

University of North Carolina at Asheville

'Jerusalem for Christmas:" The EZF & the Foreign Office's Quest for Palestine in 1903 - 1917
England

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts with major
in History at the University of North Carolina at Asheville.

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28 November 2006

HIST 452-002

Senior Research Seminar

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Abstract

The Balfour Declaration of November 1917 publicly expressed the support of the British government for the creation of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine, but how could such a bold statement be given to Zionism? The answer lies within the British imagination towards their position in the world and to Jews, Judaism, and Jerusalem in particular.. This paper examines how the English Zionist Federation used various misconceptions of the English and entrusted the creation of a Jewish Palestine into Christian England. The Foreign Office, Balfour, and Lloyd George saw Zionism and Palestine as potentially rewarding on a propaganda level, England as a supporter of Jewish prosperity, and for supporting the extension of British influence into Palestine. The Empire's motivation was not solely based on sentiment and imagination but was also driven by political and strategic agendas, yet the focus in history has often been on the political maneuverings rather than the social and religious influences on their decisions. This paper focuses on the non-political motivations and rationale of the Balfour Declaration and the Foreign Office's quest for Palestine and reveals the immense complexity of Balfour's letter.

At the dawn of the twentieth century, the British Empire faced new challenges to the growing decline of its empire, the rising sentiment of self-determination for peoples and the emerging policy of decentralized imperial power led it to look for new alliances in unconventional ways. With the outbreak of the Great War in 1914 the British Empire was forced to defend its prominent position throughout the world, and throughout the war evolving policies tried to answer how it would maintain that position. David Lloyd George's war aims and Near East vision saw the total decimation of the German, Austrian and Ottoman Empires and their reconstruction under the international community. The Foreign Office also wanted to appear as if they were uninterested in expanding British influence while exerting control over new territory. The 2 November 1917 letter from the Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour to Lord Rothschild, of the English Zionist Federation (EZF), while expressing support for the creation of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine also created a complex relationship whereby the British Empire would become the champion of Zionism. Balfour was assisted in his support for Zionism, and its nationalistic endeavors, by the EZF's president Chaim Weizmann who understood that English society was influenced by notions of Christian biblical romanticism and imaginings of Jews, and he used those perceptions to persuade Balfour and the Foreign Office. Thus the Balfour letter grew out of a combination of the Foreign Office's strategic interest and Balfour, Lloyd George's and other prominent Englishmen's imagination of Jews and Zionism.

English biblical romanticism, different from Christian fundamentalism, will be defined as the imagination of English Christians towards Jews, Judaism, and Jerusalem as influenced by Protestantism. English biblical romanticism was not a characteristic of the mass imagination but also a widely held attribute of the ruling elite. The connection between the English bible and the English imagination and identity has been continuous throughout its existence. The English poet,

John Milton declared that, "God reveals himself of his servants and, as his manner is, first to his Englishmen."¹ The English believed they held an esteemed position to carry forth with the Christian message. Since the English identified themselves as the Christian God's chosen nation they absorbed numerous religious works of art and literature into their cultural identity. Often these works included stereotypical depictions of Jews such as the character Shylock in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. The protagonist of George Eliot's 1876 novel *Daniel Deronda* sympathized with a Jewish character that yearned for the re-creation of a Jewish homeland in Israel. Most Edwardian Britons viewed Jews as a homologous group of coreligionists seeking a return to their patriarchal homeland, which ignored the reality that most Jews were content and Zionism only represented a small fraction of Anglo-Jewry. The English commonly used the phrase "Holy Land" to describe the city of Jerusalem and surrounding Palestine. Indeed, John Singer Sargent traveled through Palestine to capture its modern self for his paintings in 1904 because so many English-speaking peoples believed that it had never changed since biblical times. When Zionism emerged the English adapted it into their Christian romantic notions and saw it as a way to fulfill a pre-existing aspiration to control Jerusalem while allowing for the return of the Jewish people to their native land. The English Zionist Federation thus used the English creative imagination by appealing to it to induce political change.

The majority of the existing historiography on Zionism and the Foreign Office's decision on the Balfour Declaration has either focused on one or the other and rarely has an attempt been made to weave the two together. Political histories such as David Vital's three volume history of

¹ John Milton quoted in Peter Ackroyd, *Albion: The Origins of the English Imagination* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), 315.

Zionism² explains the decision making in the Zionist inner circle while Jehuda Reinharz's biographies³ on Chaim Weizmann emphasize his role in the process. Most histories that focus on the English side see the Balfour Declaration as a method of extending traditional imperial influence into new territory. These histories focus on the sources of interest and Britain's securing of those interests in the Middle East and this paper follows those sources of interest as the basis for Britain's maneuverings to secure Palestine.

The Foreign Office also held Palestine as being a place of strategic interest in protecting British trade and goods. By securing a foothold in Palestine, Britain believed it would be able to protect the Suez Canal on both sides, and control rail trade into Egypt. Pre-war conditions limited the British from extending any significant influence into areas controlled by the Ottoman Turks. During the war the Foreign Office was in a predicament since Palestine was still controlled by the Ottoman Empire and in addition the secret Sykes-Picot agreement largely created internationally and French controlled Palestine. In 1917, as an Entente power, they were also bound to the policy of "no annexation and no indemnities"⁴ that had been agreed to largely to pacify and maintain American support. An emerging effort by the Great Powers prior to and during World War I was to champion and aid the self-determination of unrepresented peoples, rather than continue to dominate them.⁵ Zionism offered a solution to these problems since it allowed the Foreign Office to champion a case of self-determination of unrepresented peoples, and have a legitimate claim to Palestine while appearing as the Christian champion of repressed world Jewry.

It was Weizmann who took great efforts to craft his case for the Foreign Office. He first

² David Vital, *Zionism: The Crucial Phase* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) is the most relevant to this time frame.

³ Jehuda Reinharz, *Chaim Weizmann: The Making of a Zionist Leader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985)

⁴ "War Aims: British Policy Re-Stated. Lord R. Cecil and the Chancellor," *Times* (London), 17 May 1917, 7.

⁵ Carole Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878-1938* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 91.

had to direct Zionism's focus away from other locations towards Palestine, which created an internal debate that is important to understand since it follows along within the larger course of British foreign policy. Weizmann truly felt that the EZF would be able to "gain control over *all English* public opinion"⁶ in support of Zionism and use it for their benefit. Weizmann recognized that the Christian misconceptions could be beneficial to Zionism and that England could and would have to play a vital role in order for a Jewish national homeland ever to exist; it would be "some drive worthy of England."⁷ Weizmann was able to use Christian sentiments towards Jews and Palestine together with Britain's imperial desire to prove that Zionism was the perfect fit for any future in Palestine. It is important to note, Britain's interest was not for mass Jewish support but for legitimizing their attempt to secure a dominating role in the post-Ottoman Middle East.

At the end of the nineteenth century, nationalism was the modern way in which people viewed themselves throughout Europe. The Jewish nation entered the twentieth century without a physical homeland. Zionism offered a solution for this homeless condition, calling for Judaism's adaptation into the modern national world. Modern nation states had created identities for its citizens around nationalism based on local interests, but Jews were still strangers in foreign lands, or so Zionism declared. Eastern European Jews were sympathetic to Zionism because they were still subject to pogroms, but how could it persuade an assimilated population such as Anglo-Jewry to support it? Anglo-Jews felt very much threatened by Zionism and felt that it threatened their position as Englishmen by declaring that Jews could never operate freely in a non-Jewish state.

Anglo-Jewry, as much of London, was divided between East and West London with the poor immigrant population inhabiting the slums of East London and the wealthy assimilated

⁶ Chaim Weizmann to Menahem Ussishkin, 26 November 1905, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann*, ed. Leonard Stein (London: Oxford, 1968), 4: 202.

⁷ Chaim Weizmann to Joseph Cowen, 7 February 1907, *Letters*, 5:14.

Jewish population, such as the Rothschilds, living in West London. Anglo-Jewish opinion and makeup had changed in England after the Russo-Turkish War (1876-8). Between 1880 and 1906 the Anglo-Jewish population of 60,000 was flooded with about 150,000 Eastern European Jewish immigrants. Tensions would arise between these immigrants and the English as well as their co-religionists. The prevailing attitude of the Anglo-Jewish establishment was that, "immigrants must be Anglicised. They projected an image of Jewry that was disturbing to those who identified themselves as Englishmen who observed the Jewish religionAnything which identified the Jew as an outsider, as for example the persistent use of Yiddish, was to be discouraged and eradicated during the process of assimilation and acculturation." It was within this society and culture than Chaim Weizmann wanted to create a "resolute nucleus" of Zionist activity in order to secure its future.

Zionism offered a solution that would allow for the religious and traditional continuity of Judaism by allowing Jews to remain unassimilated in their new nation and therefore act as a "great conservative force in world politics,"¹⁰ or so Arthur James Balfour convinced himself. Balfour was convinced that only Zionism could curtail the anti-semitism that was prevalent in all modern societies, and it was only through Zionism that Jewry would remain its identity as a people and a religion. Balfour would become the principal supporter of the Zionist movement in the British government and Foreign Office during these fourteen years.

Balfour's role in ensuring the prominence of Zionism in world history can not be overstated, without his advocacy the project would have continued to be a dream. Balfour admits

⁸ Anne J Kershen and Jonathan A. Remain, *Tradition and Change: A History of Reform Judaism in Britain, 1840-1995* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1995), 96.

⁹ Chaim Weizmann to Moses Gaster, 6 December 1906, *Letters*, 4:337.

¹⁰ Blanche E. C. Dugdale. *Arthur James Balfour: First Earl of Balfour, K.G., O.M., F.R.S., Etc.* (New York:

that he had "always been greatly interested in the Jewish question"¹¹ which to him meant how could Jews exist in a non-Jewish world but how could and what would be the most advantageous solution to that existence. Zionism, as presented to him by Weizmann, was the best solution that offered a way to resolve this question. Weizmann had befriended Balfour at a campaign event in Manchester during the 1906 General Election; it was a friendship that would indeed benefit both parties. Balfour had been aware of the Zionist attempt to persuade the Foreign Office into creating a Jewish colony in East Africa but he saw "it was vain to seek it anywhere but in Palestine"¹² because that was the true Jewish homeland. Balfour had made a mistake in resigning as prime minister in 1905 and it would not be until the Lloyd George Coalition Government that he would be in as prominent government position again as Foreign Secretary.

Balfour considered himself more a philosopher than a politician and during a series of lectures at the University of Glasgow in 1914 he expressed his theories behind theism and humanism. During the course of these lectures he expressed his philosophy of history. Balfour saw that historical "brute facts" were only an abstraction outside of any metaphysical context that assigned any value to them. He saw that history has an "emotional as well as intellectual value"¹³ but these are "contemplative values" that are dependent on our "world-outlook,"¹⁴ or narrative. Once we believe the historical facts to be real we gather a certain aesthetic delight in the ideal of them. The belief is possible through the imaginative enjoyment of attaching ourselves to the larger context of a theistic setting that gives value to human effort and progression. That theistic setting for Balfour, and his colleagues, was the Christian faith.

¹ Arthur James Balfour, "Introduction" in *History of Zionism: 1600 - 1918*, Nahum Sokolow, (London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1919), \:xxix.

² Balfour, "Introduction," 1 :xxx.

³ Arthur James Balfour, *Theism and Humanism: Being the Gifford Lectures Delivered at the University of Glasgow, 1914*, (New York: Kraus Reprint, 1972), 87.

¹⁴ Balfour, *Theism and Humanism*, 87.

Balfour saw that history was still progressing and moving forward, and since he was within that evolving context he should be an active participant.¹⁵ He was convinced that Zionism and its plans to revive the Jewish presence with a united community in Palestine was as important as the other nationalistic movements of the modern world that sprang from their geographic unity.¹⁶ He felt that Israel was the Jewish homeland through their "historic right"¹⁷ and therefore the uniting place for all Jews in the Diaspora. Balfour's understanding of Zionism was distorted through a romantic lens that placed Jews in a homeless state for "nearly nineteen hundred years,"¹⁸ and now he felt to be in the position to break that historical continuum. Balfour's belief that Jews had been homeless since 70 CE assumes the Zionist historical narrative that Jews are aliens in the Diaspora, and can only remedy that through Israel. The hundreds of thousands of Jews living in London were in the wrong homes, and Balfour believed that:

Those who go to Palestine will not be like those who now migrate to London or New York. They will not be animated merely by the desire to lead in happier surroundings the kind of life they formerly led in Eastern Europe. They will go in order to join a civil community which completely harmonizes with their historical and religious sentiments: a community bound to the land it inhabits by something deeper even than custom: a community whose members will suffer from no divided loyalty, nor any temptation to hate the laws under which they are forced to live. To them the material gain should be great; but surely the spiritual gain will be greater still.

¹⁵ Balfour, *Theism and Humanism*, 92.

¹⁶ Dugdale, 2:157.

¹⁷ Dugdale, 2:157.

¹⁸ Balfour, "Introduction" \:xxx.

¹⁹ Balfour, "Introduction," 1 \xxxii.

These immigrants would no longer be conflicted by their "divided loyalty"²⁰ to their 'foreign' land but would be completely committed to their Jewish land and government in Palestine.

Balfour, in a 1922 speech, before the House of Lords, reiterated his belief that the Christian world could now return the favor to Jews by supporting Zionism.

I do not deny that this is an adventure. Are we never to have adventures? Are we never to try new experiments?... Surely, it is in order that we may send a message to every land where the Jewish race has been scattered, a message that will tell them that Christendom is not oblivious of their faith, is not unmindful of the service they have rendered to the great religions of the world, and most of all to the religion that the majority of Your Lordships' house profess, that that we desire to the best of our ability to give them that opportunity of developing, in peace and quietness under British rule, those great gifts which hitherto they have been compelled to bring to fruition in countries that know not

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their language and belong not to their race?

Balfour, keeping with traditional stereotypes, saw Jews as a race that possessed some inherent material and economic advantages for any society that they lived in, which would allow for them to prosper in Palestine. He felt that the Jewish contribution to culture and religion had been unrequited by the Christian world and now the Christian world could return the favor by supporting Zionism. Balfour was convinced by the anti-semitism argument and felt that Zionism would allow for the religious and traditional continuity of Judaism by allowing Jews to remain unassimilated and therefore act as a "great conservative force in world politics." Balfour's rationale for supporting Zionism almost sounds as if he is being led by a sense of guilt.

²⁰ Balfour, "Introduction" 1 :xxxii.

²¹ Arthur James Balfour to House of Lords, 21 June 1922. Quoted in Blanche E. C. Dugdale. *Arthur James Balfour: First Earl of Balfour, K.G., O.M., F.R.S., Etc.* (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1937), 2:158.

Britons carried certain Christian narratives and concepts that were not always accurate, and many of those concerned Jews. Although a relatively liberal society devoid of xenophobic movements, it was not until 1858 that Jews, and other non-Christians, were allowed to sit in the Westminster parliament. Most of the MPs who opposed the measure believed the admission of Jews was incompatible with the Christian character of the English Constitution.²³ While this was an acknowledgement about the rising religious diversity in England, it explicitly restricted Jews from the offices of Lord Chancellor, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and High Commissioner of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.²⁴ Even the "Blood Libel" was still alive in pre-war Britain, and in 1912 a British protest that declared it as "a relic of the days of witchcraft... a cruel and utterly baseless libel on Judaism, and insult to Western culture, and a disonor to the Churches in whose name it has been falsely formulated," was drafted and signed by the Archbishops of the Church of England as well as Arthur Balfour, Francis Darwin, Thomas Hardy and H.G. Wells.²⁵ Even as late as 1929 the Bishop Hensley Henson delivered a charge against Edwin Samuel Montagu for being the Vice Roy of India because a Jew should not be the face of the Christian Empire.²⁶

Christian England still carried its prejudices towards Jews because it was woven into their narratives and negative stereotypes. Looking back in 1923, David Lloyd George summarized the situation against the Jews and Zionists as being one whereby:

the Jews of to-day can do nothing right. If they are rich they are birds of prey. If they are poor they are vermin. If they are in favour of a war it is because they want to exploit the

²³ E.R. Norman, *Church and Society in England, 1770-1970: A Historical Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 116.

²⁴ Norman, 214.

²⁵ "The Blood Libel - British Protest, 1912," *A Book of Jewish Thoughts*, ed. Joseph Herman Hertz (New York: Bloch Publishing, 1941), 181.

²⁶ H. Hensley Henson, *Disestablishment, The Charge Delivered at the Second Quadrennial Visitation of his Diocese* (London, 1929), 59

bloody feuds of the Gentiles to their own profit. If they are anxious for peace they are either instinctive cowards or traitors. If they give generously - and there are no more liberal givers than the Jews - they are doing it for some selfish purpose of their own. If they do not give - then what could one expect for a Jew but avarice? If labour is oppressed by great capital, the greed of the Jew is held responsible. If labour revolts against capital - as it did in Russia - the Jew is blamed for that also. If he lives in a strange land he must be persecuted and programmed out of it. If he wants to go back to his own he must be prevented/ It was under Lloyd George that the Balfour letter²⁷ was sent and it was his vision of the new empire that Zionism fit into. He was pro-Zionist even though he may never have fully understood it, but he did fancy the idea of being a part of the Jewish return to Israel. Lloyd George's contribution and attention to Zionism in no way matches that of Balfour.

Lloyd George was a Welsh Nonconformist and unlike other government officials had humble beginnings. When his Coalition government came to power in 1916 Lloyd George was more interested in the war effort and solving Irish Home Rule than meddling in Zionists' fancies, but he would discover that they could contribute to his imperialistic vision. Lloyd George's support of Irish Home Rule was a part of a larger movement by the Great Powers during the period to restore self-governance and self-determination to peoples who had largely been denied it during the past. The war ideology also saw that, as a Christian nation, England was fighting to restore morality to the world; the rhetoric also employed religious and chivalric language. War supporters saw that, "the Christian ideal of the noblest work on earth is the defence of the weak

²⁷ David Lloyd George, *Where Are We Going?* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1923), 312-3.

and the righting of the wrongs of this world,"²⁸ and in the current war that Christian England could right some of the historical wrongs caused by others. The stress of being a wartime prime minister took its toll on Lloyd George's health, and compounded with the limitations that the Conservatives placed upon his political agenda, he had a limited reach.

Lloyd George's ascension to Prime Minister was based on his attempt to win the war at all costs, and in order to do so he had to re-configure the war to where Britain could make out with an acceptable peace. The stalemate in France in 1916 led Lloyd George to switch the direction of attention and aggression away from the western front and look towards the Ottoman controlled Near East. Lloyd George wanted to ensure that Britain's position in the Near East "shall be there by right of conquest, and shall remain."²⁹ Lloyd George's policy ensured a diminished French influence, contrary to the Sykes-Picot Agreement, and was the front that offered hope and movement for the war effort. In April 1917 the British Cabinet ordered an offensive into Palestine led by General Murray, but Lloyd George soon replaced him with General Allenby. Allenby was given the instructions to conquer Jerusalem by Christmas, and

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produce a needed decisive victory.

Lloyd George's Zionism was one of synergy. He was first exposed to Zionism when his law firm, Lloyd George, Roberts & Co., had been hired as council to represent Herzl's interests before the Colonial Office during the East Africa period,³¹ but he had very little connection to the group otherwise until 1916. Balfour and others, such as Mark Sykes, re-introduced the prospects of Zionism to him. Lloyd George was concerned about the limitations that the Sykes-

²⁸ Wilfrid Ward, "War and the Ideal of Chivalry: Address Delivered at the Aeolian Hall, 5 December 1915," in *For the Right: Essays and Addresses by Members of the "Fight for Right" Movement*, (New York: Putnam's, 1918), 45.

²⁹ Robert Holland, "The British Empire and the Great War, 1914-1918," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Twentieth Century*, ed. Judith Brown. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 134.

³⁰ Holland, 134.

³¹ David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*. (New York: Owl Books, 2001), 271.

Picot agreement placed on the British and the extent of influence it gave to the French. Lloyd George wanted to be able to override that agreement and give Britain a legitimate reason for asserting itself over the Middle East. Zionism was the perfect fit since it gave Lloyd George an opportunity to legitimize the British presence over the French in Palestine because they were championing the self-determination of Jews, rather than aggrandizing their empire. Zionism also fit into his vision of a decentralized empire that only oversaw the individual dominions. Lloyd George believed that "Turkish misrule [had] scared away the pilgrim," from Jerusalem and its holy sites, but now they had to fear no more, and "Hundreds of thousands ought to be treading this sacred ground every year."³² Lloyd George felt that Zionism would create a Palestine from their own labors and cultivation, and the "Jew cultivator" would "heavier and richer crops" than that of the "crude tillage of the Arab peasant,"³³ making Palestine a land of milk and honey once again.

When Weizmann met with Balfour during the 1906 campaign to determine his support of Zionism, Balfour foresaw, "no political difficulties in the attainment of Palestine - only economic difficulties."³⁴ Those "economic difficulties" were a euphemism for the reality that Palestine was not under British control. Balfour was most certainly glossing over their political situation in Westminster but was confident he would be able to persuade them to see his side. Perhaps it was just a campaign promise to garner Jewish immigrant support for the Balfour Conservatives, but rather it remained on Balfour's agenda.

When Balfour used the phrase "Jewish Question" he was alluding to a vast history of Christian attempts to decide what to do with the Jews. This question referenced the debate over the nature and condition of Jews within European nations. Assimilation, emancipation, and

³² David Lloyd George, *Where Are We Going?* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1923), 318.

³³ Lloyd George, *Where Are We Going?*, 316.

³⁴ Chaim Weizmann to Vera Khatzman, 9 January 1906, *Letters*, 4:219.

conversion had all been answers to the question since the French Revolution. The "Jewish Question" also referred to where they should live, whether segregated or integrated from the Christians, or even expelled from the nation altogether. The "Jewish Question" during this period manifested the notion of Christians deciding what to do with Jewish peoples, but now Balfour was intent on understanding the Zionist solution with Jews having a political voice.

In 1903 Western-European Jewry had yet to fully accept political Zionism as a legitimate endeavor. Anglo-Jewry was far from being homologous in their opinions towards Zionism; Jews who opposed Zionism feared that its temporal and political focus would weaken the religious component of Jewish identity. Many Jews, regardless of national inhabitance, rejected the Zionist concept of a non-religious, secular Jewish state in Palestine, because it was a contradiction. Some, such as Isaac Mayer Wise, the founder of Hebrew Union College, felt that Zionism was completely unfounded and ridiculous, because it was the product of a romantic, misguided nostalgia that rejected the current condition of world Jewry.³⁵ Reform Judaism during this period emphasized the universalism of Judaism to overcome anti-Semitism rather than the nationalist idea of political Judaism.³⁶ Judaism was faced with the problem of reconciling religion with nationalism, and whether Zionism was a replacement for traditional Judaism. Asher Hirsch Ginzberg, 1856-1927 (known as Ahad Ha-Am), was an essayist who encouraged the spiritual reawakening of the Jewish people before their establishment of a national homeland in Palestine, and would influence Weizmann's Zionist vision.³⁷ Supporters of Zionism were ultimately convinced that Judaism was inseparable from "Eretz Israel," the land of Israel.³⁸

³⁵ Howard R. Greenstein, *Turning Point: Zionism and Reform Judaism*, Vol 12 of Brown Judaic Studies. (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1981), 10-11. ³⁶Kershen, 116.

Joseph Alder, *Restoring the Jews to their Homeland: Nineteen Centuries in the Quest for Zion*. (Northvale, N.J.: J. Aronson, 1997), 264. ³⁸ Greenstein, 32.

Zionism was dominated by two general schools during its infant years, the political and cultural schools. Cultural Zionism was generally known as Hibbat Zionism, or the "Love of Zion." It was devoted to the resettlement of Jews in Eretz-Israel, but was institutionally weak because it was based on philanthropic rather than political actions.³⁹ Hibbat Zionism focused on the restoration of Hebrew culture, such as the rekindling of the Hebrew language pioneered by Eliezer ben Yehudah. Supporters felt that by raising the national consciousness throughout world-Jewry they could bring forth practical results in Palestine. Hibbat Zionism supported a Jewish settlement in Palestine, but not under political auspices, rather they believed Palestine would become Israel if Jews first restored their ancient culture.

Political Zionism was believed that Jews had to attain diplomatic support for their endeavor before any Jewish settlement in Palestine could be achieved. Modern political Zionism was different in that it rejected the traditional political passivity of Jews and demanded a solution to their lack of political representation. Theodor Herzl, who was concerned about the rise of anti-semitism in Eastern Europe, began the formulation of political Zionism with his book *Der Judenstaat* and then institutionally with the First Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897. Herzl built his argument for Zionism around anti-Semitism and its political manifestations, which was active throughout Eastern Europe. Herzlian Zionism was divided in 1903 when their plan to create a Jewish settlement in British East Africa was derailed by the Colonial Office. The Colonial Office saw that Jewry was not enthusiastic about a Jewish colony in Uganda and indefinitely postponed its creation. Chaim Weizmann never supported the Zionist East Africa project, and had actively been working on building support for Palestine, both within Jewry and the British government.

Weizmann understood the effect Christianity had on English society and the possible implications it could have for Jews if they were to take advantage of this. In 1903 Weizmann was

³⁹ David Vital, *Zionism: The Formative Years*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 9.

little more than a marginal opponent to Theodor Herzl, but his modest role was soon to change. In October of 1903 Weizmann wanted to initiate a university project, Jewish Vacation University, where Jewish students would gather during August and September, traditional holiday months, and study courses concerning "topical national Jewish themes;" of the six courses he outlined was one titled "The influence of the Bible on English Culture," which was to be taught by Professor Gollancz of London University.⁴⁰ This university project was a part of a "greater propaganda effort"⁴¹ to raise awareness and support for Zionism in European Jewry.

Weizmann sought to "change the current policy of opportunism and vacillation for a firm Palestine programme and an organization."⁴² Weizmann was in the minority in trying to reform the Zionism movement by directing its undivided focus on a settlement in Palestine. In a letter to the Zionist Regional Leaders, Weizmann reported on the mood of Nordau, Zangwill, Cowen, Greenburg, Kessler, Gaster, Bentwich, as well as "the London Jewish masses, the I.C.A., and to a degree also of Christian public opinion"⁴³ towards the Africa Question and the possibility of Palestine. Those who supported the East Africa project, such as Zangwill, felt that a recreation of a Jewish home in Palestine was necessary because "the old Jewish tradition, with its sacrifices and prayers, would have to be re-established and would exclude the building of a secular state"⁴⁴ in Palestine. Those who disagreed with the East Africa project did so because they were against the Herzlain system, like Herbert Bentwich who opposed Herzlian Zionism and East Africa because he supported the Hibbat Zion policy. Weizmann felt that the I.C.A. in London would support a Palestine policy but was "under pressure from Lord Rothschild"⁴⁵ to support the

⁴⁰ Chaim Weizmann to Menahem Ussishkin, and Others. 20 October 1903, *Letters*, 3:62.

⁴¹ Chaim Weizmann to Menahem Ussishkin, and Others. 20 October 1903, *Letters*, 3:61.

⁴² Chaim Weizmann, 20 October 1903, *Letters*, 3:63.

⁴³ Chaim Weizmann, 20 October 1903, *Letters*, 3:62.

⁴⁴ Chaim Weizmann, 20 October 1903, *Letters*, 3:62.

⁴⁵ Chaim Weizmann, 20 October 1903, *Letters*, 3:64.

establishment of a large Jewish community in East Africa. This was Nathan Rothschild, First Baron Rothschild, who was the first Jewish member of the House of Lords, who had supported a settlement in East Africa and was unwilling to shift his support. Weizmann blankly dismissed Jewish opponents of Zionism by describing them as nothing more than "assimilated trash."

Weizmann is often criticized for his arrogance⁴⁷ which is apparent in his summary account of the Jewish masses in London, whom he found: "in the throes of an Africa fever, but they are so unenlightened that tomorrow they might be just as easily fired with enthusiasm for America and the day after for Palestine. If this is the so-called voice of the people that our Africans [supporters of East Africa] speak so vociferously about, one can ignore it with a clear conscience."⁴⁸ Weizmann felt that if the masses could be persuaded for East Africa they could just as easily and vehemently into supporting Palestine. Weizmann met with Sir Harry Johnston to discuss the Foreign Office' opinion of the issue, Johnston was the acting Special Commissioner of the British Government in Uganda. Weizmann wanted to understand why he was against the plan, what English public opinion was, why he favored colonization in Palestine, and what the attitude of the British Government was towards Palestine.⁴⁹ Weizmann, through Johnston, was able to glean that Sir Charles Eliot, the High Commissioner, was not favorable for the East Africa plan.

Johnston was also vital to Weizmann's case because he was "quite enthusiastic"⁵¹ about Palestine. In Johnston's opinion, as recorded by Weizmann, "England would have to do this [support a Jewish colony in Palestine] because she could never permit another nation to exert

⁴⁶ Chaim Weizmann to Vera Khatzman. 30 November 1905, *Letters*, 4:210.

⁴⁷ David Vital, *A People Apart: The Jews in Europe: 1789-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 687.

⁴⁸ Chaim Weizmann, 20 October 1903, *Letters*, 3:64.

⁴⁹ Chaim Weizmann, 20 October 1903, *Letters*, 3:65.

⁵⁰ Chaim Weizmann, 20 October 1903, *Letters*, 3:66.

⁵¹ Chaim Weizmann, 20 October 1903, *Letters*, 3:67.

influence in Palestine. But England cannot get Palestine for herself. Further, the English are the people of the Bible and the Zionists will do themselves a great deal of harm if they allow themselves to be diverted from Palestine."⁵² Johnston understood that the English would support the return of the Jews into their biblical and historical homeland of Palestine more than they would support the creation of a Jewish colony elsewhere. The support of Zionism would help Britain have a legitimate purpose for claiming and colonizing Palestine and the support of the British government would subdue any dissenting opinion in Zionism. Weizmann understood how important the British could be for him and he for the British.

Britain could not obtain Palestine for itself in 1903 because it was still under Ottoman rule, but Britain sought after it for several reasons. Prior to the war, Britain foresaw that the decay of Ottoman authority would create an economic and political void in the region. Thus it was in Britain's interest to begin asserting itself in order to establish political predominance in the Near East.⁵³ Britain began establishing its superiority when it entered Egypt in 1875 placing it under British authority; Egypt had become a vital strategic location in 1869 with the opening of the Suez Canal. Britain was intent on ensuring their control of the Suez Canal and other vital trade routes throughout the region. Britain grew concerned by the German-Turkish Baghdad Railway project taking place in Mesopotamia, which threatened Britain's emerging interests in the Persian Gulf region.

In 1907, the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, along with Sir Arthur Nicolson arranged an agreement with the Russian government that sought "the preservation of the *status quo* in the Gulf and maintenance of British trade" but England did not want to disrupt or

⁵² Chaim Weizmann, 20 October 1903, *Letters*, 3:67.

⁵³ Brock Millman, *Pessimism and British War Policy, 1916- 1918* (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 298-9.

"exclude the legitimate trade of any other Power"⁵⁴ in the region. Although Britain's interests in the Middle East were dominated by its control of Egypt and the Suez Canal it desired to maintain and secure the *status quo* by limiting the influence of any threatening party and extending its own control. With Germany threatening the *status quo* with the Baghdad Railway through Persia, Britain wanted to assert itself over this vital form of trade transport and heavily secure its control over the Suez Canal. The Foreign Office wanted to maintain that "British trade shall not be at a disadvantage in the rates which are levied on goods transported,"⁵⁵ by the Germans on the Baghdad Railway. Grey wanted German and Turkish officials to agree to British oversight, "so as to make sure that the rates fixed on British goods were not higher than the rates fixed on goods in which Germany was more interested than we were."⁵⁶ Grey wanted to create a Trans-Persia Railway that was under British control and devoid from Turkish and German authority. The Baghdad Railway is often noted as a source of pre-war conflict between Britain, Germany and the Ottomans, but that source of conflict reveals Britain's rooted interest in controlling the Middle East.

Britain began to recognize the importance the emerging Young Turkey party could have on Britain's role in the Middle East. In 1908 the Young Turk Revolution deposed the Sultan Abdulhamid II and reinstated the constitution and instituted parliamentary rule. The Committee of Union and Progress, the principle Young Turk group, acted to institute its political and social reforms and programs; the CUP was thus the acting public and political party of the Young Turk movement. The term "Young Turk" seems to imply that all who participated were young Turkish nationalists, but the group was widely composed of Albanians, Arabs, Jews, Armenians, and

⁵⁴ Foreign Office. "Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson, 29 August 1907," *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898 - 1914*, (New York: Johnson Reprint, 1967), 4:502.

⁵⁵ Foreign Office. "Extract from Minutes of the Committee of Imperial Defence at a Meeting of May 26, 1911," *British Documents*, 6:786-7.

⁵⁶ Foreign Office, 6:787.

Greeks.⁵⁷ Britain, again misunderstanding the situation, grew worried about possible aggressive military expansion by Ottoman leaders that they may "light the Islamic torch from Calcutta to Morocco"⁵⁸ in order to strengthen their position in the region, which would jeopardize British trade interest and security between Egypt and India.

The Foreign Office was misled, not intentionally, but by prejudice of Sir Gerard Lowther, the ambassador to the Ottoman Empire. Lowther was misled by his assumption that the Young Turkey party was infiltrated and controlled by Jewish interests. He believed that Jews were supplying "the brain, enterprise, money, and strong press influence in Europe"⁵⁹ for the Turkish government. Lowther failed to have any progressive ideas concerning Jewish involvement and was crippled by his reliance on traditional stereotypes. His misinformation extended into believing that Jews hated Russia and now that England was friendly with Russia their hatred would extend towards England, which made Jews anti-British as a result.⁶⁰ Fortunately the Foreign Office did not view Jews in the same light, but Lowther did influence their policy by believing or over estimating, the control world Jewry had over other governments. Lowther thus urged the Foreign Office to support the Zionists in their establishment of a national homeland. He also believed that Zionist Jews "appear determined that no important enterprise shall be started in Mesopotamia without their participation, if not control."⁶¹ England thus had to ally itself with the Zionist Jews if it was to have any involvement in assuring the area was pro-Britain. Although Lowther certainly overestimated the position of the Jews in the Ottoman government this is representative of the belief that any activity in the Middle East would also

⁵⁷ Hasan Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 4.

⁵⁸ Foreign Office. "Sir Gerard Lowther to Sir Edward Grey, 22 August 1910," *British Documents*, 10:6.

⁵⁹ Foreign Office, 10:2.

⁶⁰ Fromkin, 42.

⁶¹ Foreign Office, 10:2.

have to include and support Zionism.

In the spring of 1911, several Arab opposition deputies accused the government of operating under the influence of Zionists and favoring Jews in loan agreements. Liitfi Fikri and Ismail Hakki argued that Zionism was a malady of the state and they believed the Zionist goal was to establish a Jewish state spreading from Palestine to Mesopotamia through the gradual increase of Jewish settlers in the region. Jewish deputies and the Minister of the Interior, Talat, and the Grand Vizier all spoke out against Hakki. The Jewish deputies rejected the linkage of Ottoman Jewry and the Zionists, and the government officials discredited the claim that certain Ottoman Jews were acting under the influence of Zionism. In May 1911, another Arab deputy, Ruhi al-Khalidi, addressed how Jewish settlers had acquired property in Palestine despite legal prohibitions; he blamed government corruption for allowing these Jews to continue to buy land.⁶² Again Talat defended the Jews by responding that they were legally entitled to purchase land anywhere in the empire except in the Hijaz, in western Saudi Arabia. This discussion and criticism of Zionism and Jewish settlement by the Arab deputies failed to incite Ottoman immigration change towards Zionism, but is a reflection of Arab discontent with Jews and Israel. It also shows that Zionists were losing ground with the CUP and Ottoman government and needed a new colonial power to assist their settlement, contrary to Ottoman Arab dissent.

The rift with the Young Turks over the railway caused the Foreign Office no longer to desire a relationship with them after the war and looked for other alliances. With the growing opposition from the Young Turks, the Zionists were beginning to look to other Powers for an alliance,⁶ and it was Weizmann's work in England that showed the greatest feasibility. After the

⁶² Kayali, 104-5.

⁶ For a discussion on Herzlian Zionism's attempts to develop a relationship with the Ottoman Turks see: Mim Kemal Oke, "The Ottoman Empire, Zionism, and the Question of Palestine (1880-1908). *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 14 (Aug. 1982): 329-341.

liberating results of the Russian Revolution in 1917, Weizmann remained resolute that Zionism was a legitimate cause because the sufferings of Russian Jews "were never the cause of Zionism."⁶⁴

Weizmann and the EZF's work was different from the other Zionists in that they were planning on and Allied victory in Palestine rather than continued Turkish sovereignty. Weizmann's "final ideal" for the EZF remained for it to focus on "the creation of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine." This should be performed through a "series of intermediary stages" beginning with the immigration of Jews into Palestine, but these stages could only be done under the auspices of "a mighty and just Power as Great Britain" and it is under British control that the Zionists could "set up the administrative machinery...would enable us to carry out the Zionist scheme."⁶⁵ By May 1917, Weizmann had indeed been negotiating with the British government for a statement of support and was only waiting on the Foreign Office, which he was confident would soon act now that the British Army had entered Palestine.

In a letter dated 17 May 1917, the Conjoint Foreign Committee of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Anglo-Jewish Association outlined its criticisms of Zionism; the letter was signed by David Alexander, president of the Board of Deputies, and Claude Montefiore, president of the Anglo-Jewish Association. The letter was critical of Weizmann's policy of "a much larger scheme of an essentially political character,"⁶⁶ which was unlike the agreed plan of submitting to the British Government a proposal securing "the enjoyment of civil and religious liberty"⁶⁷ of Jewish settlers within Palestine. Alexander and Montefiore based their rejection of these new Zionist aims on the claim that the Jewish settlements in Palestine would be

⁶⁴ Chaim Weizmann, Speech at English Zionist Conference, London, 20 May 1917, "Conditions Not Ripe for a Jewish State," *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann*, Series B, ed. Barnet Litvionff (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1983), 1:156. ⁵⁵ Weizmann, *Papers*, 1:158.

⁶⁶ "The Future of The Jews: Palestine and Zionism," *Times* (London), 24 May 1917, 5, Late War Edition.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

"possessing a national character in a political sense" which is only possible if Jews are "incapable of complete social and political identification with the nations among whom they dwell."⁶⁸ This political Zionism based in Palestine would "have the effect throughout the world of stamping the Jews as strangers in their native lands, and of undermining their hard-won position as citizens and nationals of those lands."⁶⁹ A policy of Jewish political nationality is thus "an anachronism" because it rejects the identity of Jews as being a "religious community"⁷⁰ and substitutes a political identity. The Conjoint Committee also foresaw the possibility of problems arising "because the Jews are, and will probably long remain, a minority of the population of Palestine," and with their politically superior position "might involve them in the bitterest feuds with neighbors of other races and religions, which would seriously retard their progress, and would find deplorable echoes throughout the Orient."⁷¹ Based on these two points the political plan is "inadmissible" and should be abandoned. Alexander and Montefiore's letter entered the record for opposing Weizmann's plan but it would cost them their leadership. During a meeting of the Conjoint Committee on 17 June 1917 the committee expressed their disagreement with their board and its manifesto published in the *Times* on the 24th of May and called for the resignation of Alexander, Montefiore, and other officers on the board. The proposal was supported by Lord Rothschild, Walter Rothschild, 2nd Baron Rothschild, and was carried by a vote of 56 to 51.⁷² This episode shows both the criticism that some were voicing towards Weizmann's policy, but that the majority of Anglo-Jews were in favor of the proposal despite the possible repercussions.

Fellow Englishmen, from outside the Jewish community, criticized the Balfour letter and 'Zionist Controversy: Resignation of Jewish Officials,' *Times* (London), 18 June 1917, 5, Late War Edition.

Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

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Zionism. One Christian anti-Zionist critic was Herbert Gibbons, an author and essayist, who argued against Zionism because it conflicted with Arab self-determination. Gibbons essay was published in *Century* in January 1919 and displays his suspicions of Britain's aims in Palestine, believing them to be imperialistic, damaging to Anglo-French and Jewish-Arab relations. Gibbons felt that the timing of Balfour's declaration was not happenstance, but the result of "knowledge that General Allenby was ready to capture Jerusalem,"⁷³ and that Britain had to legitimize their presence in Palestine. Gibbons believed that Weizmann was "ready to enlist Zionism officially in the task of making Palestine virtually a British protectorate"⁷⁴ if they would just allow the settlement. Gibbons felt that the relationship between Weizmann and Balfour was reciprocal because it allowed for Britain to have a legitimate claim to protecting Palestine which in turn allowed for "Egypt and the Suez Canal to be covered,"⁷⁵ which gave Zionism a settlement in Palestine. Britain was thus the friend and protector of world Jewry while also the new dominate force in the post-Ottoman Middle East. British control of Palestine was aimed also at limiting French presence throughout the area, and would also undermine international projects. Gibbons felt that Britain had planned and was "using Zionism to prevent condominium with France and other nations in Palestine, to establish an all rail British route from Haifa to Bassorah."⁷⁶ Britain was using Zionism to avoid having to collaborate on their railway and would thus be able to set the prices they wanted. Gibbons also believed the Balfour letter was an "official British sanction to the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine by means of wholesale immigration and buying up of the land"⁷⁷ resulting in a displaced Arab population. Zionism was thus an invading force and causing animosity to rise between Arab and Jewish

⁷³ Herbert Adams Gibbons, *Zionism and the World Peace*, *Century*, January 1919. New York, 370.

⁷⁴ Gibbons, 370.

⁷⁵ Gibbons, 370.

⁷⁶ Gibbons, 371.

⁷⁷ Gibbons, 369.

populations. Gibbons believes that Moslems would withdraw *aman* because Jews making an "assertion of independence"⁷⁸ which justified the need for jihad to be waged against Jews.

On 2 November 1917 the Foreign Office changed the course of Zionism with its public announcement of its support for the creation of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine. The letter was sent to Lord Rothschild of the EZF and signed by Balfour; the *Times* ran the letter a week later, 9 November. Weizmann expressed his gratitude to Balfour by stating that "no Government is more qualified and no people more called upon by its noble traditions to take the leading part in this work of civilization"⁷⁹ than that of Great Britain. The English press and public felt that the Balfour letter and the British effort in Palestine had "added another chapter of the Bible - a modern chapter."⁸⁰ Indeed the public's religious imagination was fully awake now that their army was treading into the land of their Bible. Dr. Stephen Wise, of the EZF, said that what Zionists were rejoicing over was only a scrap of paper, "but that scrap of paper is written in England, it is signed by the British Government, and therefore sacred and inviolable."⁸¹ Dr. Glazebrook, also of the E.Z.F, continued to say that, "If Palestine is to be restored to Israel, [Jews must] remember that Palestine and Syria must remain in the hands of the Allies, and our most important lesson just now ... is that you see and do your whole, complete duty in this war -

by helping to secure success for Britain, France, Italy, and America." Zionists had finally achieved a massive public diplomatic success, now they only had to wait for Allied victory.

The British Army had suffered tremendous losses in 1916 and 1917 during the battles of the Somme, Passchendaele and others. Also Germany's unrestricted submarine warfare and the

⁷⁸ Gibbons, 373.

⁷⁹ Chaim Weizmann to Arthur James Balfour, 19 November 1917, *Letters*, 13:8.

⁸⁰ "Zionist Aid to the Allies: The Whole Duty of the Jewish Race," *Times* (London), 27 December 1917, 5.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Dr. O.A. Glazebrook, 26 December 1917, Carnegie Hall, New York, quoted in "Zionist Aid to the Allies: The Whole Duty of the Jewish Race," *Times* (London), 27 December 1917, 5.

withdrawal of Russia left Lloyd George anxious for something positive. He saw the Western Front to be a place of stagnation, and thus devised a plan for invasion through Palestine attacking the Ottomans in order to give the war much needed movement. General Sir Archibald Murray was initially selected to lead the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF) through Palestine but the defeats in March and April 1917 in Gaza led to his replacement. The strategic importance of Palestine to Britain has been addressed, but Palestine carried symbolic significance to Christian England. The English public had been following the progress of the EEF's movement throughout the Near East in the *Times*. On 30 June 1917 the *Times* triumphantly announced the arrival of General Allenby in Egypt with the headline "Gen. Allenby for Palestine,"⁸³ as if he was the messiah coming to liberate Palestine. Allenby was a cavalryman who was given no coherent and agreed upon objects other than to seize Jerusalem.⁸⁴

Lloyd George's scheme for a post-war Middle East sought the total destruction of Ottoman influence and the infusion of British direct and in-direct rule; this countered the internationalist vision of the 1916 Sykes-Picot agreement and came at the expense of the French. The Foreign Office defended the EEF's action in Ottoman territory and assured that it was following the policy of "no annexation and no indemnities"⁸⁵ that had been agreed upon by the Entente. Britain's propaganda maneuver decreed that their actions were a service to the native peoples because they were freeing them from the "oppressive"¹⁶ Turkish government. This phraseology thus led that the British were liberating people and protecting them by drawing them into the British fold. The expansion of British influence thus became shrouded in the guise of a liberating force. Zionism would extend to portray the British as a champion of humanitarian

⁸³ "Gen. Allenby for Palestine: Arrival in Egypt," *Times* (London), 30 June 1917, 6, Late War Edition.

⁸⁴ Matthew Hughes, *Allenby and British Strategy in the Middle East 1917-1919* (London: Frank Cass, 1999), 31.

⁸⁵ "War Aims: British Policy Re-Stated. Lord R. Cecil and the Chancellor," *Times* (London), 17 May 1917, 7, Late War Edition.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

cause while simultaneously allowing for in-direct rule. Lloyd George, writing later, expressed this concept of in-direct rule; he saw that the British Empire was having "too many burdens on its shoulders" that prevented it from fully overseeing "this [Zionist] experiment through

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successfully." Britain would not use its own resources to stabilize Palestine because it retained its desired influence through the presence of Zionism and "the Jewish race with its genius, its resourcefulness, its tenacity, and not least its wealth, can alone perform this essential task,"⁸⁸ of reconstructing a post-war Palestine.

The English public viewed the surrender of Jerusalem to Allenby on 9 December 1917 1917 as an "epoch-making victory"⁸⁹ since it brought the Union Jack to be flown over Jerusalem for the first time. The news of the surrender was cause for the bells of Westminster Abbey to be rung for the first time since the war's beginning. The government, the press and the *Times* used the capture of Jerusalem as a significant propagandist tool. Various press organizations and later books and publications were quick to use the term "crusade" to describe the British campaign in Palestine.⁹⁰ Lloyd George was able to finally have a decisive victory, fulfilling his mantra of capturing Jerusalem for Christmas.

The *Times* took no effort in limiting its enthusiastic coverage and vilification of the Turks. The *Times* condemned the way that the Turks had recklessly acted while defending the city, as opposed to the great care the British took in preventing any damage from occurring. The British took the city "without so much as a stone being scratched or an inch of soil destroyed,"⁹¹ while "no British gun was sighted to within a considerable distance of the walls. Turkish artillery

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Lloyd George, *Where Are We Going?*, 319.

⁸⁹ W.T. Massey, "Joy of the People: A Welcome from the Moslems," *Times* (London), 17 December 1917, 9.

⁹⁰ For an in-depth account of the use of Palestine in British propaganda see Eitan Bar-Yosef, "The Last Crusade? British Propaganda and the Palestine Campaign, 1917-18. *Journal of Contemporary History* 36 (Jan. 2001): 87 - 109.

⁹¹ Massey, 9.

fired from positions quite close to the city, and enemy guns thundered from the Mount of Olives."⁹²

This would have been an attempt to infuriate Christians who would have recognized the Mount of Olives as being the site of Jesus' ascension into heaven. There was also fear that any damage by either the British Army or by the Jewish settlers to the Mosque of Umar, would result in immense anger from the Muslim population. Londoners feared that if the Temple site was handed over to the "Jewish race, to whom it properly belongs, [it] could hardly give rise to complications at all commensurate with those which must ultimately follow if any other course be adopted."⁹³ They feared that nothing could damage Arab relations more than the destruction of the Dome of the Rock by Jews seeking to build the Third Temple.

After the capture, the *Times* ran a heading declaring "England a Jewish Power,"⁹⁴ now England was the worldwide champion of Christian, Islamic, and Jewish people. Henry Rider Haggard, the widely popular English adventure novelist, wrote to the editor of the *Times* expressing his concerns and enjoyment of Britain's newest territory:

As one who know and is most deeply interested in the Holy Land, may I express the hope that, whatever should be the exact outcome of this war, in no circumstances shall the Sacred City be suffered to fall again in to the dreadful hand of the Turk; and secondly, that in any ultimate conditions of settlement is may be borne in mind that Christians as well as Jews have interests in and associations with Jerusalem and Judaea? I emphasize the latter point because, from much that has appeared in the Press and elsewhere during the last few months, a reader totally ignorant of Bible and other history might have imagined that this was not the case. Christianity to-day may be bathed in blood and desolate, but where Palestine is concerned, as in other matters, it has and for ever will

Massey, 9.

⁹³ C.F. Burney, "To The Editor of the Times," *Times* (London), 12 December 1917, 7.

⁹⁴ "England A Jewish Power," *Times* (London), 12 December 1917, 8.

have its God-given traditions and its inalienable rights.⁹⁵ Haggard's letter expresses the widespread excitement of Jerusalem being a British possession, he asserts that Christianity, as embodied in the empire, has rights to possess and inhabit the land. Being a true imperialist, Haggard understood the British conquest in Palestine to be fulfillment of England's Christian destiny and the Empire would emerge from the Great War victorious. The triumph of Allenby restores the Christian presence in Jerusalem and, in accordance with biblical history, returns Jews and Christians to their rights in Palestine.

Lloyd George was ecstatic to have achieved a victory as symbolic and as monumental as Jerusalem. The victory was quickly used to reinforce political support for the Coalition Government and Lloyd George triumphantly announced to the Houses of Parliament that the victory in Palestine had "added more to the prestige of Britain throughout the world than almost any event in the whole course of the war." He continued that:

The capture of Jerusalem has made a most profound impression throughout the whole civilized world. The most famous city in the world, after centuries of strife and vain struggle which has cost millions of lives, has fallen into the hands of the British Army, never to be restored to those who so successfully held it against the embattled hosts of Christendom. The name of every hamlet and hill occupied by the British Army and over which British soldiers fought in this famed land thrills with sacred memories. Beersheba, Hebron, Bethany, Bethlehem, then Mount of Olives, are all names engraved on the heart of the world... the achievements of the British troops in these two spheres, Mesopotamia and Palestine, which have been the cradle and the shrine of civilization for centuries will remain for many ages to come.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ H. Rider Haggard, "To The Editor of the Times," *Times* (London), 12 December 1917, 7.

⁹⁶ David Lloyd George, "Victories in the East," *Times* (London), 21 December 1917, 8.

Lloyd George's words were received with great applause and accord by Parliament. His address cited the biblical landmarks that would have resonated with the Protestant majority in Parliament, the places of Jesus' anointment, birth, and betrayal. No longer were they under the tyrannical control of the Turks, now they would be cared for by English hands. The achievements of the British troops in the Near East would lead into further troubles of the modern Middle East, with their roots in areas that the government may have ignored prior.

Jerusalem had long existed as a place in the English imagination, and would remain a source of British fascination and pride until becoming a source of trouble for the Commonwealth after the White Paper of 1920. Even within the emerging turmoil, former Prime Minister H.H. Asquith would visit Jerusalem on holiday and express that after a day of exploring religious sights that it was "saturated for the moment with Biblical lore."⁹⁷ It was this saturation of Biblical lore that allowed Weizmann to secure an agreement with the Foreign Office to create a Jewish national homeland, satisfying both the Zionists and the British. This biblical romanticism was intertwined with the political realities in the minds of the dominant political movers in London, but these non-political elements helped secure diplomatic and propagandist victories for their post war plans. Balfour's support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine was not purely imperialistic but as an action of humanitarian goodwill that also supported Lloyd George's and the Foreign Office's vision. Balfour was assisted in the development of his Zionism by Chaim Weizmann who purposely presented Zionism in a way as to appeal to the English imagination. Weizmann knew that there are more than political motivations, and was certain that Britain would find a way to profit from becoming the Christian champion of Zionism, but he was also certain that it would allow for the future creation of Israel.

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