

Origins of the Balfour Declaration Dr. Weizmann's Contribution

By

James A. Malcolm

London

1944

Based on the Facsimile-Edition
The British Museum
ISBN 0939484137

Retyped, commented and with an introduction
by
Johannes Freiland

Version 2023-11-23

Introduction

The *Balfour Declaration* of 2 November 1917 is probably the most momentous, shortest and strangest foreign policy treaty document ever. Nevertheless, it is hardly known to the public, its origins and its background even less so. This background is essential for understanding:

- The USA's entry into the First World War
- The Versailles Dictate and the downfall of the German Empire
- The collapse of Austro-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire
- The sudden and lasting uptick of hostility towards Jews from 1919 onwards in the German [Weimar Republic](#) and Third Reich, Turkey and the Arab world
- The rise of Zionism as a political world power, its occupation of Palestine and the later founding of Israel
- The now generally accepted definition of Judaism as a people and a race/ethnicity, rather than a religion
- The ongoing civil war between Palestinians (Arab Israelis) and Jewish Israelis
- The irresolvable Middle East conflict between Israel and its neighbouring states

These are issues that shape the fate of Germany and world politics right up to the present day.

One of the few primary sources on the prehistory of the *Balfour Declaration* is James A. Malcolm's personal account.

James A. Malcolm and the *Balfour Declaration*

[James Aratoon Malcolm](#) Bagratian (*1868 Bushehr/Persia †1952 London) was a British financial broker, arms dealer, journalist and diplomat of Persian-Armenian descent. His father Aratoon Malcolm was treasurer to the Shah of Persia. The family name is an anglicization of the Armenian “Malkom.” He became a British [citizen](#) in 1906. For his services to Britain, he was honored with the rank of Officer of the British Empire (OBE) in 1948.

Beginning in late autumn 1916, Malcolm was involved as an initiator and negotiator in a secret agreement between the British War Cabinet and the World Zionist Organization, whereby the Zionists pledged to draw the hitherto neutral United States of America into World War I as an ally of Great Britain; in return, Great Britain pledged to secure for the Zionists access to Palestine as a Jewish homeland. The U.S. actually entered the war in April 1917, turning the Allies' fortunes in the war.

Having fulfilled their part of the bargain, the Zionists insisted on a written and binding declaration by Britain that it would now in turn secure Palestine for the Zionists. In November 1917, this assurance was finally put in writing – in veiled diplomatic language – and signed by Foreign Secretary Lord Balfour¹ to become the *Balfour Declaration* and is one of the



¹ [Arthur James Balfour](#), 1. Earl of Balfour (*1848 †1930), British Prime Minister 1902-05, Leader of the Conservative Opposition until 1911, First Lord of the Admiralty 1915-16 as Churchill's successor, Foreign Secretary from 1917, Freemason of the highest degree, Christian Zionist.

founding documents of the State of Israel (see Appendix). The *Balfour Declaration* first became known to the international public in 1919 during the negotiations of the victorious powers in Paris and Versailles, when the Jewish-Zionist delegation thus laid claim to Palestine as a spoil of war. And the Germans now knew to whom they owed their catastrophic situation.

The present document comes from Malcolm himself, who wrote down the course of events from his memory in London in 1944. He first explains why he, as a non-Jew, was so committed to the cause of Zionism, and then describes step by step the course of the negotiations, the implementation of the agreement and the emergence of the *Balfour Declaration*, with special appreciation of the contribution of Dr. Chaim Weizmann², later the first President of Israel.

Malcolm wrote his memoirs for British or Jewish readers who had lived the First World War and the postwar period consciously, and who were therefore familiar with the notables and events mentioned. All the important Anglo-Saxon political and Jewish leaders of the time were involved and are named, so this memoir reads like a Who's Who of wartime. To today's readers, however, most names will mean little. Therefore I provide further details in footnotes and [square brackets].

Military Situation in 1916

A brief look at the military situation in autumn 1916, where Malcolm's report begins. At this time, the *Central Powers* (German Empire, Austro-Hungary and Ottoman Empire) had effectively won the war against the *Allies* (France, Great Britain and Commonwealth, Russian Empire). No enemy soldier had yet set foot on German soil. Although the British navy had undertaken a naval blockade of Germany since the beginning of the war, thereby weakening Germany's supplies, the German submarines had proved to be a highly effective countermeasure from February 1915 onwards³, partially breaking the British blockade and sinking many British supply convoys, which meant that England was gradually running out of ammunition and food, and England had also exhausted its credit lines with the major American banks and got into financial difficulties. On the Western Front in France, a military stalemate had emerged in a static trench war with enormous losses. On the Eastern Front, the Tsarist Empire began to crumble and Russian soldiers deserted. In the Levant⁴, the Allies had not been able to assert themselves; the British-financed Arab uprising against the Ottoman Empire was too weak.

This was the situation from which the Central Powers had repeatedly made peace offers to the Allies. As early as the beginning of October 1916, Germany offered the Allies⁵ through

² [Chaim Weizmann](#) (*1874 in Pinsk/Belarus, †1952 Israel) was an important chemist, studied in Darmstadt and Berlin and Freiburg, worked in Switzerland from 1897 and in England from 1903. Became a British citizen and explosives developer in 1910. Head of the Zionist delegation to Versailles in 1919, President of the World Zionist Organisation from 1921, first President of Israel from 1949

³ <https://www.history.com/news/u-boats-world-war-i-germany>

⁴ [Levant](#) means "Orient" and includes the area of today's Palestine/Israel/Gaza, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, parts of Iraq, parts of Egypt and parts of Turkey. The Levant was part of the Ottoman Empire from 1516 to 1918, i.e. for four centuries.

⁵ [Quelle](#): Brisbane Courier / New York Tribune 05.10.1916

diplomatic channels to withdraw the German troops and end the hostilities, with "Status Quo Ante Bellum", i.e. a return to the situation before the war. This offer was seriously considered in London^[FRE1], because the situation was bad for Great Britain, as Malcolm also confirmed.

On 12 December 1916, Reich Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg once again made the Allies a peace offer⁶, this time highly official. This could have ended the First World War. Now, however, the Allies rejected it outright. The lame and hypocritical official justifications can be found on [Wikipedia](#). Unofficially, however, Malcolm's report shows that from the end of October, Great Britain firmly believed that it would succeed in drawing the USA into the war shortly and that it would then be possible to win militarily!

This had previously failed due to resistance from American Jewry, which owned (and still owns) most of the major banks and mass media. A large proportion of American Jews had fled to America to escape the persecution of Jews in the Tsarist Empire, others had German roots, so both factions sympathised with Germany in its fight against Russia. The American President Wilson had himself acted as a peace broker in 1916, having just won re-election with the pacifist campaign slogan "He kept us out of war". How and why, with the help of the Zionists, the USA was nevertheless quickly drawn into the war is the subject of the report.

Statehood and Nationality of Palestine

One juicy detail of the agreement between Great Britain and the Zionists was that Palestine had not been part of the British sphere of influence until then, but was part of the Ottoman Empire (which was allied with the German Empire). So the Zionists were promised something which was not yet in British possession! What's more, Britain had already promised it to others, twice over!

4

Loosely based on Arthur Koestler: "One nation [Great Britain] solemnly promises a second nation [Zionist Jews] the land of a third nation [Palestine/Arabs], which at the time was still part of the empire of a fourth nation [Ottoman Empire/Turkey]."

In effect, Great Britain initially committed itself to breaking existing agreements (with France, Arabia and Russia) and to the military conquest and occupation of Palestine. The latter was only achieved with the direct and active support of the Zionists themselves: with the help of the Jewish spy network [NILI](#) in Palestine, with the help of the Jewish Volunteer Regiment of the British Army, founded in August 1917 and integrated into General Allenby's Palestine-Sinai campaign (the first three prime ministers of what would later become Israel served in this regiment), and with the help of an Armenian Volunteer Regiment, which Malcolm himself provided as the authorised representative of the Armenian government. Malcolm touches on all of this in his memoirs.

On 30 October 1918, this campaign was successfully concluded for the Allies in the [Armistice of Moudros](#), and the Ottoman Empire was defeated. It was not until 1920 that the British "[mandated territories](#)" of Palestine, Syria and Lebanon were established by the [League of Nations](#), which had been founded shortly before under pressure from the victorious powers.

⁶ Sources:

<https://www.theeuropean.de/alexander-graf/11657-vor-100-jahren-friedensangebot-im-dezember-1916>

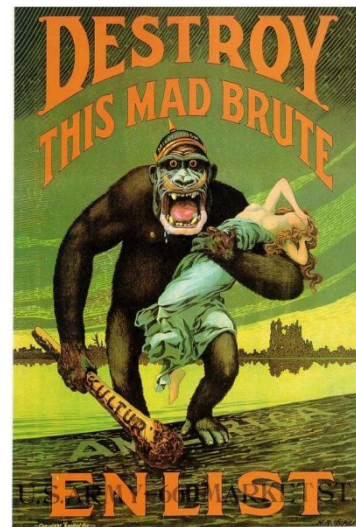
<https://www.welt.de/geschichte/article160151081/Als-das-Deutsche-Reich-der-Welt-den-Frieden-anbot.html>

The British administration of Palestine officially began in July 1921, and only then were the conditions formally created for Zionist mass immigration – which, however, prior to the Second World War, was not as massive as the Zionists had hoped.

The US-American Side

The complementary American view was provided in his writings and speeches by the New York Jew and businessman Benjamin H. Freedman⁷, at that time an insider and participant in American government circles around Woodrow Wilson, who describes ^[FRE1] how the agreement reached in London in October 1916 was implemented by the American Zionists.

As Samuel Landman⁸ noted ^[LAN1], after the announcement of the agreement to the American Zionists, “the shift in official and public opinion in favour of the Allies joining the war, as reflected in the American press, was surprisingly rapid.” With the help of the mass media (newspapers and radio stations) and financed by the banking houses, both of which were then as now heavily under Jewish influence, an unprecedented propaganda campaign was conducted in which Germans were dubbed and portrayed as bloodthirsty, unfeeling sub-humans (“Huns”) and apes with spiked caps. Within a few months, this turned the opinion of the American public from neutral or pro-German into anti-German, and finally so hysterically anti-German and enthusiastic about the war that Americans of German descent or sceptical about the war often became victims of lynch mobs⁹. In parallel, Jewish-American bankers ensured that unlimited loans were made available to Great Britain again, which eased the financial bottleneck but had to be repaid with interest, resulting in Great Britain being heavily indebted to American banks after the war.



At the same time, Zionist government advisors and lawyers succeeded, through personal blackmail ^[FRE2] and skilful influence, in changing President Wilson's mind from a superficial opponent of the war to a warmonger who was already looking for ways to actively intervene militarily as early as March 1917. Several sinkings of American ships and British passenger ships staged, provoked or deliberately accepted by the Allies provided this pretext¹⁰.

Freedman began his educational work in 1945 after renouncing Judaism and converting to Catholicism. He provides the details and names of the American side necessary to understand

⁷ [Benjamin Harrison Freedman](#) (*1890, †1984) was born in New York to Jewish parents. He was a successful businessman in New York City, an insider in the highest Jewish-Zionist circles, a member of the Wilson administration as an associate of Henry Morgenthau Senior, and personally acquainted with Bernard Baruch, Samuel Untermyer, Franklin Roosevelt, Joseph Kennedy and John F. Kennedy.

⁸ From 1916 Samuel Landman was secretary to Chaim Weizmann and Nahum Sokolow, later Secretary General of the World Zionist Organisation.

⁹ <https://www.history.com/news/anti-german-sentiment-wwi>

¹⁰ Since then, the staged sinking of ships has been repeatedly used as opening move by the USA, such as “Pearl Harbour” for the entry into the war in World War II and “Gulf of Tonkin” for the Vietnam War.

the overall picture and also shows the role of American Zionists in bringing about the Second World War. He was familiar with the memoirs of James Malcolm^[MAL] and Samuel Landmann^{[LAN1][LAN2]}.

I have also translated and commented on Freedman's well-known speech of 1961 in the Willard Hotel, Washington D.C.^[FRE1].

Origins of the Balfour Declaration

Dr. Weizmann's Contribution

by

James A. Malcolm

In order to give the history of the *Balfour Declaration* it would seem necessary to explain why the Jewish problem and Zionist aspirations for self-emancipation in Palestine were of interest to me and how it fell to my lot to meet Dr. Weizmann and to initiate the negotiations which culminated in the publication of that historical charter of Jewish national resurgence.

My family, which is of Armenian stock, has been settled in Persia since before Elizabethian days. For two centuries at least it has been engaged in shipping and commerce in Bushire¹¹, and was always closely identified with British interests in Persia and the Arabian littoral of the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. We acted for the British Government in various capacities in those parts. For instance, we were fiscal agents and during the Napoleonic wars we acted as treasurers to British Missions to the Shah of Persia. (My father and mother were married on board a British man-of-war by the British Admiral). Our Agents at Baghdad were the well-known and important David Sassoon¹² family, who had originally hailed from Sasoun in Armenia. On one occasion the Sassoon family had to flee the rapacity of the then semi-independent Pasha of Baghdad and had lain hidden in our home in Bushire for several weeks until arrangements could be made to put them (with their treasures) on board one of our "Dhows" at night and send them off to Bombay. For many decades the Jews in Southern Persia always looked to our family for protection and sometimes hundreds of them sought safety and sanctuary in the spacious courtyards of our houses in Bushire and Shiraz. We also sometimes acted as agents for Sir Moses Montefiore¹³, who sent us money for distribution amongst the indigent members of the Jewish community. This was done by our cashiers who were all Jews and who had full charge of all the cash resources of our firm. (There were no banks in those days.)

It was therefore natural that when I came to England as a boy for my education, in 1881, I was placed under the guardianship of an old friend, and agent of the family, Sir Albert (Abdalla) Sassoon¹⁴ in London, and cultivated Jewish friends, including Colonel Goldsmid¹⁵.

¹¹ [Bushire](#), British name for the Iranian harbour town of *Bandar-e Būshehr* in the Persian Gulf, was an important location for the *East India Company* from 1763 to 1948 and was temporarily a British naval base.

¹² [David Sassoon](#) (*1792 †1864) was treasurer of Baghdad 1817-1829 and became leader of the Jewish community in Bombay (Mumbai) after the Jews fled Baghdad (due to a corruption scandal) and emigrated there. He then became one of the most important merchants in British India.

¹³ Sir [Moses Montefiore](#) (*1784 Livorno/Italien; †1885 Ramsgate) was a British-Sephardic entrepreneur, senior civil servant, Freemason and pioneer of Zionism. He was the first British Jew to be elevated to the hereditary peerage. Baronet, Fellow of the Royal Society, Sheriff of London.

¹⁴ Sir [Albert Abdullah David Sassoon](#), 1. Baronet (*1818 Bagdad †1896 Brighton) called the "Indian Rothschild", head of the trading company *Davis Sassoon & Sons*, co-founder of the *Imperial Bank of Persia*

¹⁵ Albert Edward Williamson [Goldsmid](#) (*1846 †1904) was a British officer. Founder of the *Jewish Lads' Brigade*, a British Jewish youth organisation, and the *Order of Ancient Maccabeans*, an Anglo-Jewish society. Chairman of the *British Zionist movement*.

After leaving Oxford, while dabbling in Journalism, I met Mr. Edward Fitzgerald, who was then a roving correspondent of the “Daily News” on the Continent. He had met Herzl¹⁶ in Vienna and Constantinople and told me a good deal about him and his Zionist ideas, which naturally interested me very much. In London, I heard from Colonel Goldsmid and other notable Jews about projected Jewish settlements in Palestine, El Arish¹⁷, Argentine and Kenya. Of course, I had read Byron, George Eliot and Oliphant¹⁸ about the Jews. Later, during my business travels in Eastern Europe and in Russia, I saw something of the Jewish centres and I always remembered my father had told me that wherever they were, the Jews never failed each Passover to drink to “next year in the Land of Israel”¹⁹.

Early in 1915 I founded the *Russia Society* with the object of spreading knowledge of Russia among the British public as a means of improving relations between the two countries which were allied in war. The Speaker of the House of Commons, Mr. Lowther (now Lord Ullswater) was President and nearly all the members of the Cabinet, including Mr. Churchill, were Vice-Presidents. Amongst the earliest of the distinguished members were Dr. J. H. Hertz²⁰, the Chief Rabbi, and the late Mr. L. J. Greenberg²¹, Editor of the “Jewish Chronicle”. They told me they hoped that better understanding between England and Russia might lead to better treatment for the Jews in the latter country.

At the Beginning of 1916, with the sanction of the British and Russian Governments, I was appointed by His Holiness the Armenian Catholikos, as one of the five members of the Armenian National Delegation to take charge of the Armenian interests during the war and after. I was also the accredited official representative in London because the President, H. E. Boghos Nubar Pasha, and the remaining members were located in Paris.

In my official capacity I had frequent contacts with the Cabinet Office, the Foreign Office and the War Office, the French and other allied Embassies in London, and had also to be in touch personally during visits to Paris, with my colleagues there and with the leading French authorities. Among the matters I had to negotiate were the welfare of the Armenian refugees

¹⁶ Binyamin Ze'ev [Theodor Herzl](#) (*1860 in Pest/Austria, today Budapest/Hungary as *Herzl Tivadar*, †1904 Lower Austria) was the mastermind and main founder of Zionism, author of “The Jewish State” (Original German title “Der Judenstaat”). Lawyer in Vienna and Salzburg, journalist in Paris.

¹⁷ [El-Arish](#) was proposed by Theodor Herzl as a Zionist settlement in the northern Sinai, then a British protectorate. The plan, largely promoted by Colonel Goldsmid, failed. Al-‘Arīsh was occupied by Israel from 1967-1979 and is now the largest city on the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula.

¹⁸ [Laurence Oliphant](#) (*1829 Kapstadt †1888) was a British travel writer, diplomat, secret agent, Christian mystic and Christian Zionist. His plan for Jewish farming communities in the Holy Land, *The Land of Gilead*, attracted more attention than his novels. Lived in Haifa for several years.

¹⁹ The [saying](#) actually goes “L'Shana Haba'ah B'Yerushalayim“ literally “next year in Jerusalem”

²⁰ [Joseph Herman Hertz](#) (*1872 Slovakia †1946), emigrated to New York in 1894, was a theologian who held many rabbinical posts, including in Syracuse, Johannesburg and New York. The most important was *Chief Rabbi of the British Empire* (1913-1946)

²¹ [Leopold Jacob Greenberg](#) (*1861 †1931) was a British journalist and energetic propagandist for Zionism in England from 1899, when he was elected to the Propaganda Committee of the Zionist Organisation. The “Jewish Chronicle” was the leading Jewish journal in England. The Wiki entry contains further evidence and quotations for the dialogue between the War Cabinet and Zionists on the USA's entry into the war as a reward for securing Palestine.

from Turkey (in whom the United States took a generous and practical interest), and the disposition of the Armenian volunteers in Eastern Armenia who, under General Antranik, were (as recorded by Lord Cecil) operating on the left wing of the British Army in Northern Mesopotamia. (the Armenian volunteers from France and U. S. A., Canada and elsewhere were being trained in Cyprus, and eventually 11,000 of them fought under Allenby with distinction in Palestine.) These questions brought me into close relation with Sir Mark Sykes²², Under Secretary of the War Cabinet for the Near East, and with M. Gout, his opposite number at the Quai d'Orsay, and M. Georges Picot²³, Counsellor at the French Embassy in London.

During one of my visits to the War Cabinet Office in Whitehall Gardens in the late autumn of 1916, I found Sir Mark Sykes less buoyant than usual. As I had known his family of old and our relations were unrestrained, I enquired what was troubling him. He spoke of military deadlock in France, the growing menace of submarine warfare, the unsatisfactory situation which was developing in Russia and the general bleak outlook. He also told me that the much publicised Arab revolt in the desert, which was intended to deal a mortal blow to the Turks from within, was a dismal and costly failure.* The Cabinet was looking anxiously for United States intervention. I asked him what progress was being made in that direction. He shook his head glumly.

* Early in the War the Arabs and their British friends represented that they were in a position to render very great assistance in the Middle East. It was on the strength of these representations and pretensions that the promise contained in the Mac-Mahon letter²⁴ to King Hussein²⁵ was made. It was subsequently found that the Arabs were unable to “deliver the goods” and the so-called “Revolt in the Desert” was but a mirage. Their effort, at its maximum, never exceeded seven hundred tribesmen, but frequently less than 300, who careered about the desert some hundreds of miles behind the fighting line reporting for duty on “pay day”. For this they received a remuneration of £200,000 per month in actual gold, which was delivered to them at Akabah. This sum represented a remuneration for every one of the tribesmen of more than the pay of a British Field Marshal.

²² Sir Tatton Benvenuto [Mark Sykes](#), 6. Baronet (*1879 †1919) was a British writer, colonel, Conservative politician and diplomat. Served in the War Cabinet as Middle East adviser, was chief propagandist for the Arab world. Committed himself to Jewish claims in Palestine.

²³ [François Georges-Picot](#) (*1870 †1951) was a French diplomat and military man. Among other things, he was Consul General in Beirut, later French Ambassador in London, and signed the [Sykes-Picot Agreement](#) with the British Sir Mark Sykes during the First World War, in which the colonial areas of interest in the Middle East were defined after the expected defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War – without any consideration of ethnic and cultural aspects and, of course, without the participation of the peoples concerned.

²⁴ The [McMahon-Hussein correspondence](#) is a series of letters exchanged during the First World War. In them, the government of the United Kingdom agreed to recognise Arab independence in a large region (including Palestine!) after the war if the Sharif of Mecca would, in return, instigate an Arab uprising against the Ottoman Empire.

²⁵ [Hussein](#) ibn Ali (*1853 †1931) from 1908 to 1916 Emir of the Hejaz and Grand Sheikh of Mecca and from 1916 to 1924 King of the [Hejaz](#) (today in Saudi Arabia), in which Mecca and Medina are located. Last ruler of the *Hashimite* dynasty, which was replaced by the *Saud* dynasty.

Lawrence²⁶ himself made no secret of his profound disappointment with the Arab failure to carry out their engagements. That Hussein and Feyzal²⁷ were not in a position to give any effective help was afterwards made abundantly clear by the fact that Ibn Saud was easily able to drive Hussein out of his kingdom. Similar exaggerated Arab claims have, it may be noted, also been made regarding their help in the present War. These noisy claims, with nothing to back them up, remind me of an Eastern proverb (from the Talmud I believe), "An oyster shell in an empty barrel makes a loud noise".

"Precious little", he replied. He had thought of enlisting the substantial Jewish influence in the United States, but had been unable to do so. Reports from America revealed a very pro-German tendency among the wealthy American Jewish bankers and bond issuing houses, nearly all of German origin, and among Jewish journalists who took their cue from them. He was sorely disappointed and puzzled that two missions which had been sent from France and Italy had completely failed to have any effect. It appeared that the Tsarist persecution of the Jews, with the terrible record of pogroms at every Russian retreat, had made a deep impression. As the Germans had, on the contrary, shown in many army ordinances, especially in occupied Poland, a great understanding and sympathy for the Jews, the pro-German tendency of these Jews of German origin could not be deflected.

I enquired what special argument or consideration had the Allies put forward to win over American Jewry. Sir Mark replied that they had made use of the same argument as used elsewhere, viz. that we shall eventually win and it was better to be on the winning side. I informed him that there was a way to make American Jewry thoroughly pro-Ally, and make them conscious that only an Allied victory could be of permanent benefit to Jewry all over the world. I said to him, "You are going the wrong way about it. The well-to-do English Jews you meet and the Jewish clergy are not the real leaders of the Jewish people. You have overlooked what the call of nationality means. Do you know of the Zionist Movement?" Sir Mark admitted ignorance of this movement²⁸ and I told him something about it and concluded by saying, "You can win the sympathy of the Jews everywhere, in one way only, and that way is by offering to try and secure Palestine for them."

Sir Mark was taken aback and confessed that what I had told him was something quite new and most impressive. He would talk to me again about it. A day or two later he reverted to the subject and again said it was most interesting, but there were very great difficulties. I did not know at the time the exact nature of these difficulties (it was only later that I heard of the [Sykes-Picot Treaty](#) with France and Russia.***) I suggested that he should discuss it with Lord Milner²⁹, a member of the War Cabinet who was known to take a large and imaginative view

²⁶ Thomas Edward [Lawrence](#) (*1888 †1935) known as "Lawrence of Arabia", was a British officer, archaeologist, secret agent and writer. Lawrence was best known for his involvement in the British-led Arab uprising against the Ottoman Empire.

²⁷ Emir [Faisal](#) I. bin Al-Hussein bin Ali Al-Hashemi (*1883 †1933), third son of Hussein ibn Ali, was King of Syria (1920) and King of Iraq (1921-1933).

²⁸ A feint by Sykes, who had been in dialogue with Zionists since March 1916.

²⁹ Alfred [Milner](#), 1. Viscount Milner (*1854 Gießen †1925) was a British statesman of German aristocratic origin, colonial administrator, shaped British foreign policy from 1890, one of the most influential members of the War Cabinet. Freemason of the highest degree.

of the several European nationalist issues raised by the war. He promised to do so and kept his promise. He told me that Lord Milner was greatly interested to learn of the Jewish Nationalist movement, but could not see any possibilities of promising Palestine to the Jews. I replied that it seemed to me the only way to achieve the desired result, and mentioned that one of President³⁰ Wilson's most intimate friends, for whose humanitarian views he had the greatest respect, was Justice Brandeis^{31 32}, of the Supreme Court, who was a convinced Zionist. Sir Mark was much interested in this new aspect and said he would check up on the matter, but he still saw no possibility of the War Cabinet adopting my idea. I asked him why, and he replied, "We cannot act without our Allies and I am afraid they would never agree". I then suggested that if the object was to secure United States help, surely the Allies would agree. If he could obtain from the War Cabinet an assurance that help would be given towards securing Palestine for the Jews, it was certain that Jews in all neutral countries, especially the United States, would become pro-British and pro-Ally. He promised to put the question again to Lord Milner, with the additional arguments I had suggested.

**This secret Treaty, signed in May 1916, divided Turkish territories in the Near East into three zones of influence, one British, one French and one Russian. Palestine was to have been divided in a haphazard way between France and Britain under some vague form of international control to be defined later. The Jews were not mentioned at all and had clearly not been intended to have anything to do with the future Palestine.

About a week later he reported that Milner had informally discussed the matter with his colleagues, and they were favourably disposed to the idea. Of course they could not commit themselves, but advised that I should open negotiations with the Zionist leaders. I replied that this was futile as I could not go to them empty handed. I said I thought it would be sufficient if I were personally convinced of the sincerity of the Cabinet's intentions so that I could go to the Zionists and say, "If you help the Allies, you will have the support of the British in securing Palestine for the Jews". This appealed to Sir Mark as eminently reasonable but he saw grave difficulties. France would have to be persuaded to support the idea of Palestine for the Jews. Then there was the Vatican (Sir Mark himself was a Catholic) which would oppose any scheme which meant placing the Christian Holy Places under Jewish control. I replied

³⁰ Thomas [Woodrow Wilson](#) (*1856 †1924) was the 28th President of the USA from 1913. Under Wilson, the USA entered the First World War in April 1917, although he won re-election in 1916 on the promise to keep his country out of the war in Europe!

³¹ [Louis Dembitz Brandeis](#) (*1856 †1941) was the first Jew to be appointed to the Supreme Court by Woodrow Wilson on 4 June 1916, where he served until 1939. His parents came from the Jewish community in Prague. From 1914 until his appointment, Brandeis was chairman of the *Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs*, i.e. he was the highest-ranking Zionist in the USA. He pushed with all his might for the USA to enter the First and Second World Wars.

³² The Wilson-Brandeis connection came about in no small part through blackmail. Elsewhere, Malcolm said that President Wilson was "bound to Brandeis by ties of particular hardness," a cryptic allusion to the story that Wilson had been blackmailed for \$40,000 for some steamy love letters he had written to a colleague's wife when he was president of Princeton. He didn't have the money, and the go-between, Samuel Untermyer of the law firm Guggenheim, Untermyer & Marshall, said he would provide it if Wilson would nominate a candidate chosen by Untermyer for the next Supreme Court vacancy. Wilson agreed, Untermyer paid the hush money, and Brandeis was the nominee designated by Untermyer. [FRE2] [Source](#)

that these difficulties must be overcome if the Allies wanted the help of the United States. Palestine meant Jewish support which was becoming increasingly necessary. Sir Mark then raised the objection of the apparent apathy of many Jews to the idea of Palestine and the opposition of others. I replied, "That is because you have not met the other kind of Jews, who are remarkable types and intensely attached to the idea of Zion. There are tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of such Jews. The wealthy Jewish bankers of London are completely out of touch with them." Sir Mark undertook to report our conversation to the Cabinet. He thought Lord Milner and George Barnes³³ would understand. A day or two later, he informed me that the Cabinet had agreed to my suggestion and authorised me to open negotiations with the Zionists.

Remembering my conversations with Mr. L.J.Greenberg, the Editor of the "Jewish Chronicle", I wrote at once to him. I told him that from information in my possession I was sure the time had arrived when Jewry should cease "sitting on the fence" and come down definitely on the side of the Allies and use all their influence, especially in the U.S.A., to secure an Allied victory. The Jews wanted Palestine and now was a chance to get it. Such an opportunity would hardly recur and it was the duty of every Zionist to act quickly. I concluded by asking him if he could enable me to meet the leaders of the Zionist Movement. Greenberg replied in an enthusiastic letter, inviting me for a discussion.

After I had told him the position and of the favourable prospects, he offered to arrange a meeting between Dr. Weizmann and the other leaders of the movement, and myself. Greenberg asked me to meet him at Dr. Weizmann's house in Addison Road and introduced me to Dr. Weizmann, Mr. Sokolow³⁴ and some others whose names I do not remember (I am not sure if Dr. Tschlenow³⁵ was there, but I met him later). Dr. Weizmann had moved from Manchester to London a few months previously and was working on explosives for the Admiralty and Ministry of Munitions. As is well known, he had invented an important process for the manufacture of acetone. Dr. Weizmann referred to his talks with C.P.Scott, Editor of the "Manchester Guardian", Mr. Lloyd George³⁶ (then Minister of Munitions) and Balfour (then head of the Admiralty) and asked me what reasons I had for being convinced of success. I recounted the gist of my several conversations with Sir Mark Sykes and that I had the War Cabinet's authority for my overtures. Dr. Weizmann was most interested and asked his colleagues for their views. All of them, and most notably Mr. Sokolow, were sceptical and hesitant. But Dr. Weizmann turned to me again and asked if I was really personally convinced that the Government seriously intended to make a promise of Palestine in consideration of the help required from American Jewry, and if I would advise them to accept, and I replied, "Yes, most certainly." Whereupon Dr. Weizmann shook hands with me saying, "I accept your

³³ [George Nicoll Barnes](#) (*1859 †1940) was a British politician, trade unionist, leader of the Labour Party (1910-1911), Minister for Pensions in 1916, member of Lloyd George's War Cabinet from 1917.

³⁴ [Nachum ben Josef Samuel Sokolow](#) (1859 Wyszogród †1936 London) was a Hebrew journalist and writer, Secretary General of the Zionist Organisation in Cologne/Germany after Herzl's death in 1905, President of the World Zionist Organisation 1931-1935

³⁵ [Echiel Wolfowitsch Tschlenow](#) (*1864 Kremenschuk †1918 London) was a medical doctor in Moscow and one of the leaders of the Russian Zionists. He was the second chairman of the Action Committee and from 1911 to 1914 the actual leader of the *World Zionist Organisation* (whose headquarters were then in Berlin).

³⁶ [David Lloyd George](#), 1. Earl of Dwyfor (*1863 †1945) was a British politician, Welsh nationalist, Trade Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1916-1922 Prime Minister.

advice”, and asked when he could meet Sir Mark Sykes. I said if I could telephone to Sir Mark I might be able to fix it there and then. Accordingly, I rang him up, said I was speaking from Dr. Weizmann’s house and asked when I could bring him along. Sir Mark fixed the appointment for the very next day, which was a Sunday.

My impression of Dr. Weizmann at this first meeting was of a man careful and yet quick to grasp the possibilities of a situation, looking ahead to the end of the process and expecting many setbacks on the way. His tall figure, his whole bearing, his pale face and keen eyes and his natural geniality, made a great impression on me which has not faded after nearly thirty years. The other gentlemen also struck me as equally passionate and devoted workers for their cause.

Dr. Weizmann was unable, owing to war duties, to accompany me to Buckingham Gate on the next day to meet Sir Mark Sykes, but Mr. Sokolow, Mr. Greenberg and one or two other Zionists attended. The results of the talk were very satisfactory. The first step was to inform Zionist leaders in all parts of the world of the compact and Sir Mark said they would be given immediate facilities for cables to be sent through the Foreign Office and War Office, through the British Embassies and Consulates. A special detailed message was at once sent to Justice Brandeis in cipher through the Foreign Office³⁷.

Further talks were held in various Government Departments, at which Dr. Weizmann was present. All these conversations took place with the knowledge and approval of Sir Maurice (now Lord) Hankey³⁸, Secretary of the Cabinet. The talks resulted in a general understanding, which I called a “gentleman's agreement”, that the Zionists should work for active Jewish sympathy and support for the Allied cause, especially in the United States, so as to bring about a radical pro-Allied tendency in that country and that the British Cabinet would help the Jews to gain Palestine in return for this.

The negotiations were now carried on in Sir Mark’s room at the Foreign Office, to which the matter was referred by the War Cabinet for action.

At that time one of the principal Under-Secretaries at the foreign office was Sir Ronald Graham³⁹, who worked in close confidence with Sir Mark Sykes and who was of unfailing help during the whole time he was at the Foreign Office. The messages which were sent to the Zionist leaders in Russia were intended to hearten them and obtain their support for the Allied cause which had been affected by Russian ill-treatment of the Jews. Other messages were sent to Jewish leaders in neutral countries and the result was to strengthen the pro-Allied

³⁷ There are differing accounts in the various sources as to the date of the decisive meeting with the conclusion of a binding agreement. Benjamin Freedman ^[FRE1] and Robert John ^[JOH] place the verbal agreement in October 1916. Schneer ^[SN] places the first personal meeting between Sykes and Weimann on 28 January 1917 – so although Weizmann was not personally present on the day of the oral agreement, he was of course aware of its content. The process of changing the opinion of the USA and Jews worldwide began in October 1916.

³⁸ [Maurice Pascal Alers Hankey](#), 1. Baron Hankey (*1877 †1963) was a British naval officer and naval intelligence officer, from 1916 Secretary to the War Office. Considered the mastermind of the armoured vehicle. Cabinet Secretary until 1938, then government director of the [Suez Canal Company](#), government adviser during the Second World War, ennobled in 1939. From 1945 author of many writings on war policy.

³⁹ Sir [Ronald William Graham](#) (*1870 †1949) was a British diplomat, from 1902 First Secretary in the Eastern Department of the Foreign Office, British Ambassador to Italy 1921-33.

sympathies of Jews everywhere. A striking example of the effect of the message was reported to me from Petrograd. A wealthy and influential anti-Zionist Jewish banker there was shown the telegram announcing the provisional promise of Palestine to the Jews. He was very much moved and said, "How can a Jew refuse such a gift?"*

* Later I heard of an even more striking result of the message regarding Palestine for the Jews. The Jadidies of Meshed⁴⁰, in Persia, who are, like the Donmehs of Salonica, crypto-Jews, were on the point of embracing Islam en masse when they heard of the Balfour Declaration and changed their mind.

At the request of Sir Mark Sykes I had an interview with General Haddad Pasha, the representative in London of the Sharif Hussein and his son Feyzal. There were two other high Arab officers present. Although they had already some inkling from Sir Mark of the new developments in regard to Palestine, they were not at all pleased with the information I gave them that the Jews were to be promised Palestine in consideration of their help in gaining pro-Allied support in the United States. They did not want Jews to go to Palestine, which was an Arab land. But when I explained the importance of the matter and that the War Cabinet had resolved on it, they reluctantly agreed as they, too, realised the vital importance of American help. The fact that the much vaunted Arab revolt had been of such small dimensions was not without its effect on their decision. They undertook to raise no objections and said we could count on the Arab leaders agreeing to the settled British policy. During my interviews with T.E. Lawrence in London and in Paris during the War, and with Feyzal and Lawrence during the Peace Conference, I found Lawrence entirely favourable and Feyzal reconciled to the bargain being carried out. The agreement⁴¹ signed by him with Dr. Weizmann about April, 1918, bears this out.

An informal Anglo-Zionist gathering took place at the house of Dr. Gaster⁴² on the 7th February, 1917, to meet Sir Mark Sykes, and Herbert Samuel⁴³ (now Lord Samuel), James de Rothschild⁴⁴, Dr. Weizmann, Mr. Sokolow, Dr. Tchlenow and Mr. Sacher⁴⁵ and one or two

⁴⁰ In 1839, Muslims attacked the Jews of [Maschhad](#), murdering 36 of them and forcing the others to convert. These were called "Jadid al-Islam" (newcomers to Islam), or "Jadid" for short. While some managed to flee across the Afghan border and some became devout Shiites, the majority only outwardly embraced Islam while secretly clinging to their Jewish faith. Something similar often happened in countries without religious freedom; these Jews are then called "crypto-Jews".

⁴¹ The date is not correct. The [Faisal-Weizmann Agreement](#) on the status of Palestine dates from 3 January 1919. Faisal did not speak English and was tricked by Lawrence after signing it, by omitting his handwritten Arabic addition when it was sent to England.

⁴² [Moses Gaster](#) (*1856 Bukarest †1939) was a Romanian, later British scholar, from 1887 Hakham of the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish community in London, linguist for Hebrew and Romanian, professor of Slavic literature at Oxford. Was involved in the founding of the *English Zionist Federation* in 1899. The first draft of the *Balfour Declaration* was drawn up in his house. At this meeting on 7 February 1917, he was finally ousted as leader of the British Zionists and Weizmann took over.

⁴³ [Herbert Louis Samuel](#), 1. Viscount (*1870 †1963) British politician, leader of the Liberal Party from 1931, first practising Jew to become a cabinet minister and party leader. Promoted Zionism in the British Cabinet from his 1915 memorandum "The Future of Palestine". Appointed the first High Commissioner for Palestine in 1920 and thus responsible for the administration of the territory.

⁴⁴ [James Armand Edmond de Rothschild](#) (*1878 †1957) also known as Jimmy de Rothschild, British politician of the Liberal Party, son of Baron [Edmond James de Rothschild](#).

others⁴⁶ were present. My official duties prevented my attendance. Dr. Weizmann was at that time too fully occupied with his chemical work on behalf of the Government to be able to devote himself entirely to the Zionist negotiations, and moreover, as Mr. Sokolow was a member of the Zionist Executive, which Dr. Weizmann was not at the time, Mr. Sokolow was deputed to continue the conversations with Sir Mark Sykes on behalf of the Zionist leaders.

One of the friends who helped me very much in gaining support for the Zionist idea was Mr. G.M.Fitzmaurice⁴⁷, the world famous dragoman of the British Embassy in Constantinople. He was a very devout and influential Catholic and believing that the success of Zionism would be beneficial to the world as well as to the Jews themselves, he gave me his powerful support and the advantage of his invaluable counsel and experience all through my approaches to various quarters and negotiations with officials and departments concerned. It was he who won over General Sir Henry Wilson, Chief of Imperial General Staff, General Sir George MacDonogh, Director of Military Intelligence, and one of his chief assistants, Colonel W.H.Gibbon, all of whom contributed to the success of the negotiations.

During the conversations with Sir Mark Sykes, Fitzmaurice had offered his assistance in gaining the concurrence of the French and Italian Governments, and also of the Vatican. As to Russia, he did not anticipate any difficulties there if all the other parties were agreed, especially as Russia at that time was on the verge of disintegration.

After several talks with Sykes, it was found necessary that I should also discuss the matter with Georges Picot, Counsellor at the French Embassy in London and in certain respects the French colleague and opposite number of Sykes in these matters. Picot was most understanding and sympathetic – not only to the Armenians but also to the Jews, and was most willing to help if he could. But he had one great difficulty – with the sole and honourable exception of Baron Edmond de Rothschild⁴⁸ (to whom I was introduced many years previously by Mr.George Sheffield of the British Embassy in Paris), all the leading Jews in France were anti-Zionists and scoffed at the idea that any appreciable number of Jews would ever want to go and settle in Palestine. Picot was told by them that Zionism was only an idealistic obsession of a few Eastern European Jewish fanatical nationalists who themselves would never go to Palestine, much less settle on the land there. It therefore required a good deal of cogent argument, which I happened to have, to disabuse his mind of what he had been told. This being done, he promised to help, and acting on his suggestion I went to Paris and discussed the matter also with M. Gout, at the time the Under Secretary at

⁴⁵ [Harry Sacher](#) (*1881 †1971) Son of Polish Jews, was a British businessman, journalist, Zionist leader and, as a lawyer, founder of the British-Palestinian law firm *Sacher, Horowitz & Klebanoff*. As an industrialist, he was involved in setting up the electricity supply in Palestine. Worked on the board of the *World Zionist Organisation* with Chaim Weizmann. On the board of *Marks & Spencer* from 1932.

⁴⁶ In particular Lionel Walter Rothschild, head of the British branch of the family and thus the most powerful man in the British Jewish community.

⁴⁷ [Gerald Henry Fitzmaurice](#) (*1865 †1939) was a British diplomat, from 1905 consul in Constantinople, from 1907 chief dragoman, i.e. interpreter/travelling companion, in the sense of a mediator between the cultures of Europe and the Orient, which at the time was dominated by the Ottoman Empire.

⁴⁸ Baron [Edmond de Rothschild](#) (*1845 †1934) was a patron of the arts, art collector and winegrower. He contributed immense sums to the building of Jewish settlements in Palestine and was perhaps the most important financier of Zionism. Part of his collection came from the [looting and pillaging](#) of the Chinese Yùyuán (Old Summer Palace) by British and French troops in 1860 at the end of the Second Opium War.

the Quai d'Orsay for Eastern Affaires. As he was in closer contact with French Jewry even greater effort was needed to convince him and obtain promise of his help. As a matter of fact, until the last minute French Jewry, represented by the powerful [Alliance Israélite Universelle](#) and M. Bigart, the Secretary of that Institution, were straining every nerve to sabotage the project.

In December, 1916, Asquith⁴⁹ resigned and Mr. Lloyd George became Premier. This change was beneficial to the Zionist cause inasmuch as Asquith had been definitely unsympathetic whereas Lloyd George, himself a member of a small and proud nation and having a strong religious bent, was naturally more predisposed to understand the Zionist Movement. Sir Mark Sykes and I were greatly helped in gaining his support by [Philip Kerr](#) (later Lord Lothian), who was Lloyd George's Secretary and whose guidance in such matters he generally followed.

Although I had already prepared the way in Paris to some extent for a review of the Palestine question, it was decided at the Foreign Office that I should accompany Sokolow to Paris to ensure his being received at the Quai d'Orsay by M. M. Pichon⁵⁰ and de Margerie⁵¹. It was as well that I did so. On arrival I rang up M. Picot and arranged for Sokolow and myself to see him at his house. After a long and satisfactory discussion, he promised to see that we should be received by Pichon and de Margerie. Later he telephoned that, though difficult, the appointment was fixed for the following morning. Somehow the Alliance Israelite and its Secretary, M. Bigart, had got to know about it and we learnt afterwards that until the last moment they had thought they would be able to prevent it. But fortunately we had a staunch friend in Picot to see that nothing miscarried. The *Alliance Israelite* was so sure of their influence that at first they could not believe the news when, a few minutes after Sokolow's arrival at the Quai d'Orsay, some friends of theirs had telephoned and told them. I had decided after all that it would be better for Sokolow to go alone, as I had reason to know that the Quai d'Orsay felt I might be pushing some British interest. They (the people of the Alliance) kept on telephoning to our room at the Hotel Meurice and asking if it was true that Sokolow was at the *Ministere*. I answered them all. "*Son Excellence, M. Sokolow, est sortie*". When they asked who was speaking I replied, "*Le Chef de Cabinet de son Excellence*". Mr. Sokolow was much amused when I told him of my practical joke at their expense. Then a swarm of Jewish notables downstairs interrogated me – most of them I thought inwardly looked very pleased, though outwardly wearing a mask of disapproval, like a father who rebukes his son for jumping a dangerous obstacle and at the same time exults over it.

From Paris Sokolow went on to Rome, and in view of the excellent arrangements⁵² made by Fitzmaurice, it was not necessary for me to go with him. I made sure, however, that he took

⁴⁹ [Herbert Henry Asquith](#), 1. Earl of Oxford and Asquith (*1852 †1928) was a British statesman of the Liberal Party, Prime Minister 1908-1916, whose government collapsed on 5 December 1916 under the impact of the devastating war situation, in particular the Battle of the Somme with over 400,000 British casualties.

⁵⁰ [Stephen Jean Marie Pichon](#) (*1857 †1933), French Foreign Minister 1906-1911 and 1917-1920, instrumental in the Versailles Dictate.

⁵¹ Bruno François Marie [Pierre Jacquin de Margerie](#) (*1861 †1942), Secretary General/Director of the French Foreign Ministry 1914-1918, Ambassador in Brussels from 1919, Ambassador in Berlin 1922-1931.

⁵² Cardinal and Secretary of State Pietro Gasparri sent Sokolov to Eugenio Pacelli (later Pius XII), who arranged for an audience on [6 May 1917](#). It was the first reception of a Zionist by a pope.

with him the indispensable frock coat and silk hat. The result of the interview is well known, viz. the official announcement that the Pope⁵³ had said that the Vatican and the Jews would be good neighbours in Palestine. Sykes and I had arranged with the Marquis Imperiali⁵⁴, in London, for Sokolow to be received also at the Quirinale by Baron Sonnino⁵⁵, the Foreign Minister.

All these steps were taken with the full knowledge and approval of Justice Brandeis, between whom and Dr. Weizmann there was an active interchange of cables.

The work was making satisfactory progress in the Spring of 1917, when the United States entered the War⁵⁶. Sir Mark Sykes was very confident that the promise of the Government would be publicly confirmed very soon. Unfortunately, however, a number of very serious setbacks occurred which delayed the matter and made the issue of the declaration tremble in the balance more than once. As is well known, there were very many military and naval setbacks in 1917 and the Cabinet was far too occupied with them to be able to deal with the question of Palestine and the Jews. More serious, however, was the information which reached us that one of the members of the British Cabinet was working with all his might to prevent the promise being given. This was Edwin Montagu⁵⁷, the Secretary for India, himself a Jew and the son of Lord Swaythling (the Banker).

Further opposition came from Jewish quarters in France and in this country. In France, as I have said, nearly all the leading Jews, with the exception of Baron Edmond de Rothschild, were bitterly opposed to the pro-Zionist declaration by M. Pichon. Their opposition was not only due to French patriotism, but also to their fears that a National Home for Jews in Palestine could somehow affect their political status in France. The same motive explained the growing opposition from the influential Jews of England. In May, 1917, the two heads of Anglo-Jewry, the late Claude Montefiore⁵⁸, President of the *Anglo-Jewish Association*, and the late David Alexander⁵⁹, K.C., President of the *Board of Deputies* acting through Lucian

⁵³ [Giacomo della Chiesa](#) (*1854 †1922), Pope Benedikt XV (1914-1922), known as the *Pope of Peace*, concerned with neutrality and reconciliation, he strongly condemned the Russian pogroms, the war and the Versailles dictate.

⁵⁴ [Marchese Guglielmo Imperiali](#) di Francavilla (*1858 †1944) was a diplomat and politician in the Kingdom of Italy, including 1904-1909 envoy to the Ottoman Empire, 1910-1920 envoy to the United Kingdom, member of the Italian delegation at the Paris "Peace Conference".

⁵⁵ Baron [Sidney Costantino Sonnino](#) (*1847 †1922) was an Italian politician, grandfather a Jewish banker, mother Welsh, himself Anglican. He was Italian Prime Minister in 1906 and 1909-1910, Foreign Minister from 1914 and was instrumental in Italy's entry into the war in 1915 on the side of the Allies. The *Palazzo del Quirinale* was the official residence of the Italian king, now the Italian president.

⁵⁶ On 2 April 1917, Woodrow Wilson called on Parliament to declare war.

⁵⁷ [Edwin Samuel Montagu](#) (*1879 †1924) was a British Liberal politician, second Jew in the British Parliament, staunch anti-Zionist, who regarded the Balfour Declaration as anti-Semitic. Son of [Samuel Montagu](#), born Moses Samuel, 1st Baron Swaythling (*1832 †1911), founder of the bank *Samuel Montagu & Co*, ennobled in 1907, also anti-Zionist and one of the leaders of the British Jews.

⁵⁸ [Claude Joseph Goldsmid Montefiore](#) (*1858 †1938) was a theologian, scholar of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, influential Reform Jew and anti-Zionist, 1895-1922 president of the [Anglo-Jewish Association](#), 1917 co-founder of the anti-Zionist [League of British Jews](#), 1926-1938 founding president of the [World Union for Progressive Judaism](#).

⁵⁹ [David Lindo Alexander](#) (*1842 City of London †1922) was an English lawyer and anti-Zionist. In 1877 he

Wolf⁶⁰ of the Conjoint Foreign Committee of these two bodies, gathered together a number of their colleagues and wrote⁶¹ to “The Times” protesting against the reported intention of the Government to adopt a pro-Zionist policy in regard to Palestine.

Fortunately, with the assistance of the editor of “The Times”, Mr. Wickham Steed⁶², who had lived for many years in Vienna, had met Herzl and understood the Zionist Movement, we were able to counter this move by publishing immediate replies from Chief Rabbi Dr. Hertz, Lord Rothschild⁶³ and Dr. Weizmann⁶⁴. The Chief Rabbi's contribution was particularly useful to counteract the views of Claude Montefiore, who was known as a religious and spiritual leader.

Lord Swaythling and the *League of British Jews*⁶⁵ continued their active opposition and sent a very able memorandum to the cabinet, drafted by Lucien Wolf, disavowing the Zionist claims. Sir Mark and I discussed the position and the Zionist leaders were advised to take up the challenge as it was absolutely essential to convince the Cabinet that Anglo-Jewry was Zionist in sympathy and outlook, although their official spokesmen were anti-Zionist. A rapid campaign among the members of the *Board of Deputies* was organised in order to prove that British Jewry was not anti-Zionist. A pro-Zionist resolution was introduced and carried by a large majority. This led to the resignation⁶⁶ of the President, David Alexander, and the Vice-President, Mr. S.Q. Henriques, and the fact was duly reported in "The Times" and the general British press, and greatly impressed and influenced the Government.

It is extraordinary to me how obstinately those leading English Jews struggled to prevent the British Government from making the promise. They were able to postpone the matter for

became a representative of the *Board of Deputies of British Jews*, in short “Board of Deputies“, the largest British Jewish organisation, and was its president from 1903 to 1917. His successor was the Zionist Lord Lionel Walter Rothschild, to whom the Balfour Declaration was addressed.

⁶⁰ [Lucien Wolf](#) (*1857 †1930) was a British journalist (*Jewish World*, *Jewish Chronicle*), diplomat and historian. In 1917 he co-founded the anti-Zionist *League of British Jews*. With the outbreak of the First World War, Wolf's preference for the more liberal German government over the Russian one effectively ended his journalistic career.

⁶¹ Published on 24 May 1917, see appendix for full letter.

⁶² [Henry Wickham Steed](#) (*1871 †1956) was a British journalist, historian and propagandist. Lived in Jena, Berlin, Paris, Rome and Vienna. From 1914 head of the foreign policy department at *The Times* in London, used the journalistic weight of *The Times* in favour of the Balfour Declaration in 1917/18. Also headed the Austro-Hungarian section of the Directorate for Propaganda in Enemy Countries. 1919-1922 editor-in-chief of *The Times*.

⁶³ [Lionel Walter Rothschild](#), 2. Baron Rothschild (*1868 †1937), British banker and head of the British Rothschild clan, member of the House of Lords, Zionist, at the time the most powerful Jew in Great Britain. Chaim Weizmann was his friend and advisor. Addressee of the Balfour Declaration.

⁶⁴ On 28 May, *The Times* published the response of the Zionists (Lord Rothschild, Joseph Hertz, Chaim Weizmann).

⁶⁵ One of Malcolm's memory errors: the *League of British Jews* was not actually founded until November 1917, in response to the Balfour Declaration. It did not yet exist at this moment.

⁶⁶ On 17 June, David L. Alexander was condemned by the *Board of Deputies* by 56 votes to 51 for his letter and forced to resign as President ([source](#)). He then joined the founding of the anti-Zionist *League of British Jews*.

quite a long time and finally the War Cabinet determined to take the opinion of the leaders of Jewry in this country before finally deciding. Although the number of our friends in the Cabinet had grown and now included Lloyd George, Balfour, Milner, Barnes and General Smuts⁶⁷, we were very apprehensive because from the point of view of wealth and influence, the anti-Zionist Jews greatly outweighed the few Zionist leaders who were in London. The enquiry from the War Cabinet (not the Foreign Office) was sent to the following eight persons: Leonard L. Cohen⁶⁸, Claude Montefiore, Sir Stuart Samuel, Sir Philip Magnus⁶⁹, Lord Rothschild, N. Sokolow, Dr. Weizmann and the Chief Rabbi. Three of them – Leonard Cohen, Claude Montefiore and Sir Philip Magnus – replied strongly opposing the proposed statement. The late Sir Stuart Samuel, brother of Lord Samuel, while not hostile, was not greatly enthusiastic. It was fortunate, therefore, that the Chief Rabbi, with all the weight of his ecclesiastical authority, sent a very emphatic reply in favour. This undoubtedly helped greatly to satisfy the Cabinet that the proposed declaration would be hailed with enthusiasm by the vast majority of the Jewish people in the British Empire. I personally was very pleased with this because this had been my point of view from the very beginning, and Sir Mark Sykes was also most happy with the reply of the Chief Rabbi.

Our method of operation from the outset had been the following. Once the Government had decided to adopt the pattern of pro-Zionist policy, it became necessary to pick up the various strands to be woven in to the pattern. Of these the most important was the work of enlightenment regarding Zionist aims, on which Dr. Weizmann had been concentrating since the outbreak of the War. Through the good offices of the late C.F. Scott, Editor of the “Manchester Guardian”, the late Professor Samuel Alexander of Manchester University, Dr. Weizmann had over a period of years, interested in the movement Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Balfour, [Lord Crewe](#), [Lord Cecil](#), Sir Herbert Samuel, Philip Kerr, Professor [C.K. Webster](#), Sir Ronald Graham, Colonel Meinertzhagen and others. Dr. Weizmann had already discussed Zionism with Mr. Balfour as far back as 1906. * Books, pamphlets and articles were written and published by a small group of Dr. Weizmann’s disciples and friends, of whom I recollect Herbert Sidebotham, Professor Zimmern, Leon Simon, Harry Sacher, Samuel Landman⁷⁰, Simon Marks⁷¹, Israel and Rebecca Sieff⁷² and S. Tolkowsky. The late Herbert Sidebotham

⁶⁷ Field Marshal [Jan Smuts](#) (*1870 †1950), born in the British *Cape Colony*, was a South African statesman and military leader in both world wars. Co-founder of the *Union of South Africa* in 1910. Member of the British War Cabinet in 1917. At the Paris "Peace Conference" of 1919, he paved the way for the *League of Nations* and ensured that Germany finally lost control of [German South West Africa](#) (now Namibia), which had been conquered by the *Union of South Africa* in 1915. Became Prime Minister of South Africa in 1919. The only politician to be a signatory to both the Treaty of Versailles and the UN Charter.

⁶⁸ Sir [Leonard Lionel Cohen](#) (*1858 †1938), a British banker and member of one of the leading Jewish families, member of the [Jewish Board of Guardians](#), 1914-1934 President of the [Jewish Colonization Association](#) (ICA), ennobled in 1930.

⁶⁹ Sir [Philip Magnus](#), 1st Baronet (*1842 †1933), a British educational reformer, rabbi and politician, Member of Parliament 1906-1922.

⁷⁰ Samuel Landman was secretary to Chaim Weizmann and Nahum Sokolow in 1916, later Secretary General of the World Zionist Organisation. Like Malcolm, he also wrote his memoirs on the events. ^[LAN1]

⁷¹ [Simon Marks](#), 1st Baron Marks of Broughton (*1888 †1964), was a British businessman, son of the founder of *Marks & Spencer* and a director of the company until his death.

⁷² [Israel Moses Sieff](#), Baron Sieff (*1889 †1972) one of the leading British Zionists, member of the House of Lords, board member of *Marks & Spencer* from 1964.

was the famous military correspondent of the “Manchester Guardian” and “The Times” and also wrote under the name of “Scrutator” in the “Observer”. His articles and books strongly urging the Zionist claims had a great following. The weekly publication “Palestine”, the organ of the British Palestine Committee, established in Manchester at the suggestion of Dr. Weizmann at the end of 1916, was particularly helpful. Dr. Weizmann’s own contacts with scientists and Ministers naturally brought us a number of valuable friends, among whom the late Sir Alfred Mond⁷³ (Lord Melchett) deserves special mention. **

* In 1900-1903 Dr. Herzl, the founder and first President of the Zionist Organisation, had been in direct contact with Joseph Chamberlain and Lord Lansdowne. Both of these statesmen had shown understanding and sympathy for Zionism.

** Sir Alfred Mond, according to Wickham Steed, former Editor of "The Times", in his autobiography "Through Thirty Years" (London 1922), Vol. 2, P. 392, was told by Ludendorff⁷⁴ after the first World War that the Balfour Declaration was the cleverest thing done by the Allies in the way of propaganda, and that he wished Germany had thought of it first. As a matter of fact, the German Foreign Office had been in touch with German Zionists early in the war about Palestine, but the discussions were broken off when the German Government made it a condition that the language of the Jews who went there must be German.

Another strand was the military prowess of the Unit of Zionist Volunteers, first in [Gallipoli](#) in 1915 and later in Palestine. The credit for establishing the Jewish Unit belongs, as everybody knows, to the late Vladimir Jabotinsky⁷⁵, one of the most remarkable Zionist leaders I have ever met. It was in August, 1917, that he obtained the final consent from Lord Derby, on behalf of the British Cabinet, to establish the Jewish Unit⁷⁶ and this also prepared the ground for the pro-Zionist declaration which had been held back for so long.

[Rebecca Doro Sieff](#) (*1890 as Rebecca Marks †1966), daughter of the founder of *Marks & Spencer*, founder of the [Women's International Zionist Organization](#)

⁷³ [Alfred Moritz Mond](#), 1. Baron Melchett (*1868 †1930), was a British industrialist and politician. Son of the German-born chemist Ludwig Mond and his wife Frieda Löwenthal, both Jews. 1916-1921 Government Commissioner for Buildings, 1921-1922 Minister of Health, from 1926 board member of the chemical company ICI.

⁷⁴ [Erich Friedrich Wilhelm Ludendorff](#) (*1865 †1937) was an officer in the Prussian Army and the Imperial Army, ultimately General of the Infantry, and a politician, Member of the Reichstag 1920-1928. As First Quartermaster General and deputy to Paul von Hindenburg, he had a decisive influence on German warfare and politics during the First World War. One of the most respected and influential German diplomats and military strategists recognized both nationally and internationally. The [English Wikipedia](#) is basically trying to belittle and smear him as a vile warmonger, as they do with all conservative German politicians of the time.

⁷⁵ [Wladimir Zeev Jabotinsky](#) (*1880 Odessa †1940 USA) was a Russian Zionist and writer, founder of the *Jewish Legion* during the First World War and the originator of a nationalist and revisionist Zionism. The metaphor he used in 1923 of an “iron wall of Jewish bayonets”, which had to be erected between Arabs and Jews, still characterises Israeli policy towards the Palestinian population today.

⁷⁶ After intensive lobbying by Jabotinsky in Great Britain, the formation of a [Jewish Legion](#) was officially announced on 23 August 1917. David Ben-Gurion, Yitzchak Ben Tzvi and Levi Eshkol (the first, second and third prime ministers of Israel) were among the members of this legion.

Yet another strand is associated with the name of Aaron Aaronsohn⁷⁷, who was a Palestinian agronomist of the first rank, whose work as the discoverer of a new kind of wild wheat was known and appreciated especially in the United States. Aaronsohn had remained in Palestine under the Turks till the summer of 1916, when he managed with great skill and bravery to make his way through the enemy lines and arrived in London in October, 1916. He had a plan for helping the British Near Eastern campaign and this plan was greeted with enthusiasm by the Intelligence Department of the War Office and led to his being sent on a secret mission to Cairo. From that centre, with very devoted and skilful emissaries consisting of members of his family and friends from Palestine, he organised what became known as “Nili” – a Jewish secret Intelligence Service, which rendered most valuable service to [General] Allenby in his great campaign. The personality of Aaronsohn had impressed itself on General MacDonogh, the head of Military Intelligence, and others, and helped to create a favourable atmosphere for the pro-Zionist policy on which we were working.

The original draft of the Declaration was prepared by Dr. Weizmann and his friends in London in the summer of 1917 at the instance of Sir Mark Sykes, and read (after various amendments at the instance of the anti-Zionists) as follows:

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

This draft was cabled by Sir Ronald Graham to Brandeis in Washington for submission to President Wilson and to secure his concurrence. Baron Edmond de Rothschild also agreed to it and it was then submitted to the War cabinet and to Mr. Balfour, who would have to sign it as Foreign Secretary. It underwent further amendment whereby the word “people” was substituted for “race” and the reference at the end to “fully contented” was omitted, and in this final form remained at the Foreign Office until the military situation in the East improved.

Towards the end of October I heard from Sir Mark Sykes that the declaration was likely to come up before the Cabinet in view of satisfactory military progress in Palestine. He asked me to wait for him in the vestibule of the War Cabinet and arranged a code word to let me know the result. As he came out he called out to me, “It's a boy”, to indicate success. I heard later from Sykes (and also from Mr. Ormsby Gore⁷⁸ (now Lord Harlech)) that Balfour, as Foreign Secretary, in a five minute speech, convincingly explained the value of the Declaration. In this he was strongly supported by Milner and Smuts, as well as the Prime

⁷⁷ [Aaron Aaronsohn](#) (*1876 †1919) was a Jewish agronomist, botanist and Zionist activist. Born in Romania, he came to Palestine, then still part of the Ottoman Empire, as a child. Aaronsohn discovered the ancient wheat *Emmer*. He founded the [NILI](#) spy network. He proposed the northern border of Palestine during the Versailles talks.

⁷⁸ [William George Arthur Ormsby-Gore](#), 4. Baron Harlech (*1885 †1964) was a British politician and bank manager. In March 1917 he became private secretary to Alfred Milner, and shortly afterwards was appointed Deputy Secretary to the War Cabinet. Established cordial relations with Chaim Weizmann, who took refuge in his office while the Cabinet approved the Balfour Declaration on 31 October 1917, and with his support was sent to Palestine as British Liaison Officer in March 1918. Inherited his father's title in 1938 and thus became a member of the House of Lords.

Minister. Thus the war Cabinet arrived at a unanimous decision to issue the statement. I knew then that at last, after many anxious weeks and months, my seed had borne fruit and that the Government had become an ally of Zionism. The Declaration is dated 2nd November, 1917, and is known to history as the *Balfour Declaration*. The final text, as published, was communicated in a letter from Mr. Balfour to Lord Rothschild, and was as follows:

“His Majesty’s government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use its best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object; it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.”

By issuing this declaration the British Government duly carried out – as I had all along been convinced they would – its obligation to promise British help for the Jews to obtain Palestine. It is therefore strictly correct for Professor Temperley⁷⁹, the official historian of the Paris Peace Conference, to describe the Balfour Declaration as “a definite contract between Great Britain and Jewry”. ** The consideration for this contract had already been given by the Jews before November 2nd, 1917.

** “A History of the Peace Conference of Paris”, London 1920, Vol. VI, Page 173

When I look back on that strenuous struggle I feel happy indeed that a kind Providence gave me the opportunity to place all my personal and official connections freely and fully at the disposal of my Zionist friends. Thus I was able to be of some service to the Jewish people at a great historic moment. In so doing I knew I was acting in the best interests of Britain and for the good of the world.

Although in a letter to me Dr. Weizmann has recognized my initiative in this work, I think it only fair to state that without his dynamic and persuasive personality, and without his quick and courageous decisions behind the scenes and the important secret and hazardous missions he successfully undertook, we might not have succeeded at all. He took the lead throughout and was regarded by all who came into contact with him as the one man who could decide for the Movement. He was particularly fortunate in that Mrs. Weizmann shared and supported his efforts to the fullest extent. *

I have it from a good authority that as soon as Mr. Churchill became Prime Minister Dr. Weizmann was anxious to see him, but Churchill kept putting the meeting off and when asked why he was reluctant to give an appointment, he said, “I know he will convince me.”

This was a great tribute from the greatest of British leaders to Weizmann, the most outstanding Jewish figure in modern times.

* Ever mindful of the dictum of Marcus Aurelius that “no general, however great, can take a fortress without assistance”, it has been my purpose to mention the names of all those who directly or indirectly contributed to the success of my endeavours. It

⁷⁹ [Harold William Vazeille Temperley](#) (*1879 †1939) was a British historian and Professor of Modern History at the University of Cambridge from 1931. He was a member of the British delegation to the Paris “Peace Conference” in 1919, which was reflected in several publications on the negotiations there.

perchance any name has been omitted, or if no exact dates have been given, it is because some of my records were destroyed by enemy action. Indeed while writing this last footnote my windows are being violently rattled by explosions of the flying bombs which are falling hard by my abode in Palace Gate, London, W.8., England. July, 1944.

Annex 1 – Facsimile of the Balfour Declaration

It is addressed to Lord Walter Rothschild⁸⁰ and was issued by the British Foreign Office, signed by Arthur James Balfour, then Foreign Minister of the U.K.

Foreign Office,

November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet

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

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "A. J. Balfour". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish above the first name.

The Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel (1948-05-14 in Tel Aviv) explicitly refers to the Balfour Declaration.

⁸⁰ [Lionel Walter Rothschild](#), 2nd Baron Rothschild (*1868 †1937), British banker, member of the House of Lords, Zionist, friend of Chaim Weizmann, co-author of the founding declaration for a Jewish national home in Palestine. Most powerful British Jew in his time.

Annex 2 – Letter of Anglo-Jewry to *The Times*

This open letter was mentioned by Malcolm and illustrates key arguments of the opposition against the intended Declaration.

Views of Anglo-Jewry

A letter to *The Times*
from the Conjoint Foreign Committee of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the
Anglo-Jewish Association

published 24th May 1917

The Holy Land is necessarily of profound and undying interest for all Jews, as the cradle of their religion, the main theatre of Bible history, and the site of its sacred memorials. It is not, however, as a mere shrine or place of pilgrimage that they regard the country.

Since the dawn of their political emancipation in Europe the Jews have made rehabilitation of the Jewish community in the Holy Land one of their chief cares, and they have always cherished the hope that the result of their labours would be the regeneration on Palestinian soil of a Jewish community worthy of the great memories and of the environment, and a source of spiritual inspiration to the whole of Jewry.

Accordingly, the conjoint Committee have welcomed with deep satisfaction the prospect of a rich fruition of their work, opened to them by the victorious progress of the British Army in Palestine.

25

The ‘Cultural’ Policy

Anxious that on this question all sections and parties in Jewry should be united in a common effort, the Committee intimated to the Zionist organizations as far back as the winter of 1914 their readiness to cooperate with them on the basis of the so-called 'cultural' policy which had been adopted at the last two Zionist congresses in 1911 and 1913.

This policy aimed primarily at making Palestine a Jewish spiritual centre by ensuring for the local Jews and the colonists who might join them, such conditions of life as would best enable them to develop the Jewish genius on lines of their own. Larger political questions, not directly affecting this main purpose, were left to be solved as need and opportunity might render possible. Unfortunately, an agreement on these lines has not proved practicable, and the Conjoint Committee are consequently compelled to pursue their work alone.

They are doing so on the basis of a formula adopted by them in March 1916, in which they proposed to recommend to His Majesty's Government the formal recognition of the high historical interest Palestine possesses for the Jewish community, and a public declaration that at the close of the war '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 to be necessary.'

That is the policy of the Committee.

Meanwhile the Committee have learnt from the published statements of the Zionist leaders in this country that they now favour a much larger scheme of an essentially political character.

Two points in this scheme appear to be open to grave objections on public grounds.

Nationality and Religion

The first is a claim that the Jewish settlements in Palestine shall be recognized as possessing a national character in a political sense. Were this claim of purely local import, it might well be left to settle itself in accordance with the general policy exigencies of the reorganization of the country under a new sovereign power. The conjoint committee, indeed, would have no objections to urge against a local Jewish nationality establishing itself in such conditions.

But the present claim is not of this limited scope. It is part and parcel of a wider Zionist theory, which regards all the Jewish communities in the world as constituting one homeless nationality, incapable of complete social and political identification with the nations among whom they dwell, and it is argued that for this homeless nationality a political centre and an always available homeland in Palestine are necessary.

Against this theory the joint Committee strongly and earnestly protest. Emancipated Jews in this country regard themselves primarily as a religious community, and they have always based their claims to political equality with their fellow citizens of other creeds on this assumption and its corollary that they have no separate national aspirations in a political sense. They hold Judaism to be a religious system, with which their political status has no concern, and they maintain that, as citizens of the countries in which they live, they are fully and sincerely identified with the national spirit and interest of those countries.

It follows that the establishment of a Jewish nationality in Palestine, founded on this theory of homelessness, must have the effect throughout the world of stamping the Jews as strangers in their native lands, and of undermining their hard-won position as citizens and nationals of these lands. Moreover, a Jewish nationality, carried to its logical conclusion, must, in the present circumstances of the world, be an anachronism. The Jewish religion being the only certain test of a Jew, a Jewish nationality must be founded on, and limited by, the religion. It cannot be supposed for a moment that any section of Jewry would aim at a commonwealth governed by religious tests, and limited in the matter of freedom of conscience; but can a religious nationality express itself politically in any other way? The only alternative would be a secular nationality, recruited on some loose and obscure principle of race and ethnographic peculiarity; but this would not be Jewish in any spiritual sense, and its establishment in Palestine would be a denial of all the ideas and hopes by which the revival of Jewish life in that country commends itself to the Jewish consciousness and Jewish sympathy.

On these grounds the joint Committee deprecate most earnestly the national proposals of the Zionists.

Undesirable Privileges

The second point in the Zionist programme which has aroused the misgivings of the conjoint committee is the proposal to invest the Jewish settlers in Palestine with certain special rights in excess of those enjoyed by the rest of the population, these rights to be embodied in a Charter and administered by a Jewish Chartered Company.

Whether it is desirable or not to confide any portion of the administration of Palestine to a Chartered Company need not be discussed, but it is certainly very undesirable that Jews should solicit or accept such a concession on a basis of political privileges and economic preferences. Any such action would prove a veritable calamity for the whole Jewish people. In all the countries in which they live, the principle of equal rights for all religious denominations is vital for them. Were they to set an example in Palestine of disregarding this principle, they would convict themselves of having appealed to it for purely selfish motives. In the countries in which they are still struggling for equal rights they would find themselves hopelessly compromised, while in other countries, where those rights have been secured, they would have great difficulty in defending them. The proposal is the more inadmissible because the Jews are, and will probably long remain, a minority of the population of Palestine, and because it might involve them in the bitterest feuds with their neighbours of other races and religions, which would seriously retard their progress and would find deplorable echoes throughout the Orient. Nor is the scheme necessary for the Zionists themselves. If the Jews prevail in a competition based on perfect equality of rights and opportunities, they will establish their eventual preponderance in the land on a far sounder foundation than any that can be secured by privileges and monopolies.

If the conjoint committee can be satisfied with regard to these points, they will be prepared to cooperate in securing for the Zionist organizations the united support of Jewry.

(signed) David L Alexander,

President, Board of Deputies of British Jews

(signed) Claude G Montefiore,

President, Anglo-Jewish Association

London May 17, 1917

Annex 3 – Critical Reflexion of Malcolm's Memoirs

A critical reflection on this memoir with some corrections is given by Jonathan Schneer in Chapter 12 of his comprehensive look at the Arab-Israeli Conflict, [titled](#) „The Balfour Declaration: The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict“ [JSN]

[Jonathan Schneer](#) (*1948) is an American historian specializing in modern British history, a professor at the Georgia Institute of Technology, with teaching appointments at Cambridge and Oxford.

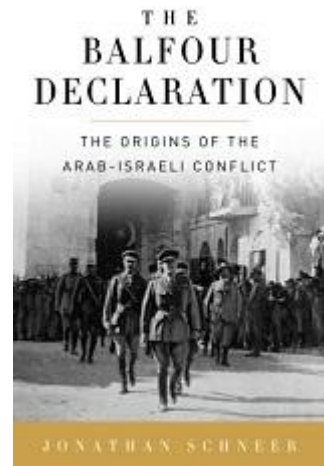
In [chapter 12](#), “Forging the British-Zionist Connection” he points out, among other things, that Mark Sykes and British-Jewish circles had been in touch for some time before, had been in regular exchange at least since March 1916, and that the basic idea of the formula “Palestine for the Jews and, in return, full worldwide Jewish support for the Allies” had already been considered from various angles, but so far unsuccessfully. Schneer says that Sykes had talked to the wrong Jews: on the one hand, to the leading British Jews, who were all anti-Zionists, and on the other hand, to the Zionist Moses Gastner, who was a scholar rather than a politician, who lacked radicalism and persuasiveness as well as networking with the United States, but who was known for his arrogance and hot-temperedness. Moreover, then Prime Minister Asquith had been hostile to the idea.

Malcolm's genius was to pull the right strings at the right time and connect the right people with Mark Sykes, namely the ardent Zionists around the strong-willed strategist Weizmann and the skillful diplomat Sokolow, and to make the radical Zionist idea of Jewish statehood in Palestine palatable to a lot of people, something the British and French governments had shied away from until then because it was considered totally unacceptable to moderate British Jewish and French Jewish circles as well as to the allied Arabs. Moreover, in the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement, the Allies had already decided to place Palestine under international control, and the British had also made promises to the Arabs concerning Palestine in the McMahon-Hussein correspondence!

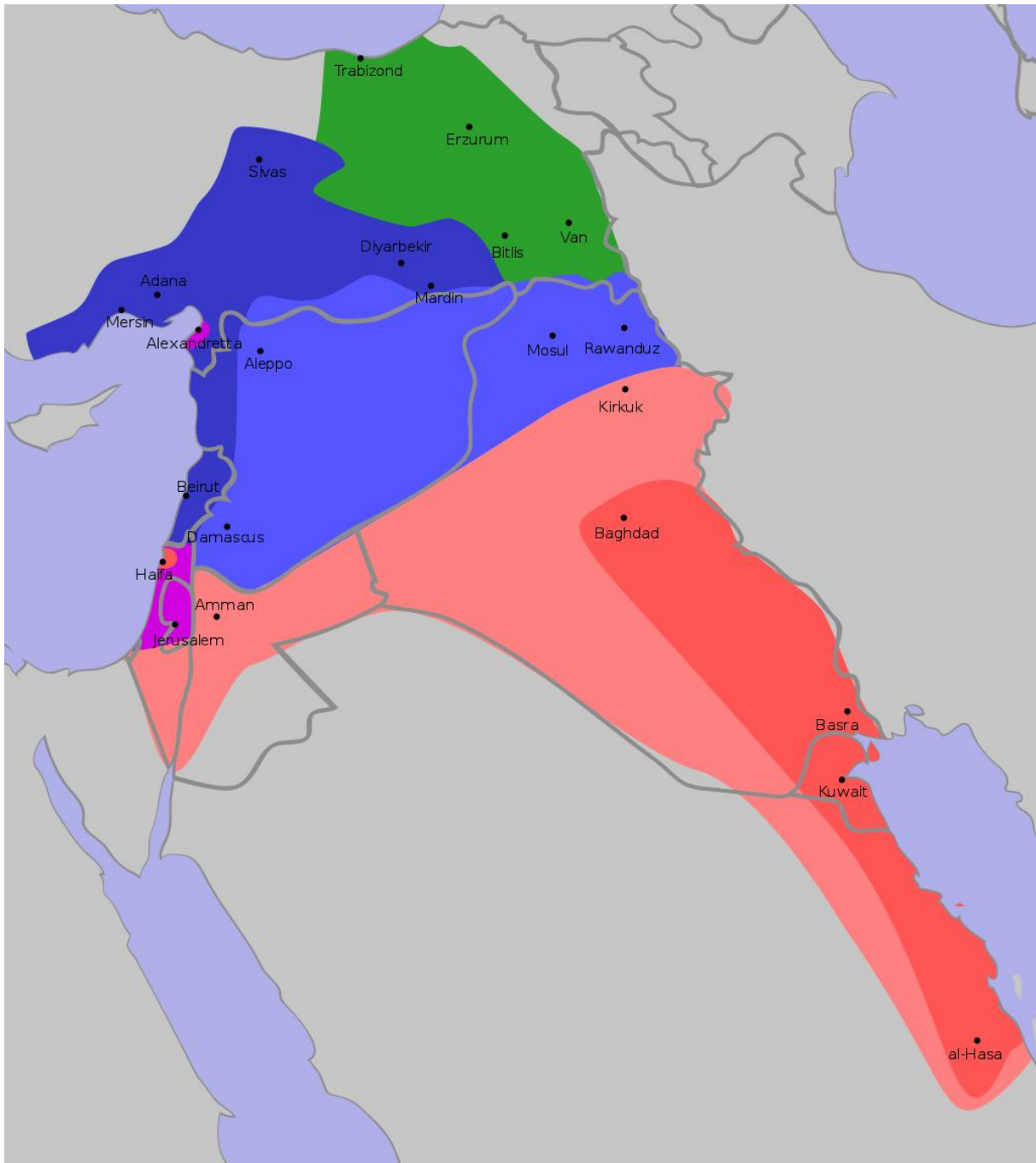
But the distress of the threatening defeat now left room for daring ideas with uncertain consequences for the future, room also for breach of word and breach of contract.

Other sources also mentioning James A. Malcolm and reflecting on his role can be found here:

- John, Robert: *Behind the Balfour Declaration: The Hidden Origins of Today's Mideast Crisis*. [JOH]
- Landman, Samuel: *Great Britain, the Jews, and Palestine*. [LAN1]
- Sykes, Christopher: *Two Studies in Virtue*. [SYK]
- Freedman, Benjamin H.: *Speech at the Willard Hotel*. [FRE1]
- Pierce, William: *Background to Treason: The Balfour Declaration: A Brief History of U.S. Policy in the Middle East* [PIE]
- Thomson, Malcolm: *David Lloyd George, the Official Biography*. [THO]



Annex 4 – Map of Sykes-Picot Agreement 16th May 1916



Blue: French

Red: British

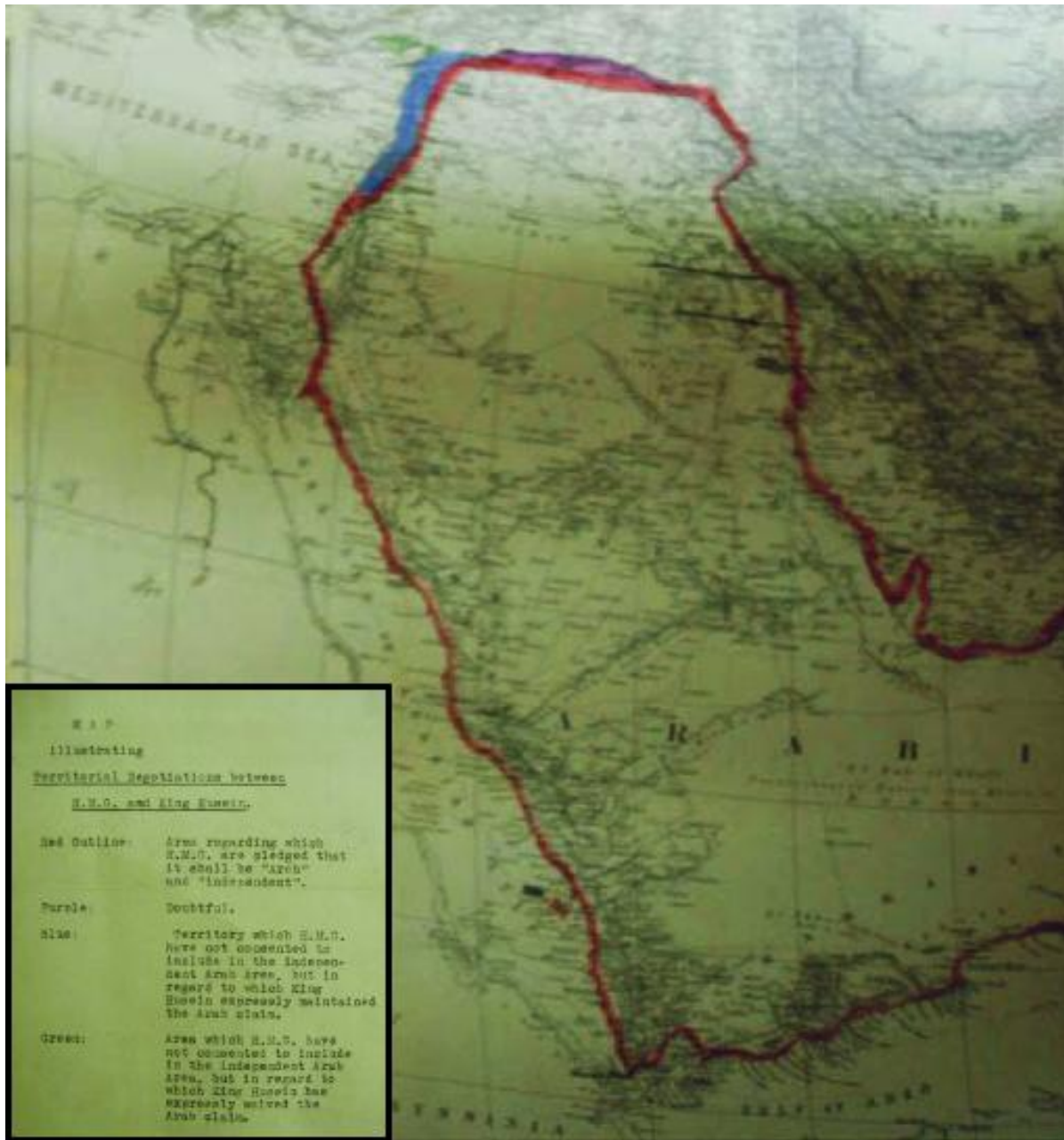
Green: Russia

Pink: joint administration

Note: the red, pink and most of the light blue area were promised to King Hussein as part of an independent Arab nation, too.

Taken from [Wiki](#)

Annex 5 – Map of Agreement with King Hussein



Taken from [Wiki](#)

Annex 6 – Map of Palestine in the League of Nations Period



Literature

[FRE1] Freedman, Benjamin Harrison: *Speech at the Willard Hotel*. (Washington D.C., 1961)
Original Audio [here](#) online.

[FRE2] Freedman, Benjamin Harrison: *Zionism – The Hidden Tyranny*
not dated, end of the 60ties. Full text as PDF available [online](#)

[HER] Herzl, Theodor: *Der Judenstaat – Versuch einer modernen Lösung der Judenfrage* (Leipzig and Vienna 1896)
Full text (original German) available [online](#)

[JOH] John, Robert: *Behind the Balfour Declaration: The Hidden Origins of Today's Mideast Crisis*. The Institute for Historical Review (Costa Mesa/Cal, 1988)
Full text available [online](#)

[JSN] Schneer, Jonathan: *The Balfour Declaration: The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*,
Full text available [online](#)

[LAN1] Landman, Samuel: *Great Britain, the Jews, and Palestine*. (London, 1936) ISBN 1471799131
Landman was secretary to Chaim Weizmann and Nahum Sokolow in 1916, later secretary general of the World Zionist Organization. He too, like Malcolm, wrote his memoirs on the background of the Balfour Declaration
Full text [available online](#)

[LAN2] Landman, Samuel: *The Origin of the Balfour Declaration*.
Published in *Jewish Chronicle* (London, February 7, 1936)

[MAL] Malcolm, James Aratoon: *Origins of the Balfour Declaration–Dr. Weizmann's Contribution*. (London, 1944) Facsimile-Edition, The British Museum, ISBN 0939484137
Facsimile available [online](#)

[MYE1] Myers, Peter: *The Balfour Declaration: World War I as an Opportunity*
Blog: <https://mailstar.net/balfour.html>;

[MYE2] Myers, Peter: *Benjamin H. Freedman, Germany and the Jews: The Role of the Jews in WWI and WWII*
Blog: <https://mailstar.net/freedman.html>

[SYK] Sykes, Christopher: *Two Studies in Virtue*. (London, 1953)
About Zionism, the Balfour Declaration, Biography of Sir Mark Sykes written by his son
Full text available [online](#)

[PIE] Pierce, William: *Background to Treason: The Balfour Declaration: A Brief History of U.S. Policy in the Middle East, Part 1: From the Exodus to the Balfour Declaration*.
Full text available [online](#)

[TEM] Temperley, Harold: *A History of the Peace Conference of Paris*. (London 1920)
Full text available [online](#)

[THO] Thomson, Malcolm: *David Lloyd George, the Official Biography*. (London, 1949)
Extract available [here](#)