Arabs, Jewish workers helped organize the Arab masses, Arab employers were to blame for the poor wages and living conditions of the Arab workers, and Arab elites agitated religious conflict to prevent Arabs and Jews from organizing together.⁷⁰

Counter to the Arab arguments and British inquiry reports, Samuel emphasized the Zionist refrain that there was plenty of unused and neglected land in Palestine. Jewish colonization, according to this argument, was transforming “desert and swamp” into a productive land of milk and honey, which was beneficial to both Jews and Arabs.

⁶⁹ In another context, Samuel repeated the charge that Palestine was a backward and unchanging “museum,” which Abraham would have recognized if he returned “to the country after forty centuries.” See, Samuel, *On the Rim of the Wilderness*, 174-175

⁷⁰ Samuel, *On the Rim of the Wilderness*, 138-140, 144-146

He repeatedly maintained that Jewish settlers converted land that consisted only of “decayed” Arab villages, the homes of “sick” and “wretched fellaheen families,” into efficient, modern, and progressive colonies. Only the inherent backwardness of the Arab masses and the corruption of the Arab effendi were responsible for the alleged underdevelopment in Palestine. While Samuel focused on the agricultural achievements of Zionist colonization, he ignored the exclusivist and separatist ideology of Zionism and neglected to acknowledge that a large majority of Jewish settlers in Palestine were concentrated in urban areas (Jerusalem, Jaffa-Tel Aviv, Haifa, Safad, and Tiberias) and that many areas of Palestine had little or no Jewish populations.⁷¹ Samuel emphasized the success of Zionist reclamation and maintained that Zionist land and labor policies did not negatively affect the indigenous Palestinians. In fact, he repeatedly asserted that Jewish land purchase, immigration, and colonization benefited the Arab fellaheen and facilitated the development of Arab nationalism and class consciousness against the Arab effendi.⁷²

The problem, according to Samuel, was not that Jewish colonization was a threat to the Arab peasant, but that the Arab leadership effectively presented the propaganda that the Arabs were “faced with a type of conquest roughly similar to that which disinherited the American Indians and the Negroes of South Africa.” Dismissing any such comparisons and arguments that Jewish colonization was based on the expropriation of Arab peasants, Samuel proposed that the conflict in Palestine was between “the Arab people and the Jews on the one side, and the Arab hereditary ruling class on the other.” Instead of considering the negative consequences of Jewish immigration on Palestinian

⁷¹ See Janet Abu-Lughod, “The Demographic Transformation of Palestine,” in Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, ed., *Transformation of Palestine* (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1987)

⁷² Samuel, *On the Rim of the Wilderness*, 182-183

society, Samuel argued that the Jewish “upbuilding” of Palestine was simply challenging the Arab effendis’ exploitation of the Arab masses. While determining that the Arabs were incapable of self-government, the Zionist spokesperson asserted both that the Jewish people had the right to reconquer Palestine because they “have never relinquished their claim” and that the reestablishment of a Jewish national home did not infringe upon the rights of the Arabs in Palestine, but in fact was “a forward step for the Arabs in the acquisition of their rights.” Ignoring that Zionism was a form of Western colonialism and that the Balfour Declaration and the mandate represented Western imperialism, Samuel argued that the Arab leadership relied on “brute force” to challenge Jewish rights to immigrate to and colonize Palestine. His works presented Zionism as complementary to the Western civilizing mission ideology and Arab opposition as the irrational and reactionary response of an Arab elite class fearing the progressive and democratic consequences of enlightened Jewish colonization. Ignoring the substance of Arab arguments and mischaracterizing the Arab nationalist movement, Samuel participated in the Zionist offensive implemented in the wake of the 1929 Arab rebellion to iterate Jewish rights to their ancient homeland and pressure the British to maintain a policy facilitating Jewish colonization of Palestine.⁷³

The British Retreat

By early December, Passfield announced to the House of Lords that the British administration “would not prohibit the [Jewish] purchase of land in Palestine or prevent the exclusive employment of Jewish labor of land held as the inalienable property of the Jewish people,” a statement which Zionists understood as a “marked retreat” from the

⁷³ Samuel, *On the Rim of the Wilderness*, 206-207, 232-235

Passfield White Paper. While welcoming these British concessions, members of the Jewish Agency continued negotiating with the British government for a more thorough revision of a suspect British policy regarding the Jewish national home. Meanwhile, Zionists and their sympathizers continued to both portray the movement as a civilizing and progressive movement and pressure the British government through a large-scale lobbying effort. Maurice Samuel, an author and lecturer, argued that the conflict in Palestine was “a struggle between the progressive Jewish force in the country, known as Zionism, and the British government allied with the Arab landowner and usurer.” Stating that Zionists were giving “democracy to Arabs” despite the opposition of the Arab effendi and British administration, Samuel iterated that the Jewish colonizers were bringing progress, modernization, and civilization to the Arab masses, who would realize that “their natural allies are the Jews.” Although disappointed with the Passfield White Paper, the other party to the conflict could only observe with dismay the tremendous Zionist pressure on the British government to fully endorse the establishment of a Jewish national home. As the British government gradually conceded to Zionist demands, the Arab population increased their protests of British policy. In early January 1931, Palestinian Arabs publicly called for the abrogation of the Balfour Declaration and the mandate, the creation of a democratic government, and the protection of Arab landownership in Palestine. The British, however, simply ignored the Arab position. As a result of international pressure and over two months of negotiations between the Jewish Agency and the British government, Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald essentially revoked the Passfield White Paper and reasserted the British commitment to the

establishment of the Jewish national home in a letter to Weizmann in early February 1931.⁷⁴

MacDonald conceded, contrary to the interpretation of the Shaw and Hope-Simpson reports and the Passfield White Paper, that “the obligation to facilitate Jewish immigration and to encourage close settlement by Jews on the land remains a positive obligation of the mandate and it can be fulfilled without prejudice to the rights and position of other sections of the population of Palestine.” Despite questionable Zionist interpretations of British policy, MacDonald maintained that Great Britain had no designs to prohibit or limit Jewish immigration or purchase of land or challenge the Zionist policy of exclusive Jewish labor. Concluding that “no solution can be satisfactory or permanent which is not based upon justice, both to the Jewish people and to the non-Jewish

⁷⁴ “Defends Purchases of Palestine Lands,” *New York Times*, 4 December 1930, 14; “Palestine Conference Here Jan. 25,” *New York Times*, 26 December 1930, 15; “Zionists Elect Lipsky,” *New York Times*, 29 December 1930, 21; “Zionists Score Weizmann,” *New York Times*, 30 December 1930, 24; “Zionists Postpone Congress to June,” *New York Times*, 22 January 1931, 8; “Report Awaited in London,” *New York Times*, 26 January 1931, 12; “Predicts Revision of Passfield Paper,” *New York Times*, 26 January 1931, 12; “New Social Order Urged in Palestine,” *New York Times*, 26 January 1931, 13; “Britain Still Backs Most of White Paper,” *New York Times*, 27 January 1931, 2; “Britain to Modify Palestine Policy,” *New York Times*, 6 February 1931, 11; *MacDonald to Weizmann*, 13 February 1931, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/bbaa033c46a9aa8b8525712c0070b943?OpenDocument> (accessed 2 January 2012); Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 330-336

According to Weizmann’s account, the Prime Minister told him in early November 1930 that “there is no White Paper” and that the British would negotiate with Weizmann and the Jewish Agency before issuing another statement of British policy. After acknowledging that he would need to discuss MacDonald’s proposal with American Jews who were hesitant to negotiate before the British clearly revoked the White Paper, Weizmann pressed the prime minister to replace the British administration in Palestine with one more supportive of Zionism and more pliable to Zionist demands. Again, Weizmann’s key point throughout this debate over British policy was that the British obligation under the mandate and the Balfour Declaration was to the Jewish people around the world and not simply the existing Jewish population in Palestine and certainly not to the Arabs in Palestine. Weizmann considered the MacDonald Letter as representing British commitment to Zionism, and he remarked in his autobiography that he attributed the great development of Zionism in Palestine the 1930s (especially the massive increase in Jewish immigration) to the reversal from the Passfield White Paper. See, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Vol 1, Series B, August 1898-July 1931*, Barnet Litvinoff, ed (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books and Rutgers University, 1983), 607-610; Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 334-335

At a meeting in late January at the Biltmore Hotel to raise funds for Jewish colonization in Palestine, one speaker explicitly compared Jewish colonization of Palestine with European colonization of North America and predicted that Jewish settlers would achieve “the same success as the settlers of the United States,” ignoring, of course, the consequences for the indigenous inhabitants. See, “Predicts Revision of Passfield Paper,” *New York Times*, 26 January 1931, 12.

communities of Palestine,” MacDonald’s policy clearly favored the continued Jewish colonization of Palestine, which, as the British well understood, was based on the denial of the fundamental rights of the indigenous Arab population and would result in serious conflict in Palestine. Reporting on the MacDonald letter prior to its publication, the *New York Times* quoted “a reliable authority close to the Labor party” to the effect that “so completely has the government met the Jewish grievances that...its new document will rival the Balfour declaration as a landmark in Zionism and eliminate whatever dissatisfaction the White Paper may have aroused.” Despite the concessions to the Zionists, the MacDonald letter did not mollify many Zionists, who deemed the MacDonald’s response “unsatisfactory” and argued that the British were “systematically obstructing the upbuilding of Palestine” at the World Zionist Congress six months later. As Weizmann declared at in a long address at the Congress, Zionists continued to press for massive Jewish immigration⁷⁵ to and colonization of Palestine. Ignoring the substance of the British inquiries into actual conditions in Palestine, dismissing Palestinian nationalism, and portraying the Zionist project as a civilizing mission congruent with Biblical and American history and Wilsonian principles, Weizmann proclaimed that “marshes still wait to be drained by our pioneers, hillsides and dunes to be planted, deserts to be reclaimed, rocks to be blasted, and roads to be constructed” and that Jewish colonization benefited the Arab population. Zionist pronouncements and the seeming shift in British policy articulated in the MacDonald letter exacerbated Arab opposition to the British administration and Jewish colonization, leaving the British

⁷⁵ Weizmann announced that Palestine could accommodate “at least 50,000 Jewish agricultural families without interfering with the legitimate interests of the Arab population.” See, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Vol 1, Series B, August 1898-July 1931*, Barnet Litvinoff, ed (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books and Rutgers University, 1983), 638

government in the position of attempting to reconcile British imperialism, Zionism, and Arab nationalism in Palestine. As Knabenshue warned the State Department in the fall of 1929, if the British refused to establish representative government in Palestine based upon the Arab majority, “the Jews will be living constantly on a volcano and the least relaxation of British force will bring on an explosion.” A few years later, in response to massive Jewish immigration, the Arab population of Palestine would undertake a major revolt against British policy and Zionism, precipitating contemplation of partition and accelerating the development of Zionist plans for the military conquest and ethnic cleansing of Palestine.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ *MacDonald to Weizmann*, 13 February 1931, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/bbaa033c46a9aa8b8525712c0070b943?OpenDocument> (accessed 2 January 2012); “Britain to Modify Palestine Policy,” *New York Times*, 6 February 1931, 11; “Arab Heads Threaten to Quit in Palestine,” *New York Times*, 17 February 1931, 10; “Wise Scores Britain in Zionist Congress,” *New York Times*, 4 July 1931, 9; *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Vol 1, Series B, August 1898-July 1931*, Barnet Litvinoff, ed (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books and Rutgers University, 1983), 613-641; Ruedy, “Dynamics of Land Alienation,” in Abu-Lughod, *Transformation of Palestine*, 132.

The Zionists faced some divisions in the wake of the controversy over the Passfield White Paper and the MacDonald letter. While Zionist leaders emphasized the unity of Jews regarding Palestine, the movement faced uncertainty at the first Zionist Congress after the 1929 rebellion given the somewhat questionable British policy and clear Arab opposition. In an article in the *Times*, William Zuckerman articulated some of the challenges confronting the Zionist movement. The promised limits on Jewish immigration and land purchases certainly posed a threat to the development of a Jewish majority on wholly Jewish land, preconditions for a Jewish state. Despite the Zionist conflict with the British, the Zionist leadership recognized that British military power was still necessary if the Zionist movement were to be successful. And, as Zuckerman noted, the world-wide depression seriously threatened the transfer of funds from the West to Jewish colonization efforts in Palestine. Additionally, the Zionists faced a leadership crisis as a result of Weizmann’s resignation as president of the World Zionist Organization in the wake of the Passfield White Paper. Zuckerman offered that the extreme nationalists within the Zionist movement, whom he compared to the “ultra-nationalist[s]” in German, were challenging the alleged Weizmann program of accommodation with the Arabs and “peaceful economic constructive work in Palestine” by demanding a Jewish state on both sides of the Jordan. For Zuckerman, the growing concern was that “militant extremist political nationalism” was enveloping the Zionist movement.

Weizmann spoke at length at the Seventeenth World Zionist Congress in the summer of 1931 justifying his actions as leader of the World Zionist movement and celebrating the Jewish pioneers. Criticizing the British administration and government for failing to carry out the terms of the mandate, Weizmann both called for “parity” between the Arabs and Jews regardless of the demographics in Palestine and the continuation of the Zionist movement, including the settling of at least 50,000 Jewish families, the development of Jewish institutions, and further land purchases, which undermined his public pretense for accommodation with the Palestinian Arabs since the Arabs were in opposition to large-scale Jewish immigration and land purchases. Weizmann even stated that there was “no political reason why the Jewish National Home should not by now be twice, or even five times, its present size.” The Zionist leader

demanded that the British fulfill the terms of the Balfour Declaration and the mandate. Considering that the development of the Jewish National Home in Palestine was based on a Jewish majority (and the expulsion of the Arab population) and that the Zionists repeatedly opposed the development of self-government institutions based on democratic principles, Weizmann's proposal of parity was disingenuous. Although publicly pronouncing that no Zionist "implied any intention to drive the Arabs out of Palestine," Weizmann himself had privately proposed the transfer of Palestinian Arabs to Trans-Jordan in the wake of the 1929 rebellion. Perhaps Weizmann's proposal of parity makes more sense when it is understood that the Zionists were preparing to remove as much of the Arab population as possible and that Weizmann "assumed... that the national sentiments of the Palestinian Arabs would centre in Baghdad, Mecca and Damascus, and find their natural and complete satisfaction in the Arab kingdoms which resulted from the Peace Treaty settlement in the Near East," a myopic and disingenuous assessment given the report of the King-Crane commission emphasizing Palestinian aspiration and complete opposition to Zionism. (A few months later, Weizmann iterated that Palestine was not the national home of the Palestinian Arabs.) Weizmann self-righteously proclaimed that he consistently sought cooperation with "Arab and Moslem leaders" and that the Zionists "remained true" to the agreement with Faisal; consequently, Weizmann asserted that he was not to blame for the lack of success in improving relations with the Arabs. Despite the reality of Zionism as a form of settler colonialism dependent on British might, Weizmann concluded that the Zionists reject "anything savoring of domination by physical force" and "anything even remotely resembling the colonizing methods which were freely practiced during the last two centuries" as "intolerable" and in opposition to Jewish history.

Not all Zionist and non-Zionist Jews were satisfied with Weizmann. The Revisionists criticized any compromise with the British, and Jabotinsky, Ben-Gurion, and even some American Zionists, such as Stephen Wise, challenged Weizmann's leadership for his supposed failures in pursuing Zionist goals with the British. At the Congress in Basle, Jabotinsky, with support beyond the Revisionists, demanded a Jewish state with a Jewish majority in Palestine and Trans-Jordan as necessary conditions for the fulfillment of the Balfour Declaration. Although this was a goal of the Zionists at-large, Weizmann and other more diplomatic officials understood such a clear declaration of policy would exacerbate Arab opposition. Weizmann was privately pushing the "transfer" of Palestinian Arabs to Trans-Jordan and Iraq while publicly claiming that "I have no sympathy or understanding for the demand for a Jewish majority....The world will construe this demand only in one sense, that we want to acquire a majority in order to drive out the Arabs. Why should we raise a demand which can only make a provocative impression?" Wise, in an intemperate speech, pilloried the British government for failing to facilitate the establishment of the Jewish national home and absurdly argued that the British privileged the Arabs in Palestine.

See, for example, "New Zionist Policy Forecast at Basle," *New York Times*, 1 July 1931, 9; "Weizmann Defends Policy in Farewell," *New York Times*, 2 July 1931, 10; "Zionist Congress Halted by Uproar," *New York Times*, 3 July 1931, 11; "Weizmann Sounds Warning to Britain," *New York Times*, 8 July 1931, 10; "Weizmann Rebuked on M'Donald's Note," *New York Times*, 14 July 1931, 9; Bustami, "American Foreign Policy," 314-318; *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Vol 1, Series B, August 1898-July 1931*, Barnet Litvinoff, ed (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books and Rutgers University, 1983), 613-642; Chaim Simons, *A Historical Survey of Proposals to Transfer Arabs from Palestine, 1895-1947* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Publishing, 1988), 12, 38; Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement, 1929-1939*, 27ff; "Palestine Zionists Hail British Upset," *New York Times*, 31 August 1931, 8; "De Rothschild Seen as Head of Zionists," *New York Times*, 11 May 1931, 10; "Lipsky Forecasts Union of Zionists," *New York Times*, 14 June 1931, 20; "Zionism in Travail," *New York Times*, 28 June 1931, E1; "New Zionist Policy Forecast at Basle," *New York Times*, 1 July 1931, 9; "Weizmann Defends Policy in Farewell," *New York Times*, 2 July 1931, 10; "Wise Scores Britain in Zionist Congress," *New York Times*, 4 July 1931, 9; "Split Threatened in Zionist Congress," *New York Times*, 6 July 1931, 6; "Weizmann Upheld on First Test Vote," *New York Times*, 7 July 1931, 10; "Weizmann Sounds Warning to Britain," *New York Times*, 8 July 1931, 10; "Zionist Laborites Drop Dr. Weizmann," *New York Times*, 9 July 1931, 9; "British Denies Pleas of Zionists on Fund," *New York Times*, 10 July 1931, 8; "Weizmann Is Heard by Zionist Leaders," *New York Times*, 12 July 1931, 9; "Revisionists Riot in Zionist Parley," *New York Times*, 13 July 1931, 6; "Schulman Sees End of Zionism at Hand," *New York Times*, 30 August 1931, 17; "Jewish Woes Here Cited by Weizmann," *New York Times*, 29 November 1931, E60; "Zionist Congress Opens Tomorrow," *New York Times*, 20 August 1933, N1; "Zionists Re-Elect Sokolow as Head," *New York Times*, 5 September

1933, 18; "Zionist Leaders Sign Peace Pact," *New York Times*, 28 October 1934, 8; "Rothenberg Assails Zionist Factionalism," *New York Times*, 24 June 1935, 4; "Zionist Leaders Plead for Unity," *New York Times*, 2 July 1935, 17.

CONCLUSION

We surely cannot deny to any nation that right whereon our own government is founded, that everyone may govern itself according to whatever form it pleases and change those forms at its own will.

Thomas Jefferson, 1793¹

At a dinner at the Hotel Astor in New York in early March 1931 that served as both a fundraiser for the upbuilding of Palestine and a farewell dinner for Albert Einstein, who had spent three months in the United States working with American scientists, the renowned physicist applauded the recent MacDonald statement to Weizmann as recognition of the Zionists' "noble goal" undertaken in Palestine on behalf of the "entire Jewish people" and urged Jews and Arabs to cooperate. Einstein's fame, reputation, internationalism, and political ideology made him an excellent spokesperson for the Zionist cause and Zionists certainly endeavored to capitalize on the great physicists' popularity and esteem. In London six weeks later at a Zionist dinner paying tribute to David Lloyd George and raising funds for the establishment of a Jewish colony in Palestine in his honor, another spokesperson for Zionism, the former Prime Minister himself, reiterated the Zionist themes that the Jewish people had a "historic right" to the Holy Land and that "Christians and Arabs, under the mandate" would "only benefit" from Zionist colonization. Weizmann, one of the "outstanding figures of Zionism" in attendance, confirmed George's observation, declaring, in the words of the *New York Times*, that "there was room in Palestine for the legitimate aspirations of the Arabs as well as those of the Jews." Weizmann was suggesting that the nationalist demands of the Palestinian Arabs were unfounded while the

¹ Betty Miller Unterberger, "The United States and National Self-Determination: A Wilsonian Perspective," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* Vol 26, No 4 (Fall 1996), 927.

claims of the Zionists for a Jewish state in Palestine were quite legitimate, based as they were on the Jews “historic rights” to Palestine and the mandate of the civilized world.²

Such themes were fundamental to Zionist arguments justifying Jewish colonization in Palestine and demanding that the British and the “civilized” international community fulfill the obligations of the Balfour Declaration and the mandate according to the satisfaction of the Zionists. Felix Frankfurter, the future Supreme Court justice, emphasized in an article in the April 1931 edition of *Foreign Affairs* that Jewish colonization of Palestine brought Western civilization, sanitation, living standards, and other benefits to the Arab masses, which, Frankfurter suggested, supported Zionism. Frankfurter patiently explained that Jewish colonization in Palestine transformed a barren, forgotten territory into a land of milk and money and brought numerous benefits to the backward and destitute Arab masses. Frankfurter began his exposition with Mark Twain’s description of Palestine found in his travel book *The Innocents Abroad*. While Twain and many Americans emphasized the Biblical history of the Holy Land, there was a concomitant tendency to lament that the land and its people had remained stagnant or even regressed since Biblical times. Twain’s Holy Land was barren and devoid of people save for “fantastic Bedouins of the desert.” Six decades later, however, British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, speaking before the House of Commons, praised Jewish colonizers for

² “Einstein Departs, Praising America,” *New York Times*, 5 March 1931, 8; “Neuman Lauds Zionism’s Benefits,” *New York Times*, 6 March 1931, 27; “Says Arabs Benefit by Zionist Success,” *New York Times*, 12 April 1931, N1. Zionist leaders and many Western commentators continued to iterate the theme that Jewish pioneers were developing and civilizing Palestine and that conditions in Palestine were improving in the early 1930s. As anti-Semitism increased, Zionist leaders emphasized Palestine as the only solution to the Jewish problem. See, for example, “Dr. Sokolow Honored by Jersey Zionists,” *New York Times*, 2 May 1932, 18; “Zionism Reported Gaining Strength,” *New York Times*, 4 July 1932, 24; “Modern Jerusalem Takes on the Airs of a Capital City,” *New York Times*, 12 March 1933, XX10; “Dr. Weizmann Sees Zionism Advancing,” *New York Times*, 2 July 1933, XX2

Some commentators even asserted that the Jewish people had a “divine right” to Palestine. See, for example, the comments of Christabel Pankhurst in “Zionist Faith Urged by Miss Pankhurst,” *New York Times*, 20 April 1931, 17.

Perhaps American Zionists overestimated Einstein’s enthusiasm for Zionism and a Jewish state, given Einstein’s criticism of extreme nationalism, but there is no doubt that Einstein’s supposed allegiance to Zionism was emphasized in Zionist propaganda. See, for example, “Einstein Is Hailed as Pride of Jewry,” *New York Times*, 9 March 1931, 7.

transforming a wasteland into a veritable Garden of Eden. Frankfurter himself determined that Jewish pioneers “have poured treasure into despoiled and neglected soil,” “drained pestilential swamps,” and “reclaimed the land,” all to the “great benefit” of the “Arab masses.” A Dr. Elwood Mead, head of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation from 1924 to 1936, also reiterated that Western Jews were reclaiming a desolate land from a backward people:

The Jewish colonies and the Jewish settlements represented the twentieth century. They had comfortable homes, good schools, they used modern tools and many of them grew crops which represented an acre value of ten times what was possible under the methods of the fellaheen. Surrounding these cases, which represented sanitation, comfort and progress, were the Arabic farms, which with their mud huts with dirt floors and primitive methods of cultivation and harvesting were a counterpart of the life of two thousand years ago. There had been no progress. On the contrary, the life they lived for centuries before the English Mandate...gave no hope of change for the better if development depended upon the initiative and expenditure of the Arabs....These achievements of the Jewish colonists deserve the grateful recognition of the world. They have been wrought under hard and discouraging conditions. Instead of being an injury to the Arab, in many ways he has been an immense gainer....In a hundred ways Jewish settlement has brought modern civilization into all parts of Palestine, transformed poverty-stricken areas into places of opulent vegetation, and multiplied manifold the wealth and opportunities of the country.

For Frankfurter, Americans were allegedly unaware of the Jewish reclamation of Palestine because the press focused on conflict and the agitation of “religious fanaticism.” The real story, however, was that Arabs and Jews were closely working together to rebuild and redevelop Palestine. Consequently, Frankfurter questioned why some Westerners romanticized the degraded state of the Arab peasant and opposed Jewish colonization. The supposed misrepresentation of the situation in Palestine, the questionable motives and policies of the British administration in Palestine, and the all-too-real agitation of religious fanaticism threatened “the elevation of lowly Arabs,” the homeland for “the Wandering Jew,” and “the peace of the world.”³

³ Felix Frankfurter, “The Palestine Situation Restated,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 9, No 3 (April 1931), 409-434.

While acknowledging that the historical connection of the Jewish people to Palestine was dubious justification for a contemporary legal right to develop the Jewish national home in the Holy Land, Frankfurter contended that the goals of the Zionist movement were congruent with the Allied commitment to the self-determination of small nations. Claiming that British strategic interests and enthusiasm for the Old Testament were the primary factors behind Great Britain's support for Zionism, Frankfurter argued that Great Britain "publicly, not secretly," formulated the Balfour Declaration "with the consent of the Allied Powers" and the United States. Frankfurter ignored the role of the Zionists in the creation of the Balfour Declaration and overlooked that the Western powers were dividing the Near East spoils without considering the wishes of the indigenous inhabitants of the region.⁴ Interestingly, Frankfurter acknowledged that "the presence of an existing Arab population...made the establishment of a Jewish national home more difficult than if Palestine had been wholly empty" and stated that the "Arab claim to the small and unique territory of Palestine rest[ed] apparently on" Sir Henry McMahon's correspondence with the Sharif of Mecca. Ignoring that Arab rights to Palestine were based on possession, Frankfurter simply noted that the British determined that the British pledge to Hussein did not include Palestine and that Palestine was "not and never has been a distinctively

Reinforcing the theme that Jewish colonization benefited the Arabs, Frankfurter contended that "if the Jewish homeland [could not] be built without making the fellaheen's lot worse rather than better, it ought not to be built." Both Frankfurter and Mead even concluded that the Arab peasants would oppose any British policy that limited Jewish colonization in Palestine.

He even argued that the Zionist commitment to Jewish labor helped raise the living standards for Arab workers and was justified because European Jews and Palestinian Arabs had two different standards of living. Frankfurter ignored that Zionists understood an exclusivist Jewish labor and Jewish land policies as means to force the Arabs to leave Palestine to seek employment. Although emphasizing the gains for Arabs as a result of Jewish colonization and dismissing claims that Arabs were being expropriated, Frankfurter proposed that Arabs could easily be transferred to Transjordan.

⁴ Ibid. Frankfurter asserted that "the only opposition within the British Government" to Zionism came from Montagu, who represented "rich and powerful Jews," who opposed the movement because it represented "the common people." In criticizing the Passfield White Paper, Frankfurter observed that "an important State paper affecting the destinies of people should never have been drawn up *in camera*, without consultation with the interests most affected," an observation that applies to the Balfour Declaration and all the other British and Zionist policies that ignored the wishes of the indigenous Arab population.

Arab country.” While pretending that the Jewish people did not want a Jewish state, Frankfurter ambiguously observed that one could not predict how the future citizens of Palestine would organize themselves. As for the mandate, Frankfurter the lawyer and judge insisted that international law required the British to facilitate the establishment of the Jewish national home in Palestine and that the safeguard clauses did not limit the “positive, creative obligation” of the favor clause. While privileging the British responsibility to Zionism, Frankfurter concluded that “securing the establishment of a Jewish National Home and safeguarding the rights of the non-Jewish communities” were “reconcilable” and “complementary” obligations, a determination congruent with British rhetoric until the publication of the Peel Commission Report in 1937, which recommended the partition of Palestine.⁵

Another American published a work on Palestine in the wake of the 1929 revolt that illuminates how many Americans understood Zionism and Palestine. After returning from a trip to Palestine in the winter of 1929, Rev. Dr. John Haynes Holmes declared that “From the standpoint of all hopes of human kind I seriously think that Zionism is the greatest thing the world has seen since the early settlement of America, and incomparably the greatest thing in the world today.”⁶ During the following summer and fall, he wrote *Palestine To-day and Tomorrow: A Gentile’s Survey of Zionism*, which he finished in the wake of the August 1929 Arab uprising. This work is notable for Holmes’ characterization of Palestine, Zionism, and the Arab population, which reiterated common themes familiar to an American audience, his recognition of the grievances of the Arab population, and his solution to the conflict in Palestine. *Palestine*

⁵ Ibid. Churchill, in explaining why the obligation in the favor clause trumps those in the Arab safeguard clause of the Balfour Declaration, observed that the “the Jews throughout the world” aided the British during WWI, while the “Palestinian Arabs...were the conscript soldiers of our Turkish enemy.” Such a statement oversimplifies the reality. Arabs, of course, fought on the side of the Allies during the war, and German and Austrian Jews fought for their respective countries as well.

⁶ “Success of Zionism a Matter of Time,” *New York Times*, 17 March 1929, N2.

To-day and To-morrow clearly illustrates how many white Americans understood Zionism as a civilizing mission, how religious beliefs influenced the American perception of Zionism, and how Americans identified with the Zionist movement and Jewish pioneers as reflecting American values and the (mythologized) American historical experience.

While he visited Palestine sixty years after Mark Twain wrote about his tour of the Holy Land, Holmes' description of the land and people differed remarkably little from his more famous predecessor and even included Twain's skepticism of some of the religious superstition evident among Christians at the many holy places throughout Palestine. Seeing the land primarily through a Biblical lens, Holmes described for his readers a land and a population that had hardly changed in two thousand years. If anything the land and the indigenous population had degenerated over the centuries. For Holmes, the land was essentially barren and unpopulated save for the Jewish colonies, settlements, and towns. The Arabs lived in "rude encampments, with their long, black, goatskin tents, and huddling groups of dirty women and children." He continued:

These primitive people wander the Palestinian countryside to-day just as they did in the days of Abraham, pasturing their flocks, sometimes feebly tilling the soil, always moving on when the grass is cropped or the tillage done. The people...represented the lowest state of human culture that I had ever seen. The tents...were crammed with dirty straw, and not infrequently occupied by goats and sheep. Before them stood the women, clad in long, black robes and headdresses, with faces partly veiled, the cheeks and brows painted in rude colors and hung with strings of beads and coins, amulets against the Evil One. The children, incredibly dirty and wretchedly clad, were at first timid. The sight of a few coins, however, cured them of their fears, and soon they were crowding about us more intimately than was altogether pleasant. Débris and filth were all over the place; animals were wandering everywhere; the smoke of smoldering fires poisoned the air. Yet the women smiled in welcome, even the dogs became friendly, and the donkeys were at our disposal for a beggarly price.⁷

⁷ Quoted material from John Haynes Holmes, *Palestine To-day and To-morrow: A Gentile's Survey of Zionism* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929), 47-48.

While the unchanging Arabs were living on the land in the same primitive fashion as their Biblical ancestors, the Jewish colonists were using modern methods to restore the land and more productively and efficiently harness and capitalize on the resources of Palestine. Fulfilling the civilizing mission, the Jewish pioneers, whom he repeatedly compared to the “early English settlers” to North America, were “transforming a wrecked and wasted country into a center of industry and happy life” through “the ploughshare and pruning hook.” For Holmes, Palestine was being “returned to its people, as Ireland has been returned to the Irish and Poland to the Poles.”⁸ Holmes importantly understood Zionism as an idealistic movement that would benefit the whole world and bridge the East and the West.

Even though he was trumpeting the ideals and successes of Zionism, Holmes cautioned that there were immediate difficulties hindering the Jewish colonization of Palestine. Holmes repeatedly characterized Palestine as barren and sparsely populated, but observed that the Zionists had control of very little of the land in Palestine after fifty years of colonization because the Arabs “feel” that the land belongs to them after their 1300-year occupation (despite the arguments of Jewish and Christian supporters of Zionism that Biblical history justified Jewish ownership of Palestine) and the Arab feudal landlords were asking exorbitant sums from Jewish buyers, which limited Jewish purchases of land and the Zionist “reconquest” of the soil.⁹

Holmes characterized the Arab population as representing three distinct stages in the hierarchy of

⁸Quoted material from *Ibid.*, 77, 79. For Holmes, the Jewish settlers were akin to American pioneers taking possession of an undeveloped wilderness, but at the same time, Palestine belonged to the Jewish people considering their history and they had the right of self-determination there just as the Irish and the Poles had the right of self-determination in their respective countries. The Jewish people had rights to Palestine because of Biblical history and because Jewish settlers were conquering the land and developing it properly.

⁹ While Holmes acknowledged the Palestinian Arabs as an obstacle to Jewish colonization, he wrote that American settlers, on the other hand, supposedly “found vast stretches of a continent waiting for their occupancy. Some of the forests and river banks were claimed in ownership by the Indians, but were easily and cheaply purchased by the new arrivals.” Holmes accepted the mythology that the land was virtually uninhabited and that the Native Americans did not have a legitimate claim to the land since they did not develop and utilize it in a European sense. The Native Americans only “claimed” ownership of “forests and river banks.” See *Ibid.*, 90.

civilization. The Bedouins, whom he suggested were the “most numerous” and primitive segment of the Arab population in Palestine, represented the lowest level of civilization for their archaic and pastoral lifestyle and clearly evoked comparisons with white American perceptions of the recently conquered Native Americans. The peasants who lived off the land represented “the agricultural stage of civilization,” although their farming techniques and culture were “as unchanged from the habits of ancient times as the shepherding upon the hills.” Members of the feudal and professional classes, who primarily lived in urban areas (and not necessarily in Palestine) represented the highest stage of civilization in the small country and were centuries ahead of the Bedouin and peasants. Overall, Holmes characterized Arabs as poverty-stricken, illiterate, dirty, and superstitious and Islam as “a savage religion.”¹⁰

Although clearly contrasting the Western, civilized Jewish settlers with the backward Arab population so as to provide further justification for the Jewish colonization of Palestine, Holmes cogently articulated that Arab nationalism, the failure of the victorious powers to fulfill their pledges for self-determination, the opposition of the British administration and the Zionists to self-government in Palestine so long as the Arabs constituted a majority, and fears of dispossession by a more civilized people were underlying Palestinian Arab resistance to Zionism and the mandate. For Holmes, however, these Arab fears were mostly irrational, and he blamed the feudal class, which he argued recognized that the Jewish settlers would raise the political consciousness and economic conditions of the Arab peasants, for exploiting these irrational fears to encourage the “ignorant, superstitious, fanatical...Arab hordes” to violently resist Zionism. Interestingly, Holmes did admit that if the Zionists opposed self-government under an Arab majority, then the Arabs had every right to oppose self-government under a Jewish majority. Indeed Holmes grudgingly acknowledged the logic of the argument that the Arabs were resisting

¹⁰ Ibid., 106ff.

colonialism and fighting for liberty and observed that “there is no answer to this [argument], at least apart from the special interests of the Zionist Movement,” implying that the supposedly exceptionalist nature of the movement justified the denial of self-determination for the Palestinian Arabs.¹¹

Holmes adopted the binationalist position, warned against Jewish nationalism and argued that the only solution was cooperation between the Zionists and the Palestinian Arabs. Ignoring that Zionism was premised on creating a Jewish state and the exclusivist nature of Jewish colonization in Palestine, Holmes concluded that the Arab fears were unwarranted and unfounded and iterated that Jewish immigration and settlement would benefit the Arab population through economic and political development. In fact, Holmes suggested that the Zionists were “deliberately undertaking to lift the Arabs out of the depths of degradation in which they have languished for centuries” and that the Arabs and Jews would come to understand that they had common grievances against British imperial rule, ignoring that the Zionists were dependent upon an outside imperial power because Zionism did mean, as Herzl envisioned, the expropriation and removal of the Arabs in Palestine.¹²

Zionists throughout this early period emphasized similarities between the early American pioneers and the Jewish colonists in Palestine when explaining the Zionist project to an American audience that celebrated the creation myths that sanitized the American past and celebrated the American mission to the world. Holmes reiterated this theme throughout

¹¹ Ibid., 116, 129. This would become an important argument during the later debates over partition. If it were wrong for a Jewish minority to live in a state with an Arab majority, then how could the British, the Zionists, and the UN argue that a significant Arab population should live in a Jewish state which had a very small Jewish majority through machinations that included the exclusion of Jaffa from the Jewish state (although it was entirely surrounded by the proposed Jewish state). See, for example, Walid Khalidi, “Revisiting the UNGA Partition Resolution,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 27, No 1 (Autumn 1997), 5-21.

¹² Holmes, *Palestine To-day and To-morrow*, 135-136. Even though the British were responsible for improving health, education, and infrastructure in Palestine, Holmes argued that the Zionists considered the British administration as anti-Semitic and in opposition to Zionism while the Arabs opposed the British for pursuing a Zionist policy and preventing the self-determination of the Arab population in Palestine.

Palestine To-day and To-morrow, suggesting that the early American settlers and the Zionists were exceptionalist peoples charged with spreading civilization “over the world’s waste spaces” and utilizing resources properly of essentially “virgin territory” sparsely populated by backward savages. Overlooking the holocaust of Native Americans (as the unfortunate, but inevitable consequence of progress) and the clear aims and ideology of Zionism (while acknowledging that the Zionists needed the land that the Arabs occupied), Holmes proposed that the Zionists would emancipate, civilize and uplift the indigenous Arabs (not exterminate or remove them) and transform a barren wasteland through the implementation of Western technology:

Where yesterday were barren hillsides and fetid marshes are to-day the homesteads and farmlands of more than one hundred Jewish colonies, old and new. Where for generations the Arab farmer scratched the surface of a rough and stony soil with the wooden plow of his remotest ancestor, the Jewish peasant to-day drives deep the steel blade wrought in the foundries of Britain and America. What for centuries furnished scant pasturage to the sheep and goats of the *Fellaheen*, now feeds fat the sleek cattle of the Jewish herdsman. Orange groves cover with fragrance and beauty what was formerly the waste and desolate sand dunes of the Mediterranean shore. Wheat and barley yield their abundant harvest in lowlands drained of those stagnant pools which smote even the wandering horseman with disease and death. New-planted forests dot a land which was long since stripped of trees; factories and power plants break the ancient silences with the modern clash of the machine; towns with schools and libraries and cultured citizens cover a country given over to the mud hut of the illiterate villager or the goatskin tent of the primitive nomad. From Russia, Roumania, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Germany, Britain, America, come the healthy, hearty, idealistic pioneers of Jewry who have left all to settle this lost land and restore it, a paradise of plenty, as Israel’s home. The world has seen nothing like this since English pioneers crossed the ocean westward in the early seventeenth century, and dotted the Atlantic seaboard with their settlements.¹³

With their adoption and personification of ostensible American values, these Jewish pioneers, who loved their children and pursued gender equality (in direct contrast to the Arabs), utilized Western technology to tame and develop the wilderness “in the midst of daily peril from the savage aggression of hostile native tribes,” valued education, culture, and sanitation, and

¹³ Ibid., 174-175

embodied Judeo-Christian civilization, reminded Americans of how they perceived themselves, their history, and their role in the world.

While characterizing the Arabs as backward savages who did not utilize the land properly, noting that the Zionists created institutions such as the Jewish National Fund to purchase land that would be “held in the name of the Jewish people” in perpetuity, intimating that the Zionist ideology meant Jewish labor on Jewish land, acknowledging the socialist and communal values of many Jewish settlements, and emphasizing that the settlers resurrected the Hebrew language, Holmes insisted that the Zionist ideology meant economic, political, and social cooperation between Arabs and Jews and suggested that the extremist and moderate Zionists who predicted a Jewish state and Jewish dominance over the Arabs were only precipitating civil war and betraying the idealism of Zionism. Echoing the sentiments of Ahad Ha’am and Judah Magnes, Holmes maintained that Zionism offered the hope of “intellectual and spiritual enlightenment” for the world and consequently needed to transcend the prevailing dominance of nationalism, colonialism, militarism, and state power in international affairs. Because the Jewish immigrants to Palestine represented both the East and the West, Holmes iterated the common theme that the Zionist presence in Palestine would precipitate cooperation and reconciliation between the Orient and Occident.

The themes prevalent in Holmes’ *Palestine To-day and To-morrow* were powerful factors in facilitating white America’s identification with the Zionist movement during the first five decades of Jewish colonization in Palestine. Adopting the prevailing ideologies on race and nationalism, Zionists presented their movement as a civilizing mission congruent with Western imperialism and colonialism and with the white American colonization and settlement of what became the United States. White Americans identified with Jewish settlers, who represented

Western civilization, Judeo-Christian values, and American principles. American nativism, anti-Semitism, and Christian fundamentalism also contributed to early American support for Zionism. Many established Jewish Americans promoted Zionism and Jewish colonization in Palestine as an alternative for many Eastern European Jews who would colonize Palestine instead of migrating to the United States and possibly exacerbate anti-Semitism. In contrast, pro-Arab voices insisted that the Palestinian Arab plea for self-determination and democracy was more congruent with Wilsonian principles and that the Zionists and British represented Old World imperialism and colonialism. Overall, Zionists propagated a narrative that portrayed their movement as congruent with American values and interests, and many Americans, familiar with negative perceptions of Arabs and Islam, essentially dismissed the Arab position.

This dissertation explores the historical roots of American support for the Zionist project. U.S. diplomatic, military, and economic power has played an instrumental role in the continued Israeli occupation and colonization of Palestinian territory and the denial of Palestinian self-determination and national rights. The roots of American support precede the Judeocide, the United Nations partition of Palestine, and the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. The United States identified with the Zionist movement during the first half century of Jewish colonization in Palestine and essentially ignored and dismissed the arguments of representatives of the Palestinian Arabs stressing the principles of American democracy and self-determination in presenting the Palestinian Arab case to the United States and international forums during and after World War I because of prevalent ideas regarding race, religion, nations, civilizing mission and because when white Americans looked at Zionist pioneers they saw a reflection of themselves and their history. Zionists presented their movement as congruent with American history and characterized Jewish pioneers and the Jewish colonization of Palestine in such a way

so as to remind white Americans of how they understood themselves and their history of settlement, conquest, and expansion. Jewish and American pioneers understood themselves as chosen people, central actors in a divine mission to serve as shining beacons of freedom, democracy, liberty, progress, development, and civilization. Their mandate was to colonize and settle a wilderness sparsely inhabited by nonhuman savages who were simply obstacles to civilization and development (despite the best civilizing efforts of the pioneers). Zionists adopted a modern version of the American frontier mythology that emphasized physical, spiritual, cultural, and national regeneration through violent conquest and the replacement of archaic, uncivilized, and backward peoples with a civilized and technologically advanced nation. American and Zionist pioneers proffered arguments that the indigenous population did not use the land and resources properly as justification for expropriation, removal, and even ethnic cleansing and genocide. In fact, apologists for both the Zionist and American colonization and conquest have produced scholarship drastically underestimating the native populations (the empty land theory) and blaming the victims for genocide and removal to justify their conquests and absolve themselves of crimes. Aside from characterizing their movement as analogous to the white American experience, Zionists capitalized on the American understanding of Palestine as a territory properly belonging to the Christian West and not the Islamic East—the Arabs, who were usually all depicted as Muslims, were illegitimately in possession of the Holy Land. The British conquest of Palestine was even praised in the United States as a crusade. During the mandate era, Zionists appealed to the “rule of law” and argued that the international community enshrined the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate for Palestine in international law, legitimizing Zionism and delegitimizing Arab opposition. Instead of understanding Western colonialism as the problem, most Western commentators accepted the Zionist narrative that the

barbarian Arabs, like the Native Americans, opposed progress, development, civilization, and international law. Although anti-Semitism and nativism factored into American support for Zionism during this period, white Americans identified with Zionism and Jewish pioneers as mirroring the American experience and representing American values and serving American interests, while the depictions of Palestinian Arabs as analogous to Native Americans only exacerbated the negative and racist attitude many white Americans exhibited toward Islam and the nonwhite other.

It is important to remember that contemporaneous with the early Jewish colonization of Palestine was the final conquest of Native Americans, which included violence (the massacre at Wounded Knee) and the pretense of civilizing mission (the Dawes Act, which used the ideology of civilization to expropriate Native American land), and white Americans utilized the prevailing Western ideas about civilization and race to justify the removal, expropriation, and extermination of the natives. Since the Palestinian Arabs posed a similar obstacle to Jewish colonization, Zionists would adopt a similar ideology and strategy in their conquest of Palestine. Native resistance to colonization was simply evidence of savagery and backwardness and grounds for violent conquest. Although white Americans and Jewish pioneers often maintained that they were undertaking civilizing missions, the process of civilization was simply a means for the violent expropriation of the indigenous populations as both Jewish and American pioneers argued that the introduction of civilization (Western gender norms, property norms, technology, and agricultural practices) would ensure that the natives would need less land. Equating Palestinian Arabs with Native Americans prodded white Americans to understand the Arabs as backward, inhuman obstacles to civilization and their resistance as irrational and illegitimate. The understanding that the Jewish settlers were analogous to American pilgrims and pioneers

and the Palestinian Arabs were akin to the savage Indians contributed to the white American identification with the Zionist project. As Richard Drinnon and others have documented, white Americans described the Native Americans as vermin and beasts (“nits make lice”) and American military forces transplanted that terminology to other nonwhite peoples who were victims of U.S. aggression (in the Philippines and Vietnam for example). Jewish settlers and Jewish Israelis have referred to Palestinian Arabs using similar terminology, illustrating the dehumanization of ‘the Other.’¹⁴ Overall, the Zionist narrative was predominate in the discourse in the United States during the first half century of the movement’s existence and contributed to an American identification with the Jewish colonization project in Palestine. While proponents presented Zionism as a civilizing mission that would benefit the East and, in fact, portrayed the movement as part of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century colonization of the world’s “waste spaces” (congruent with American continental expansion and imperialism in Latin America and the Philippines), most Zionists clearly understood that the movement’s goal was to establish a Jewish state.

¹⁴Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Meta-Physics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997). As discussed in Part I, Mark Twain and Chaim Chisson characterized the Palestinian Arabs as less than human. Golda Meir called Palestinians “two-legged vermin” while Menachem Begin referred to them as “roaches in a bottle.” Following the 1967 war, an Israeli diplomat, David Hacohen, told British Conservative Robin Maxwell-Hyslop that “[the Palestinians] are not human beings, they are not people, they are Arabs.” Others associated with the right-wing and settler movements within Israel have recently compared Palestinian Arabs to pests. Rabbi Ovadia Yosef (a member of an ultra-Orthodox party) stated that Palestinian Arabs were “reproducing like insects” and “swarming like ants.” Rehavam Ze-ev (a right-wing member of the Sharon government who strongly demanded the “transfer” of Palestinian Arabs from Israel and the Occupied Territories and who was assassinated by members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in October 2001) stated that Israel should dispose of the Palestinians “the same way you get rid of lice.” Nissim Daham (a member of the Sharon government) said that those praying at the al-Aqsa mosque were “foxes who [have] moved up a level, and are now snakes and scorpions.”

William Cook, “A World-Wide Intifada? Why?” *Counterpunch*, 7-9 December 2002, <http://www.counterpunch.org/2002/12/07/a-world-wide-intifada-why/>; Punyapriya Dasgupta, “Israel’s Foes as Beasts and Insects,” *Counterpunch*, 29-31 July 2006, <http://www.counterpunch.org/2006/07/29/israel-s-foes-as-beasts-and-insects/>; Nadim Rouhana and Nimer Sultany, “Redrawing the Boundaries of Citizenship: Israel’s New Hegemony,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 33, No 1 (Autumn 2003), 5-22; Chaim Chissin, *A Palestine Diary: Memoirs of a Bilu Pioneer, 1882-1887* (New York: Herzl Press, 1976); Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad or, The New Pilgrims’ Progress* (New York: The Modern Library, 2003)

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