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THE ORIGINS OF THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

By

P. M. Baumgartner

Submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirements  
of the degree of Master of Arts  
in the History Department of the  
American University of Beirut  
Beirut, Lebanon  
1955

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Baumgartner

## INDEX

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I --- INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	1
II -- THE BEGINNING OF ZIONISM	6
A. Pre-Herzl Movements	6
B. Asher Ginsberg (Ahad Ha'am)	12
C. Herzl	14
* III - POLITICAL ZIONISM	21
IV -- ZIONISM AND WORLD WAR I, 1914-1916	31
/ V --- OFFICIAL NEGOTIATIONS PRECEDING THE BALFOUR DECLARATION	45
/ VI -- DRAFTS OF THE DECLARATION	72
/ VII - AMERICAN ZIONISM AND ITS PART IN THE BALFOUR DECLARATION	82
VIII- FINAL DRAFT AND ISSUANCE OF THE BALFOUR DECLARATION	90
BIBLIOGRAPHY	99

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## I - INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In the Preface of his book on "ZIONISM", Leonard Stein says "This is a book on Zionism, and not on Palestine. The two subjects are closely interconnected, but they are not identical." I do not think this distinction --minute though it may be--exists between Zionism and the Balfour Declaration. From the moment I took up the study of the origins of the Balfour Declaration, I found myself immersed in Zionism--Jewish and Gentile; one without the other could not have produced the end result--the Balfour Declaration. (Had not fertile ground been plowed by a mystic combination of Gentile belief in the Millenium plus Victorian Imperialism in a few key Englishmen of the ruling group, the few seeds of the then unimportant and newborn Zionist Organization would have been blown away by the great bulk of influential and religious Jewry of the Western World.)

In the Nineteenth Century, the "Age of Enlightenment" and the issue of the Eighteenth Century "Spirit of the times"--the Philosophy of the 'Natural Rights of Man'--were gradually, in Western Europe, bringing the Jews out of their Ghettos and inculcating in them a desire for--and urging them to the possibility of--assimilation. However, for the great bulk of the Jews, this

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I. Sykes, Christopher, Two Studies in Virtue,  
118,

was not the case. By far the greatest bulk of world Jews were located in Poland and Russia and to understand the intransigent, fanatical few who blindly fought their way through the dominance of Western Jewry--which then contained the only wealthy, influential members of World Jewry--until they were able to seed their ideas and plans in a culture which would finally blossom in the Balfour Declaration, it is necessary to dip back in history and review, briefly, previous Zionist efforts.

The Zionist movement is held by some to begin with the Babylonian Captivity in the Sixth Century BC. It is generally conceded that the "Hebrew" race of the Old Testament disintegrated with this event, and that when their remnants were liberated by Cyrus the Great some decades later, only a few returned to Palestine. After the Romans finally ploughed Jerusalem under and erected a new city in its stead and prohibited the Jews residence therein, the population was never significant. In 1730 there were about 1,000 Jews in Jerusalem; in 1770 there were about 5,000 Jews in all Palestine and it was estimated that there was a population of about 20,000 Jews in Palestine<sup>2</sup> in the 1880s, which increased with the first foundation

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2. Jeffries, J.M.N., Palestine The Reality,  
32, NY, 1939  
Stein, Leonard, Zionism, 17, London, Er-  
next Brown Ltd, 1925.

of Jewish colonies to 85,000 or so before the war of 1914.

In the year 1211<sup>\*</sup>, Saladin received 300 Rabbis of England and France who sought to investigate prospects for Jewish immigration. However, nothing came of it, apparently, because some fifty years later, in 1267, there were only two Jews, brothers, living in Jerusalem. Again in the 16th Century, Don Joseph Naxi, Duke of Naxos, under Sultan Selim II, got permission to rebuild the town of Tiberius and repopulate it exclusively with Jews, but apparently nothing came of the project.<sup>3</sup> In 1798 a French Jew proposed the organization of a Jewish Council composed of representatives of all branches of the Jewish population of the world, for the restoration of the Jews to "Their Country"<sup>4</sup> and Napoleon is claimed to have intended to restore the Jews to Palestine, during the Spring of 1799.

Various projects for Jewish colonization in Palestine were initiated in the 19th century, both by Jews and by Gentiles; by the Englishman Colonel Gawler in 1845 (unsuccessful) and by Sir Moses Montefiore, an Italian born Jew whose success as a broker in London--one of twelve Jews permitted to be brokers at that time--made him rich and knighted by the age of forty. In 1854 Montefiore secured land in Palestine and established 54 families and contin-

<sup>3</sup> Jeffries, op.cit. p 31, 33

<sup>4</sup> Harbour, Neville, *MIH Dominus*, London: Geo & Harrop & Co, Ltd. 1946. p 30

<sup>\*</sup> Jeffries, op.cit., p 31. Source not disclosed. As Saladin died in 1193, this incident, if true, must have occurred under his brother, Al-Adil I. (1199-1218).

ued to the end of his life in philanthropic support of Jewish colonies in Palestine. In 1878 two English Christians--the Earl of Shaftesbury and Mr. Laurence Oliphant --took steps to assist the Jews of Jerusalem to acquire 2,500 dunams of land near Jaffa to found the colony of Petah Tikvah.<sup>5</sup>

Before we continue to the modern forming of Zionism and mention of the most prominent individuals connected with it in the latter half of the 19th Century, we should look briefly at the Jews in Eastern Europe. At just the time when the bans and taboos of medievalism were broken in Europe and the spirit of man could adventure free, persecution and disaster imposed themselves upon the Jews of Eastern Europe.<sup>6</sup> The thought and feeling of this large Jewish community turned inward and fed upon itself. The spirit so nourished was a queer and twisted thing of dialectic--irrelevant to the realities of living. It converted changing social customs into everlasting rituals, accidents of fashion in garments and hairdressing into religious vestment, accidents of diet into sacraments. Life throughout this period, which lasted some two hundred years, and aspects of which are still dominant, was for these Jews a somnambulism wherein the community and individual escaped

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5. Barbour, op.cit. p 27, 28.

6. Stein, op.cit. p 32, 33

from the harsh oppression of the poignant facts of their life.

The political event which broke into this somnambulism was the partition of Poland. The partition divided Jewry no less than the Poles, between three new and active forces. Prussian, Austrian and Russian monarchs, much under the infection of the liberal ideas of the 18th Century could not endure that their Jews should be different from their other subjects. They brought to bear upon them all the oppressive pressure of bureaucratic machinery to "modernize" and "assimilate" them. None succeeded in developing any movement toward modernization. The Jews went as far as they were compelled to and no farther, and whenever the pressure was relaxed they reverted to their initial form. Nevertheless they did get modernized with swiftness. The power which achieved this was not, however, political, but intellectual and social, and operated not by force, but by contagion.

This process is usually called "Haskalah" or Enlightenment. It began in Germany, spread thence to Austria and to Russia. Its great protagonist was Moses Mendelsshon, a Polish Jew, came to place and power in Berlin. The movement he began was one to "Germanize"--in his day the equivalent of "Civilize"--all Jews of Eastern Europe in the matter of dress and manners, but the manner of spreading this idea was by Hebrew. Hebrew, the Holy tongue,



was to be used for secular purposes.<sup>7</sup>

## II - THE BEGINNING OF ZIONISM

### A. Pre-Herzl Movements

(Kirsch Kalisher, a Rabbi of the Orthodox Church in Thorn, Prussia, in 1860 wrote that the Jewish people needed to re-interpret their life and destiny--they had been taught to wait for the realization of the Messianic hope through a miracle, but the true basis of realization must be self-help.) The creation of the Alliance Israelite Universelle was due to his inspiration.<sup>8</sup>

The new theory of Jewish nationalism was worked out by a succession of Jewish writers, some writing "on the shoulders" of their predecessors, some writing in complete ignorance of the existence of the others. The foremost, though not the earliest, was Perez Smolenskin, who founded the Hebrew review Ha-Shachar ("The Dawn") in 1869, and carried on an incessant propaganda until his death in 1885. Smolenskin's teaching was a sustained and passionate protest against the view that the Jews had no other duty than that of merging themselves as rapidly as possible in their environment. (The Jews, he declared, were not a sect, but a people--a people with its own culture, its own way of life--a people bound together by common tradi-

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7. Kallen, H.M., Zionism & World Politics,  
London: Wm Heiheman, 1921. pp 65-68.

8. Ibid, p 70.

ditions and common ideals, of which Palestine was the historic symbol. Their first duty was to be themselves and to cherish their own distinctive heritage.)<sup>9</sup> Another important writer was the German Jew, Moses Hess, whose socialist views made him an admirer of French civilization and whose ideas were influenced by Kalischer. (In 1862 he published in German a work entitled "Rome and Jerusalem" in which he expounded the idea that the Messianic era to which Judaism looks forward--and many Gentiles also--referred not to the end of time, but to the epoch when the evolution and education of mankind would be complete. This epoch, he believed, had been inaugurated by the French Revolution. In order that the Jews should play their due part in this it was essential that they should do so as a national entity. "What we have to do today," he said, "for the re-establishment of Jewish national existence is to keep alive the hope of our political rebirth\* and to awaken it where it is dormant. Then, if world events which are preparing in the East make possible a practical beginning of the re-establishment of a Jewish state\*, the next step will be the founding of Jewish colonies in the ancestral land." Hess suggested the acquisition of a territory to serve as a common fatherland and the founding of Jewish societies for agriculture, industry and commerce according to Mosaic

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9. Stein, op.cit., pp 49-50  
\*Underscoring supplied by me.

principles, calling, with Kalischer, on Jewish merchant princes "such as the Jewish people has not seen since the dispersion" to form a Jewish colonization society. Since Jews could not achieve this task unaided Hess anticipated that others--Gentiles; in his case France--would give the necessary assistance, and he cited at least one Frenchman--a certain Ernest Laharanne--as a striking example of the<sup>10</sup> Gentile enthusiast for Zionism.

Hess himself was quite moderate, recommending only a tentative beginning and anticipating that the Jews who were living happily in Western Europe would never wish to leave that area. The influence of Laharanne on Moses Hess makes it clear that the existence of Gentile believers in Zionist ideas encouraged Jews themselves to indulge in hopes that they might otherwise have dismissed as fantastic.

In the somewhat visionary and, indeed, apocalyptic appeals of Hess and this Frenchman, are to be found practically every argument which has since been advanced in favor of Zionism. (Very characteristic in these writings is the dependence of Zionism upon a Gentile Power and the benefits that this Power is to receive in return for its support.) Characteristic also is the determination to restore the fertility of Palestine, together with the belief in the coming regeneration of the Near East and the ambition

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10. Barbour, op.cit. p 37

that the Jews shall be the directing force in it. <sup>11</sup>

We have already noted that the great center of Jewish population and culture in the 18th and 19th centuries was Russia. Under the rule of the reforming Tsar, Alexander II, from 1855 to his assassination in 1881, the movement for the emancipation of the Jews made considerable progress and there arose among educated Jews a considerable enthusiasm for assimilating Russian culture. One of the leaders of this movement was a Jewish doctor in Odessa, Leon Pinsker. This state of affairs was completely changed by the reaction which followed the assassination of the Tsar. A violent outbreak of mob-violence against the Jews occurred in several parts of Southern Russia, and was rapidly followed by others elsewhere. <sup>12</sup> The difficulties of <sup>13</sup> assimilation were suddenly revealed with painful clarity. In the next year restrictive measures, known as the May Laws, were issued against the Jews. Under the shock of these events Pinsker developed a theory of Jewish self-help which he expounded in a book entitled "Auto-emancipation" which pointed out that (the World has been dealing with the Jews distributively; not collectively. Emancipation has been piecemeal, where it has occurred at all. The Jews themselves had been content with this condition. They had themselves denied their national reality, though it stared them in the face. In consequence they have been

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11. Ibid, pp 35-38.

12. Ibid, p 38. Sykes, op.cit., p 131.

13. Jeffries, op.cit. 35-36.

treated as living individual members of a dead nation, whose entity involved them like a ghost, insubstantial, yet real enough to awaken fear and dislike.) As individuals they are twice homeless--of uncertain and ambiguous status in the land of their sojourn and without any homeland to which they can refer or with regard to which they can change their status. Thus they are everywhere in the modern world legally and formally free and socially outcast. The only way to resolve their ambiguity is to create a homeland, a center of corporate reference.<sup>14</sup> It was therefore, necessary to reconstitute the Jews into a nation and to give them an independent existence like that of other nations. To Pinsker, the choice of a locality for the Jewish national center should be left to technical experts and while he thought "If the Holy Land could become our own, that certainly would be best of all. But in the first place it must be ascertained, and this is the point, what land is both accessible and suitable as a safe, undisputed, and productive place of refuge for those Jews of all countries who may be compelled to leave their homes."<sup>15</sup>

For this purpose (Pinsker recommended that a Jewish National Congress should be assembled.) The book aroused much interest. A society was organized in Odessa

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14. Kallen, op.cit., p 81. Goodman, P & Lewis, A. Zionism: Problems & Views, London: 1916, pp 95-96

15. Barbour, op.cit., p 39

with Pinsker at its head. Branches sprang up in many Jewish communities and by 1890, Lovers of Zion, as it was called, had chapters in Austria, Germany, England, Rumania, France and the United States.

Meanwhile Jewish students in Russia were forming themselves into clubs with the intention of emigrating to Palestine as soon as opportunity offered. The best known of these, which was founded in Constantinople in 1882, was given the name BILU (from the initial letters of the words Bet Yaacov lechu vanelcha--"House of Jacob, come, let us go". As a result of the activities of these clubs and societies, several colonies were founded, including some still existing.

By the year 1890 the idea of Jewish colonization of a nature and on a scale which might lead eventually to the constitution of an autonomous Jewish national center was fairly widespread among Russian Jewry.

Besides the activity in Palestine, however, Jewish agricultural colonization was also being attempted on a large scale in the Argentine. This was due to the generosity and energy of the German Jewish millionaire Baron Hirsch, who, after a careful investigation of the possibilities in many continents, had chosen the Argentine as the country most suitable for Jewish colonization on a great

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16. Ibid, pp 33-35

scale. For this reason the Argentinian movement was regarded with great suspicion and anxiety by the enthusiasts for Palestine colonization, although they did not fear the far larger emigration to the United States. They held definitely that Israel's future mission was dependent on contact between the Jews and one particular area of the earth's surface--Palestine. For this reason they took active steps to kill the Argentine scheme. The completeness of their success was to bear results in the rejection by the Russian Delegates of the British offer of Uganda at a later time, when new pogroms in Russia made any offer seem urgently acceptable to Western Jewry.

B. Asher Ginsberg (Ahad Ha'am)

Thus we get an inkling that the newly shaping Zionism--a term invented shortly before the 1890s by Na-<sup>17</sup>than Birnbaum in Vienna --was to Russian Jewry far more than a relief and a remedy; it was to be the enfranchisement of the creative energies of the Jewish people, the conservation and reconsecration of the Hebraic spirit. For them Zionism was primarily the condition of a spiritual and cultural recovery; economic and political changes were tools, not ends in themselves, and tools which they did not understand and could not care for.

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17. Sykes, op.cit., p 141.

The most powerful voice of this conviction was Asher Ginsberg (Ahad Ha'am) then living in Berlin, whose influence upon the Jewish people--Russian Jewry--and on the Zionist Movement, was incalculable.<sup>18</sup> No Jew of modern times has had so profound an influence upon the Jewish people. (He held that each nationality is characterized by a spirit, an essence, a central spontaneity, which expresses itself in all the diverse forms of the National life. The contemporary Jew of the Ghetto is too restricted in his life and vision to be truly expressive of the Jewish spirit; the "emancipated" Jew is too uprooted and errant. The combination of stability and freedom which allows for true emancipation is possible only by the recovery of a fixed center of national culture where the Jew may be a Jew by inclusion and absorption rather than as in the Ghetto by exclusion and rejection. This center is necessarily Palestine.)

This teaching made Ginsberg a protagonist and leader in the movement of the Lovers of Zion. Herzlian Zionism took him by surprise and his relation to it was that of a critical onlooker. The bulk of the Russian Zionists, that is, the bulk of the Zionists, were of his following. They opposed "practical" and "cultural" enterprises to "politi-

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18. Weizmann, Chaim Trial & Error; Harper & Bros, NY, 1949. p 36.



cal" and diplomatic ones; the winning of the spirit to the saving of the body. Their victory was far-reaching, for they modified the temper and spirit of Herzl also--partly by combat, partly by contagion. This is to be observed in all his (Herzl's) publications from 1897 on.<sup>19</sup> Ginsberg was essentially a philosopher and not a man of action; he was what Gandhi was to many Indians, what Mazzini was to young Italy.<sup>20</sup> Many people, both Jews and Gentiles, who took a leading part in this national revival underrated, to the very end, the intense force of the Jewish tradition. Nowhere was this force stronger than in the Pale of Russia.<sup>21</sup>

### C. Herzl.

Fourteen years after Pinsker had put forward his project for the self-emancipation of the Jews, the publication by another Jewish writer of a pamphlet entitled (The Jewish State (Der Judenstaat) had the effect of coordinating the various existing activities and forming them, within a few months, into an organized movement known as "Political Zionism". The author of the pamphlet was a Jewish journalist and playwright by the name of Theodor Herzl. Born in Budapest in 1860; his family moved to Vienna when he was eighteen years old, and for the greater

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19. Kallen, op.cit., pp 76-77

20. Weizmann, op.cit., p 37

21. Sykes, op.cit., p 141

part of his life he gained his living as a contributor to the famous Austrian daily, the Neue Frie Presse. He was an assimilated Jew who did not trouble himself about the strict observance of the Mosaic Law or consider himself bound by the creed of traditional Judaism. He had had little practical acquaintance with the masses of orthodox Jewry during his early life. Nor did he himself greatly suffer from anti-Semitism among his neighbors, apart from the unpleasantness of overhearing an occasional contemptu-<sup>22</sup>ous reference to Jews. In 1895, as correspondent for the newspaper in Paris, he covered the famous Dreyfus trial. He was entirely deceived by the Dreyfus conspiracy. He did not suddenly change his mind on its account, but rather did he regard the hatred it let loose as the last of a long succession of incidents which drove him to abandon his pleasant position in the world, and to labor for the Jewish cause.<sup>23</sup> Immediately after the trial, Herzl, while still quite unaware of Dreyfus' innocence, wrote his pamphlet, The Jewish State, published in February, 1896.<sup>24</sup> (The fundamental idea was that Jews, represented by a Jewish Colonization Society, should acquire a territory in which they should be supreme.) This territory should be large enough to admit the immigration of Jews on such a scale as

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22. Barbour, op.cit., p 42

23. Sykes, op.cit., pp 141-142

24. Ibid, pp 144-145

materially to reduce the pressure of Jewish population in the country of origin. He estimated that for this purpose it would be necessary to withdraw some three to four million Jews from Europe within a period of a few years, at a rate of not less than a quarter of a million annually. This tremendous rate of immigration was essential, for otherwise the natural increase of the population would more than counterbalance the decrease by emigration, as, indeed, happened in the case of the vast immigration into the United States.

By a mass emigration Herzl hoped to achieve two objects. Believing that anti-Semitism depended on the number of Jews in a country, he supposed that its intensity would automatically be reduced as the Jewish population diminished. In the second place, he held that the contempt with which Jews were regarded was not due to anything inherent in the Jewish character, but to the fact that, unlike other nations, they had no territorial center. Thus he, like Pinsker, rejected Philo's principle that Jews were held together by devotion to a center whose significance was religious, and that in all other respects they were members of the nations among whom they lived. The emigration to the United States differed radically from the emigration which he envisaged, in that the motive-power was not to be merely the desire to escape from persecution, or to improve the immigrant's personal position, but the enthusiasm for

forming a United Jewish nation. (Since the driving force of the scheme was to be nationalism and not religion\*, it is not surprising that Herzl himself did not feel that this Jewish territory should necessarily be Palestine.) The essentials, in his opinion, were that it should be large enough to contain the necessary numbers, and, above all\*, that the Jews should acquire supremacy in it.\* "Immigration," he said, "is futile unless based on assured supremacy. . . An infiltration is bound to end in a disaster. It continues until the inevitable moment when the native population feels itself threatened and forces the Government to stop the further influx of Jews." In the case of immigration into a country where the Jews were not supreme, he said, even if anti-Semitism has hitherto been non-existent there, the immigrants will carry the seeds with them in their bundles, and the harvest will not be long delayed.<sup>25</sup>

Herzl's work was divided into two parts; he interviewed as many of the leading statesmen and rulers of the world as he could in an endeavour to organize influential support for his project; this was one-half of his work. With his own people lay the second half, in the establishment of the Zionist congresses. In dealing with the first

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25. Barbour, opcit., p 45.

half we should note a very strange influence on it which was of considerable importance to the Jewish national revival--the influence of Gentile Zionism.

We have already come across an offshoot of this in Ernest Laharanne, the Frenchman; an offshoot because as a Catholic he was quite untypical. Gentile Zionism was best understood by and most widely known to the Protestant world, particularly in England.

Sporadic tracts by Gentile Zionists appeared from the reign of James I (1394-1437). With Evangelicalism, Gentile Zionism became prominent in England once more, and in the course of the 19th century developed two distinct schools: the old-fashioned millennial type, chiefly run by clergymen, and a new type which had a dual interest in the subject; religious and political, and which was for the most part the concern of laymen. In Lord Shaftesbury we can see both schools combined in one person. He was the one who persuaded Lord Palmerston to appoint a British vice-consul in Jerusalem, and further to charge this official with "protection to the Jews generally." In this action Shaftesbury was prompted by Evangelicalism, but we may suppose that Palmerston allowed himself to be guided by his step-son-in-law for Imperial reasons and that Shaftesbury knew this.

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26. Sykes, op.cit., pp 149-151

Millennial-minded references to the Holy Land were common among the English parsons of the 19th century. Such a one was William Hechler, who for some years had held the post of Chaplain to the British Embassy in Vienna. In 1884 he had published a pamphlet called "The Restoration of the Jews to Palestine." Unlike many other Gentile millennialists, Hechler had some experience of Jewish life. When the Russian pogroms broke out he busied himself with philanthropic undertakings; collected money for the settlement of Jews in Palestine and travelled there to help in the work. He was a man who got acquainted with those whom he wished to know by exerting the charm of a mild but impressive personality. In the year 1882 he carried a personal letter from Queen Victoria to Abdul Hamid II. This was one of several missions. In 1896 when he had reached certain conclusions of his own, he read Der Judenstaat, after its first appearance in Vienna. He was amazed at a similarity between the date of its publication and the result of his most recent assessments and he determined to discuss the matter with the author, and did so on March 10th, 1896.

Hechler had a great feeling for royalty. So had Herzl. Hechler, who had an extensive court acquaintance, arranged a meeting between Herzl and the Grand Duke of Baden, who was uncle by marriage to Kaiser Wilhelm II, and ultimately through the Grand Duke arranged a meeting with

the Kaiser. Hechler thus set off Herzl's spectacular diplomatic career. He represented the first meeting between Gentile Zionism and modern Jewish Zionism, a meeting which was to be repeated nearly twenty years later with great and decisive effect.<sup>27</sup>

Herzl's adventures in the courts and ministries of Europe and the Turkish Empire seemed at the time to form a melancholy record of frustration, and aroused the scepticism of the influential Russian Jewish student youth. To them Herzl's pursuit of great men, of princes and rulers, who were to "give us Palestine" was the pursuit of a mirage. There was a general revolt on the part of the Russian Zionists against the Western conception of Zionism, which they felt to be lacking in Jewishness, and in understanding of the Jewish masses. Herzl did not know Russian Jewry; neither did the Westerners who joined him--Max Nordau, Alexander Marmorek, the distinguished physician, Leopold Greenberg, the author and editor of the London Jewish Chronicle, and others. Herzl was quick to learn--not so the others.<sup>28</sup>

Herzl saw what Ahad Ha'am did not, that a full and living culture is not the source, but the outcome of an organized and stable life; that consequently the alternative

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27. Ibid, pp 154

28. Weizmann, op.cit., pp 52-53

to Political action such as Herzl always stood for was not "colonization" or "cultural" activity but one more Ghetto, this time in Palestine, added to the others already existing; that this new Ghetto might be a Hebrew speaking Ghetto and a very learned Ghetto, but, that without self-government and economic competency, it never could be more than a Ghetto. (Hence, in Herzl's view, "cultural" activity might--indeed should--accompany "political" action, but could never be a substitute for it.)<sup>29</sup>

### III - POLITICAL ZIONISM

Herzl's statesmanship aimed inexorably at a Jewish state in Palestine. His round of visits to one European Chancellory after the other made friends for his cause, established precedent and priority for the Zionist Organization as the representative and spokesman of the Jewish people. With England he established a connection which has become tradition for good will, friendliness and co-operation.<sup>30</sup>

In the second half of his work, the establishment of the Zionist congress, Herzl had to contend with a multitude of Jewish enemies. The two great philanthropists of the Jewish world, Baron Hirsch and Baron Rothschild refused to have anything to do with his project; many of the

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29. Kallen, op.cit., p 78

30. Ibid, p 82



Rabbis, including the Chief Rabbi of Vienna were vehemently against it. After much discussion and wrangling, it was decided to hold a Jewish assembly in Basle in August of 1897. This was the first Zionist Congress, the first authoritative assembly of the Jewish nation since its suppression under the Roman Empire.<sup>31</sup> The first Congress was therefore assembled in Basle. Further Congresses were held during the next four years. Subsequently they were held every second year until interrupted by the first World War. Thus, from 1897 world Jewry has to some extent been organized as a political force which represents a Jewish national interest independent of, and possibly conflicting with, the interests of the nations in which the individual Jews lived.<sup>32</sup>

The programme agreed on at the Basle Congress was the following:

"The object of Zionism is the establishment for the Jewish people of a home in Palestine secured by public law.

"The Congress contemplates the following means to the attainment of this end:

- (1) The promotion, on suitable lines, of the colonization of Palestine by Jewish agricultural and industrial workers.
- (2) The organization and binding together of the whole of Jewry by means of appropriate institutions, local and international, in accordance with the laws of each country.

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31. Sykes, op.cit., pp 159-160.

32. Barbour, op.cit., p 46.

- (3) The strengthening and fostering of Jewish national sentiment and consciousness.
- (4) Preparatory steps towards obtaining Government consent where necessary, to the attainment of the aim of Zionism."

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( In this considered statement of Policy, which has come to be known as the Basle Programme, the Jewish State disappears. In its place there emerges the conception of a home for the Jewish people--the germ of the "Jewish National Home" which has since become the accepted formula.)  
That home is to be in Palestine and nowhere else. <sup>34</sup>

The term Heimstatte or "National Home" was the invention of Max Nordau. In an article published in 1920 Nordau made a candid assertion that it was intended to deceive by its mildness and was in no sense an abjuration of the Jewish claim to a Palestinian state. He said: "I did my best to persuade the claimants of the Jewish state in Palestine that we might find a circumlocution that would express all we meant, but would say it in a way so as to avoid provoking the Turkish rulers of the coveted land. I suggested "Heimstatte" as a synonym for "State". . . This is the history of the much commented expression. It was equivocal, but we all understood what it meant. To us it signified "Judenstaat" then and it signifies the same now.

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33. Ibid, p 46

34. Stein, op.cit., p 88

Now there is no reason to dissimulate our real aim." <sup>35</sup> It is interesting to compare this statement with his (Nordau) introduction to Zionism: Problems & Views, edited by Goodman and Lewis and published in February of 1916. In this preface, Nordau stated:

"Zionism has not the ambition of founding an independent Jewish State, be it a kingdom or a republic. All it desires is that its adherents should be allowed to immigrate without any restraint (sic) into Palestine, buy there as much land as they can obtain for their money, to enjoy autonomy of local administration, and not to be hampered in their earnest efforts to create culture and prosperity."

By its very vagueness the phrase "home secured by public law" enabled the Zionist movement to secure the sympathy of a far greater number of Jews than would otherwise have supported the movement. For there were many Jews, comfortably settled in the Western European countries and in the United States who feared that talk of a Jewish state might lead the Governments of the countries in which they lived to suspect that the first political allegiance of their Jewish nationals was to a foreign state. <sup>36</sup>

In his presidential address to the First Zionist Congress, Herzl said, "The Aim of Zionism is to create in Palestine for the Jewish people a publicly recognized home-land\* under legal guarantee." Along with this may be

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35. Sykes, op.cit., p 160 ff

36. Barbour, op.cit., p 47

quoted the words of his precursor, Dr. Pinsker, who in 1881 wrote that the Jews "must be amalgated as a nation among nations,\* by the acquisition of a home\* of their own."

(These assertions demonstrate how the "National Home" phrase found in the Balfour Declaration had been devised by Zionist leaders decades before it was proclaimed as the watchword of Britain's own policy.) Moreover, the word "Home" was to be used by its British borrowers as a pseudonym for a Jewish State while in its period of incubation, but there was never any concealment about its meaning when it was invented by the first Zionist leaders. When Herzl spoke of a "homeland" he meant a sovereign State.<sup>37</sup>

The Zionist Organization was founded to embody the movement, to arrange the Congresses and generally to form a representative body for purposes of negotiation. Its membership rose at one time to 200,000, but declined to 130,000 at the outbreak of the War. In comparison with the number of Jews in the world then, somewhere about thirteen million, this was not a large proportion. The average commercial Jew, the bulk of orthodox rabbis and their congregations fought shy of it.<sup>38</sup>

The Zionist Congresses and its leaders appeared

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37. Jeffries, op.cit., p 39

38. Ibid, p 38 and  
Manuel, F. E., The Realities of American-Palestine Relations, Pub.Aff.Press, Wash.  
DC, 1949, p 162

completely oblivious to the fact that Palestine, the country they intended to have, was already populated by the Arabs. Mr. Stein, one of the few Zionist writers who seems conscious of this blindness, explains that Herzl did "not contemplate any eviction of the Arabs of Palestine in favor of the Jews. He was, to judge from his Congress addresses, hardly aware that Palestine had settled inhabitants, and he had, in perfect good faith, omitted the Arabs from his calculations." However, Ahad Ha'am protested even before the Basle Conference against the folly of Zionist wilful or casual exclusion of the Arabs, and in 1920 wrote, "From the very beginning we have always ignored the Arab people."<sup>39</sup>

It was indeed an anomaly that intelligent, industrious leaders, who, in other projects seeking land for colonization, prudently sent surveying teams out before hand to see whether such land was suitable; yet when determining upon Palestine and making great plans and decisions never took the first step of ascertaining the suitability or availability or condition of the land and its people where these plans are to be realized.

Years went by and congress after congress met on this problem, yet in 1905, a year after Herzl's death, Stein writes that "it was now coming to be realized that

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39. Jeffries, op.cit., pp 40, 42-43

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Palestine was not empty"!

The Sixth Zionist Congress convened soon after fresh pogroms in Russia and the situation of the Russian Jews in 1903 was dark and foreboding. A quick solution to the movement of hundreds of thousands of Russian Jews monopolized the thoughts of many, if not most of the Zionist leaders. At this critical time, Mr. Chamberlain, then Colonial Secretary of the British Government, had just returned from an inspection trip to Africa. He summoned Herzl and made his famous offer of Uganda (now known as Kenya). Chamberlain was an enthusiastic Zionist, but not a millenniast. His interest in Jewish fortunes was financial; he wanted to tie this force to the British Empire. The interview between him and Herzl took place on April 3, 1903. A few days later the Russian Government organized a fresh pogrom in Kishinev, where the attack on the Jewish Quarter lasted 24 hours, resulting in the murder of fifty people, including children, and the injury of more than a thousand. Terror spread; the roads from Russia were crammed anew with refugees. Shortly before the Congress convened, Herzl received official confirmation of the offer--which represented the best colonizing land in Africa.

The letter was read to the Sixth Zionist Congress in Basle, and in Weizman's own words, "the delegates were

electrified by the news. This was the first time in history of Jewry that a great Government had officially negotiated with the elected representatives of the Jewish people. The identity, the legal personality, of the Jewish people had been re-established. . . But as soon as the substance of the offer . . . sank home, a spirit of disquiet, dejection and anxiety spread through the Congress."

Experience had taught Herzl that Zionism must not lose sight of Zion. His view and that of Max Nordau, was that the horrors which surrounded Russian Jewry made some instant means of relief necessary and they explained that Uganda would never be anything but a "Nachtsyl", a halting place on the journey to the Promised Land. But the political instinct of the Russian Jews saw danger and there were tempestuous scenes following the reading of the letter. The Congress voted so evenly on acceptance of the British offer that it was a virtual deadlock. Among the most vehement of the Russian delegates against the proposal--even to the extent of going against his father and brother--was Chaim Weizman, who made a violent speech against the proposal.<sup>41</sup>

The most that Herzl could secure was that the offer should not be refused outright, but a Commission of Inquiry dispatched. Even this Commission, whose report was a fore-

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41. Sykes, op.cit., pp 162-163  
Weizman, op.cit., p 87

gone conclusion, could not set out until certain Christians offered the necessary funds.

Nine months later Herzl, who had for years suffered from heart attacks, collapsed under the strain and died, on July 3, 1904, at the age of 44. The next Zionist Congress--the Seventh, in 1905--while thanking the British Government for the Uganda offer, rejected **it**.

"Political Zionism", which, at that time, meant the direction of Zionist effort to the gaining of a political charter as a preliminary to colonization in Palestine or its neighborhood, continued to be the accepted policy of the majority in the Zionist Congresses until 1911. In the Congress held in that year the leadership passed to the party which favored "Palestinian Zionism" by which was meant the postponement of Jewish political aspirations and the concentration on the practical work of introducing immigrants, buying land and establishing schools. In order to facilitate this policy without arousing suspicion of ulterior aims, Zionist Congresses from this time forth until 1937 made a point of denying that there was, or ever had been, any intention or desire on the part of Jews to establish a Jewish state in Palestine.<sup>42</sup>

Perhaps we should remember one of the last glimpses to be had of the Zionist movement by the outside world as

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42. Barbour, op.cit., p 51



it sank out of sight into a ten-year withdrawal in which little was heard of it, as this glympse might be said to be propnetic of the new personage who was to be so influential in the final phase of the birth of the Balfour Declaration.

The scene is Manchester, England, in the rainy January of 1906, in the constituency of Arthur Balfour during the General Election of that year. The local chairman of the Conservative Party was a man named Charles Dreyfus; a Jew who divided his life between British party politics and the local Zionist organization. One day Balfour asked this man to explain an event of his premiership (he was Prime Minister when Chamberlain made the Uganda offer) which, he said, had utterly baffled his understanding-- that is, the Zionists' rejection of Chamberlain's offer. Dreyfus himself was a member of the "Ugandist" group, but he was a fair-minded man and he told Balfour that there was a member of the other party then in Manchester, who could explain to him the motive of this extraordinary denial. So Balfour arranged with Dreyfus that one evening Weizmann, then a man of thirty-one, practicing Chemistry at Manchester University, should be brought to see him for "a quarter of an hour." Dr. Weizman came to Balfour's hotel and stayed seventy-five minutes endeavoring to explain the foundation of the movement he was one day to lead. After some

time of explanation which he felt was making no impression, and considerable "sweating of blood" he found sudden inspiration and said, "Mr. Balfour, supposing I were to offer you Paris instead of London, would you take it?" "He sat up, looked at me, and answered: 'But Dr. Weizmann, we have London.'" "That is true," I said. 'But we had Jerusalem when London was a marsh.'

"He leaned back, continued to stare at me, and then said two things which I remember vividly: The first was: 'Are there many Jews who think like you?'

"I answered; 'I believe I speak the mind of millions of Jews whom you will never see, and who cannot speak for themselves.'

"Shortly before I withdrew, Balfour said: 'It is curious. The Jews I meet are quite different.'

"I answered: 'Mr. Balfour, you meet the wrong kind of Jews.'

The two men did not see one another again for eight years.<sup>43</sup>

#### IV - ZIONISM AND WORLD WAR I, 1914-1916.

The outbreak of World War I in August of 1914, found the Jews of Europe (outside Russia)--in spite of a certain amount of anti-Semitism--generally following the national

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43. Sykes, op.cit., pp 164-165  
Weizmann, op.cit., pp 109-111

popular patriotic tendencies of their particular countries of residence. In America it was somewhat otherwise. The presence of a great number of refugees from the Russian pogroms impressed Jewish opinion more violently than it did elsewhere, and in the first part of the War, Jewish influence in America tended towards neutrality colored by hopes that Germany would destroy the Romanov Empire. This Jewish disposition later had results of great importance.

In the crisis of 1914, the Chiefs of the Zionist movement did not attempt to impose their own leadership. Their headquarters had for some years been in Berlin. From here they opened a branch office in Copenhagen whence they communicated with their followers on both sides, and one of the first tasks of the Copenhagen office was to inform Zionists that the Executive considered itself neutral. Such a policy was inescapable and (as appears later) very wise, but being in contradiction to the feelings of most Jews it cost the leaders their authority. This was in any case slight. The political fortunes of the movement were low in 1914, and one reason why its followers were unmolested by any of the warring Governments in Europe (The Turkish Government alone took official action against Zionists) was that they were noticed by so few people at the heads of affairs. Nevertheless, to this obscurity in high places there were exceptions of a curious kind. They were to be

found in England. In the early part of the War Zionism became prominent in the minds of several British ministers and public men.

There was no member of the Zionist executive in England in 1914, and so, in spite of discouragements from Copenhagen, and not without some inter-party struggle, the leadership was taken by Weizmann, a member of the "Greater Actions Committee" and the moving spirit in the anti-Ugandist faction.<sup>44</sup> It is worth noting that although, according to Zionist testimony, "the least important or significant group of Zionists" was to be found in England, its funds were mainly concentrated in British banks.<sup>45</sup>

Dr. Weizmann came to England in 1904 and secured a teaching position in Chemistry and the use of a laboratory with the University of Manchester. In 1914 he met Charles Scott, the editor of the Manchester Guardian. As the career of Herzl took a new turn when he met William Hechler, so did that of Weizmann when Jewish Zionism in his person confronted Gentile Zionism once more, in the person of this famous journalist.

Scott was not a Zionist at the time. He was a rather vague Unitarianist, revering Christ as a "moral ideal", hesitating to define the matter further. The passionate

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44. Sykes, op.cit., pp 169-170

45. Jeffries, op.cit., p 88

religion of Zionism with its ancient continuity and visible sacraments of race and soil was much better suited to the mind of this Bible-reading, energetic and able man than the diluted Christianity and perplexed idealism of the Age.

Unconsciously following Hechler, Scott made the Jewish leader known to people in authority, with the difference that these introductions were to men who were all worth knowing. Through Scott Weizmann met Lloyd George, and was re-introduced to Balfour by Lloyd George. The outward purpose in the resulting interviews was to discuss Dr. Weizmann's chemical discoveries and find some means of putting them to war usage, but the perennial interests of Zionism and the fate of the Jews were present from the very beginning. "When Dr. Weizmann was talking of Palestine," Lloyd George confided to a Jewish friend, "he kept bringing up place names which were more familiar to me than those on the Western Front." "You know," said Balfour, at the end of his first meeting with Weizmann in 1914, "I was thinking of that conversation of ours, and I believe that when the guns stop firing you may get your Jerusalem."<sup>46</sup> However, Weizmann did not follow up this advantage as he did not believe the time and place propitious.<sup>47</sup>

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46. Sykes, op.cit., pp 170-171

47. Weizmann, op.cit., p 152

In November of 1914, on the entry of Turkey into the war, Mr. Asquith, the Prime Minister, declared that the Ottoman Government had rung its own death-knell and, in effect, was fair game for pillage. As soon as this occurred, Weizmann started to elaborate his political ideas and produced "definite proposals for the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jews under a British Protectorate."<sup>48</sup> On the day of Asquith's statement, Mr. Herbert Samuel, the first practising Jew to be a member of a British Government, called on Sir Edward Grey, Foreign Secretary, to obtain his sympathy for the "restoration of a Jewish state" following the collapse of Turkish rule, stating in his own words, "Perhaps there might be the opportunity for the fulfilment of the ancient aspiration of the Jewish people and the restoration there (in Palestine) of a Jewish State." "That was at the time," adds Sir Herbert Samuel, "The Zionist proposal."<sup>49</sup> Grey was sympathetic and for the second time in history a British Foreign Secretary gave full and open support to Jewish nationalism.<sup>50</sup> The interview between Samuel and Grey was rather long and covered not only Palestine and the Jews but Syria and France's aspirations there, as well as the

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48. Jeffries, op.cit., p 92

49. Ibid

50. Sykes, op.cit., p 171

position of Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land. That same day Herbert Samuel also saw Lloyd George briefly on the subject and remarked that Lloyd George told him that he (Lloyd George) was "very keen" to see a Jewish state established there.

In January 1915, Sir Herbert Samuel prepared a memorandum on establishing a condition in Palestine by which the Jewish State would gradually come to life, which he sent to Mr. Asquith, who dashed cold water on it, referring to it somewhat sarcastically as "dithyrambic" and effectively blocked any formal progress while he remained as Prime Minister.<sup>51</sup>

Two months later Mr. Samuel ~~d~~<sup>d</sup>istributed a revised version of his memorandum. Certain rhetorical passages had been removed and his practical suggestions for a protectorate had been considerably expanded. Several eminent conversions to Zionism resulted from this document, notably those of Lord Haldane and Lord Bryce. But nothing could move the Prime Minister.<sup>52</sup>

The hopes of Israel began to diminish to their accustomed size, but there is no evidence that any of the Zionist leaders proper dropped the idea of an immediate Jewish State. Weizmann went to Paris in January (1915)

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51. Jeffries, op.cit., pp 94-95

52. Sykes, op.cit., p 172

to sound out French Governmental circles and the British Ambassador recorded his visit on the 25th, noting that the scheme--supposedly having the approval of Grey, Lloyd George, Samuel and Crewe--contemplated the formation of Palestine into an Israelite State under, preferably, the protectorate of England. With Sir Herbert Samuel's memorandum judiciously distributed, the campaign in England was so well launched that the Zionist leaders could give more attention to other countries for a while. Undeterred by the frigid reception of Lord Bertie, the British Ambassador in Paris, Weizmann with his colleagues Sokolov and Tschlenow, returned to Paris. Presently, "full of great hopes," Tschlenow returned to Russia to act as liaison-agent there. 70

Back in England, Weizmann and Sokolov spent most of 1915 in quiet but effective spade-work. Mrs. Blanch Dugdale, in her biography of Balfour, records that "the Zionists had not as yet (sic) access even to the corridors of the Government Offices" but "occasionally they met various Ministers in their homes," and adds that whenever a chance occurred the Zionists pressed the arguments for a British Protectorate.

The British decision to conduct secret negotiations with France for a Syrian understanding, because of a mounting clash of interests there, was finally taken at a meeting of the War Committee held at 10 Downing Street on De-



ember 16, 1915, in the course of which British policy in the Islamic East was examined. Sir Mark Sykes was summoned to express his views and immediately after this he was instructed to begin official talks with Georges Picot, a former French Consul-General in Beirut, who at this time was the Counsellor of the French Embassy in London. In March of 1916, Sykes and Picot went to St. Petersburg to include Russia in their negotiations, which resulted in the famous Sykes-Picot Agreement. <sup>53</sup> \*

At this same time the British Government began sounding out its Allies on the Zionist issue. On March 13, 1916, Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador at Petrograd, sent a document to Sazonov (Russian Foreign Minister) presented apparently in English, in response to telegraphic communication from Sir Edward Grey. This document was published by the Russian Communist Government in 1924. It set forth certain proposals for consideration by the Russian Government. In its issue of January 4, 1925, the Rasvjet, a Russo-Jewish paper published in Paris, the document was reprinted from the Russian and translated as follows:

"In the book, 'The Partition of Asiatic Turkey as per the Secret Documents of the former Foreign Office,' just published by the Soviet Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, there is a document of considerable interest to us. It is called 'A Memorandum of the

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53. Ibid, p 178

British Embassy in Petrograd to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, S. D. Sazanoff,' and is dated March 13, 1916. The Memorandum reads as follows:--

"A telegram has been received from Sir Edward Grey, to the effect that the question of settling Jews in Palestine has been brought to the notice of His Majesty's Government. Although, as is known, many Jews are rather indifferent to the Zionist idea, a very great and most influential part of Jewry in all countries would greatly appreciate the proposal of an agreement relating to Palestine, which would satisfy the aspirations of the Jews.'

"If the above view is correct, it is clear that by utilising the Zionist idea, important political results could be achieved. One of the results would be the conversion of the Jewish elements in the East, the United States of America, and other places, to the cause of the Allies; elements whose attitude is at present rather antagonistic to the Allies.'

"The British Government, as is known, put the question before representative Jews of the various sections of English Jewry, asking for their opinion on the question. The Memorandum quotes one of the very moderate replies received from Mr. Lucien Wolf.'

'If, as a result of the War, Palestine will come into the sphere of the interests of France and Great Britain, the French and British Governments will not fail to take into consideration the historic interests of Jewry in that country. Both Governments will secure for the Jewish population equal political, civil and religious rights with the other inhabitants, municipal rights in the colonies and towns which may appear necessary, as well as reasonable facilities for colonization and immigration.'

"But the British Government, it seems found these demands too moderate.

"The only aim of His Majesty's Government is to find some agreement which would prove an inducement to the majority of Jews and would facilitate the conclusion of an agreement to secure Jewish support. Having this view in consideration, His Majesty's Government is of opinion that a project which would grant the Jews--when the colonists in Palestine have attained a position which will enable them to rival the Arabs in strength--the administration of their own internal affairs in that country (with the exception of Jerusalem and the Holy Places),--such an agreement would be a greater inducement for the majority of Jews. His Majesty's Government does not wish to give any preference to any one form of the solutions

of this problem. It is well aware, however, that an international Protectorate would meet with opposition on the part of influential Jewish sections.'

"[In telegraphically communicating the above, Sir Edward Grey instructs Sir George Buchanan to request the Russian Government to give the question their immediate serious consideration and to ask them to communicate their point of view.'" 54

Actual responsibility for the sending of this telegraphic inquiry in the name of Grey appears never to have been settled<sup>55</sup> but ESCO, using the same source as Jeffries, accepts without question that Grey was responsible for, if not the actual author of, the inquiry and indicates--without giving any source for their information--that the Russians replied to this inquiry and "informed Great Britain that they would not object to a Jewish settlement of Palestine--so long as Russian religious interests in the Holy Land were safeguarded."<sup>56</sup> Lord Curzon's remarks, referring a couple of years later to the conduct of business by the Cabinet at this time illustrate the difficulty of fixing responsibility. He stated that the Cabinet system was "quite impossible in times of War." "The meetings of the Cabinet were most irregular. There were no agenda, there was no order of business. No record whatever was kept of the proceedings. .. The Cabinet often had the very haziest notion as

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54. Stein, op.cit., pp 138-140  
Jeffries, op.cit., pp 101-102  
ESCO (Ethel S.Cohen) Foundation for Palestine Inc., Palestine: New Haven, Yale University Press, 1947, pp 83-85
55. Jeffries, Ibid, pp 103-104
56. ESCO, Ibid, pp 84-85

to what its decisions were. . . It was always congested with business."<sup>57</sup> In any case, the Jewish claim to Palestine was a serious subject of negotiation among the Allies in the summer of 1916.

Weizmann was now connected with the Admiralty as a chemist and saw Lloyd George, then Minister of Munitions, frequently in his work. Lloyd George greatly appreciated the services of Weizmann and suggested recommending him for some high honor, but the latter refused. By October, 1916, Weizmann and Sokolow were given the privilege of sending messages, in code, through the Foreign Office channels. Weizmann's good relations with the Government strengthened his position among the Zionists. In January of 1917 the political committee was dissolved and Weizmann and Sokolow were given full authority to speak in the name of British Zionism, and during the year he was elected President of the English Zionist Federation.<sup>58</sup>

With the drowning of Lord Kitchener on June 5, 1916, the War Cabinet was deprived of the one who knew the most of the Arab situation and Britain's commitments to the Arabs. Mr. Lloyd George, who succeeded him as Secretary for War, as we have already seen, was inclined in another direction.

Matters had now reached such a state that in

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57. Jeffries, op.cit., p 103  
58. ESCO, op.cit., pp 86-87

October 1916, the Zionist Organization felt justified in putting forward a formal statement of its views as to the future government of Palestine in the event of its coming under the control of England and of France.<sup>59</sup> They completed a carefully prepared draft of the Zionist proposals, entitled: "Outline of a Programme for a New Administration of Palestine and for a Jewish Resettlement of Palestine in accordance with the Aspirations of the Zionist Movement." The program was submitted to the Foreign Office as a basis of negotiation much as though the Zionist Organization possessed an internationally established organization, and in accepting this first official Zionist proposal the British Government tacitly recognized that reality.<sup>60</sup>

The Summary of the rather long document recapitulated the Programme in six basic propositions, as follows:

1. The recognition of a separate Jewish nationality or national unit in Palestine.
2. The participation of the Jewish population of Palestine in local self-government insofar as it affects all the inhabitants without distinction.
3. The protection of the rights of minority nationalities.
4. The autonomy in exclusively Jewish matters, such as Jewish education, religious and communal organization.
5. The recognition and legalization of the existing Jewish institutions for the colonization of Palestine.
6. The establishment of a Jewish chartered company for the resettlement of Palestine by Jewish settlers.

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59. Jeffries, op.cit., p 127

60. Ibid, p 128, and ESCO, op.cit., p 88

Among other things "The company should have the right of preemption of crown lands and of the acquisition of concessions; the right to improve, drain, irrigate and cultivate lands; the right to make and maintain harbors, roads and public utilities and systems of transportation of passengers and goods to Palestine".<sup>61</sup> In sum, the right of "eminent domain" commonly associated with sovereign powers.

Another clause ran: "In-as-much as the Jewish population in Palestine forms a community with a distinct nationality and religion, it shall be officially recognized by the suzerain Government or Governments as a separate national unit or nationality" although the Jews at that time in Palestine were a small and not unhomogenous group. Perhaps the most significant clause of all, betraying the attitude of the leaders of the Zionist movement is the following:

"The present population, being too small, too poor, and too little trained to make rapid progress, requires the introduction of a new and progressive element in the population, desirous of devoting all its energies and capital to the work of colonization on modern lines." 62

This sentence, in their "first official proposal", illustrates--and the reference in the final result, the Balfour Declaration itself, to the Arabs who formed nine-tenths

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61. ESCO, op.cit., p 89

62. Jeffries, op.cit., p 129

of the population, as the "existing non-Jewish community" epitomizes--the supreme artistry of the Zionists in implanting insidiously and innocuously, in preambles, qualifying phrases and clauses to other propositions, so that they were accepted without question or overlooked in the argument over the proposition in the foundation of which they were a cunning keystone, ideas tending to produce attitudes favorable to their program.

In leaving this first proposal mention should be made of the remarkable similarity of the "War Aims" Statement, with regard to the Near East, which was issued by the British Government on the entry of the United States in the War in the Spring of 1917.<sup>63</sup> This will be commented on more fully later.

✓ The end of 1916 saw the dissolution of Asquith's Government and the forming of the Second Coalition Government, with Lloyd George replacing Asquith as Prime Minister and Balfour becoming Foreign Secretary. The same change witnessed the eclipse and recall of Sir Henry McMahon, pointing up the decline of Arab interest and knowledge--begun with Kitchener's death--in high places.

The Zionist Executive has recapitulated as follows the course of Zionism in Britain between 1914 and the crit-

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63. Ibid, p 142

ical year of 1917: "During the first months of the War the foundations were laid of a close understanding with the statesmen who guided the destinies of Great Britain. The time was not yet ripe for any formal assurance of support from the British Government. But an atmosphere was created in which, given favorable political conditions, it was possible to hope that such an assurance might be obtained. The friendly atmosphere was intensified during the following two years, and when Mr. Lloyd George became Prime Minister and Mr. Balfour Foreign Secretary, the seeds sown in 1914 were able to bear fruit."<sup>64</sup>

#### V - OFFICIAL NEGOTIATIONS PRECEDING THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

With "Men like Mr. Balfour, Lord Milner, Lord Robert Cecil and myself in whole-hearted sympathy with the Zionist ideal"<sup>65</sup> Lloyd George soon appointed Sir Mark Sykes to negotiate with the Zionists.

Because of the supreme importance to the Zionists of Lloyd George, Balfour and Mark Sykes, it might be well to pause briefly and establish their bent for, and interest in, Zionism.

When Asquith was manoeuvred from power in December 1916, and Lloyd George appointed in his place, a sceptic was replaced by a passionate believer. Asquith never made

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64. Ibid, p 133.

65. Lloyd George, D. The Truth about the Peace Treaties, 2 v, London: V. Gollanz, Ltd, 1938, p 1122



a more remarkable misjudgment of Lloyd George than when he described him as one "Who does not care a damn for the Jews or their past or their future. . ." The contrary would have been much closer to the truth. Lloyd George cared intensely for the Jews; his devotion to them was one of the consistent things in his bewilderingly various nature. His Welsh traditions had filled him with the Bible. He was a man of whom we may say that the Bible had made him. It so happened, too, that the enormous egotism in his nature was on specially good terms with the Jewish people. . . he felt kinship with them, and he prided himself on being one of the few people in the world who understood their character and predicament.

Twenty years or so after The Judenstaat Lloyd George met Herzl. He acted as his adviser in the El Arish negotiations and it was Lloyd George who drew up the draft of a charter for Jewish autonomy at the time of the Uganda proposal. Three years after the Uganda affair, we find him sending a telegram to a Zionist meeting in Wales.<sup>66</sup>

Lloyd George himself says, that "In addition to the gratitude I felt for this service (Weizmann's process for manufacture of acetone for munitions while Lloyd George was Minister of Munitions) he appealed to my deep reverence for the great men of his race who were the authors of the

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66. Sykes, op.cit., pp 189-190

sublime literature upon which I was brought up.<sup>67</sup>

Balfour was raised in lifelong churchmanship; Sunday night prayers and Bible-reading to the assembled household. His mother was a woman of profound religious convictions and it was in an atmosphere saturated with these convictions that his home life was spent. "In the sixties of the last century" Balfour writes, "the so-called 'conflict between religion and science' was in a very acute state. . . . On the side of Biblical criticism the writings (for example) of David Strauss and Renan had begun to ferment in the minds of many educated people. On the scientific side such works as Lyell's Geology and Darwin's Origin of Species had raised cosmological issues which profoundly stirred the religious world. The times (from the point of view of religious speculation) were stormy, and every dabbler in theology or science was profoundly conscious of the fact. Among these dabblers was I."<sup>68</sup>

His college studies were on Theology and Philosophy and their relation to science, and he wrote and lectured on them. It is probable that Balfour's Zionism was influenced by a paper submitted to the Foreign Office by Herbert Sidebotham in the Spring of 1916 (when Balfour was First Lord), since one of the arguments in this document, that the

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67. Lloyd George, op.cit., p 1117

68. Dugdale, Blanche, Arthur James Balfour,  
2 vols, p 414

small gifted Jewish people needed but their ancestral hearth to give the world such treasures as the Ancient Greeks had given from Hellas, was often used by Balfour when discussing Zionism in private.<sup>69</sup>

Balfour was profoundly interested in the connection of the Jewish national movement with a return to Palestine. To him there was a determination behind the Zionist ideology which appealed to him as a philosopher and impressed him as a student of history. . . . He thought of the Zionists as guardians of a continuity of religious and racial tradition that made the unassimilated Jew a great conservative force in world politics."<sup>70</sup>

Mark Sykes was born of Anglican parents; his mother turned to Catholicism when he was three years old, and he grew up to be an unconventional Catholic; of ardent character, he took no decision, either of a public or private kind, without considering his duty as a member of his church. He was the neglected child of parents married against their wills, but the miseries of his childhood and youth left no rancour in his mind towards his parents and he grew up to be the most joyous of happy beings, and the surface of comedy which he showed the world deceived many people as to his true nature, among them T. E. Lawrence, who, remembering him at a distance of a few years, des-

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69. Sykes, op.cit., p 192

70. Dugdale, op.cit., p 216

cribed him in these words; "Laughs were his triumphs. His instincts lay in parody: by choice he was a caricaturist rather than an artist, even in statesmanship. He saw the odd in everything, and missed the even." In reality there was a deep strain of gravity constantly forming his mind and actions.

An early trip to the Orient with his father bent his inclination East and other youthful trips, culminating with an absence granted by an understanding Master while he was at Jesus College, at the turn of the Century, for a trip through the Ottoman Empire, settled his mind. From then on it was his aim to establish himself among the great Orientalists of English tradition. It is doubtful whether he succeeded, but during the fifteen years from this journey to the opening of World War I, he won the approval of scholars and the attention of certain leading men, notably Lord Curzon and Lord Kitchener. When he became a member of Parliament in 1911, this led to political promotion.

It is not known how Mark Sykes became a Zionist, but there is no doubt that it was Dr. Moses Gaster, Chief Rabbi of the Sephardic Community in London who first taught him Zionist principles. It is probable that they came to know each other before 1914 as members of learned Orientalist societies to which they both belonged. According to a

statement in one of Sykes speeches, the Rabbi began to open his eyes to the meaning of Zionism in the last days of 1915.

In the Autumn of that year Sykes had been appointed one of the two "Assistant Secretaries to the War Cabinet". The two assistants enjoyed the rank of Under Secretaries of State; their official duty was to prepare "Intelligence Summaries" for the information of Ministers dealing among other things, with the problems of Islam, but beyond these assignments they were allowed extraordinarily wide powers in the making of policy.<sup>71</sup> Sykes used to visit all the seats of power daily, co-ordinating their information, besides interviewing generals back from the front on leave, ambassadors and ministers, people of every standing and of every description, provided they had something worth telling to tell him. He had the ear of the Cabinet, of course,<sup>72</sup> and was, in sum, a man of the greatest influence.

Sykes had been chosen on Lord Kitchener's recommendation because it was believed that his knowledge of the Turkish empire, together with his partly French education, fitted him to conduct negotiations with the French in regard to the Middle East. At that time the whole structure of the Entente was in danger from French jealousy be-

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71. Sykes, op.cit., 174-177

72. Jeffries, op.cit., p 134

cause of the presence of British armies in a part of the world which many Frenchmen believed they had inherited from the Crusaders. It is more than probable that when Mark Sykes read the Samuel Memorandum, among the papers entrusted to his official care, his first move was to consult Dr. Gaster.

While fascinated by what he learned of Zionism from Dr. Gaster he did not see it as a possible feature of practical policy and the matter lay dormant with him for several months. ✓

The British decision to conduct secret negotiations with France for a Syrian understanding was taken at a meeting of the War Committee as already noted, on December 16, 1915, and Sykes was summoned to express his views, and although he spoke at some length he did not mention Zionism.

In March of 1916 Sykes and Picot went to Russia and in a conversation with Sazonov Sykes discussed the possibility that Zionism might solve the Jewish problem of Russia. Then, after his return to England, he showed in one small incident his growing Zionist sympathies. The Eminent English Jewish scholar, Lucien Wolf, an extreme opponent of Zionism, presented an aide-memoire to the Foreign Office early in 1916, pointing out the dangers of Jewish Nationalism. When the document came to Sykes he prevented its communication to the French Government, although he incurred

an official rebuke by doing so.

About this time Pro-German feelings in America were supposed to be harming the Allied cause and Sykes was instrumental in getting a French propaganda mission, headed by Professor Guillaume Basch of the Sorbonne, sent to the United States to influence American Jewish opinion. The mission was a failure. Sykes was an extremely impetuous man, easily led into enthusiasm, liable to sudden revulsions, and the failure of the Basch mission seems to have thrown him into a state of doubt and irritation concerning his new interest--Zionism. <sup>73</sup> —

One day, in October 1916, about four months later, a Mr. James Malcolm, noting a melancholy in Mark Sykes' expression, asked him what was wrong. Mr. Malcolm was a naturalised Englishman, of a celebrated Perso-Armenian family, a financier by profession and at that time a delegate of the Armenian Catholikos in charge of 11,000 Armenian volunteers who elected to serve under British command in the Eastern Campaigns. He had met Mark Sykes before the war, knew him on familiar terms and used to consult him both officially and unofficially. Sykes replied to his query that he could see no end to the war, and cited current bad news. A decisive victory, or indeed a victory of any kind seemed impossible without American participation

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73. Sykes, op.cit., p 179

on an enormous scale, and reports--all of which he saw--reaching the Cabinet were very discouraging of that likelihood. Mr. Malcolm asked if any progress was being made in winning American opinion. Sykes shook his head saying there was a great extent of Pro-German feeling among influential American Jews.<sup>74</sup> Mr. Malcolm told Sykes that he should have turned to the Zionists. "You are going the wrong way about it," he said, "the well-to-do English Jews you meet and the Jewish clergy are not the real leaders of the Jewish people." Political Zionism of National Zionism, as Mr. Malcolm called it, was the key to influence over the Jewish body in the United States. "You can win the sympathy of Jews everywhere," he added, "in one way only, and that is by offering to try and secure Palestine for them".<sup>75</sup> He then told Sykes of a very curious and powerful influence which Zionists could exert. One of President Wilson's closest advisors and friends was Justice Louis D. Brandeis, a Jew with the passionate Zionist faith of a recent convert. It was believed that Wilson was attached to Brandeis by ties of peculiar hardness, because, so the story ran, in his earlier days the future President had been saved by this man from appearing in a damaging law-suit. It was said that Brandeis was regarded by Wilson as the man to whom he owed his career. These al-

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74. Ibid, p 180

75. Jeffries, op.cit., p 135



legations may have been exaggerations but this situation unadorned was important enough: there could be no doubt that Brandeis was Wilson's intimate adviser, and Brandeis was a Zionist. Although, because of his own treaty (Sykes-Picot Agreement) Sykes did not think such an offer was possible <sup>76</sup> he was inspired anew with Zionism and he discussed the matter with Lord Milner and George Barnes, both of whom shared his predilection. The two Ministers put the matter to the Cabinet again, and the Cabinet, cautiously interested, authorized official conversations, with Malcolm as go-between, but no promise must be made.

During these days of 1916 there had been other meetings between Zionists and British politicians in London, notably between Dr. Weizmann and Arthur Balfour, between Dr. Gaster and Mr. Herbert Samuel, and perhaps most importantly, those which Herbert Sidebotham, a member of C. P. Scott's Manchester staff, and a Zionist of the Oliphant-Gawler "strategic" school, enjoyed with Sir Edward Grey. Lord Cromer came to take a respectful view and wrote an article on Zionism and the Jewish Future for The Spectator. But the main line of action from which the historical process of Zionism moved forward appears to have lain in these conversations during which Malcolm, the Armenian delegate, converted Sykes to believe in Zionism, and the

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76. Ibid

most curious thing about these first scenes of the last act is how little part the Jews themselves played.<sup>77</sup> It is of interest to note (p 135) that Jeffries agrees that "Mr. Malcolm's motives were disinterested; he believed in Zionism as a political force and thought it would be valuable to the Allied cause in America."

Mr. Malcolm then arranged a meeting with Zionist leaders, at the home of Weizmann and told them the situation. They did not appear particularly impressed and Weizmann asked him, "Are you really and personally convinced that the British Government seriously intend to promise Palestine in return for the help of leading American Jews?" Malcolm replied that that was his conviction. Weizmann then asked him, "Do you advise us to accept the British Government's offer?" "Yes," said Mr. Malcolm, "I do." A meeting was then arranged between Sykes and Sokolow for the next day, Weizmann being unable to be present. This was to be the usual pattern of events throughout the negotiations. Dr. Weizmann was the directing mind, but taking little active part in day-to-day business, which was handled by Sokolow, a Jew of Warsaw, of wide cosmopolitan education, the pre-eminent Jewish Journalist of Zionism, manifesting the brilliant and superficial Jewish culture of the age of Diffusion and Emancipation side by side with a passionate inner-pre-occupation

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77. Sykes, op.cit., pp 183-185

with his strict Jewish allegiance.

At this meeting a memorandum was presented to Sykes for him to convey to the Cabinet, and, in addition, Sokolow made a request that the Zionist Committee should have facilities for communications abroad. He pointed out that since they were an international body this was especially needful to them, and he suggested that they should be granted Governmental privileges, since they could thus attain their object while subjecting themselves to the needs of secrecy and censorship. Sykes made the request and got the permission: it was agreed that the War Office and the Foreign Office would send Zionist letters and telegrams<sup>78</sup> by way of Embassies, Consulates or Headquarters.

I believe Christopher Sykes showed a penetrating insight when he wrote: "It is unlikely that any of those who were present at this meeting at No. 9 Buckingham Gate recognized the immense importance of what was happening when these facilities were asked for. It is not too much to say that once the permission had been given the British Government had no alternative but to grant whatever the Zionists demanded, and that they could only get out of so doing by becoming enemies of the Jewish people. . . Great as were the obstacles yet to be overcome before a Governmental declaration could be made, the decision had been

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78. Ibid, pp 185-187

taken on this October day in 1916, and it was irrevocable. The story really ends here, for the rest of what happened between now and the promulgation of the Balfour Declaration, and indeed until the establishment of an Israelite State in Palestine, was in truth only the accomplishment of what was inevitable, little as it seemed so at the time."<sup>79</sup>

Weizmann indicates that the Memorandum presented to Sykes at this meeting for presentation to the Cabinet was indeed the "October Programme" and that Mr. Malcolm was the fortuitous catalyst by which they were given, through Mark Sykes, a quasi-governmental status, and they shrewdly seized this opportunity to present their program.<sup>80</sup>

These events had considerable results and I think it is appropriate and revealing to quote Mr. Samuel Landman, who was Mr. Sokolov's secretary at the time, from an article he wrote in the review World Jewry; Mr. Landman wrote:

"After an understanding had been arrived at between Sir Mark Sykes and Weizmann and Sokolov, it was resolved to send a secret message to Justice Brandeis that the British Cabinet would help the Jews to gain Palestine in return for active Jewish sympathy and for support in the U.S.A. for the Allied cause, so as to bring about a radical pro-Ally tendency in the United States. This message was sent in cipher through the Foreign Office. One of the principal Under-Secretaries at the time was Sir Ronald Graham. He was in the confidence of Sir Mark Sykes and during the whole time he was at the Foreign Office he was of unflinching help to

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79. Ibid, pp 187-188

80. Weizmann, op.cit., p 184

the Zionists. Secret messages were also sent to the Zionist leaders in Russia to hearten them and to obtain their support for the Allied cause, which was being affected by Russian ill-treatment of Jews. Messages were also sent to Jewish leaders in neutral countries, and the result was to strengthen the pro-Ally sympathies of Jews everywhere.

"Through General Macdonogh, who was won over by Fitzmaurice (Mr. G.H.Fitzmaurice, Dragoman of the British Embassy in Constantinople for many years, a man of great influence), Dr. Weizmann was able, about this time, to secure from the Government the service of half a dozen younger Zionists for active work on behalf of Zionism. At that time conscription was in force, and only those who were engaged on work of national importance could be released from active service at the Front. I remember Dr. Weizmann writing a letter to General Macdonogh (Director of Military Operations) and invoking his assistance in obtaining the exemption from active service of Leon Simon, Harry Sacher, Simon Marks, Hyamson Tolkowsky and myself. At Dr. Weizmann's request I was transferred from the War Office (M.I. 9) where I was then working, to the Ministry of Propaganda, which was under Lord Northcliffe, and later to the Zionist office, where I commenced work about December, 1916. Simon Marks actually arrived at the Office in khaki, and immediately set about the task of organizing the office which, as will be easily understood, had to maintain constant communication with Zionists in most countries.

"From that time onwards for several years Zionism was considered an ally of the British Government, and every help and assistance was forthcoming from each government department. Passport or travel difficulties did not exist when a man was recommended by our office. For instance a certificate signed by me was accepted by the Home Office at that time as evidence that an Ottoman Jew was to be treated as a friendly alien and not as an enemy, which was the case with the Turkish subjects." 81

This indeed was an important and portentous step forward. In connection with Fitzmaurice's influence, Christopher Sykes states that the advice of "Fitz" was much sought in the Foreign office and the War Office. Fitzmaurice had known and

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81. Jeffries, op.cit., pp 135-136

admired Mark Sykes in Constantinople, and he now followed him into Zionism. It was Fitzmaurice who converted Sir Henry Wilson, Sir George Macdonogh (The Director of Military Intelligence) and some others. Being a man of violently emotional opinion, he was easily inclined to optimism, and having succeeded so far with his own countrymen, he entertained the ambition of winning over the French, Italian and Russian Governments. Like Mark Sykes, he was a Roman Catholic, and he believed that he could even win the Papal Government to a Zionist policy. He travelled to Rome for the purpose, and in this part of his enormous enterprise he may have influenced events. <sup>82.</sup>

By early 1917 Zionism had thus reached a position where it could hardly be abandoned by a British Government. The meeting at 9 Buckingham Gate was followed by others, among which one held at Dr. Gaster's house on the 7th of February, 1917--a debate of five Jewish leaders with Mark Sykes--has come to be considered as the event which inaugurated the new era. The main purpose of the Jewish argument (at this meeting) was to obtain official agreement that the National Home should be established under British protection. The idea had often been put forward by individuals but never with the urgency and unity of this occasion. Every Jewish speaker insisted on this point. <sup>83</sup>

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82. Sykes, op.cit., p 194

83. Ibid, p 194-195

Present at this meeting were Lord Rothschild, Sir Herbert Samuel, Messrs. James de Rothschild, Cowen, Bentwich, Harry Sacher, Dr. Weizmann and M. Sokolow, all without question well-prepared for this arranged meeting. Dr. Weizmann, Dr. Gaster, M. Sokolow and Mr. Cowen directed the meeting. Bentwich had written that "State sovereignty was not essential to the Jewish national ideal" but he had predicated the concession to Zionist settlements and settlers in Palestine of "special rights" which were equivalent to sovereignty.

Sir Herbert Samuel represented the slowest form of evolutionary Zionism. Mr. Harry Sacher was a sort of proxy for Gentile interests and a direct representative of The Manchester Guardian.

The gathering put no positive proposals to Sir Mark Sykes. But in a negative way it spoke categorically; this was the insistence that there must be no internationalization of Palestine, because Zionists desired a British Protectorate "with full rights to the Jews to develop as a Nation."

The meeting decided to narrow negotiations to fewer people and Sokolow, who was the chief agent in Britain of the International Zionist Executive, was chosen to carry on conversations with Sir Mark Sykes. It was arranged that M. Picot should join them to represent the French

Government. He conferred with Sykes the next day. The minutes of this meeting were communicated in code to the Zionist Organization of the United States.<sup>84</sup>

During the three days following the meeting in Dr. Gaster's house further meetings were held between Zionists and Gentiles. On the 8th of February, Mark Sykes introduced Sokolow to Picot; on the 9th, Picot received Sokolow alone at the French Embassy; on the following day Sykes held a discussion with Sokolow and Dr. Weizmann. At all these meetings the proposal for a British Protectorate was pressed vigorously by the Zionists, and Sokolow did not hesitate to tell Picot that in Jewish eyes British suzerainty in Palestine was preferred to French rule. By his extraordinary skill in argument, by renewing the American proposal (which was already being forgotten), by demonstrating that the assimilation of Jews to Western civilization was not possible in large numbers outside highly cultivated societies such as those of England and France, Sokolow succeeded in making Picot an ally of Zionism, a process which had been begun by Dr. Gaster and Sykes. But it was beyond Picot's ability to agree on behalf of his Government in Paris. There seemed no escape but to approach the French government in Paris to secure official approval of the Zionist aims.

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84. Jeffries, op.cit., p 138



Sykes was due to leave for Egypt in April as Cabinet representative and on the 3rd he attended a meeting at 10 Downing Street where he received his instructions from the Prime Minister and Lord Curzon. Lloyd George (who had spoken to Dr. Weizmann in the same sense on the same day) told Sykes that he was anxious that no Eastern agreement should be made which could disrupt the Entente, adding, nevertheless, that it was of the utmost importance that Zionism should be assured of free growth under British auspices. He was more conscious than his colleagues that the Government was making conflicting pledges. He raised the question as to whether a choice should not be made between an Arab and a Jewish policy, and he insisted that Palestine should be excluded from all agreements with the Arabian princes. This was the only personal intervention of Lloyd George in the negotiations leading to the Balfour Declaration and it served to assure Sykes that the Prime Minister's enthusiasm had not weakened.

A few days later Sykes went to Paris, taking Sokolow and Malcolm with him. There he arranged for Sokolow to meet under-secretaries in the French Foreign Ministry. Sykes stayed only a few days in Paris, and left for Rome in order to discuss British Eastern policy with members of the Italian Government, and with the Vatican authorities.

By astute manoeuvring in Paris and Rome, utilizing

his wide and influential circle of friends, including Papal Assistant Under-secretary for Foreign Affairs, Monsignor Pacelli (subsequently Pope Pius XII) Sykes was the main instrument in securing the formal written support and sympathy of the French Government to the "Renaissance of Jewish Nationality" in Palestine and the interview with the Pope, which Sokolow successfully carried through, securing the Pope's openly expressed approval of a Palestinian regime run by Great Britain.<sup>85</sup> Each success was duly cabled to Zionist organizations everywhere over British controlled cables.

March (1917) saw more practical achievements in London. The Foreign Office sent a note to the War Cabinet endorsing the advantages of British support of Zionism. The Russian revolution had broken out on the 12th, and it was thought that as many Jewish personages were involved in the revolution they might be rendered more favorable to a continuance of alliance with the Western Powers if they were given this sop. In March Weizmann had his first interview with Balfour at the Foreign Office, which was concerned with difficulties arising from French and Italian claims in Palestine. Balfour suggested that, failing agreement with France, it might be best to aim at a Joint Anglo-American Protectorate. Dr. Weizmann was against this and

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85. Sykes, op.cit., pp 197-202

he and his friends were much perturbed by rumours of a Franco-British division of Palestine (Actually, the Sykes-Picot agreement.)<sup>86</sup> C. P. Scott learned of this on a visit to Paris in April. His immediate action, and one which showed the extremity of his belief, was to betray the secret to the Zionists--he told all he knew to Weizmann on April 16, 1917, thus arming him with a certain moral superiority of the utmost value in negotiations of this kind. Nine days later in an interview with the Assistant Secretary of State, Lord Robert Cecil, Weizmann made it clear, in guarded language, that he knew the terms and repeated<sup>87</sup> the objections of the Zionists to an international zone. Lord Cecil renewed the suggestion that the National Home should try to make terms with France by accepting French patronage. Dr. Weizmann would have none of this. Zionist policy was by now unalterable on this point. British patronage was wanted in Palestine because only under the British was there a possibility of independent growth. }  
after a long discussion, Lord Cecil agreed to support<sup>88</sup> the Zionists in this matter. However, as we have just seen (p 63), this difficulty was being successfully negotiated by Sokolow and Sykes even then.

On April 2d, 1917, President Wilson asked Congress

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86. Jeffries, op.cit., p 140  
87. Sykes, op.cit., p 204  
88. Ibid

for a declaration of War on Germany, and within three days negotiations were under way making arrangements for Balfour's visit to the United States.<sup>89</sup> Balfour arrived in Washington on April 22d, and remained until the 22d of May. During his stay Balfour discussed Zionism and his proposed declaration with Brandeis. Both men were impressed with each other and Balfour pledged his personal support of Zionism--in his new position as Foreign Secretary. Palestine was not a part of the Balfour-Wilson negotiations on the conduct of the war, except indirectly: in one of his private talks with Wilson, Balfour informed the President in a "personal," not an "official" capacity, of the existence of secret treaties among the Allies. During the same period Brandeis again raised the subject of Palestine in conversation with Wilson. On May 15, Brandeis cabled Louis de Rothschild in London that he had had "satisfactory" talks with Balfour and with the President, but that this news was "not for publication". Contrary to accepted legend, there is no evidence for a belief that Zionist aspirations had been discussed by Balfour and Wilson, or that Wilson, during their meetings on the conduct of the War, had committed the United States to acceptance of British policy with respect to Palestine.<sup>90</sup>

In December, 1916, President Wilson had sent a note

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89. Dugdale, *op.cit.*, pp 193-194.

90. *Ibid*, p 232, and Manuel, *op.cit.*, p 166

to the belligerent powers appealing for a statement of War Aims giving his belief that the objects of both sides were "virtually the same as stated in general terms to their own peoples and to the world." The official reply of the Allies (England and France) was drafted on January 10, 1917. Balfour felt the reply must be supplemented if the Allied War Aims were to make their full appeal to the American mind and on January 18th he drafted his own despatch upon the Allied Note to the British Ambassador in Washington. President Wilson may have welcomed parts of Balfour's Despatch, but as a whole it made small impression on his mind.<sup>91</sup>

With the entry of the United States into the war a statement of War Aims in the Near East was issued under the auspices of the Government, which was directed in particular towards the Jews of the United States. It ran:

"It is proposed that the following be adopted as the heads of scheme for a Jewish re-settlement of Palestine in accordance with Jewish National aspirations:

"1. Basis of Settlement

Recognition of Palestine as the Jewish National Home.

"2. Status of Jewish Population in Palestine generally.

The Jewish population present and future throughout Palestine is to enjoy and possess full national, political and civil rights.

"3. Immigration into Palestine.

The Suzerain Government shall grant full and free rights of immigration into Palestine to Jews of all countries.

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91. Ibid, pp 189-190

"4. The Establishment of a Chartered Company.

The Suzerain Government shall grant a Charter to a Jewish Company for the colonization and development of Palestine, the Company to have power to acquire and take over any concessions for works of a public character, which may have been or may hereafter be granted by the Suzerain Government and the rights of pre-emption of Crown lands or other lands not held in private or religious ownership, and such other powers and privileges as are usual in Charters or Statutes of similar colonizing bodies.

"5. Communal Autonomy.

Full autonomy is to be enjoyed by Jewish communities throughout Palestine in all matters bearing upon their religious or communal welfare and their education."

After quoting the above War Aim, Jeffries not unjustifiedly exclaims, "What is this 'British' statement of war-aims in the Near East?" and answers, "It is the programme of the previous October, complete with references to the 'suzerain", and with several other of the original phrases re-appearing. When first issued, as the October Programme, it had been termed a 'basis for discussion' between the Zionists and Whitehall. The basis had crept up by now and had become the main structure of the Government's State-<sup>92</sup>ment of Policy."

In this connection, it is interesting to note that while there are no written reports in the United States State Department files for this period on the meetings between the Zionists and the British Government, there is

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92. Jeffries, op.cit., p 142

one document describing high Zionist policy in London which was transmitted to the Department by Brandeis with a brief note in May 1917. Brandeis wrote, "I think you will be interested in enclosed formulation of the Zionist program by Weizmann and his associates and which we approve." The document itself, written on stationery of the Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs, is identical with the previously quoted "British Statement of War-aims in the Near East", with the addition of a brief four-point summary which embraces the six-point summary of the October Programme, with the addition that "The Hebrew language (is) to be recognized as the official language of the Jewish Province."

As far as the State Department is concerned there is no evidence that this "scheme for a Jewish re-settlement of Palestine in accordance with Jewish national aspirations" was ever studied by officials.<sup>93</sup>

I believe, with Jeffries, that it is worthwhile to "stop a moment here to recapitulate the magic steps by which Zionism reached the astonishing position gained in this April Statement." Although his summation is, appropriately, somewhat bitter and sardonic, its essential aptness and succinctness make it worth quoting:

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93. Manuel, op.cit., pp 165-166

"Consider its stages. First of all political Zionism floats in the minds of some adepts. A few books giving its theories, in Russian or German tongues chiefly, come to England. A handful of the adepts also transport themselves to England, and translate, in both senses of that word, their doctrines to this country. In the mind of a Cabinet Minister of their race the culture finds an appropriate medium for growth, and expands, till he eases what has been thronging his brain into a memorandum on paper. This passes to his colleagues and working through them develops, with additions from the original adepts, into a further memorandum, the Petrograd document, which half inquires about this Zionism, half supputes the advantages of patronizing it, if a satisfactory form for it can be found.

"In order to supply this form, the doctrine is tabulated thereon by its original propagators, in a manner which they dub official, but since they have no status, is official for them alone. This is presented to British ministers, to the Ambassador in Paris. Shortly afterwards it is recognized or rather accepted as an official presentation by the Government. Upon which those who presented it by an inevitable process themselves turn into official persons.

"The next step is for the now official Zionist leaders to submit a document, the latest embodiment of all that has gone before, the October Programme, and this the Government says it will take into consideration, thereby half sharing it. Soon, and finally, comes the Government's own announcement of war-aims, which proves to be, in all that matters, identical with this October document. So what began as a remote idea in the heads of a few strangers, in the far parts of Europe, has now become the mind and the policy of the British Empire. And though this development has been crammed into three years, the violence of the process has escaped observation, and has appeared to be in the order of nature."

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The British Government must have made a definite decision to support the Zionist program before May 20th, 1917, for on that day, Weizmann, at a special conference of the Zionist Organization (English Zionist Federation)



announced: "I am entitled to state in this assembly that His Majesty's Government is ready to support our plans."

However, he cautiously prepared those of his hearers who had been expecting the early establishment of a Jewish state against disappointment. <sup>95</sup> He said:

"One reads constantly in the Press and one hears from our friends, both Jewish and non-Jewish, that it is the endeavor of the Zionist Movement immediately to create a Jewish State in Palestine. Our American friends went further than that, and they have even determined the form of this State, by advocating a Jewish Republic. While heartily welcoming all these demonstrations as a genuine manifestation of the Jewish national will, we cannot consider them as safe statesmanship. Strong as the Zionist Movement may be, full of enthusiasm as the Zionists may be, at the present time, it must be obvious to everybody who stands in the midst of the work of the Zionist Organization, and it must be admitted honestly and truly, that the conditions are not yet ripe for the setting up of a state ad hoc. States must be built up slowly, gradually, systematically, and patiently. We, therefore, say that while a creation of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine is our final ideal--an ideal for which the whole of the Zionist Organization is working--the way to achieve it lies through a series of intermediary stages. And one of those intermediary stages which I hope is going to come about as a result of the war, is that the fair country of Palestine will be protected by such a mighty and a just Power as Great Britain. Under the wing of this Power, Jews will be able to develop, and to set up the administrative machinery which, while not interfering with the legitimate interests of the non-Jewish population, would enable us to carry out the Zionist Scheme. (Under-scoring supplied). 96

In concluding, he turned the attention to the internal Jewish situation. He expressed disappointment at the lack of

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95. ESCO, op.cit., p 98; Weizmann, op.cit., p 200  
Jeffries, op.cit., p 150  
96. ESCO, Ibid, p 99

unity in the Jewish ranks. He said that it was a "matter of deep humiliation to every Jew that we cannot stand united at this great hour." He lamented the fact that "There still exists a small minority which disputes the very existence of the Jew<sup>s</sup> as a nation." He added that if it came to a test "there can be no doubt on which side the majority of Jews will be found."<sup>97</sup>

The test came soon enough for four days later Messrs Alexander and Montefiore, Presidents, respectively, of the Anglo-Jewish Association and of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, in the name of the Conjoint Committee of these two bodies, dispatched to The Times a manifesto of protest. Among other things they pointed out that the theories of political Zionism undermined the religious basis of Jewry and ended with the protest that "The (political Zionist) proposal is the more inadmissible because the Jews are and probably long will remain a minority of the population of Palestine, and it might involve them in the bitterest feuds with their neighbours of other races and religions and find deplorable echoes throughout the Orient."<sup>98</sup>

A few days later, Weizmann published a brief reply and was backed by the majority of the vocal element of

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97. Ibid

98. Jeffries, op.cit., pp 147-148

British Jewry. A vote of censure proposed by Dr. Gaster at a meeting of the Board of Deputies was passed by a small margin; Alexander and a number of the Board resigned. However, the Anglo-Jewish Association stood by Montefiore. A new Conjoint Committee was formed and the question of Zionism was declared outside its province. However, anti-Zionist sentiment was crystallizing and the British Government could not neglect the views of the anti-Zionist Jews and their opposition ultimately led to modification of the original formula of the Balfour Declaration.<sup>99</sup>

By the end of April, the British Government was virtually committed. Early in June, Balfour was home from America, assured by his conversations with Mr. Justice Brandeis, and by what he had learned from him (Brandeis) of the President's attitude, that there would be active sympathy there. (There is no evidence that he (Balfour) discussed Palestine with Mr. Wilson himself).<sup>100</sup> (Underscoring supplied).

#### VI - DRAFTS OF THE DECLARATION

Negotiations between the Zionist leaders and the British Cabinet now entered their final stage. Toward the end of June Weizmann, together with Sir Ronald Graham and Lord Rothschild, went to see Mr. Balfour and told him that the time had come for the British Government to give the

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99. Ibid, p 151, and ESCO, op.cit., p 101  
100. Dugdale, op.cit., p 232.

Zionists a definite declaration of support and encouragement. Mr. Balfour promised to do so, and asked Weizmann to submit to him a declaration which would be satisfactory to the Zionists and which he would put before the War Cabinet.<sup>101</sup> Weizmann was then sent by Lloyd George, as the official representative of the British Government!--on a mission to Gibraltar to intercept an American Mission headed by Henry Morgenthau, ex-United States Ambassador to Turkey, which had the purpose of making a separate peace with Turkey. In his own words, Weizmann's instructions from Lloyd George were "to talk to Mr. Morgenthau, and to keep on talking till I had talked him out of this mission." He<sup>102</sup> was successful.

During Weizmann's absence, the Political Committee, under the chairmanship of Sokolow, busied itself with the preparation of the draft. Many different texts were suggested by the members of the committee and by British friends of Zionism. Three main versions were thoroughly discussed at the meetings. The first proposal, by Dr. Ettinger, was considered on July 4th. It read as follows:

"His Majesty's Government, after considering that the Zionist aspirations are right and just, recognizes the right of the Jewish people to Palestine as its National Home, to be secured under the protection of the Sovereign Government that will rule Palestine in the future, following the victory of the Allied Powers.

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101. Weizmann, *op.cit.*, p 203

102. *Ibid*, pp 195-196

"The specific conditions for the realization of this plan shall be defined by negotiation with the representatives of the Zionist Organization. However, in any case, the constitution of Palestine as the Jewish National Home shall be based on the principles of Internal autonomy; the recognition of Palestine as an independent country with boundaries that will be definitely fixed in advance; the granting of a charter to the Zionist Orggnization or to an institution duly created by this organization, for the development of Jewish colonization in Palestine."

A quite different version was discussed at the meeting of July 13; it was submitted in writing by Sidebotham. It made an unequivacol proposal for a Jewish state and contained the famous phrase that was to cause so much trouble later--that Palestine should ultimately become "as Jewish as England is English:"

"His Majesty's Government accepts as one of the chief aims of the war, the reconstitution of an integral Palestine as a Jewish State and as a National Home for the Jewish people. By a Jewish State is meant a state composed not only of Jews, but one whose dominant national character, after the realization of the hopes of its founders, shall be as Jewish as the dominant national character of England is English, of Canada, Canadian, and of Australia, Australian. Religious equality shall always be fundamental to the laws of this state."

. . . . .

The third formula, discussed at the meeting of July 17, was briefer and more general in character, as follows:

"The policy of His Majesty's Government with regard to the future of Palestine shall be guided by the principle that Palestine shall be set up as a National Home of the Jewish people.

"His Majesty's Government shall consider with the Zionist Organization the methods and means for the reconstitution of Palestine as a National Home for the Jewish people as well as the grant of a charter with proper authority to the

to the Zionist institutions."

The formula chosen was a combination of the first and third Drafts and did not mention the Jewish State. It was presented to the Foreign Office the next day, July 18, 1917, by Lord Rothschild as the official Zionist formula. It read as follows:

"H. M. Government, after considering the aims of the Zionist Organization, accepts the principle of recognizing Palestine as the National Home of the Jewish people, and the right of the Jewish people to build up its National Life in Palestine under a protection to be established at the conclusion of Peace, following upon the successful issue of the war.

"H. M. Government regards as essential for the realization of this principle the grant of internal autonomy to the Jewish nationality in Palestine, freedom of immigration for Jews, and the establishment of a Jewish National Colonising Corporation for the re-settlement and economic development of the country.

"The conditions and forms of the internal autonomy and a charter for the Jewish National Colonising Corporation should, in view of H. M. Government, be elaborated in detail and determined with the representatives of the Zionist Organization."

103

Jeffries states that "Drafts went back and forth to the Foreign Office. They also went back and forth over the ocean" (p 163). He also says (same page) that "President Wilson himself lent a hand to the drafting, or at least bent a supervising eye upon the text of the suggestions from England," ". . . and all the drafts of the proposed Declaration were submitted for approval to the White House." However, there appears no evidence that Wilson ever made any endorse-

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103. ESCO, op.cit., pp 102-104; see also Jeffries, op.cit., p 163 & Weizmann, op.cit., p 203.

ment of any kind to any formula until on October 13th, when, in belated reply to calls from Colonel House, his famed aide, for help, he replied to Colonel House, that he "concurred in the formula suggested from the other side."<sup>104</sup> The story of this concurrence will be related later on. Weizmann himself does not claim approval by President Wilson and gives the following version of the situation: "On August 17, I was able to write to Felix Frankfurter, in the United States: 'The draft has been submitted to the Foreign Office and is approved by them, and I heard yesterday, it also meets the approval of the Prime Minister.'" Weizmann continues:

"It remained, of course, to be approved by the War Cabinet--but from the individual expressions of opinion which had come from its members, there cannot be the slightest doubt that without outside interference--entirely from Jews!--the draft would have been accepted early in August, substantially as we submitted it.

"Around September 18, I learned that our declaration had been discussed at a cabinet meeting from which both Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Balfour were absent, and that the sharp intervention of Edwin Montague had caused the withdrawal of the item from the agenda. . . ."

Lord Rothschild and Weizmann "saw Balfour separately, I (Weizmann) on the nineteenth, Lord Rothschild on the twenty-first. I received the utmost encouragement from Balfour."<sup>105</sup>

However, the result of these objections and discussions in the Cabinet, the original draft was modified and a

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104. Manuel, op.cit., p 169

105. Weizmann, op.cit., p 204

new draft was worked out by Lord Milner which was approved by the Foreign Office and the Prime Minister on September 19th. This formula was very brief and had two short clauses:

- "1) H. M. Government accepts the principle that Palestine should be reconstituted as the national home of the Jewish People.
- "2) H. M. Government will use its best endeavors to secure the achievement of the object and will discuss the necessary methods and means with the Zionist Organization."

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Both Jeffries and ESCO state that President Wilson approved the text. However, Weizmann states "I was able to send the following cable to Brandeis on the same day (the 21st): 'Following text declaration has been approved (by) Foreign Office and Prime Minister and submitted War Cabinet: (he quotes above formula) '. "I added that opposition was to be expected and that it would be of great assistance if the text of this declaration received the support of President Wilson and of Brandeis. . . On the twenty-first I had another talk with Smuts--a member of the War Cabinet. . . On the twenty-eighth I talked again with Lloyd George, who had put our memorandum on the agenda of the War Cabinet for October 4. . . When the Palestine Item was laid before the War Cabinet, Edwin Montague made a passionate speech against the proposed move. . . Certain it was that

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106. ESCO, op.cit., p 105  
Jeffries, op.cit., p 164



Montagu's opposition, coupled with the sustained attacks which the tiny anti-Zionist group had been conducting for months . . . was responsible for the compromise formula which the War Cabinet submitted to us a few days later."<sup>107</sup>

It is interesting, at this moment, with reference to Weizmann's description of the opposition as a "tiny anti-Zionist group" to compare Christopher Sykes' description of the opposition. He says, "The anti-Zionist party was very strong. It contained many of the best known Jewish names in England. After June, 1917, it was represented in the Government, as we have seen, by Edwin Montagu--one of the most gifted English Jews ever to appear in the House of Commons. It had valuable Gentile support. Its ideas were echoed by many people in the India Office and Government, who found a spokesman in Lord Curzon. Nevertheless, for all their great strength and influence, the anti-Zionists were defeated in a very short time. One reason is that though, contrary to what Zionists believed, they probably represented a majority opinion of Jews in England, this opinion was unheroic and unsuited to a time of war. . . Another was that with the exception of a few people, such as Edwin Montagu, anti-Zionists did not hold their convictions with the same passion as their opponents did. (Still) Another reason why they failed was that they conducted their

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107. Weizmann, op.cit., pp 204-206

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campaign carelessly.

As a result of this continged opposition, however, the formula--still without approval and support from President Wilson--was modified again, and on October 9th, Weizmann cabled Brandeis as follows:

"The Cabinet after preliminary discussion suggested the following amended formula:

'H. M. Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish Race 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 enjoyed in any other country by such Jews who are fully contented with their existing nationality and citizenship.'

Weizmann continued: (in the cable to Brandeis)

"It is essential to have not only President's approval of text, but his recommendation to grant this declaration without delay. Further, your support and enthusiastic message to us from American Zionists and also prominent non-Zionists most desirable to us. Your support urgently needed."

Weizmann says in his book, "A comparison of the two texts--the one approved by the Foreign Office and the Prime Minister, and the one adopted on October 4, after Montagu's attack--shows a painful recession from what the Government itself was prepared to offer. The first declares that 'Palestine should be reconstituted as the National Home of the Jewish People.' The second speaks of 'the establishment

in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish Race.' The first adds only that the 'Government will use its best endeavors to secure the achievement of this object and will discuss the necessary methods with the Zionist Organization'; the second introduced the subject of the 'civic and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities' in such a fashion as to impute possible oppressive intentions to the Jews!

"We saw the differences only too clearly, but we did not dare to occasion further delay by pressing for the original. . . on October 16, Colonel House, acting for President Wilson, cabled the British Government America's support of the substance of the declaration. This was one of the most important individual factors in breaking the deadlock created by the British Jewish anti-Zionists, and in deciding the British Government to issue its declaration."<sup>109</sup>

Obviously American influence was considered important. We should perhaps recall that the British Government made its first commitment in October 1916--a year previously--for the expressed purpose of favorably influencing American public opinion. Now, at this stage of affairs, Jeffries says, "We must turn to Messrs. Wise and de Haas (along with Brandeis) the most prominent, energet-

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109. Weizmann, op.cit., pp 206-208

tic and influential American Jews--for genuine knowledge of what occurred. Mr. de Haas's individual version is: "The American ascendance in the war-councils led the British to ask for President Wilson's consent and approval of the terminology of the declaration before its issuance. The draft cabled from Government to Government was handed to the Brandeis regime for its approval." (Jeffries' italics). . . The text sent by the British Cabinet for approval in these quarters was the one Weizmann cabled Brandeis on October 9th (page 79 supra) and, of course, as we know from Weizmann, it was he, not the Cabinet which sent it.

Jeffries continues, "Mr. Wise and Mr. de Haas subjected it, in their own words, 'to the most necessary revision.' In the view of the members of the regime it placed Zionism 'on a principle of discontent, which is most undesirable.' They therefore proposed to Colonel House on October 15th to limit the final clause to read 'or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.' After consultation with Justice Brandeis it was submitted to Colonel House, who transmitted this version to President Wilson, upon whose agreement and express authority the final text was issued by the British War Cabinet."<sup>110.</sup>

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<sup>110.</sup> Jeffries, op.cit., pp 169-170

VII - AMERICAN ZIONISM AND ITS PART IN THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

This is an appropriate opportunity to turn to the American scene to see, briefly, American Zionism, its situation, development and alleged influence on the Balfour Declaration. Prior to the outbreak of the First World War the dominant official attitude in the State Department was unfriendly to Zionism as a political movement and to the increase of the Jewish population of Palestine.<sup>111</sup> For Zionism and the new settlement (in Palestine) ambassadors, consuls, and permanent officials in the State Department had nothing but contempt prior to the advent of Woodrow Wilson.<sup>112</sup> With Wilson's administration there was a complete reorientation of policy towards Palestine, the Jews and Zionism. In Brandeis, the protagonist of the new policy in the Wilson administration, there was a far more powerful and effective protector for the Jewish settlement in Palestine than the Jews had had in any of the 19th century ministers or consuls.<sup>113</sup>

Wilson's interest in Zionism was nurtured by Brandeis, one of the men who stood closest to him in the early years of the administration. During the first two years of Wilson's administration there was no marked change within the State Department because the President's views

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111. Manuel, op.cit., p 116

112. Ibid, p 88

113. Ibid, p 89

had not seeped down through the various levels of the Department; but with the outbreak of the World War, when the Jewish community in Palestine faced hardships, the new Wilsonian approach was decisive. This does not imply however, that desk men, counsellors, or even Secretaries of State were convinced of the wisdom of America's active intervention in Palestine affairs.<sup>114</sup>

Throughout the early years of the war American Jews remained divided into two primary groupings. The Zionists, under Brandeis, propagandized for the convocation of a great democratic congress representative of all parties and factions in order to imbue the Jews of the United States with an awareness of their responsibility for the fate of Jews throughout the world and to assume leadership in securing the Palestine homeland. The American Jewish Committee, a group of wealthy Jewish notables under the direction of Louis Marshall, preferred to use their influence behind the scenes on behalf of the suffering Jews in the war zones, without participating in Jewish politics. In general the American Jewish Committee shied away from the Jewish nationalism implicit in the Zionist movement.<sup>115</sup>

Outside of the Jewish communities there was a measure of sympathy for Zionism. Ex-President Taft, in a

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114. Ibid, pp 116-117  
115. Ibid, p 162

Washington speech before the National Geographic Society, said that a definitive solution of the Jewish Problem should form part of the agenda of the Peace Conference; in May 1916 Reverend William Blackstone revived his memorial of 1891 and persuaded the Presbyterian General Assembly to adopt a resolution in favor of a Jewish homeland in Palestine; under Samuel Gompers the American Federation of Labor approved of the idea which thereafter became a standby resolution of its annual conventions. Insofar as American public opinion turned an ear to Zionist doctrine it was not unfavorable.<sup>116</sup>

During the war American Zionist leaders grouped around Brandeis were kept informed of the progress of the London talks between Zionists and the British War Cabinet. They accepted Weizmann's de facto leadership in the negotiations, even though he had no official status on the Executive of the World Zionist Organization. Prior to April 1917 this American support bestowed upon Weizmann great worth in the eyes of the British hoping for participation of the United States in the War; even after American entry the development of enthusiasm in the United States for the European war was still a major concern of British leaders.<sup>117</sup>

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116. Ibid, p 163  
117. Ibid, p 164

In the months of September and October 1917, when the critical details of the final text of the Balfour Declaration were being debated in London and the British were making attempts to draw Wilson in as an active partner in the venture, Colonel House (Wilson's man "Friday"), not Lansing (Secretary of State) carried on the consultations. Lansing could later maintain with complete accuracy that the United States Government had never approved of the Declaration prior to its issuance; he for one had never signed any communications on the subject; and the off-the-record conversations of a Justice of the Supreme Court with Colonel House about a statement the British Government chose to publish were not in his province.

On September 4, 1917, Colonel House wrote Wilson that he had received the following cable from Lord Robert Cecil: "We are being pressed here for a declaration of sympathy with the Zionist movement, and I should be very grateful if you felt able to ascertain unofficially if the President favors such a declaration." The casualness of this inquiry is hardly congruent with the protracted negotiations which the British had devoted to that one long sentence of the Declaration and the scores of drafts which by that time had been composed by Zionists and British officials.

President Wilson, organizing the nation for its



first great foreign war, was not particularly preoccupied with what was, from the viewpoint of American overall interests, a mere detail. Three days after his query Colonel House came back again to prod, reminding Wilson of the Cecil message.

As we have already seen, on September 19th, Weizmann had cabled Brandeis a version tentatively agreed upon by the British with the suggestion that it would be very helpful if both he and President Wilson supported the text. Weizmann simultaneously wired the American Zionists de Haas and Levi-Epstein urging them to galvanize Brandeis and Frankfurter into action. No specific written approval from Wilson was forthcoming. Instead, Brandeis cabled Weizmann on September 24th, apparently at Colonel House's suggestion, advising him to get the French and the Italians to make inquiry about the President's attitude. On the same day another, more affirmative, cable from Brandeis stated that on the basis of previous talks with the President and from opinion voiced by his close advisors (sic) he could say that 'The President was in entire sympathy.' (Underscoring supplied). This again was only a description, not specifically authorized, of what Wilson thought or was represented as thinking. The French and Italians never did ask for Wilson's opinion.

On October 9th Weizmann described to Brandeis

the formidable offense which had been launched by the anti-Zionist British Jews and, as we have already noted, (page 79, supra) this time he called for more than Wilson's general assent; he needed the President's insistence on the specific text, buttressed by telegrams from important Zionists and other American leaders. None arrived. By October 14th Weizmann had to send Brandeis a new formula of the Declaration, this one significantly watered down at the behest of the assimilationist, anti-Zionist English Jews. While the September version had laid down the principle that "Palestine should be reconstituted as the National Home for the Jewish people," by October the Declaration referred only to the "establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people."

On October 13th, more than a month after Colonel House's original note, (dated September 4th) House received the following breezy reply from President Wilson:

"I find in my pocket the memorandum you gave me about the Zionist Movement. I am afraid I did not say to you that I concurred in the formula suggested from the other side. I do, and would be obliged if you would let them know it."

On October 16th House dutifully wrote Wilson:

"I will let the British Government know that the formula they suggest as to the Zionist Movement meets with your approval."

In the meantime, of course, the "formula" had been basically altered, but it is highly dubious from the record

whether Wilson was aware of what version he was approving. During this period he was troubled by the Pope's peace offensive and the course of the Russian Revolution; the Declaration was a minor incident. Under the circumstances it is rather far-fetched to consider Wilson one of the progenitors of the Balfour Declaration. The most that can be said is that he allowed it to happen. The British and many Zionists, in the nature of things, interpreted Wilson's agreement as an act of considered diplomacy, not being aware of the manner in which it was bestowed. As we have seen, Weizmann considered the House note crucial in the final overriding of the powerful opposition of the Montagu group.

A further indication of the true extent of Wilson's attention to the matter of the Balfour Declaration was given less than a month after its issuance. Under pressure to issue a formal approval of the Declaration, Secretary of State Lansing, in a formal letter to President Wilson, on December 13, 1917, analyzed the policy of the United States with reference to issuance of such a formal approval, recommending against it.

The next day, at a cabinet meeting, Wilson returned the letter to Lansing with a comment which the meticulous Secretary of State carefully noted: "The President re-

turned me this letter at Cabinet Meeting, December 14, 1917, saying that very unwillingly he was forced to agree with me, but said that he had an impression that we had assented to the British declaration regarding returning Palestine to the Jews." It was clear that Wilson did not remember precisely or give great weight to the approval of October 13 to which both the British and Zionists attached such importance. He had only an "impression" that he had assented to the Balfour Declaration.<sup>119</sup>

According to de Haas, American Zionists were responsible for a final revision in the text of the Declaration. British Jews, troubled about the problem of dual allegiance, had secured an alteration in the October version to the effect that nothing in the Declaration would prejudice "the rights and political status enjoyed in any other country by such Jews who are fully contented with their existing nationality and citizenship." When the American Zionists received a copy of this text they objected to the last clause because it made of Zionism a mere product of discontent. On October 15th they proposed to Colonel House an excision to make it read simply, "the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country,"-- a change which was duly accepted by the British. At the insistence of Justice Brandeis there was another change--

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119. Ibid, pp 172-173

the award was made to the Jewish "people", instead of the Jewish "race" of an earlier draft.

Apparently Weizmann had envisaged the publication of a statement of formal approval in the United States simultaneously with the issuance of the Declaration. Brandeis disabused him of the prospect; Wilson was not disposed to make a public declaration in connection with the Balfour pronouncement because the United States was not at war with Turkey.<sup>120</sup>

#### VIII - FINAL DRAFT AND ISSUANCE OF THE DECLARATION

So much for the importance of American influence-- which, rather than public opinion, appears to have been the results of a handful of prominent and fortunately placed Zionists. The British Zionists now had the approval--off-hand though it was--of President Wilson, and the road seemed clear. However, the British anti-Zionists had not given up the battle yet. Montagu addressed the Cabinet on Zionism for the last time on October 4th. Two weeks later he left England on an important mission to India--such a fortuitous departure of the sparkplug of the Anti-Zionists' resistance was a remarkable piece of luck for the Zionists and dealt the anti-Zionists a serious blow.<sup>121</sup>

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120. Ibid, p 170

121. Sykes, op.cit., p 221

However, anti-Zionism had not yet been defeated. Lord Curzon remained to fight the last battle, and he, unlike Montagu, was a member of the War Cabinet. He failed, as all the anti-Zionists failed, through insufficient knowledge of his opponents. On the 26th of October he addressed a note to the Foreign Secretary on the final formula. . . He sent the note but did nothing more. It had no effect.

I think it is worth while to see what Lloyd George himself says about this. He says:

"Lord Curzon, whilst professing a certain measure of interest in Zionist dreams, was anxious not to excite unattainable hopes in the breasts of Jewish zealots. He doubted the feasibility of any substantial achievement. . . He prepared a careful statement of his opinion, which can be read with interest today (1938) in view of developments in Palestine since the War. There is a great fund of detailed knowledge of his subject. He was interested in the more immediately practical questions:

"(a) What is the meaning of the phrase 'A National Home for the Jewish Race in Palestine,' and what is the nature of the obligation that we shall assume if we accept this as a principle of British policy?

"(b) If such a policy be pursued what are the chances of its successful realization?"

Curzon noted well the ambiguity of the Term "National Home" and the different interpretations placed on it by the most prominent Zionists themselves, and called attention to these contradictions.<sup>122</sup>

He proceeded further to point out that in any case, Palestine would appear to be incapacitated by physical and other conditions from ever becoming . . . the national home of the Jewish people. He pointed out the numbers of Jews involved, the nature and barrenness of the land and its capacity as regards support of population growth. Curzon Said, "There arises the further question, what is to become of the people of this country? There are over a half million of these, Syrian Arabs. They and their forefathers have occupied the country for the best part of 1,500 years. They till and own the soil, which belongs either to individual or to village communities. They profess the Mohammedan faith. They will not be content either to be expropriated for Jewish immigrants, or to act merely as hewers of wood and drawers of water to the latter.

"Further, there are other settlers who will have to be reckoned with. There are 100,000 Christians, who will not wish to be disturbed. No doubt a prodigal expenditure of wealth will secure the expropriation of some of these. But ... it is clear that a long vista of anxiety, vicissi-

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123. Lloyd George, op.cit., pp1122-1124

tude and expense lies before those who desire to rebuild the national home.

"I spoke earlier of the dreams of those who foresee a Jewish State, with possibly a Jewish capital at Jerusalem. Such a dream is rendered wholly incapable of realization by the conditions of Jerusalem itself. It is a city in which too many peoples and too many religions have a passionate and permanent interest to render any such solution even dimly possible.<sup>124</sup>

"Is it not obvious that a country which cannot within any approximate period contain anything but a small population, which has already an indigenous population of its own of a different race and creed, which can possess no urban centre or capital, and which is suited only to certain forms of agricultural and pastoral development, cannot, save by a very elastic use of the term, be designated as the national home of the Jewish people? . . . If we contemplate no more, is it wise to use language which suggests so much more?

"In reality is not the maximum policy that we can possibly hope to realize one which, if the Turks are defeated and turned out of Palestine, will

(a) Set up some form of European administration (it cannot be Jewish) in that country.

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124. Ibid, pp 1128-1129



(b) Devise a machinery for safeguarding and securing order both in the Christian and in the Jewish Holy Places.

(c) Similarly guarantee the integrity of the Mosque of Omar and vest it in some Moslem body.

(d) Secure to the Jews (but not to the Jews alone) equal civil and religious rights with the other elements in the population.

(e) Arrange as far as possible for land purchase and settlement of returning Jews.

Lord Curzon concluded: "If this is Zionism there is no reason why we should not all be Zionists, and I would gladly give my adhesion to such a policy, all the more that it appears to be recommended by considerations of the highest expediency, and to be urgently demanded as a check or counterblast to the scarcely concealed and sinister political designs of the Germans. But in my judgment it is a policy very widely removed from the romantic and idealistic aspirations of many of the Zionist leaders whose literature I have studied, and, whatever it does, it will not in my judgment provide either a national, a material, or even a spiritual home for any more than a very small section of the Jewish people."<sup>125</sup>

This was indeed a well-reasoned, powerful and prophetic statement. But Lord Curzon should have known, and probably did, that sending it to Balfour's office was simply "filing" it, and one must agree with Lloyd George that

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125. Ibid, pp 1130-1132

by November 1st, when the question came up for final decision, Lord Curzon had withdrawn his objection.

Again the road seemed clear. Then, on the first of November, there were last-minute hesitations among the Ministers. Either through the forgetfulness and confusion that often attend business at the highest levels of the State, or because following the Nivelle disaster the French Government had gone through a rapid succession of changes (there were four changes of Foreign Minister alone between September and December of 1917!), or for some other reason, the Cabinet was suddenly doubtful as to the view of their French allies. (As a matter of fact, at a meeting of the Supreme Council at the Peace Conference in Paris, on February 27, 1919, the French seriously challenged the Balfour Declaration, claiming they had never approved it).<sup>126</sup> At this point Mark Sykes went to the French Embassy for Georges Picot. He said to him: "Can you come immediately to Downing Street and tell the Ministers what the French Government thinks of Zionism? Can you do it straight away without seeking instructions from Paris? There are situations, (Sykes added) in which one must act instantly without referring to others." Picot agreed, saying, "I will come with you and show the Ministers notre formule," (meaning the document given to Sokolow

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126. Ibid, pp 1183-1190

on the 4th of June). Sykes and Picot went to Downing Street. This "formula", the declaration of Jules Cambon, <sup>127</sup> who was Secretary General to the French Foreign Ministry in June 1917, came as a surprise to several Ministers, <sup>128</sup> but it finally made up their minds.

Mr. Balfour then proposed the now famous Declaration. In support of it he stated: "That he gathered that everyone was now agreed that, from a purely diplomatic and political point of view it was desirable. . .

"As to the meaning of the words 'national home', to which the Zionists attach so much importance, he (Balfour) understood it to mean some form of British, American or other protectorate. . . 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."

Lloyd George says, "There has been a good deal of discussion as to the meaning of the words 'Jewish National Home' and whether it involved the setting up of a Jewish National State in Palestine." He continues, "I have already quoted the words actually used by Mr. Balfour when he submitted the Declaration to the Cabinet for its approval. They were not challenged at the time by any mem-

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127. Sykes, op.cit., p 203

128. Ibid, pp 223-224

ber present, and there could be no doubt as to what the Cabinet then had in their minds. It was not their idea that a Jewish State should be set up immediately by the 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.<sup>129</sup>"

On November 2, 1917, after a final discussion in the War Cabinet, Balfour issued the famous letter known as the "Balfour Declaration". It was addressed to Lord Rothschild. In an earlier talk with Balfour, he had asked Weizmann to whom the forthcoming declaration should be addressed and Weizmann suggested Lord Rothschild rather than himself, although he was President of the English Zionist Federation. The text read:

"H. M. Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, and will use their 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 the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

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129. Lloyd George, op.cit., pp 1137-1139

While the cabinet was in session, approving the final text, Weizmann was waiting outside. Sykes brought the document out to him with the exclamation: "Dr Weizmann, it's a boy!" Weizmann writes: "Well--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. A new chapter had opened for us."<sup>130</sup>

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130. Weizmann, op.cit., p 208

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