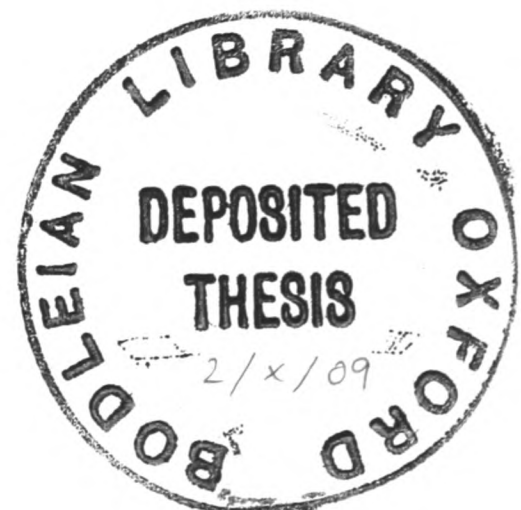


**Imperial Longings and Promised Lands:
Anglo-Jewry, Palestine and the Empire, 1899-1948**

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This thesis concentrates on two discrete contexts in which Jewish and imperial concerns converged: the Boer War and the British Mandate for Palestine. For Britain's Jews, the Boer War represented a rare—and uncomfortable—moment in which the Jewish Question achieved relative prominence. However the war also generated a different set of 'Jewish questions', leading the Anglo-Jewish establishment to refine its own understanding of patriotic and imperial duty. The case of Palestine, by contrast produced less straightforward and predictable outcomes. Ottoman entry into World War I, which prompted both British and Zionist considerations into the merits of a Jewish homeland as part of the imperial system, created an acute conflict for British Jewry's communal leadership. Although not negating the advantages of a British-Jewish Palestine either to the Empire or to Jews in need of refuge, its decision to oppose the Balfour Declaration privileged—at some cost—a distinctive reading of Jewish interests over a more obvious synthesis of national and sectarian goals.

Despite continued objections to Zionism's ideological outlook and its pursuit of statehood, the Anglo-Jewish establishment located in the interwar development of a British-Jewish Palestine a means to advance both Jewish communal and imperial agendas. As the alliance between the Zionists and Britain unravelled in the final decade of the Mandate, British Jews—eager to safeguard their position as well as their vision of Palestine's future—would persist in defending this relationship.

In its exploration of the evolution of Anglo-Jewish attitudes towards Britain, the Empire and Mandatory Palestine, this thesis aims to address both thematic and chronological gaps in the historiography of Anglo-Jewry. By drawing attention to the uniqueness of Anglo-Jewry's imperial connection to Palestine and to the domestic impact of British involvement, my work also contributes to scholarship on Zionism and the Mandate. Finally, it offers a framework for considering the impact of, and relationship to, Empire of minority groups residing in Britain.

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The dates which bookend this thesis—1899 and 1948—were both notable low points in British imperial history. The first is indelibly associated with Britain's humiliating—and surprising—losses to the Boers in South Africa, the latter with the nation's ignominious retreat from its Mandate for Palestine. Yet the half-century which passed between 'Black December' and the literal abandonment of the 'keys to the castle' in Jerusalem was one in which Great Britain defied predictions of decline by reshaping and reasserting its imperial presence in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Not only did the map stay red (in fact, the expanse of British ruled territory was at its zenith *following* World War I), but the Empire remained central to military strategy and commercial networks, as well as to notions of national ideology, mission and status.

Patriotism and national loyalty were not necessarily coterminous with an imperially-minded outlook. That questions related to Empire were—with few notable exceptions—rarely subject to partisan or electoral contestation suggests that the means and methods of Britain's rule were of limited public interest. Articulations of British imperial identity while abundant, likewise lacked specificity. However, underpinning that rhetoric, and informing those sentiments, was an intricate web of associations and experiences. The promotion of Christian missionary work, the opportunities which scores pursued as civil servants, soldiers or professionals in the dependent empire (and which thousands more

sought in emigrating to the dominions), the educational system and popular culture (particularly the new technologies of radio and cinema) all offered an outlet for the expression of imperial instincts and helped to draw Britain's populace closer to its distant and diverse component parts. In the personal and communal spheres, Empire fed appetites for religion, fortune, adventure and knowledge. On a much broader scale, it unified its subjects—in Britain and far beyond—under the aegis of shared values, goals and loyalties.

For a group understandably concerned about how, where and even if it belonged in the majority society, it should come as no surprise that imperial loyalty constituted an important element in Anglo-Jewry's synthesis of British and Jewish identities. Support for Empire functioned both as a 'cultural code' for expressing and embodying 'Britishness' and as a mechanism for laying claims to that status before an external audience. In part, the heterogeneity and plurality which the Empire embodied was a far more attractive and viable foundation for Jewish inclusion than an English identity premised purely on descent and religion. Yet this imperial patriotism also reflected Anglo-Jewry's genuine affinity towards what it believed to be a progressive imperial mission.

Even before 1917 and the Balfour Declaration, British Jews understood their relationship to the Empire as one which furthered national interests while at the same time addressing specifically Jewish concerns. Thus, during the Boer War, clergy and communal leaders argued that the extension of British rule across South Africa safeguarded Britain's vital political, strategic and economic concerns in the region. They

also asserted that in its introduction of liberal values and institutions (including civil equality for all non-indigenous populations), Britain was acting in harmony with core Jewish values of freedom and justice. With Britain's assumption of a Mandate for Palestine following World War I, the claim of a consonance of interests and aspirations took on a new meaning. For the Anglo-Jewish establishment in particular, attachment to a British-Jewish Palestine became a uniquely compelling and effective means of asserting both 'Anglo' and 'Jewish' identities, easily trumping the competing claims of a more narrowly defined Jewish nationalism.

If the Empire operated as an ongoing influence and point of reference throughout the period, this seeming constancy not only complicated assessments of its impact but largely limited the need for such introspection. It was at times of crisis and change that considerations of Britain's imperial present and future acquired immediacy. For Britain's Jews, questions of identity and status were rarely absent. Yet here too, tension—whether external or existential—heightened individual and communal self-awareness and prompted the articulation of competing viewpoints. In seeking to understand how British Jews conceived of and positioned themselves as imperial citizens, I have therefore chosen to concentrate on two discrete contexts in which Jewish and imperial concerns converged.

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contrast, produced less straightforward and predictable outcomes. In the opening years of the twentieth century, the Anglo-Jewish establishment's objections to Zionism—a direct result of its commitment to Enlightenment values—placed it at odds with proposals for a British sponsored Jewish colony in the Sinai or East Africa. On this occasion, Zionists' rejection of an extra-Palestinian alternative obviated the immediate need for British Jews to reconcile British imperial goals with their own particular conception of Jewish interests. Ottoman entry into the war, which prompted both British and Zionist investigations into the merits of a Jewish homeland as part of the imperial system, created an acute and far more profound conflict for British Jewry's communal leadership. Although not negating the advantages of a British-Jewish Palestine either to the Empire or to Jews in need of refuge, its decision to oppose the Balfour Declaration privileged—at some cost—this same, distinctive reading of Jewish interests over a more obvious synthesis of national and sectarian goals.

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In its exploration of the evolution of Anglo-Jewish attitudes towards Britain, the Empire and Mandatory Palestine, this thesis aims to address both thematic and chronological

gaps in the historiography of Anglo-Jewry. By drawing attention to the uniqueness of Anglo-Jewry's imperial connection to Palestine and to the domestic impact of British involvement, my work also contributes to scholarship on Zionism and the Mandate. Finally, it offers a framework for considering the impact of, and relationship to, Empire of minority groups residing in Britain.

Key Sources

The *Jewish Chronicle's* breadth and depth of coverage—particularly with regards to Anglo-Jewish communal politics—make it a critical source for a study of this nature. The *JC* is, moreover, the only publication spanning the entirety of the time period (1899-1948) examined in my thesis. However, in order to broaden my perspective and to compensate for the *JC's* biases, I have also relied on a number of additional Anglo-Jewish publications. They include the *Jewish World* and *Jewish Guardian* (the latter of which is the subject of sustained analysis in Chapter Five) as well as more short-lived and targeted publications: *Palestina*—the monthly newsletter of the 1890s Chovevei Zion Association; *Young Israel*—a turn-of-the-century magazine for children; *Palestine*—advocacy from the World War I era British Palestine Committee; the anti-Zionist League of British Jews' *Jewish Opinion* (1918); and three post-World War II journals, the *Jewish Monthly*, *Jewish Outlook* and *Jewish Forum*. With the exception of the *Jewish World* none have, to my knowledge, been utilised extensively by other scholars.

These published sources have been used alongside wide-ranging archival material obtained from research in England, Israel and the United States. Collections of particular relevance included those held at the Central Zionist Archive in Jerusalem

(holdings for the Chovevei Zion Association and the personal papers of Lucien Wolf, Israel Zangwill, Leopold Greenberg and Claude Montefiore), the records of the Board of Deputies, housed at the London Metropolitan Archive, and of the Anglo-Jewish Association, which form part of the Anglo-Jewish Archives at the University of Southampton. Leonard Stein's papers at the University of Oxford—comprising over one hundred boxes—formed a cornerstone of my research for Chapters Four through Six. (A smaller though still significant collection of Stein's correspondence resides in Jerusalem.)

Printed matter—reports, collated (and in some cases edited) letters and sermons and contemporary articles from the non-Jewish press—has been used to supplement material obtained from archives and Jewish publications. In instances where the primary source did not survive in its original form—i.e., clerical sermons from the Boer War—I have relied on later published collections. I have also adopted this approach in instances where the material in question—such as Chaim Weizmann's correspondence—was not sufficiently central to my research to justify recourse to manuscripts.

Structure

The thesis is divided in three chronically and thematically contiguous sections, each containing two chapters. Part I concentrates on the Boer War (1899-1902), Part II on the consequences for the Anglo-Jewish establishment's identity of the turn-of-the-century emergence of Jewish nationalism and the 1917 Balfour Declaration, Part III on the inter-war emergence of an imperial outlook premised on the ideal of a British-Jewish partnership in Palestine and the post-World War II reconstruction of Anglo-Jewish

loyalties as that much-vaunted collaboration dissolved. An overview of each chapter follows:

Beginning with a description of Jewish celebrations of the Queen's eightieth birthday, Chapter One turns quickly to the emerging conflict in South Africa. Employing the evidence of wartime sermons, it considers how the Anglo-Jewish clergy's rhetoric of shared values and imperial patriotism was used to justify both Britain's military engagement and the community's place within the nation. Chapter Two takes a broader perspective, evaluating how the communal press, philanthropy, enlistment campaigns and Anglicising youth groups acted as agents in the fulfilment of British Jewry's wartime duties and the vindication of its honour.

Herzl's 1895 arrival in London prompted no immediate outcry from the Anglo-Jewish establishment. Yet the movement which he helped to found would soon pose a direct challenge to the latter's outlook and sense of security. After opening with an overview of British Jewry's ties to Palestine in the decades preceding political Zionism, Chapter Three examines the reasons for the leadership's rejection of 'Herzism' in the closing years of the nineteenth century. It concludes by investigating why 'territorialism'—the Zionist movement's short-lived effort to establish a colony outside Palestine, a cause revived in 1905 by Israel Zangwill and his Jewish Territorial Organisation—failed to harness British Jewry's abundant patriotic and imperial zeal.

During World War I, the establishment's continued resistance to an autonomous Jewish homeland took on new significance in the context of potential British backing for the

Palestine project. Chapter Four details the build-up to the 1917 Balfour Declaration, concentrating on the pro-imperial arguments made by Anglo-Zionists and the philosophical and political objections raised by their integrationist counterparts.

The *fait accompli* of Balfour, military occupation and, by 1920, Mandatory control, demanded a revision of Anglo-Jewry's previously obstructionist ways. Now implicated in Palestine's future on another level—as British and imperial citizens—members of the Anglo-Jewish establishment would ultimately become vigorous advocates for their own particular type of (non-Zionist) collaboration. Adopting a case study approach, Chapter Five explores the development and expression of this distinctive inter-war outlook, highlighting the role of the *Jewish Guardian* (1918-1931), business investment and institutional and individual philanthropy.

By the end of World War II, rising violence, overwhelming economic burdens and a pervasive sense of failure had undermined Britain's residual commitment to remain in Palestine. Chapter Six examines the Anglo-Jewish establishment's final, unsuccessful efforts to defend the Mandate's British-Jewish partnership. Using the example of the Anglo-Jewish Association, it charts the impact of the displaced persons crisis, Jewish terrorism in Palestine and the growing incidence of anti-Semitism at home in bringing about a reluctant acceptance of partition and independence.

Acknowledgements

It is with humility and gratitude that I thank those who have aided in the research and writing of this work. I wish to acknowledge the assistance provided by the staff members of these institutions: at Oxford University, the Bodleian Library and the Middle East Centre Library and Archives (St. Antony's College), the University of Southampton's Anglo-Jewish Archives, the London Metropolitan Archive, the Centre for Jewish History (NYC), the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem and the British Library. I am also grateful for fellowships and travel grants from the American Academy for Jewish Research, Balliol College, the Beit Fund for the Study of Commonwealth History, the Cecil Roth Memorial Trust, the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, the Royal Historical Society and St. John's College, Oxford.

My greatest debt is to the following individuals: Dr. David Rechter, my doctoral supervisor, for his warmth, wisdom and constant encouragement; my parents, Beverly and Jonathan, who lived with the ups and downs of this project for many years and did everything possible to see it to its conclusion; my grandfather, Murray Gottlieb, whose pride and support have been unstinting; my brother, David, who acted as an on-call technological guru; Carole Powers and Professors Eric Foner and Alan Brinkley, for setting me on my way; Josh, Andrew, Phuong and Ian, who demonstrated it could be done; Patrick, for the gifts of time and patience; and Graeme, for laughter, love and London.

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Abbreviations

AACI	Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry
AJA	Anglo-Jewish Association
BEAP	British East Africa Protectorate
Board/BoD	Board of Deputies
Conjoint/CFC	Conjoint Foreign Committee
CZA	Chovevei Zion Association
Diaries	<i>Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl</i>
DP	Displaced Person
EZF/ZF	English Zionist Federation
<i>HYB</i>	<i>Herzl Year Book</i>
ICA	Jewish Colonisation Association
ITO	Jewish Territorial Organisation
IZ Papers	Israel Zangwill Papers
JA	Jewish Agency
<i>JAf</i>	<i>Jewish Affairs</i>
<i>JC</i>	<i>Jewish Chronicle</i>
<i>JF</i>	<i>Jewish Forum</i>
JFC	Joint Foreign Committee
<i>JG</i>	<i>Jewish Guardian</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Jewish Journal of Sociology</i>
JLB	Jewish Lads' Brigade
<i>JM</i>	<i>Jewish Monthly</i>
JNF	Jewish National Fund (also KK)
<i>JO</i>	<i>Jewish Opinion</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Jewish Social Studies</i>
<i>JU</i>	<i>Jewish Outlook</i>
<i>JW</i>	<i>Jewish World</i>
KH	<i>Keren Hayesod</i>
LBJ	League of British Jews
<i>Letters and Papers</i>	<i>Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann</i>
LG Papers	Leopold Greenberg Papers
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
LS Papers	Leonard Stein Papers
LW Papers	Lucien Wolf Papers
<i>MES</i>	<i>Middle Eastern Studies</i>
<i>SiZ</i>	<i>Studies in Zionism</i>
<i>TJHSE</i>	<i>Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England</i>
UNSCOP	United Nations Special Committee on Palestine
<i>YI</i>	<i>Young Israel</i>
ZA	Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem
ZC	Zionist Congress
ZO	Zionist Organisation
<i>ZR</i>	<i>Zionist Review</i>

Introduction

The dates which bookend this thesis—1899 and 1948—were both notable low points in British imperial history. The first is indelibly associated with Britain’s humiliating—and surprising—losses to the Boers in South Africa, the latter with the nation’s ignominious retreat from its Mandate for Palestine. Yet the half-century which passed between ‘Black December’ and the literal abandonment of the ‘keys to the castle’ in Jerusalem was one in which Great Britain defied predictions of decline by reshaping and reasserting its imperial presence in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Not only did the map stay red (in fact, the expanse of British territory was at its zenith *following* World War I), but the Empire remained central to military strategy and commercial networks, as well as to notions of national ideology, mission and status.

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¹ Exceptional cases during this period include the Boer War—on which the Liberal Party was divided—and the question of imperial preference, which split the Unionists in 1903. On the role and influence of imperial pressure groups see A. Thompson, *Imperial Britain: The Empire in British Politics c. 1880-1932* (Harlow, 2000), 38-60.

closer to its distant and diverse component parts.² In the personal and communal spheres, Empire fed appetites for religion, fortune, adventure and knowledge. On a much broader scale, it unified its subjects—in Britain and far beyond—under the aegis of shared values, goals and loyalties.

For a group understandably concerned about how, where and even if it belonged in the majority society, it should come as no surprise that imperial loyalty constituted an important element in Anglo-Jewry's synthesis of British and Jewish identities. Support for Empire functioned both as a 'cultural code' for expressing and embodying 'Britishness' and as a mechanism for laying claims to that status before an external audience. In part, the heterogeneity and plurality which the Empire embodied was a far more attractive and viable foundation for Jewish inclusion than an English identity premised purely on descent and religion. Yet this imperial patriotism also reflected Anglo-Jewry's genuine affinity towards what it believed to be a progressive imperial mission.

Even before 1917 and the Balfour Declaration, British Jews understood their relationship to the Empire as one which furthered national interests while at the same time addressing specifically Jewish concerns. Thus, during the Boer War, clergy and communal leaders argued that the extension of British rule across South Africa safeguarded Britain's vital political, strategic and economic concerns in the region. They also asserted that in its introduction of liberal values and institutions (including civil equality for all non-indigenous populations), Britain was acting in harmony with core Jewish values of freedom and justice. With Britain's assumption of a Mandate for

² B. Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leicester, 1990), 133-74; R. Heussler, *Yesterday's Rulers: The Making of the British Colonial Service* (Syracuse, 1963); S. Constantine, (ed.), *Emigrants and Empire: British Settlement in the Dominions Between the Wars* (Manchester, 1990); J.A. Mangan, (ed.), *Benefits Bestowed?: Education and British Imperialism* (London, 1988). J. MacKenzie, (ed.), *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester, 1986); J. Richards, *Visions of Yesterday* (London, 1973).

Palestine following World War I, the claim of a consonance of interests and aspirations took on a new meaning. For the Anglo-Jewish establishment in particular, attachment to a British-Jewish Palestine became a uniquely compelling and effective means of asserting both 'Anglo' and 'Jewish' identities, easily trumping the competing claims of a more narrowly defined Jewish nationalism.

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³ Because of its status as a Mandate, Palestine is frequently excluded from the study of imperial history. However, the extensive record of informal British involvement prior to 1917, Palestine's functional existence as an administered British colony from 1920 to 1948, its powerful emotional and religious hold over both Jewish and non-Jewish Britons and the disproportionate quantity of media attention it received throughout this period all justify its inclusion—in this thesis and in future studies—as legitimate subject matter for historians of Empire.

Recent Anglo-Jewish Historiography

This work is intended principally as a contribution to the history of British Jews. In the nearly twenty years since David Cannadine commented that the subject was neither very interesting nor very important, the pace of research on England's post-emancipation Jewish population has quickened enormously.⁴ Most attention has thus far focused on three broad topics of inquiry: immigration and its social, economic and political impact,⁵ the community in war⁶ and the incidence and effects of anti-Semitism.⁷ In the past fifteen years, three synthetic studies—the first to be published since Cecil Roth's 1941 volume, *A History of the Jews in England*—have also been completed.⁸ Given the relatively recent upsurge in interest and the continued neglect of Anglo-Jewish history by scholars outside the United Kingdom, it is unsurprising that a number of topics still await comparable attention. To date, the history of British Jews during the 1920s and 1930s (excluding the aforementioned studies on refugees and anti-Semitism) and the aftermath of World War II has been largely overlooked.

⁴ 'Cousinhood', *London Review of Books* 27/7/89 10-11.

⁵ J. Green, *Social History of the Jewish East End in London, 1914-1939: A Study of Life, Labour, and Liturgy* (Lewiston, 1991); B. Braber, 'Integration of Jewish Immigrants in Glasgow, 1880-1939' (Ph.D. thesis, Glasgow Univ., 1992); E.R. Smith, 'East End Jews in Politics, 1918-1939: A Study in Class and Ethnicity' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Leicester, 1990); B. Lammers, 'A Superior Kind of English: Jewish Ethnicity and English Identity in London's East End, 1905-1939' (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers Univ., 1997); S. Tananbaum, 'Generations of Change: The Anglicization of Russian-Jewish Immigrant Women in London, 1880-1939' (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis Univ., 1991); A. Hochberg-Severin, 'The Jewish Community and the Aliens Question in Great Britain, 1881-1917' (Ph.D. diss., New York Univ., 1989); M. Rozin, 'The Rich and the Poor: Jewish Philanthropy and Social Control in Nineteenth Century London' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Kent, 1996).

⁶ R. Bolchover, *British Jewry and the Holocaust* (2nd edn., Oxford, 2003); M. Levene, *War, Jews and the New Europe: The Diplomacy of Lucien Wolf, 1914-1919* (Oxford, 1992); S. Kadish, *Bolsheviks and British Jews: Anglo-Jewish Community, Britain and the Russian Revolution* (London, 1992); Louise London, *Whitehall and the Jews 1933-1948: British Immigration Policy, Jewish Refugees and the Holocaust* (Cambridge, 2000); C. Tomlin, "'Protest and Prayer': Rabbi Dr. Solomon Schonfeld and Orthodox Jewish Responses in Britain to the Nazi Persecution of Europe's Jews, 1942-1945' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Southampton, 2003); P. Hill, 'Anglo-Jewry and the Refugee Children, 1938-1945' (Ph.D. thesis, Royal Holloway, 2002).

⁷ H.M. Defries, 'The Attitude of the Conservative Party towards the Jews c. 1900-1948' (Ph.D. thesis, UC London, 1998); T. Kushner and N. Valman, (eds.), *Remembering Cable Street: Fascism and Anti-Fascism in British Society* (London, 2000); Kushner, *The Persistence of Prejudice: Anti-Semitism in British Society During the Second World War* (Manchester, 1989).

⁸ Slightly revised editions were printed in 1949 and 1964. G. Alderman, *Modern British Jewry* (Oxford, 1992); W.D. Rubinstein, *A History of the Jews in the English-Speaking World: Great Britain* (Basingstoke, 1996); T. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656-2000* (Berkeley, 2002). Although neither is positioned as a survey, the broad scope of David Feldman's *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture 1840-1914* (New Haven, 1994) and Eugene Black's *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry 1880-1920* (Oxford, 1988) places them in a somewhat different category than the more subject-specific texts listed above.

Further attention to questions of gender and economic activity⁹ and a social history focused on the middle classes would also be welcome.

As the date range specified in my title indicates, this dissertation encompasses several periods which have not hitherto been studied in particular detail. It also engages with overlooked themes and events. For example, my final two chapters concentrate exclusively on developments in the inter-war years and the immediate aftermath (defined here as 1945-1948) of World War II. By focusing on the evolution of the Anglo-Jewish establishment's relationship to Mandatory Palestine—and the impact of British withdrawal on that community's outlook—these chapters not only fill in a chronological lacuna but help to illuminate a critical period of development and transition in British Jewry's history.

The decades immediately preceding World War I are—for good reason—a key destination for scholars of Anglo-Jewish history. Yet while topics related to the mass immigration of Eastern European Jews (including Jewish and non-Jewish responses, attitudes towards Anglicisation and the development of Jewish institutional networks) are now reasonably well understood, a key event in national—and thus Jewish—history has received only passing mention. Accusations of its culpability for the Boer War (1899-1902) undoubtedly directed unwanted attention towards the Jewish community. However, these charges, and the fact that the war provided British Jews with their first real opportunity to contribute to national and imperial defence, also enabled the conceptualisation and articulation of a unique brand of Anglo-Jewish imperial patriotism.

⁹ A notable exception is D. Gutwein, *The Divided Elite: Economics, Politics and Anglo-Jewry 1882-1917* (Leiden, 1992).

The final theme which this dissertation hopes to introduce into the Anglo-Jewish scholarly lexicon is that of Empire. Although the initial case for further research was made nearly thirty years ago—in an article by Robert Huttenback¹⁰—the only scholarship to date has been biographical.¹¹ Considerations of time and space have prevented me from engaging with either of the following: the institutional and informal relationships between the Empire's Jewish metropolis (London) and the periphery (the Jewish communities established in Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand and, secondarily, the resident expatriate communities in colonies such as India) and the question of Anglo-Jewish involvement in Empire—whether via settlement, commercial engagements and civil or military service. What this thesis does do is to consider how British Jews conceived of and positioned themselves as imperial citizens with reference to two significant and contrasting examples: the Boer War and the Palestine Mandate.

* * *

From 1982 onwards, when Stuart Cohen published *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1895-1920*, the history of Anglo-Jewry's relationship to, and involvement in, the Zionist movement, has engaged at least a few scholars. Theses by David Cesarani and Stephan Wendehorst extended the chronological scope of Cohen's coverage through the Peel Commission Report (1936) and the Sinai campaign (1956), respectively.¹² In a series of articles, Gideon Shimoni has also charted Zionism's fate at Anglo-Jewry's leading communal institutions.¹³ With

¹⁰ 'The Patrician Jew and the British Ethos in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', *Jewish Social Studies* 40:1 (1978), 49-62.

¹¹ Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel: A Political Life* (Oxford, 1992); P. Stansky, *Sassoons: The World of Philip and Sybil* (New Haven, 2003).

¹² Cesarani, 'Zionism in England' (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford Univ., 1986); Wendehorst, 'British Jewry, Zionism and the Jewish State, 1936-1956' (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford Univ., 1997).

¹³ 'From Anti-Zionism to Non-Zionism in Anglo-Jewry, 1917-1937', *Jewish Journal of Sociology* 28:1 (1986), 19-47; 'The Non-Zionists in Anglo-Jewry, 1937-1948', *JJS* 28:2 (1986), 89-115; 'Selig Brodetsky and the Ascendancy of Zionism in Anglo-Jewry (1939-1945)', *JJS* 22:2 (1980), 125-61.

the partial exception of Wendehorst, who interprets his findings through the theoretical lens of supplemental nationalism (Hugh Seton-Watson and Benedict Anderson figure prominently), these authors generally exemplify what Evyatar Friesel has termed 'locally oriented'—as distinct from Palestinocentric—Zionist history.¹⁴ In other words, their primary interest is in the indigenous factors governing the relationship of British Jews to Zionism, Palestine and, in the case of Wendehorst, the State of Israel. 'External' stimuli—Zionist diplomacy, British policy decisions and events in Palestine and beyond—are therefore assessed in terms of their effect on domestic attitudes and behaviours.

In this thesis, I also adopt a 'locally-oriented' approach. My subject matter, however, differs from that of the historians discussed above. The Anglo-Jewish establishment's evolving relationship to Jewish nationalism—which on the whole took the form of ideologically charged anti-Zionism in the twenty years preceding the Balfour Declaration, pragmatic non-Zionism in the 1920s and 1930s and non-statist Zionism from the late 1930s through 1948—is a central, though not exclusive, focus in Chapters Three, Four, Five and Six. But in contrast to Cohen, Shimoni and Wendehorst, for whom the discussion of Zionism is an end unto itself (and whose focus therefore rests on a somewhat different population), my intent is to use this material in order to illuminate how British Jewry's elite conceptualised and expressed its relationship to the nation, the Empire and, *inter alia*, Palestine.

¹⁴ 'Criteria and Conception in the Historiography of German and American Zionism', *Zionism: An International Journal of Social, Political and Intellectual History* 1:2 (1980), 285-302.

Scholarship on Zionism and the British Mandate

A further category in which this thesis can be placed is that of scholarship on Jewish nationalism and the British Mandate. Studies of Zionism—of which there are too many to make any fair accounting here—have explored ideological concerns, the course of Zionist high politics and the mechanics of building the Jewish national home. A parallel track, more relevant to my own work, has examined the fate of Zionism amongst Jewish populations in the diaspora.¹⁵ Although this dissertation is not a study of Zionism as such, its emphasis on Anglo-Jewry's distinct modes of relation to Palestine—imperial patriotism and its inter-war offshoot, non-Zionism—nonetheless offers a new perspective on the complex connection between Jews and their Holy Land. A further, more modest, contribution can be found in my discussion (Chapter Five) on Anglo-Jewish philanthropic and investment activities in Mandate Palestine. While the content of these sections is on the whole anecdotal and descriptive, the material helps to form a fuller picture of the scope, scale and motivations of such work—in Britain and elsewhere—and calls attention to the opportunities for further research.

Just as the historiography of Zionism has been shaped by the political agendas of some of its scholars, scholarship on the British Mandate is not wholly divorced from partisan concerns. The decisions of London's policy-makers (and the beliefs, calculations and pressures which underpinned them) and their counterparts in Palestine have come under close and unrelenting scrutiny.¹⁶ Yet while the course of events—if not their meaning—is now agreed upon, attention to diplomacy has often obscured low politics.

¹⁵ Most have focused on a single nation, as in the case of J. Reinharz, *Fatherland or Promised Land* (Ann Arbor, 1975); N.W. Cohen, *The Americanization of Zionism, 1897-1948* (Hanover, 2003); E. Mendelsohn, *Zionism in Poland: The Formative Years, 1915-1926* (New Haven, 1981). Michael Berkowitz's monographs, which nominally encompass 'Western Jewry', are weighted heavily towards Germany and the United States. Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry Before the First World War* (Chapel Hill, 1993); *Western Jewry and the Zionist Project, 1914-1933* (Cambridge, 1997).

¹⁶ T. Segev, *One Palestine Complete: Jews and Arabs Under the British Mandate*, tr. H. Watzman (New York, 1999); Wasserstein, *The British in Palestine: the Mandatory Government and the Arab-Jewish Conflict, 1917-1929* (London, 1978); H.M. Sachar, *A History of Israel from the Rise of Zionism to Our Time* (2nd edn., New York, 1996).

This thesis does not argue that the Anglo-Jewish establishment was successful (either in popular campaigns or in high-level intercessions) in influencing its government's policy in Palestine. Rather, it suggests the value of examining the intersection of foreign policy and domestic political ideals. As my final chapter details, British Jewry's commitment to a joint Anglo-Jewish project in Palestine was far stronger than that of national political leaders or—we may only assume—the non-Jewish majority. Yet insofar as Britain's policy decisions *vis-à-vis* the Mandate exercised a profound impact on this population, it is worth considering—as I do below—how research of this sort may fit into a broader definition of political and imperial history.

New Departures in the History of Empire

One of the first, and certainly the most emphatic, cases for a domestic history of Empire was made by John M. MacKenzie. In his introduction to *Imperialism and Popular Culture* MacKenzie argues that 'the centrifugal effects of imperialism have come in for much more attention than the centripetal.'¹⁷ This 1986 volume, and several dozen others that have clustered under the *Studies in Imperialism* banner, have compensated for prior oversight and exclusion with a (largely) sociocultural emphasis drawing attention to, amongst other subjects, the 'imperial game' of cricket, the African memoirs of Victorian travellers and the resonance of Empire on British stage and screen.¹⁸ In recent years, strides have also been made in re-connecting a domestic perspective on Empire with politics and diplomacy.¹⁹

¹⁷ (Manchester, 1986), 2.

¹⁸ The series concentrates on the British Empire. B. Stoddart and K.A.P. Sandiford, (eds.), *The Imperial Game: Cricket, Culture and Society* (Manchester, 1998); T. Youngs, *Travellers in Africa: British Travelogues, 1850-1900* (Manchester, 1994); J.S. Bratton et al., *Acts of Supremacy: The British Empire and the Stage, 1790-1930* (Manchester, 1991); Richards, *Imperialism and Music: Britain, 1876-1953* (Manchester, 2001); S. Ward, (ed.), *British Culture and the End of Empire* (Manchester, 2001).

¹⁹ Thompson, *Imperial Britain*.

To date, no studies of this kind have focused on Palestine during the Mandatory period.²⁰ The notion and content of a minority perspective on Empire is similarly unexplored. Finally, while the rhetoric with which the Empire was described and the mechanisms by which it was defended have received some attention—most notably in MacKenzie’s own work, *Propaganda and Empire: the Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960*, and Andrew Thompson’s more recent monograph—research into this area is still in its early stages.²¹ In its attention to British Palestine and the construction of Anglo-Jewry’s own ‘brand’ of imperial patriotism this thesis therefore serves as a modest scholarly contribution.

Key Sources

The *Jewish Chronicle’s* breadth and depth of coverage—particularly with regards to Anglo-Jewish communal politics—make it a critical source for a study of this nature. The *JC* is, moreover, the only publication spanning the entirety of the time period (1899-1948) examined in my thesis. However, in order to broaden my perspective and to compensate for the *JC’s* biases, I have also relied on a number of additional Anglo-Jewish publications. They include the *Jewish World* and *Jewish Guardian* (the latter of which is the subject of sustained analysis in Chapter Five) as well as more short-lived and targeted publications: *Palestina*—the monthly newsletter of the 1890s Chovevei Zion Association; *Young Israel*—a turn-of-the-century magazine for children; *Palestine*—advocacy from the World War I era British Palestine Committee; the anti-Zionist League of British Jews’ *Jewish Opinion* (1918); and three post-World War II journals, the *Jewish Monthly*, *Jewish Outlook* and *Jewish Forum*. With the exception of

²⁰ Eitan Bar-Yosef’s recent monograph has investigated Palestine’s imprint on Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian literature. *The Holy Land in English Culture 1799-1917* (Oxford, 2005).

²¹ Thompson, *Imperial Britain*.

the *Jewish World* none have, to my knowledge, been utilised extensively by other scholars.

These published sources have been used alongside archival material obtained from research in England, Israel and the United States. Collections of particular relevance included those held at the Central Zionist Archive in Jerusalem (records of the Chovevei Zion Association and the personal papers of Lucien Wolf,²² Israel Zangwill, Leopold Greenberg and Claude Montefiore), the records of the Board of Deputies, housed at the London Metropolitan Archive, and of the Anglo-Jewish Association, which form part of the Anglo-Jewish Archives at the University of Southampton. Leonard Stein's papers at Oxford University—comprising over one hundred boxes—formed a cornerstone of my research for Chapters Four through Six. (A smaller though still significant collection of Stein's correspondence was consulted in Jerusalem.)

Printed matter—reports, collated (and in some cases edited) letters and sermons and contemporary articles from the non-Jewish press—has been used to supplement material obtained from archives and Jewish publications. In instances where the primary source did not survive in its original form—i.e., clerical sermons from the Boer War—I have relied on later published collections. I have also adopted this approach in instances where the material in question—such as Chaim Weizmann's correspondence—was not sufficiently central to my research to justify recourse to manuscripts.

²² I have also utilised Wolf's paper at New York's YIVO Institute.

Structure

The thesis is divided in three chronically and thematically contiguous sections, each containing two chapters. Part I concentrates on the Boer War (1899-1902), Part II on the consequences for the Anglo-Jewish establishment's identity of the turn-of-the-century emergence of Jewish nationalism and the 1917 Balfour Declaration, Part III on the inter-war emergence of an imperial outlook premised on the ideal of a British-Jewish partnership in Palestine and the post-World War II reconstruction of Anglo-Jewish loyalties as that much-vaunted collaboration dissolved. An overview of each chapter follows:

Beginning with a description of Jewish celebrations of the Queen's eightieth birthday, Chapter One turns quickly to the emerging conflict in South Africa. Employing the evidence of wartime sermons, it considers how the Anglo-Jewish clergy's rhetoric of shared values and imperial patriotism was used to justify both Britain's military engagement and the community's place within the nation. Chapter Two takes a broader perspective, evaluating how the communal press, philanthropy, enlistment campaigns and Anglicising youth groups acted as agents in the fulfilment of British Jewry's wartime duties and the vindication of its honour.

Herzl's 1895 arrival in London prompted no immediate outcry from the Anglo-Jewish establishment. Yet the movement which he helped to found would soon pose a direct challenge to the latter's outlook and sense of security. After opening with an overview of British Jewry's ties to Palestine in the decades preceding political Zionism, Chapter Three examines the reasons for the leadership's rejection of 'Herzism' in the closing years of the nineteenth century. It concludes by investigating why 'territorialism'—the Zionist movement's short-lived effort to establish a colony outside Palestine, a cause

revived in 1905 by Israel Zangwill and his Jewish Territorial Organisation—failed to harness British Jewry’s abundant patriotic and imperial zeal.

During World War I, the establishment’s continued resistance to an autonomous Jewish homeland took on new significance in the context of potential British backing for the Palestine project. Chapter Four details the build-up to the 1917 Balfour Declaration, concentrating on the pro-imperial arguments made by Anglo-Zionists and the philosophical and political objections raised by their integrationist counterparts.

The *fait accompli* of Balfour, military occupation and, by 1920, Mandatory control, demanded a revision of Anglo-Jewry’s previously obstructionist ways. Now implicated in Palestine’s future on another level—as British and imperial citizens— members of the Anglo-Jewish establishment would ultimately become vigorous advocates for their own particular type of (non-Zionist) collaboration. Adopting a case study approach, Chapter Five explores the development and expression of this distinctive inter-war outlook, highlighting the role of the *Jewish Guardian* (1918-1931), business investment and institutional and individual philanthropy.

By the end of World War II, rising violence, overwhelming economic burdens and a pervasive sense of failure had undermined Britain’s residual commitment to remain in Palestine. Chapter Six examines the Anglo-Jewish establishment’s final, unsuccessful efforts to defend the Mandate’s British-Jewish partnership. Using the example of the Anglo-Jewish Association, it charts the impact of the displaced persons crisis, Jewish terrorism in Palestine and the growing incidence of anti-Semitism at home in bringing about a reluctant acceptance of partition and independence.

'No Conflict of Principle': The Anglo-Jewish Clergy and the South African War, 1899-1902

Britain and the Empire celebrated the eightieth birthday of their monarch, Queen Victoria, on 24 May 1899. The occasion provided Anglo-Jewry with opportunity for both celebration and reflection. Some of London society's most prominent Jewish members took part in a commemorative banquet sponsored by the Queen's Birthday Committee.¹ Across town in Spitalfields, the teachers of the Jews' Free School gave a résumé of Her Majesty's reign, followed by the singing of the national anthem, three cheers for the Queen and an afternoon excursion to the Royal Military Tournament. Not to be outdone, the festivities organised for the residents of the Jews' Hospital and Orphan Asylum in West Norwood featured a brass and reed band and an enthusiastic parade.²

Sermons preached that Sabbath took a more solemn tone, but were no less emphatic in the enthusiasm they expressed for the Queen. Reverend Hermann Gollancz of the Bayswater Synagogue expressed his congregation's emotions through a special prayer. 'This day', he declared,

our hearts overflow with gratitude unto Thee, for having preserved Her MajestyIn the political influence which she wields ...not only at home but abroad, in the moral influence which her lofty and unsullied example wields in the distant regions of the earth ...we have an illustration of the ...greatness of the British nation in the Victorian eraMay, O Lord! the Sun of this Empire never set, and may the most glorious name in its history never fade!³

Victoria's birthday, and the consciousness that the age to which she had given her name was approaching its end, prompted leading British Jews to consider her legacy.⁴

¹ Sir Philip Magnus, M.H. Spielmann, Israel Gollancz and Israel Zangwill.

² *Jewish Chronicle* 26/5/99 10, 9/6/99 24.

³ *JC* 2/6/99 24.

⁴ Despite a development of the ideas of 'Britishness' (as distinct from 'Englishness') and the 'British race' during this period, the Anglo-Jewish elite appears to have used the terms 'English' and 'British' interchangeably. This reflected the fact that most British Jews resided in England as well as England's political, economic, and demographic dominance within the British Isles. T. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656-2000* (Berkeley, 2002), 12.

What these various articles and speeches held in common—beyond a reliance on remarkably florid prose—was the belief that the Victorian period had enhanced their own status both as Jews and as Englishmen. To borrow the famous phrase from the Passover *Hagaddah*, Victoria's beneficent rule had brought about the passage from *avdut l'herut*, from 'political bondage to unchallenged freedom'.⁵

As was noted, not only did Anglo-Jewry achieve civic equality during the Queen's reign, but it now also enjoyed unlimited opportunity to thrive in commerce, education, political leadership and imperial service.⁶ The Empire's remarkable expansion during the last half of the nineteenth century—described by one commentator as an 'all-conquering march of British ideas and civilisation'—had extended these same benefits to far corners of the globe.⁷ As the century closed, Anglo-Jewry now stood together with Victoria's millions of citizens—representing all races and creeds—in veneration and devotion.

Proclaiming allegiance to the holy trinity of nation, monarch and Empire, the Anglo-Jewish elite rededicated itself to what it understood to be a positive British mission at home and overseas. Some Anglo-Jewish leaders even maintained that their unique heritage endowed them with a singular ability to fulfil the destiny of the British race. They were, as Disraeli had once declared, 'twice-born Brahmin—created once as a Jew and again as an Englishman. Members of an aristocracy twice over', the modern Jew

⁵ *JC* 26/5/99 Editorial 16. See also 14/7/99 22. These themes were also emphasised during the Queen's Jubilee, celebrated two years earlier. *Young Israel* 4/97 35-6, 6/97 83, 99-114, 116, 127, 7/97 138.

⁶ Emancipation was achieved via piecemeal legislation from 1825-1858. Since Anglo-Jewry had never suffered from systemic residential or occupational discrimination, attention focused largely on the elimination of negative disabilities impeding municipal and national political participation. The final barrier to elite social inclusion—entry to Oxford and Cambridge—was removed in 1871. Although the functional impact of emancipation was limited, its symbolic import for British Jews was arguably far more extensive. A. Gilam, *The Emancipation of the Jews in England* (New York, 1982); M.C.N. Salbstein, *The Emancipation of the Jews in Britain: the Question of the Admission of the Jews to Parliament 1828-1860* (Rutherford, 1982). On emancipation's communal impact see D. Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840-1914* (New Haven, 1994), particularly 72-93 and 121-37.

⁷ *JC* 26/5/99 Ed 16.

had been selected by Britain for a special task, just as Britain had itself been chosen as the tide-bearer of liberty and civilisation.⁸

Viewed in the contemporary context of Dreyfus, Central European blood libels and Russian pogroms, the advantages enjoyed by *fin de siècle* Anglo-Jewry should not be discounted. Britain's prevailing milieu of tolerance contrasted sharply not only with the state of affairs in Eastern Europe, where hopes for Jewish emancipation remained unrealised, but also with the situation of Western and Central European Jewry—where concessions on political rights had been accompanied by significant assimilatory pressures. Whether measured in religious, political, economic or social terms, the safeguards and opportunities afforded to Britain's Jewish population were real and, with the exception of the United States, practically unique.⁹ Nowhere else could Jews so fully combine commitment to their religion with patriotic citizenship.¹⁰

This favourable situation had resulted from several distinctive attributes of British state and society. Of particular importance were embedded popular and governmental support for liberalism (albeit one which was in practice increasingly interventionist rather than classically *laissez-faire*) and the embrace of a relatively broad and pluralistic conception of nationhood (in contrast with the more exclusive notions of *Volk* gaining a following on the Continent).¹¹ While these factors were certainly critical, a further feature also seems likely to have played a role. Britain's Empire, in its symbol and

⁸ R.A. Huttenback, 'The Patrician Jew and the British Ethos in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', *Jewish Social Studies* 40:1 (1978), 52-3.

⁹ The case for viewing the Anglophone Jewish experience as the paradigmatic model of Jewish modernisation is made by W.D. Rubinstein, *A History of the Jews in the English-Speaking World: Great Britain* (Basingstoke, 1996).

¹⁰ Jewish ritual observance certainly waned over the course of the nineteenth century. Yet the correlation between conversion and enhanced political, economic or social standing was insubstantial relative to both earlier points in British history and to the contemporaneous situation in Central Europe. Endelman, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History, 1656-1945* (Bloomington, 1990), 73-113.

¹¹ Endelman, 'The Englishness of Jewish Modernity in England', in J. Katz, (ed.), *Toward Modernity: The European Jewish Model* (New Brunswick, 1987), 225-46; R. Colls, 'Englishness and Political Culture', in id. and P. Dodd, (eds.), *Englishness: Politics and Culture, 1880-1920* (London, 1986), 29-61; G.L. Mosse, *Germans and Jews: The Right, the Left, and the Search for a 'Third Force' in Pre-Nazi Germany* (New York, 1970), 3-60; L. Greenfield, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass., 1992), 27-88, 275-351.

substance, provided Anglo-Jewry a comfortable and flexible arena in which to pursue its interests.¹² It was therefore not mere wishful thinking that propelled so many British Jews to express their unity of interest with the nation's imperial future. Britain and its Empire were to many of them a true Promised Land—a haven from persecution and a bastion of religious equality, freedom and justice, with its diverse elements bound together by imperial citizenship and monarchical loyalty.¹³

* * *

In the celebratory atmosphere of that spring, Chief Rabbi Hermann Adler was virtually alone in calling attention to the sobering obligations which Anglo-Jewry's position entailed.¹⁴ Speaking to congregants of the Hammersmith Synagogue, Adler admonished that 'loyalty was enjoined by Judaism as a cardinal duty, and that no crime was viewed with more utter loathing than treachery.'¹⁵ It may have seemed as if he were preaching to the converted. But, as Adler intimated, responsibility and even vulnerability coexisted alongside privilege and comfort. British Jews needed to prove that they were worthy of their place in the nation and the Empire.¹⁶

Adler's warning was a general one, but its timing proved unexpectedly prescient. In October 1899, just several months later, Britain entered into hostilities with the Boers¹⁷

¹² On the need to consider the history of Britain and its Empire as an interactive social and political entity see D. Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (London, 2001), Preface, Chapter 1, particularly xvii-xviii; J. MacKenzie, (ed.), *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester, 1986), Introduction.

¹³ See for example S. Singer, *Sermons to Children*, ed. I. Abrahams (London, 1908), 50-3.

¹⁴ Adler's full title was Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Empire. Established in 1842, the office of the Chief Rabbi was designed to operate as a Jewish equivalent to the Archbishop of Canterbury. C. Roth, 'The Chief Rabbinate of England', in id., *Essays and Portraits in Anglo-Jewish History* (Philadelphia, 1962), 250-61; E. Black, 'The Anglicization of Orthodoxy: The Adlers, Father and Son', in F. Malino and D. Sorkin, (eds.), *Profiles in Diversity: Jews in a Changing Europe, 1750-1870* (Detroit, 1998), 295-325; S. Sharot, 'Religious Change in Native Orthodoxy in London, 1870-1914: Rabbinate and Clergy', *Jewish Journal of Sociology* 15:2 (1973), 167-87.

¹⁵ *JC* 9/6/99 27.

¹⁶ *JC* 31/3/99 19.

¹⁷ Also known as the Cape Dutch or Afrikaners, these were Europeans of Dutch origin who began settling in the southern African Cape during the seventeenth century.

in South Africa.¹⁸ While the government claimed that it was merely protecting the rights of British citizens in the Boer administered Transvaal territory, its critics saw things rather differently. The war's true aim, they charged, was not the vindication of Britain's sacred principles, but the control of South Africa's mineral wealth. Moreover, the prime beneficiaries of British intervention—and, it was therefore assumed, the driving force behind it—were the Jewish financiers who had invested in the mines.

Over the following thirty-two months, Anglo-Jewry would find itself the target of attacks from Left and Right alike.¹⁹ Worryingly, much of the vitriol came from well outside the boundaries of the dependably anti-Jewish camp. Implicated in the warmongering of international finance, suspected of dodging armed service, Anglo-Jewry's leaders nonetheless hoped to disarm their critics through conspicuous demonstration of the community's loyalty. This defensive posture indelibly shaped both the style and content of the establishment's wartime agenda. Replete with ceremony, propaganda and philanthropy, this was not merely a display of patriotism, but an effort to vindicate Jewish honour.

It would nonetheless be a mistake to leave the story here. Without question, any consideration of organised Jewry's response to the war must take into account the nature and impact of the charges made against them. However, this immediate context provides only a partial explanation for communal leaders' behaviour. It is therefore necessary to assess the impact of a wider set of developments and

¹⁸ The literature on the Boer War—now more commonly referred to as the South African War—is extensive. The classic scholarly text is T. Pakenham, *The Boer War* (London, 1979). More recent works include G. Cuthbertson and A. Grundlingh et al. (eds.), *Writing a Wider War: Rethinking Gender, Race and Identity in the South African War, 1899-1902* (Athens, 2002) and A. Porter, 'The South African War (1899-1902): Context and Motive Reconsidered', *Journal of African History* 31:1 (1990), 43-57.

¹⁹ The former, closely associated with opposition to the war, was far more prevalent. C. Hirschfield, 'The British Left and the "Jewish Conspiracy": A Case Study of Modern Antisemitism', *JSS* 43:2 (1981), 619-31. One scholar who argues for the importance of the latter is S. Bayme, 'Jewish Leadership and Anti-Semitism in Britain, 1898-1918' (Ph.D. diss., Columbia Univ., 1977), 83-8. On anti-Semitism and the 1900 general election see J. Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven, 1999), 229-63. The best of the texts on British anti-Semitism in this period is C. Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society, 1876-1939* (New York, 1979), 1-120.

changes—in the shape of the Anglo-Jewish community, the status of Jews on the Continent and the tenor of domestic political discourse. Foremost among these was the influx of Eastern European Jews to Britain during the previous two decades.²⁰ Totalling as many as 100,000 by some estimates, their arrival had not only altered dramatically the demographic make-up of the nation's Jewish population, but strained communal resources, provoked friction over education and religious standards and generated a fair degree of ambivalence—even antipathy—on the part of the 'native' establishment.²¹

This sentiment was amplified in non-Jewish appraisals of the new arrivals. By the mid 1890s, ethnic prejudice and fear of economic competition had coalesced into a small but increasingly powerful restrictionist movement.²² Although some British Jewish leaders did support limits on immigration, they were understandably troubled by the tendency of anti-alien rhetoric to become entangled with a broader critique of the Jewish position in England. If dislike of the 'foreign Jew' became dislike of the 'Jew as foreigner', even Anglo-Jewry's 'poshocracy'²³ would not be safe from attack.

Ongoing manifestations of Continental anti-Semitism had a disquieting impact as well. Despite its eagerness to believe that anti-Jewish sentiment (at least outside the Russian Empire) was in decisive retreat, events such as the re-emergence of ritual murder accusations in Germany, the election of the popular and anti-Semitic Karl

²⁰ Lloyd Gartner's *The Jewish Immigrant in England, 1870-1914* (London, 1960) remains unsurpassed. Studies of a more limited scope include J. Buckman, *Immigrants and the Class Struggle: The Jewish Immigrants in Leeds, 1880-1914* (Manchester, 1983) and W. Fishman, *East End Jewish Radicals, 1875-1914* (London, 1975). On 'native' responses to Jewish immigration see Black, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1880-1920* (Oxford, 1988); Feldman, 'Englishmen, Jews, and Immigrants in London, 1865-1914: Modernization, Social Control, and the Paths to Englishness', in R. Dotterer et al. (eds.), *Jewish Settlement and Community in the Modern Western World* (London, 1991), 101-3; Larissa Douglas, 'Defining the Alien: Responses to Russo-Jewish Immigration and the Creation of Cultural and Political Identities in England and Canada, 1881-1907' (M.A. thesis, McMaster Univ., 1999).

²¹ Endelman, *Jews of Britain*, 127; G. Alderman, *Modern British Jewry* (Oxford, 1992), 110.

²² B. Gainer, *The Alien Invasion: The Origins of the Aliens Act of 1905* (New York, 1972); J.A. Garrard, *The English and Immigration: A Comparative Study of the Jewish Influx, 1880-1910* (London, 1971); Holmes, *Anti-Semitism*, Part I.

²³ The phrase—which did not refer to Anglo-Jewry specifically—belongs to Christopher Isherwood.

Lueger as Vienna's mayor and, most dramatically, Dreyfus's show-trial, did at some level cast doubt upon the establishment's sunny prognosis.²⁴ It would seem that few believed that what took place across the Channel would be repeated on their own doorsteps. Nonetheless, the counsel of one leading cleric (issued only weeks before the outbreak of war) that the anti-Jewish crowds in Paris should serve as a reminder 'to be more cautious and more circumspect than ever before', suggests that the home front was not seen to be entirely invulnerable.²⁵

With the exception of immigration, mainstream political debate within Britain did not concern itself with so-called 'Jewish problems'. Yet the questions which were at the fore of public attention also affected—if less directly—the outlook of the Jewish establishment. One particularly prominent concern during the last decade of the nineteenth century related to Britain's economic future. Despite its status as the progenitor of the Industrial Revolution and its previously unchallenged hold on international economic leadership, the nation was losing ground to Germany and the United States.²⁶ Another key issue was the apparent failure of Victorian prosperity to alleviate the often wretched conditions in the big cities. Middle-class anxiety about overcrowding, poor health standards and crime generated a flurry of reports and calls for government intervention.²⁷ The state of the Empire also came under new, if limited, scrutiny. Even the Radical Liberals, who would soon attack Britain's war against the Boers as immoral, did not challenge the popular and governmental consensus linking the maintenance of Britain's international position to a strong Empire.

²⁴ P.J. Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria* (Rev. edn., Cambridge, Mass., 1988), 27-183; A.S. Lindemann, *The Jew Accused: Three Anti-Semitic Affairs (Dreyfus, Beilis, Frank) 1894-1915* (Cambridge, 1991), 57-173; J.D. Klier and S. Lambroza, (eds.), *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian Jewry* (Cambridge, 1992), Parts I, II and III.

²⁵ Cited in Endelman, *Jews of Britain*, 162.

²⁶ A. Orde, *The Eclipse of Great Britain: the United States and British Imperial Decline, 1895-1956* (Basingstoke, 1996); R.C. Floud, 'Britain 1860-1914: A Survey', in id. and D. McCloskey, (eds.), *The Economic History of Britain since 1700, ii. 1860s to the 1970s* (Cambridge, 1981), 1-26. P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, 'Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Expansion Overseas II: New Imperialism, 1850-1945', *Economic History Review* NS40:1 (1987), 1-26.

²⁷ G. Stedman Jones, *Outcast London* (Oxford, 1971), Part III.

Nonetheless, anxiety about the difficulty (and cost)²⁸ of holding the Empire predated the debacle in South Africa.²⁹

One consequence of these developments was renewed attention to the nature and content of 'Britishness'. Interest in history, tradition and ritual intensified as the public and politicians alike sought ways to make sense of a rapidly changing environment and to reproduce social cohesion. Behind these new foci lay an attempt to define what it meant to belong—and, at some level, who could belong—to the British nation.³⁰ Was it defined by religion—broadly Christian, or more narrowly Protestant? Was it based around shared adherence to a set of political ideals, laws and institutions? Was its imperial nature key to its self-understanding? If, so, how broadly did membership in this cultural and political community extend? Could one become British, or was it exclusively a privilege of birth? Anglo-Jewish leaders could not help but take a keen interest in this collective process of self-definition. The future of their own position, and that of British Jews as a whole, was to a large extent dependent upon the vindication of a liberal, inclusive and tolerant definition of Britain and British peoplehood.

The outbreak of war in South Africa forced the Jewish establishment to confront troubling accusations regarding its place in the nation. Yet the more philosophically minded saw an opportunity to turn this to their advantage: the war experience could

²⁸ For two contrasting views see L.E. Davis and Huttenback, *Mammon and the Pursuit of Empire: The Political Economy of British Imperialism, 1860-1912* (Cambridge, 1986) and A. Offer, 'The British Empire, 1870-1914: A Waste of Money?', *Economic History Review*, NS46:2 (1993), 215-38.

²⁹ D. Judd, *Empire: The British Imperial Experience from 1765 to the Present* (London, 1996), 130-53. One evocative expression of this pessimism is Rudyard Kipling's 1897 Jubilee poem, 'Recessional'. E. Boehmer, *Empire Writing: An Anthology of Colonial Literature, 1870-1918* (Oxford, 1998), 272.

³⁰ Colls, 'Englishness and National Culture', in *Englishness*, 1-28; Dodds, 'Englishness and the Political Culture', in *Englishness*, 29-61; H. Cunningham, 'The Language of Patriotism, 1750-1914', *History Workshop Journal* 12 (Autumn, 1981), 8-33; E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger, (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (2nd edn., Cambridge, 1992), Introduction; K. Robbins, *Nineteenth-Century Britain: Integration and Diversity* (Oxford, 1995), 1-28, 183-5; Robbins, *Great Britain: Identities, Institutions and the Idea of Britishness* (London, 1997), particularly 206-25, 277-93. A. Thompson, *Imperial Britain: The Empire in British Politics c. 1880-1920* (Harlow, 2000), 15-37.

itself be an instrument of Jewish integration. If successful, this effort would provide a stinging report to the allegations of disloyalty and allay the community's own concerns about its current and future inclusion. The battlefields of South Africa—and the home front in Britain—would serve as the physical crucible in which Anglo-Jewry could permanently meld its fortune with Britain and the Empire. This was, to borrow David Feldman's apt phrase, a response shaped by both faith and fear.³¹

* * *

Because of the lack of any substantive prior scholarship on Anglo-Jewish responses to the South African War, my exploration of this subject will extend over two closely linked chapters.³² I begin with a discussion of methodology and historical context. Key themes in the Anglo-Jewish establishment's response to the war are then set out through a homiletical study. Since Anglo-Jewish sermons remained ideologically consistent throughout the war, this analysis is structured around three central tropes. In the first section, I analyse clerical arguments regarding the compatibility of British and Jewish values and consider how this evidence was employed to defend both the war and Anglo-Jewry's place within the nation. The following section investigates the content and function of the clergy's patriotic rhetoric, in particular its idealised vision of Victoria, Britain and the Empire. In the final section of this chapter I consider accounts of Anglo-Jewry's past civic and military contributions and preachers' attempts to engage their congregants in the current war effort.

The second chapter takes a broader perspective, examining how the Anglo-Jewish establishment (and, to a lesser degree, the immigrant Jewish population) responded to

³¹ Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews*, Introduction, Chapter 3. While Feldman's book covers the period of the Boer War, he devotes very little attention to the topic.

³² R. Mendelsohn, 'The Jewish Soldier: Anglo-Jewry at War, 1899-1902', *Jewish Affairs* 54:3 (1999), 11-18. Also published under the title 'The Jewish War: Anglo-Jewry and the South African War', in Cuthbertson and Grundlingh et al. (eds.), *Writing a Wider War*, 247-65. Although Stephen Bayme includes a brief overview of communal responses in his dissertation, 'Jewish Leadership' (89-100), his primary interest is in anti-Semitism.

the war and participated in the war effort. Topics discussed here include the role of the Jewish press in engaging the home front, the development of institutional and individual philanthropy (including benefits, appeals and individual gifts) and the Jewish presence in the military campaign. Offering up Jewish men, subsidising hospital care for injured soldiers or sending small luxuries to the forces was in some sense simply a question of doing one's duty in a time of national need. Yet, as I will argue, these activities were also driven by a much more particularistic concern: the perceived obligation to provide evidence of Anglo-Jewish loyalty.

My final section will focus on the Jewish Lads' Brigade, an elite instrument of Anglicisation and militarism that was frequently utilised during the war for communal propaganda. While the Brigade was founded in the mid 1890s, its first major successes—not coincidentally, I suggest—were achieved during the war years. Moreover, the Brigade's ethos and activities were seen to perpetuate and publicise communal commitment to imperial patriotism, muscular Judaism and military service.

In these chapters I do not aim to produce a comprehensive survey of the wartime Jewish community(ies) of Great Britain. Rather, I concentrate on the attitudes of a largely native-born and London based elite which chose to affiliate with the organised community.³³ This group was composed of the self-appointed communal leaders (including, but not limited to, the Cousinhood—the accepted descriptor for London's great and intermingled Jewish families³⁴), the clergy and a less prominent but increasingly numerous and prosperous Jewish middle and upper middle class. The composition of the ultra-elite was virtually fixed, with lineage, duration of settlement in

³³ This definition is taken from D. Gutwein, *The Divided Elite: Economics, Politics and Anglo-Jewry, 1882-1917* (Leiden, 1992), 6-10. Both Gutwein and I exclude those born to Jewish parents who were consciously estranged from the Jewish community. Though their Jewishness may not have been incidental to their critics, they did not wish to speak for Anglo-Jewry, nor did they wish it to speak for them.

³⁴ C. Bermant, *The Cousinhood: The Anglo-Jewish Gentry* (London, 1971).

Britain, philanthropic commitments and positions of authority and wealth in the *non-Jewish* world all according privileged status and leadership in the *Jewish* community. The latter two groups, although lacking the economic or political cachet of their more prestigious counterparts, nonetheless embodied and expressed a similar set of values. During a period in which there was a rapidly growing number of Jews residing in Britain, these groups believed themselves to embody fully the label Englishmen of the Jewish faith. This 'cultural orientation' transcended party divisions and precise occupations in producing nearly unanimous backing of the war.³⁵ Support derived from a particular understanding of what it meant to be English and Jewish, rather than from simpler political or economic affiliation.

Re-presentation on the Public Stage

Before beginning this analysis, a certain question of judgment must be settled. Faced with what appears to be copious evidence—both word and deed—of Anglo-Jewish patriotism and loyalty, how critical should we be of the motivations underlying these sentiments and actions? Several options exist. The first—and most obvious—is to accept them at face value, discounting discomfort with overwritten prose or highly managed events as a product of contemporary sensibilities. This approach, however, is obviously inadequate, as it requires the sensitive reader to bury ambiguities and conflicts within these sermons, speeches and newspaper reports. Second, we can hone in on the note of pleading found in remarks of community leaders as proof that these occasions were mere facades, designed explicitly for maximum impact on a watchful, non-Jewish public. To paraphrase the playwright, do they protest too much?

³⁵ This phrase is used by historian Stuart Cohen in describing the basis of the Anglo-Jewish elite's anti-Zionism. His idea of a broadly accepted world-view influencing outlook on both Jewish and national political concerns would also seem to apply here. 'Ideological Components in Anglo-Jewish Opposition to Zionism Before and During the First World War: A Restatement', *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* NS30 (1987-1988), 151-2.

Amongst historians of the Empire, James (Jan) Morris, argues for a healthy dose of scepticism in his description of Victoria's 1897 Jubilee. In *Pax Britannica* he asserts that the Jubilee 'was mostly froth, whipped up for the occasion by press and publications'.³⁶ Morris's statement suggests the need to examine the motivations of key actors as well as to recognise these individuals' power to project supposedly consensual images upon the public stage. Yet while he is correct to demand analysis of the layers of meaning behind such events, this critique should not undercut either the reality of sincere imperial sentiment (which was evident in virtually every segment of British public life—both Jewish and non—during this period³⁷) or the significance of this type of evidence in forming a picture of Anglo-Jewry at the end of the Victorian era.

David Cannadine and Mark Looker have also examined the imperial celebrations of 1897 in light of this concern.³⁸ Cannadine's jointly authored study of Jubilee commemorations in Cambridge takes a behind-the-scenes approach in order to explore 'tensions and strains' regarding the substance and style of planned events.³⁹ Yet while Cannadine concludes that the festivities' apparent conformity masked underlying conflict, he also sees the very fact of these disputes as evidence of the Jubilee's real—if contested—public meaning. Similarly, Looker's article on the religious press points to the 'myth-making' opportunity, particularly for minority groups (he focuses on Catholics, who were by far the largest non-Anglican faith community), provided by the Jubilee.⁴⁰ He argues that for those ill at ease about their place in society, these national celebrations were ideal opportunities to 'mint protestations of loyalty ...into the

³⁶ *Pax Britannica: the Climax of an Empire* (2nd edn., London, 1975), 441.

³⁷ J. MacKenzie, (ed.), *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester, 1986); A. Thompson, *Imperial Britain: The Empire in British Politics c. 1880-1932* (Harlow, 2000), 15-37.

³⁸ E. Hammerton and D. Cannadine, 'Conflict and Consensus on a Ceremonial Occasion: The Diamond Jubilee in Cambridge in 1897', *Historical Journal* 24:1 (1981), 111-46; Looker, "'God Save the Queen": Victoria's Jubilees and the Religious Press', *Victorian Periodicals Review* 21:3 (1988), 115-19.

³⁹ Hammerton and Cannadine, 'Conflict and Consensus', 115.

⁴⁰ Looker, 'Victoria's Jubilees', 115.

coin of true “Englishness”.”⁴¹ Although Looker views much of this Jubilee inspired rhetoric as ‘merely the orchestration of platitudes’, he acknowledges that it was motivated by the sincere desire of vulnerable groups to identify more closely with the nation at large.⁴² The idealised images projected by Anglo-Jewry, among others, did reflect an underlying defensiveness. They also anticipated a future of complete and unquestioned inclusion.

Arthur (Aryeh) Goren has investigated Jewish self-portrayal in his recent study of turn-of-the-century American Jewry. He argues that communal events such as the 1905 celebrations of American Jewry’s 250th birthday not only offered ‘didactic opportunities’ for re-presentation, but also had had an important function in shaping the identity of the Jewish population.⁴³ Blending self-affirmation and apologetics, the organisers of these public proceedings sought to ‘activate, uplift and educate’ the maximum numbers of Jews as well as to ‘win the sympathy and respect’ of the non-Jewish public by parading Jewish values and accomplishments.⁴⁴

It would appear that the *fin de siècle* Anglo-Jewish elite shared a similar agenda. Whether celebrating the Jubilee, expressing support for the British troops in South Africa or welcoming the new King,⁴⁵ it was engaged in a genuine effort to formulate and express British-Jewish ideals. Yet particularly during the South African War, these ‘didactic opportunities’—imperatives, even—were not to be taken for granted.

⁴¹ Looker, ‘Victoria’s Jubilees’, 116.

⁴² Looker, ‘Victoria’s Jubilees’, 115.

⁴³ *The Politics and Public Culture of American Jews* (Bloomington, 1999), 55.

⁴⁴ Goren, *Politics and Public Culture*, 46.

⁴⁵ *JCEd* 3/5/01 17, 10/5/01 10-11.

Charges of Jewish Culpability

Britain's first major conflict since the Crimea, the Boer War was the product of long-standing competition for land and resources (mainly gold and diamonds) in South Africa. Yet the importance which came to be placed on regional domination underscores that the path to war was also shaped by Britain's reinvigorated pursuit of Empire during the 1880s and 1890s. Others have pointed to the influence of jingoistic nationalism and propaganda in stirring up public support for a final defeat of the Boers.⁴⁶

While a detailed discussion either of the war's causes or the range of public reactions to it (despite the initial wave of popular enthusiasm, it also provoked sharp moral outrage and, as victory appeared elusive, introspection and anxiety) is outside the scope of this dissertation, there is one obvious exception to this rule. Allegations of Jewish responsibility for the South African conflict not only formed the backbone of Liberal and socialist anti-war critiques but also stimulated a temporary rise in domestic anti-Semitism. In order to contextualise establishment responses to this threat, the following pages will summarise the arguments made by J.A. Hobson and others and consider the history of Jewish involvement in South Africa.

Justifying the decision to go to war, the Conservative-Unionist government of Lord Salisbury argued that conflict had been made inevitable by the Boers' failure to grant political equality to the Uitlanders, foreigners—mainly British—who had migrated to the Transvaal following the 1886 discovery of gold. A rather different explanation came

⁴⁶ I concur with Andrew Porter that cruder theories of economic imperialism remain unconvincing. Additional factors relevant to a multi-causal explanation include the influence of the metropolis, great power rivalries, 'peripheral' problems, 'personality and accident' and the assumptions of imperial policy-makers. Porter, 'South African War', 42-57. A concise but thorough consideration of historiography and key themes can be found in Judd, *Empire*, 117-70; I.R. Smith, 'A Century of Controversy over Origins', in D. Lowry, (ed.), *The South African War Reappraised* (Manchester, 2000), 23-49.

from *Reynolds Newspaper*, a socialist weekly with a working-class constituency. 'At the bottom of the war', the paper wrote, 'are the Jewish syndicates and millionaires ...counting the chickens shortly to be hatched'.⁴⁷ Within the House of Commons, opposition members asserted that the German-Jewish associates of Cecil Rhodes (former Governor of the British ruled Cape⁴⁸ and the premier mining magnate) were forcing Britain's hand for selfish ends. The future Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, then a Welsh Liberal Party backbencher, decried 'fighting for men of that type!'⁴⁹

What degree of social permeation did such views achieve? Both anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist arguments—from which these anti-Semitic variants derived—had a limited following. Not only were the Liberals divided on the war question, but many of those who did oppose Conservative policy attached no credence to the idea of a Jewish conspiracy.⁵⁰ Matters were perhaps otherwise within the trade union movement and the Left's more radical fringes.⁵¹ Yet even here, the strident anti-Semitic ranting of the Social Democratic Federation leader, Henry Hyndman, or that of John Burns, a Lib-Lab MP obsessed with the 'financial Jew', failed to galvanise this sector of the British public.⁵² (Probable factors include British discomfort with explicit anti-Semitism,⁵³ the war's popularity amongst the working and lower middle classes and the failure, as evidenced by the Conservative victory in the 1900 'Khaki' election, to form a Commons coalition of war opponents.)

⁴⁷ Cited in Hirschfield, 'Jewish Conspiracy', 623.

⁴⁸ Britain annexed the territory in 1806 as a strategic safeguard for the Indian and Far Eastern sea route. What lay inland, to the north, was seen to be of little value until the 1869 diamond rush.

⁴⁹ Hirschfield, 'Jewish Conspiracy', 625.

⁵⁰ For other aspects of the Liberal argument see R.J.W. Auld, 'The Liberal Pro-Boer', *Journal of British Studies* 14:2 (1975), 78-101; B. Porter, *Critics of Empire: British Radical Attitudes to Colonialism in Africa, 1895-1914* (London, 1968), 56-137; A. Davey, *The British Pro-Boers 1877-1902* (Cape Town, 1978), 48-115. On the defense of Anglo-Jewry in the *Spectator* see Bayme, 'Jewish Leadership', 68-70.

⁵¹ Critiques of Jews as the symbol of monopoly-capitalism were a staple of socialist philosophy. R.S. Wistrich, *Socialism and the Jews: The Dilemmas of Assimilation in Germany and Austria-Hungary* (Rutherford, 1982); J. Jacobs, *On Socialists and 'the Jewish Question' After Marx* (New York, 1992).

⁵² Schneer, *London 1900*, 248-59. See also Hirschfield, 'Jewish Conspiracy', 619-31; J. Galbraith, 'The Pamphlet Campaign on the Boer War', *Journal of Modern History* 24:2 (1952), 111-26; Bayme, 'Jewish Leadership', 70-77.

⁵³ One historian who favours this position is Endelman, 'Jewish Modernity', 237-9.

Where many of these ideas found both a respectable face and a prolonged lease on life were in the writings of the *Manchester Guardian* correspondent and Radical Liberal activist, J.A. Hobson.⁵⁴ Hobson's argument, developed during an extended trip to South Africa in 1899 (and therefore appearing to be based on first-hand evidence rather than abstract theory), was that South African Jewish capitalists had forced Britain into war in order to maintain their domination over the economy. Aided by a cabal of Jewish press lords and influential London financiers, they had twisted the arms of Cabinet members and exploited the British public's jingoism. To Hobson, this relentless pursuit of an agenda that was at odds with, and detrimental to, the British nation constituted a betrayal of the highest order.⁵⁵

Hobson's critique undoubtedly distorted the magnates' political power, the closeness of their relationships with London financiers and the ultimate influence of either group over Whitehall's South Africa policy. (The writer acknowledged as much by dropping the Jewish conspiracy idea altogether in his 1902 study of British imperialism.⁵⁶) It also exaggerated the extent to which the Rand's coterie was dominated by Jews, or to which a Jewish consensus existed. Instead, 'Jewburg' served as a one-word signifier for all that was disagreeable about the South African situation. Yet without accepting the overall validity of such claims, it must be noted that amongst the Randlords Hobson so despised were indeed a fair number of Jews (or individuals born to Jewish parents, though such a distinction was infrequently made).⁵⁷ Moreover, with few exceptions,

⁵⁴ J. Allett, 'New Liberalism, Old Prejudices: J.A. Hobson and the "Jewish Question"', *JSS* 69:2 (1987), 99-114; Holmes, 'J.A. Hobson and the Jews', in id., (ed.), *Immigrants and Minorities in British Society* (London, 1978), 137-42.

⁵⁵ *The War in South Africa: Its Causes and Effects* (London, 1900), 189-90, 197, 217.

⁵⁶ *Imperialism: A Study* (London, 1902).

⁵⁷ One such figure was Alfred Beit. Second-in-command to the (non-Jewish) Cecil Rhodes and in charge of the latter's London operations, Beit came from a family of Hamburg merchants. In 1875, at the age of twenty-two, he had been sent to Kimberly (the site of diamond discoveries, this was, after some dispute, annexed by the British) as the representative of a German-Jewish trading firm. He achieved early successes, met Rhodes in 1879 and created a partnership with him. During this period, he also converted to Christianity. Rhodes' rival, Barney Barnato, was perhaps the most colourful of the Jewish Randlords. Born Barnett Isaacs, this grandson of a rabbi and erstwhile conjurer's assistant, street hustler and prize-fighter arrived in South Africa in 1872. Within two years, he had established Barnato Brothers, where he soon became known for remarkable earnings and dubious business practices. He was also unusual amongst the Jewish magnates in being British; the vast majority were, like Beit, from German backgrounds. (On the

the Randlords did—as Hobson asserted—wish to rid the Transvaal of Boer rule, even going so far as to back an 1895 coup attempt, the Jameson Raid.⁵⁸

For the second part of his story, Hobson looked closer to home, contending that through their undue influence in Westminster (in a period without high taxation, public revenue was often supplemented by privately backed bonds and loans), Jewish bankers had been able to pressure the government into going to war. Here again, Hobson's argument was superficially convincing. The Rothschilds in particular did have substantial investments in South Africa, both with Rhodes' De Beers company and in gold extraction.⁵⁹ Moreover, by the late 1890s they were firmly in the Conservative camp, having broken with the party that had first enabled their entry into political life.⁶⁰ Yet although the greatest Jewish banking house did have sympathy for the idea of a greater British South Africa, it wished to avoid force. As an international business, with major offices in Paris and Frankfurt (once again, Hobson's sneer of internationalist was fundamentally correct, though he did not grasp the implications in this case), it was imprudent to support a British policy which, at the very least, was likely to have a damaging effect on Anglo-German relations.

In pursuit of a peaceful resolution, Natty Rothschild, an MP and head of the family's London offices, even made a last-minute appeal to Kruger (via a South African Jewish associate, Sammy Marks) for franchise concessions. This was done without the prior approval of either the Prime Minister or the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain.⁶¹

whole, South African Jews came from Lithuania.) G. Wheatcroft. *The Randlords: The Men who Made South Africa* (London, 1985). More generally, M. Shain and Mendelsohn, (eds.), *Memories, Realities and Dreams: Aspects of the South African Jewish Experience* (Johannesburg, 2000).

⁵⁸ Pakenham, *Boer War*, 1-35.

⁵⁹ N. Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild*, ii: *The World's Banker, 1849-1998* (London, 2000), 352-3, 356-68. Rothschild family financing enabled Rhodes to mount a takeover bid of one of his South African competitors.

⁶⁰ The Rothschilds left the Liberals in 1886, when the party split over Irish Home Rule. Those opposed to the radical position labeled themselves as third-party 'Liberal Unionists' and began to form coalitions with the Conservatives.

⁶¹ Ferguson, *Rothschild*, 365, 391-2.

Such an audacious—and inconveniently timed—measure was not appreciated by certain persons in Whitehall (who had spent the last several years trying to build momentum for a final settlement of the Transvaal question) and may have resulted in the family's failure to secure its usual monopoly on war financing.⁶² As for Rothschild, the outbreak of war produced the expected philanthropic gestures and patriotic rhetoric from this '*de facto* temporal chief' of Anglo-Jewry.⁶³ He was, like most Jewish leaders, both British and not, peace-loving until the first shot was fired.

Natty Rothschild's strenuous efforts to prevent British-Boer violence, coupled with his swift about-face in October 1899, suggest that he was well aware of the problems which such a war could bring—not only for his company, but for his community. At a time when immigration and urban problems had already directed unwanted and unfavourable attention to Jews in Britain, anything which would cast further doubt on Anglo-Jewry's position was to be strenuously avoided. The alleged circumstances of the conflict—the seeming linkage amongst the Randlords, London's bankers and Whitehall, and the accusations situating Jewry at the centre of an international political and financial plot—served to heighten anxieties still further.

Although 'rich Jew' anti-Semitism would acquire a fair degree of social respectability, many of its proponents continued to operate well outside the political mainstream. Furthermore, the intensity of anti-Jewish rhetoric was both short-lived and directly correlated to Britain's military progress. Jewish conspiracy theories therefore had particular political currency during the winter of 1899-1900, when the campaign was going poorly. By the end of 1900, following British victories at Kimberley,

⁶² Ferguson, *Rothschild*, 366-7.

⁶³ Ferguson, *Rothschild*, 365-6. Posts held included the presidency of the United Synagogue and the Jews' Free School.

Johannesburg, Ladysmith and Mafeking and the effective end of conventional military engagement,⁶⁴ recourse to such arguments became far less frequent.

In the end, Britain's wartime flirtation with anti-Semitism would appear to have been far less severe than contemporaneous Continental *Judenhetze*. However, it should come as little surprise that the Anglo-Jewish establishment refused to remain passive in the face of this offensive. With its reputation seemingly in the balance, a vigorous display of patriotism was now required.

The Anglo-Jewish Clergy and the Wartime Pulpit

Unlike their Talmudic predecessors, a late medieval German rabbi noted, today's rabbis were 'not accustomed to preaching'.⁶⁵ Within the Ashkenazic world (there was an active tradition of preaching in Moorish Spain and the post-expulsion Sephardic communities of Italy, Turkey and the Netherlands), sermons did not begin to appear as a regular part of Sabbath and festival services until the mid eighteenth century. From that point onwards, development—in rhetoric, function and significance—appears to have been rapid. By 1832, the history of Jewish preaching was deemed important enough to merit a full-length monograph by Leopold Zunz, one of the founders of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (Science of Judaism) movement.⁶⁶

The precise reasons behind this shift are unclear. Sermons may well have come to be viewed as an effective means of imparting Jewish wisdom to less well-educated members. They also appear to have enabled rabbis to frame issues of temporal

⁶⁴ British victory was now virtually assured. However, the Boers' switch to a policy of attrition meant that low-grade conflict (characterised by guerrilla tactics and British retribution against the civilian population) would continue for a further seventeen months. Pakenham, *Boer War*, 470-571.

⁶⁵ Cited in M. Saperstein, 'War and Patriotism in Sermons to Central European Jews: 1756-1815', *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 38 (1993), 5-6.

⁶⁶ Saperstein, *Jewish Preaching, 1200-1800: An Anthology* (New Haven, 1989), 87. On *Wissenschaft*, see I. Schorsch, *From Text to Context: The Turn to History in Modern Judaism* (Hanover, 1994), 151-359.

concern through a religious lens. This interpretation is corroborated by Marc Saperstein's observation that the increasing frequency of sermon delivery was also matched by thematic changes. He points to sermons delivered in both England and Prussia during the Seven Years War (1756-1763) as evidence that, '[n]ow for the first time, Jews began to be included in public mourning and celebration for events concerning the nations in which they lived.'⁶⁷ Whether or not this goal was achieved, it is nonetheless clear that sermons, like communal proclamations and prayers for the leader, could function both as a means of enhancing identification with the nation and as a collective statement of loyalty. Bart Wallet echoes these themes in his discussion of the role of vernacular in nineteenth century Dutch-Jewish homiletics.⁶⁸ According to Wallet, vernacular preaching reflected a conscious intent to align the Jewish community with the host society. It also signified an effort to underplay the perceived 'foreignness' of Judaic teaching and practice. Finally, it was a pragmatic concession to the fact that many in the congregation may not have understood a Jewish language.

Though still overlooked by Jewish history scholars as a means of insight into the preoccupations of the Jewish community-at-large (as opposed to more narrowly defined theological concerns), sermons are in fact a remarkably expressive and illustrative primary source. Those delivered by Anglo-Jewish preachers during the Boer War are no exception. On the whole, they possess rhetorical, if not literary, value and are exceptionally effective at capturing the tone of discourse of the Anglo-Jewish elite. In addition, despite their carefully crafted form, these sermons also preserve the community's search for solutions during a period of acute crisis.⁶⁹ During the Boer War, preachers stood in front of their congregations as interpreters, counsellors and, in

⁶⁷ Saperstein, 'War and Patriotism', 5-6. See also 'British Jewish Preachers in Time of War (1800-1918)', *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 4:3 (2005), 255-71.

⁶⁸ 'Religious Oratory and the Improvement of Congregants: Dutch-Jewish Preaching in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century', *Studia Rosenthaliana* 34:2 (2000), 168-93. On the influence of Christian models in the 'singer' versus 'preacher' dilemma of Victorian Anglo-Jewish congregations see Sharot, 'Religious Change', 176-80.

⁶⁹ Saperstein, *Jewish Preaching*, 87.

some ways, politicians. In addition to teaching and consoling their congregants, therefore, they also hoped to influence their outlook and actions.

Anglo-Jewish wartime sermons not only reflected the questions of the day but attempted to contextualise those concerns within the framework of Jewish values and history. Accordingly, preachers commonly relied on Biblical and Talmudic materials to draw lessons for the present out of the Jewish past. Moreover, sources were employed in such a way that the sermons could be appreciated by those with differing levels of Jewish knowledge and intellectual sophistication; stories, parables, anecdotes and other literary devices therefore helped to dramatise and simplify more involved themes.

The chances of any sermon making a lasting impression depended in large part on the oratorical skills displayed in its delivery.⁷⁰ Yet the intended audience for many sermons extended beyond those congregants present when it was first delivered. Most notably, the *Jewish Chronicle*—the largest and best-known Jewish newspaper, and therefore the semi-official voice of the institutional and elite community—and the *Jewish World*—a similar but somewhat cheaper newspaper aimed at a less affluent but still Anglicised market—often selected several sermons for publication in full in their weekly editions. Less frequent provincial, organisational and literary Jewish publications also transcribed and summarised sermons of note. In addition, sermons by leading preachers were sometimes printed in pamphlet form by private presses.⁷¹ There are no known sources about who purchased these pamphlets; one can only speculate that they were read

⁷⁰ Saperstein, 'The Sermon as Oral Performance', in Y. Elman and I. Gershoni, (eds.) *Transmitting Jewish Traditions: Orality, Textuality, and Cultural Diffusion* (New Haven, 2000), 248-77.

⁷¹ For example, the Chief Rabbi's 4/11/99 sermon, 'Judaism and War', was the twelfth pamphlet to be printed under the imprint of *The North London Pulpit: A Special Series of Sermons Delivered at the North London Synagogue*.

largely, if not exclusively, by Jews. Finally, non-Jewish national broadsheets also took occasional note of Jewish sermons.⁷²

Only on the rarest occasions, then, would the wider public have heard or read Anglo-Jewish sermons. Yet while preachers were primarily addressing their own congregants, their messages were often calibrated for another set of ears and eyes. In defending the government's decision to fight or asserting Jewish willingness to join the British forces, clergy were in no way disingenuous. The Anglo-Jewish establishment was indeed staunchly loyal to Britain and its Empire. Equally, it identified sincerely with the values which Britain was purporting to defend in South Africa. And it was—for a number of reasons—responsive to the national call to arms. However, just as they sought to inspire their congregants, clergy members were also attempting to advance a particular image of the community which they served and represented.

The consistency of pro-war sentiments in Anglo-Jewish sermons, while striking, is not by itself proof of unanimous community opinion. Yet there are several reasons to believe that divergences of outlook—if they existed—would have been most likely to emerge within individual congregations. At the time of the Boer War, and, in many ways, for fifty years thereafter, Anglo-Jewish communal politics were conducted in a highly centralised and often autocratic manner. Synagogues operated with relative autonomy and would therefore have been—at least in principle—a haven for minority sentiments.⁷³ Moreover, the old adage of two Jews and three synagogues did seem to hold true in late Victorian London.

⁷² *The Times* 4/12/99 7, 29/1/01 3, 12/6/02 12. According to the *Jewish World* ((8/12/99 179), the *Manchester Evening Chronicle* printed a pamphlet of a sermon given at the city's Great Synagogue. On Jewish sermons appearing in the *Daily Chronicle* and *Daily News* see *JCEd* 8/12/99 19.

⁷³ With minor exceptions, the native clergy were trained as pastors and preachers—usually at Jews College—rather than as rabbinic scholars. Authority over questions of Jewish law therefore resided with the more rigorously educated Chief Rabbi. Sharot, 'Religious Change', 169-70, 174-5.

The Ashkenazic Jewish elite affiliated with a relatively large number of congregations. This was a consequence of several factors: firstly, Jewish residential expansion into North and West London led to the opening of new congregations in these neighbourhoods. (For example, the Bayswater Synagogue was founded in 1863; a Hampstead congregation followed in 1892.) Another contributor was the development, beginning in the 1840s, of Liberal Judaism.⁷⁴ Drawing inspiration from contemporaneous German and American-Jewish efforts at religious reform as well as from liberal Christian theologians like Balliol College's Benjamin Jowett, this new approach to theology, liturgy and ritual had produced a split from the Anglo-Orthodox mainstream and its organising body, the United Synagogue.⁷⁵ Finally, the congregational affiliations of the Anglo-Jewish establishment were influenced as much by personal affinities and familial traditions as by geographic and doctrinal concerns. (This Balkanisation did not occur within London's smaller and more acculturated Sephardic population, which continued to affiliate with the Bevis Marks Synagogue.)

With this degree of institutional fragmentation, it is particularly striking that London's Jewish pulpits appear to have produced a consistent wartime message. One can clearly point to the constraints circumscribing dissent, in particular fear of anti-Semitic backlash and desire for inclusion. However, the most compelling interpretation seems to be that preachers actually believed that both patriotic obligation and Jewish tradition dictated communal support for Britain's effort in South Africa. Taking as their starting point the rabbinic dictate *dina d'malkhuta dina* ('the law of the land is the law'), the

⁷⁴ A.J. Kershen and J. A. Romain, *Tradition and Change: A History of Reform Judaism in Britain, 1840-1995* (London, 1995), 3-127.

⁷⁵ M. Freud-Kandel, 'An Ideology Forsaken: Theological Developments in Anglo-Jewish Orthodoxy since 1913', (Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge Univ., 2001), 13; A. Newman, *The United Synagogue* (London, 1950). The United Synagogue was founded in 1870 as means of producing an Anglican style hierarchy over Jewish religious life. Presenting itself as the sole religious spokesperson—and 'Anglo-Orthodoxy' as the official denomination--it also sought a monopoly in interpreting Jewish law.

Anglo-Jewish clergy proffered a theological defence of the war and attempted to spur their congregants to action.

Before turning to the sermons themselves, several methodological concerns should be considered. Scholars utilising homiletic sources have acknowledged the difficulty of ascertaining whether preachers' sermons are representative of broader opinion. Saperstein responds to this challenge by arguing that the preacher's direct, face-to-face contact with his audience, both during the sermon and after—which he contrasts to the distance and anonymity enjoyed by a writer—discouraged the presentation of an oppositional stance. In addition, despite the preacher's status as spiritual leader, he also functioned as an employee of a lay-directed synagogue. A congregation could therefore threaten to terminate the employment of a rabbi who expressed controversial opinions, as Bevis Marks in fact did when it was displeased with the Zionist pronouncements of its Chief Rabbi, or *Haham*, Moses Gaster.⁷⁶ Keeping this in mind, it is important to note that there are no known incidents of dispute between a preacher and his congregation over the question of the war. In this instance, employee and employer were most likely aligned.

A second problem which must be taken into account is the relationship between the sermon heard by congregants and that encountered on paper by contemporaries or later scholars.⁷⁷ The transition from oral to written communication and the mediation of a transcriber or editor do change the context and, to some extent, the content of these sermons. To give one example, sermon transmissions cannot take into account nuances of delivery; readers therefore encounter the text without these interpretive

⁷⁶ See Cohen, *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1895-1920* (Princeton, 1982), 48, 145; S. Jackson, *The Sassoons: Portrait of a Dynasty* (London, 1968), 113. When the congregation dismissed Gaster in 1918, some contended that this was as a result of his Zionist affiliations (*JC* 4/4/19 12).

⁷⁷ Saperstein, 'Oral Performance', 248-77.

clues. The sermons utilised in this chapter are not in manuscript form; those which form the basis of my analysis were published in the Jewish press, usually the *Jewish Chronicle*, or, in a few instances, in later compilations.⁷⁸ It is therefore possible that some have been shortened, polished or similarly altered. However, while these variations create shortcomings for close literary analysis, there is every reason to believe that any substantive later version would have preserved the original's overall theme, structure and rhetorical devices. Stephen Yeo confirms this assertion, noting that late Victorian and Edwardian newspapers tended to print verbatim accounts of sermons, lectures and meetings.⁷⁹ Therefore, while we still should question when and why such items are included in coverage—and, similarly, what fails to appear—this type of reportage lends itself to fewer acute problems of representation and authorial viewpoint.⁸⁰

A final consideration is the question of audience. Late Victorian clergy and lay persons alike expressed concern about flagging attendance at churches and synagogues. The findings of the 1903 *Daily Mail* census of London congregations would suggest that the Anglo-Jewish elite was not immune from this increasing irreligiosity.⁸¹ Although it is impossible to ascertain the size and make-up of the congregation at a given Sabbath, festival or special service, it does appear that extraordinary occasions, like national prayer days, memorial services and, to a lesser extent, prominent guest preachers drew unusually large crowds.

⁷⁸ Neither the archival records of individual synagogues (which in some cases include preachers' personal papers) nor those of the United Synagogue contain original sermons from this period.

⁷⁹ *Religious and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis* (London, 1976), Preface.

⁸⁰ The compilations which I have located each focus on the work of a single rabbi. All include sermons on a wide range of topics and cover a number of years. None has a thematic introduction.

⁸¹ Endelman, *Radical Assimilation*, 95. On the first day of Passover, the *Mail's* data collectors found that the number of male worshippers in many synagogues did not exceed the number of permanent seat holders. This was more likely to be the case in congregations whose membership was drawn from the native-born middle classes, like the Borough Synagogue in Southwark, than those with particular wealthy attendees, such as the New West End Synagogue, located at St. Petersburg Place, W1.

Defining Anglo-Jewish Values

Well before the outbreak of the South African War, Victoria's Jewish subjects had exhibited a persistent anxiety regarding their ability to make 'common cause' with the British nation. Civic pride was thus intermingled with both fear and anticipation of what one leading cleric described as the 'sterner duties that m[ight] one day be demanded of them as Englishmen and Israelites'.⁸² The 'sterner duties' to which the Reverend Hermann Gollancz had referred in his 1897 sermon soon became apparent. For Anglo-Jewish soldiers, the conflict with the Boers enabled them to 'give practical proof' of their devotion and loyalty.⁸³ The clergy faced a different test: to disprove claims that Jews were foreigners. The Reverend G.J. Emanuel's evidence, although delivered several months before the war, was nonetheless defiant. 'We are Englishmen as much as our next door neighbours, the Browns and the Smiths,' he declared. 'We are bound by all an Englishman's obligations. We are entitled to all an Englishman's privileges. We claim all the rights and honours of British subjects—among them the right to worship God as we please.'⁸⁴

According to Emanuel, the fact that British Jews held 'certain religious dogmas' and performed 'special religious rites' in no way compromised their claim to complete equality. Nor did he believe that Jewish religious distinctiveness conflicted with the full exercise of 'an Englishman's obligations' and privileges. Emanuel was far from alone in holding this view. The Anglo-Jewish clergy's wartime sermons would proffer a vigorous defence of the compatibility of Jewish and British values.

⁸² H. Gollancz, 'Queen Victoria: Her Diamond Jubilee (June, 1897)', in *Sermons and Addresses* (New York, 1909), 280. On this theme see B. Williams, 'The Anti-Semitism of Tolerance: Middle-Class Manchester and the Jews 1870-1900', in A.J. Kidd and K.W. Roberts, (eds.), *City, Class and Culture: Studies of Social Policy and Cultural Production in Victorian Manchester* (Manchester, 1985), 74-102; Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews*, 72-137.

⁸³ Gollancz, *Sermons and Addresses*, 280-1.

⁸⁴ *JC* 31/3/99 19.

The first step taken by the clergy—led by Adler—was the composition and recitation of a special prayer for the protection and success of British arms.⁸⁵ (A prayer for the safeguarding of the monarch and Royal Family was already included in weekday and Sabbath services.) This was duly adopted by most congregations⁸⁶ and offered either at the end of a sermon or following the reading of the weekly portions from the *Torah* and prophetic books.⁸⁷ The prayer was also delivered on public occasions such as services for the military. Similar versions were recited by congregations across the Empire. A vigorously worded version, praising Britain's battle for freedom and calling for its adversaries to be subdued, was even drafted by the Ashkenazic synagogue in Jerusalem. (Its Jewish population, although under Ottoman jurisdiction, had enjoyed protection from Britain since the mid nineteenth century.)⁸⁸

If this was the bare minimum required of the clergy, save the Sabbath of prayer set aside by the Queen in early January 1900, most unsurprisingly went much further. A few weeks into the conflict, Moses Gaster issued the following dictum during a visit to the Lauderdale Road Synagogue. 'We are now equally called upon', Gaster stated, 'to do our duty as patriots and as Jews. I have purposely mentioned these two duties, not that they clash against the other, but because they supplement one another. As patriots we must stand by our country, not even questioning the right or wrong of the case.' Gaster's instructions were clear. In reaching a position on the war, both British and Jewish values should be taken into account. Yet as he explained, the Jewish tradition's emphasis on allegiance to temporal authority ensured that there was no

⁸⁵ *JC* 27/10/99 11. Adapting the standard formula, it called for the Divine to watch over British troops, shield them with His right hand and '[g]ird them with victory, so that the war may be speedily ended'. It also sought blessings for those who aided the wounded, strength for those who prayed for 'their absent kinfolk' and solace to those who suffered a loss.

⁸⁶ A controversy arose at Bevis Marks, which while in alignment with the sentiments of the prayer, refused to allow any alterations to the service order. Members of the Jewish public, feeling that such unnecessary inflexibility would prejudice non-Jewish opinion against them, spoke out in dozens of letters. *JW* 1/12/99 155; *JC* 24/11/99 8.

⁸⁷ *JW* 12/1/99 256. The Chief Rabbi determined in October 1900 that recitation could be discontinued since large-scale hostilities were coming to an end (*JC* 12/10/00 10).

⁸⁸ *JC* 2/2/00 12.

necessary conflict between these two value systems. Indeed, these patriotic obligations even superseded (individual or collective) ethical judgement; duty prevailed even if the ruler or government was unjust.

However, Gaster continued, the 'loftiest conceptions of morality' could be satisfied by praying for Britain's military victory.⁸⁹ 'We Jews must fully appreciate the righteousness of the cause for which England has drawn the sword. The old Biblical maxim ...that there should be one law for the inhabitant and the stranger, is the watchword of this great nation.' With his use of a Biblical proof-text, Gaster neatly linked British and Jewish responsibilities in the Transvaal. Britain's commitment to justice and liberal values obliged it to relieve Uitlander disabilities. For Jews, who since ancient times had suffered inferior treatment, the historical parallel between the Uitlander experience and their own also presented an obvious ethical imperative.⁹⁰

The claim that Judaism both sanctioned and mandated support for the war was echoed at a North London children's service. 'Our holy religion wishes us [to] ...do all we can for the honour of our country and Queen,' the Reverend Gouldstein explained.⁹¹ Yet aligning British and Jewish ideals was not always so straightforward. In his widely disseminated sermon, 'Judaism and War', the Chief Rabbi commenced by asserting that the love of peace was a core Jewish principle. This, however, was immediately followed by a caveat; 'the inevitability of certain wars', Adler explained, was reflected in the Bible's descriptions of battles and military heroes. With the exception made, Adler

⁸⁹ A similar point was argued by M. Hyamson: 'If the prophet of the exile exhorted his brethren to pray for the peace of the Empire that had subjugated them, how much more ought we to implore Heaven for the prosperity of this happy Empire, with whose welfare our own is intimately bound up[?]' *JC* 1/12/99 27.

⁹⁰ *JC* 17/11/99 12. There is perhaps also a third dimension in Gaster's argument. The verse cited in his sermon refers to the Israelite law mandating fair treatment for strangers (*gerim*) residing in the land. While this was an explicit reference to the plight of the Uitlanders, it can also be seen as an implicit reference to Britain's treatment of its own *gerim*, immigrant Jews.

⁹¹ *JW* 1/12/99 157.

continued on, comparing the ancient Israelites, who fought only when their cause received divine sanction, and the British government which, while also desiring peace, recognised that 'of all policies none is more dangerous, none more calculated to sap a nation's greatness than the advocacy of peace at any price.' If the European powers were to believe that England had abandoned its 'sons in distant lands', all would be lost. War was therefore the only available means of restoring just government to the Transvaal and vindicating England's honour.

Adler cemented his argument through a reference to the forty-sixth Psalm. He urged his congregation to remember its message that 'God is the sure defence of those who uphold the cause of justice and righteousness.' Britain's recent military setbacks (Adler was referring to 'Black Week', a series of British routs in late December 1899) should only 'enkindle their devotion and ...strengthen their resolve'.⁹²

While many members of the clergy were no doubt eager to draw attention to Anglo-Jewry's martial fervour, others defended the war in terms that appeared to be more in keeping with traditional religious ideals. One example can be found in a sermon delivered by the preacher at the Berkeley Street Synagogue, Morris Joseph, in which he noted that Jews and non-Jews were being drawn together by their acts of mercy. Their common sympathy with suffering was knitting the Empire together and displaying to the world this 'common virtue of the Englishman and the Israelite'.⁹³ Claude Montefiore, a founder and leading theologian of Liberal Judaism, also considered the compatibility of patriotism and religion with greater circumspection.⁹⁴ Yet he too

⁹² *JC* 10/11/99 12. Also published as 'Jews and War', *North London Pulpit* 12 (London, 1899).

⁹³ *JC* 12/1/00 22. See also *JC* 16/2/00 21.

⁹⁴ 'Nation or Religious Community?', *Jewish Quarterly Review* 12 (1/00), 177-94; 'Liberal Judaism in England: Its Difficulties and Its Duties', *JQR* 12 (7/00), 618-50. D.R. Langton, *Claude Montefiore: His Life and Thought* (London, 2002), Introduction, Part I.

reached similar conclusions. While acknowledging that previous alliances between national and sectarian ideals had weakened both value systems, he hoped that the lessons of the past had been learned, and that 'patriotism need not be dissociated from religion.' This new alliance, Montefiore asserted, was based in pure motives, because the Empire which they fought to preserve stood for liberty, progress and peace.

To Montefiore, the introduction of religion purified love of the nation and of Empire. For this reason he could—with an apparently clear conscience—encourage his congregation to respond to the question, 'Is this war a righteous war?' in the affirmative. The prayer which concludes his sermon, while engaging with the war's potential ethical ambiguities, underscores Montefiore's conviction that the union of religious and civic values could in fact produce a higher moral order. Speaking on behalf of his congregation, Montefiore expressed the hope that

the spirit in which we have entered upon this war, the purpose for which we wage it, be pleasing unto Him, the Infinite Spirit of Righteousness. May He give us victory that we may put victory to noble uses. May He grant that our foes of to-day become our friends in a not distant morrow, and that we are they be united together in a single Empire which shall work for righteousness and peace.⁹⁵

The contrasting tone of Montefiore's and Adler's sermons demonstrates that the clergy did not share an identical understanding of Anglo-Jewish values. But if their starting points were somewhat different, their conclusions were not. Anglo-Jewish support for the war was not only a duty, but in keeping with Jewish tradition.

A Vision of Britain

As I have suggested, some Jewish clergy members believed that their civic obligations preceded any consideration of Britain's virtues. This reflexive patriotism—captured by

⁹⁵ *JC* 26/1/00 14.

the slogan 'My Nation, Right or Wrong'—was hardly the exclusive province of British Jews. Yet Jewish (over)eagerness to proclaim the nation's virtues barely concealed a more complex set of motivations. Through patriotic rhetoric, preachers sought inclusion in the broader outpouring of sentiment taking place across the nation and Empire. Their sermons also advanced a particular vision of Britain.

For Anglo-Jewry, Queen Victoria and her Empire were potent symbols of Britain's greatness. Indeed, as has recently been argued, the image of each was mutually reinforcing. The development of the Empire was seen to be inextricably linked to the Queen's reign, while the image of progress associated with the later Victorian era was itself a product of the Empire's newfound potency.⁹⁶ Clergy's reflections on the 1897 Diamond Jubilee, the aforementioned eightieth birthday celebrations and the Queen's funeral, which took place on 2 February 1901, all attest to the special bond which British Jews felt with their Royal family, the long-reigning monarch in particular.⁹⁷ As one preacher told his young congregants at a special children's memorial service, 'That is something for you to rememberYou will be able to say ...I lived under the reign of Queen Victoria the Good.'⁹⁸ While she had won the hearts and minds of millions 'throughout the length and breadth of the Empire', British Jews felt the loss of the Queen particularly keenly, another noted.⁹⁹

Anglo-Jewish sermons on the monarch emphasised two themes: Victoria's influence on the status of Jews in Britain and her contributions to imperial expansion and enhancement. Speaking on the occasion of the Queen's visit to Ireland in April 1900, a

⁹⁶ R. Williams, *The Contentious Crown: Public Discussion of the British Monarchy in the Reign of Queen Victoria* (Aldershot, 1997), 153-89.

⁹⁷ Adler, *Anglo-Jewish Memories* (London, 1909), 95-103, 117-23; *JC* 26/5/99 10, 2/6/99 24, 8/12/99 24-5, 27/4/00 20, 1/2/01 20-5, 8/2/01 20-6.

⁹⁸ Singer, *Sermons to Children*, 52-3.

⁹⁹ *JC* 1/2/01 24.

Belfast preacher reminded those assembled that during 'Her Majesty's illustrious reign the many disabilities from which we previously suffered [were] ...entirely removed'. British Jews had repaid this kindness, he added, by 'devot[ing] themselves with zeal and success to the service of the Queen'.¹⁰⁰ A London colleague corroborated this sentiment, asserting that 'six decades had accomplished what the previous six centuries had not been equal to.' Recent advances in civil and religious liberty were due in the large part to the Queen's conviction 'that distinctions that had no foundation in justice or in reason ought to cease'.¹⁰¹

Victoria's most enduring legacy, however, was the British Empire, whose size and power had increased enormously during her years on the throne. As one sermon noted, the Queen had presided over 'the mightiest and grandest Empire ever set up by God'.¹⁰² Yet her Empire was distinguished not only by its unrivalled magnitude, preachers asserted, but also in the loyalty of its citizens. A mother to all her subjects, Victoria had united England and her colonies under the banner of freedom and justice.¹⁰³ Francis Cohen elaborated on this idea, explaining that even as they faced the hardships of war, the Empire's members were bound together in a 'great spirit of brotherhoodOld countries and colonies, white, black, red and yellow men, Christian, Jew, Moslem and Heathen,' each loyally assumed 'the responsibilities as well as the privileges of citizenship, and proudly acknowledge[d] his share in the great British commonwealth.'¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ *JC* 27/4/00 20. See also Gollancz, *Sermons and Addresses*, 279-81.

¹⁰¹ *JC* 1/2/01 21. See also 25/1/01 12.

¹⁰² *JC* 1/2/01 25.

¹⁰³ *JC* 25/5/00 27, 1/2/01 22, 23, 25, 8/2/01 22-3, 25.

¹⁰⁴ *JC* 12/1/00 25. Although the first contemporary reference dates to 1884, when Lord Rosebery described the Empire as a 'commonwealth of nations', the term did not achieve widespread popularity until after World War I. Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, 168-9; S.R. Mehrotra, 'On the Use of the Term "Commonwealth"', *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies* 2:1 (1963), 1-16.

It seems hardly coincidental that wartime Jewish sermons endorsed the whiggish ideal of a catholic Empire. Not only did this vision validate explicitly the presence and acceptance of Britain's Anglo-Jewish population, but it also suggested that, despite the difficulties Anglo-Jewry currently faced, liberalism, tolerance and pluralism would in the end win out against less British virtues. Some even went a bit further, arguing that Britain's embrace of diversity was crucial in differentiating it from its imperial neighbours and, as such, was a key to its international successes.¹⁰⁵ The defence of Britain's unique national values could therefore be tied directly to the continuing acceptance of its Jewish population. Or, put another way, if Britain were true to itself, it would necessarily do well by its Jewish citizens.

While freedom and justice are traditionally associated with the pursuit of peace, preachers contended that Britain's unstinting commitment to those virtues now required it to bear arms. Simeon Singer, spiritual leader of the New West End Synagogue (and chaplain to the Jewish Lads' Brigade), declared that Britain's forbearance in declaring war was due in large part to its 'love of rightIf anything had been made clear in the course of modern history', it was that Great Britain had been called by destiny to be 'the mother of free communities; to be the chief disseminator of the principle of law and justice in the world ...to set the example and to give the impulse, wherever she had prevailed, to ordered liberty.'¹⁰⁶ Facing a direct challenge to those values, Britain now had no choice but to pursue its 'just quarrel'.

Singer's argument would be reiterated frequently over the coming months. This was particularly true around the time of the Jewish festival of Hanukkah, when commemoration of the ancient Maccabees' victory against the tyrannical Greeks

¹⁰⁵ *JC* 31/3/99 19, 12/1/00 26.

¹⁰⁶ *JC* 20/10/99 11.

provided the clergy with an apposite parallel for Britain's defence of the Uitlanders.¹⁰⁷ Speaking at the West London Synagogue, Isidore Harris opined that '[f]or a nation whose Government was the most beneficent the world had ever seen to be false to its ideals of justice would be a great calamity to the world, a more terrible blow to civilisation, than war itself.'¹⁰⁸ The Chief Rabbi endorsed the new orthodoxy as well, predicting that Britain's victory would yield moral benefits of the highest order.¹⁰⁹ A similar message was sounded outside the capital. According to a Swansea preacher, the Reverend S. Fyne, every nation was given a mission on earth to fulfil. Providence had charged Britain with the responsibility to bring about the equality of the races and the brotherhood of men.¹¹⁰

Just as preachers found ethical lessons in the Hanukkah story, they also drew upon other thematically relevant Biblical episodes.¹¹¹ One compared Britain's current situation with that of the Jews under the prophet Nehemiah. Confronted by the jealous Samaritans, who conspired against them and attacked their capital, Jerusalem, Nehemiah had gathered his people together in order to repel the invasion. According to the preacher, Nehemiah's story demonstrated that the defence of an earthly Jerusalem was both a necessary and a positive goal. In fact, he concluded, the very foundations of a state depended on such exhibitions of courage.¹¹² If the image of saving Jerusalem left little to the imagination, the Dalston Congregation's leader offered an equally arresting metaphor. He reflected on the bravery of Moses, who spoke in God's name to demand freedom for his enslaved people, and whose request

¹⁰⁷ *JC* 8/12/99 24-5. See also 1/12/00 27-9, 21/12/00 12; *JW* 1/12/99 157, 8/12/99 169-70, 15/12/99 194. Although annual military services (held to coincide with Hanukkah) featured on the Jewish communal calendar prior to 1899, their heightened wartime importance is suggested by the reports of extra provincial services and inadequate provision for all those who wished to attend. *JC* 8/12/99 28, 8/12/99 Ed 19, 25.

¹⁰⁸ *JC* 29/12/99 10.

¹⁰⁹ *JC* 12/1/00 22.

¹¹⁰ *JC* 12/1/00 26.

¹¹¹ *Maccabees* I-IV is conventionally placed in a group of non-canonical texts known as *Apocrypha*.

¹¹² *JC* 12/1/00 23.

was scornfully refused by the Egyptian tyrant. So too, the reply to England's reasonable demands had been 'the flinging down of the gage of war.' Like the Hebrew slaves who had to win their freedom from Egypt, Britain's sacrifices on the *veldt* were the premium demanded for the Empire's security.¹¹³

The Anglo-Jewish clergy certainly had no monopoly on such sentiments. During the fall of 1899 and the winter of 1900, the call to preserve freedom and justice also resounded in churches and meeting halls across Britain.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, Jewish preachers saw themselves as being particularly well-placed to substantiate Britain's moral claims. They also had a particular incentive to do so. By demonstrating that Britain was fighting not for gold and glory, but in defence of its sacred principles, they could strike a blow against their attackers and underscore Jewish devotion to the national cause.¹¹⁵

Anglo-Jewish preachers insisted that the values at stake in South Africa were the same as those which ensured religious equality and toleration at home. Emphasis on this continuity may have allowed clergy members to present the conflict in terms particularly relevant to their congregations. It also enabled them to stress the urgency of the current struggle. As one leading clerical figure put it, none 'ha[d] more reason than we Jews to pray and labour and strive for England's success'.¹¹⁶ This point was amplified by evoking the exceptional nature of Jewry's position in Britain. For the leader of Liverpool's largest synagogue, the message was clear. 'We who have

¹¹³ *JC* 12/1/00 24-5.

¹¹⁴ This was particularly true of Anglican congregations. Amongst Nonconformists, the Wesleyan Methodists—a relatively large body—took a pro-imperialist stance. Baptists and Congregationalists were divided, while Quaker groups were uniformly pacifist. M. Blunden, 'The Anglican Church during the War', in P. Warwick, (ed.), *The South African War: The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902* (Harlow, 1980), 279-91; Cuthbertson, 'Pricking the "Nonconformist Conscience": Religion against the South African War', in *South African War Reappraised*, 169-87.

¹¹⁵ *JC* 17/11/99 12, 25/5/00 27, 8/6/00 22.

¹¹⁶ *JC* 12/1/00 22.

suffered, whose kin are suffering ...who receive fair treatment at the hand of no other European power, we can testify to England's justice, and will continue to do so.¹¹⁷

Such comments were not unusual. Clergy members regularly discussed the ongoing ill-treatment of Jews on the Continent, contrasting this with the privileges afforded to British Jews.¹¹⁸ They also expressed gratitude that the nation continued to function as an 'asylum of refuge' for Jews fleeing persecution.¹¹⁹ Some, like Claude Montefiore, even asserted that British Jews lived in a land with no anti-Semitism.¹²⁰

If the last example was intentionally hyperbolic, it nonetheless helps to demonstrate an important point. These sermons were all delivered at a time when anti-Semitic ideas were receiving an unusual degree of mainstream attention—in the press, the House of Commons and on the campaign trail.¹²¹ It is therefore necessary to account for the disjunction between that reality and the forcefully optimistic picture presented to Anglo-Jewish congregations. One possible explanation is as follows. Although the appearance of anti-Jewish war rhetoric was a source of concern, Anglo-Jewish leaders nonetheless recognised that their current situation was neither permanent nor terribly severe. Consequently, an overt rebuttal was simply unnecessary. However, a more convincing explanation for the phenomenon which I have just described can be found by returning briefly to David Feldman's dialectic of faith and fear.

As I have suggested, the clergy believed that the war offered Anglo-Jewry an unrivalled opportunity to guarantee its place within the nation. Preachers also wished to

¹¹⁷ *JC* 16/2/00 21. See also 17/11/99 12.

¹¹⁸ *JC* 12/1/00 24, 21/12/00 12, 25/1/01 12; *JW* 12/1/00 254-6.

¹¹⁹ *JC* 12/1/00 26.

¹²⁰ *JC* 26/1/00 13-4.

¹²¹ In the 1900 election campaign, anti-Jewish rhetoric focused on the 'Jew as foreigner' and gained currency in districts which perceived themselves to be under threat from Jewish immigration. Schneer, *London 1900*, 229-63. P. Readman, 'The Conservative Party, Patriotism, and British Politics: The Case of the General Election of 1900', *JBS* 40:1 (2001), 107-145.

demonstrate gratitude for the fair treatment their communities had received at Britain's hands. Confidence that the Jewish position would continue to improve in a more moderate post-war climate therefore prevented clerics from taking a more forceful stance on recent trends, worrying though they were. Desire to speak out was also tempered by concern that such statements would further inflame non-Jewish opinion. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, clergy's faith in Britain's reason and good will encouraged the belief that increased evidence of Jewish patriotism would in fact silence criticism.

Two further priorities emerged from this: explication of the Jewry's current duties and the compilation of a record of Jewish contributions (particularly military) to the nation and the Empire. The chapter's final section will consider the clergy's role in these areas.

Anglo-Jewish Duties and Contributions

As he concluded his eulogy for the Queen, Simeon Singer offered the following reminder to his congregation: 'We should, indeed, be ungrateful if we did not value our blessings and prove that we value them by striving all of us, old and young, rich and poor, to do our duty as loyal citizens of this country.'¹²² For Singer and his colleagues, the question of Anglo-Jewry's wartime obligations was a central one. Under pressure to demonstrate that British Jews were indeed doing their 'fair share', the clergy attempted to spur congregants to action by recalling Jewish debts to the nation and issuing detailed guidelines for communal behaviour.¹²³ Simultaneously, preachers also

¹²² Singer, *Sermons to Children*, 53.

¹²³ JW21/12/00 200.

(implicitly) addressed their critics, assembling evidence which purported to show that British Jews had been, and continued to be, the most loyal and devoted of citizens.

In the early months of the war, members of the Anglo-Jewish clergy delivered numerous sermons on the community's changing responsibilities and obligations. Some limited themselves to general remarks, noting 'the duty of love for and loyalty to their land' or calling upon those assembled to 'emulate their ancestors' patriotism'.¹²⁴ Many, however, were far more specific. At the Great Synagogue's youth Hanukkah service, the Reverend J. Stern warned against an over-reliance on rhetoric. Loyalty to country and faith encompassed more than shouting 'Rule, Britannia, rule', and 'God Save the Queen', he explained.¹²⁵ In a sermon two weeks earlier, the Haḥam had similarly pilloried 'empty declarations'. Instead he emphasised gestures of compassion and generosity, calling upon British Jews to 'alleviate the distress caused by ...death, to wipe away the tears of mourning, to support the widows and orphans, [and] to equip ambulances for the service of the wounded.' By these actions, Anglo-Jewry would be able to show its identification with the nation in its moment of trial.¹²⁶

This external positioning was particularly prominent in the proposals offered at the New Synagogue. There, the Reverend S. Levy articulated the question on everyone's lips: 'How should they comport themselves in such a grave and imperial crisis?' Levy himself proposed a four-part strategy, consisting of prayer, patience, patriotism and philanthropy. In describing this programme, he was distinctly—though perhaps unconsciously—forthright about the need for self-promotion, calling for the community to make 'loud protestations of loyalty'. As Levy's statement (and, to a lesser extent, the Haḥam's) reveals, Jewish clergy members believed it insufficient for British Jews to

¹²⁴ *JC* 1/12/99 27; *JW* 8/12/99 169.

¹²⁵ *JW* 1/12/99 157.

¹²⁶ *JC* 17/11/99 12.

merely engage in acts of compassion, generosity and bravery. No matter how genuine these contributions, it was still necessary to publicize just how compassionate, generous and brave they really were.¹²⁷

This observation is borne out by examining how the clergy addressed the question of Anglo-Jewish military involvement, unquestionably the most contentious aspect of Jewish wartime duties. During the first Sabbath of 1900, for example, the preacher at the Lauderdale Road Synagogue, G.S. Belasco, spoke at length about the 'active part which Jewish valour was displaying in South Africa', noting that Jews could be found at all critical points of the campaign, as well as among the noble dead.¹²⁸ Other clergy members were equally assiduous in describing the self-sacrifice and military prowess of Anglo-Jewish men.¹²⁹ Yet throughout the war, accounts of contemporary service—as described in these sermons—were also supplemented by a carefully crafted record of past Jewish heroism. Thus the *Jewish Chronicle* reported that the Reverend E.P. Philips, of Glasgow's Garnet Hill Synagogue, had preached 'an appropriate sermon, giving an historical resume of many instances in which Jews have distinguished themselves, both in ancient and modern times[,] on the field of battle.'¹³⁰ But few could have been more concise than Julius Gouldstein, whose message to those at a youth service was simply, 'We Jews were never cowards.'¹³¹

Despite this, some clearly remained concerned that Anglo-Jewish men were not seen to be doing their part. Repeating the question posed in the Book of Numbers, Morris Rosenbaum challenged his congregation: 'Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye

¹²⁷ *JC* 12/1/00 24.

¹²⁸ *JC* 12/1/00 24.

¹²⁹ *JW* 8/12/99 169, 21/12/00 200, 12/1/00 257; *JC* 1/12/99 27.

¹³⁰ 1/12/99 28.

¹³¹ *JW* 1/12/99 157.

sit here at ease?¹³² But how much was enough? Since it was impossible to 'adequately gauge the greatness of the debt' Jewry owed Britain, a precise measure for gratitude was similarly ill-placed.¹³³ One preacher argued that since most Jews had experienced unprecedented equality and privileges upon arriving in Britain from another land, they should therefore 'bear more than an ordinary share' of the nation's burden.¹³⁴ Another believed that unbounded patriotism could impress upon European governments how Jews behaved when granted citizenship.¹³⁵ But a third contended that while the public attention paid to Anglo-Jewry tended to exaggerate the community's actual size, 'there is no doubt that we ...have not only borne a fair share of our dear Country's burden ...but that we have actually borne a larger share than our mere numerical proportion would allot to us.'¹³⁶

No matter how many Jewish soldiers were sent to South Africa, a show of support was also believed necessary on the home front. Therefore, in addition to promoting and publicising military service, clergy used their pulpits to encourage philanthropy. Clerical appeals complemented the frequent benefit teas, readings of Kipling's 'Absent-Minded Beggar' and photogravure sales by providing a rhetorical framework and theological justification for continuing activism. These efforts took several forms. Preachers presided over communal fundraising events, adding solemnity to the proceedings by offering a brief religious invocation.¹³⁷ They also hosted special services (usually on a Sunday or public holiday) featuring local dignitaries, military processions by groups like the Jewish Lads' Brigade and an appeal for funds.¹³⁸ Finally, they responded *en masse*

¹³² *JC* 12/1/00 26.

¹³³ Adler, *Anglo-Jewish Memories*, 103.

¹³⁴ *JW* 12/1/00 257.

¹³⁵ *JW* 12/1/00 256.

¹³⁶ *JW* 21/12/00 200.

¹³⁷ *JW* 1/12/99 152.

¹³⁸ *JW* 1/12/99 152.

to the Queen's request for a day of collections benefiting those injured, disabled, orphaned or widowed by the war.¹³⁹

In a special circular, Chief Rabbi Adler designated the first Sabbath of the New Year, 6 January 1900, for this effort, calling it a chance for 'every member of the Jewish community, moved as he is by heart-whole loyalty and devotion', to demonstrate his patriotism.¹⁴⁰ Whether the campaign's success can be directly attributed to the impact of the sermons delivered that day is, of course, impossible to judge.¹⁴¹ What is clear is that the clergy once again made a powerful case both for the British cause and for the necessity of tangible Anglo-Jewish support.¹⁴²

* * *

During the Boer War, Anglo-Jewry's preachers occupied a distinctive and significant role. As communal leaders their moral authority lent credence to arguments backing Britain's military engagement. Through their relationship to their congregants, they were also unusually well positioned to interpret and explicate Anglo-Jewry's wartime responsibilities. Moreover, their access to a public stage enabled them to be active participants in the community's defence efforts. Finally, the body of sermons they produced is an unmatched source for exploring the religious, ethical and political questions which British Jews were forced to confront as a result of their nation's conflict in South Africa. When considered in combination with the record of wartime communal activism—as detailed in the following chapter—the resulting picture is a particularly rich and satisfying one.

¹³⁹ *JC* 29/12/99 9; *JW* 29/12/99 218.

¹⁴⁰ *JC* 29/12/99 9. See also Hermann Adler Papers, (Jewish Theological Seminary, New York): 3.

¹⁴¹ *JW* 12/1/00 250; *JC* 12/1/00 16. The *JC* reported on special services in ten provincial communities. The geographic range of those cited suggests that the occasion was likely observed more widely. 12/1/00 10.

¹⁴² The leading Jewish papers reprinted more than a dozen sermons. *JC* 12/1/00 22-26; *JW* 12/1/00 254-8.

'More Than Its Full Share': Participating in Britain's War Effort

The clergy's call to action did not go unanswered. From the earliest days of the war, the Jewish establishment set out to prove itself and to refute its detractors. For the next three years, Anglo-Jewish patriotism would be demonstrated with 'voice, sword [and] purse'.¹ This chapter will examine each of these spheres of activity: the Jewish press' role in publicising communal achievements, the significance attached to Jewish involvement in the military campaign and the multiplicity of communal philanthropic endeavours. While I will argue that Anglo-Jewish support for the conflict was both ubiquitous and pervasive, I will also consider the case put forward by several contemporary critics. Finally, in order to underscore the ideals espoused by the Jewish establishment, I will discuss the founding and wartime development of the Jewish Lads' Brigade, an organisation designed to increase the imperial fervour and military readiness of Eastern European Jewish youth.

In a letter written to his parents, Private Edwin Samuel Lyons, a Jewish member of the Second Royal Scots Fusiliers, made the following comment: 'I told you when you parted with me that I would do my duty like an Englishman and a Jew, and you bet I'll not disgrace my uniform or my raceI am glad I am here ...to do my little bit for the credit of dear old England and the grandest Queen who ever reigned.'² For Lyons, as well as for many of the British Jews who remained at home, participation in Britain's war effort was at once an obligation and a desire, a reaction to external pressure as

¹ *Jewish Chronicle* 20/10/99 Editorial 17.

² *JC* 19/1/00 8.

well as the product of genuine loyalty. For both these sets of reasons, Anglo-Jewry resolved not only to do its part, but to do 'more than its full share'.³

* * *

At the forefront of this domestic crusade was the Jewish media, particularly the *Jewish Chronicle*. Although the paper's weekly publication schedule did not allow for the inclusion of breaking military news, editors compensated by printing current statistics on Jewish regulars, volunteers and casualties (complete, in many cases, with photos), documenting philanthropic giving and calling attention to instances of heroism on and off the battlefield. In addition to these news and feature items, frequent editorials highlighted Anglo-Jewry's imperial and martial fervour. As well as reflecting a genuine pride in the community's wartime achievements, coverage sought—either implicitly or directly—to counter accusations of deficient patriotism.

The *JC*'s war reporting was distinctly ecumenical, detailing not only the activities of its establishment and middle-class readership but the contributions of the Jewish immigrant population. Thus, on 5 January 1900, the paper announced that Lord Rothschild had donated £1,600 to launch an equipment fund for the Buckinghamshire Yeomanry and Rifle Volunteers. It also recognised a Blackpool fruit seller who had raised £5 in a benefit auction. Finally, the paper drew its readers' attention to a collection undertaken by a Jewish resident of Leicester. Mrs B. Samuel sought tobacco, undergarments, mufflers and cholera belts to send to South Africa.⁴

Other Jewish publications also gave pride of place to their war coverage. Like the *JC*, the *Jewish World* had a dedicated weekly section throughout the whole of the active

³ *JC* 12/1/00 Ed 16.

⁴ 10-11.

military campaign. This contained a similar mix of casualty and donation lists, letters from the front and reports on communal fund-raising efforts. *Young Israel*, a monthly magazine for Jewish youth, published extensively on the war, even asking its readers one month to make as many anagrams as possible out of the names of Cecil Rhodes, Arthur Balfour, Joseph Chamberlain and Lords Roberts, Kitchener and Salisbury.⁵ And *Der Yiddisher Express*, the East End's mainstream Yiddish paper, encouraged its readers, though unnaturalised and therefore ineligible for the volunteer corps, to do all they could to support the British war effort, declaring: 'Jews now have the opportunity to show thanks to the country which has taken them in and given them freedom. Jews should not let this opportunity slip.'⁶

The Yiddish press had few readers in London's leafier expanses. Despite this, evidence of immigrant patriotism did not go unnoticed. Indeed, throughout the war, establishment leaders publicised demonstrations of loyalty and military enthusiasm by more recent Jewish arrivals. Coverage of East End Mafeking celebrations, for example, was unsurprisingly extensive. The *Chronicle* and the *Jewish World* each contained several pages of vivid descriptions and pictures of the festivities, which began with Sabbath morning sermons and culminated after sundown with exuberant parades, patriotic music played by Yiddish bands and the sale of Mafeking fish, Mafeking lemons and Mafeking cakes by the Petticoat Lane hawkers.⁷

Although economic pressures, cultural distance—in the form of Yiddish, radical politics or Orthodoxy—and widespread non-naturalisation all limited the war's significance for immigrant Jews, the preceding examples indicate that events in South Africa did exert

⁵ 4/00 28.

⁶ Translated and cited in D. Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840-1914* (New Haven, 1994), 345.

⁷ *JC* 25/5/00 10-11; *JW* 25/5/00 127.

a palpable, if more transient, influence on this population. Several possible motives help to explain Jewish immigrants' apparent attention to, and involvement in, the war effort. It is likely that all played some role: genuine devotion to their adopted homeland, the desire of immigrant leadership to attract positive attention to their often maligned community and external, elite Jewish intervention.

As I have suggested, Anglo-Jewry's lay leadership was eager to encourage immigrant support for the war. Accordingly, it did on occasion manufacture occasions which would allow for 'spontaneous' expressions of such sentiments. A typical example of this orchestrated patriotism is found in the description of a North London tea party for children 'from the poorest slums in Whitechapel'. While the reporter noted that the attendees still bore evidence of their Eastern descent, their behaviour was deemed beyond reproach, and they apparently joined with gusto in the singing of such patriotic anthems as 'Marching to Pretoria' and 'The Soldiers of the Queen', and in cheers for Baden-Powell and Kitchener.⁸

But this youthful malleability would seem to be an exceptional case. Obedience to elite prerogatives hardly characterised the broader pattern of the immigrant population's relationship with the Anglicised communal leadership. Establishment operated welfare and educational organisations did possess substantial economic muscle, and their lay directors felt little compunction about 'representing' immigrant interests to non-Jewish parties. Yet much to its chagrin, the authority of this self-appointed leadership was not accepted without challenge; in particular, efforts to regulate and direct the friendly societies and religious life (the latter via the Federation of Synagogues) were resisted.⁹

⁸ JC27/7/00 21.

⁹ On the Federation see G. Alderman, *The Federation of Synagogues, 1887-1987* (London, 1987) 1-41; S. Sharot, 'Native Jewry and the Religious Anglicization of Immigrants in London: 1870-1902', *Jewish Journal of Sociology* 16:1

Given these ongoing difficulties in asserting control over, and setting priorities for, a diverse and independently minded population, it is difficult to believe that immigrant enthusiasm for the British cause could have been wholly manufactured. Quite simply, the Anglo-Jewish elite lacked that degree of influence.

On 15 December 1899, the *JC* reported on a meeting recently convened by a Jewish naturalisation society in the East End. After gaining admission (many in the large crowd outside had been unable to do so), those present were addressed by the former Whitechapel MP and Federation President, Samuel Montagu. At the close of the meeting, the attendees dispatched a loyal telegram to the Queen and collected a sum of £50 for the Widows and Orphans Fund. The correspondent expressed admiration for these Jews, 'with the traces of their foreign origin thick upon them ...expressing loudly and sincerely their devotion to their adopted land ...and laying, each of them, on the altar of patriotism such sacrifices as their slender means allowed.'¹⁰

This story appears suspiciously aligned with the paper's own editorial agenda. Yet the article also contained a near-verbatim translation (from Yiddish) of a speech given at that gathering by the leading East End preacher, Hyam Maccoby (formerly the Kamenitzer *Maggid*). Identifying England as a noble and holy land, and English power as a force of justice and righteousness, Maccoby called upon those present to demonstrate their gratitude by donating to the fund, and 'that not sparingly'.¹¹ This undoubtedly sounded the right notes with the *JC*'s editors and loyal readers. Yet there is strong indication that it had the same effect on Maccoby's local constituents. Within the East End, a 'Foreign Jews Committee' (consisting largely of representation from

(1974), 44-7. On the relationship between philanthropy and social control see E. Black, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1880-1920* (Oxford, 1988), 71-103.

¹⁰ *JC* 15/12/99 8.

¹¹ *JC* 15/12/99 8. Another particularly striking example of patriotic immigrant rhetoric can be found in the 1900 work of the Yiddish poet Morris Rosenfeld, 'I Sing for England'. *JC* 1/6/00 17.

various friendly societies) was organised in late 1899 to direct local collections for the Lord Mayor's Fund.¹² A special fund was also launched by a mutual benefit society in Manchester.¹³ Immigrant leaders appear to have used similar fund-raising tactics as their more Anglicised counterparts; they organised benefit concerts and made appeals during synagogue services and religious occasions such as a *brit milah* (ritual circumcision) or wedding.¹⁴

Filling the Coffers: The Importance of Philanthropy

Given their limited means, it would appear that immigrant Jewry supported the war quite generously. However, the most substantial philanthropic efforts were aimed at—and organised by—the upper strata of Britain's Jewish population. Predictably, the names of the many of the wealthiest and most prominent families topped the published lists of Jewish donations.¹⁵ Their charitable activities—like Alfred Moseley's donation of a base hospital (weighing 1,000 tonnes, it was shipped to Cape Town then assembled), Lord Rothschild's gift of top-quality tobacco and smoking paraphernalia for all Jewish soldiers or the success of the Lady Mayoress of Belfast, Mrs Otto Jaffe, in collecting for the Widows Fund—received customary attention.¹⁶ In the case of Moseley, the news of his 'exceptional public spirit and ability' (also humility, as the new building would not bear his name) was accompanied by an interview in which the subject waxed forth on the illiterate, corrupt Boers, the value of the colonies and the necessity that the rest of the world come to terms with the greatness of the British Empire.¹⁷

¹² *JC* 24/11/99 20.

¹³ *JC* 24/11/99 11.

¹⁴ *JW* 12/1/00 250; *JC* 8/12/99 13, 1/19/00 10, 16/3/00 12.

¹⁵ *JW* 20/10/99 63, 3/11/99 95, 10/11/99 107.

¹⁶ *JC* 26/1/00 11-12, 8/11/01 15; *JW* 12/1/00 250.

¹⁷ *JC* 26/1/00 11-12.

The largesse shown by such individuals, while exceptional in scale, was nonetheless in keeping with the practice of Anglo-Jewry's self-appointed representatives to combine titular positions of Jewish leadership with charitable support of communal enterprises.¹⁸ During the war, a similar process of earning and demonstrating status through philanthropy took place. The published lists of donors which appeared nearly every week were both a reward to those who had given and a spur to action for those whose names were embarrassingly absent. While donor rosters always reflected the internal politics of the Jewish community, they were also potentially subject to non-Jewish scrutiny.¹⁹ This was particularly true of donations to the war funds. The length of the lists—and the totals raised—would either offer indisputable financial proof of Anglo-Jewry's loyalty or raise further doubts regarding the depth of the community's patriotism.

This point is demonstrated by considering the aforementioned Queen's Appeal. Writing on the eve of the designated Sabbath, the *JC* explained that Anglo-Jewry's unique history and position obligated it to outpace the general population in its response. It chastened those 'short-sighted' enough to complain about 'the growing demands on Jewish charity', noting that

Jews are, and almost seemed destined for ever to remain, in an exceptional situation, and that situation requires exceptional conduct[W]ith Jewish patriotism challenged, as that of no other people is questioned ...the burden of the Jew is heavier than that of his fellow-citizen. By seeking to escape from it, we should make our last state worse than our first; by cheerfully accepting it and taxing our resources to the fullest to meet it, our people will show themselves worthy of the freedom which is still withheld in less blessed lands.

Although the editorial also incorporated typically overwrought descriptions of England's commitment to preserve freedom and justice, it offered a remarkably plain-spoken appraisal of Anglo-Jewry's 'exceptional' wartime position. Generosity in the

¹⁸ Black, *Social Politics*, 36-70.

¹⁹ On establishment disputes regarding communal infrastructure see D. Gutwein, *The Divided Elite: Economics, Politics and Anglo-Jewry 1881-1917* (Leiden, 1992), 145-306.

forthcoming appeal may have been a 'bounden duty'. Yet it was also unmistakably in the community's self-interest to 'give with both hands'.²⁰

Anglo-Jewry did open its pocketbooks, and it was reported the following week (with more than a hint of smugness) that while Westminster Abbey had collected only £200, the New West End Synagogue had more than trebled that amount.²¹ Other head-to-head match-ups also showed Jewish congregations coming out on top. Nor did the high sums merely reflect large donations from the very wealthy. The collective contributions of those of more moderate means—often a guinea or half-guinea—constituted the majority of monies raised. This outcome no doubt pleased communal leaders, as it indicated that Anglo-Jewish pro-war sentiment did not reside exclusively among the exclusive.

Philanthropic activity also allowed for the inclusion of Jewish women in the war effort. While Anglo-Jewry's lay and professional leadership was wholly male-dominated, fund-raising was one area in which female involvement was welcomed, albeit within limits. The report of a Miss Connie Cohen presiding over a benefit concert for the Soldiers, Widows and Orphans Fund at a major London venue appears to be exceptional.²² More commonly, women were recorded as participating in activities that would have been regarded as a natural extension of their domestic responsibilities and feminine talents. They contributed to the entertainment at public gatherings by reciting patriotic poetry, and they were surely responsible for the 'hall being decorated with patriotic emblems, Union Jacks & c' for a Manchester Jewish ball in aid of the War Fund.²³ At a bazaar widely patronised 'by the well-to-do section of the [not just Jewish] community'

²⁰ *JC* 5/1/00 15.

²¹ *JC* 12/1/00 16.

²² *JC* 22/12/99 9.

²³ *JC* 9/2/00 12, 16/3/00 12.

Jewish women volunteered as stall assistants. The paper noted with pride that Jewish men had served as members of the executive committee and one as president of the smoking gallery.²⁴

Behind the scenes, Jewish women were engaged in knitting and sewing for soldiers and their relatives. Some of this work was done in the home. Regular gatherings like mothers' meetings also provided an opportunity for collective activity. While the prosperous husbands of the women who sewed at the West London Synagogue surely had the means to contribute to the war funds, projects like making winter clothing for the families of fallen soldiers were recommended to wealthy and poor women alike. However, women without resources were admonished that 'those who cannot assist by giving money should at least work with their hands for the sufferers ...[and] poorer Jewish women, whatever their birthplace, should prove that they are English at heart by volunteering their aid when England's children are in need.'²⁵ Jewish women—no less than men—could not afford to be complacent. But while it was important that all segments of the community be seen to be active in the war effort, Jewish women's handiwork was not done just for show. As a (rare) female columnist stated, 'The work for our men seem to be going on steady and "more" is still clamoured for. One would almost think that the nimble fingers of the women of England had knitted tam-o'-shanters and socks enough to supply a dozen armies but apparently it is not so.'²⁶

²⁴ *JW* 29/12/99 226.

²⁵ *JW* 10/11/99 18.

²⁶ *YT* 6/00 59.

Showing the 'Fighting Spirit'

Philanthropy certainly enabled British Jews to make tangible contributions to the war effort. However, as the *JC* admitted in January 1900, 'money [wa]s not the strongest test of patriotism.' Far more telling was whether young Anglo-Jewish men possessed a 'readiness to share in the toils and perils of campaigning'.²⁷ Some argued that these soldiers would merely be fulfilling their duties as citizens. Yet the tallies of Jewish men at the front—and the lists of those who would not return—would also provide the most resounding vindication of the community's honour and loyalty. For those on the home front, the ensuing challenge was threefold: encouraging eligible—i.e., native or naturalised—Jewish men of fighting age to volunteer, compiling records of Jewish servicemen and their acts of bravery and presenting this evidence to the wider public.

No formal enlistment campaign was launched.²⁸ However, the imperative to demonstrate Jewish bravery figured heavily in sermons, as I have discussed. Editorials in the Jewish press, speeches at fundraising events, songs and poetry also echoed this message. Furthermore, the evidence that Jews were already joining up was offered as an example to emulate. (Both the major Jewish papers published weekly lists of new recruits.²⁹) To that end, one paper informed its readers of a family who had sent three sons into combat. This was but one example, it wrote, of the 'heartiness [with] which our community has entered into war'.³⁰ Such efforts, while hardly systematic, appear to have produced a climate wherein enlistment was—for those fit and eligible to serve—viewed as a logical expression of duty and loyalty.

²⁷ *JC* 12/1/00 Ed 16.

²⁸ Although far more soldiers fought in the Boer War than in any other late Victorian conflict, the total number serving (approximately 366,000 British and 83,000 colonial forces) was miniscule when compared to the size of the army (volunteers and enlisted) during World War I.

²⁹ *JW* 12/1/00 249.

³⁰ *JC* 26/1/00 Ed 17.

Like the clergy, members of the establishment were eager to prove that Jewish military prowess was not a new phenomenon. Not only did they wish to inspire Anglo-Jewry, particularly the young, with tales of past glory, but they also hoped to validate the martial pedigree of contemporary Jewish soldiers. For the readers of *Young Israel*, Albert Hyamson (later prominent as a Zionist leader) offered several monthly instalments on Jewish warriors.³¹ His examples of Jewish leadership in historic battles spanned from Cleopatra (two of her generals were reputedly Jewish) straight up to the present day.³² On a similar note, another article recalled the ancient Jews' reputation as a martial people. Since Jews had 'retained their purity of race' over the centuries, it was therefore logical to maintain that they still possessed these same qualities.³³ In the *JW*, another writer attempted to answer 'what of the Jews as soldiers?' by pointing to the record of Jewish participation in great European campaigns, ranging from the defence of Prague against the Swedes in 1648 to the Franco-Prussian War, a conflict surely remembered by the older generation of British Jews. The unspoken implication in this latter example was that in wartime patriotism outranked loyalty to a fellow Jew. That which held true in 1870 would remain the case in 1900 (and to a much greater extent in 1914); willingness to fight other Jews could itself become evidence of dedication to the nation.

This historical case was not allowed to stand alone. Others claimed that the war would allow for the emergence of the new fighting Jew, the best specimen of 'muscular Judaism'.³⁴ In the past, it was conceded, Jews might have suffered from a 'want of

³¹ This concern with Jewish masculinity and military ardour was not simply a wartime phenomenon. See *YI* 12/97 280, 8/98 117-8 and my discussion of the Jewish Lads' Brigade.

³² 'Some Jewish Warriors', *YI* 3/01 1, 4/01 42-3, 5/01 71-2.

³³ *YI* 12/99 202-3.

³⁴ *JC* 29/6/00 25. Central and Eastern European Zionist activists also exhibited a preoccupation with these ideas of Jewish masculinity and strength. In particular, Max Nordau, a leading Zionist politician, engaged explicitly with the idea of '*Muskeljudentum*', literally a Jewry of muscle. M. Stanislawski, *Zionism and the Fin de Siècle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky* (Berkeley, 2001), 74-98; B. Halpern and J. Reinharz, *Zionism and the Creation of a New Society* (Hanover, 2000), 168-200.

military spirit'. Yet while emancipation and acculturation had by now wiped away the 'cringing character of the race of old', Jewish masculinity and virility were as yet unproven.³⁵ Just as the war was a turning point for the Empire, it could also produce a new chapter in the history of Anglo-Jewry, that of the Jewish soldier. The antidote to the resurgent charges of Jew as capitalist would now be found on the battlefield.

Yet how prevalent were these fighting Jews? Judged solely on the basis of pre-war army regulars, the case was flimsy. While the British military was perceived to offer a respectable professional path for men of various social backgrounds (albeit one which was highly regimented on class lines), it does not seem to have figured prominently in the aspirations of Victorian Anglo-Jewry.³⁶ One report listed a maximum figure of twenty six Jewish officers on the army's active list, fifty two in the auxiliary forces and thirty five in the colonial militia and volunteer units.³⁷ However, the military's defeats at Stormberg, Magerfontein and Colenso during December 1899 led to urgent calls for volunteers. As older part-time units were pressed into active service and new detachments formed, Anglo-Jewish men could now show their readiness for combat.

Most well-known amongst the new units were the City Imperial Volunteers and the Imperial Yeomanry. The former, which was funded by the banking houses and the press and sent out men from those professions, had substantial Jewish representation. The latter, described by one leading military historian as a project of peers and fox hunting gentlemen (albeit with middle and artisan classes in the rank and file) would appear to have had a much smaller number of Jewish volunteers. Walter Rothschild,

³⁵ *JC* 8/11/01 Letter 9.

³⁶ One interesting exception was Colonel Albert Goldsmid, whom I will discuss in the final section of this chapter.

³⁷ *YT* 12/97 280; *JW* 20/10/99 52. The Indian Army was thought to have a higher Jewish representation. However, these were members of the non-white Benei Israel community rather than Jews of British descent. There were also a fair number of Jewish officers in the Hapsburg imperial military. See E.A. Schmidl, *Jews in the Hapsburg Armed Forces, 1788-1918* (Eisenstadt, 1989), 93-145. Russia, where the world's largest Jewish population was subject to conscription, had by far the most Jews in uniform.

an MP in Buckinghamshire, offered to go out with that contingent of the Yeomanry but was rejected for being overweight.³⁸

Although Jewish men were joining up, quantifying their ranks proved unexpectedly difficult. The main source for calculating Jewish participation in the armed forces was official enlistment records, which included a line for religious affiliation. However, since many Jewish soldiers did not provide this information—presumably in order to avoid being the target of anti-Semitism—figures compiled were necessarily inaccurate. The editors of the *Jewish Chronicle* therefore reinvoked the plea that every Jewish soldier register his religion upon enlistment, 'if only with the object that his community might reap the full credit to which it was entitled for the patriotic service of British Israelites.'³⁹ Barring that, they themselves scoured lists of recruits for Jewish-sounding last names. As Richard Mendelsohn has described, this 'intricate ethnic calculus' at times led to 'embarrassing errors', most notably when the paper asserted that Aubrey Wools-Sampson, military hero and founder of the Imperial Light Horse, was Jewish; it was later forced to print a retraction.⁴⁰ Efforts to massage the numbers also meant that the standard criterion of direct matriarchal descent was sometimes relaxed. On one occasion, a soldier whose family had intermarried several generations before was included.

Figures compiled in the first nine months of the war suggested Anglo-Jewish enlistment of between 600 and 800 men, although a proviso was offered that such early figures were only conjectural.⁴¹ By late 1900 and 1901, numbers ranged from a low of 1,000

³⁸ *JC* 26/10/00 12, 16, 29/12/99 9.

³⁹ *JC* 16/4/00 17; *JW* 29/12/99 202.

⁴⁰ R. Mendelsohn, 'The Jewish Soldier: Anglo-Jewry at War, 1899-1902', *Jewish Affairs* 54:3 (1999), 14.

⁴¹ *JW* 29/12/99 202. This sector breakdown suggests that Jewish servicemen were concentrated in the regular army, artillery, yeomanry and volunteers, with very small numbers in the navy, marines and militia. I. Harris, (ed.), 'The Roll of Honour', *Jewish Year Book* 5 (London, 1900), 195-212.

to a high of 2,000.⁴² In recent studies, historians have generally endorsed these original assessments.⁴³ An alternative method used to calculate Jewish participation relied on published casualty figures.⁴⁴ Yet this produced its own quandary: were higher proportions of casualties, which Jewish soldiers allegedly incurred, a sign of devotion and bravery, or indicative of lack of skill?⁴⁵

The only enlistment totals that the elite would have been happy to ignore were those of South African Jews fighting on the wrong side.⁴⁶ David Saks estimates that there were likely about 250 Jews serving in the Boer commandos, with another fifty in non-combat roles. (For example, two of Winston Churchill's prison guards were known to be Jewish).⁴⁷ At least eighty Jews are listed as having been captured and held in British POW camps.⁴⁸ While some of these South African Jewish soldiers volunteered willingly, motivated by patriotism or antipathy to British imperialism, those with citizenship rights (namely those living in the Orange Free State, where the Transvaal restrictions on foreigners were not in place) would have been conscripted along with the rest of the *burgher* population. Significantly, Jews who fought for the Boers were overwhelmingly of Lithuanian origin, with small numbers of Dutch-Jewish representation; no Jewish Boer soldiers are thought to have been born in Britain. In fact, many of the English speakers, the Jews of Johannesburg included, fled the Transvaal for Capetown just before the war began.⁴⁹

⁴² *JC* 21/9/00 Ed 15, 8/11/01 13.

⁴³ 'Jewish Soldier', 14-5; S. Kadish, *A Good Jew and a Good Englishman: The Jewish Lads' Brigade and Girls' Brigade, 1895-1995* (London, 1995), 59.

⁴⁴ *JW* 27/10/99 74; *JC* 23/3/00 10, Ed 17.

⁴⁵ The casualty figure presented at the December 1901 military service was 325, approximately a one in six ratio. *JC* 13/12/01 Ed 17.

⁴⁶ D. Saks, 'Three *Boere-Jode* on Commando', *JAf* 51:4 (1996), 35-9; 'Jews on Commando', *JAf* 54:3 (1999), 23-30. As Saks notes, initial scholarship—completed in the 1940s by South Africa's Chief Rabbi I.L. Rabinowitz—reflected an anxiety about Jewry's contemporary position in South Africa. This resulted in an over-eagerness to demonstrate that Jews had been loyal to the national—i.e., Boer—cause.

⁴⁷ Saks, 'Jews on Commando', 23.

⁴⁸ Saks, 'Jews on Commando', 26.

⁴⁹ E. Bradlow, 'Jewish Refugees at the Cape in the Anglo-Boer War', *JAf* 54:3 (1999), 37-41; *JC* 9/2/00 9-10, 29/9/00 9, 27/10/99 10. Bradlow estimates that there were approximately 15,000 Jews in the Transvaal, with two-thirds in Johannesburg. Several hundred of the Capetown Jewish refugees, mostly recent Russian arrivals, left South Africa

One response to the troubling phenomenon of Jewish Boer soldiers—which had been noted by several war correspondents—was to downplay its existence. Reports like those from the *JC*'s pro-British Johannesburg contributor, Manfred Nathan, that 'fortunately very few' Jews had joined the Boer forces offered some encouragement.⁵⁰ Emphasis was also placed on the number of Jews who were fighting in pro-British units like the Cape Volunteers, and the bravery shown by those who had chosen to be incarcerated rather than join the Boers.⁵¹ Jewish presence amongst the Boer troops was also explained through a comparison of the character and background of South African Jewry's pro-Kruger and pro-British elements. Nathan rather crudely argued that 'only disreputable Jews are favoured by the [Kruger] Government'; the rest had no reason to back the man known to many as Uncle Paul. Similarly, the *JC*'s editors contrasted the pro-Boer Jews, who were unacquainted with British sentiment, with the 'genuine' English, Australian or Cape Colony Israelite who 'ha[d] learnt at school the story of Agincourt and Blenheim, ha[d] got by heart the music of Shakespeare ...and [had] stood in spirit with Hardy besides the dying Nelson.'⁵² By this logic, not only could Englishness (or Britishness) be learned, but those who had imbibed British values—whether through language, education or association—were sure to recognise the virtue of its cause.

The striking incidence of pro-British sentiment amongst foreign and immigrant Jews substantiated this claim. Britain's historic commitment to liberal values, and its reasonably well-deserved reputation as the best friend of the Jews in Europe, had earned it a legion of staunch defenders, even at a time when the war in South Africa

entirely. They traveled via London, where many were assisted by the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter, either back to Russia or onward to America.

⁵⁰ *JC* 3/11/99 11. Nathan's 'Letter from Johannesburg' appeared periodically through 1899 and 1900.

⁵¹ *JC* 10/11/99 12, 6/4/00 12, 27/10/99 Ed 17.

⁵² *JC* 17/8/00 Ed 12.

was making it exceptionally unpopular in the international arena. Outpourings of support from Jews living outside Britain or the Empire, like the 250 enlistment applications completed by Russian Jews at the British Consulate in Odessa, were neither militarily nor politically relevant.⁵³ Nonetheless, such evidence offered a counterpoint to charges of deficient Jewish patriotism. The same Jews who scrambled to avoid conscription in the Czar's army were so convinced of Britain's virtue that they were willing to risk their lives in support of a foreign nation.⁵⁴ All the more so, it could be argued, would such devotion be found amongst Jews who actually enjoyed the equality and fair treatment which accompanied British rule.

But were the Anglophilic tendencies of Jews in Odessa necessarily shared by Odessa's Jews in London? As I have discussed, establishment concerns were to a large degree vindicated by expressions of pro-British sentiment from the East End and other immigrant strongholds. The sermons delivered in the *hevras*, the post-Sabbath crowds on Mafeking day and the funds raised for war charities suggested that even these Jews who were not-quite-British had assimilated the message of patriotism. Military service was another matter, however, as pre-existing statutes limited enlistment in the regular forces to native-born Britons and naturalised immigrants.⁵⁵ The authorities would prove unyielding in this regard, either because they doubted the value of these unskilled men to the forces, or, as the flippant comment of one Imperial Yeomanry official that "[w]e are not raising a Yiddish regiment" implies, they simply did not like foreign Jews.⁵⁶ However, the very fact that so many (ultimately unsuccessful) attempts were made to register did itself seem to offer evidence of genuine loyalty—a

⁵³ *JW* 12/1/00 250.

⁵⁴ *YT* 1/00 218.

⁵⁵ Although the evidence is inconclusive, it appears that non-naturalised Jews were eligible to join certain domestic volunteer corps. These corps, which functioned mainly as a means of training future soldiers and imparting military values, did not send their members to South Africa. More prestigious groups, like the Imperial Yeomanry and the City Imperial Volunteers (CIV), some of whose ranks remained in Britain, did not admit foreigners.

⁵⁶ *JC* 27/4/00 Ed 17. See also 12/1/00 Ed 16; *JW* 12/1/00 249.

point which was not missed by Anglo-Jewry's image-makers.⁵⁷ This 'profound interest in and sympathy with the British cause', one noted, 'should cause a little searching of heart amongst those who do not appreciate the potentialities that lurk beneath the occasionally grimy exterior' of the Jewish immigrant.⁵⁸

The fulfilment of such potential—which was, in a sense, the acquisition of full Britishness—by naturalised or first-generation Jewish soldiers was a popular topic in the wartime Jewish press. One particularly striking example was a children's short story published in January 1900 by *Young Israel*. Entitled, 'Private Jacob Moses', it told of a family of Jewish immigrants, the Bilewitzes, whose son volunteered for the army and died in the war. Despite their conflicts over their son's increasing secularism, parents and child shared one thing in common: a profound devotion to their adopted nation. For the Anglicised son, the decision to join up is presented as the logical outcome of his London education, evidence that along with new clothes he has also acquired true English values. For the parents as well, England's success in the war is extremely important.

In a conversation with Berenstein, a fellow-tradesman, the father explained his position. "The English are a great and mighty people," he began. "The English must be right—they are rightThey are good people; they are good to us. They let us live in peace." Berenstein considered this point and added, "The English must winBesides, where would we be if they did not win[?]"Shmuel [the father] seized the new point with avidity. He had not passed from Russia to England without gaining an idea of world politics. The war seemed a menace at the quiet of his own hearth. "If the English lose, then the prestige of England is gone, and the Russians will come, and the *Cossacken*, and we shall have riots. The English must win." "England shall win," observed Bernstein emphatically, lighting a fresh cigarette; and so the placid uncontroversial debate ended.⁵⁹

The story's message was unapologetically didactic: Britain's immigrant Jews were deeply grateful for the privileges they now enjoyed. Fully appreciative of the

⁵⁷ *JC* 12/1/00 Ed 16; *JW* 12/1/00 249.

⁵⁸ *JC* 26/1/00 Ed 17.

⁵⁹ 219-220.

importance of Britain's current struggle, they would not hesitate in repaying their debts to the nation.

* * *

One proposed means of calling attention to the Anglo-Jewish military contribution was the mounting of a special Jewish Brigade.⁶⁰ By recruiting, equipping, and sending out its own force, the community would be able to demonstrate the extent of its commitment to the British cause. But elite critics savaged the plan on two fronts (as they would again do when a similar debate erupted over creating a separate unit for non-naturalised Russian Jews during World War I⁶¹). They invoked the time-worn liberal platitude—that Anglo-Jewry's devoted service to the nation left its loyalty 'unimpeached and unimpeachable'.⁶² In such an atmosphere of fair play, no special pleading—and hence no overt attention to 'ordinary' Jewish patriotism—was necessary. At the same time, however, communal leaders cautioned that 'ostentatious' behaviour would undermine efforts at Anglo-Jewish inclusion. If British Jews wished to claim that they were 'part and parcel of the nation', they should integrate themselves within existing military structures and behave with the bravery and self-sacrifice that would be expected of any soldier, regardless of religion.

Despite these admonitions, the Jewish press continued to highlight the heroism of individual British Jewish soldiers. They published photos, letters home and stories of individual exploits, thereby personalising the experience of Anglo-Jewry's men in uniform.⁶³ Inclusion of Jewish Uitlanders and Cape citizens, as well as members of the

⁶⁰ JC 22/12/99 Letter to the Editor 9, 26/1/00 Letter 8, 9/2/00 Letter 6.

⁶¹ The latter debate persisted for far longer and attracted much more attention. This was due to several factors: the introduction of conscription in 1916, the subsequent threat of repatriation for Russian Jews and the propensity of the question to act as a proxy for ongoing West End-East End battles over Jewish nationalism. Kadish, *Bolsheviks and British Jews: The Anglo-Jewish Community, Britain and the Russian Revolution* (London, 1992), 223-6.

⁶² JC 2/2/00 Ed 15.

⁶³ JC 23/3/00 10, 4/5/00 10, 11/5/00 10, 18/5/00 10, 25/5/00 10-11, 8/6/00 17-8, 26/10/00 12.

Canadian and Antipodean militias, within this type of coverage was also key. It not only allowed the case to be made that meaningful allegiance to the Crown existed amongst the Jewish citizens of the Empire,⁶⁴ but also justified focus on men like Major Karri Davies, an Uitlander raised in Australia who became the war's most famous Jewish soldier as a result of his role in the relief in Mafeking.⁶⁵

Many articles focused on the bravery of well-scrubbed young Jewish boys in relatively lowly positions—the Dover rabbi's son who managed to restore a telegraph line, or the nineteen year-old private from Manchester who expressed frustration that he could not return to action after being wounded three times.⁶⁶ Those with a taste for swashbuckling adventure were satisfied by a series of articles on 'the Jewish scout Morris', also known as 'Darkie Morris' or the 'Fighting Jew'.⁶⁷ The son of the beadle at St. John's Wood Synagogue, the pre-war career of this soldier spanned service in the Royal Navy, work as a body diver in Johannesburg, involvement in the abortive Jameson Raid and irregular service in the Spanish-American War. During the South African campaign he worked as a scout for Kitchener and was so skilled that Kruger's men reputedly put a price on his head.

The record of Jewish soldiering in South Africa was a source of considerable communal pride. Anglo-Jewish men had stood shoulder to shoulder with their fellow citizens and had not been found wanting. By their actions, they had affirmed Jewish military and physical capacity, strengthened Jewish identification with the nation and defied those who questioned the depth of the community's loyalty.

⁶⁴ *JC* 5/2/01 12, 25/10/01 25; *JW* 29/12/99 202.

⁶⁵ *JW* 19/10/00 55. The paper featured a front page photo with the title, 'The First Man in Mafeking'.

⁶⁶ *JW* 29/12/99 218, 22/12/99 202.

⁶⁷ *JC* 23/2/00 10, 9/3/00 10, 25/5/00 13, 15/2/01 12-3.

The Loyal Opposition

There is little question that support for the war permeated nearly all sectors of the organised Anglo-Jewish population. As I have demonstrated, pro-war sermons were delivered in Orthodox and Reform synagogues alike, as well as in the *hevras*. Similarly, both the wealthy and less well-off donated funds for soldiers and their dependents. Nor was approval limited to London; evidence of pastoral and lay activism could be located in the provinces, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. Finally, endorsement of military action crossed party lines. If support for the war was perhaps to be expected of a staunch Conservative such as Chief Rabbi Hermann Adler, it nonetheless also appears to have been the norm amongst Anglo-Jewish Liberals.⁶⁸ Finally, the fractiousness of the Anglo-Jewish communal establishment was a well-observed phenomenon, with nearly every matter—whether of consequence or not—producing open divisions of opinion. This was true even of such externally sensitive concerns as immigration restriction and Zionism.⁶⁹ It is therefore particularly striking that the war received nearly unanimous support in these circles.

The phrase 'nearly unanimous' is of course key. Anglo-Jewish opposition to the war did exist, although expressions of moral outrage, or even misgiving, were rare indeed. An obvious litmus test for public opinion—the letters section of the Jewish press—supports this claim. No more than a handful of anti-war letters were published between the fall of 1899 and the winter of 1901. While it is not inconceivable that impolitic views could have been suppressed, the papers' openness to minority pro-Zionist and anti-restriction

⁶⁸ The 1900 election returned ten Jews—seven Unionists, three Liberals—to the House of Commons. None opposed the war. However, although most of these figures identified overtly with the Jewish community, it is problematic to see them as direct representatives either of Jewish opinion or of a 'Jewish vote'. My research to date has uncovered no evidence suggesting that the Anglo-Jewish public determined its war stance on a party line basis. G. Alderman's *The Jewish Community in British Politics* (Oxford, 1983), does not address this particular question. Moreover, although Alderman argues persuasively that Anglo-Jewry's drift away from the Liberals was well under way by 1900, he is vague about its implications (36-46).

⁶⁹ On the former see Black, *Social Politics*, 270-309; Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews*, 268-311. On the latter see Chapters 3 and 4.

views would seem to undermine accusations of deliberate suppression. What cannot be as easily accounted for is the possibility of self-censorship.

The authors of these few letters took issue not just with the decision to go to war but with what they regarded as the Jewish community's inclination to 'hail bloodshed with the delight of an ancient Visigoth'.⁷⁰ It was inconceivable, wrote one Bernard Heyermans, that Anglo-Jewry truly saw it as 'proof of loyalty to tacitly approve of such and similar acts which are a disgrace to the civilisation of any age or any country.'⁷¹ In their support for Britain's indefensible war, British Jews had themselves entered an ethical quagmire.

Further insight can perhaps be gained by considering the opinions of three well-known Anglo-Jewish opponents of Britain's actions in South Africa. Leopold Greenberg, Solomon Schechter and Israel Zangwill all resolved that the war was immoral—and British Jewry misguided in its support—and did not hesitate to say so. Significantly, each was a dynamic and idiosyncratic force within the Anglo-Jewish communal framework. As a leader of the Zionist movement and later long-time editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*, Greenberg was skilled in rhetoric and suasion. Schechter, who discovered the Cairo Genizah and was the first to hold a readership in Jewish Studies at one of the ancient universities, possessed an unmatched intellectual gravitas. And Zangwill's sharp tongue and even sharper pen had made his fictional studies of Anglo-Jewry well-regarded far outside the leafy expanses of Northwest London.

It is conceivable that any one of these men could have been a centrifugal force for Jewish anti-war opinion. That they were not appears to indicate their audience's

⁷⁰ *JC* 25/7/00 8.

⁷¹ *JC* 11/1/01 10.

fundamental lack of receptiveness to the message which they were delivering. It also draws attention to the fact that these men held other views and positions which set them apart long before the war began. They were not outsiders in the conventional sense, as they mingled with, lived near and in many ways were identified as belonging to the higher echelons of Anglo-Jewish society. Yet Greenberg's Zionism, which was just one example of his generally confrontational stance towards the Jewish establishment, Schechter's commitment to serious scholarship (as well as his growing links to America) and Zangwill's role as the self-styled maverick of, and commentator on, Anglo-Jewry, placed each well outside the mainstream. Whether or not their anti-war positions were a direct product of this marginality, they nonetheless were a further feature setting them apart.

A successful advertising and publishing professional (he would acquire the *JC* in 1906⁷²), Greenberg was also a prominent Jewish communal activist and a supporter of dissident causes. The year that the war began, he had helped to found the English Zionist Federation.⁷³ He also took a principled stand against restriction, as his 1902 testimony before the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration reveals.⁷⁴ Throughout his career Greenberg would argue that communal leaders were too easily influenced by fear of unfavourable non-Jewish attention. Therefore, just as he maintained that Anglo-Jewish support for Zionism was not tantamount to dual allegiance, he also asserted that opposition to the war in South Africa was in no way inconsistent with 'perfect loyalty to his country'.⁷⁵

⁷² On the Greenberg family's tenure at the *JC* see D. Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry, 1841-1991* (Cambridge, 1994), 103-41, 158-92.

⁷³ S.A. Cohen, *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1880-1920* (Princeton, 1982), 25-46.

⁷⁴ Black, *Social Politics*, 304.

⁷⁵ S.A. Cohen, *English Zionists*, 66-70; *JC* 13/10/99 11.

Greenberg expressed his repugnance at Anglo-Jewry's 'Khaki fever' in a periodic column, entitled 'Between Ourselves', in *Young Israel* and at Zionist meetings.⁷⁶ It was unfortunate, he wrote, that 'the Jewish community, which usually exhibits immunity from contagious diseases, seems to have got "Khakiitis" rather more virulently than their neighbours.'⁷⁷ The Anglo-Jewish ministry was a particular target of Greenberg's wrath, its hypocrisy exemplified by a minister well-positioned to assume an 'independent attitude' who

when in the autumn of 1899, Peace and War were trembling in the balance, felt such righteous disgust at the methods of the Government with Mr. Kruger, that he told me that if England went to war with the Transvaal, he would refuse to say the Prayer for the Royal Family because it involved a prayer for the triumph of the Queen over all her enemiesWhen the war did break out, he not alone said the prayer for the Queen, he not alone said the War Prayerbut he actually joined a Committee and presided at a meeting for the promotion of a Carnival.⁷⁸

According to Greenberg, this reversal was predictable but unjustified. The same was true of prayers offered on behalf of an army guilty of wanton cruelty against Afrikaner civilians.⁷⁹ While acknowledging that war fever could not be easily stemmed, Greenberg maintained that Anglo-Jewry could make no permanent gains by relinquishing its moral authority. British Jews had no real choice other than to be true to their innermost values.

Solomon Schechter also viewed support for the war as detrimental to Anglo-Jewry's spiritual health. A reader of *Rabbinics* at Cambridge, Schechter's Cairo discoveries had helped to cement a growing international reputation. (They also contributed to his being wooed for the presidency of New York's fledgling Jewish Theological Seminary, a

⁷⁶ *JC* 18/1/01 9; *YI* 3/00 2-3, 6/00 53-4; *JC* 13/10/99 11. While Greenberg owned and edited *Young Israel*, its war coverage was otherwise scrupulously positive.

⁷⁷ *YI* 6/00 53.

⁷⁸ *JC* 18/1/01 9.

⁷⁹ Greenberg was referring to British anti-insurgency tactics, which included burning homesteads and imprisoning women and children. Although these policies proved controversial at home, there does not appear to have been any public Anglo-Jewish opposition to them. *JC* 23/8/01 Ed 13, 29/11/01 Ed 16-17. (The latter example emphatically denies accusations of British cruelty.) More generally, K. Surridge, 'Rebellion, Martial Law and British Civil-Military Relations: the War in the Cape Colony', *Small Wars and Emergencies* 8:2 (1997), 35-60.

job he would accept at the end of 1901.⁸⁰) He operated simultaneously as something of a public intellectual, helping to interpret a modernised traditional Judaism for the educated Anglo-Jewish community. Despite his frustration with Britain's limited scope for serious Jewish scholarship, this Romanian native was naturalised in 1893, immersed himself in English culture and assumed the leadership of an informal group of Jewish men of letters.⁸¹

As early as 1897, when English agitation against the Turks' Armenian massacres yielded a brief outburst of Anglo-Jewish jingoism, Schechter had lamented the unholy mix of religion and politics.⁸² This stance would be sharpened by the events of 1899 and 1900. Though Schechter is not known to have been particularly radical in his secular politics, he immediately saw the Boer War as the triumph of capital over principle. But his critique was not directed at Conservative politicians. Rather, he attacked the patriotic zealotry of his adopted Jewish community and (like Greenberg) the clergy, whose theology he saw as inspired by 'South African millionaires and other great men'.⁸³ As the war progressed, Schechter became increasingly vehement in his opposition to what he called 'the yellow press, yellow sermons and yellow prayers'.⁸⁴

Schechter's correspondence during 1900 reveals a preoccupation with the community's apparent drift from its ethical principles. With Claude Montefiore, his close friend and colleague (Schechter had originally resettled in England at his request), their differing positions produced a temporary rift, leading the former to urge, 'Let there be no *grollen*

⁸⁰ D. Starr, 'The Importance of Being Frank: Solomon Schechter's Departure from Cambridge', *Jewish Quarterly Review*, NS94:1 (2004), 12-18.

⁸¹ This Jewish quasi-bohemia termed itself 'the Wanderers.' It included Gaster, Zangwill, Lucien Wolf, a journalist and later head of the Conjoint Committee of the Board of Deputies and the Anglo-Jewish Association, Asher Myers, then the *JC's* editor, and Israel Abrahams, Schechter's successor at Cambridge.

⁸² N. Bentwich, *Solomon Schechter: A Biography* (Cambridge, 1938), 99-100.

⁸³ Letter to Herbert Bentwich (father of Norman), cited in Bentwich, *Solomon Schechter*, 105.

⁸⁴ 1/1/00, Cited in Bentwich, *Solomon Schechter*, 104.

[resentment] between us. You know I wish you well. If we differ in opinion, that is no reason why we should not be good friends.⁸⁵

While the relationship with Montefiore appears to have been mended, Schechter's public denunciations of the war left a more lasting impression on his Anglo-Jewish admirers and acquaintances. Particularly noteworthy was the following outburst, which took place in January 1900. As his biographer relates, Cambridge's Jewish congregation (which lacked its own rabbi) invited a preacher from London to speak each term. Schechter, though suspicious of a martial outpouring, was persuaded to attend the service. However, when the guest preacher offered a prayer for British victory, he walked out. Schechter explained his behaviour afterwards, saying, 'The less God Almighty knows about this dirty business, the better for all of us.'⁸⁶ But Schechter's last word on the subject was still to come.

Beginning in the fall of 1900, the *JC* published Schechter's valedictory address, a four-part series entitled 'Epistles to the Jews of England'.⁸⁷ The essays appeared less than one year prior to Schechter's announcement of his intention to take up a new position in New York. The change was one Schechter had long contemplated; he did not leave England because of his opposition to the war. Nonetheless, the knowledge of his imminent departure may have provided an imprimatur for particularly candid criticism. While the 'Epistles' focused primarily on the need to strengthen Anglo-Jewish religious knowledge and spirituality, Schechter managed one final dig at the fashion of muscular Judaism. Far from developing a true symbiosis of British and Jewish values, he argued, Anglo-Jewry had now convinced itself that 'nothing is so conducive to holiness as

⁸⁵ C. Montefiore, *Lieber Freund: The Letters of Claude Montefiore to Solomon Schechter, 1895-1902*, ed. J. Stein (Lanham, 1988), 44.

⁸⁶ Cited in Bentwich, *Solomon Schechter*, 104.

⁸⁷ It appeared on 12/10/00 (6), 26/10/01 (7), 30/11/00 (9) and 15/2/01 (9) and was subsequently reprinted in Schechter's *Studies in Judaism: 2nd Series* (Philadelphia, 1908), 182-201.

underdone beef and stout, bare knees and championship contests at football.⁸⁸ Only by overcoming their ignorance of Jewish life and thought could Britain's Jews master their susceptibility to yellow theology.

The final voice of dissent to consider is that of Israel Zangwill, Anglo-Jewry's most prolific author and one of its more colourful personalities.⁸⁹ An East End boy made good (he was educated at the Jews' Free School and the University of London), Zangwill was integrated in non-Jewish literary and cultural circles yet also wrote regularly on Jewish subjects. His first major success came in 1892 with *Children of the Ghetto*, a warm-hearted—though not sentimental—look at immigrant life which proved popular with Jews and non-Jews alike.⁹⁰

By 1899, Zangwill was combining his writing career with a prominent role in Jewish politics, both as an orator and a Zionist activist. Unlike Greenberg and Schechter, whose primary concerns lay with the effect of Jewish jingoism, it appears that Zangwill interpreted the war through the prism of his radical politics. (He would later take up the causes of women's suffrage and pacifism.)⁹¹ His chosen vehicle for critique was, unsurprisingly, a novel. A thinly veiled story of the dangers of imperial opportunism, *The Mantle of Elijah* (1900) opens with the marriage of Allegra Marchmont, daughter of a Radical MP, to her father's protégé, Robert Broser. Broser soon betrays both his mentor and Allegra with selfish advocacy of an imperial war. Allegra's discovery of her

⁸⁸ Schechter, *Studies*, 192.

⁸⁹ J.H. Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto: The Life and Works of Israel Zangwill* (Tuscaloosa, 1990); M. Wholgelernter, *Israel Zangwill* (New York, 1964).

⁹⁰ Its full title was *Children of the Ghetto, Being Pictures of a Peculiar People*. Zangwill wrote the novel as a commission for the Jewish Publication Society of America. M. Rochelson, 'Israel Zangwill and "Children of the Ghetto"', *Judaism: A Quarterly Journal of Jewish Life and Thought* 48:1 (1991), 85.

⁹¹ Interestingly, Zangwill, like many other Radical Liberals of his day, was not a classic anti-imperialist. Despite his opposition to the war, he believed in the general benevolence and justice of the British colonial system. See for example J. Leftwich, *Israel Zangwill* (London, 1957), 143. Moreover the aim of his territorialist movement—established in the wake of the Zionists' 1905 split over a temporary extra-Palestinian Jewish homeland, it hoped to secure (preferably British) sponsorship for an autonomous Jewish colony—was very much tied-up with the maintenance and expansion of the imperial system.

husband's martial fervour and unimpeded ambition generates severe emotional turmoil. However, she ultimately rejects Broser's contention that 'England needs a war. A woman cannot feel that we have all grown womanish,' instead choosing to don the 'mantle of Elijah' and fight for justice.⁹² This cautionary tale—though aimed at a wider audience than either Greenberg or Schechter could reach—offers a similar message about the ethical cost of heeding false prophets. Britain and Anglo-Jewry would both lose, these critics warn, if they danced to the 'music hall measures' composed by the nation's 'Jingo bards'.⁹³

Games and Guns: The Jewish Lads' Brigade

It is ironic that one of the most visible and enduring symbols of Anglo-Jewry's militant patriotism, the Jewish Lads' Brigade, was created by an organisation in which Zangwill himself played a leading role.⁹⁴ Although the *raison d'être* of the Maccabaeans was to organise dinners and debates for Jewish professional men, the group's 1895 founding of the Brigade testifies to the Anglo-Jewish establishment's common commitment to Anglicisation and the promotion of Britain's imperial mission.⁹⁵ By instilling 'ideas of cleanliness, order, discipline, and obedience to superiors', the JLB's organisers hoped to '[s]ave many a boy from flying to the kerbstone to sell matches, or from running down the public thoroughfares with the "Hextry Speshul."⁹⁶ This attempt to refashion Jewish immigrant youth was both a goal in and of itself and, during the Boer War in particular, a means of improving the community's image.⁹⁷

⁹² *The Mantle of Elijah* (New York, 1900), 346.

⁹³ *Mantle*, 349-50.

⁹⁴ There is no evidence that Zangwill was involved with the JLB.

⁹⁵ In addition to Zangwill, the group's members included the painter Solomon J. Solomon, Asher Myers and Israel Abrahams. The Maccabaeans were also instrumental in founding the Jewish Historical Society. R.A. Goodman, *The Maccabaeans* (London, 1979).

⁹⁶ *YI* 12/97 287.

⁹⁷ Kadish, *Good Jew*. The only full-length study of the Brigade, Kadish's book focuses largely on the post-World War I period. This reflects the relative paucity of documentary evidence from the organisation's first twenty years. More problematic is the fact that this study, like virtually all Anglo-Jewish institutional histories, was commissioned by the organisation itself. While the end result does make some attempt to address questions related to Anglicisation and

Two contemporary models provided inspiration for the Brigade. The first was London's Jewish youth clubs. Established in the East End from the early 1880s onwards, these sought to continue the acculturation of students who had completed their compulsory (usually state-run) primary education. Often sponsored by individual members of the Jewish establishment, the original clubs targeted teenage girls, to whom they taught 'the three Rs: religion, refinement, and recreation'.⁹⁸ Another formative influence came from sectarian Christian youth groups like the Scottish Presbyterian Boys' Brigade, the Anglican Church Lads' Brigade and the Catholic Lads' Brigade. These organisations combined the ideals of muscular Christianity popularised by Thomas Arnold and the Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.) movement with so-called public school virtues of sportsmanship, leadership and imperial service, thus diffusing what had once been an exclusively upper-class value system to a broader audience.⁹⁹

Reverend Francis Cohen, a London pulpit preacher, as well as the first Jewish army chaplain at Aldershot, was the first to note the lack of any comparable outlet for Jewish boys. Writing in 1891, Cohen contended that

the first requirement of our Jewish youth ...is undoubtedly the spirit of discipline. To foster that spirit there is required the co-operation of gentlemen who will assist in forming and energetically maintaining a "Jewish Boys' Brigade" ...for the promotion of habits of self-respect, obedience, reverence, and all that tends towards a God-fearing manliness.¹⁰⁰

While British Jews were certainly sympathetic to the ideals of a modified Christian militarism, the Maccabaeans' adoption of Cohen's proposal—as well the development of

social control, it nonetheless falls short of its advertised 'honest appraisal.' See also R. Voeltz, 'A Good Jew and a Good Englishman: The Jewish Lads' Brigade, 1894-1922', *Journal of Contemporary History* 23:1 (1988), 119-27.

⁹⁸ Black, *Social Politics*, 133-56. After Balfour's 1902 Education Act gave funding (via taxation) to private schools and educational institutions, the scope and scale of such activities increased dramatically.

⁹⁹ O. Anderson, 'The Growth of Christian Militarism in Mid-Victorian Britain', *English Historical Review* 86:338 (1971), 46-72; G. Best, 'Militarism and the Victorian Public School', in B. Simon and I. Bradley, (eds.), *The Victorian Public School: Studies in the Development of an Educational Institution* (Dublin, 1975), 129, 131-6; W.E. Winn, 'Tom Brown's Schooldays and the Development of "Muscular Christianity"', *Church History* 29:1 (1960), 64-73. A. Summers, 'Militarism in Britain before the Great War' *History Workshop* 2 (Autumn 1976), 104-23.

¹⁰⁰ *JC* 3/4/91 7.

other Jewish boys' clubs in the late 1890s—also seems likely to have been influenced by rising anti-alienism. The transformation of Jewish immigrant youth into strong and masculine Englishmen of the Jewish persuasion would not only demonstrate the potential of these foreign-born Jews, but also undercut restrictionist arguments.¹⁰¹

The Maccabaeans were not alone in recognising the benefits which could be achieved by improving the physical condition of young Jewish immigrants. Instructors at London's Jewish schools had already noted the impact of callisthenics and games on the appearance and character of their students, while the Jewish press published regular columns on the advancements in physical fitness within this population.¹⁰² Similarly, the fledgling Jewish boys' clubs encouraged their members' proficiency in English team sports—both the working-class game of football and cricket, played primarily by public school students. In 1900 a Jewish Athletics Association (JAA) was founded to support and organise athletic training and competition for both sexes; this was muscular Judaism *lite*, athleticism without militarism.¹⁰³

What distinguished the JLB from these other agents of Anglicisation was its emphasis on the relation between physical fitness and military preparedness. In this respect, it embodied the belief of Harrow headmaster J.E.C. Welldon that '[t]he pluck, the energy ...the self-control, the discipline, the cooperation, the *esprit de corps*, which merit

¹⁰¹ YI 12/97 287, 6/98 85, 8/98 136, 162-3. In the aftermath of the Boer War, similar anxieties—in this case about the physical condition of the nation's troops and military-age men—would lead to the establishment of the Boy Scouts by Lord Baden-Powell. Just as the Brigade's instigators had hoped to stem restrictionist impulses by 'improving' young Jewish immigrant men, Baden-Powell and his followers now attempted to preserve the race and Empire by inculcating discipline, athleticism and militarism in the nation's youth. A. Warren, 'Citizens of the Empire: Baden-Powell, Scouts and Guides and an Imperial Idea, 1900-1940', in J. Mackenzie, (ed.), *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester, 1986), 232-56; J. Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society: British Youth Movements 1883-1940* (London, 1977), particularly 63-74.

¹⁰² YI 3/97 6, 5/97 60, 6/97 116, 11/97 252-3, 10/98 188, 5/99 40; Victoria Club for Working Lads Papers, (London Metropolitan Archives): ACC/2996/1.

¹⁰³ Similar groups were also organised in Central Europe. However, in all known cases, these promoted Jewish nationalism as well as physical fitness. See G. Eisen, 'Zionism, Nationalism and the Emergence of the Jüdische Turnerschaft', *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 28 (1983), 247-62; Heidi Zogbaum, 'Hakoah Wien: Jewish Sport Before 1938', *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* 8:2 (1994), 44-66.

success in cricket or football, are the very qualities that win the day in peace or war.¹⁰⁴

An 1897 article in the Jewish press also endorsed the broader benefits of 'athletics and general outdoor sports', adding that 'if in the course of time the boys of the Brigade should wish to enter the army or navy in defence of their country, the Jewish Lads' Brigade would be found a splendid stepping-stone by which these objects might be achieved.' Thus even before the outbreak of war in 1899, the JLB's ultimate goal was the creation of future Jewish soldiers.

Unlike its Christian counterparts, the Jewish Lads' Brigade did not place particular emphasis on religion *per se*. (There was, as far as its founders were concerned, already far too much religion in Jewish immigrant homes.)¹⁰⁵ Accordingly, while it emphasised something akin to Jewish pride, it focused on transmitting 'British' values. Chief amongst these was support for the Empire. At one level, this was simply an outgrowth of the organisation's role as a 'cultural bridge' between upper-class Anglo-Jewish society and the Jewish immigrant community.¹⁰⁶ While members of the Brigade could not aspire—in contrast to Welldon's students—to be politicians or colonial administrators, a proper understanding of the Empire's significance was still believed to be critical to their development as patriotic Anglo-Jewish citizens. It was perhaps only natural that the JLB's leadership wished to promote an ideal which they themselves valued so deeply. However, at a time of growing anxiety about the nation's imperial future, it was also crucial that Jews in Britain—particularly those of immigrant

¹⁰⁴ Welldon's 1895 speech to the Royal Colonial Institute is cited in J.A. Mangan, 'The Grit of Our Forefathers: Invented Traditions, Propaganda and Imperialism', in *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, 121.

¹⁰⁵ Fundamental tenets of Jewish law were nonetheless observed. No vigorous activities took place on the Sabbath, and dietary restrictions were followed according to the customs of Anglo-Orthodox households. Liberal rabbis were brought in to lead services at the summer camps. (Although the movement had no following within the immigrant population, many of the Brigade's funders and organisers were identified with it.) It is difficult to assess whether this lax and—to the immigrants—relatively foreign mode of ritual observance kept some more traditional youths away. However, since much of the immigrant population was traditional in religious outlook rather than stringent in actual practice, this may not have been a serious impediment to participation.

¹⁰⁶ Voeltz, 'Good Jew', 120.

background—not be perceived as lacking the skills or commitment to protect the Empire.

Appropriately enough, the Brigade's founder, Colonel Albert Edward Goldsmid, personified this dual commitment to Anglo-Jewish ideals and the imperial mission.¹⁰⁷ The first professing Jew to achieve the rank of Colonel in Chief, Goldsmid's unusual personal history had also attracted attention. Born in Poona to high-ranking, baptised civil servants, Goldsmid discovered his Jewish heritage—he was in fact related to a leading Anglo-Jewish banking family—only at the age of twenty-one. Soon after, he returned to Judaism and combined an active military career with Jewish communal projects like the Brigade.

Indeed, even before the Brigade's creation, Goldsmid already rated mention as an important, albeit somewhat atypical (due to his military credentials and early proto-Zionist proclivities—he claimed at times to be the inspiration for George Eliot's 1876 novel, *Daniel Deronda*) Jewish communal activist. For example, while stationed in Wales in the early 1890s, Goldsmid helped to found the Cathedral Road Synagogue in Cardiff. He was also an early member of the British Chovevei Zion (Lovers of Zion) Association, a non-political group which supported small-scale agricultural settlements in Palestine, and the Maccabaeans, serving as President of both organisations during that decade. From 1892 to 1894, Goldsmid took leave from his military duties to oversee colonisation work in Argentina sponsored by the German-Jewish philanthropist Baron Edmund de Hirsch.¹⁰⁸ His work with the Brigade, which would continue until his untimely death in 1904, was yet another attempt to grapple with the problems of Eastern European Jewry. It expressed the belief of this 'quintessential Englishman' that

¹⁰⁷ Bradlow, 'Colonel A.E.W. Goldsmid: "Everything British With Old Jewish Touches Breaking Through"', *Jewish Social Studies* 39:1-2 (1997), 63-75.

¹⁰⁸ T. Norman, *An Outstretched Arm: A History of the Jewish Colonization Association* (London, 1985), 70-89.

'without any loss of pride in their faith and race', even the immigrant Jew could play a role in enriching and strengthening the British Empire.¹⁰⁹

The Brigade attempted to achieve this end through a weekly programme of military drilling, marching and exercise. Recruits, aged between twelve and sixteen years, were charged a small weekly subscription, issued a 'Blue Book' of rules and provided with a regulation cap, belt and haversack to be worn over their ordinary clothes. University-aged sons of the Jewish communal elite supervised these activities and served as role models. (Their non-Jewish contemporaries assumed similar roles in the settlement houses, public school missions and youth clubs.) Funding and Executive Council leadership also emerged largely from these families—notably, the Cohens, D'Avigdors, Franklins, Henriques, Mocattas, Montagus, Sassoons and Tucks.

In April 1895, the Brigade's first London company began to meet at Whitechapel's Gravel Board School.¹¹⁰ Within the year, rising popularity and a waiting list of potential members forced them to establish a second company and relocate to the more spacious facilities at the Jews' Free School. (Both staunch proponents of Anglicisation, the two institutions saw themselves as having a natural concert of interests. The JFS headmaster encouraged his boys to join the Brigade, and the school added a Rothschild funded drilling hall and rifle range during its 1898 renovations.) By the beginning of 1898, London Brigade membership had reached 800. Five new London companies were also founded later that year, as well as the first Northern unit, based in Liverpool. Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Cardiff, Sheffield and Newcastle, among others, soon followed suit. In addition, companies were also established in several of the colonies of white settlement, thereby demonstrating that the Brigade could also be

¹⁰⁹ *JC* 23/8/01 6.

¹¹⁰ *JC* 5/4/95 12.

a force for Jewish imperial unity. On the eve of the war overall membership totalled approximately 2,000 boys.¹¹¹ What would become a key component of the Brigade's activities, the annual, week-long summer camp, was also added during this period. When it was first held at Deal in 1896, the programme, led by Cecil Sebag-Montefiore, attracted only twenty youths. By 1898, however, attendance rose to 459, with increased demand leading the organisers to open a second camp in Manchester the following summer.¹¹²

As I have argued, Britain's declaration of war that fall infused the establishment's goal of making 'manly Englishmen out of [foreign-born] Jewish lads' with new immediacy.¹¹³ Since it appeared that the simulated military drills, parades and intensive summer camps at the core of the Brigade's programme had already begun to succeed in 'iron[ing] out the Ghetto bend', many now hoped that actual combat would be even more decisive in 'mak[ing] the designation of Jew a symbol of honour and not a term of reproach'.¹¹⁴ In fact, the Brigade made good on its original promise of training future Jewish soldiers by sending at least some of its own off to South Africa. The relative youth of both the organisation and its membership would seem to suggest that it could not have been a significant contributor to the corps of Jewish volunteers.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, at least several lads from the Brady Street Company joined ten Brigade officers in South Africa.¹¹⁶ There were also some reports of former Brigade members volunteering in Manchester.¹¹⁷

¹¹¹ *YI* 6/99 60.

¹¹² Kadish, *Good Jew*, 38.

¹¹³ *JC* 9/6/99 Ed 18.

¹¹⁴ *JC* 23/8/01 Letter 6. The phrase, used in this case by Goldsmid himself, was commonly employed to describe the process of Anglicisation. *JC* 17/6/99 18.

¹¹⁵ The scarcity of Brigade records from these years renders a definitive judgment impossible.

¹¹⁶ Kadish, *Good Jew*, 59.

¹¹⁷ By contrast, 535 former members of the Brigade—approximately one-third of total Anglo-Jewish war dead—were killed in World War I. Voeltz 'Good Jew', 120.

Membership continued to grow during these years, although the war's short-term effect on communal philanthropic priorities produced serious budget deficits. In one notable instance, the 1902 Northern camp was cancelled due to lack of funds. Significantly, however, the visibility of the Brigade increased dramatically, as the Jewish media—and, on occasion, the philo-Semitic national press—took special note of the Brigade's activities.¹¹⁸ Reportage of Goldsmid's military successes in South Africa, where he joined Lieutenant General Kelly-Kenny's Sixth Division as commander of the Welsh Regiment, was often accompanied by admiring mention of the organisation which he headed up at home.¹¹⁹ Second, Brigade outfits played a prominent role in community events, including the sending-off of Jewish soldiers to war, local fund-raising pageants and the mourning of those lost.¹²⁰ For example, in June 1900, twenty officers and 430 Lads participated in a synagogue memorial parade presided over by the Chief Rabbi. The correspondent covering the event commented that the onlookers

were loud in their praise of the work of the Brigade in setting-up and disciplining the sons of our artisan class, for the benefits which the organization has already conferred on the community by improving the physique and manners of so many hundreds of its growing lads, were obvious at a glance.¹²¹

This comment is suggestive of the third and final cause of Brigade's special wartime status. As the Anglo-Jewish establishment perceived itself to be under increasing attack, the Brigade's achievements provided reassurance that it was in fact succeeding in its quest to Anglicise the immigrant population.

Accordingly, particular status was attached to athletic accomplishments, especially when a Brigade company beat a non-Jewish team.¹²² The Brigade's members were the children of immigrants, and, in some cases, immigrants themselves. Therefore, in the

¹¹⁸ *The Times* 26/6/00 6, 21/1/02 3, 31/1/02 2.

¹¹⁹ Bradlow, 'Goldsmid', 68. *JC* 5/1/00 Ed 16, 24/5/01 11-12; *JW* 8/12/99 166.

¹²⁰ *JW* 1/12/99 152-3, 8/12/99 179, 21/12/00 201; *JC* 9/2/00 8, 12, 21/12/00 25.

¹²¹ *JC* 29/6/00 25.

¹²² *YT* 7/98 85.

eyes of the more established Jewish community, they were self-evidently not yet British. Nevertheless, according to one speaker at a Maccabaeans meeting, the lads' newly acquired football skills made it 'difficult to tell them from native boys and girls' once they were on the pitch.¹²³

Despite the overwhelmingly positive image of the Lads' Brigade in the eyes of the Jewish (and non-Jewish) elite, the spectre of failure still loomed. As the Chief Rabbi reminded one London unit, it was their responsibility to prove, when the occasion arose, that 'the blood of the Maccabees runs in your veins, and you are no craven sons of such heroic sires.'¹²⁴ But the heroism—or lack thereof—of teenage boys was only one small part of the picture. Glowing testimony about the Brigade's achievements figured prominently at the hearings of the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration in May 1902. Yet it was clear that the spectacle of uniformed Jewish immigrant youth, well-mannered, responsible and possessing remarkable prowess in cricket, was insufficient to stem either Jewish insecurity or continued attacks on the Jewish position in Britain.

* * *

The inaugural issue of *Young Israel* offered a statement of its philosophy in the form of a story about a Jewish public school boy. Asked which he would rather be, an Englishman or a Jew, the youth responded, "I am both!" This boy, the editor stated, had given exactly the right answer. In all that differentiated an Englishman from those of other nations he was English, and in all that differentiated Jews from adherents to other faiths he was Jewish. The Englishman was not defined by his bloodline but rather by his language, his devotion to justice and liberty, his love of sport and, chiefly,

¹²³ *JC* 13/12/01 14. Kadish, *Good Jew*, 42.

¹²⁴ *JC* 29/6/00 25.

his willingness to live and die for certain ideals. Any Christian or Jew privileged enough to live in 'an English atmosphere' (this presumably included the Dominions and Colonies) could and should share in those ideals.

But, the article continued, to be Jewish also implied devotion to certain principles. Was it possible therefore that a conflict could arise between these two sets of values, posing the terrible alternative for this Jewish boy of English citizenship as to which he should follow? The response, as should by now be clear, was that no such clash could arise. To be both English and Jewish, in all thoughts and actions, was, *Young Israel* argued, both an admirable and a viable aim.¹²⁵

During the Boer War, the persistent public questioning of Anglo-Jewish patriotism generated a crisis within Britain's Jewish establishment. Yet this was not a crisis of conscience. Although the war produced divisions of opinion within the nation at large, British Jews did not question the ethics of their country's choice. Moreover, while the attacks upon them shook their confidence, the demands of war also provided an unmatched opportunity to set things right. Anglo-Jewry could now prove its loyalty with voice and purse and where it most counted—on the battlefield. By assisting the war effort and demonstrating overwhelming unity of purpose to a sceptical, but fair public, British Jews would vanquish any charges that their sectarian interests interfered with the fulfilment of their responsibilities as Englishmen and women. In their eyes, at least, there was no 'conflict of principle'.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ *YI* 3/97 2-3.

¹²⁶ *JW* 1/12/99 155.

Lovers of Zion, Opponents of Zionism: The Establishment Confronts Jewish Nationalism

The signing of the Treaty of Vereeniging in May 1902 formalised Britain's supremacy in South Africa and brought its conflict with the Boers to an end. Yet victory had proven far more difficult and costly than expected. With so much public meaning attached to the war, the near-fatal setbacks which the British army encountered dealt a harsh blow to national confidence and called into question the Empire's supposedly unassailable strength. Morale was further weakened by the Queen's death in the winter of 1901. At the new century's uncertain dawn, the doomsayers now held sway.

It soon became obvious, however, that the diagnosis of decline—exemplified by the Elgin Commission's report on the physical condition of the nation's troops—was premature. Not only did the war itself produce no permanent changes in Britain's relationship with the other great powers, but it failed to slacken official commitment to the Empire.¹ Serious challenges to imperial rule, both domestically and in the colonies, still remained some years off. (Afrikaner nationalism was sated by the installation of white self-rule in the united South African territories.) The extension of British sovereignty over ex-German and Ottoman territories following World War I, the inter-war determination to maintain even troublesome holdings and the ongoing symbolic import of Empire to British national identity all undermine the claim that the Boer War was Britain's last great imperial outing. As John MacKenzie has noted, '[i]t may even

¹ Neither the 1904 Entente Cordiale nor the 1902 alliance with Japan (renewed in 1905) was a direct result of the war. The former was intended to resolve long standing Anglo-French colonial disputes, while the latter attempted to limit Russian territorial and economic threats. Similarly, the development of the Anglo-German arms race should be placed in the broader contexts of post-Bismarkian great power rivalry and British and German domestic politics. N. Rich, *Great Power Diplomacy, 1814-1914* (New York, 1992), particularly 364-422; P. Kennedy, *The Rise of Anglo-German Antagonism 1860-1914* (London, 1980), 251-437; I.H. Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance: The Diplomacy of Two Island Empires, 1894-1907* (London, 1985); P.J.V. Rolo, *Entente Cordiale: The Origins and Negotiation of the Anglo-French Agreements of 8 April 1904* (London, 1969). On other aspects of the war's legacy see A. Porter, 'The South African War and Imperial Britain: A Question of Significance', in G. Cuthbertson and A. Grundling et al. (eds.), *Writing a Wider War: Rethinking Gender, Race and Identity in the South African War, 1899-1902* (Athens, 2002), 287-302; D. Lowry, 'The Boers Were the Beginning of the End? The Wider Impact of the South African War', in id., (ed.), *The South African War Reappraised* (Manchester, 2000), 203-46.

be the case that a truly popular imperialism ...was stronger *after* the imperial climacterics of the late nineteenth century had ceased.²

For Anglo-Jewry's elite, presumptions about the war's long-term impact proved similarly ill-founded. Dangerous charges of Jewish financial impropriety had been challenged, so too the rising tide of anti-alienism. The outbreak of hostilities had also provided an opportunity to demonstrate Anglo-Jewry's patriotism. However, accusations of Jewish capitalist conspiracy would re-emerge during the Marconi Scandal of 1912 and the less well-known Indian silver affair of the following year.³ In addition, critiques of the nation's new plutocracy often devolved into attacks on the ostentatious—and thus un-British—behaviour of Edward VII's wealthy 'court Jews'.⁴ The post-1905 decline of anti-immigration sentiment, though marked, was not only relatively short-lived but unconnected to recent Jewish heroism. Its source? The passage of legislation restricting immigration.⁵

As these examples suggest, the Boer War did not mark the end of Anglo-Jewry's quest for unequivocal inclusion. The establishment's rhetorical, philanthropic and military support for the British cause had failed to secure the elusive (and illusory) prize of non-Jewish validation. Consequently, new opportunities were exploited to prove—this time once and for all—the extent of Anglo-Jewish devotion to Britain and its Empire. It would be unfair to suggest that this behaviour reflected a slavish and single-minded

² *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester, 1986), 7.

³ In the Marconi case, Herbert Samuel, Asquith's postmaster general, faced accusations of unfair practice in the awarding of a lucrative telegraph contract. The latter scandal implicated Samuel's elder brother, Sir Stuart, the Whitechapel MP, and his first cousin Edwin Montagu, parliamentary undersecretary for India, in an alleged secret contract for the purchase of bullion. T. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656-2000* (Berkeley, 2002), 153-5; F. Donaldson, *The Marconi Scandal* (London, 1962), particularly 9-45, 171-90, 198-255; G.R. Searle, *Corruption in British Politics, 1895-1930* (Oxford, 1987), 172-212.

⁴ W. D. Rubinstein, 'Jews Among Top British Wealth Holders, 1857-1969: Decline of the Golden Age', *Jewish Social Studies* 34:1 (1972), 73-84. A. Alfrey, *Edward VII and His Jewish Court* (London, 1991), particularly 1-69, 176-209; C. Roth, 'The Court Jews of Edwardian England', in id., *Essays and Portraits in Anglo-Jewish History* (Philadelphia, 1962), 282-94.

⁵ J.A. Garrard, *The English and Immigration, 1880-1910* (London, 1971), particularly 23-89; B. Gainer, *The Alien Invasion: The Origins of the Aliens Act of 1905* (London, 1972).

drive towards assimilation. Pursuit of enhanced inclusion did not come at the cost of association with organised Anglo-Jewish life. The figures whom I will be discussing in this chapter were, far from being on the fringes of Jewish communal activity, deeply committed to its values and institutions. Nonetheless, this elite was not insensible to the perceived dictates of non-Jewish opinion. Accordingly, it continued to cultivate an exquisite sensitivity to questions regarding the compatibility of British and Jewish values.

What would prove to be the most persistent and troubling such issue over the following forty-plus years was in fact already on scene. Along with Art Nouveau, Modernism and radical nationalism, the *fin de siècle* had also spawned a new and revolutionary challenge to the perennial Jewish Question. The Anglo-Jewish elite's overwhelming reaction to political Zionism, as popularised by the Viennese journalist and novelist Theodor Herzl, took the form of a well-ordered, trenchant critique.⁶ Neither in its diagnosis of anti-Semitism's permanence nor in its solution of a Jewish state was this ideology in any way acceptable to those who believed themselves as strongly English as they were avowedly Jewish. Both faith and fear seemed to caution against such an idea.

As Frederic David Mocatta, noted philanthropist, explained in an 1896 letter to the journalist and communal diplomat Lucien Wolf,

I fear that mine [my mind] is already made up, and that whatever matters relating to the scheme of Dr. Herzl may unfold, I shall continue to view it as at present utterly impracticable. My view is that if desirable the idea would be found entirely impossible to carry out and that if it were possible it would be highly undesirableI feel certain no sensible person will ally himself to this plan.⁷

⁶ In this and future chapters I will use the phrases 'political Zionism', 'Jewish nationalism' and the 'Zionist movement' interchangeably. Where the word 'Zionism' is used alone, I will specify instances in which it does *not* refer to political Zionism.

⁷ 6/9/96 Lucien Wolf Papers, (Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem): A77/1. The Mocattas, one of the oldest and most eminent Sephardic families, served as bullion brokers to the Bank of England. E. Black, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1880-1920* (Oxford, 1988), 20-22.

Wolf himself later wrote to the author Israel Zangwill that he could see no reason to wring his hands over the supposed imbecility of his fathers in winning Jewish emancipation. There was, after all, no Jewish nationality. A Jew was a Jew by religion only.⁸

That Herzl gave his second London speech in perfect English did not make his ideas sound any less foreign. Nathaniel Rothschild—the organised community's *de facto* chief—would not even meet with him during the Austrian's 1901 trip to London. (The two men came into contact the following year, when both testified before the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration. Despite agreeing to a conversation, Rothschild's outlook remained unchanged.) And Colonel Goldsmid of the Lads' Brigade fame allowed his Love of Zion organisation, the Chovevei Zion, to dissolve in order to prevent it from being co-opted by Herzl's English supporters. What would ultimately set in motion a change in attitude was the prospect of a Jewish homeland under British rule. This idea was first introduced in the El Arish (Sinai) proposal of 1902, formally offered by the Colonial Office in the 'Uganda' or East Africa plan the following year and ultimately realised in the Balfour Declaration of 1917. It was only under these changed circumstances that the Anglo-Jewish establishment would begin to reconcile its aversion to Jewish nationalism with the potential for a new outlook, forged equally in Jewish faith, British patriotism and imperial fervour.

⁸ 28/9/03 Israel Zangwill Papers, (Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem): A120/58. As Josef Fraenkel has noted, Wolf did flirt briefly with political Zionism. However this can likely be attributed to the impression made by Herzl's personality rather than to any substantive agreement with his ideas. Wolf's passionate commitment to liberalism (demonstrated most vividly in his work on the post-World War I Minorities Treaties) was incompatible with any sustained support for Jewish nationalism. Fraenkel, *Lucien Wolf and Theodor Herzl* (London, 1960). See also M. Levene, *War, Jews and the New Europe: The Diplomacy of Lucien Wolf, 1914-1919* (Oxford, 1992), Introduction; id., 'Lucien Wolf: Crypto-Zionist: Anti-Zionist or Opportunist *Par Excellence*?', *Studies in Zionism* 12:2 (1991), 133-48. On Wolf's efforts to thwart the Balfour Declaration see Chapter 4.

The founding of the Jewish nationalist movement and the institutional development of Anglo-Jewish Zionism have already been the subject of extensive scholarly research.⁹ I do not intend to replicate or improve on those efforts here. Instead I wish to use that framework of events as a backdrop for investigating the overwhelmingly negative responses of the Anglo-Jewish elite to the content and implications of political Zionism during the period of 1895 to 1905.

* * *

For Mocatta and Wolf (and indeed for their elite counterparts in the United States and Western Europe) the failings of political Zionism were obvious and insurmountable. An equally scathing assessment of the establishment's own philosophy was mounted by Zionist critics. Intent on assimilation and the preservation of their positions of influence, anti-Zionists were, it was alleged, blinded to the desperate plight of their Eastern co-religionists. Furthermore, the liberal values to which this elite subscribed had little to offer those who did not enjoy their benefits. Scholarship which followed the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel did not so much echo these earlier moral and intellectual critiques as dismiss the phenomenon of anti-Zionism out of hand. It now appeared clear that the proponents of Jewish nationalism had been right all along.¹⁰

Whether or not this was true, Zionism's active supporters were, as late as the outbreak of World War II, a minority—in many cases quite small—in every Jewish community

⁹ David Vital's three-volume series is the classic source on early Zionism: *The Origins of Zionism* (Oxford, 1975); *Zionism: The Formative Years* (Oxford, 1982); *Zionism: The Crucial Phase* (Oxford, 1987). On Zionism in pre-World War I England see S.A. Cohen, *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1880-1920* (Princeton, 1982) and V. Hein, *The British Followers of Theodor Herzl: English Zionist Leaders, 1896-1904* (New York, 1987). Cohen focuses on the debate over Zionism within organised Anglo-Jewry and the foundation of a British branch for the movement, while Hein concentrates on the (relatively minor) contributions of British Jews to international Zionist diplomacy.

¹⁰ B. Halpern, *The Idea of the Jewish State* (Cambridge, Mass., 1961), Part I; W. Laqueur, *A History of Zionism* (London, 1972), 384-437.

outside of Palestine itself.¹¹ While reconciliation with Jewish nationalism was unquestionably hastened by the emergence of Nazism and, more dramatically, the events of 1939 to 1948, the inclusion of Zionism as a staple of mainstream Jewish identity took somewhat longer. Recognition of the disjunction between popular Jewish opinion and the 'official' successes of the Zionist movement therefore raises an important question. Why had so many stood aloof, or particularly earlier, opposed it outright?

In recent years historians have considered pre-World War II Jewish communal debates on Zionism through a number of parallel national studies.¹² Most of these scholars have managed to avoid the sharp dichotomies posed by their ideologically driven predecessors. Rather, they have contextualised their subjects' anti-Zionist views within a broader analysis of secular loyalties, Jewish communal affiliations and theological beliefs. Seen from this perspective, anti-Zionism is transformed from a perverse, knee-jerk reaction to a well-considered and articulate expression of an alternative Jewish *Weltanschauung*. The particularities of Jewish identity—rather than a lack thereof—underpin antipathy to the Zionist message.

This approach has been utilised to good effect by Stuart Cohen, whose monograph and articles on English Zionism and anti-Zionism before 1920 not only restore the latter's intellectual credibility but also demonstrate the diversity of its adherents.¹³ This

¹¹ Rubinstein, 'Zionism and the Jewish People, 1918-1960: From Minority to Hegemony', *Jewish Journal of Sociology* 43:1-2 (2001), 5-36. The most reliable—though still problematic—source for assessing the depth of support for Zionism is the rate of 'shekel-holding', namely dues-paying membership in the Zionist movement. This article, which compares totals and percentages of shekel-holders in over thirty countries in 1930-1931 and 1934-1935, demonstrates that while the rise of Hitler had a marked effect on Zionist affiliation in Eastern Europe, shekel-holding rates in much of Western Europe—including Great Britain—still failed to reach double-digits.

¹² Pre-Balfour responses are discussed in J. Reinharz, *Fatherland or Promised Land? The Dilemma of the German Jew, 1893-1914* (Ann Arbor, 1975), 37-89, 171-234; P. Hyman, *From Dreyfus to Vichy: The Remaking of French Jewry, 1906-1939* (New York, 1979), 153-78; R.S. Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph* (Oxford, 1989), 347-493; J. Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism and the Russian Jews, 1862-1917* (Cambridge, 1981), particularly 49-132, Part II; N.W. Cohen, *American Jews and the Zionist Idea* (New York, 1975), 1-24.

¹³ S.A. Cohen, *English Zionists; The Reception of Political Zionism in England: Patterns of Alignment Among the Clergy and Rabbinate*, *JJS* 16:2 (1974), 171-85; 'Anglo-Jewry and Zionism: The Initial Confrontation, 1895-1900', *Mikhael: On*

chapter will build on Cohen's work, in particular his idea of an elite 'cultural orientation' antithetical to Zionism.¹⁴ But while Cohen considers the history of Anglo-Jewish Zionism and anti-Zionism largely as an end unto itself, my interest here is somewhat different. The goal of this chapter is to explore how the establishment's response to Jewish nationalism produces new insight into that group's self-understanding as Jews and as British citizens. I also wish to draw attention to an aspect of Anglo-Jewish identity which has not received adequate attention, and which impacted on the elite Jewish stance towards Zionism between 1902 and 1905: imperial patriotism.

By 1902, faced with ongoing Ottoman opposition to large-scale colonisation and few encouraging signs from other quarters, members of the international Zionist leadership—Herzl in particular—believed that their best chances for great power recognition lay with Britain. Accordingly, some proposed the creation of a temporary Jewish enclave in imperial territory. It was anticipated that the negotiations would facilitate Westminster's support for Jewish nationalism while also addressing the charge that Zionism's Palestino-centrism was failing to help Eastern European Jews in the here and now. The proposal met with positive reception from a number of British policy makers, who saw it as a means of solving some of their own immigration problems. While deeming the Zionists' first and second choices, Sinai and Cyprus, unsuitable (the former was the subject of six months of negotiations; the latter was dismissed immediately), they did propose an alternative territory in 'Uganda', or East Africa.

The East Africa project proved bitterly divisive for the Zionist movement. For the Anglo-Jewish establishment, which saw itself as bearing the subsidiary effect of any

the History of the Jews in the Diaspora 10 (1986), 49-74; 'Ideological Components in Anglo-Jewish Opposition to Zionism Before and During the First World War: A Restatement', *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* NS30 (1987-8), 149-61; 'The Conquest of a Community? The Zionists and the Board of Deputies in 1917', *JJS* 19:2 (1977), 157-84; "'How Shall We Sing of Zion in a Strange Land?": East European Immigrants and the Challenge of Zionism in Britain, 1897-1918', *JSS* NS1:2 (1995), 101-122.

¹⁴ S.A. Cohen, 'Ideological Components', 151.

agreement reached between the Zionists and the British government, the potential placement of a Jewish refuge within the purview of the Empire also raised difficult questions. My investigation of the Anglo-Jewish establishment's response will therefore attempt to explain why the imperial context of Zionist negotiations over Sinai and East Africa failed to generate a fundamental reassessment of what this group saw as the 'Zionist [p]eril'.¹⁵

* * *

My analysis will begin by outlining the British Jewish establishment's philanthropic and religious ties to Palestine in the period preceding the advent of political Zionism, including the work of the Chovevei Zion Association (CZA). I will then consider the reasons behind this community's rejection of 'Herzism' during the closing years of the 1890s. The chapter's final section will examine Anglo-Jewish responses to the territorialist (i.e., extra-Palestinian) programme pursued by the international Zionist organisation between 1902 and 1905.

Part I: Precedents

An Eastern Question: Nineteenth Century Britain and the Holy Land

Anglo-Jewry's greatest contribution to the Zionist pantheon, Sir Moses Montefiore, was also its first. Between his initial trip to the Holy Land in the 1820s and his last, at the age of ninety, in 1874, Montefiore did much to establish Anglo-Jewry's position as a leading supporter of Palestine's small and impoverished Jewish community (memorably described by one historian as the 'oriental annexe of the Diaspora's conscience'¹⁶). His visits to Palestine and ongoing efforts to improve the living conditions and economic prospects of Jerusalem's Jewish residents—including the construction of the first homes

¹⁵ The phrase comes from the title of a lecture given by Wolf in 1904. 'The Zionist Peril', *Jewish Quarterly Review* 17 (10/04), 1-25.

¹⁶ S. Schama, *Two Rothschilds in the Land of Israel* (London, 1978), 57.

outside the city's medieval walls (the neighbourhood is known today as Y'min Moshe, literally, the 'right hand of Moses') and the planting of orange groves—earned widespread accolades.¹⁷ Yet classifying Montefiore as a proto-Zionist misinterprets what was a purely religious and sentimental attachment to the Land of Israel.¹⁸ At no time did Montefiore come to believe that Jewish life in Europe was doomed to failure, nor did he advocate political recognition either of Jewish nationality or of Jewish sovereignty in Palestine.

Although Montefiore's devotion to Palestine was exceptional, both his interest in what might be called Jewish foreign policy and his style of leadership (a mix of personal diplomacy and charity) were shared by his Anglo-Jewish contemporaries. Establishment efforts to protect poor and oppressed Jews, particularly in Eastern Europe and the Orient, spanned crisis intervention—most famously during the Damascus blood libel (1840) and Mortara Affair (1858), both of which occurred during Montefiore's tenure as leader of the Board of Deputies—and ongoing financial support to local, Western oriented educational and welfare institutions.¹⁹ (The Ottoman *millet* system, which accorded civic autonomy to minorities, combined with the paucity of state provision, facilitated Western institutional intervention.) Frequently, such initiatives ran parallel to, or in collaboration with, those of the French and German Jewish communities. In fact, the model for the Anglo-Jewish Association (AJA),

¹⁷ Those similarly inspired included the East End furrier Zerah Barnett, patron of the Petah Tikvah settlement, and Abraham Benisch, who promoted economic modernisation in his role as editor of the *Jewish Chronicle* (1854-69, 1875-8). N. Bentwich and J.M. Shaftesley, 'Forerunners of Zionism in the Victorian Era', in Shaftesley, (ed.), *Remember the Days: Essays on Anglo-Jewish History Presented to Cecil Roth*, (London, 1966), 207-39. Endelman, *Jews of Britain*, 187. On Montefiore see A. Green, 'Rethinking Sir Moses Montefiore: Religion, Nationhood, and International Philanthropy in the Nineteenth Century', *American Historical Review* 110:3 (2005), 631-58; V.D. Lipman, (ed.), *Sir Moses Montefiore: A Symposium* (Oxford, 1982); S. Lipman and id., (eds.), *The Century of Moses Montefiore* (Oxford, 1988).

¹⁸ Jacob Katz has argued that the term 'forerunners of Zionism' is used too freely. While excluding figures like Montefiore from this category, Katz does identify several mid nineteenth century thinkers—Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer, Moses Hess and Rabbi Yehudah Alkalai—who conceived of Jewish national revival in a new way. Without rejecting emancipation or the possibility of integration, they sought the creation of a model Jewish nation in Palestine as a prerequisite for either messianic redemption (Kalischer) or spiritual revival (Hess). 'Forerunners of Zionism', in Reinhartz and A. Shapira, (eds.), *Essential Papers on Zionism* (London, 1996), 33-45. See also A. Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader* (Garden City, 1959), Part I; S. Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* (London, 1981), 36-55.

¹⁹ J. Frankel, *The Damascus Affair: 'Ritual Murder', Politics, and the Jews in 1840* (Cambridge, 1997), 1-13, 331-98; D.I. Kertzer, *The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara* (New York, 1998).

established in 1871, was the Alliance Israélite Universelle.²⁰ However, although the older organisation had a much denser network of activity within other parts of the Levant,²¹ it can be argued that British Jews were the most strongly committed to support of the old *Yishuv* (the pre-Zionist population of Palestine).²²

The environment of Victorian Britain was uniquely conducive to such activities. Protestant millenarians, who believed that the Second Coming would be signalled by the restoration (and conversion) of the Jews, sponsored pilgrimages, supported missionary activities in Palestine and encouraged the establishment of a joint Prussian-British bishopric there in 1841.²³ Many whose religious zeal was less acute also harboured emotional ties to the Land and sympathy for its one-time inhabitants. For others, the primary interest was intellectual; amateurs and professionals alike were attracted to the region's rich history, striking topography and wealth of antiquarian relics. By mid century, this potent combination of curiosity and attachment fuelled a steady stream of Holy Land tourists. The output of these travellers, artists, novelists and archaeologists (whose ranks included anti-slavery activist James Silk Buckingham, *Vanity Fair* author William Makepeace Thackeray, William Holman Hunt and David

²⁰ Prior to 1871 Anglo-Jewry contributed funds for overseas philanthropy directly to the Alliance. Although the ostensible reason for terminating that agreement was the disruption caused by the Franco-Prussian War, several other factors were at work. In addition to growing desire to bring control over Anglo-Jewish foreign policy back to London, the foundation of the AJA also provided a mechanism for Britain's leading Reform Jews, still shut out of the Board of Deputies, to assert institutional power. In the end, however, the AJA was neither a true rival to the Board nor was it dominated by the non-Orthodox. Following the Balkan crisis in the late 1870s, the two organizations achieved a *modus vivendi* through the formation of a Conjoint Foreign Committee. See Z. Szajkowski, 'Conflicts in the Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Founding of the Anglo-Jewish Association, the Vienna Allianz and the Hilfsverein', *JSS* 19:1-2 (1957), 29-50.

²¹ While the activities of each organisation focused on territories within the political or cultural spheres of their respective governments (e.g., Morocco and Tunisia for France, India for Britain) the AIU and AJA did co-operate, most notably in the establishment of the Evelina de Rothschild School in Jerusalem. K. Grunwald, 'Jewish Schools under Foreign Flags in Ottoman Palestine', in M. Ma'oz, (ed.), *Studies on Palestine during the Ottoman Period* (Jerusalem, 1975), 164-74; N. Bentwich, *The Evelina de Rothschild School, Jerusalem, 1864-1964* (London, 1964). On an instance of Anglo-Jewish intervention in French territory see M.M. Laskier, *The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Jewish Communities of Morocco, 1862-1962* (Albany, 1983), 48-50.

²² Anglo-Jewish financial contributions were paltry in comparison with the funds allocated for Palestine colonisation work by the Parisian Edmond de Rothschild. However, Rothschild's work should be viewed as a personal project, not as an expression of typical Franco-Jewish views. Schama, *Two Rothschilds*, 13-136.

²³ M. Vereté, 'The Restoration of the Jews in English Protestant Thought, 1790-1840', *Middle Eastern Studies* 8:1 (1972), 3-50; L. Kochan, 'Jewish Restoration to Zion: Christian Attitudes in Britain in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries—Comparative Approach', in M. Davis, (ed.), *With Eyes Towards Zion: Themes and Sources in the Archives of the United States, Great Britain, Turkey and Israel*, ii. (New York, 1986), 102-121; S. M. Jack, 'No Heavenly Jerusalem: The Anglican Bishopric, 1841-83', *Journal of Religious History* 19:2 (1995), 181-203.

Wilkie, the painters, Orientalists Edward Palmer and Tyrwhitt Drake and the photographer Francis Firth) diffused interest in Palestine to an even broader audience back home.²⁴

If Zion had captured the attention of the British public, it had also begun to exercise a similar effect on official minds. Government officials were hardly immune to the play of sentiment. Indeed, while strategic factors were a substantial influence, no policy decision regarding Palestine was ever made on a purely pragmatic basis.²⁵ Both 'Bible and Sword', to borrow Barbara Tuchman's apposite phrase, played their parts. As early as the Napoleonic campaigns in Egypt and southern Syria, fear for the jewel of the Crown, India, directed policy-makers' focus towards the Eastern Mediterranean. With the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, acquisition of majority shares in the Canal Company six years later and the 1882 occupation of Egypt, emotion and *realpolitik* began to converge. Even while Britain worked to keep the Ottoman Empire intact, interest in Palestine's prospects also grew.²⁶

Not That Sort of Zionist: The English Chovevei Zion Association

During this same period, more direct precursors to political Zionism were beginning to take shape in Eastern Europe. In the wake of the pogroms of 1881-1882, groups of Russian Jews formed Lovers of Zion (*Chovevei Zion*) societies to raise funds for agricultural settlements in Palestine. The movement of people and ideas westward

²⁴ For a general overview see B. Tuchman, *Bible and Sword: England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour* (New York, 1956), particularly 158-223, 239-80; E. Bar-Yosef, *The Holy Land in English Culture 1799-1917: Palestine and the Question of Orientalism* (Oxford, 2005). See also Y. Ben-Arieh, *The Rediscovery of the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* (Jerusalem, 1979); J. Shadur, *Young Travellers to Jerusalem: An Annotated Study of American and English Juvenile Literature on the Holy Land, 1785-1940* (Ramat Gan, 1999); C.G. Smith, 'The Geography and Natural Resources of Palestine as Seen by British Writers in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries', in *Studies on Palestine*, 87-100. Two examples of contemporary travellers' accounts can be found in M. Mott, *Stones of Palestine* (London, 1865) and C.W. Wilson, (ed.), *Picturesque Palestine, Sinai and Egypt*, 4 vols. (London, 1880).

²⁵ See for example I. Friedman, 'Lord Palmerston and the Protection of the Jews in Palestine 1839-1851', *JSS* 30:1 (1968), 23-41.

²⁶ M.S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923: A Study in International Relations* (London, 1966), 149-260; A. Cunningham, *Eastern Questions in the Nineteenth Century: Collected Essays*, ii ed. E. Ingram (London, 1993), 226-46.

during that decade led to the founding of several short-lived groups in London, Wales and Northern England; however, formal establishment of a British Chovevei Zion Association did not take place until 1890. Over the following two years, the society established headquarters, held its first mass meetings and inaugurated local branches in locations including the West End, Edinburgh, Birmingham, Glasgow, Manchester, Dublin and Limerick.²⁷

Few if any other Anglo-Jewish organisations boasted such broad class participation. The norm at this time was a high degree of segmentation, with groups either explicitly or effectively serving various segments of the elite (including the aforementioned Maccabaeans—limited to professional men—and the Anglo-Jewish Association, a bastion of the Cousinhood), establishment-dominated groups operating on behalf of the immigrant population (notably the Jewish Board of Guardians, the youth clubs and the Jewish Lads' Brigade) or self-governing immigrant groups like the friendly societies. Although the CZA's rank and file—including those who would later embrace Herzl's message—was composed largely of immigrants and members of the emerging middle classes, the organisation's philanthropic orientation also attracted the patronage and leadership of some of Anglo-Jewry's most prominent names. The first meeting alone drew Sir Samuel Montagu (later Lord Swaythling), Lord Nathan Rothschild, Sir Benjamin Louis Cohen, Rabbi Hermann Adler (soon to succeed his father as Chief Rabbi), the Haḥam Moses Gaster and Simeon Singer, reverend to the wealthiest of establishment congregations, the New West End Synagogue.

The *curricula vitae* of those men are suggestive of their motivations for involvement in the CZA. Montagu was head of the Federation of Synagogues and the Jewish Working

²⁷ *Palestina: The Chovevei Zion Quarterly* 1 (1892). *Palestina's* first eight issues detailed the organisation's early history.

Men's Club and Liberal MP for Whitechapel, the parliamentary constituency with the largest number of immigrant Jews. Although Rothschild served as lay leader of the United Synagogue, the influence of this first Jewish peer was hardly restricted to that domain. And Cohen, a Conservative MP for East Islington, led the Jewish Board of Guardians, the largest Jewish organisation concerned with social welfare. Though their later opposition to political Zionism (with the exception of Gaster) would cause them to be labelled as 'assimilationists', the CZA's leaders demonstrated deep commitment to Judaism, both privately and publicly. Their roles were therefore, at least in part, simply the formalised expression of an age-old spiritual and historic attachment to Zion.

By the 1890s another more utilitarian factor was also at work. As my previous chapters have suggested, the late Victorian Jewish communal agenda was influenced profoundly by the political and institutional ramifications of Eastern European immigration. Accordingly, just as members of the elite sought to control immigrants' educational provision (quite successfully) and their religious practice (rather less so), they appear to have identified similar opportunities for influence within the CZA. Participation enabled establishment leaders to infuse the movement with their own Anglicising agenda. As expressed in the words of Colonel Goldsmid, the Lads' Brigade founder who would also serve as the CZA's President from the mid 1890s onward, their motto was to be loyalty, 'loyalty to their race, loyalty to the country in which they lived'.²⁸ Secondly, the very idea of colonising Palestine—on any scale—raised the potential for radical dangers. It was only prudent that it be guided—and directed—by steady hands.

²⁸ *Palestina* 1 (1892), 11. The movement's organisational structure also bore Goldsmid's martial imprint, with chapters referred to as tents, leaders as commanders, the central office as headquarters and the national president as chief.

A draft copy of a CZA fundraising letter, written in the early 1890s, outlined the current situation. Since

the tendency of Polish and Russian Jews towards the Holy Land was great, and their anxiety to return there overwhelming ...unless some active steps were taken by men able to influence the masses, a wholesale rush to Palestine would probably ensue, with the inevitable result of frightful distress, and, possibly, famine and disease among the immigrants.

Attempts to halt Jewish *aliyah* (migration to Palestine) were both impolitic and unrealistic.²⁹ Nevertheless, the document continued, it was absurd to entertain the idea that the CZA could aspire to find homes in Palestine for more than a '*portion of the many Jews driven out of Russia*'. Ill-advised settlement would not only 'injure the Jewish cause all over the world', but 'prove a frightful source of expense to all charitable persons in the West'. The British Committee of the Chovevei Zion was therefore determined to moderate the numbers who might otherwise migrate to Palestine.³⁰ Moreover, the organisation would not discourage colonisation of other destinations. (This presumably referred to the Argentinian and North American schemes operated by the Baron de Hirsch.³¹)

The letter concluded with a request for funds from 'those who wish to benefit the persecuted Russian Jews', particularly individuals 'able to head the list with substantial sums'. The inclusion of this standard platitude is hardly surprising. However, copy marks on the document indicate that its original author also considered another, more controversial, rationale for assistance. Support for the CZA, this sentence stated,

²⁹ On settlement in Palestine between 1882 and 1904 see S. Ettinger and I. Bartal, 'The First Aliyah: Ideological Roots and Practical Accomplishments', in *Essential Papers*, 63-93.

³⁰ Emphasis in original. Chovevei Zion Papers, (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem): A2/9. This appears to have been written between 1891 and 1893.

³¹ T. Norman, *An Outstretched Arm: a History of the Jewish Colonization Association* (London, 1985), particularly 70-90. A representative sample of the ICA's work during this decade is available in *Report of the Central Administration to the Council of Administration, for the Year 1898* (London, 1899). The Baron, who was descended from a Bavarian banking family and earned his own fortune from railways and race horses, was part of the social circle surrounding the future King Edward VII. British signatories to the organisation's 1891 establishment included Lord Rothschild, Sir Julian Goldsmid, Sir Benjamin Cohen, Sir Ernest Cassel and F.D. Mocatta. Following Hirsch's death in 1896, shares were divided amongst the Alliance, the AJA and the Jewish communities of Brussels, Berlin and Frankfurt. On Hirsch see Grunwald, *Türkenhirsch: A Study of Baron Maurice de Hirsch, Entrepreneur and Philanthropist* (Jerusalem, 1966), particularly 71-85.

would benefit the whole of England 'by relieving this Country of a large influx of an alien population'.

Although aware that Palestine's current facilities were limited, CZA leaders were loathe to encourage further migration to already popular Western destinations. Yet even if Palestine became available for mass settlement, the vast majority of Eastern European immigrants—notwithstanding their apparent great devotion to the Holy Land—had thus far displayed little desire to actually settle there. Thus in the realm of practical politics, the CZA's headquarters had little to offer. The leadership's muddled thinking was itself a product of established Anglo-Jewry's competing motivations: a pre-nationalist love of Zion, a genuine desire to help Russian Jews and a wish to limit the numbers arriving in England.

Some of these agendas also manifested themselves in the London office's ambitious plans for managing Palestine colonisation, including the establishment of an English agricultural college designed to provide future pioneers with vital practical training. It was also suggested that immigrant selection be controlled by appointing officers in key port cities and hiring dedicated steamer transport. The intended effect of these measures was to 'check the invasion of the Colony by persons of whom there are, unfortunately, many who cannot, or will not, work and desire only to live on charity.'³² Finally, some proposed the receipt of formal permission from the Ottoman Sultan for small-scale land purchase and the development of economic infrastructure.³³

None of these grander proposals ever approached realisation. The audacious early idea of a *firman*—though intended as a means for colonists to gain some basic legal

³² CZA Papers, (ZA): A2/9.

³³ *Palestina* 12 (1895), 5-6.

safeguards, not as a first step towards Jewish autonomy—would undoubtedly have been disavowed in the later haste to distinguish the CZA from its more radical Zionist competitors. However, during the 1890s the CZA did make a tangible contribution to Palestine colonisation through joint efforts to found and install freehold settlers at Maḥanaiim, Rehovot, Catinie and B'nei Y'hudah.³⁴ Standards, while likely not enforced, were nonetheless set out with enthusiasm; one report listed thirty-one criteria governing the choice of prospective colonists and the settlement's financial operations.³⁵ In their desire to make the new colonies self-supporting within a reasonable period of time (this goal had not been realised when control was relinquished in 1902), the CZA's leaders wished to distinguish themselves from the traditional practice of *ḥalukah* (charity)—which had almost single-handedly sustained the old *Yishuv*—and from Edmond de Rothschild's agricultural colonies, which failed to make a profit despite receiving unlimited funding from their patron.³⁶

Even before the founding of the international Zionist movement, therefore, the CZA's establishment wing argued for the value of practical work, conducted with fiscal sobriety.³⁷ They also warned against the perils of emotional rhetoric. Whether coming from outside the organisation—in the case of non-Jewish advocates for 'restoration'—or from the CZA's more militant East End tents, inflammatory language risked obscuring the organisation's efforts in Palestine.³⁸ CZA publications (presumably authored or edited by the national leadership) did on occasion contain sympathetic references to the national idea. However, these expressed an ideal of Jewish collective identity

³⁴ CZA Papers, (ZA): A2/9. *Palestina* 17 (1896), 1-2, 19 (1897), 3-12.

³⁵ CZA Papers, (ZA): A2/9. See also 2/8/96 Questions for Jaffa representative.

³⁶ Schama, *Two Rothschilds*, 13-136. Rothschild transferred administration of his colonies to the Jewish Colonisation Association (ICA) in 1899. The Anglo-Jewish Association, a substantial shareholder, opposed this move, arguing that resurrection of the beleaguered settlements was unlikely, and that the current prohibition against the permanent settlement of Russian Jews in Palestine indicated that the ICA's energies should be redirected. AJA leaders also feared that the transfer would increase the Zionist movement's credibility. See *JW* 12/1/00 248-9; *JC* 12/1/00 Ed 15-6, 12/1/00 12-3, 19/1/00 Letter 7.

³⁷ 2/94 Letter draft, CZA Papers, (ZA):A2/9.

³⁸ On the former see 1/12/91 Letter to Elim D'Avigdor, CZA Papers, (ZA): A2/138/1. On the latter see 11/8/96, 4/3/97 B'nei Zion letters, CZA Papers, (ZA): A2/59.

based upon shared values, religious ties and ancient history. By contrast, the Zionists—like other national revivalists of their time—also believed that the nation should constitute a distinct political and territorial unit.

Intriguingly, however, there may have been one dimension in which even West End restraint failed to keep sentiment in hand. At an 1893 banquet convened by British backers of the Syrian-Ottoman railway project, Elim D'Avigdor, the current CZA President, was asked to respond to a toast. Opening with a quote of Laurence Oliphant (former MP, Christian mystic and 'philosemitic fantasist'³⁹), D'Avigdor then noted the progress that had occurred in Palestine over the last decade—when the first settlements of the new *Yishuv* were founded—as the result of 'cultivation by an intelligent and industrious population'.⁴⁰ 'In a country such as this', he continued, it was inconceivable that the new Middle Eastern railway—designed to link the Palestinian port of Acre with Damascus—could not be made to pay. B.I. Belisha, the Vice-Chief, echoed this theme in his remarks. Identifying himself as a representative of the Empire's second city, Birmingham, he acknowledged that action was needed in order for Britain to maintain its economic supremacy. The railway was a step in the right direction, as it would cheapen transport and open a new outlet for English commerce. Moreover, Belisha asserted, it would be helpful for the 'outcast' amongst the people of Israel.

While neither D'Avigdor nor Belisha were advocates of Jewish autonomy, their speeches suggest they grasped the prospect of a mutually beneficial relationship developing between Britain and a renewed Jewish population in Palestine. Falling short of advocating regime change, there nonetheless seems little question both regarded an

³⁹ Schama, *Two Rothschilds*, 54.

⁴⁰ *Palestina* 2 (1893), 7.

enhanced British foothold in the Eastern Mediterranean as benefiting imperial and Jewish interests alike. Not unimportantly, the prospect of a deepening alliance also opened up a new sphere in which elite Anglo-Jewry could operate. As imperial Britons, lovers of Zion and advocates for oppressed Jews everywhere, they would be natural intermediaries in any future negotiations.

Herzl's Arrival and the CZA's Demise

Theodor Herzl's initial visit to London in November 1895 provided little indication of the storm which soon would follow. Lacking either contacts or followers, he was—far from being regarded as the prophet of the Jews—treated like an entertaining, if somewhat eccentric, dinner guest.⁴¹ The only public engagement Herzl secured during his week in the British capital was at a Maccabaeans banquet, where he dined with the society and delivered a speech in French and German. (He described the culinary offerings as skimpy, but the welcome as warm. Later reports would reveal the attendance was rather sparse as well.) His liaison, Israel Zangwill, was more successful in procuring invitations to private homes. The Zionist leader dined with the Chief Rabbi, introducing his plan over 'a light claret produced in a Zion colony'.⁴² Simeon Singer hosted him for Sunday tea, and he also lunched with Samuel Montagu.⁴³

Zangwill's introductions may have opened some doors. Yet even on subsequent visits, the Anglo-Jewish establishment—which Herzl had aimed to co-opt—remained intrigued but unmoved. (For instance, a second appearance at the Maccabaeans again failed to

⁴¹ S. Beller, *Herzl* (London, 1991); G. Shimoni, (ed.), *Theodor Herzl: Visionary of the Jewish State* (Jerusalem, 1999); R. Robertson and E. Timms, (eds.), *Austrian Studies*, viii: *Theodor Herzl and the Origins of Zionism* (Edinburgh, 1997); T. Herzl, *Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl* (ed. R. Patai, tr. H. Zohn), 5 vols. (New York, 1960). See also O.K. Rabinowicz, 'Herzl and England', *Jewish Monthly* 5:8 (1951), 448-61; id., 'Herzl and England II', *JM* 5:9 (1951), 532-42; Fraenkel, 'Herzl and the Rothschild Family', *Herzl Year Book* 3 (New York, 1960), 217-36.

⁴² Herzl, *Diaries* i 23/11/95 (279); See also Adler's account of the meeting. *JC* 21/7/99 10.

⁴³ Herzl's diary entry on Montagu (24/11/95) mentioned the MP's interest in a 'Greater Palestine'. Although there is no evidence as to what Montagu actually meant by this phrase—or indeed any independent verification that he actually referred to it at all—it is perhaps worth speculating whether it was conceived in an imperial, as well as Jewish, context.

yield an organisational endorsement. However the group did appoint a study commission to consider the Zionist programme in more detail.⁴⁴) The only apparent enthusiast amongst the British Jews Herzl encountered was Colonel Albert Goldsmid. But Goldsmid's support for political Zionism would prove tenuous at best, as the conflicts within the CZA soon revealed.⁴⁵ Singer, who despite ideological differences maintained a correspondence with the Zionist leader, attributed the disappointing response to two main factors: the lack of domestic anti-Semitism and the enhanced patriotic sentiment of English Jews. A further letter stressed that political Zionism was believed to be incompatible with Anglo-Jewish interests. 'As it is being generally urged—England is the Paradise of the Jew—Why help to lose it or be driven from it?'⁴⁶

Snubbed in his attempts to infiltrate London's Jewish elite, Herzl made good on his threat to 'move the lower world' if he could not 'bend the powers above'.⁴⁷ On 13 July 1896, several days before the completion of his second London trip, he headlined a meeting at the Jewish Working Mens' Club. There is little reason to doubt that his speech was greeted with genuine enthusiasm.⁴⁸ In contrast to his audience at the Maccabaeans, those who attended Herzl's East End gathering were far more likely to identify with his assessment of anti-Semitism and appeals to Jewry's national character. But this short-term excitement did not translate into sustained commitment on the part of Britain's immigrant Jews. Although this population produced some of the most fervent Zionist activists, multiple factors—including involvement in anti-nationalist

⁴⁴ Herzl, *Diaries* i 7/7/96 (409-10), 12/7/96 (416). Somewhat remarkably, the group took up Herbert Bentwich's suggestion of an investigatory 'Pilgrimage' to Palestine. Despite claims that the 1897 trip would not advance 'any specifically religious, much less any political, purpose', recruitment failed to match expectations. Many of the most prominent members—Wolf, Israel Abrahams and Goldsmid, among others—declined to participate. See Herbert Bentwich Papers, (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem): A100/21; CZA Papers, (ZA): A2/28; M. Bentwich and N. Bentwich, *Herbert Bentwich: The Pilgrim Father* (Jerusalem, 1940), 110-17.

⁴⁵ Herzl, *Diaries* i 25/11/95 (281-2), 19/7/96 (427). Although he expressed support for Herzl's programme during this initial meeting, Goldsmid soon wrote to Edmond de Rothschild saying that he regarded the undertaking as 'downright dangerous'.

⁴⁶ 5/2/96, 19/2/96, Herzl Manuscripts, (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem): HVIII/739. See also *Diaries* i 27/1/96 (297).

⁴⁷ Herzl, *Diaries* i 8/7/96 (411-2). On Herzl's preference for an elite-dominated movement see i 26/5/96 (356-7), 8/7/96 (411-2), 11/7/96 (414-15), 15/7/96 (422).

⁴⁸ See for example the account of Paul Goodman in *Zionism in England, 1899-1949* (London, 1949), 14-15.

radical movements, participation in ultra-Orthodox religion and preoccupation with basic economic concerns—militated against more widespread affiliation.⁴⁹ The sensation caused by the meeting has 'rather simmered down now', Zangwill wrote to his cousin and friend M.D. Eder just some six weeks later.⁵⁰ If Herzl had indeed invaded England, he had done so in a rowboat rather than a warship.

* * *

These grassroots failures notwithstanding, Herzl's (mostly middle class) British adherents continued to work to establish a local power base for political Zionism.⁵¹ Since some leading these efforts were active in East End affiliated branches of the CZA, the organisation was a natural locus for change. Yet with the exception of Herbert Bentwich, a former commander of the radical B'nai Zion tent, now one of the national Vice-Chiefs, the CZA's central leadership opposed both the aims and methods of 'Herzliism'.⁵² In the absence of coherent competition, the CZA had been able to encompass—if not entirely comfortably—competing views. By 1896, however, the broad church was threatened with schism.

⁴⁹ A more extensive consideration of the political, religious and economic profile of Jewish immigrants to Britain is outside the scope of this chapter. See S.A. Cohen, "How Shall We Sing", 101-122; Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews*, 329-52.

⁵⁰ Included in Roth, (ed.), *Anglo-Jewish Letters, 1158-1917* (London, 1938), 381. A leading social reformer, medical doctor and psychoanalyst, (Montagu) David Eder was a member of the ITO and, following World War I, head of the Zionist Executive in Jerusalem.

⁵¹ Anglo-Jewish communal conflicts over Zionism were often not limited to ideological differences. In particular, it has become conventional to attribute bourgeois disaffection with the autocratic leadership of organisations like the Board of Deputies—rather than passion for Zionism *per se*—as the motivation for challenges from below. But while this interpretation helps to explain the debate over the AJA's position on East Africa in 1905 and the backlash following establishment attempts to undermine the Balfour Declaration (see Chapter 4 and S.A. Cohen, 'Conquest?', 157-84), it does not illuminate the ideological division within the CZA. The future founders of English Zionism—like Herbert Bentwich—were on the whole prosperous, second generation professionals and commercial figures largely excluded from elite communal leadership. However, the same description would also appear to fit figures like Joseph Prag, a successful manufacturer who became Vice-Chief of the Headquarters, and *Palestina* editor Dr. Samuel Hirsch, a tutor at Jews' College, both of whom helped to shape the CZA's moderate stance. On the basis of the available evidence, therefore, it does not appear that we can ascribe more instrumental motives to these figures' respective stances on political Zionism.

⁵² They did not, however, find themselves in total agreement with out-and-out anti-Zionists such as Claude Montefiore. *Palestina* 15 (1896), 12-15.

Despite grassroots pressure from within, and the challenge from outside, the CZA's leadership (particularly Goldsmid and Samuel Hirsch) was steadfast in resisting political Zionism's more radical stance.⁵³ The organisation therefore continued to subscribe to a programme of colonising Zionism—which detractors referred to with some disdain as 'infiltration'.⁵⁴ However, certain decisions may have yielded unintended consequences. Though designed to avoid an internal rift, Goldsmid's refusal to chair Herzl's public East End meetings or to attend the first international Zionist Congress (held in Basle in 1897) ensured that the CZA was singled out for attack.⁵⁵ For their part, the political Zionists' ongoing attacks on colonisation (many within the movement opposed piecemeal settlement prior to political recognition) left little room for rapprochement.

There would be no middle ground. At a 'Conference of English Zionists' held at the Clerkenwell Town Hall on 6 March 1898, the assembled delegates failed to reach consensus on the CZA's future course.⁵⁶ Less than a year later, the English Zionist Federation (EZF) was founded as a direct affiliate of the World Zionist Organisation (ZO) based in Vienna. Local CZA societies sympathetic to Herzl joined the new group; those which were not wound up operations. Lacking funds and members, the headquarters would follow the latter course in 1902.⁵⁷

The CZA's collapse was not inevitable. Rigidity on both sides, clashing egos and a lack of formal support from Anglo-Jewry's communal infrastructure (for example, leading organisations, including the AJA, declined to participate in the Clerkenwell Conference) all played a part. Moreover, the issues dividing the two parties were both far fewer and—by all measures—less insuperable than those which would later separate the

⁵³ See for example *Palestina* 15 (1896), 1-7.

⁵⁴ Herzl, *Diaries* i 14/7/96 (419-420).

⁵⁵ *Palestina* 20 (1897), 1-7, 21 (1897), 1-2.

⁵⁶ *Zionist Conference Held at the Clerkenwell Town Hall on 6 March 1898: Report of Proceedings* (London, 1898).

⁵⁷ 2/12/02 Letter announcing CZA termination, CZA Papers, (ZA): A2/9. CZA organisations outside of England suffered a similar fate.

Zionist and anti-Zionist camps. Yet the CZA was trying to stand still in the middle of an exceptionally strong current. Overcoming its inauspicious beginnings, the Jewish national movement was gaining followers and attention. Almost concurrently, a sophisticated critique of its aims and methods was also taking shape. The need to define these respective positions and to assemble supporters—both within and outside the Jewish community—now assumed priority.

The Anti-Zionist Position Explained

Most members of the Anglo-Jewish establishment would surely have agreed with Frederic Mocatta's assertion that the Zionist project was 'utterly impracticable' and 'highly undesirable'.⁵⁸ Accordingly, the case they mounted against it incorporated both pragmatic and ideological critiques. However, the key disagreement between those referred to as Herzlists and their Anglo-Jewish opponents was one of principle. This was at its core a debate over the nature—and the future—of Jewish life in Europe, with two competing narratives of modern Jewish history at work.

While its schemes were dismissed out-of-hand as chimerical, it would take little more than a generation for some of Zionism's most ambitious plans to be realised. By the 1920s, with the support of the British government, Palestine was once again the site for a Jewish national home. Yet the combination of circumstances which brought about the Mandate could hardly have been anticipated. Consequently, it is unsurprising that late Victorian and early Edwardian Anglo-Jewish leaders threw up logistical roadblocks. To them, fulfilment of the Zionist programme appeared about as probable as the introduction of the aeroplane or the outbreak of two world wars.

⁵⁸ 6/9/96, LW Papers, (ZA): A77/1.

The establishment's first critique concerned the political Zionists' apparent political *naïveté*; no European power would be willing to back such a plan. Britain, France, Germany and Russia each had incentive for wishing to strengthen their Levantine positions. However, there was a long standing consensus linking maintenance of a regional balance of power to a policy of keeping the Ottoman Empire (notwithstanding its already disbursed Balkan holdings) more or less intact. In the case of Palestine, the potential for strategic gain did not outweigh the risks of destabilising this equilibrium.⁵⁹ It was also unlikely that European leaders would engage in any collective effort in Palestine. While discontent with Muslim hegemony over the Holy Land was universally shared, sectarian loyalties ran high as well.⁶⁰

Anglo-Jewish opponents also drew attention to the impact of Zionist diplomacy on Palestine's Jewish residents. If a European power expressed interest in the Jewish national project, the implied threat to Ottoman sovereignty could have disastrous consequences. According to Joseph Prag—a national leader in the CZA—the Zionists' public agitations had already jeopardised existing colonies. 'Everything was going swimmingly until the arrival of Dr. Herzl on the scene,' Prag claimed.⁶¹ Now, far from issuing a territorial concession, the Porte was placing further restrictions on Jewish immigration. This point was particularly important, as many of those who now opposed political Zionism did support (more or less actively) the practical work being undertaken in Palestine by groups like the CZA. 'Whatever one may think of political

⁵⁹ The status quo in the Eastern Mediterranean was threatened on two occasions: by the Fashoda Affair (1898), an Anglo-French scuffle on the Upper Nile, and by German efforts to gain a North African foothold. (This prompted the Morocco Crises of 1905 and 1911.) Two distinctions might be made, however. Firstly, these intra-European conflicts did not impinge directly on Ottoman territorial integrity. Secondly, the strenuous diplomacy employed to settle these disputes (including the intervention of U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt at the 1905 Algeciras Conference) suggests that the dangers of realignment in such a sensitive area were well understood. Rich, *Power Diplomacy*, 274-7, 396-404, 418-20.

⁶⁰ Although the suffering of Armenian Christians disturbed the British public, the issue was not as emotive as the Bulgarian atrocities of the late 1870s. On European disputes regarding the administration of Palestine's sacred sites see JC 24/8/00 Ed 10-11; C. Wardi, 'The Question of the Holy Places in Ottoman Times', in *Studies on Palestine*, 385-93.

⁶¹ JC 13/4/00 Letter 8-9. See also JC 16/3/00 8, 27/7/00 21.

Zionism,' it was argued, 'colonising Zionism has the sympathies of all Jews alike.'⁶² By offering direct—and timely—aid to the struggling Palestinian settlements, these so-called anti-Zionists contended that they were doing more to help their fellow Jews than the 'dreamers and enthusiasts who have hurried after will-o'-the-wisps'.⁶³ Even though the label of anti-Zionist would stick, Herzl's Anglo-Jewish antagonists would continue to claim that they were in fact the true Zionists.

Herzl's Anglo-Jewish opponents also remained convinced that complete reliance on Palestine as the salvation for Eastern European Jews was unrealistic. (That it had nothing to offer Western and Central European Jews—who experienced only a 'modified form of political ostracism'—was so obvious that it rarely merited mention.⁶⁴) 'The attempt to expatriate the millions of wretched Russians and Roumanians, and transplant them in Palestine, was', the Reverend G.J. Emmanuel declared, 'utterly impossible of attainment'.⁶⁵ An adverse climate and poor soil—both of which hampered economic potential—and Turkish objections to large-scale settlement necessitated the pursuit of other, more promising, opportunities. As the Baron de Hirsch's ICA work had shown, there were areas of the Americas, particularly Canada, which required agricultural labourers and which would welcome a larger Jewish presence.⁶⁶

Even if these practical concerns had been met with satisfactory responses, more fundamental obstacles undercut any possibility of Anglo-Jewish elite recruitment to the Zionist camp. In its assertion of Jewish nationhood, its reformulation of Palestine as a

⁶² *JC* 5/5/99 18. During the editorships of Asher Myers (1878-1902) and Israel Davis (1902-1907) the *JC* was a forthright opponent of Jewish nationalism. Despite this, it provided extensive coverage of Zionist developments—printing a weekly column, hiring a Vienna correspondent, sending a reporter to cover all the Zionist Congresses and publishing letters and signed articles presenting a range of viewpoints. Over the same period, the *Jewish World* was altogether quieter, although its editorial stance was also anti-Zionist. Fraenkel, 'The *Jewish Chronicle* and the Launching of Political Zionism', *HYB* 2 (New York, 1959), 217-27; D. Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry, 1841-1991* (Cambridge, 1994), 82-7.

⁶³ *JC* 14/4/99 17.

⁶⁴ *JC* 16/8/01 Ed 13.

⁶⁵ *JC* 14/7/99 24.

⁶⁶ *JC* 26/5/99 22, 6/7/00 Ed 18.

political destination—rather than a spiritual or cultural homeland—and its diagnosis of perpetual European anti-Semitism, political Zionism appeared to make a mockery of the establishment's most cherished ideals. As a result, Anglo-Jewry's opposition to Jewish nationalism would be as much a defence of an existing value system as an attack on Zionism's principles and territorial aims. The following section will consider briefly the three main tenets of British-Jewish anti-Zionism: theological objections to a temporal Jewish homeland, opposition to the idea of Jewish nationhood and philosophical commitment to European liberalism.

Palestine Is Not the Answer

The Anglo-Jewish establishment had over the course of three generations developed a reasonable record as lovers of Zion. But its members protested vigorously at Zionist attempts to hijack what they saw as strictly a spiritual and religious ideal. 'We feel as strongly as possible', the *JC* protested, 'that the present attempt to hasten the days of the Messiah by means of a joint stock company is as ill-omened as it is absurd.'⁶⁷ A North London respondent agreed. It was best to 'leave the resettlement of Palestine to the Almighty, who works without the aid or assistance of ...limited liability companies.'⁶⁸

This theological critique of Zionism cannot be categorised simply as religious backlash against a godless political movement. The Zionist programme was not explicitly secular, and while many of its most prominent spokespersons were wholly non-observant (Herzl was a self-declared atheist, and Max Nordau, his successor as head of the ZO, intermarried), the movement's adherents—both in and out of Britain—defied

⁶⁷ 4/4/99 Ed 17.

⁶⁸ 3/3/99 Letter 8.

easy categorisation along those lines.⁶⁹ The ranks of British Jewish anti-Zionists also spanned a wide assortment of religious views and practices. Within the fractious Anglo-Jewish religious establishment, where Liberal and Orthodox leaders were not known to agree on much, there was nonetheless a surprising degree of alignment on the correct place of Palestine in Jewish religious thought.

Proponents of what was known as 'advanced Reform'—including Claude Montefiore, Israel Abrahams and Philip and Laurie Magnus—rejected entirely the idea that restoration was the apotheosis of Jewish history.⁷⁰ They believed instead that dispersion had allowed for the fulfilment of Jewry's ethical mission as a light unto the nations (*or la-goiyim*).⁷¹ Since redemption within this framework was universal, millenarian and spiritual, the physical return of some Jews to Zion would do nothing to bring it closer. As evidence of this conviction, the Jewish Religious Union, forerunner to Britain's institutionalised Liberal movement, expunged traditional liturgical references to the ingathering of the exiles.⁷²

Though this last action was seen as blasphemous by traditionalists, Anglo-Orthodox leaders also had serious misgivings about the religious implications of the Zionist programme. In his classic exposition of the moderate, United Synagogue view, Hermann Adler outlined the crucial theological distinction between love of Zion—which he also described as religious Zionism—and political Zionism. 'Every believing and

⁶⁹ E. Luz, *Parallels Meet: Religion and Nationalism in the Early Zionist Movement, 1882-1904*, tr. L.J. Schramm (Philadelphia, 1988).

⁷⁰ Abrahams replaced Solomon Schechter as a Reader in Rabbinics at Cambridge, Philip Magnus was a leading educationalist and longstanding MP for the University of London, his son a journalist, educator and publisher.

⁷¹ Montefiore, *Liberal Judaism: An Essay* (London, 1903), 182-92; M. Joseph, *The Spirit of Judaism* (London, 1930), 41-51.

⁷² This decision, codified in the JRU's Order of Service in 1902, followed the 1850s precedent of German and American Reform prayer books, including Abraham Geiger's untitled work for the Breslau community (1854), Isaac Mayer Wise's *Minhag America* (1857) and David Einhorn's *Olat Tamid* (1858). M. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (New York, 1988), 219-20. Liberal Judaism's views on Zionism closely resembled those espoused by the larger and more established Reform movements. Meyer, 'Liberal Judaism and Zionism in Germany', in S. Almog, J. Reinhartz and A. Shapira, (eds.), *Zionism and Religion* (Hanover, 1998), 93-106; N.W. Cohen, 'The Reaction of Reform Judaism in America to Political Zionism (1897-1922)', *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 40:4 (1951), 361-94.

conforming Israelite', he explained, 'must be a Zionist. His heart cannot fail to beat with love and reverence for Zion ...and to seek the welfare of its indwellers.'⁷³ It was therefore both a duty and a highly meritorious act 'to promote *Yishuv Eretz Yisrael*, the colonisation of the Land of Israel with care and circumspection ...to labour also for the welfare of the indwellers of the Holy Land, to aid in extirpating pauperism, banishing ignorance, and alleviating sickness.'⁷⁴ But Adler warned that this recent colonisation should not be confused with the return to Palestine described within the prophetic books. Whereas the former relied on human agency, the latter could not 'be accomplished by our instrumentality and at the period we desire'.⁷⁵ By attempting to hijack this divine plan, political Zionists were flouting the teachings of Judaism.

Few United Synagogue preachers dissented from this position. Two who had taken an early interest in Herzl's ideas, A.A. Green of the Hampstead Synagogue, and the aforementioned Simeon Singer, soon expressed discomfort with the shape that the movement was taking.⁷⁶ (There is no evidence that they did so under pressure from Adler.) The only significant rabbinic outlier—as he was in virtually every regard—was the Haḥam Moses Gaster, leader of the Britain's Sephardic community. Yet as I have noted, Gaster's support for Zionism was so controversial that it jeopardised his post at Bevis Marks.⁷⁷

Altogether, this theological argument, in both its Reform and Anglo-Orthodox variants, should be seen as an adjunct to the more central political and philosophical

⁷³ Entitled 'Religious versus Political Zionism', the sermon was preached on 12/11/98 and printed in *The North London Pulpit: A Special Series of Sermons delivered at the North London Synagogue* 10 (London, 1898).

⁷⁴ 'Religious versus Political Zionism', 12, 15.

⁷⁵ *Ibid* 13.

⁷⁶ R. Apple, *The Hampstead Synagogue 1892-1967* (London, 1967), 46-55; LW Papers, (ZA): A77/1/1.

⁷⁷ The Liverpool Old Hebrew Congregation issued a similar injunction against its preacher, John S. Harris, in 1898. S.A. Cohen, *English Zionists*, 194.

components of Anglo-Jewish anti-Zionism.⁷⁸ That even the Chief Rabbi generally presented religious factors as part of a multifaceted case is not altogether surprising. For a community lacking either a tradition of, or an apparent appetite for, theological discussion, a more sophisticated discourse regarding the proper place of Palestine in Jewish religious thought might have been difficult to sustain.⁷⁹ More fundamentally, however, the cornerstones of Anglo-Jewish anti-Zionism—rejection of the idea of Jewish nationhood and defence of liberal principles—drew their strength from the statute books, not from Scripture.

Who are the Jews?

The idea that Jews constituted a distinct national and political unit—and that the Jewish future depended on collective self-actualisation—lay at the heart of modern Zionist ideology.⁸⁰ Yet to the leaders of the Anglo-Jewish community, this idea was not only antithetical to their own self-understanding but threatened claims of Jewish equality both at home and abroad. The advent of political Zionism during the 1890s undoubtedly brought such concerns to the fore. However, the conviction that the Jews were *not* a nation originated at least a generation earlier, a product of Anglo-Jewry's own experience of political emancipation and its interpretation of Continental precedents.

⁷⁸ Leaders of the immigrant *hevras* also expressed antipathy towards Zionism's flouting of divine will. However, as Stuart Cohen notes (*English Zionists*, 209), their contribution to rabbinic debate (concentrated in Russia, Poland and Hungary) was limited.

⁷⁹ The founders of Liberal Judaism, particularly Montefiore and Israel Abrahams, were exceptional in this regard, as was their publication, the *Jewish Quarterly Review*. The *JQR*, modeled on leading Victorian journals such as the *Edinburgh Review*, was published in Britain from 1888 to 1908. It re-emerged in the United States in 1910 under the editorial direction of Cyrus Adler and Solomon Schechter.

⁸⁰ L. Pinsker, *Autoemanzipation, ein Mahnruf an seine Stammesgenossen, von einem russischen Juden* (Berlin, 1882); M. Lilienblum, *The Regeneration of Israel in the Land of its Forefathers* (London, 1884); Herzl, *The Jewish State* (London, 1896). 'The Basle Program', in P.R. Mendes-Flohr and Reinhartz, (eds.), *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History* (2nd edn., New York, 1995), 540-1.

In France, Clermont-Tonnerre's famous phrase, 'To the Jews as a Nation, nothing; to the Jews as individuals, everything', encapsulated the terms underscoring the newfound political equality of that nation's Jewish population.⁸¹ By contrast, Anglo-Jewish emancipation was non-contractual and focused only on the relatively circumscribed questions of religious nonconformity and political participation.⁸² The 1858 passage of legislation allowing Jewish members to take their seats in the House of Commons had nonetheless left lingering questions regarding the nature of Anglo-Jewish civic and cultural identity.

As a response to assaults on its loyalty and Anglo-Jewry's own fuzziness regarding its ontological status, some members of the establishment advocated a strictly religious outlook. In 1878, Hermann Adler—addressing the query, 'Can Jews Be Patriots?'—characterised British Jews as devoted Englishmen who 'profess the ancient, primaeval faith of Judaism'.⁸³ During the late 1890s debate over political Zionism, Claude Montefiore would become the most publicised (though by no means the only) advocate for this position. Speaking to the Jewish Historical Society in 1899, Montefiore declared that two thousand years of diaspora had brought an end not only to the unitary narrative of Jewish history but to the very idea of a Jewish nation.⁸⁴

Infamous for his claim that '[i]n all tastes, feelings, and ideas—apart from religion—I have far more in common with a Christian Englishman than with a Bulgarian Jew,' Montefiore's opposition both to claims of Jewish nationhood and to political Zionism

⁸¹ On the notion of a 'quid pro quo' see D. Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780-1840* (2nd edn., Detroit, 1999), 86-90, 173-4.

⁸² M.C.N. Salbstein, *The Emancipation of the Jews in Britain: The Question of the Admission of the Jews to Parliament, 1828-1860* (Rutherford, 1982); Endelman, 'The Englishness of Jewish Modernity', in J. Katz, (ed.), *Toward Modernity: 1828-1860* (New Brunswick, 1987), 225-46. For a contrasting view see B. Williams, 'The Anti-Semitism of Tolerance: Middle-Class Manchester and the Jews, 1870-1900', in A.J. Kidd and K.W. Roberts, (eds.), *City, Class and Culture: Studies of Social Policy and Cultural Production in Victorian Manchester* (Manchester, 1985), 74-102.

⁸³ Adler, 'Can Jews Be Patriots?', *Nineteenth Century* 3 (1878), 646; G. Smith, 'Can Jews Be Patriots?', *NC* 4 (1878), 875-87. For context refer to Rubinstein, 'Top British Wealth', 73-84; Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews*, 94-120.

⁸⁴ 'Nation or Religious Community', *JQR* 12 (1/00), 177-94; *TJHSE* 4 (1903), 1-15. Prior commentaries include, 'Is Judaism a Tribal Religion?', *Contemporary Review* 42 (1882), 361-82; 'One God, One Worship', *JC* 14/2/96 19-20.

derived, at least in part, from his distinctive theological outlook.⁸⁵ For this grandson of Moses Montefiore, thoroughgoing commitment to acculturation did not preclude participation in what might best be described as ethnic solidarity politics. (Claude Montefiore served as President of the AJA for twenty-six years, beginning in 1895, and was a member of the Jewish Colonisation Association's executive.) Yet for those of his background and outlook, ties of kinship and collective responsibility existed within strict, if not always clearly defined, parameters. Advocacy and assistance for foreign Jews could not be allowed to interfere with loyalty to one's own nation.

This principle of monolithic loyalty would assume a crucial role in arguments against Jewish nationalism. When during the 1900 election British Zionists urged votes for a Party candidate sympathetic to their position, the (anti-Zionist) *JC* expressed its outrage.⁸⁶ '[T]hey are concerned not with what is best for the country, but what is best for the Jews of Germany, Austria, Roumania and Russia.'⁸⁷ By placing Jewish interests before civic duty—particularly in a time of national crisis—British Zionists were undermining their assertions of patriotism.

It is important to emphasise that British Zionists themselves saw no tension between the desire for a Jewish homeland and dedication to the land of their birth or adoption. As one argued, England had long regarded itself as a nation 'foremost in standing up for the oppressed and downtrodden'. By helping their less fortunate brethren (Palestine was not intended as a destination for British Jews), English Zionists would not only prove that they were good Jews, but would be 'following the Englishman at his best'.⁸⁸ Wider public opinion was also largely untroubled by the spectre of British

⁸⁵ 'Liberal Judaism in England: Its Difficulties and Its Duties', *JQR* 12 (7/00), 643.

⁸⁶ *The Times* 2/10/00 Letter 9; J. Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven, 2001), 238.

⁸⁷ 12/10/00 Ed 13. See also the Letter (6) of the same date.

⁸⁸ 24/2/99 Letter 9; *JC* 4/1/01 23, 24/2/99 Letter 9 and 10/8/00 Letter 6.

Zionism. In contrast with the Continent, the movement could in fact claim substantial non-Jewish support.

As Adler's comments suggests, however, British Jewry's Victorian leadership perceived a direct linkage between what one historian has described as 'respectable, civic-minded and patriotic' behaviour and the community's continued integration.⁸⁹ Although the legislation granting civil rights had not prohibited Jewish self-definition in extra-religious terms, the establishment itself resolved that claims to membership in—or identification with—more than one national group courted anti-Semitism. On these grounds alone, the Zionist programme posed a clear and direct threat to Anglo-Jewry's credibility.⁹⁰ But the danger was not limited to Britain alone. If Jews in the West showed themselves to be less than entirely faithful to the privileges of citizenship, the possibility of winning political equality for Eastern European Jews would erode still further.

The establishment's rejection of the idea of a Jewish nation should also be viewed through a second lens. In my previous chapters, I argued that Anglo-Jewish identification with the British cause during the Boer War was not motivated solely by fear of reprisal or the desire to be seen as wholly English. Rather, it emerged from the conviction that Anglo-Jewry was unambiguously part of the nation, that the 'English Jew who serves England serves not "other people," but his own people.'⁹¹ For the Anglo-Jewish establishment, a rejection of the idea of Jewish nationhood also derived from this particular orientation. Emancipation symbolised a rejection of the Jewish past and a path into a brighter future. The nation that offered this opportunity—and which

⁸⁹ Williams, 'Heritage and Community: The Rescue of Manchester's Jewish Past', in T. Kushner, (ed.), *The Jewish Heritage in British History: Englishness and Jewishness* (London, 1992), 137.

⁹⁰ *JC* 11/8/99 Ed 16.

⁹¹ *JC* 31/8/00 Letter 10.

on the whole delivered on its promise—now became, in the words of Israel Abrahams, the 'one and only fatherland'.⁹² Devotion to another nation—if it even existed—would be unthinkable.

Answering the Jewish Question

In recent years it has become conventional to characterise the generation prior to World War I as one in which liberalism suffered severe, even fatal, setbacks.⁹³ Yet at the close of the nineteenth century most members of Britain's Jewish elite saw the future as being filled with promise for their cherished political ideal. That there had been temporary setbacks—in Austria or France, for example—or resistance to change, particularly in Eastern Europe, was undeniable. But even these disappointments failed to impair confidence in two core principles: that society was progressing inexorably towards greater liberalism and tolerance, and that this process would reveal itself in the ever-improving position of the Jewish minority. Accordingly, establishment anti-Zionists were adamant in disputing claims of anti-Semitism's permanency. Herzl, the journalist Lucien Wolf explained, had based his theory of Jewish nationalism on the erroneous assumption that hatred of Jews could never be overcome. However, Wolf reasoned, since anti-Semitism was artificial and doomed to extinction, there was no need for Zionism's supposed salvation.⁹⁴

The Enlightenment had brought Jews in Western and Central Europe both legal equality and a degree of social integration previously unimaginable. To optimists like Wolf, there was no reason to believe that this process would not in time repeat itself in

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ D. Blackbourn and G. Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History. Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford, 1984); D. Harris, 'European Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century', *American Historical Review* 60:3 (1954-5), 501-26; G.M. Luebbert, *Liberalism, Fascism or Social Democracy: Social Classes and the Political Origins of Regimes in Inter-War Europe* (New York, 1991); A. Lyttelton, 'Landlords, Peasants and the Limits of Liberalism', in J.A. Davis, (ed.), *Gramsci and Italy's Passive Revolution* (London, 1979), 104-35.

⁹⁴ 'Zionism', *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (10th edn., London, 1902), 927-30.

the as-of-yet unenlightened lands of the East. As one *JC* editorial declared, '[t]he Ghetto is no more an eternal institution in Russia than it was in England.'⁹⁵ And what of recurrent outbreaks of anti-Semitism in the West? In contrast to the Zionists, who saw these episodes as symptoms of emancipation's failure, Anglo-Jewry's establishment contended that the priest had been called in for last rites when the patient was in no real danger.⁹⁶ While '[h]ere and there one [wa]s confronted with unfortunate reactions of persecution,' the unmistakable trend was towards

more freedom and toleration. How dark the prospect for Jews in France appeared a year ago, and how suddenly the clouds lifted! If one had counselled the French Jews to leave their Fatherland, at a time when the Dreyfus affair seemed to be at its worst, the advice would have been proved unsound.⁹⁷

Though the denouement of the *affaire* resulted from French liberals' belated defence of the Republic rather than, as some might have liked to believe, any conscious rejection of anti-Semitism, the positive outcome for French Jewry was nonetheless instructive. Just as Dreyfus' loyalty had been vindicated, so too would liberalism emerge victorious. With each successive liberal triumph, vestigial anti-Jewish sentiment would be weakened still further.

Proponents of this argument were of course vulnerable to charges of passivity. As one Zionist leader noted, the only alternative posed by anti-Zionists was that the Jews of Russia should bear their suffering for a few more generations.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, the Anglo-Jewish establishment maintained that Zionism's *deus ex machina* offered false promise. Attempts to establish a Jewish national home in Palestine would, far from resolving the Jewish question, only exacerbate it. The vast, dispersed Jewish populations of Eastern Europe could not be removed from their present environment.

⁹⁵ 17/2/99 18. The statement should not be taken literally, as the pre-emancipation structure of a physical ghetto did not exist in either country.

⁹⁶ See for example Montefiore, 'Nation or Religious Community', *JQR* 12 (1/00), 178.

⁹⁷ *JC* 17/8/00 Ed 11.

⁹⁸ *JC* 9/6/99 23.

For those suffering under the most adverse conditions, emergency relocation—perhaps including, but certainly not limited to, Palestine—would be continued under the auspices of organisations like the ICA.⁹⁹ On the whole, however, anti-Semitism had to be addressed *in situ*, the 'Russian problem in Russia; the Roumanian in Roumania'.¹⁰⁰ Secondly, Anglo-Jewish liberals feared that even the prospect of a Jewish homeland in Palestine would destabilise the overwhelmingly successful progress of emancipation. Jewish loyalty would be cast in doubt, and European leaders would lose any incentive to maintain the status quo. It was even conceivable that some would succumb to public pressure to unburden themselves of their Jewish populations.

In contrast to the lachrymose Zionists, who contended that liberalism had failed to safeguard Jewish rights, the Anglo-Jewish establishment remained committed to its defence and formulated a response to the Jewish Question accordingly. Its strategy relied primarily on the use of legal and diplomatic channels, following the precedent set at the Congress of Berlin treaty negotiations in 1878.¹⁰¹ But while diplomacy was restricted to communal notables, leaders contended that the entirety of Anglo-Jewry had a crucial role to play. By showing itself to be wholly patriotic, it would counter both Zionist and anti-Semitic claims that European Jews could not be meaningfully integrated.

Though high-minded and well-intentioned, neither of these strategies guaranteed results, much less timely ones. To a large degree therefore, the establishment's approach was driven by faith rather than certainty. Even so, it was seen as preferable

⁹⁹ JC 26/5/99 21-2, 6/7/00 Ed 18; Norman, *Outstretched Arm*, 46-7.

¹⁰⁰ JC 17/8/00 Ed 11. See also 8/12/99 Ed 20.

¹⁰¹ By guaranteeing equal rights to all citizens of Romania regardless of religion, Article 44 of the Treaty had ostensibly resolved the Jewish problem there. However, Romanian nationalists, now 'masters in [their] own house', refused to grant citizenship to most of their Jewish population and maintained or strengthened discriminatory legislation. With their own governments losing interest in the matter, Jewish communal leaders in the West could do little to effect change. See Vital, *A People Apart: A Political History of the Jews in Europe, 1789-1939* (Oxford, 1999), 496-509.

to Zionism's counsel of despair. As the *JC* explained: 'For the redemption of our race we must look to some hope not bounded by the narrow limits of Palestine'.¹⁰²

Part II: Offers of a British Alliance

Zionists and members of the Anglo-Jewish establishment shared few ideological presuppositions. While both were genuinely concerned about the Jewish position in Eastern Europe, they differed in their prognoses as well as their favoured solutions. Similarly, they were at odds regarding the putative existence of a Jewish nation. Where they did occupy some common ground, however, was in their positive view of Britain. From the earliest days of political Zionism, there had been great enthusiasm for engaging the British mind with the Zionist cause. Herzl's 1898 declaration that England was the 'Archimidean point where the lever' of Zionist diplomacy should be applied encapsulated the popular belief that Britain's political traditions, religious proclivities and strategic interests made it the most likely of the great powers to recognise the Jews' need for a nation in Palestine.¹⁰³ There was another reason for confidence, Herzl maintained. England, which had been the first to grasp the necessity for colonising in the modern-day world, would surely understand Zionism, which was itself a colonial idea. Speaking to the Zionist Congress of 1900, Herzl reiterated this theme. In the darkness of the Asian future, a British Palestine could be a 'station for civilisation'.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² *JC* 16/8/01 Ed 13.

¹⁰³ Herzl's February 1898 statement to the Clerkenwell conference is quoted in Goodman, *Zionism in England*, 18-9. See also Beller, 'Herzl's Anglophilia', *Herzl and the Origins of Zionism*, 54-61. As Beller notes (59), Herzl linked England's conventions and social values with the Empire's freedom, progress and power. In his 1901 novel *Altneuland* (*Old-New Land*), in which he envisioned an idealised Jewish state, he therefore described the children as participating in English team sports of cricket, football and rowing.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Rabinowicz, 'Herzl and England', 42-3, 45. The decision to hold that year's gathering in London failed to attract favourable attention from either politicians or local Jewish leaders.

For Anglo-Jewish Zionists, this diplomatic focus enabled them to challenge any charges of diminished patriotism. In a speech to the Article Club, Israel Zangwill echoed D'Avigdor and Belisha, the CZA leaders, in citing Laurence Oliphant. He recalled Oliphant's 1880 prediction that the 'strategic value and political importance' of the provinces 'between the Holy Places at Jerusalem and the Asiatic frontier of Russia, between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, between Syria and Egypt' would soon be demonstrated, and that the British Empire might be endangered by its failure to prepare for such a development.¹⁰⁵ Britain could ill afford to neglect its Levant interests any longer.

Leopold Greenberg made the case somewhat more directly, also alluding to the relevance of such a policy to British Jews. Some had asked:

"What has Zionism to do with English politics?" But the people who asked this forgot that Zionism might become a matter of English politics sooner than they expected. For what power had the interest in Palestine that England had, seeing that England in Egypt was the next door neighbour to Palestine, and that the shortest way to India was through Palestine[?]

Furthermore, Greenberg added, millions of Jews were suffering in Eastern Europe. If Russian and Romanian Jews could not all come to Britain, their best hope was a legally recognised home—presumably under British auspices—in Palestine.¹⁰⁶ This would not only strengthen Britain's Eastern Mediterranean defences but would also help to resolve the persistent problem of Jewish homelessness.

As I have described, even British Jews who were staunch opponents of political Zionism could be susceptible to the charms of this argument. One might therefore expect them to have been particularly enamoured of schemes that attempted to ameliorate the position of Eastern European Jews in territory that was already British controlled.

¹⁰⁵ *JC* 22/11/01 14. As noted in Chapter 2, although Israel Zangwill and Leopold Greenberg were vigorous opponents of the Boer War, neither attacked the fundamental values or goals of British imperialism.

¹⁰⁶ *JC* 26/10/00 25-6. See also the speech of S. Levy, President of the Portsmouth Zionist Association (*JC* 5/10/00 9).

(There was, for example, enthusiasm at the Board of Guardians and the Jews' Temporary Shelter for sending Jewish immigrants on to Canada and Australia.) Such a plan would have three potential advantages: it would avoid the practical problems associated with Palestine (including Ottoman control and poor agricultural conditions), allow open land to be populated with white, pro-British colonists and divert excess Western emigration. However, the Anglo-Jewish elite's profound discomfort with the implications of Jewish territorial autonomy would lead it to oppose Zionist efforts to gain a charter in either the Sinai or East Africa.¹⁰⁷

In the end, they were hardly the only ones with misgivings. The Colonial Office scuppered the El Arish proposal after consultation with the Egyptian government, while the East Africa plan was allowed to lapse by the Zionist Organisation after Herzl's death. Although some Zionists—led by Israel Zangwill—split from the international movement in order to pursue other colonial options under the auspices of the Jewish Territorial Organisation, a lack of further opportunity or interest from either the Zionist establishment or Whitehall relegated the extra-Palestinian programme to the historical dustbin.¹⁰⁸

Beginning in the 1950s, several scholars of Zionism began to revisit this controversial but largely overlooked episode.¹⁰⁹ Yet while their work helped to situate the events of

¹⁰⁷ In a 1960 pamphlet for the Jewish Historical Society of England entitled *Lucien Wolf and Theodor Herzl*, Josef Fraenkel contrasts the motivations of El Arish's Anglo-Zionist opponents (such as Herbert Bentwich and Moses Gaster) with those of 'Lucien Wolf and his friends'. According to Fraenkel, the former acted out of 'love of Zion', while the latter sought only to preserve their monopoly over Jewish diplomacy. Although there is some truth in Fraenkel's claims, he does not accord the anti-nationalist argument sufficient credibility.

¹⁰⁸ There is no scholarly monograph on the ITO. Articles include S.A. Cohen, 'Israel Zangwill's Project for Jewish Colonisation in Mesopotamia', *MES* 16:3 (1980), 200-08; J. Medina and J. Barromi, 'The Jewish Colonization Project in Angola', *Studies in Zionism* 12:1 (1991), 1-16; Vital, 'Zangwill and Modern Jewish Nationalism', *Modern Judaism* 4:3 (1984), 243-53; R.G. Weisbord, 'Israel Zangwill's Jewish Territorial Organisation and the East African Zion', *JSS* 30:2 (1968), 89-108.

¹⁰⁹ M. Heymann, (ed.), *The Minutes of the Zionist General Council: the Uganda Controversy* (Jerusalem, 1970); Rabinowicz, 'New Light on the East Africa Scheme', in I. Cohen, (ed.), *The Rebirth of Israel: A Memorial Tribute to Paul Goodman* (London, 1952), 77-97; R. Patai, 'Herzl's Sinai Project: A Documentary Record', *HYB* 1 (New York, 1958), 107-144; Weisbord, *African Zion: The Attempt to Establish a Jewish Colony in the East African Protectorate, 1903-1905* (Philadelphia, 1968).

1902 to 1905 within the history of the international Zionist movement, comparable efforts have not yet been made in other areas. For example, although the relevant Colonial and Foreign Office documents have been published, there is virtually no mention—much less detailed analysis—of these negotiations in relevant works on British imperial policy. Moreover, to the extent that Anglo-Jewish views on territorialism have been considered, attention has focused on individuals associated with the Zionist movement rather than those within the communal establishment.¹¹⁰ The final section of this chapter will therefore make a preliminary attempt to close this gap by analysing the El Arish and East Africa negotiations within the context of the politics and philosophy of the British-Jewish leadership.

One point must be clarified. Seen from the perspective of either of the major protagonists, the role played by the local Jewish establishment was negligible. The Zionist movement's own divisions regarding territorialism ensured that its attention was focused largely inwards. As for the British government, there is no evidence that Anglo-Jewish viewpoints were of particular concern. Despite Wolf's public exhortation to Lord Lansdowne, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, elite Jewish opinion was not canvassed by Whitehall.¹¹¹ More surprisingly—and in direct contrast to their behaviour during World War I—it does not appear that (anti-Zionist) communal leaders initiated correspondence with the Foreign Office.¹¹² In the end, therefore, Anglo-Jewish opposition to the Sinai and East Africa proposals, while hardly a secret, cannot be judged to have played a significant part in their failure. What is being investigated here is the effect of the events of 1902 to 1905 on the Anglo-Jewish elite, *not* the impact of the Anglo-Jewish elite on those developments.

¹¹⁰ Weisbord's discussion focuses overwhelmingly on Anglo-Jewish Zionists like Gaster, Zangwill and Greenberg. Cohen's brief analysis in *English Zionists* (81-5) is somewhat more balanced.

¹¹¹ *The Times* 28/8/03 Letter 5.

¹¹² Public Record Office (PRO) papers on the subject do not include any letters from relevant individuals or institutions.

* * *

By late 1902, a deadlock in negotiations with the Turkish authorities prompted a renewed Anglocentric focus in Zionist diplomacy.¹¹³ The aim of these efforts, which concentrated on Balfour's Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, was to obtain rights to territory in the vicinity of Palestine. At the first meeting between Herzl and Chamberlain, held on 22 October, the Zionist leader presented a shortlist of potential locations for the colony: Cyprus, the Sinai region of Egypt and East Africa. Cyprus, which had already been the site of several (non-autonomous) failed Jewish settlements, nonetheless possessed two significant advantages.¹¹⁴ Not only was it the closest to Palestine but, as a formally administered Crown Colony, it was the only one of the proposed territories actually under Chamberlain's remit. (Egypt was not annexed until 1914, and the East Africa Protectorate did not become the colony of Kenya until 1920. Consequently both were the responsibility of Lord Lansdowne and the Foreign Office.) Nonetheless, Chamberlain did not think that the Greeks would agree to a self-governing Jewish settlement. For the next nine months—and intermittently thereafter¹¹⁵—attention therefore turned to the second choice, El Arish.¹¹⁶

While Chamberlain was thought to harbour some sympathy for the Zionist programme, his willingness to engage in negotiations was not driven by humanitarian sentiment alone. Encouraged by Herzl, he also had begun to see the benefits which Britain could

¹¹³ See I. Friedman, *Germany, Turkey and Zionism, 1897-1918* (Oxford, 1977), 92-102.

¹¹⁴ During the 1880s, the AJA gave some relief funds to a failing Romanian-Jewish settlement on the island. In 1897, the ICA tried to resettle some Eastern European Jews residing in Britain. The liaison to those colonists, as well as a leading financial supporter, was Walter Cohen, member of a prominent Anglo-Jewish banking family and later part of Lord Milner's 'Kindergarten'. Although Cohen would become involved with Palestine (in a non-Zionist capacity) as secretary of the Mandatory era Economic Board for Palestine, he wrote in 1900 that Palestine was a sink-hole for Jewish capital and energy. Projects there 'appear doomed to failure'. *JC* 9/3/00 23. The final promoter of a Cypriot Jewish colony was David Trietsch, a Zionist associated with the Berlin *Kadimah*. Trietsch's independent approaches to the British government coincided with those of Herzl, much to the latter's annoyance. Shaftesley, 'Nineteenth Century Jewish Colonies in Cyprus', *TJHSE* NS22 (1970), 88-107; Rabinowicz, 'David Trietsch's Colonization Scheme in Cyprus', *HYB* 4 (New York, 1962), 119-206.

¹¹⁵ 23/10/03 Greenberg to Herzl, Leopold Greenberg Papers, (Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem): AK86/1.

¹¹⁶ Patai, 'Herzl's Sinai Project', 107-44.

accrue from a Jewish colony in Sinai: the sympathy, he imagined, of Jews worldwide, an influx of Jewish capital for the development of British territory and a further foothold near Palestine, which would surely prove helpful in the inevitable event of Ottoman collapse. There was another motivation as well. Several months earlier, in July 1902, the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration had met in London. As Herzl himself had testified, there was no reason to believe that the current flow of Jewish migrants out of Eastern Europe would abate. The British economy could ill afford unrestricted immigration, Chamberlain believed. Consequently, any reasonable settlement alternatives deserved serious consideration.¹¹⁷

The case was then presented to Lansdowne, who, while not sharing the Colonial Secretary's enthusiasm, saw sufficient cause to send Leopold Greenberg to Egypt as the Zionists' emissary. Here again the reception was relatively cool, although the Consul-General, Lord Cromer, suggested that a small commission be sent out to investigate the suitability of the proposed settlement.¹¹⁸ With the help of Thomas Cook's Eastern Tours, the group set off from Ismaila on 4 February 1903.¹¹⁹ Greenberg remained in Cairo.¹²⁰ Early impressions were favourable, but the surveyors soon uncovered substantial problems. '[U]nder existing conditions, the country is quite unsuitable for settlers from European countries,' their final report stated. '[T]he whole question is one of water supply, the furnishing of which would involve great capital expenditure.'¹²¹ Ultimately, however, the insurmountable obstacle was not irrigation, but the Egyptian government's opposition to a Jewish colony. Despite Zionist

¹¹⁷ D. Judd, *Radical Joe: A Life of Joseph Chamberlain* (2nd edn., Cardiff, 1993), 178-80, 254-5.

¹¹⁸ Curiously, this group included Colonel Albert Goldsmid. Presumably chosen for his Argentinian experience, Goldsmid had long since fallen out with Herzl. Since Goldsmid left no known personal papers and died the year after he returned from Egypt, it is difficult to assess whether his position on political Zionism had changed once again, or whether he judged the El Arish plan to be sufficiently similar to his earlier work for Hirsch and the ICA. Fraenkel's brief article on the Goldsmid-Herzl relationship offers little insight. 'Colonel Albert Goldsmid and Theodor Herzl', *HYB* 1 (New York, 1958), 145-53.

¹¹⁹ Diary and trip log, Leopold Kessler Papers, (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem): A143/8, 10, 11, 12. Kessler was a South African engineer and Zionist activist.

¹²⁰ LK Papers, (ZA): A143/10.

¹²¹ LK Papers, (ZA): A43/11.

entreaties, the Foreign Office refused to intercede. El Arish would not be opened up to Jewish settlement.

Things might have ended here if not for Chamberlain. Recently returned from a visit to Africa, he told Herzl on 24 April 1903 that 'I have seen a land for you on my travels ... and that's Uganda.'¹²² What Chamberlain had in mind was in fact not Uganda—which was an adjacent but separately administered British territory—but a different piece of the British East Africa Protectorate (BEAP).¹²³ (The misnomer of 'Uganda' has nonetheless remained attached to the plan up to the present day.) Initially Herzl pronounced East Africa unsuitable, noting that the land was too far from Palestine and had, unlike Sinai, no historical or emotional resonance for the Jewish people. Discussions with Greenberg induced him to reconsider.¹²⁴ After years of fruitless negotiations with European leaders, Greenberg argued, Britain had made an unbidden offer to the Zionists. Even if the territory would not ultimately be utilised, it was foolish to spurn such unprecedented generosity. East Africa could at the very least provide a starting point for future negotiations.¹²⁵

From the outset, however, the project ran into problems. By mid September 1903 Chamberlain had resigned over the question of tariff reform. Zionist fears that 'a new king may arise who will not know Joseph' proved reasonably well-founded.¹²⁶ Although the new secretary, Lord Lyttelton, was not averse to his predecessor's scheme, neither

¹²² Quoted in Friedman, 'Herzl and the Uganda Controversy', *Herzl and the Origins of Zionism*, 39-53. Chamberlain's advancement of the East Africa proposal was again motivated by a combination of economic and political factors. The new, government-funded railroad built into the territory had thus far failed to attract sufficient private capital or white settlement. Moreover, an upsurge of Jewish immigration to Britain—and, as a consequence, increased public pressure for restriction—was expected in the aftermath of the recent pogrom (April 6-7) in Kishinev. Finally, according to Chamberlain's biographer, Julian Amery, the Colonial Secretary believed that the East Africa scheme would prompt the assistance of British and Continental Jewish financiers in funding South Africa's post-war reconstruction. Cited in Weisbord, *African Zion*, 126-7.

¹²³ Confusion was heightened by two factors. The Uganda railway, which had opened up the territory in which Chamberlain wished to place white settlers, was not in Uganda but in the BEAP. Secondly, a portion of the territory slated for the new colony had recently been reassigned—for unrelated reasons—from the Uganda protectorate.

¹²⁴ 20/5/03, 24/5/03 Greenberg to Herzl, LG Papers, (ZA): AK86/1.

¹²⁵ 7/6/01, 14/7/03 Greenberg to Herzl, LG Papers, (ZA): AK86/1.

¹²⁶ 11/2/04 Greenberg to Herzl, LG Papers, (ZA): AK86/1.

he nor any else in the Cabinet had a particular investment in its outcome. Therefore, when BEAP settlers (largely British born) began to object to the 'Jewing' of their land (these complaints were reinforced, albeit with less inflammatory rhetoric, by the local Commissioner, Sir Charles Elliot), the government began to hesitate.¹²⁷ Llyttelton, seemingly compelled by a sense of diplomatic propriety, decided to renew the offer. By this time, however, opposition was mounting within the Zionist ranks.

Few in the ZO had been privy to the original negotiations over El Arish.¹²⁸ But when the East African proposal was announced to those assembled at the Zionist Congress in Basle, protests erupted.¹²⁹ Despite continued reassurances from Herzl, Greenberg and Nordau that East Africa was not a substitute for Palestine, claims of betrayal, and of the folly of Zionism without Zion, were difficult to silence.¹³⁰ While the Congress did authorise an exploratory mission, the continued failure to achieve movement consensus resulted in a critical loss of momentum. At the time of Herzl's death in July 1904 (many believed his chronic ill health to have been exacerbated by the ongoing Zionist infighting), the commission had still not been sent. A somewhat cursory investigation early the following year only confirmed doubts about the territory's suitability.¹³¹ The commission's 1905 report, which was followed by a vote of the ZO's General Actions Committee, signalled the end of the movement's attempts to reach Palestine by an alternative route. With the main road blocked, there was now no choice but to wait.

¹²⁷ See Weisbord, *African Zion*, 81-97, 196. See also *The Times* letter from the former Special Commissioner for Uganda (JW4/9/03 469) and compilation of reports in BEAP press (JC2/10/03 13). Elliot's report to Parliament is discussed in JC28/8/03 11-12.

¹²⁸ Although it is difficult to imagine how the commission's travels escaped attention, the first hint in the Jewish press that something 'not altogether Palestinian' was afoot was not until early April. JC3/4/03 11. See also 15/5/03 26. On the need for secrecy see 17/6/03 Greenberg to Herzl, LG Papers, (ZA): AK86/1.

¹²⁹ For a near-verbatim account of the Congress see JW28/8/03 439-47, 4/9/03 463-8. See also Vital, *Formative Years*, 281-309.

¹³⁰ English Zionists were also divided, with Greenberg and Zangwill advocating strenuously for the plan, and Gaster and Bentwich steadfast in their opposition. See JC28/8/03 6, 13/11/03 14-17; *The Times* 19/12/04 7; 22/11/03 Greenberg to Herzl, LG Papers, (ZA): AK86/1.

¹³¹ JC16/6/05 11-15.

Anglo-Jewry and East Africa

When the news of the El Arish proposal was (belatedly) received, the first response of the Anglo-Jewish establishment was incredulity, laced liberally with sarcasm. The *JC*'s editorial of 16 June commenced with a Biblical verse about Egypt containing the admonition: "ye shall henceforth return no more that way." Yet it was hardly surprising, the editors suggested, that the Zionists had forgotten even this most basic of instructions. As a result,

Israel, it appears is to go back on its history. Egypt, the classic land of Jewish oppression, is to become the home of the new RedemptionThe Hebrew is to seek refuge from anti-Semitism in the home of the Pharaohs. Of course, things have changed since those ancient days. The Pharaohs have gone, and in their place are the Union Jacks and Tommy Atkins. But the new departure is none the less an excellent illustration of the irony of history.¹³²

Yet beyond poking fun, there seems to have been virtually no engagement in the potentialities—or dangers—which this scheme had presented. Whether the plan was simply not taken seriously, or whether there was insufficient knowledge to fuel an extended debate, is not clear. Nonetheless, mention of El Arish quickly disappeared from the Jewish press, as the usual suspects (Wolf, Montefiore et al.) failed to line up for jousting with the Zionists. In the months leading up to the 1903 Zionist Congress, it would appear that British Jewish leaders—with the obvious exception of Greenberg—were unaware of the newest object of negotiations, East Africa.

Although they were unquestionably surprised to learn that the land of the Pharaohs had now been substituted—even more curiously—for an 'African swamp', Britain's Jewish establishment was hardly alone in wondering whether Herzl had taken leave of his senses.¹³³ As I have noted, the Anglo-Jewish elite's near-unanimous opposition to Britain's 'Uganda' offer neither prompted nor materially impacted the crisis already

¹³² 5/6/03 17-8.

¹³³ *JC* 28/8/03 Ed 14-5. On the debate and vote at the ZC see *The Times* 27/8/03 3.

taking place within the Zionist movement. What that discord did mean, however, is that the pro-East Africa camp was forced to seek allies outside of the traditional Zionist ranks.

Notwithstanding a record of resistance to political Zionism, the Anglo-Jewish establishment was the most obvious target for such outreach. Public endorsement by its communal leaders, though perhaps not critical to the campaign's success, would undoubtedly aid propaganda efforts. More importantly, the British Jewish elite had something the Zionists desperately needed: money. The 1903 Congress, while voting to send a commission, had not yielded hold of the purse strings.¹³⁴ The hope therefore was that Jewish financiers, impelled by the generosity of their government's offer and moved to action by the suffering of Russian Jewry, would now be willing to consider East Africa's potential. (A further, arguably more attractive, option also existed. In the not unlikely event that the Zionists did not pursue the project, the land could be turned over for development by an organisation like the ICA.)

Early assessments that Britain's Jewish leadership might prove susceptible to this reasoning were not wholly without merit. By October 1903 the Chief Rabbi had already made some favourable comments regarding the plan.¹³⁵ In addition, Hampstead's Reverend Green, described by one local Zionist leader as 'a real weathercock', also preached a sympathetic sermon on Yom Kippur. It was reasoned that Adler would not have spoken publicly without first consulting New Court, the Rothschilds' London headquarters. While the opposition of Anglo-Jewry's first family could easily doom

¹³⁴ The funds of the Jewish Colonial Trust and the Anglo-Palestine Company were reserved for work which contributed directly to Palestine's development. N.T. Gross, 'The Anglo-Palestine Company: the Formative Years, 1903-1914', in G.G. Gilbar, (ed.), *Ottoman Palestine, 1800-1914: Studies in Economic and Social History* (Leiden, 1990), 219-54.

¹³⁵ 23/10/03 Greenberg to Herzl, LG Papers, (ZA): AK86/1. This was confirmed, but not expanded upon, in the *JC* several months later. It does not appear that Adler explained his views until the winter of 1905, when he wrote an article on East Africa for the Baltimore *Jewish Comment*. The *JC* discussed the piece but did not reprint it. 8/1/04 Ed 19, 10/2/05 Ed 9.

efforts to catalyse elite support, even tacit Rothschild approval would make the Zionists' task far simpler.

It was soon clear, however, that this optimism had been unfounded. Adler and Green were hardly the ideal publicists for East Africa. To the extent that they did approve of the plan, it was only as a practical—and partial—response to the immediate problems in Russia and Romania. As Green explained, he could not support efforts to reconstruct 'a religious political state [in Palestine] as in the days of old'. However, if Eastern European Jews could achieve a 'measure of relief' through settlement in East Africa, this would merit consideration.¹³⁶ As for Rothschild, it seemed increasingly unlikely that he had granted Adler an imprimatur to speak. In any case, the chances of benefiting from his customary largesse had apparently been spoiled by his contact with the American Jewish philanthropist Jacob Schiff, whose schemes for immigrant dispersion and resettlement excluded any idea of self-government. (By 1907, Lord Rothschild would be of the key supporters of Schiff's work in Galveston, Texas.)¹³⁷

Throughout the nearly two years that the East Africa plan was on the table, the issue of self-rule would prove an ongoing, and ultimately insuperable, barrier to collaboration between the Zionists and the Anglo-Jewish leadership. For the former group, autonomy for the East African settlement was a non-negotiable requirement. The ZO had resisted lending support to the Rothschild and ICA colonisation schemes in Palestine because they failed to advance the cause of great power recognition for Jewry's national status. Apart from any tactical benefits gained in diplomatic negotiations, establishing a colony in East Africa was therefore only useful if it operated on different lines from those in Palestine, Argentina or rural North America. What East

¹³⁶ JW 30/10/03 109.

¹³⁷ 29/5/04 Greenberg to Herzl, LG Papers, (ZA): AK86/1. N.W. Cohen, *Jacob H. Schiff: A Study in American Jewish Leadership* (Hanover, 1999), 82-188. B. Marinbach, *Galveston: Ellis Island of the West* (Albany, 1983).

Africa could provide, however, was a training-ground for the future Jewish state. In psychological as well as practical terms, the creation of a preliminary Jewish colony would allow Eastern European Jews (even the Zionists conceded that few from the West were likely to settle at this stage) to prepare for self-rule in Palestine.¹³⁸

For the Anglo-Jewish establishment, imperial patriotism and compassion for less fortunate Jews—the latter of which was not incompatible with the self-serving wish that fewer of them should come to Britain—could easily have led to support for the East Africa scheme. As one commentator noted, the plan not only increased ‘the limited number of refuges now available for oppressed Jewry’ but placed them ‘upon British soil and under the British flag’.¹³⁹ It could hardly be disappointing to see ‘British patriotism diffused among an increasing number of industrious men ...saved from the burning of Kishinev.’¹⁴⁰ But Zionist insistence that the colony enjoy a wide measure of self-rule ensured that the Anglo-Jewish elite, who saw such autonomy as both unnecessary and dangerous, would deny its support. Unsurprisingly, this response mirrored earlier reactions to calls for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, with logistical critiques—in this case relating to the territory’s agricultural potential, the state of white settler opinion and the cost of settlement—largely secondary to philosophical concerns, specifically issues of governance.¹⁴¹

At one level, Anglo-Jewish leaders may have dismissed Jewish self-rule as superfluous. In their own vision for the scheme, East Africa was simply another haven for

¹³⁸ Autonomy was not the only relevant factor. According to one report, Herzl had set out three other criteria: territory large enough to settle a significant number of Eastern European Jews, land suitable for colonisation and sufficient enthusiasm within the movement. Whether the first three conditions were met is debatable; the fourth certainly was not. *JC* 9/6/05 Ed 8.

¹³⁹ *JC* 8/1/04 Ed 19.

¹⁴⁰ *JC* 25/9/03 Ed 18.

¹⁴¹ Laurie Magnus, a leading proponent of Reform Judaism, made a theological case against East Africa. Like Gaster, he believed that there could be no substitute for the Holy Land. But while Gaster thought that efforts to secure Palestine should be redoubled, Magnus maintained that ‘Palestine was a single vision which cannot be schemed for.’ *The Times* 4/9/03 Letter 9.

persecuted Jews, differentiated from other settlements only in its privilege of flying the British flag. Like all other white settlers in the territory, the Jewish colonists would be British subjects, enjoying equal rights and contributing fully to the development of the Protectorate. The East Africa settlement would be not so much a 'training-ground' for Palestine as a demonstration of the potential to be realised in a 'Jewish colony conducted under the aegis of the greatest colonising power in the world'.¹⁴² But while the possible benefits of Jewish autonomy may have genuinely eluded those so deeply invested in their British citizenship, the Anglo-Jewish elite was not oblivious to its dangers. While the generous British offer was deemed 'worthy of the glorious traditions of this great country', it nonetheless threatened to do more harm than good.¹⁴³

If Greenberg and Zangwill were the primary Anglo-Zionist boosters for East Africa, Lucien Wolf occupied a similar position on behalf of the scheme's opponents.¹⁴⁴ His ability to shape both Jewish and non-Jewish opinion—he was now the Honorary Secretary for the Conjoint Foreign Committee as well as an editor at the *Daily Graphic*—was perhaps overestimated. (Greenberg, noticing his adversary's apparent influence on the editorial position of both *The Times* and the *JC*, warned Herzl of Wolf's 'insidious workings'.¹⁴⁵) But regardless of how his political influence is measured,

¹⁴² *JC* 9/10/03 Ed 17.

¹⁴³ *JC* 28/8/03 Ed 14. It is also worth speculating whether either the British authorities or Anglo-Jewish leaders believed Eastern European Jews ready for self-government. Although men like Chamberlain and Lansdowne may not have classified Eastern European Jews as the racial equals of Anglo-Saxons, they nonetheless deemed them sufficiently white to enjoy some degree of autonomy. Similarly, while the British Jewish elite frequently disparaged the 'backwardness' of their co-religionists' cultural and religious practices, a distinction should be drawn between this attitude and the prevalent assumption (which English Jews presumably also shared) that the innate racial and intellectual inferiority of Caribbeans, Africans and Indians made them incapable of ruling themselves. B. Cheyette, *Constructions of 'The Jew' in English Literature and Society: Racial Representations, 1875-1945* (Cambridge, 1993), particularly 1-12, 55-93.

¹⁴⁴ Greenberg, 'British East Africa and Zionism', *Maccabean* (12/03), 359-62. On Zangwill see *Israel Zangwill: Speeches, Articles and Letters*, ed. M. Simon (London, 1937), 181-97.

¹⁴⁵ On the same day that Wolf's first East Africa letter was published in *The Times*, the paper ran an editorial questioning the scheme (28/8/03 7). The following week, the *JC* noted its agreement with his position (4/9/03 Ed 17). 23/10/03 LG Papers, (ZA): AK86/1.

Wolf's writings on East Africa are the pre-eminent source for assessing establishment Jewish opinion on the East Africa project.¹⁴⁶

Like many of the scheme's critics—who included Samuel Montagu, Claude Montefiore, Laurie Magnus and the editors of both major Jewish newspapers—Wolf emphasised that he had no interest in impeding Jewish emigration to the Protectorate.¹⁴⁷ What he deplored was the prospect of self-government.¹⁴⁸ It was, in the first instance, bad for the Empire; in avoiding the creation of autonomous conglomerates within the imperial system, past leaders had acted wisely.¹⁴⁹ Beyond this brief comment, however, Wolf appears to have been concerned solely with the *Jewish* consequences of the proposed policy. He outlined three major problems: the vital project of Jewish modernisation and self-improvement could not take place in a 'ghetto'; self-imposed isolation represented an overly hasty surrender to the argument that Jews could not be integrated; and third, by proclaiming Jewish separatism, the plan exacerbated existing anti-Semitism and endangered ongoing efforts to gain and safeguard Jewish civil equality.

Though Wolf's views were generally shared by the elite Jewish community for which he was a spokesperson, this first objection may not have been widely endorsed. Shortly after the East Africa plan was announced, Wolf wrote in a letter to *The Times* that the Zionists wished for self-rule so as to be able to 'observe their national customs'. Yet as noted earlier, Wolf did not believe that the Jews constituted a nation in any meaningful sense of the word. Accordingly he argued that Eastern European Jews could not purport to possess national customs. These were at best 'some disagreeable habits of

¹⁴⁶ His letters to *The Times* on 28/8/03 (5) and 8/9/03 (5) were also reprinted in the Jewish press. *JC* 4/9/03 15, 11/9/03 14; *JW* 4/9/03 469, 11/9/03 488-9.

¹⁴⁷ On Montagu and Montefiore see 29/5/04 Greenberg to Herzl, LG Papers, (ZA): AK86/1; *JC* 7/4/05 15. Magnus' objections were explained in a letter to *The Times* (4/9/03 9).

¹⁴⁸ See also *JC* 4/9/03 Ed 17: 'the Home Rule or political element in the enterprise is to be deprecated.'

¹⁴⁹ *The Times* 28/8/03 Letter 5.

life' which the creation of a 'Polish ghetto' would only serve to perpetuate. Isolation would deprive the Jewish settlers of the civilising influence of Western—particularly British—values, the inculcation of which was one of the major purposes of emigration schemes.¹⁵⁰

That escape from persecution was a good unto itself Wolf did not deny. Yet he contended that creating an autonomous Jewish settlement in East Africa would be like waving a white flag while winning the battle. It was, Wolf declared, nothing short of a 'comprehensive capitulation to the calumnies of the Anti-Semites'.¹⁵¹ The evidence of the past one hundred years demonstrated clearly that Jews could be good citizens of the nations in which they resided.¹⁵² But they could not refute the claims of the Goldwin Smiths, Stoeckers and Drumonts when the Zionists were determined to show that 'we are in truth an unassimilable element among Christian peoples'.¹⁵³ The *JC* presented a similar argument. Despite the achievement of Jewish civic equality in all but three of Europe's nations (Russia, Romania and Turkey), the Zionists were announcing emancipation's failure. Surely this was a 'hasty gesture of impatience, an unwarrantable groan of despair born out of an incomplete grasp of the whole truth.' The stark choice posed between 'racial suicide' or disappearance to a far corner of Africa was a false one.¹⁵⁴

In his second letter to *The Times*, dated 8 September 1903, Wolf wrote of the East Africa proposal: 'It is a libel on the past and a peril for the future.'¹⁵⁵ Just several weeks after the Zionist Congress, events already appeared to justify this warning. The

¹⁵⁰ *The Times* 28/8/03 Letter 5. The *JW* struck what could be seen as a contrary note, declaring, '[t]here is room under the British flag for men of various customs and nationalities.' But this was somewhat undercut by the assurance that the Jewish settlers would show themselves worthy. 11/9/03 Ed 491.

¹⁵¹ *The Times* 8/9/03 Letter 5.

¹⁵² 'The Zionist Peril' (Lecture to the Central Jewish Literary Society), *JC* 27/5/04 13-15.

¹⁵³ *The Times* 8/9/03 Letter 5.

¹⁵⁴ *JC* 27/5/04 Ed 8.

¹⁵⁵ Letter 5.

protests of white settlers in the BEAP led the *JC* to offer this wry observation: 'Already a telegram announces that anti-Semitism has got ahead of the Jews in East Africa. A good Zionist can perhaps afford to smile—the new solution proves his original contention.'¹⁵⁶ Yet for Wolf, this news did not suggest the inevitability of anti-Semitism. The rhetoric emerging from the settler community, while deplorable, represented the short-term impact of Zionist propaganda on an otherwise tolerant population. According to Wolf, the residents of the Protectorate were not objecting to the presence of Jews as such, but to what one MP had described as the establishment of 'an independent alien polity in the bosom of an English colony'.¹⁵⁷

Although the accuracy of this observation is certainly doubtful, it is nonetheless indicative of the curious mix of confidence and uncertainty which characterised the Anglo-Jewish elite's response to the East Africa crisis. On the one hand its members proclaimed—and appear to have believed—that anti-Semitism could be beaten.¹⁵⁸ Yet even while heralding the transforming effect of tolerance on Europe's Jewish populations, they were keenly aware that this golden future was not close at hand. Under such conditions, was Africa the best alternative to another Kishinev, or would the scheme simply strengthen existing doubts regarding Jewish patriotism? In other words, could Jews 'claim to form part of the Russian and Romanian nationalities' if their co-religionists sought a 'separate political existence' under the British flag?¹⁵⁹

To most, the answer to that final enquiry was clear: in its current form, the East Africa plan was impossible. Yet given the urgent need for refuge, some hoped that the autonomy problem could be resolved. A modicum of flexibility therefore existed. Just

¹⁵⁶ *JC* 28/8/03 14.

¹⁵⁷ *JC* 4/3/04 Interview, Ed 22-3.

¹⁵⁸ See Montefiore's speech at the AJA annual meeting, *JC* 9/12/04 13.

¹⁵⁹ *The Times* 8/9/03 5.

how much autonomy did the Zionists actually require, the *JC* asked in mid 1904. If it was simply a question of powers like those of the London County Council, whose exceptionally limited authority consisted of little more than control over gas and power supplies, perhaps that should be allowed. Several months earlier, in response to the ICA's refusal to cooperate in politically motivated colonisation, the paper confessed that there were 'probably many others who would have preferred to see objections to local autonomy subordinated' to the greater good of saving Jews from oppression.¹⁶⁰

Discussions about the meaning and content of autonomy were only relevant if the project was otherwise viable. Yet the ZO, facing ongoing fission over East Africa and a leadership vacuum after Herzl's unexpected death, had still not managed to send out a team of surveyors. Without their report, the true prospects of the territory—for the Zionists or anyone else—remained unknown. Although a commission was finally dispatched in early 1905, it was now becoming increasingly unlikely either that the government offer would still be honoured (a recent influx of new colonists into the BEAP had weakened the project's original political and geographic logic) or that the Zionists would be able to reach internal consensus.¹⁶¹ In order to make the best of the situation, the General Actions Committee approved another approach to non-Zionist organisations. Subject to the receipt of a positive report, the ICA and AJA would be invited either to collaborate in, or to assume total control for, Jewish colonisation of the BEAP.

When the AJA convened in April, it was still unclear whether the proposed conference would even take place.¹⁶² Debate was nonetheless heated. Wolf called attention to the organisation's founding mission: helping non-British Jews to gain social and political

¹⁶⁰ *JC* 8/1/04 Ed 19.

¹⁶¹ *JC* 25/11/04 Ed 7, 17/2/05 30-1.

¹⁶² *JC* 7/4/05 Ed 7, 14-15.

equality. The AJA would be contravening its most basic principles, he argued, by participating in a scheme which implied abandoning hope. Montefiore, who spoke as President, also queried whether the AJA had an appropriate role to play. The group's funds had always gone to support educational activities; it was not a colonising society. Furthermore, the AJA's reputation with foreign governments, which was crucial to its work in fighting persecution, would be sullied by its association with a Zionist scheme.¹⁶³ Two other members—Oswald Simon and Elkan Adler—agreed. The AJA could not allow a public flirtation with advocates of Jewish autonomy.

It is therefore rather surprising that those present voted to accept the Zionist invitation. Importantly, however, their resolution included this caveat: the AJA would not favour any plan involving self-rule. Communal response to the decision was mixed. Some expressed satisfaction that the AJA and the Zionists were willing to engage in direct discussions.¹⁶⁴ Others were less impressed, though their dissatisfaction centred on the organisation's non-democratic, London centred process of policy-making, not on the conditions attached to collaboration.¹⁶⁵

Africa Reborn? Israel Zangwill and the ITO's Imperial Agenda

Following the publication of an altogether unfavourable survey report, the majority of delegates to that summer's Zionist Congress voted to terminate their movement's territorial misadventures.¹⁶⁶ Yet although the policy of 'Zionism without Zion' was officially discredited, the idea of a Jewish colony outside Palestine would have a curious

¹⁶³ Montefiore had made a similar point in refusing Gaster's request to send observers to the 1898 Zionist Congress. *JC* 18/2/98 17.

¹⁶⁴ *JC* 14/4/05 Letters 15-16.

¹⁶⁵ At a protest meeting organised by the Manchester Jewish community, every speaker concentrated on the need for due process. *JC* 5/5/05 33.

¹⁶⁶ *Report on the Work of the Commission Sent Out by the Zionist Organization to Examine the Territory Offered by H.M. Government to the Organization for the Purpose of a Jewish Settlement in East Africa* (London, 1905). On the conference see *JC* 4/8/05 15-25; Vital, *Formative Years*, 428-35.

sort of afterlife in the hands of Israel Zangwill and his newly formed Jewish Territorial Organisation.¹⁶⁷ In the years leading up to World War I, Zangwill and the ITO (as it was commonly known) would not only attempt to revive the earlier East Africa proposal but also pursue territorial opportunities within Mesopotamia, Cyrenaica, British Honduras, Australia and Angola.¹⁶⁸ Somewhat improbably, these projects garnered a measure of support from anti-Zionist stalwarts in Germany, the United States and—most importantly for our purposes—Great Britain.¹⁶⁹

Although he had left the Zionist movement, Zangwill had not rejected its conventional wisdom regarding the permanence of anti-Semitism and the need for a Jewish homeland. If anything, his insistence that Eastern European Jews required an immediate refuge suggests an unusually pessimistic outlook.¹⁷⁰ From this perspective, it would certainly appear that the ITO would not have been particularly attractive to establishment Anglo-Jewry. However, in several dimensions, the organisation was able to transcend its philosophical underpinnings.

As early as 1898, Zangwill expressed doubts regarding Palestine's suitability for Jewish colonisation.¹⁷¹ (In contrast to most Zionists, he insisted that a Jewish homeland required territory in which Jews could constitute a majority.) By 1905, with Palestine still in Turkish hands, and questions regarding its economic potential also unanswered, the ITO's rejection of 'Zion' Zionism could be seen as confirming the Jewish

¹⁶⁷ The phrase 'Zionism without Zion' appeared in a speech given by Israel Zangwill in April 1905. *Speeches of Israel Zangwill*, 212.

¹⁶⁸ On the ITO's East Africa negotiations see Weisbord, 'East African Zion', *JSS* 30:2 (1968), 89-108. On Mesopotamia: *JC* 10/5/09 14-5, 15/7/09 26-9; 23/11/09 Zangwill to Montefiore, IZ Papers, (ZA): A120/454; 21/4/09 Wolf to Zangwill, LW Papers, (ZA): A77/4; S.A. Cohen, 'Zangwill's Project', 200-209. On Cyrenaica see *Report of the Work of the Commission Sent Out by the Jewish Territorial Organization Under the Auspices of the Governor-General of Tripoli to Examine the Territory Proposed for the Purpose of a Jewish Settlement in Cyrenaica* (London, 1909). On Angola see Medina and Barromi, 'Jewish Colonization Project', 1-16.

¹⁶⁹ German backers included Paul Nathan and James Simon, founders of the *Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden*. In America, Oscar Strauss, soon to be appointed a member of Theodor Roosevelt's cabinet, the mining tycoon Daniel Guggenheim and Judge Meyer Sulzberger, first President of the elite American Jewish Committee, were all ITO supporters. Vital, *Formative Years*, 436-7.

¹⁷⁰ 'What is the ITO?', *ITO Leaflet No. 1* (London, 1905).

¹⁷¹ *Dreamers of the Ghetto* (London, 1898), Appendix.

establishment's original misgivings. Zangwill's self-promoting tendencies notwithstanding, the ITO's search for an extra-Palestinian territory was not a ploy to attract elite Jewish support. Nonetheless, this shared assessment of Palestine's impracticality, combined with the ITO's emphasis on a pragmatic, business-like approach to Jewry's needs, won it some prominent advocates within Anglo-Jewry.¹⁷²

An even greater asset in attracting British-Jewish sympathy was the ITO's implicit imperialism. With the exception of the Portuguese colony of Angola, all of the territories which the ITO pursued were either under direct British control (East Africa, Australia and British Honduras) or within the Empire's broader sphere of interest (Cyrenaica and Mesopotamia.¹⁷³) The ITO's Anglocentric focus was hardly accidental. Of all the leading powers, Britain had proved itself the most likely to support a Jewish colonisation scheme. Zangwill, while willing to consider any available territory (even those which did not meet key criteria¹⁷⁴), still hoped to establish his 'Itoland' on British soil. Others were far less equivocal about their patriotic motives. 'My chief interest in Iticism [i]s the founding of a ...colony within the British Empire,' Lucien Wolf asserted in mid 1907.¹⁷⁵ For Wolf and other Anglo-Jewish supporters—who formed the majority of the organisation's executive and membership—the synthesis of interests was obvious. Under the aegis of the ITO, Britain would see an infusion of Jewish capital and (white) labour into the 'wastelands' of the Empire. In return, Jews who could not 'or will not remain in the lands in which they at present live' would gain a permanent refuge.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² 'What is the ITO?'

¹⁷³ On British interests in Mesopotamia see S.A. Cohen, 'Prestige and Policy in British Imperialism Before 1914: The Case of Mesopotamia', *Bar Ilan Studies in History*, ed. P. Artzi (Ramat Gan, 1978), 179-95.

¹⁷⁴ In the case of East Africa, for example, the earlier survey had already cast doubt on the prospects for Jewish colonisation. Attempts to renew that offer therefore operated primarily as a means to establish the ITO's name and its reputation for activism. S.A. Cohen, *English Zionists*, 85-7, 97-8, 103-4.

¹⁷⁵ 29/7/07 Wolf to Zangwill, LW Papers, (ZA): A77/4. See also earlier Wolf-Zangwill correspondence reprinted in *ITO Leaflet No. 1* (London, 1905) and *JC* 15/9/05 16.

¹⁷⁶ *JC* 25/8/05 17. This facet of the ITO has not been addressed in the existing literature.

The Zionists' Sinai and East Africa projects had failed to gain establishment support because of an insistence on Jewish autonomy. Perhaps having learned from that failure, the ITO's position on Jewish self-rule remained ambiguous. The first article of its manifesto stated that the 'object of the organization is to procure a territory on an autonomous basis.' However, this apparently straightforward position was moderated by assurances that the colony was not intended as a homeland for all Jews. It could therefore be argued that the creation of an ITO colony would not impact adversely on the national status of Western Jews. Differing opinions regarding the political evolution of an 'IToland' were also allowed to stand. Zangwill undoubtedly sought an independent state of Jews, while Wolf and other liberals convinced themselves that the ITO intended no more than a 'model British Colony', with the gradual emergence of self-government which that implied. Attempts to clarify the ITO's place within the Jewish political landscape were complicated still further by the organisation's partial funding of Jacob Schiff's (non-autonomous) Galveston scheme.¹⁷⁷

For some members of the Anglo-Jewish elite, however, there was no disguising the ITO's essentially nationalist character. In December 1905 eight communal notables denounced the new territorialist movement in a letter to *The Times*.¹⁷⁸ Claude Montefiore, Lord Rothschild and Samuel Montagu all rejected offers to join the international council.¹⁷⁹ (As well as the predictable ideological and practical critiques, they also registered their personal dislike of Zangwill.) The AJA attempted to ignore the upstart organisation entirely.¹⁸⁰ Nonetheless, the list of those who agreed to join the ITO's British committee included not only a number of highly recognisable names but committed anti-Zionists as well: Wolf, Leopold de Rothschild, Laurie Magnus and

¹⁷⁷ Marinbach, *Galveston*. On the reasons for ITO involvement see for example 30/10/06 Wolf to Zangwill, LW Papers, (ZA): A77/4.

¹⁷⁸ 8/12/05 4.

¹⁷⁹ 15/11/09 Montefiore to Zangwill, IZ Papers, (ZA): A120/454. Rothschild later agreed to a symbolic post on the Geographical Commission.

¹⁸⁰ 17/4/15 Zangwill to Wolf, IZ Papers, (ZA): A120/4.

his mother, Lady Kate Magnus, London University registrar Sir Philip Hartog, Osmond D'Avigdor-Goldsmid, a future leader of both the Board of Deputies and the AJA, and Sir Lionel Abrahams, a high-ranking figure in the India Office.¹⁸¹ The ITO's broader impact on Anglo-Jewry was reflected in the pre-war emergence of fifty British chapters, comprising almost 5,000 members.¹⁸²

Yet while many wanted to believe in Zangwill's vision, the ITO would prove incapable of meeting its lofty goals. The Zionist movement's self-imposed political exile, combined with the desperate position of Eastern European Jewry, had provided the ITO with a critical opportunity. Tellingly, however, the problems encountered during the organisation's 1906-1907 East Africa campaign—unsuitable territory, noncommittal public officials and division between sectors of the international Jewish leadership—re-emerged in later negotiations over Cyrenaica, Mesopotamia and Angola. With each successive failure, the prospects for an ITOLand—remote from the outset—receded even further.

As measured by its practical achievements, the ITO must be judged a total failure. In the ideological realm, it is tempting to view it as a path not taken. At a time when few in the Jewish world could transcend the antagonism between Zionists and anti-Zionists, the ITO offered something of a third way. And for British Jews in particular, the ITO may have been the first to offer a synthesis for what were otherwise competing values: imperial patriotism, integrationist liberalism and Jewish collective responsibility.

¹⁸¹ JC 4/8/05 7-8, 19/1/06 30-31, 26/1/06 2, 2/2/06 23; Leonard Stein Papers, (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem): A185/113.

¹⁸² S.A. Cohen, *English Zionists*, 86. On the basis of available evidence, it is difficult to draw conclusions regarding the demographic makeup of the ITO's Anglo-Jewish supporters.

1917: A MARRIAGE OF INTERESTS OR A 'TROJAN HORSE'?¹

In a 1909 interview with Cambridge student and Zionist activist Norman Bentwich, the *Jewish Chronicle* asked him whether he thought that his fellow Zionists were able to 'completely identify themselves with the English nation'. Bentwich responded in the negative, stating that they found this to be impossible. Anglo-Zionists could not 'be as entirely English in thought as the man who was born of English parents and descended from ancestors who have mingled their blood with other Englishmen for generations ...There is no use disguising this fact.'²

For Bentwich, a leading light of the second generation of Britain's Zionist leaders—as well as a man born of English parents (his father, Herbert, was a barrister and member of a prominent and comfortable Hampstead clan)—this was perhaps a curious assertion.³ Less surprising was the reaction of the Jewish communal establishment. Twenty-five of its most prominent members (all graduates or current members of the Universities of Cambridge, Oxford and London) signed their names to a letter contesting Bentwich's claims.⁴ They soon received the support of the two leading religious authorities, the United Synagogue and the Federation of Synagogues.⁵

That letter, published on 9 April 1909, cited several by-now familiar objections to the views expressed by Bentwich and his fellow Zionists. By claiming they could not be wholly English, the respondents charged, the young Zionists were encouraging a

¹ S. Wendehorst, 'British Jewry, Zionism and the Jewish State', (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford Univ., 1997), 363.

² *JC* 26/3/09 32.

³ Norman Bentwich later wrote of his father, 'He belonged to that first generation of the full political and cultural emancipation of the Jew in Europe, which combined with equal energy and conviction the double loyalty, to the community from which it was sprung and to the country which had given it equal civic opportunity.' *Wanderer Between Two Worlds* (London, 1941), 1.

⁴ *JC* 9/4/09 6.

⁵ S.A. Cohen, *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1895-1920* (Princeton, 1982), 130.

dangerous and unproductive division between British Jews and their fellow citizens. Anglo-Zionists' persistence in identifying themselves as a body apart would cast suspicion not only on their own loyalties, but on those of the entire British Jewish community. Through their irresponsible statements and actions, they could even endanger the position of Jews living in Europe and beyond.

The 1909 controversy faded away as quickly as it had sprung up. But the Zionist question would return with a vengeance some five years later, this time, for a much longer duration. After protracted negotiation, debate and subterfuge, a climax of sorts would come on 2 November 1917, when Foreign Secretary Lord Balfour sent a brief note to Lord Rothschild conveying the government's support for a Jewish national home in Palestine.⁶ The Balfour Declaration initiated three decades of a British imperial experiment which would not only prove to be one of its most difficult and least well-regarded, but which would also reshape the course of Jewish (and Palestinian) history. As for Anglo-Jewry, it now found itself at the intersection of British imperial policy and Jewish national aspirations.

The labyrinth of diplomacy and intrigue preceding the Balfour Declaration has been detailed assiduously by earlier researchers.⁷ Therefore my goal in this chapter is to focus attention on a subject which has received somewhat less attention: the role and

⁶ On the factors influencing the date of publication see T. Segev, *One Palestine Complete: Jews and Arabs Under the British Mandate*, tr. H. Watzman (New York, 1999), 49-50.

⁷ L. Stein, *The Balfour Declaration* (London, 1959); I. Friedman, *The Question of Palestine, 1914-1918: British-Jewish Arab Relations* (London, 1973); M. Levene, *War, Jews and the New Europe: The Diplomacy of Lucien Wolf, 1914-1919* (Oxford, 1992), 65-160; S.A. Cohen, *English Zionists*, 215-76. The first two texts concentrate on international relations, the latter on internal Anglo-Jewish dynamics. Levene's focus is the wartime activism of his subject, the Conjoint secretary Lucien Wolf, while Cohen examines the communal controversy over the Declaration. Although a discussion of Wolf is certainly indispensable to this chapter, my emphasis is not on the scope and significance of Anglo-Jewish 'war aims' a whole, but on the place and meaning of patriotism and anti-Zionism in the establishment's overall world-view. Cohen's history of Anglo-Jewry's relationship to Zionism is unsurpassed. However, he does not consider the imperial dimension of the Zionist question and is concerned particularly with the internal politics of Anglo-Zionism. With regard to sources, this chapter does draw from a similar body of governmental, Zionist and anti-Zionist memoranda and correspondence. Given the prodigious body of scholarship around the Declaration, this is perhaps inevitable. However, I have made extensive use of the Leonard Stein Papers at the University of Oxford (used minimally by Chaim Weizmann's biographer, Jehuda Reinharz) as well the pro-imperial Zionist propaganda organ, *Palestine*, which has hitherto received just a passing mention.

ideological outlook of the Anglo-Jewish establishment, in particular, the challenge which the prospect of a British-Jewish Palestine posed to the consonance of three core values—faith in the integrationist ideal, commitment to aid less fortunate Jews and allegiance to Britain and its imperial mission.

During the El Arish and East Africa episodes of 1903-1905, the natural inclinations of these imperially minded citizens were overwhelmed by the threatening spectre of Jewish political autonomy. The events of 1914-1917 would pose a similar challenge and provoke a similar response. Yet if the world-view of the Anglo-Jewish establishment remained largely constant, the world around it had not. The outbreak of war brought considerable upheaval to Eastern Europe, though whether this signalled an improvement or decline in Jewish fortunes was not immediately clear.⁸ At home, Jewish loyalties were once again called into question. And by 1917, not only did it seem probable that Palestine would end up on the bargaining table at the war's end, but Zionism was—for both utilitarian and sentimental reasons—finding increasing favour in British officialdom. Thus while its instincts and convictions ultimately guided it in the same direction, the Anglo-Jewish establishment's continued opposition to Jewish nationalism took on a different meaning—and indeed a greater importance—in the context of these developments.

Several questions emerge from this background. Why did the prospect of (some) relief for Eastern European Jews—for whom communal leaders had long-advocated—once again fail to elicit their support?⁹ Moreover, why did the establishment refuse to back a

⁸ J. Frankel, 'The Paradoxical Politics of Marginality: Thoughts on the Jewish Situation During the Years 1914-1921', in id., (ed.), *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, iv: *The Jews and the European Crisis 1914-1921* (New York, 1988), 3-21; V.G. Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity and German Occupation in World War I* (Cambridge, 2000); American Jewish Committee, *Jews in the Eastern War Zone* (New York, 1916).

⁹ Even Zionists did not believe that Palestine could absorb the vast numbers displaced by the war. According to one estimate, emigration over the next fifty years would only offset Eastern European Jewry's natural growth rate. 20/10/14

programme that not only promised to increase the lustre of the Empire and to help bring civilisation to the Levant, but now also enjoyed the firm support of their own government? As one Zionist critic queried, was it possible to be 'more English than the English'?¹⁰

Between 1914 and 1917, it was alleged that these critics of Jewish nationalism were, by opposing a government declaration for Palestine, placing British interests before Jewish concerns.¹¹ (Interestingly, this claim was to some extent corroborated by members of the establishment, who asserted that in the event of conflicting priorities, their loyalty to the state would supersede obligations to their fellow Jews.¹²) However, in answering the questions posed above, I would argue for a rather different interpretation. On the whole, Anglo-Jewish opponents of a British declaration for Palestine did not challenge the claim that it furthered national and imperial interests. Unlike Edwin Montagu, Lloyd George's Secretary of State for India (despite his lineage—he was the son of Samuel Montagu and a first cousin of Herbert and Stuart Samuel—he did not count himself within the Jewish community),¹³ members of the communal establishment also failed to consider the plan's consequences for Palestine's Arab populations or its potential effect on Muslim opinion within the Empire.¹⁴ Equally, they did not appear to believe—as some politicians did—that imperial expansion in the

Weizmann to Israel Zangwill, C. Weizmann, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann: Series A*, vii: *Letters August 1914–November 1917*, ed. L. Stein (London, 1975), 47-9.

¹⁰ 16/2/15 Moses Gaster to Jacob Moser (a fellow Anglo-Zionist), Leonard Stein Papers, (University of Oxford): 64.

¹¹ 6/3/15 Weizmann to Gaster LS Papers, (Oxford): 64; 1/6/17 Weizmann to Harry Lewis, Lucien Wolf Papers, (Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem): A77/3/2.

¹² See for example Philip Magnus and Claude Montefiore's responses to the last-minute government solicitation of Jewish opinion regarding a declaration for Palestine. 12/10/17 LS Papers, (Oxford): 1.

¹³ Based on the definition of elective affinity which I made in Chapter 1, I do not include Edwin Montagu within the Anglo-Jewish establishment. He more closely fits Todd Endelman's description of a radical assimilationist. Montagu played a significant (obstructive) role in the crafting of the Declaration, but he positioned himself as a Cabinet member, not as a British Jew, much less a representative of Anglo-Jewry. E. Black, 'Edwin Montagu', *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, NS30 (1987), 199-218; Endelman, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History, 1656-1945* (Bloomington, 1990), 106-7.

¹⁴ One exception is the ITO founder, Israel Zangwill, who was attuned to the Arab question from an early date. 28/10/14 Zangwill to Weizmann, Israel Zangwill Papers, (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem): A120/609.

Near East was incompatible with the maintenance of Britain's existing responsibilities.¹⁵ What they continued to contend, however, was that British support for a Jewish homeland would, by validating the existence of a distinct Jewish nationality, not only destabilise the position of Jews living in the West, but also undermine the ongoing campaign for Jewish rights in the East. In that sense, the establishment's conviction that a British-Jewish Palestine (as the Zionists conceived of it¹⁶) was 'bad for the Jews' trumped the possibility that it was good for Britain and the Empire.

Anti-Zionist politics were of necessity a response to the Zionist programme. Therefore, while I will examine the events of 1914 to 1917 largely from the perspective of the Jewish establishment, some broader context is also required. To that end, I will look briefly at the position of the Zionist leadership (primarily in England, but with reference to the international movement where necessary) as well as that of pro-Palestine advocates in the government. My interest in these sections will be to introduce the individuals who would become the architects of the Declaration and therefore, to at least some extent, the adversaries of the communal elite. More importantly, I also hope to shed light on the rationale which these two parties assembled in support of a British-Jewish Palestine—particularly the imperial case constructed by Anglo-Jewish Zionists—as well as the confluence of personalities and events which brought about Balfour's 2 November letter to Lord Rothschild.

Shifting focus back to the anti-Zionist establishment, I will analyse the wider impact of the war on this population, considering in particular its role in intra-communal debates regarding Jewish loyalty (notably the controversy over conscripting non-naturalised

¹⁵ Reinharz, *Chaim Weizmann: Making of a Zionist Leader* (New York, 1993), 25-30.

¹⁶ In the interregnum between Uganda and the war, the majority of the Zionist Organisation endorsed a programme of 'synthetic Zionism' virtually indistinguishable from the 'colonising' Zionism previously espoused by the Chovevei Zion. This was, as David Vital has described it, 'Zionism writ small': open immigration to Palestine and the provision of development resources without demands for autonomy or special rights. By 1915, new political opportunities led to the resurrection of a more overtly nationalist agenda. Vital, *Zionism: The Crucial Phase* (Oxford, 1987), 3-88.

Russian Jews) and how best to confront the situation in Eastern Europe. These conflicts—which were, in a very real sense, a struggle to define the composition and values of organised Anglo-Jewry—will provide a backdrop for examining elite reactions to Zionism’s renewed political and ideological challenge. The final section will review the establishment’s May 1917 attempts to sabotage a pro-Zionist declaration and the backlash this produced within the broader Jewish community. I will conclude with some reflections on the implications of those events, as well as the wartime question of Zionism more generally, for the position and outlook of the Anglo-Jewish elite.

Dramatis Personae

Whitehall and the Political Intelligentsia

While British policy makers’ emotional and strategic interest in the Holy Land long preceded World War I, the outbreak of war focused an unprecedented level of attention in the direction of the Near East. It was within that context that the idea of giving Palestine to the Jews began to gain credibility. The initial trigger was Turkey’s decision, on 5 November 1914, to join the Central Powers. Regardless of the war’s outcome, it was practically assured that the sick man of Europe—who had long benefited from Europe’s collective commitment to maintain regional stability via Ottoman territorial integrity—would not survive it intact.¹⁷ With the sounding of the ‘death knell of Ottoman dominion’, the senior Allied partners began to consider the fate of Turkey’s Levantine and Arabian territories.¹⁸ Although the taste for direct colonial rule may have been fading, Woodrow Wilson’s idealistic vision of a post-imperial world found little favour with either British under-secretaries or their French counterparts. In

¹⁷ This implicit promise was already eroding. See M. Kent, (ed.), *The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire* (London, 1984).

¹⁸ The phrase was used by Prime Minister Asquith. *The Times* 10/11/14 9.

Whitehall and the Quai d'Orsay, therefore, officials attempted to mediate between their nations' competing interests while also assuring that they kept Russia out.

Failure at Gallipoli and the ceaseless demand for reinforcements on the Western Front meant that for now at least there was no serious talk of invading Palestine. Nonetheless, the imperative to protect Egypt (annexed at the war's start) and the Canal route necessitated that some attention be paid to the Levant. Accordingly, an initial attempt to define Britain's regional objectives took place in early 1915 under the auspices of the de Bunsen Committee. Within this forum, and through more informal channels, three main proposals emerged: a British sponsored home for the Jews in Palestine, some degree of independence for the Arab peoples and a division of the region into Anglo and French spheres of interest.¹⁹

The first of these options had in fact been in circulation for some time. It could already claim advocates within Lord Milner's 'Kindergarten' (a group of young imperialists recruited to lead South African reconstruction) and amongst the regular contributors to the *Round Table*, the patron of these groups, and another well-placed promoter of the plan, was Lady Astor.²⁰ Within government, supporters included Asquith's Home Secretary, Herbert Samuel (following Britain's receipt of the Palestine Mandate, he would be appointed the first High Commissioner) and the current Minister for Munitions—soon to be Prime Minister—David Lloyd George. Its foremost Jewish backer was the Zionist leader and noted scientist, Chaim Weizmann.²¹ Although lobbying of the Cabinet (largely by representatives of the international Zionist movement) began in

¹⁹ The de Bunsen report is reprinted in J.C. Hurewitz, (ed.), *The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics: A Documentary Record* ii. (New Haven, 1979), 26-46. See also A.S. Kleinman, 'Britain's War Aims in the Middle East in 1915', *Journal of Contemporary History* 3:3 (1968), 237-51.

²⁰ Key figures included Leo Amery and Philip Kerr (later Lord Lothian), both of whom joined Lloyd George's War Cabinet Secretariat. J. Kendle, *The Round Table Movement and Imperial Union* (Toronto, 1975).

²¹ Weizmann was unusual in this regard, as most of his fellow Zionists were initially pro-German. The Zionist Organisation signalled its official neutrality by moving its headquarters from Berlin to Copenhagen. Vital, *Crucial Phase*, 120-29.

late 1914, the case would not receive serious consideration until the advent of a new coalition two years later.

During the early stages of the war, official attention was focused instead on the region's Arab populations, whom some (most famously T.E. Lawrence) believed could aid Britain and France by fomenting a nationalist rebellion against the Turks.²² The price demanded for this assistance was support for Arab independence. However what became known as the McMahon-Hussein correspondence—Sir Henry McMahon was the British High Commissioner in Egypt, Hussein the Sherif of Mecca—co-existed with a third attempt to resolve the Levant's post-war status.²³ The Sykes-Picot Agreement (also referred to as the Asia Minor Agreement), signed in May 1916, represented what was for the time a more conventional approach to imperial rivalries. Britain's representative, MP Mark Sykes, and Francois Georges Picot, first secretary at the French Embassy in London, simply decided between themselves how to divvy up the likely Ottoman spoils. France would gain Syria and Lebanon, two territories in which it already exercised cultural influence, while Britain would acquire Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq, whose oil was required for the Royal Navy's new ships), parts of the states bordering the Persian Gulf and Palestine.²⁴

Lloyd George's assumption of the post of Prime Minister in December 1916—which was accompanied by other high-level leadership changes and a shift in military strategy—

²² The consequence was the creation of what Lord Hardinge called a 'Frankenstein's monster'. Arab nationalism, once cultivated, was largely denied at the peace table. As a result, while Lawrence's plan had helped to get the British into the Middle East, it also sowed the seeds of their departure from it. Hardinge is cited in L. James, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire* (London, 1994), 361.

²³ The correspondence contained a critical, possibly intentional, ambiguity regarding whether the territory demarcated for an Arab homeland incorporated or excluded Palestine. The former interpretation would become the basis for claims that Palestine was a twice-promised land. Friedman, 'The Mc-Mahon Correspondence and the Question of Palestine', *JCH* 5:2 (1970), 83-122; E. Kedourie, *Into the Anglo-Arab Labyrinth: The McMahon-Husayn Correspondence and Its Interpretations, 1914-1939* (Cambridge, 1976). 24/10/30 'Foreign Office 371/14495 Memorandum (Confidential) 13778 on "The Exclusion of Palestine from the Area Assigned to Arab Independence by the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence of 1915-16"', Copy in LS Papers, (Oxford): 1.

²⁴ J. Nevakivi, *Britain, France and the Arab Middle East 1914-1920* (London, 1969), 45-67. Kedourie, *Labyrinth*, 159-84. Unlike the Balfour Declaration, none of these agreements was intended as a public document. Matters were therefore somewhat complicated by the Bolsheviks' publication of Sykes-Picot in the fall of 1917.

lent a degree of immediacy to these various suggestions for structuring post-Ottoman rule. It would soon prove to be a key turning point in the fortunes of the Zionists. In particular, the War Cabinet shake-up swept out several persons opposed to a British-Jewish Palestine (most notably Asquith's Foreign Secretary, Lord Grey²⁵) and raised the profile of some who already were sympathetic to the Zionist plan, including Lloyd George himself, Grey's replacement, Arthur Balfour, and the South African representative, Jan Smuts. With the exception of the implacable anti-Zionist Edwin Montagu, promoted to the post of Secretary of State for India, and the loss of Herbert Samuel to the opposition front bench, advocates for a Jewish Palestine under British auspices could hardly have hoped for better.

Events in the spring of 1917 also helped to clear the path towards a pro-Zionist declaration. In early March, the last Russian Czar, Nicolas II, was overthrown; a multi-party Provisional Government was quickly put into place. Several weeks later, Wilson finally brought the United States into the war as an Associated Power of the Entente. From a military perspective, neither the threat of Russian withdrawal (radical parties within the Duma were demanding a separate peace with the Germans) nor the promise of American reinforcements (not expected to reach the Continent until the following year) altered Britain's current priorities in the Middle East.²⁶ Their impact can therefore only be understood by outlining some of the other motivations and assumptions at work in Whitehall.

The men in and around the War Cabinet were certainly not the first to believe that Britain's destiny was in some sense wrapped up with that of the Holy Land and its

²⁵ 16/3/16 'FO 371/2767 Nicolson to Buchanan', Copy in LS Papers, (Oxford): 2.

²⁶ Although the Cabinet now authorised a revival of 'forward operations' in the Middle East, the Turkish theatre remained a sideshow. The conquest of Palestine would be achieved with a motley assortment of English, Jewish, Commonwealth and Indian forces. D. Lloyd George, *War Memoirs*, 2 vols (2nd edn., London, 1938), ii., 1081-3; M. Hughes, *Allenby and British Strategy in the Middle East 1917-1919* (London, 1999), 9-70.

chosen people. During a private interview with Lucien Wolf, Herbert Samuel expressed the belief that 'something would have to be done' in Palestine because 'Christian opinion expected it, and Christian religious feeling was deeply stirred by it.'²⁷ Samuel, while perhaps overestimating the imperative for political action, was not mistaken regarding the depth of religious emotion which Palestine aroused. Within the government, Lloyd George's mystically tinged Zionism owed itself almost entirely to his Welsh Protestant roots. Similarly, Balfour had a profound interest in the history of the Jews, a product, his niece and biographer Blanche Dugdale later asserted, of Scottish educational emphasis on the Old Testament.²⁸ And for many of the war-weary—soldiers and civilians alike—the promise of redeeming Jerusalem after a hiatus of 700 years helped to endow the prospective Middle East campaign with a higher moral purpose.²⁹ Such sentimental motives were neither the sole, nor even the primary, justification for the pursuit of a British-Jewish Palestine. However, the emotional pull which Palestine exercised was undeniable. If British attachment to India, for example, emerged as a result of direct engagement (commercial, then political), the opposite was true in Palestine. Here political commitment followed the attachment and was, at least in part, a consequence of it.³⁰

Palestine's strategic advantages were also well-understood. It had long been argued that Palestine could play a crucial role in holding Egypt and the Canal, and, by extension, in safeguarding India. Now there was an opportunity to realise this potential. Moreover, within the context of regional political realignment (one official

²⁷ 26/2/15 LW Papers, (ZA): A77/3/1.

²⁸ Dugdale, *Arthur James Balfour*, 2 vols. (London, 1936) i., 433. See also ii., 216-7.

²⁹ V. Gilbert, *The Romance of the Last Crusade* (New York, 1926), 171-9. E. Bar-Yosef, 'The Last Crusade? British Propaganda and the Palestine Campaign, 1917-18', *JCH* 36:1 (2001), 87-109.

³⁰ Although I have taken the example of India, it could also be applied to most, if not all, of Britain's imperial engagements. On this basis, Palestine would appear to be exceptional.

even argued that Britain should seek a Near Eastern Monroe Doctrine³¹), many believed that a British-Jewish Palestine could operate as a cultural intermediary between Europe and the Orient.³² (Kipling expressed this idea vividly when he wrote that 'Palestine must be the buckle on the belt of the world, the bridge between East and West.'³³) But it was not enough to simply hold Palestine. It also had to be populated with the right sort of people. And while affection and regard for the Arab peoples exerted a profound influence on other dimensions of Britain's Middle Eastern policies, Palestine's current inhabitants were seen as decidedly inferior.³⁴ An Occidental influence could only be cultivated by inviting the Jews to settle.³⁵

According to some, there were other, even more important, benefits to be accrued from such an arrangement. Writing to Sir John Buchanan, the British Ambassador in Petrograd, Sykes impressed upon him the 'inestimable advantage to the allied cause of [the] active friendship of Jews of the World'. Accordingly, he suggested that the Zionists should 'give some demonstration of their power; accentuation of German financial straits and glow of pro-allied sentiment in certain hitherto anti-ally neutral papers would be sufficient indication.'³⁶ Sykes was not unique in his conviction that Jews possessed a controlling influence over modern society's three main receptacles of power: finance, the press and government.³⁷ Yet perhaps at no time previously had the reality of Jewish helplessness—specifically *vis-à-vis* the declining situation in the

³¹ Leo Amery made this comment in a letter to W.M. Hughes, the future Australian Prime Minister. The reference to America's 1820 statement of intent regarding Latin America is intriguing, as the Monroe Doctrine did not attempt to impose direct rule in the region. Rather, it established an American sphere of interest and sought to exclude other powers from commercial or political intervention. The other powers in the British case were in effect just one: France. Amery, *The Leo Amery Diaries, i: 1896-1929*, ed. J. Barnes and D. Nicholson (London, 1980), 174.

³² See 25/4/17 'Notes from an interview with Weizmann and Lord Cecil', LS Papers, (Oxford): 13.

³³ Cited in Bentwich, *Wanderer*, 152. Kipling apparently made this observation on an inspection of British military cemeteries in Palestine.

³⁴ David Cannadine argues that British romantics and social conservatives saw the Arab world as one where, in contrast to their own, order, deference and tradition still prevailed. *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (London, 2001), 72-3.

³⁵ 19/4/18 William Ormsby-Gore (assistant to Lord Milner) to Sir Maurice Hankey (Secretary to the Committee on Imperial Defence), Copy in LS Papers, (Oxford): 6.

³⁶ 14-5/3/16 'FO 371/2767/961', Copy in LS Papers, (Oxford): 1.

³⁷ Lloyd George, *Memoirs of the Peace Conference*, 2 vols. (New Haven, 1939), ii., 724-6, 737. Frankel, 'Paradoxical Politics', 3-21; Levene, 'The Balfour Declaration: A Case of Mistaken Identity', *English Historical Review* 107:422 (1992), 54-77. M. Vereté, 'The Balfour Declaration and Its Makers', *Middle Eastern Studies* 6:1 (1970), 48-76.

East—been so obvious to Jews themselves. This gap between fact and mythology would make for 'paradoxical politics', nowhere more so than with regards to Jewish nationalism and the future of Palestine.

By 1917, these assumptions regarding world Jewry's powers, combined with a mistaken belief in its Zionist proclivities, intersected with two crises in British war strategy: the United States' delayed entry into the war and growing Russian desire for a separate peace with Germany. In both instances, the aim of pacifying Jewish opinion—American Jewry was alleged to harbour pro-German tendencies, while Russian Jewish radicals were thought capable of keeping their country in the war—would take Britain a good deal further on the road to the Declaration.³⁸ Yet this analysis contained a critical flaw. Neither American nor Russian Jews possessed anything resembling the degree of influence which the British imagined them to have. Firstly, their collective power was limited; for instance, while Russian Jewry had (finally) achieved legal equality on 22 March, the organised community—which was hardly uniformly Zionist—did not gain leverage on the national political stage. Furthermore, Jews in positions of authority tended to view political Zionism either as a surrender to anti-Semitism (in the case of prominent American liberals like Henry Morgenthau, United States Ambassador to Turkey, and Wilson's close advisor, Oscar Strauss) or as just another form of chauvinist nationalism. (This was almost uniformly true of Russian-Jewish Bolsheviks.)

But, proving the old adage true, such facts were not allowed to get in the way of a good story. With Zionist encouragement, British policy-makers had come to believe that redeeming Palestine from the Ottomans would not only unlock the sympathies of

³⁸ The former claim had at least a passing acquaintance with reality. Prominent American Jews like Jacob Schiff made no secret of their cultural affinity and general sympathy with Germany. Russia's treatment of its Jewish population operated as a further barrier to wholehearted American-Jewish support for the Entente. See 14/6/15 Schiff to Wolf, LW Papers, (ZA): A77/3/13; 15/6/15 J.D. Eisenstein (the American editor of the *Hebrew Encyclopedia*) to Wolf, LW Papers, (ZA): A77/3/5.

world Jewry but also help to ensure an Entente victory.³⁹ The Anglo-Jewish establishment, despite its best efforts, could not deliver such a prize.

The Zionists

At first glance, however, the government had chosen rather improbable bedfellows. British Zionism was, as late as 1914, in a shambolic state. Although the English Zionist Federation had achieved some degree of institutionalisation over the previous decade, funds and members were still lacking.⁴⁰ Unity was also in short supply. Not only were local societies intent on preserving their independence—leading to a tug of war between London and the provinces—but conflicts of principle as well as personality inhibited organisational coherence. There was undeniably substantive basis to some of these disputes. Opinions differed, for example, on the desired relationship with Zangwill and the ITO. Moreover, policy differences within the EZF mirrored the broader split within the Zionist Organisation between adherents of 'practical', also known as 'synthetic', Zionism and political, or 'pure', Zionism, with the former favouring cultural work in the diaspora and Palestine colonisation (within the existing constraints) and the latter reiterating Herzl's position: that international recognition of Zionism was a prerequisite for further development.⁴¹ Without question, however, many of English Zionism's problems, in particular its leadership crises and internal polarisation, were attributable to the competing egos and irascible tempers of its first-generation leaders.⁴²

³⁹ 1/9/15 Samuel, 'The Future of Palestine', Copy in LS Papers, (Oxford): 1.

⁴⁰ The EZF's pre-war membership never exceeded 4,000. This would mean that in 1914 a maximum of five to six percent of Britain's adult Jewish population could be considered 'officially' Zionist. S.A. Cohen, *English Zionists*, 107.

⁴¹ On the content of those positions see Vital, *Zionism: The Formative Years* (Oxford, 1988), 412-78 and *Crucial Phase*, 8-85.

⁴² See Black, 'A Typological Study of English Zionists', *JSS* 9:3 (2003), 29-32. Gaster was particularly susceptible to such charges. S.A. Cohen, *English Zionists*, 110-15; V. Hein, *The British Followers of Theodor Herzl: English Zionist Leaders, 1896-1904* (New York, 1987), 67-90. For a more sympathetic assessment see J. Renton, 'Reconsidering Chaim Weizmann and Moses Gaster in the Founding-Mythology of Zionism', in M. Berkowitz, (ed.), *Nationalism, Zionism and the Ethnic Mobilization of the Jews in 1900 and Beyond* (Leiden, 2004), 129-51.

Yet responsibility for these shortcomings should not be laid entirely at the feet of the local leadership. Zionism's relative success in Germany during the same period (this was a minority, grassroots victory; activists were similarly unsuccessful in capturing the elite) was due largely to the ongoing difficulties of being Jewish in the *Reich*, not the superior calibre of leaders like Max Bodenheimer and Karl Blumenfeld, skilled though they might have been. Simply put, the Zionist claim that full Jewish acculturation was impossible would appear to have resonated with German Jews far more than it did across the Channel.⁴³

This came as no small consolation to the movement's Anglo-Jewish opponents, who for most of the period between the denouement of the East Africa plan and the outbreak of war believed that a resurgence of tolerance, combined with the movement's own self-destructive tendencies, had largely neutralised the 'Zionist Peril' in Britain. Indeed, critiques of domestic Zionist activity were hardly limited to the anti-Zionists. Ahad Ha'am (Asher Ginsburg), the sage of cultural Zionism, and—to a lesser extent—Chaim Weizmann, both found British Zionism to be intellectually stultifying and petty-minded. The former largely boycotted public Zionist activity during his time as the British representative for the Wissotsky tea company, while Weizmann, despite holding leadership positions in the EZF (he became its President in February 1917), tried to remain above the fray.⁴⁴

Leadership of the EZF could perhaps have given Weizmann a patina of authority in his approaches to the government. But this diplomat *par excellence* did not position

⁴³ S. Poppel, *Zionism in Germany, 1897-1933* (Philadelphia, 1976), 21-77; H. Lavsky, *The Distinctive Path of German Zionism* (Detroit, 1996), 11-31. Wendehorst, 'Zionism in Britain and Germany: A Comparison', in M. Brenner and R. Liedtke, et al. (eds.), *Two Nations: British and German Jews in Comparative Perspective* (Tübingen, 1999), 193-218.

⁴⁴ Ginsburg, however, did not think any more highly of the anti-Zionists. He was reputed to have described the British Jewish community in which he resided for fifteen years as a 'cemetery of pretty gravestones'. Quoted in Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England* (London, 1960), 281. See also S.J. Zipperstein, *Elusive Prophet: Ahad Ha'am and the Origins of Zionism* (London, 1993), particularly 277-310.

himself as a representative either of Anglo-Jewry or of British Zionism. He was, rather, an envoy of the international Zionist movement and, more broadly, 'world Jewry'. For this reason, and because he has already been the subject of extensive scholarship, I will focus exclusively on the following aspects of Weizmann's wartime Zionist work: his (largely successful) attempt to usurp the traditional diplomatic role of the Anglo-Jewish elite; his consummate grasp of the imperial significance of the Palestine question; and his ability to convince those in positions of (secular) authority that Jewish and British interests would both be served by the creation of a Jewish homeland there.⁴⁵

While Herzl had been the first to see England as the Archimedean point on which Zionist fortunes would turn, Weizmann would prove the accuracy of that prediction. More than any other Zionist leader, he was wholly committed to Britain. His dual careers as scientist (he held a chemistry lectureship at Manchester University) and Zionist leader would be spent in the country of which he became a naturalised citizen in 1910. It was not until 1949, when he was appointed the first President of the State of Israel, that he would leave England altogether. But while intimacy can breed affection, Weizmann's Anglophilia was something more like a first principle, an article of faith. His friend and biographer, the philosopher Isaiah Berlin, explained that:

[T]o him, as to so many Jews of his background and upbringing in East Europe, England ...stood for settled democracy, humane and peaceful civilization, civil liberty, legal equality, stability, toleration, respect for individual rights ...everything, in short, that ...[they] craved for most of all and lacked most deeply in their own midst.⁴⁶

As I have argued previously, such heartfelt loyalty was quite common amongst Eastern European Jews who immigrated to Britain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. What set Weizmann apart—and what made him appear as such a threat to

⁴⁵ The pre-eminent study is Reinharz. *Weizmann: Making of a Statesman* (New York, 1993). An earlier volume, *Chaim Weizmann: The Making of a Zionist Leader* (New York, 1985), treats his pre-war Zionist work. Correspondence is collated in *Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann: Series A*, 23 vols. ed. M. Weisgal et al. (New Brunswick, London and Jerusalem, 1968-1980).

⁴⁶ *Chaim Weizmann* (New York, 1958), 41-2. See also Stein, *Weizmann and England* (London, 1964), 9. The same point can be applied to Berlin himself, as Michael Ignatieff has noted. *Isaiah Berlin: A Life* (London, 2000), 31-2, 36.

the Jewish establishment—was that he put his British patriotism at the service of the Zionist cause.

Weizmann's conviction that an 'an imperial synthesis between England and Jewry would be the greatest thing imaginable,' was shared by a small but influential group of non-Jewish intelligentsia and policy-makers.⁴⁷ It was also taken up with enthusiasm by a number of his fellow Anglo-Zionists. Although there was nothing particularly revolutionary about this thesis, similar claims having been made long before Weizmann's arrival on the scene, the case would now be pursued with avidity. At the end of 1916 the Mancunian Zionists Harry Sacher, Simon Marks and Israel Sieff—in alliance with Albert Hyamson and Leon Simon, both based in London—founded the British Palestine Committee (BPC) to promote the idea of Palestine's inclusion within the Empire to the nation's political establishment. Publication of their mouthpiece, *Palestine*, soon began out of a small office at 170 Piccadilly. (With the exception of a small grant, the organisation maintained full independence from both the EZF and the ZO.)

The editors of *Palestine* (who also included the non-Jewish Henry Sidebotham, an editor at the *Manchester Guardian*⁴⁸) assembled a veritable arsenal of historic, moral and strategic justifications for Britain's imperial aims in that country.⁴⁹ Citing Britain's traditional backing for the idea of Jewish restoration, they noted that 'the mere list of names of our sympathisers'—including such figures as Lords Shaftesbury and Rosebery, Stratford Canning and E.L. Mitford—represented much of the best in English

⁴⁷ 4/7/15 Weizmann to Alfred Zimmern, *Letters and Papers*, vii, 220.

⁴⁸ The paper's editor-in-chief, C.P. Scott, was also a long-time supporter of Zionism.

⁴⁹ On the goals of the publication see 'The Policy of the Palestine Committee', LS Papers, (Oxford): 1.

life in the last century.⁵⁰ Far from being a 'new movement disconnected with the life of England', Zionism was rooted firmly in the nation's civic culture and religious life.

From the outset, *Palestine* also emphasised the synchronicity between Jewish claims to Palestine and British war aims. Britain had entered the current war, the paper argued, not only to advance justice and progress but to vindicate the rights of nationality. If the Belgians, Serbs and Poles could all lay claim to the nation's 'affectionate interest', then surely the ideal of a return of the Jews to Palestine was equally deserving of support.⁵¹ By responding to Jewry's age-old longing for Palestine and ensuring the establishment of a peaceful, stable and progressive government there, Britain would not only legitimate its decision to go to war but also earn the loyalty both of Palestine's inhabitants and Jews throughout the world.⁵² This final example—which demonstrates a savvy appreciation for contemporary perceptions of Jewish power—suggests that *Palestine* was not simply targeting philo-Semites and church-going matrons. Rather, its argument that economic and military self-interest favoured British-Jewish collaboration could be described as utilitarian.

'[L]est it should be thought that Jews are merely adding to the burdens on the war-weary shoulders of Atlas,' the editors explained, a Jewish Palestine under British auspices would make valuable contributions to Britain's position in the East.⁵³ Firstly, its patriotic and energetic population would be an 'impregnable bastion' safeguarding the most important imperial sea-road, Egypt, the 'Achilles heel' of the Empire and the

⁵⁰ *Palestine* 26/1/17 3-5, 6, 8/2/17 21-3, 1/3/17 43-5.

⁵¹ *Palestine* 26/1/17 1-2.

⁵² *Palestine* 4/4/17 92-3, 11/8/17 19-20.

⁵³ 26/1/17 1. See also Sidebotham, *England and Palestine: Essays Towards the Restoration of the Jewish State* (London, 1918), 173-201.

land route to India.⁵⁴ A British-Jewish Palestine also had a vital role to play in harmonising the Occident with the East.⁵⁵ Its Jewish inhabitants, who were Oriental in origin and 'in the stuff of their spirit and their mind', but who had nonetheless 'absorbed the science of the West', were ideally positioned not only to restore prosperity but to help mediate any future problems generated by Britain's historic lordship in the East.⁵⁶

Palestine's editors were adamant that only a British protectorate over Palestine, and the resettlement of the Jewish people there, could deliver security and prosperity to the region. In successive articles, each of the other policy alternatives under consideration—a separate peace with Turkey (under which it might retain sovereignty over Palestine), internationalisation (either a condominium or international guarantee) and American rule—were considered and dismissed.⁵⁷ The case thus made, the paper concluded on 27 October 1917, just days before the Balfour Declaration would be issued: 'It is seldom indeed that idealistic elements, the requirements of historic justice, the voice of democracy, and the arguments of interests all combine and harmonise and point to one and the same end. The case for a Jewish Palestine has that rare distinction.'⁵⁸

While *Palestine* endeavoured to enlist non-Jewish supporters into the Zionist ranks, the *JC* and the *Jewish World*, the two national Jewish newspapers, were making a similar

⁵⁴ 26/1/17 6, 21/2/17 11, 16, 15/2/17 15-30, 1/3/17 48, 24/3/17 69.

⁵⁵ 17/10/17 111-2.

⁵⁶ 22/2/17 35, 1/3/17 47-8, 24/3/17 63.

⁵⁷ 31/3/17 73-77, 5/5/17 118-20, 9/6/17 160, 23/6/17 169-72, 25/8/17 35, 17/10/17 111-2.

⁵⁸ 122-3.

effort to rouse the Anglo-Jewish public.⁵⁹ In particular, they challenged anti-Zionist claims that support for Jewish nationalism was incompatible with unalloyed commitment to Britain. By early 1917, as the extent of official support for the Zionists was becoming clear, the *JC* and the *JW* both declared that those who had stood aloof

on the supposition of implied disloyalty or from fear of the charge of divided allegiance would manifestly be driven to reconsider their position. To promote a movement which had become a British interest would, so far from being an act of separatism, be a patriotic duty.⁶⁰

Accordingly, in the months leading up to November's declaration, the papers featured editorials and unsigned pieces (in many cases written by Leopold Greenberg himself), as well as favourable reports from 'special correspondents' reinforcing the principle of a British-Jewish alliance and critiquing members of Anglo-Jewish society who continued to undermine the Zionists' efforts.⁶¹

In promoting their vision of a Jewish Palestine under British auspices, these propagandists also articulated—perhaps unconsciously—an understanding of national and imperial identity which was strikingly well-aligned with that posited by campaigners for imperial union. Recent efforts to strengthen and consolidate the relationship between Britain and its largely self-governing colonies (advanced, amongst others, by members of the Round Table) had been premised on the belief that local patriotism could co-exist alongside a wider, shared sense of Britishness. In Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, national self-consciousness was on the rise. However, apart from their ongoing requirements for migrants, markets and military protection, the colonies of white settlement still retained familial, cultural and linguistic (not to

⁵⁹ Leopold Greenberg purchased the *JC* in 1907 and gained control of the *JW* six years later. In both cases, the change in ownership resulted in a pro-Zionist editorial stance. D. Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry, 1841-1991* (Cambridge, 1994), 103-6, 122-6.

⁶⁰ *JC* 16/2/17 Ed 7; *Jewish World* 21/2/17 Ed 13. Although the editorial positions of the two papers were virtually indistinguishable, this instance of an identical article is unusual.

⁶¹ See for example *JW* 6/6/17 Ed 7; *JC* 13/3/17 Ed 3, 14/9/17 Ed 8.

mention racial) ties to the motherland.⁶² It was therefore envisioned that this shared history, combined with a mutually beneficial future, would allow for the development of a new and enduring partnership between Britain and its dominions.

Palestine differed from the colonies of white settlement in several crucial dimensions. It was not Christian, its inhabitants would not be British (or descendants of British settlers) and it could not draw upon a comparable shared history. Nonetheless, it was anticipated that the protectorate's Jewish inhabitants would not only identify with Britain and its imperial values, but would operate as a Levantine outpost for these ideals. At least informally, therefore, Jewish Palestinians would participate in 'Britishness'. Moreover, while the political and constitutional connotations attached to a protectorate differed both from the pre-war governing structures for the white colonies and the post-war framework for dominions (as set out at the 1923 Imperial Conference), it is indisputable that advocates for a British-Jewish Palestine drew upon these models, rather than those at work in Africa, the Caribbean or even India.⁶³

The Establishment: Uniform Devotion

The commencement of hostilities in August 1914 put Zionism back on the political map. Yet a concurrent surge in domestic anti-alienism, the emergence of a Jewish refugee crisis in Eastern Europe and—particularly from 1916 onwards—intense controversy over the conscription of Russian Jews residing in Britain, ensured that Palestine's future was

⁶² A. Thompson, *Imperial Britain: The Empire in British Politics c. 1880-1932* (Harlow, 2000), particularly 25-31. S. Dubow, 'Colonial Nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the Rise of "South Africanism", 1902-10', *History Workshop Journal* 43 (Spring 1997), 53-84; J. Darwin, 'The Third British Empire: The Dominion Idea in Imperial Politics', in J.M. Brown and W.R. Louis, (eds.), *Oxford History of the British Empire*, iv: *The Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 1988), 64-87.

⁶³ For example: 'It is sometimes asked why Jews, who are at once of all nationalities and of none except that of their age-long dreams, should turn to England to recover for them their ancient birthright. To this question the answer that Jews all over the world would make is that they turn to England because she alone has known how to combine Empire with liberty. In the British Empire, the better Australian, or Canadian, or South African a man is, the better subject of the King he is, and of no other Empire could this be said with truth. Jews turn to the British Empire because they know that under it, provided that there is loyalty to the common ideal, they are free to develop their own nationality, and indeed, that the better Jews they are the better British subjects they will be.' *Palestine* 26/1/17 2. See also reference to Jan Smuts' ideal of a community of nations. *Palestine* 4/8/17 11.

far from the only issue on Anglo-Jewish institutional agendas. Bypassing an involved discussion either of British Jewry's wartime experience, or of the war's impact on communal politics, I will touch upon several themes which help to inform my subsequent analysis: the impact of wartime xenophobia and anti-Semitism; the test posed by alliance with Russia to establishment assertions of congruent British and Jewish interests; and the emergence of internal opposition to the traditional framework of communal authority.⁶⁴

* * *

In 1914, some segments of British society positively welcomed war. By all accounts, Anglo-Jewry did not figure in these ranks. Through most of the July Crisis, Jewish officialdom—in the form of the *JC* and the Conjoint Foreign Committee—remained neutral.⁶⁵ Less than a week before the war, Lord Rothschild (in an echo of his efforts fifteen years earlier) attempted to turn both Lloyd George and *The Times* towards the pacifist camp.⁶⁶ Although Rothschild made his case as a representative of the City, it was viewed—rather inevitably—as a Jewish entreaty. With this possible exception, hopes for a last-minute reversal were indeed the product of a distinctly Jewish agenda. The *JC*'s leader of 31 July 1914 captured the overriding concern when it declared: 'We protest with all our might against the mere thought of spilling blood or the squandering of British resources in order that the Slavs may maintain their position.' British Jews in particular could have 'no interest in the upholding of Russia'.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ A monograph on organised Jewry during the war would be welcomed. There is one unpublished work, a 1966 thesis by Elkan Levy (later United Synagogue President), 'English Jewry in the Great War (during the period August 1914 to mid-1916)' (M.H.L. diss., Jewish Theological Seminary). For briefer overviews and more focused studies consider Black, *Social Politics*, 321-8, 333-76; Levene, *War, Jews*, 21-160; S. Kadish, *Bolsheviks and British Jews: The Anglo-Jewish Community, Britain and the Russian Revolution* (London, 1992).

⁶⁵ *JC* 31/7/14 Ed 7; Levene, 'Anglo-Jewish Foreign Policy in Crisis', *TJHSE* NS30 (1987-8), 179-97.

⁶⁶ N. Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild*, ii: *The World's Banker, 1849-1998* (London, 2000), 431-7.

⁶⁷ *JC* 31/7/14 1.

But neutrality would not be maintained at any cost. With Britain's declaration of war, pragmatism as well as genuine patriotism mandated a swift reversal. Armed with the slogan, 'England has been all she could be for Jews; Jews will be all they can be to England,' Anglo-Jewish leaders joined their fellow countrymen in inveighing against the 'German menace', while simultaneously admonishing the community 'to live up to [its] obligations as Jews as well as Englishmen'.⁶⁸ Following the pattern established during the Boer War, communal propaganda emphasised the morality of the national cause as well as its compatibility with specifically Jewish concerns. British Jews were reminded that the battles ahead would be 'a fight not only for British interests—supreme as they must be—but for the vital interests of the Jewish people as well.' The defence of liberty and progress was therefore 'an undertaking in which the Jew as Jew has a very palpable stake'.⁶⁹

From the pulpit, press room and meeting hall the call went out for donations, services and, most importantly, men.⁷⁰ Communal response was both prompt and generous. Well before the introduction of conscription in 1916, most of British Jewry's native sons—numbering as many as 10,000—were already overseas.⁷¹ But despite such impressive statistics, Anglo-Jewry's fidelity was still questioned, its last-ditch efforts to avert war, the Frankfurt ties of many of the City's Jewish owned banking houses, even the proliferation of Germanic Jewish surnames, all proffered as evidence of its alleged support for Prussian hegemony.⁷² Insinuations of conspiracy, suspicions of deficient loyalty; these were nothing new—even in Britain. Yet in 1914 as in 1899, the social

⁶⁸ *JC* 7/8/14 Ed 5, 28/8/14 Ed 5.

⁶⁹ *JC* 4/9/14 Ed 5. See also 28/8/14 5 (Ed), 7, 14.

⁷⁰ Sermons: *JC* 28/8/14 11-13, 15/9/14 15, 26. Recruitment ads: 4/9/14 6, 11, 2/10/14 13.

⁷¹ M. Adler, 'The Story of British Jewry in the War', *American Jewish Year Book* 21 (Philadelphia, 1919), 98-119; H. Pollins, 'Jews in the British Army in the First World War', *JJS* 37:2 (1995), 100-111. Adler was the Jewish chaplain to British forces on the Western Front.

⁷² Cesarani, 'An Embattled Minority: The Jews in Britain during the First World War', *Immigrants and Minorities* 8:1-2 (1989), 61-81; Levy, 'Anti-Semitism in England at War, 1914-1916', *Patterns of Prejudice* 4:5 (1970), 27-30. Cesarani's claim that the war 'savagely eroded' Jewish status (75) appears overstated.

and intellectual respectability accorded to such views increased markedly. At *The Times*—arguably the nation’s most august publication—no less a figure than the foreign editor, Henry Wickham Stead, denounced Jewish Germanophilism.⁷³

It is difficult to measure the precise effect of such charges on the British Jewish establishment. However, the frequency with which both individual and collective protestations of loyalty were issued—during the first year of the war in particular—suggests a very palpable level of insecurity.⁷⁴ So too does the Board of Deputies’ refusal to intervene on behalf of most interned Jewish ‘enemy aliens’.⁷⁵ If external pressures abated somewhat (revived hostility in 1916 and 1917 was largely, although by no means exclusively, directed at more recent arrivals⁷⁶), the ugly mix of anti-alienism and anti-Semitism unleashed in 1914 nonetheless appears to have exerted a more sustained impact on the Anglo-Jewish establishment. As well as underscoring the need for ongoing caution and restraint, it subjected both intra-communal and external relations to noticeable strain.

Efforts to ameliorate the position of Eastern European Jewry had been a staple of Anglo-Jewish politics for nearly two generations. Although such initiatives had yielded few tangible gains, Russia’s imminent status as a military ally created a fault line in communal values.⁷⁷ Concerned and outraged regarding the treatment of Jews in the

⁷³ See ‘Washington Despatch’, 23/11/14 8 and Stead, *Through Thirty Years: A Personal Narrative* ii (London, 1924), 9, 390-3. At the *National Review*, Leo Maxse published a similar series of articles in the autumn of 1914.

⁷⁴ The German born Sir Felix Semon, a renowned otolaryngologist and, since 1901, physician extraordinaire to the King, felt compelled to assert his allegiance in a letter to *The Times* (4/5/15 9). See also *JC* 14/8/14 Letter 14, 8/9/14 Letter 7, 2/10/14 Ed 5; Wolf, *Jewish Ideals and the War* (London, 1915).

⁷⁵ C.C. Aronsfeld, ‘Jewish Enemy Aliens in England During the First World War’, *JSS* 18:4 (1956), 275-83.

⁷⁶ A. Gilam, ‘The Leeds Anti-Jewish Riots in 1917’, *Jewish Quarterly* 29:1 (1978), 34-7.

⁷⁷ In the early decades of Anglo-Jewish diplomacy, Whitehall had been at least formally responsive to requests for intervention on behalf of Russian Jews. However, following the breakdown of the Bismarckian system, and, after 1907, a formalised Anglo-Russian entente, British policy-makers would not risk antagonising the Russians over the question of Jewish civil rights. With the usual diplomatic route blocked, Britain’s Jewish elite turned to dollar diplomacy (for instance, the London Rothschilds refused to issue a loan to the cash-strapped Russian government), appealed to non-Jewish opinion through such organs as Lucien Wolf’s bulletin, *Darkest Russia* (supported by the ICA), investigated extra-European resettlement schemes and helped to fund infrastructure within Russia’s Jewish communities. Conscious that an overly aggressive posture might place Eastern European Jews in greater peril, the establishment also sought to

eastern war zone, the leadership was nevertheless fearful of appearing to undermine Britain's war effort. As the AJA's annual report for 1914 explained, with Russia 'now the ally of England ...all painful subjects of difference and dissension must for the time being be overlooked.'⁷⁸ The government's desire to keep its easternmost ally happy, and the war's Eastern Front intact, also limited the potential efficacy of Anglo-Jewish intercessions. Although funds were raised to assist dislocated Jewish war victims in the East (particularly Russian Poland), the unprecedented level of need outstripped available resources.

Anglo-Jewry's inner circle was not only at odds with governmental priorities, but was also disconnected from the mood of many immigrant and middle class Jews. As the war progressed, the shortcomings of Jewish diplomacy and the apparent passivity of leading organisations and figures would prompt intense criticism and act as a stimulus for grassroots activism. Groups created in opposition to the wartime policies of the Board and AJA included a Workers' League for Jewish Emancipation and a Foreign Jews' Protection Committee. Jewish trade unions, friendly societies and the B'nai B'rith, a middle-class fraternal organisation, also assumed an increasingly activist stance.⁷⁹

Growing divergence in the composition and representation of Anglo-Jewish interests was reinforced by controversy over the enlistment of friendly Jewish aliens (non-naturalised Russians residing in Britain). Despite this group's understandable resistance to fighting alongside the Czar's troops and a technical exemption—even after the introduction of conscription—from service, the presence of military-age Jewish men

control what they saw as unproductive outbursts from the immigrant population. Black, *Social Politics*, 308, 335-40; Ferguson, *Rothschild*, 401-7.

⁷⁸ *AJA Report 1913-4* (London, 1914), 5-6.

⁷⁹ Levene, *War, Jews*, 40-1.

on the streets was believed to act as a lightning rod for anti-Semitism. The establishment's acquiescence to legislation mandating enlistment or repatriation was unquestionably self-serving; it wished to avoid the contagion of these new attacks. Yet support for the Home Secretary's proposal was also derived from the conviction that Jewish loyalty could only be vindicated through unqualified devotion to the national cause. The Jewish Board of Guardian's consequent adoption of a 'No Khaki, no soup' policy therefore operated both as a public relations exercise and as an attempt to force recalcitrant East Enders back into line.⁸⁰

Divisions—between the acculturated old-timers and newer arrivals, and between middle-class aspirants to power and those they sought to displace—were not always this straightforward, as the case of the Jewish regiment demonstrates.⁸¹ To the communal leadership, the Russian Zionist Vladimir Jabotinsky's proposal to create a separate Russo-Jewish battalion reeked of separatism. Non-naturalised immigrants remained unmoved, and even some Anglo-Zionists, including the *JCs* Leopold Greenberg, questioned the plan's merits.⁸² Nor did differences on wartime issues correlate neatly with opinions on the Zionist question. However, even before the debate over Palestine took centre stage in 1917, the war laid bare the myth of uniform Anglo-Jewish interests.

Palestine Redux

Although the first Zionist representation to the government took place just months after the war began, the Jewish establishment was slow to apprehend the potential

⁸⁰ *JC* 9/3/17 8, 30/3/17 11. The same point can be made regarding the 'Letter of the Ten', published in the *Morning Post* on 23 April 1919, in which leading Jews condemned the alleged Communist sympathies of London's Jewish immigrant population. Kadish, *Bolsheviks*, 120-35.

⁸¹ M. Watts, *The Jewish Legion and the First World War* (Basingstoke, 2004), particularly 48-137; D. Yisraeli, 'The Struggle for Zionist Military Involvement in the First World War, 1914-1918', *Bar Ilan Studies in History*, ed. P. Artzi (Ramat Gan, 1978), 197-213; J.H. Patterson, *With the Judeans in the Palestine Campaign* (London, 1922).

⁸² Kadish, *Bolsheviks*, 223-6.

relevance of Palestine either to Allied strategy or to their own foreign policy agenda.⁸³ It was not until the spring of 1915 that the Conjoint Foreign Committee—Anglo-Jewry's 'privy council' and the institutional repository for liberal anti-Zionism—formulated its own policy statement.⁸⁴ Starting off on the back foot, it never quite gained the initiative. However, while the war had to some extent revived the prospects of Jewish nationalism, Zionist victory was far from assured.

Amongst the elite, conversions to the Zionist cause had been few, if notable. The recently appointed Chief Rabbi, Joseph Hertz, was, unlike his predecessor, a firm supporter of Jewish nationalism.⁸⁵ Despite this, he did not ally himself publicly with either the EZF or the wartime campaign for a British declaration. (Hertz's behaviour towards the anti-Zionists was similarly restrained. While he spoke out against the Conjoint's manifesto of May 1917, his criticism focused on the committee's neglect of due process, not the ideological merits of its position.⁸⁶) More significant therefore was the contribution of Herbert Samuel. In his roles as head of the Local Government Board and Home Secretary, Samuel was a well-placed, if occasionally ambivalent, advocate for the Zionist programme.⁸⁷ A further establishment adherent was the Cambridge geneticist Redcliffe Salaman.⁸⁸

⁸³ These meetings did not represent a coordinated strategy on the part either of British Zionists or the international movement. Moreover, they do not appear to have generated either official or public attention. Samuel, *Memoirs, By the Right Honourable Viscount Samuel* (London, 1945), 140-5.

⁸⁴ S.A. Cohen, *English Zionists*, 20.

⁸⁵ Hertz first gained notice for his strong pro-British position while serving in Witwatersrand (Johannesburg) during the Boer War. Following Adler's death, his candidacy for Chief Rabbi was championed by Lord Rothschild, who believed that Hertz would be able to act as a bridge between the establishment and the immigrant communities. For evidence of his Zionist sympathies see his 1897 essay, 'After the Congress—A Resume and a Retrospect'. Originally published in *The American Hebrew*, it was reprinted in W. Gottlieb, (ed.), *Essays and Addresses in Memory of the Very Rev. Dr. Joseph Herman Hertz* (London, 1947), 45-50. Other aspects are discussed in M. Freud-Kandel, 'The Theological Background of Dr. Joseph H. Hertz', *Le'ela* (12/99), 25-33; J. Simon, 'Rabbi J.H. Hertz and the Anglo-Boer War', *Jewish Affairs* 54:3 (1999), 53-6.

⁸⁶ *The Times* 28/5/17 Letter 5.

⁸⁷ B. Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel: A Political Life* (Oxford, 1992), particularly 198-229. See also Samuel, *Zionism: Its Ideals and Practical Hopes* (London, n.d.). Although Samuel circulated a policy paper favouring the inclusion of Palestine within the British Empire, this stalwart liberal was uncomfortable with certain Zionist formulations of Jewish nationality. 1/9/15 'The Future of Palestine', Copy in LS Papers, (Oxford): 1. See also Wasserstein, 'Herbert Samuel and the Palestine Problem', *EHR* 91:361 (1976), 753-75.

⁸⁸ Sir Francis Montefiore (Claude's cousin), an early, though ineffectual leader in the EZF, renounced his ties to the movement in 1917. S.A. Cohen, *English Zionists*, 266.

The Zionist movement's courtship of the Rothschilds had spanned nearly twenty years. By World War I, some measure of success could finally be claimed. Although Lord (Walter) Rothschild (who in 1915 succeeded his father, Nathaniel, as head of the family's English branch) had not engaged previously in Zionist politics, his unambiguous support for the movement was now demonstrated by his role in securing a censure of the aforementioned Conjoint statement and in his involvement in drafting the text of the Balfour Declaration. Walter's wife, Rozsika, and Charles, his brother, also counted themselves within Zionist ranks. Changes had occurred in the older generation as well. Despite multiple refusals of Herzl's overtures, Baron Edmond had revised his stance. Intent on staying out of the limelight, it was his son James, a dual Franco-British citizen, recently settled in England, who (along with his wife, Dorothy, a member of a minor branch of the Sephardi establishment) would become both a close associate of Weizmann's and an mediator between the Zionist leadership and the communal establishment.⁸⁹ It was also rumoured that Nathaniel had something of a deathbed conversion.⁹⁰

During the wartime disputes over Zionism, English Rothschilds could still be found in both camps.⁹¹ Leopold (Natty's brother) and his oldest son, Lionel, remained staunch opponents of the Zionist programme. The former was a signatory to the same Conjoint letter which his nephew condemned, while the latter took a leading role in the founding of the avowedly anti-Zionist League of British Jews in November of that year. Anthony, the middle son, was at best apathetic.

⁸⁹ Ferguson, *Rothschild*, 449-53; S. Schama, *Two Rothschilds and the Land of Israel* (London, 1978), 190-218.

⁹⁰ 9/6/15 Charles Rothschild to Weizmann, LS Papers, (Oxford): 6.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* After acknowledging his father's change of heart, and his personal sympathy for the movement, Charles noted that he could not offer the family's endorsement.

It is difficult to account for these shifts in a wholly satisfactory manner. One obvious—and not implausible—explanation is to see the emergence of limited Anglo-Jewish establishment support for Zionism as the product of a generational changing of the guard. Born after the end of emancipation, figures like Herbert Samuel or Walter Rothschild were, it has been suggested, more comfortable in their own skins.⁹² Not only did they possess greater confidence that support for Zionism would not undermine claims of complete loyalty to Britain, but their endorsement of the movement also helped to eradicate its outcast status. As Simon Schama has noted, '[n]o one, on either side of the Channel, was likely to call into question the patriotism of the Rothschilds.'⁹³ Yet Rothschild loyalty in particular was challenged quite publicly in the months following the war's outbreak. Both genuine patriotism and a very understandable element of self-protection would therefore appear to have motivated decisions such as New Court's sponsorship of a recruitment office and the enlistment of all three of Leo's sons. (The youngest, Evelyn, would be killed at El Mughar in 1917.)

Wartime considerations may have also played a role. Since dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire was now almost a foregone conclusion, it seems logical that Jewish philanthropists—who in some cases had considerable emotional and financial investment in the new *Yishuv*—would have expressed concerns regarding the territory's future governance and the prospects for ongoing colonisation there. Furthermore, partition of the Ottoman territories, and the establishment of a new balance of power in the region, gave Britain the opportunity to secure its vital Near East interests: Suez and the land route to India. It was common knowledge that if it failed to stake its claim in Palestine, France would not hesitate to do so. Thus even if a British commitment to the Zionists challenged some of the establishment's philosophical

⁹² Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656-2000* (Berkeley, 2002), 192. While Endelman's argument is tentative, he does not pose an alternative thesis.

⁹³ *Two Rothschilds*, 191.

principles, its benefits to the Empire were hard to deny. In other words, if Palestine was to be under European control, an alliance between Britain and the Zionists was surely preferable to one with the French.⁹⁴

The fact remains, however, that such arguments failed to move all but a small minority of the Anglo-Jewish establishment. Thus the answer to why one Rothschild became a Zionist, while another remained an arch-opponent, why Herbert Samuel backed the movement when his cousin and uncle failed to do so, can perhaps only be found by considering the motivations and ideological presuppositions of the individuals in question.⁹⁵ What is clear is that in 1917, just as in 1903, neither the imperial allure of a new British settlement nor the prospect of refuge for beleaguered Eastern European Jews could overcome long-standing objections to the message and methods of political Zionism.

Indeed, the establishment's original tripartite criticism—encompassing theological dissent, rejection of the idea of Jewish nationhood and an affirmation of liberalism—had survived virtually intact from its first appearance a generation earlier. Not only did many of the anti-Zionist articles and pamphlets published between 1914 and 1917 revisit the arguments made at the time of *Der Judenstaat's* publication, but in multiple cases previous pieces were reprinted without alteration.⁹⁶ There was as well considerable continuity in communal leadership. Lucien Wolf remained at the (professional) helm of the Conjoint—a role for which he was finally remunerated—and

⁹⁴ 27/4/15, Board of Deputies Papers, (London Metropolitan Archives): ACC/3121/E3/204/1. The unknown author (in a sentence later struck through) acknowledged that British control would be most beneficial for Palestine's development. See also 13/8/15 Wolf to Joseph Cowen (EZF leader and onetime enthusiast for the Uganda scheme), BoD Papers, (LMA): ACC/3121/C11/2/7/1.

⁹⁵ For instance, Samuel's biographer, Bernard Wasserstein, explains his subject's embrace of Zionism largely as a consequence of two factors: his search for a non faith-driven Jewish identity and the desire to leave a lasting political legacy. *Herbert Samuel*, 199-201.

⁹⁶ Laurie Magnus' treatise, *Zionism and the Neo-Zionists* (London, 1917) was extracted from his 1902 work, *Aspects of the Jewish Question* (London, 1902). In 1917 the Conjoint also reprinted other earlier pieces, including Montefiore's 1899 address to the Jewish Historical Society, 'Nation or Religious Community', *TJHSE* 4 (1903), 1-15, and an article by the elder Magnus, Philip. Entitled, 'Jewish Action and Jewish Ideals', it had been published by the *JC* in 1891.

Claude Montefiore, born in the great year of 1858, continued to serve as President of the Anglo-Jewish Association. However both the Board of Deputies vote of June 1917 and the first membership list of the League of British Jews would suggest that hostility to political Zionism was not merely the fixation of Anglo-Jewry's elder statesmen.

For as long as Turkey remained in control of Palestine, and the Zionist movement in disarray, passive opposition had sufficed. But with Zionists and policy-makers alike beginning to grasp the potential for realignment, more forceful advocacy was now required. Lucien Wolf explained the situation in a letter to his American colleague, Cyrus Adler:⁹⁷

The present view is that the Zionist programme in Palestine can never offer any solution of the large practical questions ...in Russia, Poland and Roumania. Nevertheless, it appeals to the historic sense of all Jews, and also to the religious hopes of many non-Jews. For this reason the Committee will be prepared to consider any scheme of Jewish immigration and colonisation, and for the free development of Jewish institutions and cultural life, which will promote the Zionist aims without compromising the struggle for equal rights in other countries.⁹⁸

In Wolf's estimation, the stirring of popular support for Zionism, although still limited in Britain, could not be denied or resisted. The best option, therefore, was to attempt to shape and contain it.⁹⁹ (Much the same strategy had been employed by the leadership of the English Chovevei Zion some twenty-five years earlier.) If successful, the masses could be satisfied, an additional outlet for Jewish emigration created, and—crucially—Anglo-Jewry's promotion of liberalisation in Eastern Europe would not be undermined. To that end Wolf added, '[t]he Committee do not contemplate any special political privileges [in Palestine] for Jews, nor do they think they would be desirable.'

⁹⁷ Adler, a leading Jewish scholar, educator and communal leader, had helped to establish the American Jewish Committee, an organisation somewhat akin to the AJA in its complexion. Like Wolf, he was a vigorous opponent of political Zionism. S. Kling, 'Cyrus Adler and Zionism', *Conservative Judaism* 33:1 (1979), 22-7. Cyrus Adler, *Selected Letters*, 2 vols. ed. I. Robinson (Philadelphia, 1985), ii., 212-3, 272, 276-84, 329-30, 338-41.

⁹⁸ Lucien Wolf Papers, (YIVO Archives, New York): 348-MK502, 2/21.

⁹⁹ Another, far cruder, control mechanism was the virtual ban—nominally in place from 1899 onwards—on discussions of Zionism at leading communal institutions. S.A. Cohen, 'The Conquest of a Community? The Zionists and the Board of Deputies in 1917', *Jewish Journal of Sociology* 19:2 (1977), 158-60.

In this sense, the diplomatic campaign was conceived as a means to an end. Although recent allegations of pro-German bias had damaged elite Jewish standing, it appeared likely that assistance on the Palestine question could set things right. Helping the government to cultivate American Jewish opinion and to impede French post-war designs in the Levant would, by confirming the establishment's loyalty, lead to the re-opening of diplomatic channels. The 'traditional consensual link between British and British-Jewish interests' thus restored, and the Zionists thoroughly outflanked, the Conjoint could once again redirect attention to the Jewish situation in the East.¹⁰⁰

Ironically, the Conjoint did achieve one of its goals: the compatibility of patriotism and religious particularism would be affirmed through the publication of the Balfour Declaration. But the Palestine plan, once proffered, veered out of the committee's control, as the government chose to pursue it according to the nationalists' formula. In truth, the events of 1917 would suggest that there were two competing interpretations of British-Jewish interests. That of the anti-Zionists did not ultimately win the day.

* * *

Establishment leaders engaged in diplomacy on two simultaneous fronts: with the Zionist leadership and with government officials. The former did not constitute negotiations as such; rather, each side had an obvious incentive 'to know what they [the others] are doing'.¹⁰¹ Unsurprisingly, there was also a fair degree of dissembling by both parties, with the Zionists sidestepping their desire for a state, and the Conjoint appearing noncommittal on the nationality question. But the distance between the Conjoint and the Zionists became readily apparent at a joint conference held in April

¹⁰⁰ Levene, 'Foreign Policy', 192.

¹⁰¹ 20/11/14 Weizmann to Leopold Greenberg, *Letters and Papers*, vii, 50.

1915.¹⁰² Thereafter, while representatives of the two camps would continue to meet sporadically—once by the rather peremptory demand of James de Rothschild—the possibility of compromise was becoming increasingly far-fetched.¹⁰³

Having arrived late to the game, the elite's challenge was to gain primacy of access in Whitehall and, if possible, to discredit its opponents. Notwithstanding assurances that the Cabinet was in no position to entertain the question of post-war arrangements, it was known that the Zionists had already begun to make inroads.¹⁰⁴ (This caused Montefiore to write somewhat hysterically, 'The Zionists are exceedingly active, and those, who like myself, regard their policy and aims as most dangerous and false, can no longer afford to go to sleep.'¹⁰⁵) One potentially effective, if not altogether admirable, solution was to draw attention to the demographic make-up of the Zionist leadership. Appealing to the paranoid and xenophobic tendencies of the time—the depth of which they were well aware—establishment members warned about the predominance of 'foreign Jews', particularly enemy aliens, within the Zionist Executive. Surely the government could not discuss, much less negotiate, a matter of imperial policy with such persons.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, as the vast majority of Zionists were Russians or Germans, claims that the movement represented British Jews were self-evidently false.

¹⁰² 27/4/15 BoD Papers, (LMA): ACC/3121/E3/204. Several months earlier, Weizmann had warned two colleagues, Harry Sacher and Leon Simon, 'Somehow I begin to think that LW [Lucien Wolf] is not ...frank with you.' Wolf had written to Sacher that progress was impossible unless the Zionists accepted his (unstated in this letter) conditions. 8/1/15, *Letters and Papers*, vii, 119; 26/1/15 LS Papers, (Oxford): 8.

¹⁰³ 17/8/16 LW Papers, (ZA): A77/3/2. An undated memo, seemingly drafted just after that gathering, cited irreconcilable differences.

¹⁰⁴ 7/1/15 'Memo on meeting with Sir Francis Acland [an undersecretary for foreign affairs]', LW Papers, (ZA): A77/3/2.

¹⁰⁵ 3/3/15 Montefiore to Samuel, LW Papers, (ZA): A77/3/13. See also 2/3/15 Wolf to Montefiore, LW Papers, (ZA): A77/3/2.

¹⁰⁶ 7/1/15 'Memo on Acland', LW Papers, (ZA): A77/3/2; 21/4/17 Wolf to Lancelot Oliphant (Laurence's nephew and a government advisor on Jewish questions), LW Papers, (ZA): A77/3/2. See also 26/7/15 Wolf to Zangwill, LW Papers, (ZA): A77/3/1; 11/6/15 Wolf to Sokolow, LS Papers, (Oxford): 6.

Yet, as I have explained, the Conjoint recognised that it could not dispense with the idea of Palestine entirely. Thus while communal deputations continued to insist that it did not offer a solution to Jewry's problems, their members also lobbied for their own Palestine policy and offered to help promote the cause both at home (through the vehicle of a new East End group, the National Union for Jewish Rights) and abroad (via a propaganda committee aimed at neutral—i.e., American—and Russian Jewish opinion).¹⁰⁷

With conditions through the end of 1916 continuing to favour the establishment, it was unsurprising—and not unreasonable—that in late October Wolf commented to Israel Abrahams, 'I think we shall have a great success. That, of course, is the grievance of the other side. They suspect that we are going to show that Jewry can be saved without Zionism.'¹⁰⁸ However, over the following year, this confidence would be thoroughly undermined. In the end, it was not the Zionists but the establishment which had 'crowed too soon'.¹⁰⁹ To a large extent the latter's defeats—if we are to consider the condemnation and (temporary) dissolution of the Conjoint and the issuing of the Balfour Declaration as such—were a function of circumstance. However, these reversals were also a consequence of misreading the political climate within both the organised Jewish community and Whitehall and, perhaps more fundamentally, of ceding moral and historical claims to represent the highest British and Jewish interests.

During 1917, the Anglo-Jewish establishment's opposition to political Zionism, though without question principled, would come at a high cost. It not only undermined the leadership's claims to communal authority but also demonstrated the extent to which

¹⁰⁷ See S.A. Cohen, *English Zionists*, 254-7; Black, *Social Politics*, 373. By 1917, the NUJR would become a target of anti-establishment activists. 5/4/16 Wolf to Montefiore, LW Papers, (YIVO): 2/35; n.d. (likely 1916) LS Papers, (Oxford): 6.

¹⁰⁸ 30/10/16 LW Papers, (YIVO): 2/21.

¹⁰⁹ 12/6/17 Abrahams to Wolf, LW Papers, (ZA): A77/3/2.

that status had already begun to be eroded. A similar process took place in the official relations between Anglo-Jewry and the government. For nearly fifty years, the Conjoint Foreign Committee (and, more informally, the Jewish establishment as a whole) had operated as the foreign policy spokesman both for Anglo-Jewry and on behalf of Jews in Eastern Europe and the Near East. Its position of influence at Whitehall had been premised on two assumptions: firstly, that it could make a reasonable claim to represent Jewry as a whole and secondly, that it had both particularist and patriotic motives at heart (and that the two were compatible). The Conjoint's attempts to thwart a declaration for Palestine threw both of these suppositions into question. It was now evident that many Jews—both within Britain and elsewhere—did not share the establishment's views regarding Jewish nationalism. Moreover, by criticising imperial policy on the basis of Jewish interests, the leadership had acknowledged that its claim to represent consonant interests was, at least for the moment, null and void.

Twice-Defeated?

In the last six months of 1916, relations between the establishment and the Anglo-Zionists suffered a precipitous decline. This coincided with, and was partly the consequence of, a shift in medium. Over the previous two years, intra-communal debates over Zionism had been conducted primarily via private correspondence or face-to-face meetings, sometimes with a New Court mediator present. But commencing with the July publication of a provocative Zionist volume, *Zionism and the Jewish Future*,¹¹⁰ the ideological battle moved almost entirely into the public realm, with the

¹¹⁰ H. Sacher, (ed.), (London, 1915). Articles authored by Weizmann and Gaster generated particular controversy. In 'Zionism and the Jewish Problem' (1-11), the former claimed that emancipation could not yield full integration. The latter put it even more sharply. 'The claim to be Englishmen of the Jewish persuasion', Gaster wrote in 'Judaism As A National Religion', 'is an absolute self-delusion' (93).

Jewish press backing the Zionists,¹¹¹ and several national journals offering a hearing, if not an endorsement, to the anti-Zionist camp.¹¹² Predictably, positions hardened, and personal rancour increased.

Of more decisive importance was a slow but unmistakable shift in the balance of power. Independent of anything that Gaster had written about the establishment, or Magnus about the Zionists, the government was for its own reasons edging towards a Zionist policy. Accordingly, in February 1917 Mark Sykes was instructed to begin negotiations with Weizmann and his associates; in turn, Sykes dispatched Sokolow to begin lobbying the Quai d'Orsay and Rome.¹¹³ Ostensibly conducted with absolute secrecy, these machinations nonetheless attracted elite Jewish attention. Contacts at the Alliance shed some light on the negotiations, but officials in Whitehall remained tight-lipped. The most Wolf and Montefiore could extract during two May meetings (with Lords Cecil and Milner—the former was Balfour's deputy, the latter a member of the War Cabinet without portfolio) were vague assurances that the government would not act without prior consultation.¹¹⁴

What happened next has been well-documented; because of its importance in illuminating these two contending definitions of British and Jewish interests, it bears brief repetition here.¹¹⁵ Montefiore's meeting with Milner appeared to confirm (wrongly, as it later turned out) existing suspicions that the government was on the

¹¹¹ For example, *JW* 8/11/16 7-8, 6/12/16 9-10 .

¹¹² An Englishman of the Jewish Faith [Montefiore], 'Zionism', *Fortnightly Review* 100 (11/16), 819-26; Wolf, 'The Jewish National Movement', *Edinburgh Review* 225 (4/17), 1-17. The anti-Zionists in and around the Conjoint also published a sermon, 'The Mission of the Jew', by Ephraim Levine and a series of article reprints under the banner, *Papers for the Jewish People* (London, 1916-1917). These were in turn subject to a detailed critique in a Zionist Organisation pamphlet. L. Simon, *The Case of the Anti-Zionists: A Reply* (London, 1917).

¹¹³ 8/2/17 Weizmann to Jabotinsky, *Letters and Papers*, vii, 328-9. On Sokolow's diplomatic work on the Continent see Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 394-420.

¹¹⁴ 8/5/17 Wolf to Montefiore and David Alexander (President of the Board of Deputies), Claude Montefiore Papers (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem): AK46/1; 16/5/17 'Memo of meeting with Milner', CM Papers, (ZA): AK46/1.

¹¹⁵ S.A. Cohen, *English Zionists*, 243-76; id., 'Conquest?', 157-184.

verge of issuing a statement on Palestine.¹¹⁶ Accordingly, the decision was made to launch a pre-emptive strike. The primary object was to remind political leaders that Zionism was overwhelmingly the province of foreign and immigrant Jews. Anglo-Jewry—which incorporated all Jews who identified unreservedly with the British nation—opposed any official recognition of Zionist political aims in Palestine. A secondary goal was simply to generate controversy, as this would delay imminent action and possibly foil a declaration entirely.

At an emergency meeting called for the following day, 17 May, the Conjoint's members (fifteen out of twenty-one attended) voted on a previously prepared 'Statement on Palestine'. There were only two enfranchised dissenters: Joseph Prag, a one-time leader in the CZA, and Elkan Adler (Hermann Adler's half-brother). Chief Rabbi Joseph Hertz, the third opponent, did not possess a vote.¹¹⁷ (Of the three, he was the only *bona-fide* supporter of political Zionism.) One week later, after efforts to avert a public showdown failed,¹¹⁸ an anti-Zionist manifesto entitled, 'The Future of the Jews—Palestine and Zionism: Views of Anglo-Jewry' and signed by the Conjoint's Co-Presidents (the respective heads of the Board and the AJA), David Alexander and Claude Montefiore, was printed as a Letter to the Editor in *The Times*.¹¹⁹ It had not been discussed or approved by either of the bodies which the Conjoint represented.

This letter recapitulated most of the major themes which had defined anti-Zionist thinking over the last generation.¹²⁰ It began, characteristically, by noting Jewry's

¹¹⁶ 15/4/17 Wolf to Montefiore, CM Papers, (ZA): AK46/1.

¹¹⁷ Adler resigned from the Committee on 25/5/17. *The Times* 5.

¹¹⁸ See 23/5/17 Wolf to Montefiore, LW Papers, (YIVO): 2/35; 30/5/17 Hertz to Wolf, LW Papers, (YIVO): 2/35; 18/6/17 Montefiore to Hertz, CM Papers, (ZA): AK46/1.

¹¹⁹ 24/5/17 5. See also draft copies (not substantively different), LW Papers, (ZA): A77/3/1.

¹²⁰ Characteristic examples include the four anti-Zionist resolutions passed by the Central Conference of American Rabbis (the umbrella organisation for the Reform rabbinate) between 1896 and 1917 and the 1914 statement of the

special relationship with Palestine and the 'deep satisfaction' felt at the newfound hope of regeneration. Accordingly, the Conjoint had drafted its own Palestine policy—providing for equal rights and colonisation facilities for Jewish settlers—and sought cooperation with the Zionists in pursuit of this common end. It now appeared, however, that the Zionists were intent on creating a settlement possessing 'a national character in the political sense'. Not only was this an anathema to those Jews who 'regard[ed] themselves primarily as a religious community', but it would also 'have the effect ...of stamping the Jews as strangers in their native lands'. An additional threat emerged from Zionist proposals that the Jewish population in Palestine be invested with special privileges. The principle of equal rights for all religions had been well-established as the best guarantor of Jewish status. If the Jewish settlement in Palestine disregarded that principle, it would not only undermine the defence of Jewish rights in Eastern Europe—where such privileges were freshly won—but in 'those countries, where those rights have been [previously] secure'.¹²¹

Signs that the Conjoint's action would not go unchecked followed almost immediately. Particularly damaging were the rebuttals issued by what we might call establishment Zionists—Lord Rothschild and Chief Rabbi Hertz—in the very public venue of *The Times*.¹²² The *JC*, which made no secret of its stance on the Zionist question, had already condemned the Conjoint's 'chicanery', 'hypocrisy', and 'trickery'. 'We may be quite certain', the lead editorial stated

that only if interests altogether apart from Jewish interests so demand will there be a Jewish PalestineIs the Conjoint Committee going to oppose its view of Jewish

German Antizioniste Komite. N.W. Cohen, 'The Reaction of Reform Judaism in America to Political Zionism (1897-1922)', *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 40:4 (1951), 365-6; Reinharz, *Fatherland or Promised Land: The Dilemma of the German Jew, 1893-1914* (Ann Arbor: 1975), 219-21.

¹²¹ The Conjoint's objection appears to have been based on a belief that special rights were fundamentally illiberal and/or concern that their application in Palestine could injure Jewish causes elsewhere. This statement should not be interpreted as expressing a particular humanitarian concern for the fate of Palestine's majority population.

¹²² 28/5/17 5. The third pro-Zionist Letter to the Editor on that date was written by Weizmann.

interests against the British Government's view? If so, we could imagine nothing more damaging to Anglo-Jewry.¹²³

This tone of righteous indignation was echoed in the resolutions passed by dozens of synagogues and Jewish fraternal societies across Britain and the Empire. Like the *JC*, many not only repudiated the non-representative character of the Conjoint's actions, but also declared themselves in support of a 'home for the Jews under the auspices of the British Empire'.¹²⁴

However, far from acceding or apologising, the Conjoint was gathering its supporters. Calling themselves 'Jews of British birth and nationality', eighteen of the community's most prominent members—including the Second Lord Swaythling, Laurie Magnus, Leonard Cohen and Lionel Abrahams—defended the committee's stance in robust terms.¹²⁵ With both parties claiming to speak for Anglo-Jewry, the stage was set for a confrontation at the body which alone claimed representative status, the Board of Deputies. Exactly one month after the infamous May meeting had been convened, the Board of Deputies, by a vote of 56-51 (with six abstaining),¹²⁶ condemned the statement published in *The Times* of 24 May and called upon the members of the Committee to 'resign their appointment forthwith'.¹²⁷ They did so without hesitation. The President of the Board, David Alexander, followed suit.

¹²³ *JC* 25/5/17 6, (Ed) 10.

¹²⁴ *JC* 15/6/17 5-13; *Palestine* 27/10/17 128.

¹²⁵ 1/6/17 *The Times* 9. Additional supporters included Matthew Nathan, Israel Abrahams, Ernest L. Franklin, Israel Gollancz and H.S.Q. Henriques. The signatures of Philip Magnus and O.E. D'Avigdor-Goldsmid, amongst others, arrived too late for inclusion. 5/12/51 Adolph Brotman (Secretary of the Board of Deputies) to Stein, LS Papers, (Oxford): 7.

¹²⁶ Those present constituted approximately seventy percent of the Board's total membership.

¹²⁷ *JC* 22/6/17 15.

The Zionist Revolt: Neither Zionist nor a Revolt

Three days later, Weizmann wrote to Sacher, '[t]he victory at the Board of Deputies was indeed a great one, and it has already had an effect.'¹²⁸ At some level, this ebullient assessment was absolutely correct. The apparent mandate provided by the Board's vote was utilised immediately by the Zionists in order to press for action at the Foreign Office. More importantly, perhaps, this interpretation of events was corroborated by the government itself. The Zionist 'victory' validated what many officials wanted to believe, namely, that the majority of Jewry backed—even demanded—a formal 'assurance' on the Zionist project.¹²⁹ Persistent Anglo-Jewish opposition could not be ignored altogether, as the obstinate Edwin Montagu would demonstrate with his last-minute demand for a Cabinet canvassing of 'representative [British] Jews'.¹³⁰ Yet the intentional skewing of that exercise in favour of the Zionists merely illuminated the shift in allegiances which had already taken place. (While they were unable to prevent its issue, the anti-Zionists did manage to influence the Declaration's language.¹³¹)

In the weeks after 17 June, a different sort of victory had also been claimed. To many, the dissolution of the Conjoint represented a populist triumph over the anti-Zionist 'plutocratic oligarchy'.¹³² Jewish nationalism, it was declared, could now claim the

¹²⁸ 20/6/17 LS Papers, (Oxford): 65.

¹²⁹ 27/9/17 Foreign Office 371/3083/1135, Graham to Hardinge on 'Zionist Aspirations', Copy in LS Papers, (Oxford): 2.

¹³⁰ Although not a member of the War Cabinet—and thus in theory excluded from decision-making on Palestine—Montagu managed to convince that body to hold a further discussion on the forthcoming declaration. Opinions were solicited from Herbert Samuel, Hertz, Lord Rothschild, Weizmann, Nahum Sokolow, Stuart Samuel, Philip Magnus, Montefiore, Lionel Cohen (President of the Jewish Board of Guardians) and Montagu himself. The inclusion of Sokolow—who was not a British national—was suggestive of the plan's ulterior motives, but the responses were as expected: the first five supported the declaration, the sixth was cautiously in favour and the final four were unambiguously opposed. 4/10/17 Montagu to Lloyd George, LS Papers, (Oxford): 9; 6/10/17 Hankey (Secretary of the War Cabinet) to Montagu, LW Papers, (ZA): A77/3/2; Responses in LS Papers, (Oxford): 1.

¹³¹ Concerns about the position of Jews living outside Palestine, and of the non-Jewish peoples living inside it, were addressed in the following clause: 'it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.'

¹³² 6/3/15 Weizmann to Gaster, LS Papers, (Oxford): 64.

sympathy of the vast majority of Jews in Britain.¹³³ But had it really been the voters' intention to sanction the Zionist programme? Edwin Montagu thought not. As he explained to Lord Cecil and the War Cabinet, the margin of victory at the Board was very narrow. Moreover, the vote could not be interpreted simply as a referendum on Zionism. While some deputies had supported censure because they disagreed with the Conjoint's anti-Zionist position, many more had done so out of the belief that in its failure to consult with its parental bodies the committee had 'exceeded its rights'.¹³⁴

It could be (correctly) pointed out that Montagu was an extreme anti-Zionist and estranged from the organised Jewish community. Furthermore, it was certainly in his interests to put forward an alternative interpretation of the Board's decision. Yet irrespective of his motives, it would appear that Montagu's assessment was fundamentally sound. The Zionist revolt was in fact neither Zionist nor a revolt.

As Stuart Cohen makes clear, pro-Zionist resolutions enjoyed little success at the Board as late as May 1917; the EZF also faced severe difficulties in recruiting members.¹³⁵ Consequently, it is difficult to view the June vote as the product of a sustained growth in organised Anglo-Zionism. Equally, as my following chapter will discuss, not only did Anglo-Jewish ambivalence—if not outright hostility—towards political Zionism persist long after the Balfour Declaration was issued, but such attitudes were not limited to the old establishment. The censure of the CFC should therefore be interpreted not a pro-Zionist gesture, but as an expression of long simmering resentment towards Anglo-

¹³³ For examples from the English and Yiddish Jewish press see S.A. Cohen, *English Zionists*, 244. This interpretation was later endorsed by a number of historians sympathetic to the Zionist cause. In the last twenty years, however, it has been quite thoroughly debunked. The traditional historiography is represented by Friedman, *Question of Palestine* 239-40, the revisionist by Cohen, Levene, Endelman's *Jews of Britain* and Stephen Bayme, 'Jewish Leadership and Anti-Semitism in Britain, 1898-1918' (Ph.D. diss., Columbia Univ., 1977), Chapter 7.

¹³⁴ 14/9/17 LS Papers, (Oxford): 12; 4/10/17 CAB 23/4, Copy in LS Papers, (Oxford): 1.

¹³⁵ S.A. Cohen, *English Zionists*, 247, 251-60. In addition to persistent ideological and personal divisions, the EZF also suffered from an inability (or unwillingness) to make common cause with the immigrant population.

Jewry's native autocracy. Indeed, this was not an entirely new phenomenon. As mentioned previously, Zionism provided a vehicle for a small group of ambitious and acculturated middle-class Jewish men to challenge the closed circle of communal leadership during the late 1890s.¹³⁶ Over the succeeding generation, the impact of immigration, the expansion of provincial Jewish communities and increasingly widespread prosperity on the demographic profile of Anglo-Jewry (and the application of that term to a larger proportion of Jews residing in Britain) extended the appeal of this critique. Dissatisfaction increased markedly during the war, as institutional responses to key communal problems were found lacking.¹³⁷ These accumulated grievances all played a role in shaping the demand for democratic change in the wake of the CFC's indisputably high-handed behaviour.

In the end, though, the purported revolt was not quite that. After the initial upheaval, things largely returned to normal. Tellingly, the CFC was reconstituted—under the new name of the Joint Foreign Committee—less than a year later, with most of its original functions and practices intact (even, after some struggle, the right to formulate Palestine policy). David Alexander's replacement at the Board was Sir Stuart Samuel, a non-Zionist (although not overtly hostile to the movement) and hardly the product of a meritocratic system. Philip Magnus, by now a founding member of the anti-Zionist League of British Jews, also retained a senior post. The United Synagogue, the Jewish Board of Guardians and the AJA remained safe ground for the anti-Zionists as well. Although old patterns of communal governance did undergo change—for example, the Board's rules were adapted to allow female deputies and non-synagogal

¹³⁶ Black memorably refers to them as 'bourgeois communal Jacobins'. *Social Politics*, 304.

¹³⁷ A further factor may have been the war's temporary loosening of traditional social divisions in the nation as a whole. S.K. Kent, 'Love and Death: War and Gender in Britain, 1914-1918', in F. Coetzee and M. Shevin-Coetzee, (eds.), *Authority, Identity and the Social History of the Great War* (Providence, 1995), 153-74; G.J. De Groot, *Blighty: British Society in the Era of the Great War* (London, 1996), 290-311.

representation—the system (and its supporters) would demonstrate remarkable resilience in the face of pressures for reform.¹³⁸

* * *

It was surely no coincidence that Claude Montefiore's 1899 treatise, 'Nation or Religious Community', was republished in 1917 by establishment opponents of a British declaration for Palestine. The fact that Montefiore's almost two decade-old case against Zionism remained the rhetorical weapon of choice suggests that the broader outlook underpinning this argument had also remained largely unchanged. Quite obviously, however, the context in which this pamphlet reappeared differed radically from the circumstances under which it was originally written. By 1917, it was becoming increasingly likely that Britain would help in fulfilling Zionist aspirations in Palestine. The war had also brought unprecedented levels of turmoil and insecurity to the Jews of Eastern Europe. As a result of their government's stance, elite British Jews now faced the conundrum of reconciling their patriotic and imperial instincts with an equally instinctive antipathy towards Jewish nationalism.

Plus ça change, plus c'est le meme chose. As the events of 1917 unfolded, the Jewish establishment stayed wedded to its own definition of British-Jewish interests. Despite considerable opposition from both at home and abroad, it continued to see itself not only as representing broader British-Jewish opinion but as doing what was best for all Jews. Above all, it remained convinced that it was still correct.

¹³⁸ The EZF was not an immediate beneficiary of this legislation.

'Building Jerusalem': Anglo-Jewish Non-Zionism, 1918-1939

In the short term, at least, Balfour's announcement did little to narrow the gulf between the Zionist and anti-Zionist blocs of the organised Anglo-Jewish community. While the major Jewish institutions rendered dutiful votes of appreciation, the tone of these statements contrasted sharply with the genuine enthusiasm expressed by British Zionists at their own public thanksgiving meetings.¹ Tellingly, leading Jews—save James de Rothschild and Herbert Samuel—did not appear in front of the crowds at the Royal Opera House and the Manchester Hippodrome. The Zionists' careful inclusion of prominent non-Jewish speakers, including Lord Cecil and Sir Mark Sykes, ensured that these celebrations could not be discredited as gatherings of foreign Jews. Yet those who had thought that the *fait accompli* of the Declaration, and the consequent demand for patriotic affirmation, would force an immediate, public show of Anglo-Jewish unity (if not eliminate opposition to Zionism entirely), were to be proven wrong.

The new circumstances did demand a degree of delicacy. Since the Declaration impacted on them both as Englishmen and as Jews—and had been met with some enthusiasm in both quarters—it was undoubtedly impolitic for elite anti-Zionists to attack it directly.² However, while the law does tend to respect possession—and Britain controlled most of Palestine by the end of the 1917—the Central Powers were as yet undefeated, and it was by no means obvious that a post-war settlement would endorse the status quo. One option, therefore, was to pay some degree of lip-service to the

¹ A motion thanking the government for its 'sympathetic interest' in Jewish affairs was passed at the Board of Deputies' November meeting. However, a majority of those present voted against cooperation with Zionist bodies in the establishment of a Jewish national home. *Jewish Chronicle* 23/11/17 17. N. Sokolow, *History of Zionism, 1600-1918* ii, (London, 1919), 99-123; I. Sieff, *Memoirs* (London, 1970), 95.

² Press coverage (largely positive) is collected in Leonard Stein Papers, (University of Oxford): 9. See also Sokolow, *History*, 85-97. One indication of growth in enthusiasm for the Zionist movement amongst Jews in Britain was a temporary but significant increase in English Zionist Federation membership. S.A. Cohen, *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jews 1895-1920* (Princeton, 1982), 282-3. On the responses of Jews outside Britain see P. Hyman, *The Jews of Modern France* (Berkeley, 1998), 138-42. C.I. Goldblatt, 'The Impact of the Balfour Declaration in America', *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 57:4 (1968), 455-515 (particularly 476-92).

government's kindness, and hope that the plan would be scuttled quietly at a later date.³

Diehards: The League of British Jews

Others, however, were not taking any chances. Less than two weeks after the Declaration, Lucien Wolf wrote to a colleague, 'To stamp the Jews everywhere as forming a separate nationality means that our children will have to fight the battle of Jewish emancipation over again under circumstances of much greater difficulty.' Consequently, 'even at the risk of finding ourselves in disagreement with our own Government at this moment', he, along with other like-minded anti-Zionists, had decided to take action. Their chosen instrument was a 'League of British Jews[,] ...formed for the protection of British subjects of the Crown professing the Jewish religion', and to resist the Zionist claim that Jewry constituted a distinct political entity. The League was not, Wolf hastened to add, opposed to the Palestine movement. Its members welcomed the establishment of a Jewish community in the Holy Land and pledged to assist it. What they would oppose fiercely was any attempt to 'loosen the bonds of loyalty attaching the Jew to his native land'.⁴

³ Apart from Britain's own hesitations about assuming further imperial responsibilities, there were two further sources of complication. France had not yet given up the ghost of Sykes-Picot, while the American tendency—at least in the form of the increasingly erratic Wilson—to rail against European war spoils threatened to wreck a Franco-British division of former Ottoman territories. Nonetheless, by the time that the Palestine question was negotiated at San Remo (questions regarding the former Ottoman territories were not addressed at Versailles because of delays in finalising a Turkish peace treaty), Britain had already been occupying the country for nearly three years, France had retreated from its Palestinian claims in exchange for the promise of British non-interference in Syria and Wilson—and with him the policy of liberal internationalism—was dead. In the interim, Britain had also authorised a Zionist Commission. As well as acting as the *Yishuv's* representative, this forerunner to the Jewish Agency coordinated a wide array of social and civic provision. D. Vital, *Zionism: The Crucial Phase* (Oxford, 1987), 297-302, 312-57; E. Monroe, *Britain's Moment in the Middle East, 1914-1971* (Rev. edn., London, 1981), 50-70; J.T. McTague, 'Anglo-French Negotiations over the Boundaries of Palestine, 1919-1920', *Journal of Political Studies* 11:2 (1982), 100-112. J. Nevakivi, *Britain, France and the Arab Middle East 1914-1920* (London, 1969). Documents relating to the Commission are compiled in I. Friedman, (ed.), *The Zionist Commission in Palestine 1918* (New York, 1987).

⁴ 15/11/17 Lucien Wolf Papers, (Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem): A77/3/2. Although the addressee of the letter would appear to read 'Moskowitz', it seems more likely that Wolf was writing to David Mowschowitch, a Russian-born Jew who advised him on Eastern European Jewish affairs. On Mowschowitch's role see M. Levene, *War, Jews and the New Europe: The Diplomacy of Lucien Wolf, 1914-1919* (Oxford, 1992), 135-7, 186-9, 194-7, 204-7.

In its composition and ideology, the League recapitulated the pre-Balfour anti-Zionism of the AJA and the Conjoint.⁵ (Although it would not have described its *raison d'être* as such, it was also the first Anglo-Jewish organisation with a specific aim of resisting Jewish nationalism.) If its significance was to be gauged by the size of its membership, which was small even in its heyday of 1918-1919, Anglo-Zionist claims that the organisation represented only the narrowest swathe of opinion—and was therefore practically irrelevant—would appear to have some merit.⁶ Yet the stature and influence of its membership (the executive included Claude Montefiore, Laurie and Philip Magnus and Lord Swaythling; Lionel de Rothschild served as the first President, while Lucien Wolf assumed the familiar role of secretary and publicist),⁷ its active programme of propaganda—including a general meeting attended by some 400 persons⁸ and the publication of *Jewish Opinion*, a monthly bulletin⁹—and its links with anti-Zionists in France and the United States¹⁰ all suggest that the determination of this segment of Anglo-Jewry to resist Jewish nationalism had if anything been strengthened by the Zionists' November 1917 triumph.

With the Declaration already an established fact, the Leaguers concentrated on securing 'an interpretation consonant with the principles by which Jewish emancipation was won' and resisting the notion that Jewry constituted a discrete political entity.¹¹

Self-protection continued to act as a significant motivator, a fact which did not endear

⁵ For 'position statements' see 12/17 Montefiore and M.A. Green, 'Private and Confidential: Sketch of Suggested Declaration by the League of British Jews on the Palestine Question' and 12/17 Wolf, 'Notes on Palestine and the Jews', LW Papers, (ZA): A77/3/1; 12/18 'Draft of LBJ statement to be submitted to Lord Balfour', LW Papers, (ZA): A77/3/3; 12/19 'Draft of LBJ statement to be submitted to Lloyd George', LW Papers, (ZA): A77/3/1; Publicity materials are collected in Board of Deputies Papers, (London Metropolitan Archives): ACC/3121/E3/208/2.

⁶ See JC 11/18/11 Letter to the Editor 11; JC 12/4/18 Ed 13.

⁷ JC 22/3/18 7.

⁸ *Report of the First General Meeting of the League of British Jews, 14 March 1918* (London, 1918).

⁹ Publication commenced in December 1918 and continued for approximately one year.

¹⁰ See for example 12/7/18 Louis Marshall (President of the American Jewish Committee) to Lionel Rothschild, LW Papers, (ZA): A77/3/3. *Jewish Opinion* published the complete correspondence, as well as the Committee's statement on the Declaration (12/18 2-3, 1/19 7).

¹¹ JO 12/18 4.

the organisation to its more populist critics.¹² Indeed, the League's controversial limitation of membership to native-born or naturalised British subjects, and its appearance of support—through the infamous 'Letter of the Ten'—to the *Morning Post's* anti-Semitic campaign against Jewish immigrants contributed to the not unreasonable impression that it was simply a vehicle for hyper-patriotism and narrow self-interest.¹³ (Although the LBJ did not formally endorse the letter, most of the signatories were its members.) Equally, despite its stated objective to 'facilitate the settlement in Palestine of such Jews as may desire to make Palestine their home', there is little evidence that either the organisation or its individual members—with the exception of Laurie Magnus, whom I will discuss in more detail in the section on the *Jewish Guardian*—had serious intentions of follow-through.¹⁴ Insofar as Palestine was concerned, the League's policy was primarily one of principled dissent.

If, as Stuart Cohen has suggested, the League did offer Anglo-Jewry—or at least a narrow constituency thereof—a coherent alternative to Zionism, it was nonetheless a short-lived and limited one.¹⁵ Formally, the LBJ limped through most of the 1920s, its existence offering a 'standing protest' to what its membership viewed as a dangerous policy in Palestine.¹⁶ In truth, however, it had long ceased to play a meaningful role in either communal politics or ideological discourse.¹⁷ While suffering from a perverse tendency to hold meetings 'on the fag end of a hot day', the LBJ's real problem was that it was politically redundant.¹⁸ Anglo-Jewry's search for a middle ground on

¹² See for example *JC* 18/2/18 Ed 5-6, 15/3/18 9-10. A further, and more laudable, concern was ensuring that Palestinian developments did not endanger forthcoming negotiations for Jewish rights in the new Eastern European nation-states. See 12/17 'Notes on Palestine', LW Papers, (ZA): A77/3/1.

¹³ S. Kadish, 'The Letter of the Ten': Bolsheviki and British Jews', in J. Frankel, (ed.), *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, iv: *The Jews and the European Crisis 1914-1921* (New York, 1988), 96-112.

¹⁴ It was envisioned that this would take place on entirely non-political lines or, at minimum, in the context of a Palestinian, rather than Jewish, nationality. *JO* 12/18 1. See also *JO* 5/19 6, 10/19 2, 11-12/19 1-2.

¹⁵ *English Zionists*, 307-8.

¹⁶ A phrase used at the LBJ's 1928 annual meeting, as reported in the *Jewish Guardian* 11/5/28 2.

¹⁷ In his article, 'From Anti-Zionism to Non-Zionism in Anglo-Jewry, 1917-1937', Gideon Shimoni writes of the LBJ, 'By 1926, it had all but petered out.' I would suggest, however, that the organisation's loss of momentum and influence took place as much as five years earlier. *Jewish Journal of Sociology* 28:1 (1986) 20, n. 43.

¹⁸ *JG* 26/5/22 3.

Palestine—and its achievement of some manner of one by the early years of that decade—had rendered both the substance and the style of the League's politics moribund. (A further factor may have been the fact that non-Jewish opponents of the Mandate, whose ranks included arch Conservatives, Arabists and a wide variety of anti-Semites, were not exactly cosy bedfellows.¹⁹)

From the outset, the League's oppositional stance had placed it in an isolated and unsustainable position. Despite apparent interest in cooperation with other elements of British Jewry—the executive had, for example, agreed to participate in 'multi-party' discussions in anticipation of a unifying, community-wide summit²⁰—the conditions it attached made failure virtually inevitable.²¹ Yet although the Anglo-Jewish Conference of 1918 never took place, the guiding principle behind it—broad-based Anglo-Jewish collaboration in the practical development of Palestine—was gaining wider support.

There were several reasons for this shift. The first was the recognition by a number of leading British Jews—early converts included Sir Adolph Tuck and Robert Waley Cohen—that in the wake of Palestine's new position, their previous coolness towards cooperation with the Zionists required revision. As Waley Cohen—who was, appropriately enough, the leading advocate of the communal conference—would explain in November 1918, Palestine policy was simply too important to leave to the Zionists. Anglo-Jewish leaders had a responsibility to safeguard the interests of their community and of Jews elsewhere. Consequently, it was imperative 'that the forces of the Community ...be united upon this vital effort, instead of being dissipated in a

¹⁹ D. Cesarani, 'Anti-Zionist Politics and Political Antisemitism in Britain, 1920-1924', *Patterns of Prejudice* 23:1 (1989), 28-45.

²⁰ The coordinating body, known as the Provisional Committee on an Anglo-Jewish Conference, operated from late 1917 to October 1918. 17/2/17 and 19/5/18, Minute Book, (Anglo-Jewish Archives, University of Southampton): AJ/82/1.

²¹ This trend continued. See for example, 26/6/22 Wolf to Montefiore, 'I am all for doing something for the economic development of Palestine and for the establishment of a National Home in a purely spiritual sense, but we cannot do this in alliance with people who are intent on things and methods of which we have unswervingly disapproved.' Lucien Wolf Papers, (YIVO Archives, New York): 348-MK502, 4/35.

controversy upon a "*chose jugée*."²² Speaking to the Board of Deputies following his return from a 1921 Palestine trip, its President, Sir Stuart Samuel, voiced a similar sentiment. Palestine needed money and energy, he declared. It was their obligation as British Jews to help remove the obstacles to its success.²³ And finally, Sir Lionel Abrahams (an assistant Secretary of State for India as well as a former ITOist, he had helped to mediate the pre-conference discussions) decried the extremes in both the Zionist and the anti-Zionist camps. 'It is surely clear', he declared in an address to the B'nai Brith, that 'Zionist controversy, as such, should as far as possible be allowed to rest when practical discussion about the Declaration on Palestine is in progress.'²⁴

These Anglo-Jews, who were among the first who would come to be known as 'non-Zionists', were not the only ones looking at matters with a more measured gaze. Although Allenby's 11 December (1917) entry into Jerusalem had prompted the first ringing of the Westminster Cathedral bells in three years, the honeymoon for officials in Whitehall and Palestine alike had been brief.²⁵ In addition to the practical problems of a devastated local economy, depleted population and virtually non-existent infrastructure, those responsible for Palestine also faced an overarching political challenge, that of reconciling the local Arab²⁶ population to Britain's ostensibly pro-Zionist policy. By the time that the mandate was issued in April 1920, and Herbert Samuel dispatched as High Commissioner, Arab opposition to the Zionist presence had

²² 13/11/18 Waley Cohen and Frederick Stern (successful city banker and closely affiliated with the Jewish War Memorial project—a campaign to develop an institute of advanced Jewish learning at Oxford or Cambridge) to the League of British Jews, LS Papers, (Oxford): 11. More generally, R. Henriques, *Sir Robert Waley Cohen 1877-1952* (London, 1966), particularly 260-71.

²³ *JG* 22/7/21 3. On Samuel's lukewarm attitude towards Zionism see *JC* 24/2/22 17.

²⁴ *JC* 22/2/18 10.

²⁵ B. Wasserstein, *The British in Palestine: the Mandatory Government and the Arab-Jewish Conflict, 1917-1929* (London, 1978), 18-57. McTague, 'The British Military Administration in Palestine, 1917-1920', *Jewish Political Studies* 7:3 (1978), 55-76. The memoirs of the military governor, Ronald Storrs, are particularly evocative. *Orientations* (London, 1943).

²⁶ The contemporary usage of 'Palestinian' was not in place at this time. The non-Jewish population of Palestine was universally referred to as 'Arab'; the term 'Palestinian' was used occasionally by both British officials and Jews (usually European or American non-Zionists, see, for example, *JG* 7/11/19 10, 11/2/21 10) to denote the entirety of the population of the territory. Although this definition began to shift in the 1920s and 1930s, concurrent with the emergence of a Palestinian Arab national independence movement, it was not universally in place until after 1948.

taken a violent turn, relations between the British and Zionist officials had suffered further decline and the British press was questioning the wisdom of the nation's Levantine commitments.²⁷

Samuel's arrival in Palestine, coupled with the implementation of a civilian administration, yielded a temporary abatement of Arab-Jewish tensions, while the suspension of restrictions on immigration and land purchase mollified *Yishuv* officials. However, following a further, and substantially more deadly, outbreak of violence in May 1921, British policy was subjected to formal review. Designed to reassure the Arab population and to curb the aspirations of so-called extreme Zionists—it was with those aims that the document disavowed British intent to make Palestine 'as Jewish as England is English', or to 'impos[e] ...a Jewish nationality upon the inhabitants of Palestine as a whole'—the Churchill White Paper (1922) nonetheless reaffirmed Britain's original commitment to help found a Jewish national home in Palestine.²⁸ This first attempt to clarify British aims foreshadowed two defining features of later policy: a tendency, in the face of competing and incompatible interests, to employ ameliorative measures, or 'muddle through', and a desire to minimise the disruptive (and costly) impact of Arab opposition. It also underscored the endurance of assumptions regarding Jewish influence, Palestine's strategic importance²⁹ and the symbolic advantages of imperial control.³⁰

²⁷ On the factors behind Samuel's appointment see T. Segev, *One Palestine Complete: Jews and Arabs Under the British Mandate*, tr. H. Watzman (New York, 1999), 145-9; Wasserstein, *British in Palestine*, 81-4.

²⁸ Although the White Paper recognised the significance of immigration to the creation of the Jewish national home, it nonetheless stated that it should not exceed 'whatever may be the economic capacity of the country ...to absorb new arrivals'. The phrase took on subsequent notoriety when it was invoked during the 1930s as a means of justifying severe limitations on the admission of European Jewish refugees. E. Friesel, 'British Policy in Palestine: The "Churchill Memorandum" of 1922', in R. Cohen, (ed.), *Vision and Conflict in the Holy Land* (New York, 1985), 190-217.

²⁹ This was no longer an article of faith. In 1923, both the Lords and a special military panel concluded that Palestine had become a liability. At the same time, a popular book by *The Times* correspondent, Philip Graves, reinvented the traditional arguments regarding regional balance of power and the protection of Suez and India. Friesel, 'British Officials and the Situation in Palestine, 1923', *Middle Eastern Studies* 23:2 (1987), 194-210. Graves, *Palestine, the Land of Three Faiths* (London, 1923).

³⁰ 17/2/23 Colonial Office Memo, LS Papers, (Oxford): 1; Anthony Hall to Stein, Leonard Stein Papers, (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem): A185/103.

The Zionist leadership was now forced to take stock as well. The faltering (albeit momentary) of British will, the contradictory messages of the White Paper and, perhaps most obviously, the apparent fixity of Arab opposition, placed the future of a Jewish Palestine in jeopardy. Moreover, the Zionist Organisation could hardly finance the *Yishuv's* social and economic development. In the absence of changes to London's budgetary policy (funding was restricted to defence and some essential infrastructure), the building of the Jewish national home would therefore require a massive infusion of capital from European and American Jewry. The idea of a moderate stance towards Britain, the Arabs and non-nationalist Jews alike—through, for instance, the disavowal of the pursuit of Jewish statehood and the muting of plans for mass immigration—continued to provoke substantial discord within the Zionist movement itself. (By the 1930s it would lead to a shearing-off of the right wing of the movement and the ouster of the moderates' chief prophet, Chaim Weizmann, from the ZO presidency.) Nonetheless, there was a growing consensus that the Zionists would have to establish a broad church.³¹

* * *

It was against this backdrop of political and organisational change that a new relationship between established Anglo-Jewry and the Britain's project in Palestine began to take shape. Various described as non-Zionism,³² practical Zionism³³ (or practicable Zionism—this was Herbert Samuel's favoured term³⁴), commercial Zionism³⁵

³¹ 15/10/22 Stein, 'Memorandum: The Jewish Agency', LS Papers, (Zionist Archive): A185/96.

³² The earliest contemporary reference found is in the *JG* 1/4/21 10. Academic citations include M. Kaufman, *An Ambiguous Partnership: Non-Zionists and Zionists in America, 1939-1948* (Jerusalem, 1991); P.R. Mendes-Flohr, 'Rosenzweig and the "Kamaraden": A non-Zionist Alliance', *Journal of Contemporary History* 26:3-4 (1991), 385-402.

³³ *JG* 9/9/21 Ed 10. The term was also employed by both Zionists and non-Zionists to describe the mechanics of Palestine development work or policies of a constructive (i.e., applied), ostensibly non-ideological, character. *JG* 8/6/28 Ed 8, 17/7/31 2, 24/7/31 Ed 6.

³⁴ *JG* 30/12/21 8, 27/1/22 8, 28/7/22 1, 28/3/24 8.

³⁵ *JG* 8/10/26 1.

and patriotic Zionism,³⁶ it differentiated itself both from the 'official', 'political', or 'extreme' Zionism³⁷ of the English Zionist Federation and the Zionist Organisation as well as the anti-Zionism of the League of British Jews.³⁸ This chapter will consider the inter-war development of Anglo-Jewish non-Zionism (in particular its rhetorical and institutional expressions) and seek to assess its motivations, content and significance through a case study approach.

Scholars have noted the difficulty of defining who is a Zionist.³⁹ The task of classifying *non-Zionists* is arguably an even trickier one. In their assessments of Zionist strength within a given community, historians have ordinarily relied either on tallies of membership in a Zionist organisation and/or *shekalim* purchases. (Payment of this token fee entitled the purchaser to vote in elections to the Zionist Congress). With the case of non-Zionists, no comparable indices exist. As such, any attempt to characterise the demography of non-Zionism or to calculate the extent of its popular appeal is necessarily imprecise.⁴⁰ A further complication arises from the fact that boundaries between non-Zionist and Zionist aligned work were often blurred. The former group participated selectively in the activities of and/or offered financial support to Zionist linked causes (such as the Jewish National Fund, also known as *Keren Kayemet*, which coordinated the purchase of trees and land in Palestine, or the Jewish Agency—*Keren Hayesod*—whose remit included social services and education). Committed Zionists also engaged in ostensibly non-ideological work.

³⁶ The phrase is used by David Cesarani in 'Zionism in England, 1917-1939', (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford Univ., 1986). It does not appear in surveyed primary source literature.

³⁷ Other descriptors used occasionally were ideal, Herzlian and national.

³⁸ Shimoni characterises the distinction between anti-Zionism and non-Zionism as follows: while the former describes active opposition to Zionist ideology and the work of the ZO, the latter, while not excluding a disagreement with the tenets of Zionism, nonetheless allows for some manner of cooperation with Zionists and/or Zionist groups. 'Anti-Zionism to Non-Zionism', 26.

³⁹ W.D. Rubinstein, 'Zionism and the Jewish People, 1918-1960: From Minority to Hegemony', *JJS* 43:1-2 (2001), 5-36. More broadly, E. Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics* (New York, 1993), particularly 34-6, 56-62, 82-6.

⁴⁰ On which see *JC* 24/8/34 Ed 8. Strictly speaking, Anglo-Jewish non-Zionism had neither a tradition of intellectual debate and discourse—either oral or written—which would characterise an ideology nor the structures of a coherent, organised movement (By comparison, Anglo-Jewish Zionism of this period lacked the former but possessed the latter.) Nonetheless, non-Zionism was understood both by its proponents and detractors to refer to a specific approach to Palestine questions.

For the purposes of this chapter, therefore, I offer a broad outline of my approach. A substantial portion of what follows will focus on figures who identified themselves explicitly and/or were associated exclusively with practical work related to the development of Palestine. In these cases, application of the terms 'non-Zionist' or 'non-Zionism' would appear to be wholly appropriate. This would seem equally true of organisations—most prominently the Economic Board for Palestine, whose sole purpose was the financing of such efforts—and a publication like the *Jewish Guardian*, which advocated a moderate, practical and non or anti-nationalist approach to the Palestine question.

Indifference to Palestine, or an absence of opposition to some components of Zionist work, is not itself synonymous with non-Zionism or practical Zionism. However, I will argue that what might be termed latent non-Zionism—usually dormant but with the possibility to express itself, through, for example, attendance at a Palestine charity bazaar or the purchase of a tree in the Anglo-Jewish Forest—became the dominant, although not universal, position within the more elite segments of Anglo-Jewry by the early 1930s. In other words, while active affiliation in the Zionist movement increased during this period (largely within the middle classes, but, to a degree, also within the immigrant communities and the traditional leadership) and the significance of outright anti-Zionism waned, the majority of establishment Anglo-Jewry identified either passively or actively with a non-Zionist approach to Palestine questions.

In what way did this differ from what Derek Penslar has described as the 'inchoate Palestinophilia' of many Western Jews during the late nineteenth and early twentieth

centuries?⁴¹ To some extent, it did not. Anglo-Jewish philanthropic activity in aid of Palestine remained outwardly similar even after the establishment of the Mandate.⁴² However, coupled with an increase in the scale and scope of these activities (and the creation of new projects conducted on a business basis), there was also a shift in motivations. Historic, sentimental and religious associations with the Holy Land, the desire to build up a Jewish spiritual and cultural centre and the charitable urge to assist less fortunate Jews all continued to play a role. At the same time, British Jews were now implicated in Palestine's future on an additional level: as English and imperial citizens.

Just as Palestine was envisioned as a bridge between East and West,⁴³ Anglo-Jewry would now operate as the link between the Mandatory government and Jewish communities throughout the world.⁴⁴ This positive obligation to further British and Jewish interests—which were assumed to be not only compatible but synonymous—therefore necessitated some manner of rapprochement.⁴⁵ Although, as the Reverend S. Levy explained, 'It is purely accidental ...that the Mandatory Power for Palestine is Britain,' it was nonetheless

a high privilege ...that as free citizens of Britain we may answer the call of Palestine to the Jew of to-day with absolute fidelity to the genuine cause of British imperial policy and world peace. As citizens of Britain we therefore need have no hesitation in regarding as a special responsibility the signal opportunity that now offers itself to us of assisting, encouraging and supporting Britain in its acceptance and honourable fulfilment of the Mandate for Palestine.⁴⁶

There was, of course, another dynamic at work. Just as many British policy-makers urged their government to hold on to the Mandate for fear of the consequences of

⁴¹ *Zionism and Technocracy: The Engineering of Jewish Settlements in Palestine, 1870-1918* (Bloomington, 1991), 15.

⁴² Paul Goodman (EZF leader and historian of Zionism) referred to this as 'philanthropic Palestinianism'. Cited in Cesarani, 'Zionism in England', 22.

⁴³ 12/7/20 James de Rothschild speech at Royal Albert Hall San Remo celebration, LS Papers, (Oxford): 7; 27/2/22 Alfred Mond speech at Oxford, LS Papers, (ZA): A185/73; 18/2/21 Stein, 'The Future of Palestine: Memorandum for the Independent Liberal Party', LS Papers, (ZA): A185/77.

⁴⁴ *Jewish Graphic* 19/3/26 11.

⁴⁵ Herbert Samuel speech, *JG* 7/11/19 5.

⁴⁶ Sermon delivered to the Conference of Jewish Preachers, *JG* 13/7/23 5.

failure, many British Jews felt duty-bound to ensure its success out of concern that any shortcomings would reflect poorly on them.

For all these reasons, cooperation was now seen as being both necessary and desirable. Underlying ambivalence regarding Zionism's long-term aims nonetheless meant that the efforts of Anglo-Jewish non-Zionists were frequently tentative, half-hearted and inconsistent.⁴⁷ Moreover, while many desired to play a positive role in Palestine's future, they were insistent on two conditions: involvement could not be entirely on Zionist terms, nor would participation in practical work imply support for either Jewish nationalist ideology or the policies of the Zionist Organisation. Rather, through their involvement in Palestine work, Anglo-Jewish non-Zionists hoped to 'reclaim Zionism' from the Zionists and thus place the development of Palestine on a steady, moderate and practical course.⁴⁸ While the *Jewish Guardian* would proclaim in 1926, 'we are all Zionists to-day,' the Zionism to which they referred was of very particular nature indeed.⁴⁹

As I have suggested, the formulation and articulation of this new philosophy towards Palestine and Zionism also brought new spokespersons and leaders into the forefront of Anglo-Jewish public life. For the most part, the moderate ethos of practicable or non-Zionism failed to attract those who had led attacks on political Zionism during and immediately after the war.⁵⁰ Significantly, the figures who did come to be identified with it—including Robert Waley Cohen, his cousin, Walter Cohen, Osmond d'Avigdor

⁴⁷ See for example 15/2/18 Lionel Abrahams to Wolf: 'I believe this need [for refuge] is generally recognized and that many Jews, who have always disliked the ideas connected with Zionism, would nonetheless co-operate, perhaps not very happily, in helping to give effect to the Government Declaration if it did not contain the phrase about the establishment of "a *National* Home for the Jewish people.'" LW Papers, (ZA): A77/3/3. Emphasis is my own.

⁴⁸ *JG* 3/10/19 Ed 12.

⁴⁹ *JG* 8/10/26 Ed 18.

⁵⁰ Figures like Montefiore and Wolf would remain committed anti-Zionists. (Both died in the 1930s.) See, for example, the former's column in the last issue of the *JG* (14/8/31 5). An obvious product of ideological conviction, their age and other interests—Montefiore focused increasingly on theological projects, while Wolf devoted his attention to the ongoing problems for Jews in the Soviet Union and Eastern European successor states—also undermined the prospects for any substantive transformation of their perspectives.

Goldsmid, Neville Laski and Alfred Mond—had not taken a part in these earlier battles. All recognised in the fact of the Mandate an imperative as well as an opportunity to fulfil their roles as Jewish and imperial citizens. Despite concerns regarding political Zionism, a British-Jewish Palestine was, they believed, the best path for Palestine, Jewry and the Empire alike.

* * *

Given the breadth of time in question, the limitations imposed by source material⁵¹ and the subjects which have already been addressed by other scholars,⁵² I have chosen to focus on two thematic illustrations of Anglo-Jewish inter-war non-Zionism. My first case study analyses the *Jewish Guardian*, an explicitly non-Zionist British-Jewish newspaper published between 1919 and 1931. Cited occasionally in other works, the *JG* has not yet been the subject of any sustained investigation. However, the paper's extensive coverage of Zionism and Palestine during the 1920s, which included such issues as whether and how to cooperate with the Zionists, how to promote 'Jewishness' in Palestine, the virtues of British rule and the continued need to seek liberal, non-nationalist solutions to Jewish problems in Europe, make it an optimal source for examining the evolution of established Anglo-Jewish views during the first decade of the Mandate.

⁵¹ The papers of many of the organisations in question, including, for example, those of the Economic Board for Palestine, have not survived; similarly, there are no personal archives for most of the key personalities associated with 'practical' Zionism in inter-war England. In other cases, the records of non-Zionist activities are contained only within the vast archives of specifically Zionist bodies; the latter are located almost exclusively in Israel. Any more systematic study is also limited by a paucity of secondary literature.

⁵² Gideon Shimoni has posited that the Churchill White Paper allowed for the development of a pragmatic attitude to Zionism within Anglo-Jewry. While Shimoni is relatively authoritative on the question of Zionist-non-Zionist relations, he, perhaps inevitably, has little to say about the motivations of Anglo-Jewish non-Zionism, its constituency or its domestic structures and activities. A dissertation by David Cesarani addresses some, but not all, of these questions. Most interestingly, Cesarani proposes—but does not develop fully—the idea of what he terms 'patriotic Zionism'. However, since his primary interest is the growth of organised Zionism within inter-war Britain, he devotes considerable attention to Zionist efforts at institutional transformation and tends to view non-Zionism as somewhat of a stepping stone to 'real' Zionism. Most recent is Stephan Wendehorst's doctoral thesis covering the years 1936 to 1956. Its focus is, like Cesarani's, largely on the transformation of organised Zionism. Finally, Michael Berkowitz's study of Western Jewry's relationship to Mandatory Palestine makes only passing reference to Anglo-Jewish non-Zionism. Shimoni, 'Anti-Zionism to Non-Zionism', *JJS* 28:2 (1986), 19-47; Cesarani, 'Zionism in England'; Wendehorst, 'British Jewry, Zionism and the Jewish State, 1936-1956' (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford Univ., 1997); Berkowitz, *Western Jewry and the Zionist Project, 1914-1933* (Cambridge, 1997).

The second case study is an overview of Anglo-Jewish Palestino-centric philanthropic and business activities, in particular those which were independent of the official Zionist movement. This section will therefore consider the creation, composition and programme of commercial organisations—notably the Economic Board for Palestine—and charitable groups, including the Friends of the Hebrew University. In addition, I will also discuss non-Zionist participation and leadership in such projects as the Palestine Pavilion at the 1924 Empire Exhibition and the Balfour Forest, as well as involvement, particularly by women, in smaller and more frequent fêtes, garden parties and bazaars in benefit of Palestine. This case study does not aim to produce a comprehensive catalogue of such institutions or activities or to offer quantitative or comparative assessments of their impact (in terms of funds raised, persons in attendance or total membership figures). Rather, I hope to demonstrate through these examples that many British Jews who remained distant from (if not actively opposed to) the more far-reaching aims of the Zionist movement during the 1920s and 1930s nonetheless found in philanthropy and investment a concrete means both of conveying and of building a relationship to Mandatory Palestine. Secondly, I also hope to bring to light personalities, institutions and events which have hitherto not received adequate attention.

The Jewish Guardian: 1919-1931

When the first issue of the *Jewish Guardian* appeared on 3 October 1919, it would not have been unreasonable to assume that this new paper was simply a rebranded version of the League of British Jews' monthly publication, *Jewish Opinion*. In fact, the idea of ending the Zionist monopoly over the national Jewish press had been discussed

by the LBJ's Propaganda Committee.⁵³ Moreover, the *JG*'s Board of Directors and early funders both drew heavily from League members—not least the staunch anti-Zionist Claude Montefiore. (In addition to Montefiore, the former included Israel Abrahams, Joseph Gluckstein and, somewhat incongruously, Joseph Prag.⁵⁴) The editor, Laurie Magnus, was also a League officer and, on the evidence of his 1918 pamphlet, 'Old Lamps for New: an Apologia for the League of British Jews', as well as two earlier articles, 'Zionism and the Neo-Zionists' and 'Aspects of the Jewish Question', a public and determined foe of Jewish nationalism.⁵⁵

The *JG*'s first editorial disclaimed any formal affiliation with the League. Nonetheless, its statement of purpose hardly placed it at odds with its alleged parent. '[W]e shall aim at spreading a knowledge of Judaism, its history, traditions and antiquities, as our best defence against calumny and attack.' With regards to Palestine, the paper's editors found themselves 'unable to acclaim a temporal Jewish State in Palestine as the finite home of a missionary Israel'. Therefore, while they were not 'insensible to the magnetism of the Holy Land' and would endeavour to 'follow these developments [in Palestine] with great interest', they would nonetheless 'preserve the root-distinction between religion and nationality so as to guard Judaism as the *differentia* of the Jew'.⁵⁶

⁵³ 18/3/18 Minutes LBJ literary subcommittee, Board of Deputies Papers, (LMA): ACC/3121/E3/208/1.

⁵⁴ Cesarani, 'Zionism in England', 88. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Prag was one of the sole Conjoint members to vote against the Committee's May 1917 statement on Zionism. On the reasons for his involvement in the *JG* see his obituary on 28/6/29 1.

⁵⁵ All published in London. 'Zionism and the Neo-Zionists', (1917); 'Aspects of the Jewish Question by a Jewish Quarterly Reviewer', (1902). These articles reflect Magnus's association with Liberal Judaism, a movement which produced some of the staunchest anti-Zionists. Nonetheless, just as it would be a mistake to see the *Jewish Guardian* simply as a mouthpiece for the League of British Jews, it also surpassed the classic—and by this point somewhat dated—Reform critique of Zionism.

⁵⁶ *JG* 3/10/19 12. In what can be viewed as a sign of its budding independence, this issue also criticised the *Jewish Opinion* for lacking initiative (9).

Yet almost from the outset, the *JG* transcended its original brief.⁵⁷ What began as a classically anti-Zionist publication soon came to exemplify a type of engaged non-Zionism which was increasingly gaining strength in the more established ranks of Anglo-Jewry.⁵⁸ The answer to why this editorial transformation occurred is, in the absence of the paper's own records, difficult to judge. Certainly the ZO's prevailing—if not consistent—trend towards moderation played a role, as did governmental clarification of its aims in Palestine. One might also speculate that the *JG*'s editor, Laurie Magnus, underwent some manner of ideological transformation. While others involved with the paper would seem to have maintained their earlier views (notably Montefiore), Magnus' public statements on issues related to Palestine and Zionism suggest that he may well have been at the forefront of this readjustment.⁵⁹

On the whole, the paper was true to its promise to follow Palestinian developments 'with great interest'. Although it functioned, much like its overtly Zionist competitors, as a source of news and opinion on a broad array of Jewish topics, coverage of Palestine and Zionist affairs was particularly strong. This took several forms. The first was reporting on specifically Anglo-Jewish developments: charity functions,⁶⁰ reports on speeches or debates,⁶¹ transcripts of Economic Board meetings or EZF conferences (as well as relevant discussions at other bodies, including the AJA and the Board of

⁵⁷ Although it would appear that neither has examined the paper's full print run, both Cesarani and Shimoni suggest that the *JG* remained in effect a corollary to the work of the League. Cohen takes a somewhat different view, stating that the paper established itself as a 'non-Zionist alternative' in the national Jewish press. Cesarani, 'Zionism in England', 46-7; Shimoni, 'Anti-Zionism to Non-Zionism', 26, 43 n. 5; S.A. Cohen, *English Zionists*, 309.

⁵⁸ In general, the paper appears to have targeted the wealthier and more acculturated Jews. Its intermittent publication of a friendly societies supplement, beginning on 7/1/21, would indicate that an attempt was made to broaden this profile. In his history of the *JC*, Cesarani states that Greenberg implemented several changes in order to maintain market dominance. *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry, 1841-1991* (Cambridge, 1994), 139-40.

⁵⁹ Magnus' speech, 'Zionism and Anti-Semitism', was published in full on 4/5/23 3-4. See also 30/5/24 'The Palestine Mandate—Seven Years After', 7-8. It should be mentioned while that there is no evidence that Magnus resigned from the LBJ, his father, Philip, continued to play a role in that organisation while nonetheless supporting both the Hebrew University and tree planting in Palestine. Another possible source of influence was Israel Abrahams, who embraced a more moderate position in the years prior to his 1925 death. Address to the London University Jewish Student Union, 7/11/19 14, 11/6/20 10, 22/9/22 2-3, 22/9/22 Letter 8.

⁶⁰ 11/11/21 3, 4/4/24 3, 23/4/25 15, 7/1/27 7, 10/2/28 3, 17/5/29 2, 9-10.

⁶¹ 25/11/21 7, 3/3/22 11, 3/8/23 4-5, 25/4/24 4, 6/11/25 3-5, 11-12, 2/12/27 9-10.

Deputies)⁶² and lists of donors to a recent appeal.⁶³ This emphasis revealed the range and scope of discussion and activism and underlined the importance of Anglo-Jewish investment, both literal and figurative, in the Palestine project.

At the same time, however, domestic activity reflected external developments, in particular changes within the ZO, policy decisions of the British government and Mandatory authorities and, perhaps most importantly, events in Palestine itself. To that end, the *JG* hired correspondents to attend Zionist Congresses,⁶⁴ interviewed leading Zionist and public figures,⁶⁵ noted the content of parliamentary debates and official reports,⁶⁶ provided frequent updates on the *Yishuv's* political and economic development⁶⁷ and reported on setbacks like the 1927 earthquake and the outbreak of Arab violence two years later.⁶⁸ Altogether, therefore, while readers were certainly encouraged to hold a particular viewpoint, they were nonetheless given a fair amount of information with which they could both increase their knowledge and draw their own conclusions.

The *JG's* editorials also reflected evolutions in the content and context of the Anglo-Jewish non-Zionist position. Over the twelve years of its publication (the last issue was printed on 14 August 1931), the paper both mirrored and helped to shape ongoing debates regarding such key questions as the content and significance of Anglo-Jewry's responsibilities *vis-à-vis* Palestinian Jewry and the Mandate, the correct course for the

⁶² In many cases, debates and speeches at these types of gatherings were printed nearly verbatim. 6/2/20 3, 22/4/20 9-10, 18/3/21 3-4, 6, 14/10/21 11-12, 23/11/23 16, 22/8/24 15, 16/7/26 4, 23/7/26 13, 16/11/28 3, 22/2/29 8-9, 26/4/29 7-8, 31/1/30 4, 6/6/30 9.

⁶³ 11/1/24 4, 20/9/29 8, 4/10/29 14-16.

⁶⁴ 1/9/22 3-4, 8/9/22 1, 4/9/25 3, 4/2/27 7, 2/9/27 3-5, 28/12/28 4, 17/7/31 2.

⁶⁵ 28/11/19 11, 3/2/22 11, 14/9/23 3.

⁶⁶ 17/6/21 3, 5-6, 2/9/21 11-13, 7/7/22 3-6, 22/11/29 3, 11, 3/1/30 7-8, 4/4/30 8-10. The paper also monitored domestic press coverage. See 12/8/21 1, 12/4/22 1, 9/1/25 3, 27/9/29 2.

⁶⁷ For a period of time, a column entitled 'In New Palestine' provided quantitative data on immigration and the economy. See 4/2/21 9, 25/2/21 3-4. See also 3/11/22 19, 27/6/24 12, 12/12/24 6, 9/1/25 3, 17/2/28 3, 9/1/31 3. At various times the paper had Palestine and Jerusalem correspondents (12/8/21 3, 13/1/22 3, 1/2/24 3). There was also a more frivolous side to *Yishuv* reporting, with details of social events—particularly those involving British Jews living in Palestine and/or working for the Authority—and important visitors (18/3/21 7, 26/5/22 3, 23/3/23 14).

⁶⁸ 12/8/27 7, 5/10/28 1-3, 30/8/29 3, 6/9/29 2-3.

Zionist movement to take, the character of the future Jewish national home and the place of Palestine within the broader spectrum of Jewish concerns.⁶⁹ The goal of this case study is threefold: to analyse the specific content of the *JG*'s editorial positions (and, to a limited extent, the means by which they were argued),⁷⁰ to establish a holistic picture of the paper's perspectives on Palestine and Zionism and to suggest how this might offer insight into the concerns and priorities of Anglo-Jewish non-Zionism in the first decade of the Mandate.

The Mandate: Serving Jewry and the Empire

In its formulation of Anglo-Jewry's Mandatory obligations, the *JG* addressed itself to a readership which was devoted to Britain as well as to Judaism. As well as demonstrating that these loyalties were—if properly conceived—absolutely compatible, the paper also attempted to persuade readers that Britain's Mandate for Palestine benefited the Empire and Jewry⁷¹ (both within and outside of Britain) alike. Despite its own hesitations regarding the creation of a Jewish national home, the *JG* declared with assurance that a British Palestine was an imperial asset. Responding to a *Daily Express* quit Palestine campaign, it stated, 'To those who realize Great Britain's peculiar position as an Oriental Power, and the fact that Palestine is on the highway to the East and the guardian of the Suez Canal,' the idea of giving up the Mandate on account of its alleged expense, was 'unthinkable'.⁷²

⁶⁹ The final editorial offered little explanation. Cesarani suggests that the market was simply too small for two Anglo-Jewish weeklies. *Jewish Chronicle*, 140.

⁷⁰ Each edition of the paper included one full-page editorial, generally focused on a single theme. In addition, the front pages (usually 1 and 3) had editorialised summaries of the major news. Detailed editorial analysis will for practical reasons be largely limited to the former, while my analysis of the paper's editorial position will be drawn from both sections.

⁷¹ Consistent with its opposition to 'nationalised Judaism', or claims of Jewish nationhood, the paper was uncomfortable with the term 'world Jewry'. Nonetheless, it did acknowledge that various national Jewries were not wholly atomised and that matters related to Palestine had significance (albeit differential) for all Jews. 29/5/21 1, 3, 19/2/26 13.

⁷² 2/9/27 1, 25/7/24 8, 16/8/29 1. As the first example demonstrates, the question of Palestine's cost to British taxpayers—a key reason behind British withdrawal in the late 1940s—was raised by critics at a much earlier date. Since the Palestine government paid for everything except defence out of local tax receipts, the real issue being referred to was the cost of keeping the peace between Jews and Arabs.

Similarly when in the aftermath of the 1929 Hebron riots, Ramsay MacDonald's Cabinet contemplated a total reorientation of its Palestine policy, the paper offered a stern reproof.⁷³ 'Knowing the history and facts, and trammelled by no record of support to Jewish nationalist views', it wrote following the publication of the investigatory commission's report, it is a 'travesty of the truth to maintain that development in Palestine would have followed a course adverse in any sense or kind to the present and longer interests of the British Empire.'⁷⁴ In contrast to those whom it dubbed the 'Colonel Lawrence and Miss Bell' wing of the Colonel Office, the *JG* also did not attach much significance to Moslem opinion within the Empire.⁷⁵ Instead it argued that the real threat to Britain's imperial interests would come from a halt in regional Westernisation (Jews were generally seen to be the primary agents of change) and the inevitable loss of international confidence which would accompany it.⁷⁶ Those who urged the government to scuttle its promises to the Jews were simply failing to 'think imperially'.⁷⁷ (No such criticism could be made of the *JG*.)

Confidence that Britain's presence in Palestine benefited both its current inhabitants (Jewish and non-Jewish) and those who would later come to settle was unalloyed. The *JG* put it simply in this April 1920 statement: 'British rule is good.'⁷⁸ That its extension to Palestine—as a consequence of ending 'Turkish *misrule*'—and the country's inclusion in the 'family group of the Empire' would yield positive change was

⁷³ Wasserstein, *British in Palestine*, 217-41. G. Sheffer, 'Intentions and Results of British Policy in Palestine: Passfield's White Paper', *MES* 9:1 (1973), 43-60. P. Ofer, 'The Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August 1929: Appointment, Terms of Reference, Procedures and Report', *MES* 21:3 (1985), 349-61.

⁷⁴ 28/11/30 6.

⁷⁵ 2/1/31 6, 7/8/31 1.

⁷⁶ 6/9/29 2, 6, 11/10/29 2, 24/1/30 6, 28/11/30 6. The non-Jewish Labour MP Josiah Wedgwood and his short-lived Seventh Dominion League (revived in 1944 as the Jewish Dominion in Palestine League) were perhaps the most passionate advocates for this position. Although dismissed by both the British government and the mainstream Zionist leadership, Wedgwood's plan to forge permanent Anglo-Jewish ties was welcomed by Revisionist sympathizers, including the editor of the *JC*, Ivan Greenberg. Wedgwood, *The Seventh Dominion* (London, 1928); *Zionist Review* 5:12 (1922), 189-90; J.B. Stein, 'Josiah Wedgwood and the Seventh Dominion Scheme', *Studies in Zionism* 11:2 (1990), 141-55.

⁷⁷ 6/9/29 6.

⁷⁸ 30/4/20 10.

viewed—even by political Zionism’s detractors—to be practically axiomatic.⁷⁹ (It is notable that no less an opponent than the League of British Jews went on record in 1920 as favouring a British protectorate over any other type of arrangement for Palestine.⁸⁰) The paper cited several factors operating in Britain’s favour, including the Empire’s traditions of freedom and justice, its previous successes as a civilising power and what Laurie Magnus had in another setting described as its ‘quiet, sound, equable way’ of ruling subject nations.⁸¹ (Magnus noted that this approach had brought peace and contentment to the *fellaheen* of Egypt and the Indian peasantry.) The consequence was that in Palestine the ‘fruits of the land [we]re [now] being gathered’ and a national home provided for those Jews who elected to become ‘modern Palestinians’.⁸²

Despite its enthusiasm for this expansion of Empire, and its confidence that Palestine would prosper under British guidance, the *JG*’s editors nonetheless reflected carefully on the Mandate’s implications for Anglo-Jews, particularly those of non-Zionist inclinations. As they no doubt recognised, the idea that British and Anglo-Jewish interests operated in harmony had deep roots in communal self-conception. This was not a conviction that the paper sought to challenge in any serious fashion. Nonetheless, a degree of circumspection was in order.

There was little question, the paper suggested in November 1919, that ‘Jews may remain strong in the faith of their fathers without in the least affecting the strength of [their] allegiance to the King.’⁸³ Moreover, Britain’s imminent acceptance of the Mandate, and the pressing need for another outlet of Jewish refuge, made a call on

⁷⁹ 25/7/24 8, 28/5/20 15. Emphasis in the former is my own.

⁸⁰ 22/4/20 Lionel de Rothschild (Letter) 3.

⁸¹ 28/5/20 4, 8/6/20 8. Magnus’ speech was published on 4/5/23 3–4. Other contributors made similar arguments. 5/1/23 4, 28/4/22 3–4, 1/2/24 3.

⁸² 25/7/24 8.

⁸³ 14/11/19 10.

both sets of loyalties: 'the British and the Jewish, the patriotic and the religious'.⁸⁴ But what was the meaning of that obligation for those who could not support the Zionists' political ambitions? The editorial pages offered several responses.⁸⁵ In some cases, any potential conflict of interest was simply denied. Anglo-Jewry could help to carry on 'the great charitable tradition established by Sir Moses Montefiore' in Palestine without supporting 'vague "national" aims', the *JG* claimed in January 1920.⁸⁶

The second response—which was reiterated on multiple occasions—emphasised responsibility and expectations. Commencement of the Mandate 'carrie[d] with it ...a new duty incumbent on all Jews, and particularly on British Jews' as subjects of the Mandatory power. After a period of initial difficulty, the experiment in Palestine had to be turned to the good of British and Jewish interests alike. Anglo-Jewry could not reasonably stand aside, both because the Mandate's terms included an explicit request for Jewish assistance and because, 'to put it at its lowest, all Jews w[ould] be judged by the success of that experiment.' In short, whether or not a national home in Palestine was good for either Britain or for Jews (and the *JG* generally believed that it was beneficial to both), the Mandatory's failure was not in Anglo-Jewry's self-interest. For that reason alone, 'a means of helping England [wa]s clearly indicated.'⁸⁷

Alongside this was a third response, as poetic as the former was pragmatic. 'The prospect that on the soil of Palestine, Jewish culture will flourish again', the paper declared,

and that England's splendid felicity in encouraging the best forms of life—physical, moral and intellectual—in the distant countries to which she sends the flag, will be

⁸⁴ 22/4/20 8.

⁸⁵ The fact that the latter two 'responses' were published in the same issue of the paper (6/8/20) suggests that the *JG* did not privilege any particular outlook.

⁸⁶ 23/1/20 1, 30/1/20 12.

⁸⁷ 6/8/20 8. See also 30/12/21 8, 6/4/23 8, 8/5/25 1, 12/4/29 6.

extended to Jewish life in Palestine, is one which quickens our consciousness in its racial, religious and imperial parts.

With Anglo-Jewry's help, a British Palestine could become 'a centre of Jewish life, which [would] radiate an example of civic virtue'. According to this view, support for the 'new Palestinian adventure' did not merely accord with carefully-defined obligations to the mother-country or fellow Jews. It also awakened deeper emotions.⁸⁸

The JG's How-To Guide for Palestine

If, as the *JG* concluded, support for the British Mandate was both necessary and good, a number of considerations still awaited discussion. They included Palestine's relative importance within the broader spectrum of Jewish philanthropic priorities, the manner in which aid to the *Yishuv* should be rendered, whether Anglo-Jewry had a specific role to play in the provision of assistance and what, if any, conditions should be placed on cooperation with Zionist bodies. Through its discussions of both the practical and philosophical dimensions of these issues, the *JG* articulated its own prescription for the future development of Palestine and Zionism. This formula rejected organised Zionism's political and ideological aims and called instead for Jewish unity under the banner of moderate, pragmatic colonisation. The building of the national home—which was to be a home for (some) Jews in Palestine, not a Jewish state—should, the *JG* opined, prioritise economic development on business lines and operate in such a way as to allow for the involvement and leadership of those outside official Zionist ranks, particularly in Britain.

⁸⁸ 6/8/20 8.

How Important is Palestine?

Both the content and the quantity of the *JG*'s Palestine coverage leave little doubt that the paper saw the development of the Jewish national home as a significant priority. Nonetheless, there were periodic attempts to redress this balance. The intent was perhaps to remind readers caught up with Palestine that the whole of Jewish history had not come to a halt with the announcement of the Mandate. (The paper acknowledged that recent developments in Palestine did possess a certain romantic allure unmatched by mundane domestic issues.⁸⁹) It also seems likely that such editorials were designed to reassure less enraptured readers that the paper was not neglecting other matters of Jewish concern.

The *JG* was hardly alone in pointing out Palestine's practical limitations as a destination for Jewish immigration. In fact, Zionist leaders had already conceded that the country could at present take in only limited numbers. For the *JG*, however, Palestine's inability to accept even a 'considerable percentage' of Jews in need meant that other approaches had to be developed and financially sustained.⁹⁰ Accordingly, the paper urged its readers to assist Ukrainian Jews (who were the target of severe White Russian violence between 1918 and 1921), the War Victims Fund and, for those who had fled westward, the Jews' Temporary Shelter in London.⁹¹ Significantly, it also endorsed, along with many moderate and non-Zionists, the ambitious campaign of the Agro-Joint (a collaboration of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and the

⁸⁹ 9/3/28 8.

⁹⁰ 20/6/24 10. See also 29/12/22 8, 6/11/25 3, 2/9/27 6. Palestine's sluggish economic growth and limited employment prospects were exacerbated by recession and the 1927 earthquake. Although immigration restriction—in the form of a quota system—was nominally in place after 1922, structural problems and the Zionists' own desire to hand-pick the best pioneers meant that there was generally not serious pressure on the system. In fact, Palestine experienced net population loss in several of the leanest years. S. Carmi and H. Rosenfeld, 'Immigration, Urbanization and Crisis: The Process of Jewish Colonization in Palestine during the 1920s', *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 12:1 (1971), 41-57; D. Giladi, 'The Economic Crisis during the Fourth Aliya (1926-1927)', in id. and G. Yagev, (eds.), *Zionism: Studies in the History of the Zionist Movement and of the Jewish Community in Palestine*, i (Tel Aviv, 1975), 157-92.

⁹¹ 29/4/21 10, 22/6/23 8, 20/6/24 10.

Jewish Colonisation Association) to establish agricultural colonies for Russian Jews in the Crimea.⁹²

'It is obvious', the paper wrote in late August 1926, 'that whatever purpose the realisation of the Zionist programme may serve, the solution of the Jewish problem in Eastern Europe will not be one of them.'⁹³ Nonetheless, although it did warn (albeit without the apocalyptic overtones of Lucien Wolf and Claude Montefiore) of the risk posed by extreme Zionism to the 'thirteen-fourteenths of the Jewish population of the world' who resided outside Palestine, the *JG* was generally content to endorse this partial outlet for 'unassorted' Jews.⁹⁴ For a paper which ceased publication in 1931, was grounded in a strong ethos of liberal integrationism and prided itself on its pragmatism, it should come as no surprise that it never reassessed Palestine's potential to play a larger role in the struggle against anti-Semitism.

Talents and Special Roles

In addition to explicating British Jewry's unique responsibility to the Mandate, the *JG* also maintained that the community's experience and talents enabled it to make a distinctive contribution to Palestine's development. Firstly, it could act a mediator between Britain and the *Yishuv*, fostering good will and helping each party to understand the other's needs and perspectives.⁹⁵ It could also advise the international Zionist organisation. Drawing upon the lessons of nearly four generations of leadership in Jewish affairs, it would speak up for its 'homeless coreligionists' (most of whom

⁹² 27/8/26 8, 12/9/24 4, 23/7/26 3-4, 1/2/29 7-8. The work of the Agro-Joint rankled many Zionists, who believed all relocation efforts should be directed at Palestine. J. Dekel-Chen, *Farming the Red Land: Jewish Agricultural Colonisation and Local Soviet Power, 1924-1941* (New Haven, 2005); A. Kagedan, 'American Jews and the Soviet Experiment: The Agro-Joint Project, 1924-1937', *JSS* 43:2 (1981), 153-64.

⁹³ 27/8/26 8. Penslar, *Shylock's Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe* (Berkeley, 2001), 237.

⁹⁴ 6/11/25 3.

⁹⁵ 30/1/20 12, 14/11/30 1-2. This theme was also echoed in a signed piece by Economic Board for Palestine member, Hannah Cohen (28/4/22 3-4).

would remain outside Palestine) and, more generally, seek to take control of the 'narrow ring of noisy nationalists'.⁹⁶ The paper justified this rather self-aggrandizing stance as follows: 'British Jews, it is generally acknowledged, are enabled by the accidents of their history and circumstances to take a more objective view of the problems created by the Zionist movement than their co-religionists in certain other countries.' Finally, while American Jews might be setting the pace in outright donations to Palestine, the *JG* stressed Anglo-Jewry's indispensable role in the provision of credit and investment.⁹⁷

This was simply wishful thinking. American Jewish donations to Palestine consistently outstripped those of their English counterparts in both absolute and relative terms.⁹⁸ Moreover, while British Jewry showed some enthusiasm for so-called commercial Zionism, it was outdone by the Americans (both because its pockets were less deep and because it dug less deeply into its pockets) in this department as well.⁹⁹ Yet despite (or perhaps because of) these shortcomings, the *JG* promoted the development of Palestine on business lines with great vigour.

In April 1920, just days before the Mandate was declared, the *JG* reminded its readers that just as '[p]rivate enterprise ...[had] helped to build the Nile dam in Egypt', there would soon be a call for funds to develop Palestine's prospects.¹⁰⁰ It therefore lauded the creation the following year of the Economic Board for Palestine, a project which

⁹⁶ 18/11/21 3.

⁹⁷ 9/12/27 2-3, 27/6/24 12.

⁹⁸ Several examples illustrate the point: in April 1926, American receipts for the *Keren Hayesod* totalled nearly £30,000. By comparison, Great Britain raised only £1,490—less than the sum raised by Canada, which had a much smaller Jewish population (21/5/26 7). The discrepancy was even wider in January of the following year (7/1/27 4). Although a lack of records makes a quantitative comparison of British and American investment vehicles impossible, it is inconceivable that the £5,000,000 of capital with which the American Palestine Company was launched (22/4/21 5) was matched by Robert Waley Cohen's Palestine Corporation. On the general development of American Jewish non-Zionism see S.E. Knee, 'Jewish Non-Zionism in America and Palestine Commitment 1917-1941', *JSS* 39:3 (1977), 209-226.

⁹⁹ This will be discussed in greater detail in the second half of this chapter.

¹⁰⁰ 22/4/20 8.

was seen to exemplify '[c]ommercial Zionism'.¹⁰¹ Report of the organisation's first annual meeting and list of subscribers were judged so impressive that the paper queried whether the Board could assume a similar role for the *Keren Hayesod*.¹⁰² This brainchild of the Jewish industrialist and Liberal Cabinet member Sir Alfred Mond, along with projects such as Haboneh (a 'Society for Promoting Building Operations in Palestine'),¹⁰³ the Palestine Electric Company¹⁰⁴ and the salt works at Athlit,¹⁰⁵ presented an 'encouraging picture of the gradual but sure transformation of the movement known as Zionism'. It was now emerging as a series of financial and commercial undertakings which benefited Palestine, Britain and 'incidentally', the companies' shareholders.¹⁰⁶ Reiterating the case in 1928, the paper explained,

The fact that they [the investors in Palestine] will have a return for their money ...does not render the act of investment less romantic from the idealist's point of view; and the combination of idealism and security should command a wide response. The habit of investing in Palestine is as urgently to be cultivated as the habit of responding to her appeals for free gifts.¹⁰⁷

While the *JG* sought to redress the balance between business and charity, it did not propose that investment decisions be made solely on the basis of probable return; considerations of sentiment and patriotism should also be taken in account. British Jewry should therefore give to Palestine even when there was no promise of financial benefit.¹⁰⁸

These caveats suggest that the *JG* recognised some limitations in the appeal of commercial Zionism. In the same issue in which it lauded the positive impact of Anglo-Jewish investment on Palestine's material prospects and the movement's overall

¹⁰¹ 8/10/26 1.

¹⁰² 14/10/21 1, 21/10/21 1.

¹⁰³ Haboneh was led by Sir Stuart Samuel. Other participants included Dr. Redcliffe Salaman. Its projects appear to have included investment in home construction and the creation of a technical expertise panel. The scope and longevity of Haboneh's operations are unknown. 6/2/20 3, 18/6/20 6.

¹⁰⁴ A number of leading British Jews were investors and board members. The Marquess of Reading served as the chairman from 1926. 1/10/26 7.

¹⁰⁵ This was one of a number of projects partially funded by Waley Cohen's Palestine Company. 3/11/22 19, 12/6/25 4.

¹⁰⁶ 8/10/26 1.

¹⁰⁷ 2/6/28 3.

¹⁰⁸ 8/10/26 1-2.

direction, a second editorial acknowledged that 'profits on oranges and electricity' were perhaps not the most effective means of generating 'pride and interest' in Palestine.¹⁰⁹ Here too balance and moderation were indicated. While it again confirmed the importance of development assistance, the paper also sounded a cautionary note. 'The increasing emphasis on the money standard' should not be allowed to upset 'older valuations' of religion and history.¹¹⁰

There is a final theme in the *JG*'s economic editorials which deserves mention: the campaign for fiscal transparency. During the late 1920s, the paper railed against the major Palestine fund-raising bodies (the *KH* and the Jewish National Fund) for failing to issue clear and detailed reports of their annual spending. This complaint, published in late October 1927, was typical: 'Money seems to be swallowed up in a huge reservoir, which is always crying out for more.'¹¹¹ In April of the following year, after issuing further (apparently unanswered) calls for institutional audits, the paper managed to obtain a copy of the *KH*'s books and hired an 'expert authority' to review them. The findings were published in a series of reports that spring.¹¹²

Although the paper justified the *KH* audit on the basis of the (non-Zionist) public's 'right to know', it seems clear that the primary impetus was not a preoccupation with good business practice. Nor would it appear coincidental that the investigation took place less than a year before a representative conference of Anglo-Jewry (at which non-Zionists were in the majority) voted on whether to participate in the expanded Jewish Agency.¹¹³ (As I will discuss below, the *JG* was a firm supporter of a more

¹⁰⁹ 8/10/26 1, 8.

¹¹⁰ 8/8/24 3. Interestingly, Zionist activists had similar complaints, arguing that the movement's decision to appeal to the uncommitted (via an emphasis on practical work and fund-raising) had diluted its ideological programme. See Cesarani, 'Zionism in England', 15-28.

¹¹¹ 25/11/27 1.

¹¹² 10/2/28 3, 27/4/28 3-4, 11/5/28 2, 22/6/28 2.

¹¹³ 21/4/29 'Anglo-Jewish Conference on the Jewish Agency', LS Papers, (ZA): A185/69.

representative JA.) Seen in this light, the *JG*'s challenge to the *KH* represented yet another attempt to define the terms and conditions of Anglo-Jewish participation in the Palestine project.¹¹⁴ The attendant questions were those with which the paper had struggled since its inception: to what extent Anglo-Jewish non-Zionists could cooperate with the international Zionist leadership and/or support the development work of Zionist led institutions like the *KH* and the JNF; if funds for practical work should be offered without conditions; or whether financial backing had to be accompanied with demands for a share in fiscal or political management.

In contrast to its consistency on other issues, the *JG*'s stance on cooperation with the Zionists shifted back and forth according to its perception of the movement's current orientation. Instances of Zionist moderation secured calls for collaboration, while a perceived resurgence of extremism yielded principled detachment. The following section will outline some of the key factors in the *JG*'s decision-making and assess whether the paper evolved towards a policy of closer partnership during the course of the 1920s.

At What Cost Common Ground?

When it commenced publication in October 1919, the *JG* had been swift to join the already vigorous debate regarding an Anglo-Jewish Palestine policy. By January it had nominally endorsed the Jewish Restoration Fund, a project to repair war damage and support infrastructure development in the *Yishuv*.¹¹⁵ There was, however, one problem; the Fund was being administered by the Zionist Organisation. While the

¹¹⁴ The question of support for the *Keren Hayesod* also emerged at the United Synagogue and the Board of Deputies. Cesarani, 'Zionism in England', 50-8, 136-7.

¹¹⁵ C. Weizmann, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann: Series A*, viii: *Letters November 1917-October 1918*, ed. D. Barzilay and B. Litvinoff (New Brunswick, 1977), xx; *ZR* 6:5 (1922), 291.

monies collected were not being used for Zionist political work, the *JG* was nonetheless uncomfortable with any implicit endorsement of nationalist activities.¹¹⁶

Britain's acceptance of the Mandate that spring yielded a fresh, if temporary, burst of collaborative energy, with the paper euphemistically proclaiming, 'We may all be Zionists to-day, because Zionism has passed out of its theoretic into its practical stage ...The distinction which existed [between Zionists and non-Zionists] should become merged in a common policy.'¹¹⁷ It reinforced this point some months later, expressing the hope that British Jews would overcome past divisions and seize the opportunity to work together for common objects.¹¹⁸ Certainly the clarification of Britain's role—and thus of Anglo-Jewry's civic responsibilities—influenced the paper's newfound willingness to break bread with old enemies. So too did the Zionists' recent attempts at outreach. But the *JG* had been too quick to claim that 'evidence [wa]s accumulating from various quarters as to the approaching bankruptcy of official Jewish Nationalism.'¹¹⁹ The recognition of that error, and of the endurance of political Zionism, led the paper to alter its position. Cooperation was still possible, but only if the Zionists agreed to rein in their ideologues.

The *JG* did not hesitate to assign blame both for the poor state of relations between Zionists and non-Zionists and for the problems that the former were encountering in Palestine. For as long as 'political-nationalistic rhetoric persists', it declared in mid 1923, 'Jewish money will never be poured into Palestine.'¹²⁰ With regard to tensions in Palestine, it advised the Zionists that only moderation would allay Arab fears and

¹¹⁶ Not all non-Zionists were equally ambivalent. For instance, Israel Abrahams issued an appeal to the Cambridge synagogue and hosted a fundraising meeting. *JG* 11/6/20 6; *JC* 1/9/20 28. On publicity material for the campaign see 15/1/20 Council and Special Minutes, Women's International Zionist Organisation (WIZO) Papers, (LMA): 4175; *JC* 23/1/20 frontpiece, 14/5/20 25. On fundraising benefits see for example *JC* 9/1/20 28.

¹¹⁷ 6/8/20 1.

¹¹⁸ 11/2/21 10.

¹¹⁹ 12/3/20 10.

¹²⁰ 18/5/23 12. See also 22/8/24 9.

British antagonism.¹²¹ Therefore, the paper added, 'we venture gravely to urge them to adopt, in their further activities, a less extreme tone in debate and a more conciliatory disposition in counsel.'¹²² From the *JG*'s perspective, the source of both these difficulties was the same: Zionist radicalism. The only solution was sober restraint and 'a more responsible sense of ...limits'.¹²³

For the *JG*, 'extremism' was in effect a synonym for adherence to the core tenets of political Zionism. Thus while the term was sometimes also used to describe the right wing Revisionists within the Zionist Organisation,¹²⁴ it more commonly operated as shorthand for those who endorsed the idea of Jewish nationhood and, in particular, those who sought to create an independent Jewish polity (as opposed to a national home for some Jews) in Palestine.¹²⁵ Yet by classifying the vast bulk of political Zionists as extremists, the *JG* placed itself in a difficult position. It could perhaps justify a policy of total disengagement for as long as Zionists persisted in 'injur[ing] their own cause'.¹²⁶ But if the true object was to effect change, this might be more easily accomplished from the inside. In either case, the paper had to assess the potential for cooperation on practical goals.

While the *JG* was unquestionably self-righteous in its judgements regarding the Zionist movement, it does seem that the editors' interest in forging a middle ground was genuine. For instance, the paper welcomed both the 1922 White Paper and Weizmann's ongoing efforts to make the Jewish Agency's diaspora leadership more

¹²¹ 12/4/22 1. See also 23/9/22 1.

¹²² 7/7/22 10.

¹²³ 1/4/21 10. See also 18/11/21 3, 22/9/22 2-3.

¹²⁴ 8/5/25 1, 22/4/27 3, 7/6/29 6, 8/8/30 1. On the development of Revisionism see Y. Shavit, *Jabotinsky and the Revisionist Movement, 1925-1948* (London, 1988).

¹²⁵ See for example 'Mr. De Valera's attempts to get out of the terms of the Irish Treaty more than its provisions contained were neither helpful nor successful; and in very much the same way, the attempts of Zionist extremists to get out of the Balfour Declaration more than the "practicable Zionism," which it provides for, are diminishing the practicability of what was offered.' 27/1/22 10. See also 17/2/22 10, 29/12/22 8, 6/3/25 1, 3/4/25 12, 9/4/25 8, 4/6/26 1, 9/3/28 3.

¹²⁶ 22/8/24 15.

inclusive. From its perspective, Churchill's modification of British policy—in particular, the denial of any intent to create a Jewish state—not only reframed the Mandate in terms largely acceptable to non-Zionists but redefined the future course of Zionism itself.¹²⁷ As the paper explained,

Since the moderate policy has prevailed, and since a reconstruction of Palestine under the British flag is—partly, at least—a debt due from British Jews to the Mandatory Power, let them come out of opposition into neutrality, if not actually into active help. We may all be Zionists nowadays, in an ascending scale of participation, in the conviction that Zionism in 1923 is not the same as Zionism in 1917 ...Zionism purged of its extremists is Zionism released for practice, and we are serving the true interests of Zionism in drawing our readers' attention to the new situation and in laying emphasis on the fact that its accredited leaders are loyal to the limits which have been set to them ...[T]hose limits, we take leave to say, should not frighten the large section of Jews who refused their support to Zionism while it clutched at impossible frontiers.¹²⁸

This had two implications: First, British Jews—no matter what their opinions on Jewish nationalism—should no longer withhold assistance from the Palestine project. (However, as I will shortly explain, the paper did continue to draw a distinction between practical and political work.) Furthermore, those Zionists who continued to promote 'exaggerated interpretations' of British aims could be cast as intransigents and excluded from the consensus in-the-making.¹²⁹

For much of the 1920s, Weizmann's proposed Jewish Agency reforms were a source of tension within the ZO.¹³⁰ They were supported from the outset by the *JG*. It was critical, the paper stated in April 1922, that the organisation guiding Palestine's development be more representative of Jewry as a whole.¹³¹ If all Jews—not just Zionists—were now being asked to support the Mandatory project, it was only reasonable that they have the opportunity to share in decision-making. (As the paper

¹²⁷ 7/7/22 10, 28/7/22 10, 16/2/23 10.

¹²⁸ 2/3/23 12.

¹²⁹ 26/11/26 8.

¹³⁰ Y. Elam, *The Jewish Agency: Formative Years, 1919-1931* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1990); H. Parzen, 'The Enlargement of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, 1923-1929: A Hope Hamstrung', *JSS* 39:1-2 (1977), 129-58.

¹³¹ 12/4/22 1.

pointed out, the Zionists could not bite the hand from which they fed.¹³²) Moreover, Palestine would surely benefit from the additional advice and expertise, as well as the moderating influence which non-Zionists could provide. For these reasons, the *JG* expressed intense frustration at the ongoing delays in implementing reform. 'Dr. W[eizmann], whose persistence we admire, and whose sincerity is obvious, goes on talking ...about the readiness of the Zionist Organisation to admit the cooperation of Jews of all opinions. We grow a little tired of that talk. It ends in talk, and leads nowhere.'¹³³

In the meantime—which turned out to be nearly seven years from the time the JA expansion plan was first proposed (1922)—the *JG* urged its readers to aid practical work in Palestine. By assisting deserving beneficiaries like the Hebrew University or commercial enterprises, 'British Jews ...who have consistently declined to follow the "national" Zionists' would now have the opportunity 'to give expression to their zeal and loyalty for Judaism, their religion, and England, their country'.¹³⁴ Accordingly, the paper also endorsed participation in two national tree planting campaigns, in 1923-1924 and 1927-1928. In the former instance, it encouraged the planting of 100 trees (at six shillings apiece) in a specially designated 'Jewish Guardian Garden'.¹³⁵ Contributors were recognised by having their names published, and the paper also reprinted the certificate it received from Jerusalem. The justification offered was simple: 'Trees are not political.'¹³⁶ Nonetheless, the *JG's* attitude towards the body responsible for planting and land purchase, the *Keren Kayemet* (Jewish National Fund),

¹³² 31/10/24 3.

¹³³ 14/11/24 8.

¹³⁴ 5/11/26 1.

¹³⁵ 4/1/24 4, 28/3/24 9.

¹³⁶ 30/11/23 12. See also 14/3/24 1, 4/7/24 11, 23/12/27 8, 2/3/28 3, 22/6/28 8, 2/11/28 6.

was initially more guarded.¹³⁷ There was virtually no mention of the organisation prior to 1926 (despite the fact that the first planting campaign was conducted under its auspices), and a full-fledged endorsement was not offered for a further year.¹³⁸

Far more problematic was the case of the *Keren Hayesod* (initially referred to as the Palestine Foundation Fund), established in 1919 as the primary revenue stream for the *Yishuv's* budget. While the *KH's* funding priorities were largely in line with non-Zionists' practical parameters (twenty percent went directly to the JNF, with two-thirds of the remainder supporting capital investment and the final one-third for education and social welfare¹³⁹), the *JG* was not only unhappy about ceding fiscal control but also remained unconvinced of the organisation's true political leanings. Therefore, while the paper drew attention to Palestine's urgent social needs, it remained wary of channelling funds through the *KH*.¹⁴⁰

Ultimately, it was not until 1929, when the JA plan finally approached implementation, that the paper threw itself fully behind cooperation. As well as broadening the range of acceptable destinations for Palestine aid, it anticipated that the JA would also

attract subscribers among British Jews, who have hitherto been denied the name of Zionists[W]hen Zionism no longer carries a 'nationalist' connotation, it will be free to include, not merely the extremist and reactionaries, who have failed to set the experiment on a sound footing, but the men of moderate council and progressive views, who have been waiting till the truth prevailed.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ Because of its bearing on Israeli-Palestinian relations, the subject of Jewish land purchase has long been a contentious one. However, although Palestinian Arab newspapers alleged tenant eviction and lack of compensation in the 1920s, the *JG* was either unaware of or uninterested in this controversy.

¹³⁸ This editorial noted that the organisation was much more deserving than its (English) name—Jewish National Fund—suggested. The JNF, it wrote, was 'non-national' and 'non-political'. 23/12/27 8.

¹³⁹ Reinharz, *Weizmann* (1993), 333. More generally, A. Ulitzer, *Two Decades of the Keren Hayesod: A Survey in Facts and Figures, 1921-1940* (Jerusalem, 1940).

¹⁴⁰ The *JG* also objected to the Zionists' proposed tithe of world Jewry in support of the *KH*. 11/8/22 3, 3/11/22 16, 22/8/24 9.

¹⁴¹ 23/8/29 6.

In the end, of course, the new JA would not fulfil the expectations that those like the *JG* had set out for it.¹⁴² But from the perspective of 1929, it did appear that the decade-long problem of cooperation had been resolved. As the paper explained, while the 'ultimate aspirations[s]' of Zionists and non-Zionists might still differ, the mechanism for a 'united front' and a new direction was now at hand.¹⁴³

A Vision of Palestine

Almost from the movement's inception, Zionists struggled over questions of religion and culture. Debates regarding the appropriate role for Jewish law in modern Palestine and the importance of linguistic and intellectual revival continued through the 1920s and 1930s, when, despite the practical orientation of much of Zionist state-building, and the growing dominance of secular nationalists within both the ZO and the *Yishuv* leadership, they took on a new and different meaning.¹⁴⁴ Although the *JG* was not a direct participant in these internal Zionist discussions, it also engaged with some of the same questions in its editorial pages. As early as April 1920 the paper declared its interest in helping to establish Palestine as a 'centre for Jewish culture'.¹⁴⁵ Over the following years, it reported with uncharacteristic enthusiasm on what it saw to be signs of Palestine's budding cultural renaissance. The *JG* also criticised the Zionist leadership for failing to devote sufficient energy and resources to these concerns. This was consistent with the paper's avowed intent to 'sprea[d] a knowledge of Judaism, its

¹⁴² Shimoni, 'Anti-Zionism to Non-Zionism', 30-42.

¹⁴³ 31/1/30 4, 26/4/29 1.

¹⁴⁴ On the debate's intellectual origins see B. Halpern and J. Reinharz, *Zionism and the Creation of a New Society* (Hanover, 2000), Chapter 5; E. Luz, *Parallels Meet: Religion and Nationalism in the Early Zionist Movement, 1882-1904*, tr. L.J. Schramm (Philadelphia, 1988); S. Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* (London, 1981), 112-24 (on Ahad Ha'am), 187-97 (Rabbi Kook). On inter-war developments see I. Kollatt, 'Religion, Society and State during the Period of the National Home', in S. Almog, J. Reinharz and A. Shapira, (eds.), *Zionism and Religion* (Hanover, 1998), 273-301.

¹⁴⁵ 30/4/20 10. See also 6/8/20 8 and remarks on the seventieth birthday of Ahad Ha'am, cultural Zionism's founder (13/8/26 1).

history, traditions and antiquities'.¹⁴⁶ It also reflected the continuing influence of pre-Zionist spiritual attachment to the Holy Land.¹⁴⁷ (Although the *JG*'s editorial philosophy emphasised that Jewish life outside the Holy Land was both valid and viable, it nonetheless confessed a belief 'that there is a capacity for Judaism on the ancient soil of Palestine which cannot be, and has not been, satisfied on any soil of the Diaspora.'¹⁴⁸) Yet in its coverage the *JG* was attempting to do something more: in effect it sought to reassert the primacy of Judaism in the project now underway in Palestine.

'A separation between Zionism and Judaism', it asserted, 'would seem to us a deplorable result of ...trying to establish a Jewish national home in Palestine; indeed, if it is to be a Zionist national home, and not specifically a Jewish one, it is not worth the trouble that is being taken about it.'¹⁴⁹ According to the *JG*, the national home conceived of by political Zionists was motivated by secular principles and sought only secular ends. These ideals were ones which the paper could not countenance. Support for this sort of Zionism acted merely as a poor substitute for true commitment to Judaism—hence the paper's scorn for the non-observant Palestine benefactor, Alfred Mond, and the sneering comment that '[t]he policy of anything-you-like-so-long-as-you-subscribe-to-the-Keren-Hayesod is, simply, not the policy of British Jews.'¹⁵⁰ According to the *JG*, Zionism divorced from Judaism could neither inspire broader backing nor be a true source of credit to Jewry.¹⁵¹ Therefore, just as Zionism had to be

¹⁴⁶ 3/10/19 12. Similar motivations prompted the paper's support for a revitalised Jews College under the auspices of Waley Cohen's Jewish War Memorial Fund. See 8/10/20 8 and Special Supplement.

¹⁴⁷ 23/12/27 8.

¹⁴⁸ 30/12/21 8. The *JG* also referred to Palestine as 'a kind of spinal cord to the religious body of Judaism' (1/1/26 8).

¹⁴⁹ 10/8/23 3. See also 14/11/24 8, 10/12/26 8.

¹⁵⁰ 8/6/28 1. Although Mond's German father, Ludwig, did not baptise his sons, they were not raised as Jews. Alfred Mond married a non-Jew, and his children were educated as Anglicans.

¹⁵¹ 8/3/21 8, 19/2/26 8, 30/4/26 1, 25/6/26 8, 10/12/26 8.

protected from the extremists who threatened a moderate course, it also had to be saved from the 'little-Jews' and 'restored to Judaism'.¹⁵²

A crucial vehicle for these pursuits—and thus a particular object of attention and praise—was the Hebrew University, officially opened by Lord Balfour on 1 April 1925.¹⁵³

For the *JG* it represented 'the kind of Zionism which appeals with special force to those who, like ourselves, have more taste for the cultural than for the national ambitions of that movement.'¹⁵⁴ That the University became something of a pet project for the

paper was not altogether surprising. In the years before the war, support for the idea of a Western institution of higher education in Jerusalem had provided a rare (albeit inconsistent) source of common ground between anti-Zionists and Zionists in Britain.¹⁵⁵

By the early 1920s, the project had begun to gain wider recognition; the most illustrious convert to the cause was the renowned physicist Albert Einstein.¹⁵⁶

Therefore, by the time that the *JG* first published editorials in support of the University (three examples can be found between 1920 and 1922), it was in no sense a risky or controversial undertaking.¹⁵⁷ As the paper itself suggested following the news of

Einstein's endorsement, 'A project which enjoys the support of Professor Einstein himself ...hardly needs commendation to the Jewish public.' The *JG*'s unalloyed

sympathy was nonetheless both striking and exceptional. It wrote some months later,

'To the least Zionistic of all our readers we commend with absolute confidence the

¹⁵² 29/3/29 6.

¹⁵³ Zionist interest in a Jewish University in Jerusalem was first expressed at the Fifth Zionist Congress (1901). There was little concrete progress until 1913-1914, when the movement purchased much of the land on which the University now stands. Although initially intended for Jewish students denied access to Continental (particularly Eastern European) universities, by the time its cornerstones were laid in 1918, the University had become part of a broader project of Jewish nationalism and nation-building. N. Bentwich, *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1918-1960* (London, 1961), 11-40; D.N. Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past: European Jewish Intellectuals and the Zionist Return to History* (New York, 1995), 42-7.

¹⁵⁴ 30/7/26 3.

¹⁵⁵ S.A. Cohen, *English Zionists*, 183. Israel Abrahams expressed his support for the scheme in 1908 (*JC* 28/2/08 16-7) but rescinded it in 1914. See also Weizmann, *Trial and Error* (London, 1949), 177-81.

¹⁵⁶ Einstein wrote an open letter of support, accompanied Weizmann on an American fundraising tour and visited Palestine as part of a public relations campaign. Segev, *One Palestine Complete*, 202-4; *JG* 24/6/21 12.

¹⁵⁷ Within Anglo-Jewish circles, figures that had stood aloof from other Zionist projects, most notably Philip Magnus, publicised their support for the University. *JG* 22/9/22 2-3, 27/3/25 24-5.

cause of the Jerusalem UniversityHere, at least, is a cause which no one need oppose, and in which every one should be willing to help.¹⁵⁸

The University appealed on many levels. Firstly, it was a prime example of the practicable, non-sectarian Zionism which the *JG* favoured.¹⁵⁹ (The paper therefore welcomed the announcement that the University's Board of Governors would be composed of both Zionists and non-Zionists.¹⁶⁰ It also reminded its readers that contributions could be made directly to the institution, noting that 'knowledge has no politics.'¹⁶¹) Secondly, it was believed that the University would both revitalise a tradition of academic inquiry and scholarship and help to renew Jewry's reputation as a people of the Book.¹⁶² Finally, it provided a 'bridge between Eastern and Western scholarship' and 'distinctly enhanced the Jewish name and prestige'.¹⁶³

What is particularly notable about the *JG*'s editorials on the University is the extent to which they mirror the themes found in the Zionists' own promotional literature and celebratory volumes. Thus in September, 1925, several months after the University's inaugural ceremonies, the *JG* declared, 'Like the Greek colonies of old, the new settlements are becoming an independent centre; and Judaism in Palestine, with its University and its schools, is on the way to winning recognition as an Athens.'¹⁶⁴ A Zionist public relations brochure was similarly expansive, claiming that the University

¹⁵⁸ 30/12/21 8. See also 12/3/20 10, 22/9/22 2-3. Not only was there no criticism of the University during the entirety of the paper's publication run, but editorials on the subject often tended towards overwrought allusion. For example, 'In the midst of the positive results from Palestine—the potash, the harbour-works, the oranges—it [the University] shines like a beacon in the night' (20/2/25 8).

¹⁵⁹ Editorials supporting 'non-nationalist' Palestinian projects which made explicit reference to the University include 30/12/21 8, 30/7/26 3, 5/11/26 1, 13/1/28 6, 27/1/28 3, 22/6/28 8, 1/4/29 6-7, 23/8/29 6.

¹⁶⁰ 5/11/26 1.

¹⁶¹ 3/8/28 2, 6.

¹⁶² 27/3/25 Special Supplement. 'The nucleus of the University—departments of microbiology and chemistry and an institute of Jewish studies, all initially research-focused, and the national library—represented a fulfilment of Weizmann's vision of a 'synthesis of Yavneh [located near modern-day Rehovot, it was the site of the first Jewish seminary founded after the Roman destruction of the second Temple in 70 C.E.] and Europe'. Cited in N. Rose, *Chaim Weizmann: A Biography* (New York, 1986), 62.

¹⁶³ 11/10/29 2, 1/1/26 8, 11/10/29 2.

¹⁶⁴ 4/9/25 8. On this theme see Myers, *Reinventing*, 6.

'will ...raise the level of the intellectual outlook in Palestine and the bordering countries and create a centre of culture on Mount Scopus which has in it potentialities of becoming a prophetic world centre.'¹⁶⁵ But while the *JG* yielded to none in its boosterism for the HU, it was forced to admit that its efforts had not resulted in the desired response.¹⁶⁶ It is not difficult to discern a plaintive tone in this 1928 appeal: 'We very earnestly hope that some Jew of public spirit—not necessarily a "Zionist" in any political sense ...may now at once be forthcoming to put at least £500,000 at the disposal of Dr. Magnes [the first chancellor] and his coadjutors.'¹⁶⁷

* * *

On 14 August 1931, the *JG* announced its decision to cease publication. Its job, that week's editorial explained, had been to accompany Anglo-Jewry through a period of transition; twelve years on, that task was now complete.¹⁶⁸ If this statement elided the real (financial) reasons for the paper's closure, it nonetheless contained an element of truth. The *JG* had come into being both as a protest against the Zionist dominated press and as a mechanism for exploring the changes which the Mandate would bring to British Jews, particularly those opposed to political Zionism. Throughout its print run, the paper continued to be a determined critic of that movement's more far-reaching ideas and aims. However, the *JG* also disavowed non-participation in Palestine's development. As it argued frequently, Anglo-Jewry was not only obligated to assist the Mandatory experiment, but also had a special role to play in the process of Palestinian renewal.

¹⁶⁵ *The Proposed Hebrew University on Mount Scopus, Jerusalem Palestine* (Jerusalem, 1924?); ZR 8:12 (1925), 125-6.

¹⁶⁶ I will discuss the work of the Friends of the Hebrew University in the second case study.

¹⁶⁷ 3/8/28 6.

¹⁶⁸ 14/8/31 4.

Consequently, the *JG* sought to define the content and the confines of its favoured middle way. The programme's central feature was assistance—in the form of philanthropic aid and/or business investment—in the practical development of Palestine. But while this created some common ground with political Zionists, the paper's attitude to both the ZO and Zionist fund-raising bodies remained diffident. Before 1929 (and the expansion of the JA) the *JG* avowed its commitment to the ideal of collaboration but insisted on Zionist moderation as a prerequisite to any more formal cooperation. Even in 1930 and 1931, it advised caution about the prospects for ongoing unity. One area where the paper was far less circumspect was in its idea of Palestine as a (renewed) locus of Jewish culture. Editorials arguing for the primacy of Judaism within the Zionist project were therefore another distinctive feature of the *JG*'s Palestine coverage.

Like many other publications, the *JG* was at times the prisoner of its own convictions. It also had a highly developed sense of its own importance. Yet on one level, this was not entirely misplaced. For its audience—who likely included British Jews defining themselves as practical Zionists, lovers of Zion or simply as patriots (or indeed all of the above)—the paper operated as the chief source of information and guidance on matters related to Palestine. In this role, the *Jewish Guardian* was both an architect of, and an advocate for, engaged and informed non-Zionism, carving out a new space in the British-Jewish media, and, in the process, helping to shape establishment views towards Palestine during the first decade of the Mandate.

Philanthropy and Investment

Opened with predictable pageantry on St. George's Day, 23 April 1924, the Empire Exhibition at Wembley was a showcase for all that was 'marvellous and significant in Britain overseas'.¹⁶⁹ Its aims, according to one promotional guide, were three-fold: '[t]o find, in the development and utilization of the raw materials of the Empire, new sources of wealth', to foster imperial trade and open new markets and 'to demonstrate to the people of Great Britain the almost illimitable possibilities of the Dominions, Colonies, and Dependencies'.¹⁷⁰ *The Times* adopted a global perspective, noting that the Exhibition was an 'impressive reminder' to the world of 'the recuperative powers of the British Empire'.¹⁷¹ Simultaneously a trade fair and a tourist destination (it would attract over 27,000,000 visitors in its eighteen months of operation), the Exhibition's scale and scope were unprecedented. Extending over 219 acres, it included a continuously running railway, entertainment facilities, Palaces of Industry, Engineering and Art and pavilions for each of Britain's overseas holdings.¹⁷² One could literally stroll from Hong Kong to Canada, taking in such varied sights as an exact replica of Tut-an-khamen at Luxor, 'actual [African] tribal natives', fifty Australian merino sheep and a model of the Prince of Wales—and his horse—carved out of butter.¹⁷³

As a mandated territory, Palestine was not originally slated for inclusion at the Exhibition. However, at the behest of Herbert Samuel, it was granted a shared pavilion with Cyprus.¹⁷⁴ The Palestine Zionist Executive (successor to the Palestine Commission), the London office of the ZO (represented by Leonard Stein, its Political

¹⁶⁹ *The Times* 23/4/24 16; *Marlborough Pocket Guide to the Empire Exhibition at Wembley, 1924* (London, 1924), 3. The ceremonies included military parades, the singing of 'Jerusalem' (with choruses conducted by Sir Edward Elgar) and—in a move surely designed to highlight Britain's forward-looking qualities—the first wireless address by King George V. K. Walthew, 'The British Empire Exhibition', *History Today* 31 (August 1981), 34-9; J. Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester, 1984), 107-112.

¹⁷⁰ *Marlborough Guide*, 2.

¹⁷¹ 23/4/24 Special Supplement xii.

¹⁷² H. Bass, *Glorious Wembley: The Official History of Britain's Foremost Entertainment Centre* (Enfield, 1982), 25.

¹⁷³ *Marlborough Guide*, 3-18; *The British Empire Exhibition* (London, 1924).

¹⁷⁴ Palestine was the only Mandate to be represented in this fashion.

Secretary) and members of the Anglo-Jewish community, in particular the Economic Board for Palestine, assumed responsibility for funding and exhibit display.¹⁷⁵ To a large extent, these organisers shared the goals of every other pavilion coordinator: to call attention to the country's resources and accomplishments (human, agricultural and industrial), to highlight its distinctive culture and, ultimately, to stimulate public interest and trade.¹⁷⁶ With that aim in mind, displays were created for the Palestine Electric Company (pioneers of hydroelectric energy) and other industrial representatives. Samples of Rishon wine and Jaffa oranges were also offered, and the work of 'indigenous' craftsmen promoted. Palestine's ancient and glorious history was evoked through models of the Tabernacle and the temples of Kings Solomon and Herod.¹⁷⁷

Although the pavilion's primary intent was to market Palestine to reluctant investors and a wary British public,¹⁷⁸ it also had the potential to convince Anglo-Jewish sceptics about the merits of the new Mandatory experiment. With that aim in mind, the *JG* urged its readers to attend, arguing that they should 'see for themselves what Palestinians are making of the national home for Jews'. This earnest demonstration of "practicable" Zionism', was an excellent advertisement for the cause of British policy in Palestine.¹⁷⁹

* * *

¹⁷⁵ Westminster covered just a nominal portion of the Pavilion's cost. For correspondence between Stein and the PZE [Palestine Zionist Executive] see Jewish Agency Political Section Papers, (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem): S25/577. *ZR* 8:1 (1924), 4.

¹⁷⁶ See for example the comments of Harold J. Solomon (Director of Commerce and Industry for the Palestine Government), Literary Supplement, *JG* 25/4/24 13.

¹⁷⁷ *British Empire Exhibition*, *JG* 28/3/24 9

¹⁷⁸ Herbert Samuel addressed the latter group explicitly in his introduction to the Pavilion's handbook, calling attention to the positive changes which had taken place in Palestine—at virtually no cost to the British taxpayer—since the end of the war and underscoring the government's commitment to promoting both an Arab and a Jewish revival. *Palestine Pavilion Handbook and Tourist Guide* (London, 1924), 21-2.

¹⁷⁹ 25/4/24 1. The Anglo-Palestine Exhibition, held in June 1933, promoted similar goals on a far smaller scale. *JC* 17/2/33 22, 7/4/33 17, 21/4/33 22, 19/5/33 26, 9/6/33 Special Supplement. *The Times* 7/6/33 7, 8/6/33 9.

Not only did the Palestine Pavilion attract visitors who would not have identified themselves as political Zionists, but a number of those involved in its organisation (within Britain) would also have been likely to resist any such classification. This was not an isolated occurrence. As I have argued throughout this chapter, many British Jews who disagreed sharply with aspects of the Zionist programme also expressed an interest in providing Palestine and its inhabitants with 'non-political' aid. This category encompassed both financial and technical assistance for infrastructure development (in the form of loans and other types of capital investment), funding for key services such as health and education and aid to vulnerable or stricken populations. It did not necessarily exclude support for Zionist development institutions like the *KH* and the JNF. In practice, however, those who defined themselves as non-Zionists were more likely to support independent initiatives.

Strictly Business?

In a 1925 letter to Robert Waley Cohen, Alfred Mond expressed the conviction that '[t]here is no doubt plenty of good business to be done in Palestine; those who come in now will reap their reward very soon; there will be a great many people, and not all Jews by any means, joining in.'¹⁸⁰ Waley Cohen echoed this sentiment in his speech to the Fifth Ordinary General Meeting of the Economic Board for Palestine. 'I do not suppose', he declared,

there was ever an easier, simpler and more satisfactory colonizing proposition than that which presents itself in Palestine. You have an industry which is practically a monopoly in the Orange industry. You have an unlimited market growing[,]a population fired by an ideal and ...conditions which are far more favourable than were to be found in any similar colonizing proposition that I think has existed in the history of the British Empire.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ 25/2/25 LS Papers, (ZA): A185/104.

¹⁸¹ JG 9/6/27 3.

For Mond and Waley Cohen, Palestine presented a strong business case for investment. Yet both men also believed that Anglo-Jewry had an obligation to assist in Palestine's economic development and a special role to play in that process. As Mond himself had acknowledged, this was a business affair fuelled by 'considerable sentiment'. But regardless of the impetus for action—whether Jewish nationalism, or a sense of responsibility as a British Jew and imperial citizen—one thing was clear. By assisting in the growth of Palestine's economy, Anglo-Jewry would 'be rendering incalculable service to the Jewish cause and the British cause'.¹⁸²

Primary and secondary sources offer occasional illustrations of Anglo-Jewish non-Zionists' involvement in developing the Palestinian economy. One frequently cited case is that of the Palestine Electric Company, whose Board of Directors included the Marquess of Reading (just returned from serving as the Viceroy of India), Hugo Hirst (see below) and James de Rothschild.¹⁸³ The role of individual entrepreneurship is suggested by the personal investments of Mond and Waley Cohen and the activities of Frank Goldsmith (brother-in-law of James de Rothschild), who helped to build Palestine's hotels.¹⁸⁴ Other Anglo-Jewish investors were also thought to have subscribed much of the necessary capital for developing the greatest of these venues, the King David.¹⁸⁵ A further instance in which Anglo-Jewish participation is probable

¹⁸² *JG* 14/10/21 1. This was part of Mond's address to the Board's first annual meeting. See also *JG* 23/10/25 12; *JC* 2/12/32 27-8, 19/5/33 24. Imperial patriotism was central to the outlook of both men. Waley Cohen's robust belief in the civilising impulse of British rule (a product of his classical education and, perhaps, time spent working in India) is evident in his speeches to Jewish audiences. *JG* 23/10/25 12, 2/12/27 9-10. More generally, Henriques, *Robert Waley-Cohen* 53-6, 103-224. During the 1920s, Mond was not only involved in Palestine investment but devoted himself to the causes of dominion settlement—which he offered to fund personally—and economic union (free trade amongst the colonies). Hector Bolitho, *Alfred Mond: The First Lord Melchett* (London, 1933), 319-41; Mond, *Imperial Economic Unity* (London, 1930).

¹⁸³ *JG* 1/10/26 7; *JC* 9/6/33 (Special Supplement) vi; Shimoni, 'Anti-Zionism to Non-Zionism', 29. Another significant contributor was Bernhard Baron, owner of the world-leading tobacco company, Carreras.

¹⁸⁴ *JG* 17/6/27 4.

¹⁸⁵ *JG* 9/1/31 3.

but unproven is that of subscriptions to a £4,500,000 loan floated on the London Stock Exchange in 1927.¹⁸⁶

While these examples undoubtedly give a taste of the range and scale of non-Zionist investment activities, they do not really allow for more detailed analysis. Accordingly, the following pages will focus on the Economic Board for Palestine and the Palestine Corporation, the two primary Anglo-Jewish vehicles for venture capital and business promotion. I will be examining the evolution and operation of the two bodies, the motivations of key participants and the question of institutional legacy—i.e., the impact of the Board and Corporation on Anglo-Jewish non-Zionism and Palestinian infrastructure.

* * *

When the Zionists acquired Palestine in 1917, they also inherited a formidable set of developmental challenges: immature agriculture, poor water supplies, limited industry and trade links and a general lack of physical infrastructure.¹⁸⁷ For all those implicated in the Mandatory project—whether Zionist or non-Zionist—economic transformation was therefore a high priority. One particular driver was immigration; economic growth was a necessary prerequisite for any substantive expansion of Palestine's Jewish population. But the project of physically altering the landscape also drew on powerful (often contradictory) political and religious-sentimental imagery. Palestine's renewal

¹⁸⁶ Shimoni asserts that this 'was a clear indication of the broadening base of support amongst Anglo-Jews of means' ('Anti-Zionism to Non-Zionism', 29). However, it does not appear that any list of the subscribers exists. Moreover, the fact that the loan was reviewed in leading financial organs, including *The Times* (which described it as a 'very attractive investment' and a 'rare opportunity'), suggests that its merits were of interest to a wider audience. See 30/11/27 20, 1/12/27 22.

¹⁸⁷ The idea that Jews built the state out of a virtual wasteland has long been a staple of Zionist historical myth. Pre-World War I economic development is discussed in G.G. Gilbar, (ed.), *Ottoman Palestine, 1800-1914: Studies in Economic and Social History* (Leiden, 1990); D. Kushner, (ed.), *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period: Political, Social and Economic Transformation* (Jerusalem, 1986).

was at once the restoration of a Biblical land, flowing with milk and honey, and the creation of a modern, Western society based on scientific principles.

Both Zionists and non-Zionists were aligned on the need for an economic programme and, at least to a degree, the manner in which growth could be best achieved: an infusion of Jewish capital. Yet as the demise of the short-lived Economic Council would reveal, substantial barriers to cooperation still persisted. Established in 1920, the Council was intended to bring together the ZO and Anglo-Jewish financiers and industrialists for the purposes of promoting Palestine's economic development, raising investment capital and organising technical and financial schemes. Things began auspiciously enough. The list of non-ZO participants assembled by the chair, Alfred Mond (reputedly Britain's richest man), read like a veritable *Who's Who* of the Anglo-Jewish business world: Waley Cohen (Shell), Stuart Samuel (Montagu & Co.), James de Rothschild (N.M. Rothschild & Sons), Albert Belisha (Belisha Shaw & Co.), Hugo Hirst (GE Co.), Harry Marks (Kynochs Ltd.), Fred Stern (Stern Brothers) and Herbert Guedalla (Imperial Foreign Corp).¹⁸⁸ With the exception of James de Rothschild, none were known to be sympathetic to political Zionism.¹⁸⁹ However, the prior involvement of several members (Mond, Waley Cohen and Stern) in the bipartisan Palestine Advisory Committee suggested a level of commitment to pragmatism and compromise.¹⁹⁰

Collaboration nonetheless foundered almost immediately, as it became apparent that participants held widely diverging ideas about the Council's proposed role. Waley Cohen in particular wanted the Council to have authority over all ZO financial decisions;

¹⁸⁸ Reinharz, *Weizmann* (1993), 337.

¹⁸⁹ Although Rothschild was at the forefront of efforts to secure the Balfour Declaration, his involvement in Palestine affairs during the 1920s and 1930s could be described as 'non-political'. This apparent transformation would seem to warrant further scholarly inquiry.

¹⁹⁰ This group, chaired by Herbert Samuel, operated as a go-between with Whitehall during 1918. Other members included Weizmann, Sokolow, Cowen, and Lionel Abrahams. LW Papers, (ZA): A77/3/1.

he believed this was justified by considerations of fiscal prudence as well as fairness. (After all, the men on the committee had not been chosen solely for their advisory skills.) Unsurprisingly, the ZO refused to relinquish anything resembling this level of control, maintaining that the group was to act only in an advisory capacity. Its members unable to reach agreement, the Council dissociated itself from the ZO, shed its Zionist representatives and reformulated itself as a limited British company under the title, Economic Board for Palestine.¹⁹¹ The new executive, composed of Mond, Waley Cohen, Belisha, Hirst, de Rothschild, Walter Samuel and Walter Cohen (Waley Cohen's first cousin and uncle by marriage, he would steward the organisation during Mond's frequent absences), held its first meeting on 18 July 1921.¹⁹²

Although it retained its predecessor's mission of encouraging economic growth through investment, the Board defined its position in much more specific terms. Firstly, it sought to exclude itself from ideological wrangles. Close cooperation with other bodies (including both the ZO and independent entities like the ICA and the Palestine Jewish Colonisation Association, or PICA¹⁹³) was encouraged. However, the Board would have 'nothing to do with politics'.¹⁹⁴ Secondly, it emphasised the primacy of sound business practice in all development enterprises.¹⁹⁵ While recognising that many would assist Palestine on a non-commercial basis, it maintained that sufficient capital could only be generated through a proven record of oversight and security. The need to foster and

¹⁹¹ Henriques, *Robert Waley-Cohen*, 274-81. Later that year, similar concerns would result in a split between Weizmann and Louis Brandeis' group of American 'business Zionists'. Halpern, *A Clash of Heroes: Brandeis, Weizmann and American Zionism* (New York, 1987), 171-269; Elam, *Jewish Agency*, 11-20.

¹⁹² 20/7/21 Walter Cohen to Stein, LS Papers, (ZA): A185/104; ZR 4:3 (1921), 69.

¹⁹³ The ICA's Palestine work centred largely on industrial investment. For much of the 1920s, the organisation was represented at the Board of Deputies by Leonard Cohen and Osmond d'Avigdor Goldsmid. (The former went on to become the ICA's President, while the latter was instrumental in bringing Anglo-Jewry into the expanded Jewish Agency.) PICA was indirectly represented by the Baron's son, James de Rothschild. Founded in 1924, PICA not only assumed responsibility for the Rothschild and ICA agricultural settlements, but also helped to finance Palestine's national infrastructure. JG 11/3/22 19, 12/12/24 6, 18/1/29 3, 18/10/29 2, 5; T. Norman, *An Outstretched Arm: a History of the Jewish Colonization Association* (London, 1985), 151-62. On PICA see JC 28/3/24 3 and S. Schama, *Two Rothschilds in the Land of Israel* (London, 1978), 190-263.

¹⁹⁴ This claim was made by Waley Cohen at the Board's third annual meeting. JG 23/11/23 16.

¹⁹⁵ 14/3/27 'Note on Sir Robert Waley Cohen's Address to the PZE', JA Political Section Papers, (ZA): S25/743/1. This was also a guiding principle of the Board's American equivalent, the Brandeisian Palestine Development Council. LS Papers, (ZA): A185/61; M.I. Urofsky, *American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust* (Garden City, 1975), 337-41.

maintain investor confidence also influenced the recruitment of members. These, Mond declared, should be men of 'proven capacity and judgement, men who would have the public[']s confidence, whose integrity ...ability and judgement are well known and accepted by the public.'¹⁹⁶ Finally, despite the Board's emphasis on business and profits, its members clearly understood themselves to be performing acts of Jewish and imperial service. By helping to shape Palestine's economic development, they were benefiting not only all of that country's inhabitants but the region—and, by extension, British interests therein—as well.¹⁹⁷

At the Board's first annual meeting, Mond had called attention to Palestine's urgent demand for credit. Without it none of the necessary infrastructure and development projects (which included the provision of hydro-electric power, home-building and the improvement of shipping and land transport links) could be attempted.¹⁹⁸ To that end, the Board's advisory¹⁹⁹ and promotional role—exemplified by its contribution of guarantee funds and clerical assistance to the organisers of the Palestine Pavilion—was to be augmented by direct investment through another body, the Palestine Corporation.²⁰⁰ Established as a holding company with initial capital of £40,000, the Corporation would act as the Board's 'financial instrument'. Its functions would include examining proposals, providing loans and helping to direct (from Palestine, where it would establish an office) the operations of key companies.²⁰¹ Significantly, the

¹⁹⁶ *JG* 14/10/21 1, 21/10/21 1; Draft, 'Report of the Executive Committee of the Economic Board for Palestine, year ending 31/12/24', LS Papers, (ZA): A185/104.

¹⁹⁷ *JG* 16/11/23 13, 23/11/23 16, 17/9/26 7; *The Times* 28/4/22 9; *JC* 16/7/35 20. On the motivations of individual investors see I. Amit, 'Economic and Zionist Ideological Perceptions: Private Investment in Palestine in the 1920s and 1930s', *MES* 36:2 (2000), 82-102. Mond is discussed briefly.

¹⁹⁸ *JG* 14/10/21 1, 11-12.

¹⁹⁹ In 1933, Walter Cohen and d'Avigdor Goldsmid proposed creating an information bureau for potential investors. *JC* 6/1/33 25.

²⁰⁰ *JG* 25/4/24 13.

²⁰¹ *JG* 25/4/24 13; 20/7/21 Walter Cohen to Stein, LS Papers, (ZA): A185/104; *Near East* 28/12/22 830-1. This distinction in function was not absolute. While the Board lacked the capital to engage in large-scale lending, it did hold shares in Palestine's Central Bank of Cooperative Institutions and extended some credit to small businesses (possibly through the Central Bank). *JG* 11/3/22 19, 16/11/23 13.

Corporation would be run on business, not philanthropic lines; in contrast to the Board, any profits would be returned to the individual investors.

During its first decade of existence (it remained in at least nominal operation until 1955, when it was purchased by Israel's Bank Leumi²⁰²), the Palestine Corporation backed a range of major infrastructure projects, either directly or through subsidiaries. These included the Palestine Salt Co.,²⁰³ the Levant Bonded Warehouses, the Dead Sea Transport and Trading Co., Nesher Cement, the Agricultural Mortgage Co. and Union Bank. Credit was also extended to the diamond industry and to the builders of the King David Hotel.²⁰⁴ Robert Waley Cohen acted as the Corporation's director until his death in 1952; the other members of its Executive—a mix of Jewish and non-Jewish business leaders, half of whom were to be appointed by the Economic Board—do not appear to have been active in day-to-day operations.

The programmes of both the Board and the Corporation were undeniably ambitious. But how much did they actually accomplish? The absence of comprehensive records for either body, or for key leadership figures,²⁰⁵ makes an authoritative judgement difficult.²⁰⁶ What have survived, however, are some items of correspondence, as well as public statements discussing the success—or lack thereof—of the organisations in question; most date from the mid to late 1920s. These materials suggest that, despite the aspirations of their founders, both the Economic Board for Palestine and Palestine

²⁰² *The Times* 18/5/50 9, 18/10/50 9, 8/3/55 12, 30/4/55 13.

²⁰³ Schama, *Two Rothschilds*, 248-9.

²⁰⁴ *Near East* 29/12/22 830; *The Times* 21/12/22 9; *JG* 17/6/27 3; *JC* 12/1/34 26; Henriques, *Robert Waley-Cohen*, 281-2.

²⁰⁵ The biographies of Alfred Mond and Robert Waley Cohen do not consider their subjects' involvements in the Board (both) and the Corporation (Waley Cohen alone) at any length, nor do they refer to any relevant archival documents or other printed materials. Waley Cohen's surviving speeches would, however, merit a more intensive study. 'Judaism in England' (Birmingham Jewish Literary Association), *JG* 18/10/25 12; 'Anglo-Jewish Ideals', *JG* 20/11/27 9-10; 1/11/32 'British Methods of Government and the Jewish Ideal' (Anglo-Palestine Club), LS Papers, (ZA): A185/42.

²⁰⁶ Although most of the Board's annual meetings (through 1930) were reported in the *Jewish Guardian*, financial summaries were not included. A few meeting reports and items of correspondence also found their way into the Leonard Stein Papers at the Central Zionist Archives. It would appear that as a private company, the Palestine Corporation was not required to publish its earnings.

Corporation played a relatively minor part in Palestine's inter-war economic development.

For instance, the Economic Board averaged only around twenty-five members during its first five years of operation.²⁰⁷ Although membership had been restricted intentionally to British citizens of some means, the Board's leaders nonetheless expressed frustration at the utter lack of growth.²⁰⁸ The 1927 decision to scrap entrance fees (previously set at £30) and to establish a new category of associate member (paying only £1 per annum) can also be seen as a response to the organisation's failure to expand.²⁰⁹ More important perhaps than the Board's membership totals was the activism of its existing subscribers. Here too, dissatisfaction reigned. In a letter to the Dutch Zionist, Jacobus Kann, Weizmann complained about the Board's apparent lack of commitment to Palestine's development. 'It works slowly', he wrote, 'and, apart from 2-3 men, there is nobody who has any real programme or interest.'²¹⁰

Admittedly, Weizmann may not have been the most objective judge of the Board's efficacy. (He was likely still annoyed at the Economic Council's demise and the continued refusal of Mond and Waley Cohen to join the ZO Executive.) Yet Mond himself levelled similar critiques, lamenting on one occasion to Walter Cohen, '[W]e are doing so little and are so half-hearted in helping.' As a result, everything was being left to 'those n[ot] as well equipped as we in money or ability'.²¹¹

²⁰⁷ LS Papers, (ZA): A185/104.

²⁰⁸ *The Times* 21/12/22 9; *JG* 23/7/26 13.

²⁰⁹ LS Papers, (ZA): A185/104.

²¹⁰ 21/1/22 *Letters and Papers: Series A*, xi: *Letters, January 1922-July 1923*, ed. Bernard Wasserstein (New Brunswick, 1977), 12-14. See also 16/7/22 Weizmann to J. Simon (a member of the American 'Brandeis group'), *Letters and Papers*, xi, 143-7; 29/4/27 Weizmann to Mond, *Letters and Papers: Series A*, xiii: *Letters March 1926-July 1929*, ed. Ofer (New Brunswick, 1978), 230-35.

²¹¹ 8/2/25 Mond to Walter Cohen, LS Papers, (ZA): A185/104. Despite this, the Board outlasted the Mandate, renaming itself the Anglo-Israel Chamber of Commerce following Israel's declaration of statehood. It exists today under the title British-Israel Chamber of Commerce.

In terms of measurable output, the Palestine Corporation would seem to have been the more successful. During the 1920s, it provided start-up capital to a number of Palestine's fledgling industries, while in the late 1930s the government acknowledged its expertise by asking it to produce a survey of Palestinian industry.²¹² Whether the Corporation returned a consistent profit is unknown; on at least one occasion it was able to pay dividends. Yet like the Board, the Corporation also experienced difficulty in attracting capital. Similarly, both suffered the adverse consequences of Palestine's economic downturn in the late 1920s, and, most likely, that of the British economy during parts of the 1930s. What the Corporation did possess, however, was ready access to the substantial wealth of its founder and director, Robert Waley Cohen.²¹³ To an extent, then, it is reasonable to ask whether the Palestine Corporation was simply a front—of the best possible kind—for Waley Cohen's personal assistance to the Mandatory experiment.

* * *

Investment is never a populist activity. As such, the number of British Jews able to participate in any significant way in the affairs of the Economic Board or, in particular, the Palestine Corporation, was necessarily limited. Yet the problems which both bodies faced suggest that their most serious impediment may have been lack of public interest, not a shortage of available funds.²¹⁴ The significance of the Board and the Palestine Corporation would seem to lie not in their financial impact or communal following, but in the fact that they provided an alternative paradigm for support of Palestine.

²¹² Henriques, *Robert Waley-Cohen*, 282-3.

²¹³ Although Mond was amongst the most prolific investors in Palestine, he did not channel his funds through the Corporation. *JG* 10/2/28 3, 7/12/28 1; *JC* 17/6/32 22-3.

²¹⁴ Whether such a conclusion can be extended to extra-organisational Palestine investment remains to be determined.

Although adherence to 'commercial values' was touted frequently, it does not appear that non-Zionist loans to Palestine were viewed as pure business propositions. As the examples of Mond and Waley Cohen would indicate, investment decisions were not divorced from considerations of sentiment and obligation—to Britain and the Empire, as well as to Palestine. What investment did allow for was relative independence, the ability to apply personal expertise and the opportunity to see quick results. For a select group of Anglo-Jewish non-Zionists, it may therefore have been the most effective and constructive—if not conventionally rewarding—means of playing a role in Palestine's future.

Sweet Charity

Like investment, philanthropy also allowed non-Zionist British Jews to feel that they were making a practical contribution to Palestine's development.²¹⁵ But while the former was the domain of plutocrats, charitable giving was by its nature able to involve a wider population. This was reflected in the variety of mechanisms for collecting funds—from appeal letters to closely managed public events (the latter of which also provided opportunities for voluntary activity)—as well as the range of causes supported. In this course of this current study, it is not possible to produce a complete picture of non-Zionist donor activity. Instead, I will highlight several distinctive organisations and events, while also considering the appeal of particular types of aid, the involvement of women and the perceived difficulty in supporting Zionist funding structures.

²¹⁵ In the following section, 'philanthropy' refers to all levels of charitable giving, not merely that engaged in by an economic elite.

* * *

During the 1920s, the enormous financial demands of building the Jewish national home generated two types of funding structures: Zionist affiliated bodies aimed at the entire Jewish community, like the *KH* and the JNF, and elite business and investment vehicles like the Economic Board for Palestine. However, an older style of charitable aid also persisted. Operating in a manner not wholly dissimilar to pre-World War I *ḥalukah*, it sought to ameliorate acute need rather than to produce systemic change. Not only was the approach of this sort of philanthropy more psychologically straightforward (it emphasised urgency and direct assistance and limited itself to a specific time-frame), but the underlying humanitarian rationale was as well. It could also claim the advantage of historical precedent. Collecting funds to purchase Passover food for indigent immigrants,²¹⁶ or requesting assistance for victims of the 1927 earthquake,²¹⁷ mirrored established patterns of support for the Jewish poor and 'disaster relief' for foreign Jews, such as in the aftermath of the 1903 Kishinev pogroms.²¹⁸ This powerful combination of religious obligation and communal tradition was at times able to overcome the characteristic ambivalence—even indifference—of many British Jews towards the Mandatory experiment. As the *JG* noted in an editorial on relief for victims of the 1929 riots, 'Sums of money, surprising in some instances in the largeness of their amount, have been given by persons who would hardly have been suspected of acute concern for the Jewish National Home.'²¹⁹

While such responsiveness was motivated largely by the exceptional events in Palestine, it seems likely that it was also abetted by local (non-Zionist) control and the

²¹⁶ Sir Stuart Samuel and Mrs Gerald Montagu were two of the leading names associated with this Mizraḥi appeal. *JG* 1/4/22 2.

²¹⁷ *JG* 22/7/27 General Secretary EZF (Letter) 3, 29/7/27 Board and AJA (Letter) 3.

²¹⁸ Jonathan Frankel and Abigail Green both describe the dynamics of Western Jewish crisis intervention. Frankel, *The Damascus Affair: 'Ritual Murder', Politics, and the Jews in 1840* (Cambridge, 1997), 1-13; Green, 'Rethinking Sir Moses Montefiore: Religion, Nationhood, and International Philanthropy in the Nineteenth Century', *American Historical Review*, 110:3 (2005), 631-58.

²¹⁹ 4/10/29 1. According to Cesarani, the fund raised £40,000. 'Zionism in England', 122-3.

non-politicisation of fundraising efforts. For example, it appears that collections for earthquake relief were undertaken not by the English Zionist Federation—which was generally regarded with instinctive dislike by those outside the movement—but by the Board of Deputies and the Anglo-Jewish Association.²²⁰ Similarly, while the political aftermath of the 1929 riots produced a range of responses from British Jews, the initial appeal for emergency aid was characterised by a ‘common repugnance’ at the violence perpetrated by non-Jews (in this case Arabs) against the Jewish inhabitants of Hebron and Palestine’s coastal plain.²²¹

In addition to emergency aid, private, ‘non-structural’ Palestine philanthropy survived in a number of small Anglo-Jewish charities. Some, like the Sir Moses Montefiore Testimonial Fund—a provider of interest free loans for home purchase and construction—pre-dated not only the Mandate but the advent of political Zionism.²²² Others, including a fund for the Shaarei Tzedek (Jerusalem’s original hospital) once operated by members of the Sephardic congregations, had become moribund but were now being revived.²²³ Measured in terms of monies raised or total persons involved, the impact of these funds was limited. Moreover, in a period where Palestine philanthropy was becoming increasingly centralised, they were structurally anachronistic. That they remained in operation, even nominally, was likely a function of multiple factors: convention, nostalgia for an earlier, non-political approach to the *Yishuv*, a desire for autonomy and a sense of alienation from the dominant modes of support for Palestine.

²²⁰ Both organisations had spearheaded earlier extra-Palestinian relief efforts. Although the Board had already assented in principle to cooperation with the JA, the absence of progress in that direction meant that until 1929 it generally considered Mandatory issues to be outside its purview. The AJA, while attempting to avoid political discussions, saw itself as being directly implicated in Palestinian affairs by virtue of its involvement in the Rothschild school.

²²¹ JG 4/10/29 1.

²²² JG 10/10/24 11. The fund began operation in 1882 and supported building in the Jerusalem developments of Y’min Moshe, Mazkeret Moshe and Ohel Moshe. Board members included Arthur Franklin, Elkan Adler, Norman Bentwich, Edmund Sebag-Montefiore, Geoffrey Montefiore and Isaac de Poliakoff.

²²³ JG 24/2/22 3.

'Women's Work' and Palestine

The 1918 enfranchisement of British women (over thirty) and the admission, one year later, of women as institutional representatives at the Board of Deputies were—not unreasonably—interpreted as feminist victories. Yet the 'women's cause' had not been the main stimulus for reform in either realm. Moreover, in the latter case, democratisation failed to yield a real growth in institutional power for women during the inter-war period. Hannah Cohen did make history of a sort when she became the first female president of a major British-Jewish organisation—the Jewish Board of Guardians—in 1930. However, the advent of the welfare state had diminished the JBG's significance; the power that Hannah Cohen wielded at its helm was therefore less than that possessed by her familial predecessors during their presidencies.²²⁴

Female leadership was also palpably absent in the leading Anglo-Jewish organisations, both Zionist and non-Zionist, associated with Palestine work.²²⁵ (One notable exception was Hannah Cohen, also a member of the Economic Board.) Britain did possess two women's Zionist organisations—the Federation of Women Zionists and the Women's International Zionist Organisation (WIZO)—which operated in parallel to the EZF.²²⁶ Nonetheless it would seem that neither was particularly influential in communal politics. Equally, their size and resources were in no way comparable to the massive \$1,000,000 budget boasted as early as 1928 by Hadassah, the Jewish women's group largely

²²⁴ Hannah Cohen's father, Benjamin, led the organisation from 1887-1900 (succeeding his own brother, Lionel), after which Leonard Cohen—Benjamin's nephew and Hannah's first cousin—carried on for a further twenty years.

²²⁵ This is striking, if not surprising, given the relative youth of the organisations in question, their lack of statutory restrictions regarding women's participation (these still existed at the United Synagogue and the Federation of Synagogues) and, in the case of the Zionists, the movement's rhetoric of equality between the sexes.

²²⁶ Neither has been the subject of independent scholarly study. However, both organisations commissioned historical volumes by former movement activists. R. Gassman-Sherr, *The Story of the Federation of Women Zionists of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1968); F. Grove-Pollack, (ed.), *The Saga of a Movement: WIZO, 1920-1970* (No place, no date).

responsible for creating Palestine's health care system.²²⁷ A further comparison with Hadassah is also instructive. While the American organisation retained control over its own finances, the English groups directed most of their funds to the local coffers of the *Keren Hayesod*.²²⁸

Powerful and independent women's organisations were undoubtedly viewed as a threat to the status quo. Yet those at the forefront of Anglo-Jewish Palestine work nonetheless recognised that women played a crucial role both in philanthropic activities and in the broader project of raising awareness. The reason for this was simple. Since official rates of membership in Palestino-centric groups remained low throughout the inter-war years, the occasions on which most British Jews had the potential to engage with Palestinian issues or offer support for the *Yishuv's* development were both infrequent and informal. (Even for those sympathetic to political Zionism, formal affiliation with a Zionist group would appear to have entailed a higher level of commitment than most possessed. This problem was exacerbated for those who identified as non-Zionists, as affiliation with the EZF or a Zionist women's group was ideologically problematic, while involvement with a group like the Economic Board was generally restricted to the very well-off.²²⁹) Accordingly, those who wished to extend communal support for practical work in Palestine frequently looked to social events—bazaars, teas, garden parties and 'at homes'—as a particularly effective means of spreading their message and collecting aid.²³⁰ And with Palestine work, just as with

²²⁷ Berkowitz, *Western Jewry*, 188. See also B.R. Shargel, 'American Jewish Women in Palestine: Bessie Gotsfield, Henrietta Szold and the Zionist Enterprise', *American Jewish History* 90:2 (2002), 141-60; M. Katzburg-Yungman, 'Women and Zionist Activity in *Erez Israel*: The Case of Hadassah, 1913-1958', in S. Reinhartz and M. Raider, (eds.), *American Jewish Women and the Zionist Enterprise* (Hanover, 2005), 160-83.

²²⁸ 4/9/19, 26/10/20, 8/2/22 Council and Special Minutes, WIZO Papers, (LMA): 4175. See also Gassman-Sherr, *Federation of Women Zionists*, 9-10.

²²⁹ JC 24/8/34 Ed 8.

²³⁰ On the aims of this approach see 29/11/20, 21/12/27 Council and Special Minutes, WIZO Papers, (LMA): 4175; *Souvenir Programme, Jewish National Fund Palestine Exhibition* (London, 1938); JG 15/2/29 3; ZR 8:9 (1924-1925), 96, 9:1 (1925), 12, 10:4 (1926), 56-7, NS6:7 (1938), 13-15.

every other cause that attracted Anglo-Jewish attention, the planning and execution of these activities fell largely to women.²³¹

In some instances, female involvement was largely ceremonial. The wives of Anglo-Jewish leaders were much in demand to open events, serve as patrons or host small fundraisers in their homes.²³² Women also contributed virtually all the leadership and behind the scenes labour for the 1929 Palestine Exhibition and West End Fair. Conceived of as a means for both Zionists and non-Zionists to 'stimulat[e] interest in Palestine, ...bind more closely the Jews of Palestine with Anglo-Jewry' and increase trade, the exhibition attracted 5,000 persons, boasted more than forty stalls—operated by 150 female volunteers—and collected nearly £4,000 for the *Keren Kayemet*.²³³ (It seems highly probable that women were, if not the majority of attendees, certainly the primary purchasers of the Palestinian carpets, food, jewellery and needlework on display.) There was of course limited demand for this scale of female management and voluntarism; the assemblage of twenty-odd committee chairpersons and 180 volunteer waitresses—as were required for another massive JNF benefit in 1938—or for dozens of stall operators to work at the aforementioned Palestine Pavilion, was undoubtedly exceptional.²³⁴ But in the months and years between these massive undertakings, women took on comparable responsibilities at numerous smaller events.²³⁵

²³¹ Within both the Jewish community and 'polite' society, voluntary work had long been viewed as an acceptable—even ideal—outlet for female civic engagement. M. Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family and Identity in Imperial Germany* (New York, 1991), 192-227; K.D. McCarthy, 'Parallel Power Structures: Women and the Voluntary Sphere', in id., (ed.), *Lady Bountiful Revisited: Women, Philanthropy and Power* (New Brunswick, 1990), 1-31; E. Black, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1880-1920* (Oxford, 1988), Chapter 8.

²³² *JG* 4/4/24 3, 23/4/25 15, 9/5/30 9.

²³³ *JG* 25/2/29 3, 12/4/29 3, 17/5/29 2, 9-10, 5/7/29 4. Given the event's scale, it is unsurprising that it was opened by a notable non-Jew, the former High Commissioner Lord Plumer. Several men (Leonard Stein and Cyril Henriques) were in attendance at the initial planning meeting. However, most of the exhibition's organising committee, and well as nearly all of those working on the day, were female.

²³⁴ *Souvenir Programme*.

²³⁵ *JG* 19/3/26 22, 10/2/28 3.

Inducing Anglo-Jewish women to assume such positions of leadership, or even to attend social functions, was not without its difficulties. Not only did Palestine have to compete with domestic philanthropic priorities, but non-Zionist women also had misgivings about the ideological and political aims of the Mandatory experiment. However, since the project of developing Palestine incorporated what were thought to be traditional areas of female concern and aptitude (including the creation and maintenance of social, medical and educational infrastructure), it was therefore hoped that women would apply their charitable instincts towards meeting the *Yishuv's* practical needs.

As one (Zionist) leader noted, women who 'had never been approached nor taken the slightest interest in Palestine', and would not participate in 'general Zionist work', would likely work 'in greater or lesser degree[s]' for the welfare of that country's women and children.²³⁶ In addition, the depoliticised nature of women's Palestine activity may have allowed for an easier unity between Zionists and non-Zionists than was achieved in other quarters. The comments of Dulcie Sassoon, chair of the 1929 Palestine Exhibition, are suggestive. The event, she said,

had taught them that Palestine had a message for every Jew, Zionist, or non-Zionist, and that they should seek the points of agreement among them rather than the differences. In spite of the fact that she and some of her friends were non-Zionists, they worked very harmoniously with their Zionist friends.²³⁷

Whether or not Sassoon's somewhat Pollyana-ish statement is interpreted literally, it seems doubtful that any of the non-Zionist men working for Palestine would have made a comparable claim. Moreover, although too much should not be made of limited examples, it is nonetheless striking that at the same time Laurie Magnus was

²³⁶ Edith Eder (wife of M.D. Eder, the Anglo-Jewish liaison between the Palestine Commission and British officials), 9/3/27 Council and Special Minutes, WIZO Papers, (LMA): 4175. On this point see also Berkowitz, *Western Jewry*, 185-6; M. McCune, 'Formulating the "Women's Interpretation of Zionism": Hadassah Recruitment of Non-Zionist American Women, 1914-1930', in *American Jewish Women*, 90-111.

²³⁷ JG 5/7/29 4.

promoting a 'yes, but' attitude to cooperation in the pages of *JG*, his wife was serving as an officer of a 'mixed' *KH* women's outreach committee.²³⁸

The Politics of Practical Assistance

Philanthropic work was not only differentiated on the basis of gender but along class lines. As numerous scholars have noted, British Jewry's Zionist leadership was drawn largely from an upwardly mobile and Anglicised first or second generation middle class. Despite its economic success, this group had been hitherto excluded from the highest echelons of Jewish establishment institutions.²³⁹ The trend was slowly reversed during the inter-war years, culminating in 1939 with the election of a Zionist immigrant, Professor Selig Brodetsky, as the President of the Board of Deputies.²⁴⁰ Throughout, however, the demographic profile of British Zionism remained largely unchanged. In other words, while the movement continued to attract a fair number of *non-Jewish* establishment figures, its Jewish appeal was still class specific.

In the philanthropic realm, this sometimes yielded unexpected outcomes. Prior to the expansion of the JA, appeals for Zionist charities (the *KH* and, quite frequently, the JNF) generally attracted neither establishment patronage—in the form of honorary chairmanships and signatories to letters—nor individual supporters from within that segment of the Jewish community.²⁴¹ But while the ostensible basis for these refusals

²³⁸ *JG* 26/11/26 8, 22/4/27 3, 23/7/26 13, 18/3/27 3.

²³⁹ S.A. Cohen, *English Zionists*, 55-63, 67-74, 124-48; Cesarani, 'The Transformation of Communal Authority in Anglo-Jewry, 1914-1940', in id., (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* (Oxford, 1990), 115-40.

²⁴⁰ Shimoni, 'Selig Brodetsky and the Ascendancy of Zionism in Anglo-Jewry (1939-1945)', *JJS* 22:2 (1980), 125-61; S.A. Cohen, 'Selig Brodetsky and the Ascendancy of Zionism in Anglo-Jewry: Another View of his Role and Achievements', *JJS* 24:1 (1982), 25-38.

²⁴¹ On the basis of available evidence, it is difficult to judge whether this change at the JA led to a growth of non-Zionist donations during the 1930s. Regarding the 1920s see 'Where is the English Keren Hayesod?', *ZR* 5:6 (1921), 107. See also *Keren Hayesod Report of the Head Office of the Erez Israel (Palestine) Foundation Fund, Keren Hayesod, Limited, to the XIV Zionist Congress at Vienna, August 1925* (London, 1925). 'Among those who have been attracted to the work on behalf of the KH are some who have previously not taken part in Zionist activities. It would not, however, be correct to say that any considerable number of contributors to, or workers for, the KH look upon it other than as a purely Zionist fund' (67).

was ideological, responses to requests for money were sometimes dependent on who was doing the asking. Consequently, a fair opened by Moses Gaster—the former rabbi of Bevis Marks, and a shrill advocate for Jewish nationalism²⁴²—was far less likely to garner establishment, non-Zionist support than one where the role of hostess was performed by Lady Mond.²⁴³ This was the case even when the cause in question was wholly uncontroversial. The event Gaster headlined was in aid of the Bezalel School, an independent Jerusalem institution for arts education and a previous recipient of Anglo-Jewish elite support.²⁴⁴ (In 1912, the community had held a major fundraiser for the joint benefit of Bezalel and the Evelina de Rothschild school. It was presided over by Lady Swaythling—whose husband was a particularly fierce opponent of political Zionism—and attracted volunteers from the *crème-de-la-crème* of pre-war Anglo-Jewish society.²⁴⁵)

Similarly, the endorsement—either implicit or explicit—of an establishment figure could lend some legitimacy to a previously or potentially suspect cause. Thus the public support of Viscount Bearsted (formerly Lord Swaythling) and Sir Philip Magnus—both LBJ stalwarts—for planting trees in Palestine helped to demonstrate that such practical work ‘need not commit its donor to the Jewish-national programme of political Zionists’.²⁴⁶ The case of the Hebrew University illustrates an analogous dynamic. As I have detailed, the University project could already claim a broad base of support (from Einstein to Viscount Cecil) by the time of its 1925 inauguration. Its British fundraising

²⁴² Gaster also opposed ‘diluting’ the JA through the inclusion of non-Zionists. *JG* 29/3/29 3.

²⁴³ The party benefited the Jerusalem School of Music. Lady Magnus had organised a similar event five years earlier. *JG* 25/6/26 8, 11/11/21 3.

²⁴⁴ *JG* 24/6/21 4.

²⁴⁵ *Programme, Palestine Exhibition and Bazaar 13-14/5/12*, LS Papers, (ZA): A185/139. Some similarities with the 1929 exhibition are also instructive. Leadership included both non-Zionists (insofar as such a distinction can be made pre-Balfour) and political Zionists (Joseph Cowen and Leopold Greenberg), and a majority of those involved were women. Both also had a similar content, incorporating a range of entertainment, educational booths and a bazaar selling Palestinian products.

²⁴⁶ *JG* 23/12/27 Philip Magnus (Letter) 4, 8, 27/1/28 1. The potential value of Magnus’ action was not lost on Zionist leaders. Another letter to the *JG*, this time from the JNF’s English representative, Leopold Schen, expressed gratitude to the former MP and urged others to follow his example. 6/1/28 7.

arm, the Friends of the Hebrew University, mirrored this trend, attracting Jews and non-Jews, Zionists and non-Zionists, to its ranks.²⁴⁷ The moderate, non-political character of the organisation was reinforced by its choice of leadership: Sir Matthew Nathan, a former colonial governor of territories including Hong Kong and the Gold Coast, and Sir Philip Hartog, a chemist and the first Vice-Chancellor of the University of Dhaka (now in Bangladesh).²⁴⁸ These were men best known for their record of imperial service, not for their involvement in Jewish causes.²⁴⁹

The *JG* proclaimed in July 1926: 'We are all friends of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.'²⁵⁰ Yet for at least a decade, this apparent enthusiasm for the HU did not translate into success for the Friends. In 1929, the group's subscribing members numbered under 250. More importantly, perhaps, funds were also limited; consequently, activities consisted of collecting and advising on books for the National Library, providing two small scholarship endowments (in Arabic, named after Lord Plumer, and in philosophy, in memory of Ahad Ha'am) and organising lectures on the University's work.²⁵¹ (In the meantime, most of the University's support was coming from American Jewry.²⁵²)

Impetus for an expanded role came in the mid 1930s, following the influx of German-Jewish academics to Palestine and the University's consequent expansion. However, while a substantial portion of the new funds came from a single person—James de

²⁴⁷ Following its 1926 foundation, the Friends also inaugurated a medical section and several provincial branches. *Friends of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem Annual Report 1936-7* (London 1937) 1; *JG* 25/6/26 4.

²⁴⁸ Nathan served from 1926-1930. Hartog assumed the post in 1932 and continued to hold it until his death in 1947. See *JC* 17/2/33 20; M. Hartog, *P.J. Hartog: A Memoir* (London, 1949), 127-8.

²⁴⁹ *JC* 26/10/00 13, 14/11/02 14; *JW* 3/1/17 11. Nathan was associated with the attempt to forestall the Balfour Declaration and the League of British Jews' provisional committee. *JC* 19/11/17 6; 20/3/16 Wolf to Rufus Isaacs, LW Papers, (ZA): A77/3/1.

²⁵⁰ 30/7/26 3.

²⁵¹ *JG* 26/10/28 3, 25/1/29 3, 22/11/29 7, 30/10/30 4; *JC* 16/1/32 5-6, 9/12/32 24; Bentwich, 'The Friends of the Hebrew University, 1926-1951', in id., (ed.), *Hebrew University Garland: A Silver Jubilee Symposium* (London, 1952), 128.

²⁵² *Hebrew University of Jerusalem Annual Report 1926-7* (Jerusalem, 1927), 3-4, 20-22, Appendix 6.

Rothschild—it does appear that the HU's urgent needs prompted both a higher level of organisational activism and a growth in the number of Anglo-Jewish contributors.²⁵³ In 1936-1937 alone, the Friends sent out an appeal by post (signed by prominent Jews and non-Jews, it yielded commitments of £4,000 annually for seven years), hired a part-time organiser, reinvigorated moribund provincial chapters, held a dinner at the Savoy and underwrote a new chair in English literature.²⁵⁴ In his preface to that year's annual report, Philip Hartog underlined the need for further work. 'English Jewry', he wrote, 'is beginning to play a very real part in the upbuilding of the Hebrew University. Its existence and progress are important to the whole of Jewry, and we must ensure, in this critical time, that its activities are not curtailed through lack of financial support.'²⁵⁵

The End of the Affair?

The advent of a British Mandate for Palestine produced a significant shift within the organised Anglo-Jewish establishment. Ongoing resistance to Jewish nationalism's ideological claims and to its goal of an independent Jewish state ensured that political Zionism would not take hold. What did emerge, however, was practical or non-Zionism, an ad-hoc movement characterised by selective philanthropic and commercial assistance in building the Jewish home. The intensity of non-Zionist commitment to Palestine was highly variable: for many, it was limited to occasional donations (often to an organisation independent of Zionist funding bodies) or attendance at a charity benefit. For others, like Robert Waley Cohen, non-Zionism became a life's work.

²⁵³ *JC* 14/4/33 17, 9/3/34 32, 26/7/35 8; Bentwich, 'Friends of the HU', 129. There were over 300 individual donors listed in the 1936-1937 *Friends Annual Report* (10-17).

²⁵⁴ *Friends Annual Report*, 3-6. Although its impact is difficult to quantify, it seems likely that the Friends benefited from increased non-Jewish sympathy. As mentioned, the appeal letter had non-Jewish signatories. Prominent public figures, including Sir Ronald Storrs and Reverend Canon Herbert Danby, also spoke at the Savoy event. In addition, funds were transferred to the Friends from two organisations set up to help German Jews: the Central British Fund for Jewish Relief and Rehabilitation and the Council for German Jewry. On these see G. Alderman, *Modern British Jewry* (Oxford, 1992), 275-6.

²⁵⁵ *Friends Annual Report*, 1.

Anglo-Jewry's non-Zionist posture was premised on two foundations: the alliance of British and Jewish interests and, after 1929, an official—if fragile—partnership with the Zionist leadership at the Jewish Agency. However, by the mid 1930s, both of these relationships were subject to severe strain. While the emergence of Nazism heightened the need for a Jewish refuge, the surge of Jewish immigration into Palestine (nearly 150,000 refugees arrived in 1933-1935 alone²⁵⁶) not only triggered a violent Arab uprising²⁵⁷ but threatened the viability of the Mandate itself. When the Peel Commission, appointed to investigate the breakdown of law and order, recommended the partition of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states, Anglo-Jewry's middle-of-the-road stance could not be easily sustained.²⁵⁸

At the Jewish Agency, divisions had already been exposed—and widened—by disputes over parity of representation, the creation of the Zionist oriented World Jewish Congress and the merits of an Arab-Jewish legislative council in Palestine.²⁵⁹ With the stakes far higher, the debate over Peel would drive a fatal rift between the organisation's Zionist and non-Zionist constituencies. The former group faced internal division. Some contended that the land offered was too little too soon (the narrow coastal plain would be difficult to defend), while others argued that a rump state would not only allow for increased immigration but also provide a launching point for future territorial gains.²⁶⁰ For the latter, the prospect of an independent Jewish territory—

²⁵⁶ Although numbers would decline in the years immediately preceding the war, the overall rate was more than double that of the 1920s. J. McCarthy, *the Population of Palestine: Population History and Statistics of the Late Ottoman Period and the Mandate* (New York, 1990), 34.

²⁵⁷ Other factors included high rates of unemployment, urbanisation and political radicalisation, both within Palestine and in the region as a whole. Y. Porath, *The Palestine-Arab National Movement, 1929-1939: From Riots to Rebellion* (London, 1977), 80-161.

²⁵⁸ *Palestine Royal Commission Report Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament by the Command of His Majesty, July 1937 Cmd. 5479* (London, 1937).

²⁵⁹ 13/1/36 Lionel Cohen to Laski, 15/1/36 Laski to Waley Cohen, LS Papers, (ZA); JC 24/7/36 27; Shimoni, 'Anti-Zionism to Non-Zionism', 33-9; Elam, *Jewish Agency*, Part II.

²⁶⁰ LS Papers, (ZA): A185/6/1; T.G. Fraser, 'A Crisis of Leadership: Weizmann and the Zionist Reaction to the Peel Commission's Proposals, 1937-8', *JCH* 23:4 (1988), 657-80.

relatively remote during the first fifteen years of the Mandate—resurrected old fears. Even under the changed circumstances of 1937, Jewish autonomy was still viewed as a highly dangerous endeavour. At the same time, however, outright opposition to an object of British policy carried with it its own risks.

Anglo-Jewish non-Zionists (in coordination with their American counterparts, led by Felix Warburg²⁶¹) nonetheless resolved to fight a two front—albeit cautious—battle against partition. At a meeting of the Jewish Agency Council, the current Board of Deputies President, Neville Laski, argued for a continuation of the Mandate. The Rothschilds' New Court headquarters once again played host to a private gathering of British Jews; those in attendance included Laski, Waley Cohen, Osmond d'Avigdor Goldsmid, Anthony de Rothschild, Lionel Montagu and Leonard Montefiore. All were leaders in the JA's English section, yet they 'were not Zionists and ...[by their own admission] opposed the "Jewish nation" conception'.²⁶²

The group eschewed public protest, resolving instead to lobby for mediated Arab-Jewish talks and delayed implementation of the Peel plan. Both of these aims were in fact achieved, although non-Zionists could claim no credit for the changes in policy. Unwilling to impose partition against the will of the Arab leadership (who would not accept any Jewish state, regardless of its borders), British politicians made a final effort to reach consensus at the St. James Conference in early February 1939. But by the spring, with a European war looming and no agreement in sight, they fulfilled their threat to impose a unilateral solution. The MacDonald White Paper, issued on 5 May 1939, called for an independent, binational state within ten years. Consistent with the political realities of that period—captured in Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's

²⁶¹ Kaufman, *Ambiguous Partnership*, 35-40.

²⁶² 19/7/37 'Memorandum of Meeting at New Court', BOD Papers, (LMA): ACC/3121/E3/37.

observation that '[i]f we must offend one side, let us offend the Jews rather than the Arabs'—Jewish immigration was limited to 75,000 over the next five years, with any subsequent entry subject to Arab approval.²⁶³ Severe restrictions were also placed on Jewish land purchase. The Mandate's pledge to create a Jewish homeland in Palestine, though not officially rescinded, was all but dead.

Between 1936 and 1939, the pace of British political reorientation in Palestine had increased dramatically. The events of those years also accelerated shifts in the composition and outlook of Anglo-Jewry's communal leadership. At the Board of Deputies, pro-Zionist delegates not only approached majority status but managed to elect one of their own as President.²⁶⁴ (Selig Brodetsky gained the post after the resignation of his embattled non-Zionist predecessor, Neville Laski, and the rejection of Anthony de Rothschild, another opponent of Jewish nationalism, as successor.) The Board also endorsed a Zionist Federation resolution calling for the creation of a Jewish state within the British Commonwealth.²⁶⁵ While the Anglo-Jewish Association continued to be dominated by a largely non-Zionist elite, the organisation's participation in the Joint Foreign Committee came under renewed assault.

For British Zionists, Brodetsky's triumph vindicated the principle of democratic rule and symbolised the completion of Anglo-Jewry's demographic revolution. Those who had sat at the helm of the Board represented, in the words of Chaim Weizmann, 'an infinitesimal minority', holding hostage 'millions of suffering Jews'.²⁶⁶ With these non-Zionists now relegated to the sidelines, communal leaders would be free to defend Jewish interests in a more robust manner.

²⁶³ Cited in M. Cohen, *Retreat from the Mandate, the Making of British Policy, 1936-45* (London, 1978), 84.

²⁶⁴ Shimoni, 'Selig Brodetsky', 125-161. A similar victory had already been realised at the Federation of Synagogues.

²⁶⁵ *JC* 21/1/38 8, 28.

²⁶⁶ Cited in Shimoni, 'Anti-Zionism to Non-Zionism', 41.

In contrast to 1917, the Zionist victories of 1937-1939 can be rightly termed a revolt. As well as ushering in a new cadre of leaders (at least at the Board), they also produced a measurable change in policy. Nonetheless, useful parallels can be drawn between the two 'revolts'. In both cases, elite responses to domestic and foreign Jewish crises were judged to be weak and largely ineffectual. Moreover, just as the hesitancy of the World War I era establishment to defend Russian Jewish immigrants undermined its authority, the Board's perceived inaction in the face of Nazism and domestic fascism had similarly detrimental consequences.²⁶⁷ Zionist leaders—although largely lacking alternate strategies—were best positioned to benefit from the resulting power vacuum.²⁶⁸

A further comparison is also appropriate. During World War I, both supporters and opponents of the Balfour Declaration defended their positions by referencing specific interpretations of Anglo-Jewish interests. The same would be true of British Zionists and non-Zionists in the late 1930s. For members of the Zionist Federation, it was self-evident that the creation of a Jewish dominion—free to accept immigrants while retaining an imperial link to Great Britain—would benefit the Jews of Europe as well as the Empire.²⁶⁹ Although the historic partnership between Britain and the Jews was now

²⁶⁷ E. Smith, 'Jewish Responses to Political Anti-Semitism and Fascism in the East End of London, 1920-1939', in Kushner and T. Lunn, (eds.), *Traditions of Intolerance: Historical Perspectives on Fascism and Race Discourse in Britain* (Manchester, 1989), 53-71; Kushner and N. Valman, (eds.), *Remembering Cable Street: Fascism and Anti-Fascism in British Society* (London, 2000); S. Gewirtz, 'Anglo-Jewish Responses to Nazi Germany 1933-39: The Anti-Nazi Boycott and the Board of Deputies of British Jews', *JCH* 26:2 (1991), 255-76; N.W. Cohen, 'The Transatlantic Connection: the American Jewish Committee and the Joint Foreign Committee in Defence of German Jews, 1933-1937', *American Jewish History* 90:4 (2002), 353-84.

²⁶⁸ Within 1930s Britain, Jewish activism was concentrated in three distinct arenas. Grassroots groups, including the Jewish Representative Council for the Boycott of German Goods and Services, took the lead in responding to Nazism, trade unionists, socialists and Communists combated Mosley and the British Union of Fascists (BUF) in the East End and Zionists promoted Palestine as the solution to Jewry's problems. H. Srebnik, 'The British Communist Party's National Jewish Committee and the Fight Against Anti-Semitism During the Second World War', *Immigrants and Minorities* 8:1-2 (1989), 82-96; id., 'Communism and Pro-Soviet Feeling among the Jews of East London, 1935-45', *Immigrants and Minorities* 5:3 (1986), 285-304; Cesarani, 'Zionism in England', Chapter 7.

²⁶⁹ *ZR* NS5:1 (1938), 6, Ed 10.

subject to unprecedented strain, they viewed Balfour's original vision as both morally justified and strategically sanctioned.

In his 1939 book, entitled *Jewish Rights and Jewish Wrongs*, Neville Laski asserted that the idea of a 'Jewish State is no less distasteful now than it was twenty years ago'.²⁷⁰ While unwavering in his aversion to Jewish national independence, Laski was equally forthright in his appreciation for the 'overwhelming advantages, moral, economic and protective, which the connexion with Britain has given and can always give to Palestine'. For its part, Palestine's Jewish population—moved by 'undying gratitude' and an unshakeable commitment to defend the land of its forefathers—was a frontline in the protection of vital British interests. Laski therefore admitted a hope

that in time the entity, Palestine, m[ight] become a member of the British Commonwealth of NationsIt w[ould] be a tragedy of the first magnitude if the result of the conferences now being held [at St. James would] ...be the abandonment or even the modification of the nexus exist[ing] in the form of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate.²⁷¹

The events of the next seven years would challenge—and eventually destroy—Laski's vision.

²⁷⁰ (London), 149.

²⁷¹ Laski, *Jewish Rights*, 153, 155.

A 'Divergence of Interests': Anglo-Jewry at the End of the Mandate¹

On 14 May 1948, at exactly twelve midnight, Britain's Mandate for Palestine came to an end. The formalities accompanying withdrawal commenced the previous evening with a radio address by Sir Alan Cunningham, the last High Commissioner.² Early the next morning, a final convoy departed from the King David Hotel, headquarters for the Secretariat and, at least until its bombing in 1946, the unofficial gathering place for Jerusalem's British population. Following a review of the guard of honour, the Union Jack was also taken down at Government House, home to four of Palestine's seven High Commissioners. Cunningham then continued on to Haifa, where he boarded the *Euryalus* and set sail for Cyprus.³

It was only lunchtime. But the 'new chapter ...of Palestine's history' to which Cunningham had referred in his concluding broadcast was already being drafted. In London, the War Secretary announced to the House of Commons that Britain no longer controlled Palestine. As the remaining troops and civilians exited Jerusalem, David Ben-Gurion read out Israel's Declaration of Independence to those assembled in the Tel Aviv City Hall. And at 6:15 pm Eastern Standard Time, President Harry Truman became the first world leader to offer recognition to the fledging state.⁴

For many Jews, Israel's birth represented the culmination of a 2,000 year quest to return to Palestine. The emergence of an internationally sanctioned Jewish state also vindicated—in moral as well as political terms—the labours of Zionist pioneers and the

¹ *Jewish Chronicle* 4/1/46 Editorial 10.

² Alan Cunningham Papers, (Middle East Centre, St. Antony's College): 6.

³ 14/5/48 Diary typescript, Sir Henry Gurney (Chief Secretary to the Palestine Administration) Papers, (Middle East Centre, St. Antony's College). A.J. Sherman draws on this material in *Mandate Days: British Lives in Palestine, 1918-1948* (Baltimore, 1997).

⁴ M. Cohen, *Truman and Israel* (Berkeley, 1990), 207-22.

vision of an earlier generation of British politicians. Most obviously, perhaps, Jewish responses to Israel's creation bore the imprint of recent events. The new state was the only viable destination for the surviving remnant (*shearit hapletah*) of European Jewry. Israel's existence—precarious though it was—offered a measure of security against future threats to the Jewish people. Finally, the state's creation, just three years after Hitler had been defeated, symbolized Jewish endurance and renewal; the phoenix was rising from the ashes.

But how was the news of 14 May met by Jews in Britain? Even those outside the Zionist camp agreed that the survivors of Nazism could not make their home anywhere other than Palestine.⁵ British Jews also shared in the widespread pride regarding Jewish achievements in building the national home. Yet for Anglo-Jewry, it was impossible to separate Israel's birth from the Mandate's death, the success of the Zionist project from the failure of British-Jewish collaboration. The relationship initiated at San Remo between the Jewish national home and the Empire had mandated Anglo-Jewish support. Within this context, British Jews unable or unwilling to endorse Zionism's political aims were able to reframe assistance to the Jewish national project as a matter of patriotic (as well as religious and/or ethnic) duty. Mainstream Anglo-Jewish opinion—both Zionist and non-Zionist—came to regard this union as central not only to the Jewish future in Palestine but to the protection of Britain's broader imperial aims. These assumptions, while subject to considerable stress during the 1930s, would not be debunked thoroughly until after World War II.

⁵ M. Simon, 'The Jewish-British Feud in Palestine', *Jewish Monthly* 5 (8/47), 19, 23-4; Draft, 'Anglo-Jewish Association Report to the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine 23/6/47', Leonard Stein Papers, (University of Oxford): 105. This was even true—in large part—of the Jewish Fellowship, a 1940s throwback to the League of British Jews. *Jewish Outlook* (4/46), 1, (8/46), 7.

Between 1945 and 1948, Zionist and British politicians alike retreated from the Mandate. (Both acted with the full support of their respective constituencies.⁶) Many British Jews, however, were not so eager to do so. Leonard Stein, President of the Anglo-Jewish Association, wrote in mid 1947:

I believe it important ...that there should be no final break between Palestine—and especially “Jewish” Palestine—and Great Britain [Although] “back to before 1939” is now an impossibility, I am anxious for a solution which would leave Britain a foothold in Palestine and would not completely sever the link between themIt is in British interests, and also in the interests of the Jewish National Home, that the British connection should, in some form, be maintained.⁷

Since they remained both political and philosophical opponents of an independent Jewish state, it is unsurprising that Stein and the AJA were amongst the most vigorous advocates for the continuation of a British-Jewish partnership in Palestine. Yet even most British Zionists resisted severing this link. As late as 1947, the Zionist Federation’s policy called for Palestine’s inclusion within the British Commonwealth of Nations.

The very fact that groups as ideologically disparate as the AJA and the ZF both favoured a renewed relationship between their country’s government and that of the future Jewish state is significant. Moreover, their motivations were frequently—if not always—overlapping. Without question, lingering discomfort with Jewish nationalism was not a factor in the ZF’s pro-Commonwealth stance. What the two organisations did hold in common, however, was a distinctly Anglo-Jewish perspective on unfolding events. Their policies were therefore shaped not only by concern for the nation’s

⁶ On the former, A. Shapira, *Land and Power and The Zionist Resort to Force, 1891-1948*, tr. W. Templar (New York, 1992), 277-352; Z. Ganin, ‘Activism versus Moderation: The Conflict between Abba Hillel Silver and Stephen Wise during the 1940s’, *Studies in Zionism*, 5:1 (1984), 71-95; N. Rose, ‘Weizmann, Ben-Gurion, and the 1946 Crisis in the Zionist Movement’, *SiZ* 11:1 (1990), 25-44.

⁷ 23/5/47 Stein to S.H. Frankel (Oxford economics professor and advisor to the South African government), LS Papers, (Oxford): 105. Exposed to Palestine as an officer in the British military administration, Stein was for much of the 1920s a leading figure in both English and international Zionist circles. In addition to serving as the political secretary to the Zionist Organisation (1920-9), he advised Chaim Weizmann and published numerous articles on Palestine. Never an advocate of Jewish statehood—rather, he sought the development of a semi-autonomous national home under British auspices—Stein drifted out of official Zionist work during the 1930s. He became President of the AJA in 1939. Political writings include L. Simon and id., (eds.), *Awakening Palestine* (London, 1923); ‘The Jews in Palestine’, *Foreign Affairs* 4:3 (1926), 415-32. On Stein’s outlook and role see J. Gribetz, ‘“Not Just a Club”: Leonard Stein and the Problem of Anglo-Zionism’, (M.St. diss., Oxford Univ., 2003).

strategic interests but by investment in the principle of British-Jewish partnership and concern about the impact of Palestinian events on their own communities.

In the end, of course, British Jews could not halt the deterioration of Britain's position in Palestine. Out of step with their own government and fellow citizens, as well as with organised Jewish opinion in both the United States and the *Yishuv*, their idealised vision would prove unsustainable. Britain's refusal to admit Jewish Holocaust survivors to Palestine and the *Yishuv's* often violent campaign against British rule exposed the hollowness of Anglo-Jewry's rhetoric of shared values and historical alliance. Incapable of influencing either Britain's immigration policy or the *Yishuv's* guerrilla tactics, British Jews also found themselves in an increasingly precarious situation at home. A marked increase in domestic anti-Semitism, culminating in riots (terrifying, though not murderous) over the August 1947 bank holiday weekend, underscored their unenviable position.⁸ By the end of the year, with the creation of a Jewish state now inevitable, and the *Yishuv* directing its attention to the forthcoming conflict with the Arabs, Anglo-Jewish focus would turn to the rehabilitation of its own status and the repositioning of its loyalties.⁹

* * *

It would be foolhardy to attempt to examine the events of 1945 to 1948 without reference to the wartime context from which they evolved. For Jews and non-Jews

⁸ *JC* 8/8/47 1, 8, 15/8/47 Ed 12; T. Kushner, 'Anti-Semitism and Austerity', in P. Panayi, (ed.), *Racial Violence in Britain, 1840-1950* (Leicester, 1993), 149-67; D. Leitch, 'Explosion at the King David Hotel', in M. Sissons and P. French, (eds.), *The Age of Austerity* (Oxford, 1986), 45-67.

⁹ Somewhat inexplicably, the period of 1945 to 1948 has received only limited attention in Anglo-Jewish historical scholarship. Neither Todd Endelman nor Bill Rubinstein waylay here in their one-volume histories. Stephan Wendehorst's thesis on British Zionism, while spanning the years in question, does not treat them as a discrete epoch. Two studies focusing on this period are limited in scope: Rory Miller's monograph on the Jewish Fellowship, a small, historically anachronistic, anti-Zionist group, and Tony's Kushner's article on the 1947 riots. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656-2000* (Berkeley, 2002), 229-34; Rubinstein, *A History of the Jews in the English-Speaking World: Great Britain* (Basingstoke, 1996), 364-9; Wendehorst, 'British Jewry, Zionism and the Jewish State, 1936-1956' (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford Univ., 1997); Miller, *Divided Zion: Anti-Zionist Opposition in Britain to a Jewish State in Palestine, 1945-1948* (London, 2000), 82-120; Kushner, 'Antisemitism and Austerity', 149-67.

alike, the wholesale slaughter which occurred in Europe placed the question of Palestine's future on an altogether different plane. What the Holocaust did not do, however, was to alter the fundamental, pre-existing conflicts—between Jews and Palestinians and between the British and the *Yishuv*—which had bedevilled the Mandatory project since its inception. With progress towards Jewish statehood already well advanced by 1939, it therefore seems most likely that the war delayed rather than precipitated British withdrawal. For Jews, the White Paper's 'freeze-frame' effect, combined with the necessity of supporting the Allies and the prevailing question of rescue, also postponed more intensive diplomacy until the war's end.

For these reasons, and because existing scholarship on the war years is unsurprisingly wide-ranging, I will only highlight the changes in Zionist aims and strategies which took place during this period. Similarly, as the story of Britain's post-war withdrawal from Palestine is also much-told, I will limit myself to an overview of the key events and decisions leading up to 14 May 1948. My focus of this final chapter is otherwise: I hope to examine the Anglo-Jewish establishment's ultimate and unsuccessful efforts to defend the British-Jewish partnership in Palestine. To that end, I will consider the rationale advanced in favour of a continued Mandate as well as arguments made for Palestine's inclusion within the Commonwealth. Using the example of the Anglo-Jewish Association, I will then examine the post-war demise of 'unpolitical Zionism', detailing the role of the displaced persons crisis, the incidence of Jewish violence against the Mandatory authorities and the rise of domestic anti-Semitism in bringing about (reluctant) acceptance of partition and independence. Finally, I will reflect briefly on the new uncertainties confronting British Jews in the months preceding the Mandate's termination.

Death of the Mandate, Birth of the State

To a large degree, the strategic calculations governing the 1939 White Paper continued to shape Britain's Palestine policy throughout the war. Until late 1942—by which time Rommel's forces were defeated in Egypt, and the Soviets had checked a potential German swing southwards—Palestine was threatened by invasion.¹⁰ This military risk was further compounded by the likelihood of Axis-Arab collaboration. (Pro-German sympathies were rife on the grassroots level, and both Iraq's Rashid Ali and the Mufti of Jerusalem openly sought alliances with Berlin.¹¹) Although no steps were taken to hasten Arab majority rule in Palestine, few in London questioned the need to maintain restrictions on Jewish land purchase and immigration.¹²

Within the *Yishuv*, the menace posed by Nazism—to the future of the Jewish homeland as much as to European Jews—yielded an overwhelming loyalty to Britain and the Allied cause. Palestine's Jews helped to defend the home front and also saw action in Vichy Syria and Italy. However, Britain's wartime enforcement of the White Paper was not accepted meekly. Most of the population saw no conflict between supporting the war effort and assisting illegal immigration (*Aliyah Bet*).¹³ And at the radical end of the spectrum, members of two underground paramilitary groups, *Lehi* and the *Irgun* (the former was also termed the Stern Gang after its founder, the latter was known by its Hebrew acronym, *Etzel*), targeted British governmental and military figures.¹⁴

¹⁰ M. Kolinsky, *Britain's War in the Middle East: Strategy and Diplomacy, 1936-1942* (London, 1999), 122-219.

¹¹ D Carpi, 'The Mufti of Jerusalem, Amin-el-Husseini, and His Diplomatic Activity During World War II (October 1941-July 1943)', *SiZ7* (Spring 1983), 101-31.

¹² Although a committee again endorsed partition in 1943, there was no question of implementing a policy change before the war's end. 17/4/44 Harold MacMichael (departing High Commissioner) to Secretary of State for the Colonies, Oliver Stanley, AC Papers, (St. Antony's): 6.

¹³ D. Ofer, 'Illegal Immigration During the Second World War; Its Suspension and Subsequent Resumption', in J. Frankel, (ed.), *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, vii: *Jews and Messianism in the Modern Era* (New York, 1991), 220-46.

¹⁴ Embodying the maxim, 'my enemy's enemy is my friend,' *Lehi* even made contact with the Nazi leadership. In 1944, the group attempted to assassinate the current High Commissioner and succeeded in murdering Lord Moyne, Churchill's close friend and Britain's resident minister in Egypt. The *Irgun's* declaration of war against the British had the additional goal of challenging labour (*Histadrut*) dominance of the *Yishuv's* government-in-waiting. B. Wasserstein, 'The Assassination of Lord Moyne', *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* NS27 (1982), 72-83.

Jewish opinion outside Palestine was also revolutionised by news of the events in Europe. In May 1942, an 'Extraordinary Zionist Conference' held at New York's Biltmore Hotel called for 'Palestine to be established as a Jewish Commonwealth integrated in the structure of the new democratic world'.¹⁵ (This was understood to mean a wholly independent state in all of western, i.e., Mandatory, Palestine. The resolution did not envision inclusion within the British imperial system.) The message was clear: Britain could no longer be trusted to fulfil the Balfour Declaration. Only Jewish authority over Palestine—and its concomitant, free immigration—would ensure continued progress. A further conference the following year cemented Zionist hegemony over American Jewry's representative institutions.

In Britain, Zionism made significant gains as well. The Board of Deputies passed its own version of the Biltmore programme in November 1944. (Although fundamentally similar, its demands were couched in more moderate language. Accordingly, it called for Palestine to become—after 'an agreed period of transitional government'—a 'Jewish State' or independent member of the Commonwealth.¹⁶) The previous year, pro-Zionist deputies, finally in the majority, had voted 154-148 to abolish the Joint Foreign Committee.¹⁷ Membership in Zionist organisations was also on the rise.¹⁸ While non-Zionists still persisted in their objections, it now appeared that Herzl's nearly fifty year-old call to capture the community for the Zionists had been answered.¹⁹

¹⁵ M.N. Penkower, 'American Jewry and the Holocaust; from Biltmore to the American Jewish Conference [1942-1943]', *Jewish Social Studies* 47:2 (1985), 95-114. The Jewish Agency backed Biltmore in 1945, making statehood the official policy objective of the *Yishuv*.

¹⁶ 'Board of Deputies of British Jews: Statement of Policy on Palestine Adopted 5th November, 1944', Copy in Leonard Stein Papers, (Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem): A185/18.

¹⁷ Although this was intended to reduce the AJA's influence over communal Palestine policy, it could be argued that separation and the AJA's subsequent creation of a separate Palestine Committee actually yielded higher visibility. Board of Deputies Papers, (London Metropolitan Archives): ACC/3121/C11/1/7, ACC/3121/C11/10/10.

¹⁸ Wendehorst, 'British Jewry', 323-7; G. Shimoni, 'Poale Zion: A Zionist Transplant in Britain (1905-1945)', in P. Medding, (ed.), *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, ii: *The Challenge of Modernity and Jewish Orthodoxy* (Bloomington, 1986), 227-9.

¹⁹ Shimoni, 'The Non-Zionists in Anglo-Jewry, 1937-1947', *Jewish Journal of Sociology* 28:2 (1986), 89-115.

The White Paper of 1939 had been condemned by Zionists and non-Zionists alike. Not only did Weizmann denounce it as a betrayal, but Robert Waley Cohen called it a 'gravely mistaken proposal', detrimental to England and to the progress of civilisation for which the Empire stood.²⁰ Despite these objections, patriotic fervour, an awareness of the danger faced by Britain and its Empire and a fear of domestic anti-Semitism constrained Anglo-Jewry's wartime representations. In any case, the probable efficacy of such attempts was questionable. (The same was true of lobbying efforts to save Europe's Jews.²¹)

The Labour Party's electoral victory on 26 July 1945, which was followed shortly by VJ Day, appeared to signal an imminent policy revision.²² Not only had the Party's campaign platform included a pledge to abrogate the White Paper, but the desire of Jewish camp survivors—known as 'DPs', or displaced persons—to enter Palestine commanded considerable international sympathy.²³ However, Palestinian Arabs (with the support of leaders in Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and Transjordan) remained unwilling to accede to increased Jewish immigration. With an overstretched military, growing recognition of the Empire's reliance on Middle Eastern oil and a looming Soviet threat at the region's borders, Chamberlain's pre-war policy now assumed a new post-war relevance.²⁴

²⁰ *JC* 26/5/39 14.

²¹ Scholars of both British and American Jews are divided as to whether communal leaders demonstrated, in Pamela Shatzkes' words, 'a lack of will, or a lack of skill'. On the former see Shatzkes, *Impotent or Indifferent? Anglo-Jewry 1938-1945* (Basingstoke, 2002); R. Bolchover, *British Jewry and the Holocaust* (2nd edn., Oxford, 2003). On official British behaviour see Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe, 1939-1945* (Oxford, 1988), particularly 183-221; L. London, *Whitehall and the Jews 1933-1948: British Immigration Policy, Jewish Refugees and the Holocaust* (Cambridge, 2000); P. Bartrop, 'Britain's Colonial Empire and Jewish Refugees During the Holocaust: The Limits of Rescue Reached', *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies*, 8:2 (1994), 67-84. On the U.S. see D. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945* (New York, 1984). A revisionist perspective on Allied behaviour is provided in Rubinstein, *The Myth of Rescue* (London, 1997).

²² On Jewish expectations see I. Cohen, 'The Labour Government and Palestine', *Jewish Forum* 11 (1945), 14-19; *JC* 10/8/45 1, 17/8/45 Letter to the Editor 6, 16/9/45 1.

²³ A. Königseder and J. Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope: Jewish Displaced Persons in Post World War II Germany*, tr. J.A. Broadwin (Evanston, 2001), 15-77; L. Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust* (New York, 1982). Dinnerstein emphasises that America's advocacy for the DPs did not equate with support for their admission to the United States.

²⁴ W.R. Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, The United States, and Postwar Imperialism* (Oxford, 1984).

For Clement Atlee's government, the cost of maintaining law and order in Palestine (one-tenth of Britain's army—as many as 100,000 soldiers—was stationed in a country no larger than Wales, with an annual policing cost of £7,000,000²⁵) and the utter incompatibility of Jewish and Arab demands soon prompted recourse to a joint Anglo-American commission.²⁶ To the surprise and dismay of Atlee's Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, the Committee of Inquiry's June 1946 report recommended the immediate admission of 100,000 Jewish refugees and the reversal of Jewish land sale restrictions. It also endorsed the indefinite continuation of Mandatory rule, with the ultimate aim that Palestine 'be established as a country in which the legitimate national aspirations of both Jews and Arabs can be reconciled'.²⁷ The government's refusal to implement what it viewed as a dangerous and unworkable plan would not only increase American diplomatic pressure but would strengthen the Yishuv's anti-British campaign. By February 1947, faced with economic crisis at home and growing political unrest in Palestine, the Mandate's future was referred to the United Nations.²⁸ That body's endorsement of partition (intended to bring about separate Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem under international administration) set the stage for the end of the British Mandate and the emergence of an independent Jewish state on 14 May 1948.

²⁵ D. Reynolds, *Brittania Overruled* (London, 1991), 166; 6/4/48 'Diary', HG Papers, (St. Antony's): 1656-0218.

²⁶ A. Nachmani, *Great Power Discord in Palestine: The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry into the Problems of European Jewry and Palestine, 1945-1946* (London, 1987). See also R. Crossman (MP, member of the AACI and non-Jewish supporter of Zionism), 30/12/45-4/8/46 'Diary'; 7/5/46 'Draft of Letter to Atlee', Richard Crossman Papers (Middle East Centre, St. Antony's College): 165-0068.

²⁷ 'The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry: Recommendations and Comments', in W. Laqueur and B. Rubin, (eds.), *The Israel-Arab Reader: A Documentary History* (6th edn., New York, 2001), 63-4.

²⁸ Louis, *British Empire*, 383-531; id. and R.W. Stookey, (eds.), *The End of the Palestine Mandate* (London, 1986); R. Owendale, 'The Palestine Policy of the British Labour Government 1947: The Decision to Withdraw', *International Affairs* 56:1 (1980), 73-93; M. Cohen, *Palestine and the Great Powers, 1945-1948* (Princeton, 1982). On the 'birth' of the state see H.M. Sachar, *A History of Israel from the Rise of Zionism to Our Time* (2nd edn., New York, 1996) and, for a revisionist perspective, B. Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-1999* (New York, 1999), 173-214.

Unswerving Commitment

Writing just months after the war's conclusion, Anglo-Jewry's leading historian, Cecil Roth, noted that the events of the last five years had 'left English Jewry the solitary self-reliant, independent, unbroken [Jewish] community in Europe'.²⁹ In the same publication, G.J. Webber concurred. Not only were British Jews now the 'great Jewry' of Europe, but 'Anglo-Jewry ha[d] become, perforce, one of the three great Jewries of the world.'³⁰ Roth's article, published in November 1945, preceded full knowledge of what these new responsibilities actually entailed. By February 1946, when the Anglo-Jewish Association co-convened (with the American Jewish Committee) an international Jewish conference on the future of European Jewry, the scale of these challenges—spanning migration, restitution, and human rights protection—was better understood.³¹ What continued to be a subject of contention was the relationship between European Jewry's future and that of Palestine. The conference's organisers, who supported unrestricted immigration but remained opposed to Jewish statehood, did not invite delegates from either the American Jewish Conference or the World Jewish Congress, both undisguisedly Zionist bodies.³² The Board of Deputies, while wary of sanctioning this posture, justified its participation as necessary for influencing what Selig Brodetsky described as the 'right direction' regarding Palestine.³³

Yet regardless of their differing views on Palestine's future, British Jews agreed that they had a special role to play in the unfolding action. As early as July 1944 the chairman of the AJA's Palestine Committee urged the assertion of this leadership position. Faced with 'an impulse to remove Palestine from British control ...[t]he

²⁹ 'The Anglo-Jewish Tradition', *JF* 11/45 1.

³⁰ 'The Present Position of Anglo-Jewry', *JF* 10/46 75.

³¹ Anglo-Jewish Association Papers, (Anglo-Jewish Archives, Southampton): AJ/95/ADD/12; AJ 95/148; *Memoranda Prepared in Connection with the London Conference of Jewish Organisations* (London, 1946).

³² On the latter see N.W. Cohen, *The Americanization of Zionism, 1897-1948* (Hanover, 2003), 165-84.

³³ World Jewish Congress (British Section) Papers, (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem): C2/333.

natural role of British Jewry' was to restore confidence, 'secur[ing] for Britain and the Commonwealth their due influence with regard to Palestine'.³⁴ The monthly publication of the Jewish Fellowship (an elite-led, overtly anti-Zionist group) emphasised British Jewry's innate capacity for moderation and mediation, noting that '[t]he Jews in England are also particularly well situated to see both sides of the question, for we are close enough to both ...to be able to understand the[ir] feelings.'³⁵ And the *Jewish Chronicle*, at this time sympathetic to Zionism's Revisionist fringes, recalled Anglo-Jewry's 'double association with the British undertaking of Jewish national rehabilitation in Palestine'. Through this position of special service and helpfulness to both parties, British Jews 'were not only helping themselves by helping to solve the aching world problem of the Jewish people, but aiding what by and large had been a uniquely beneficent political influence for world peace and democratic ideals, the British Empire.'³⁶

As the *JC* suggested, continued attachment to an imperial Palestine was not based purely on sentiment. Rather, it was argued that Palestine—far from being a military liability—was a valuable asset in post-war defence strategies. Faced with expansive commitments east of Suez, the mounting pressure of Soviet power and rising Arab nationalism (particularly in Egypt), an ongoing British presence in Palestine could provide an economic and military foothold. It was, one editorial suggested, 'as important strategically to imperial security as the Straits of Dover are to these islands'.³⁷ Palestine's specific advantages included its established function as an air and land communications centre, its location at the terminus of an oil pipeline, the existence of an industrial economy, proximity to the British Eastern Mediterranean and,

³⁴ 'Note by the Chairman for Meeting of Palestine Committee 17 July 1944', LS Papers, (Oxford): 113.

³⁵ *JU* 6-7/46 3.

³⁶ 1/4/46 Ed 10.

³⁷ *JC* 10/5/46 Ed 10. See also 25/5/45 Ed 6, 28/9/45 Ed 10, 30/8/46 Ed 10; 14/4/46 Weizmann to Winston Churchill, C. Weizmann, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann: Series A*, xxii: *Letters May 1945-July 1947*, ed. J. Heller (New Brunswick, 1979), 118-20.

at least until 1947, its position as a land barrier on the route to India.³⁸ The perceived importance of this last factor was such that the unexpected announcement of Indian partition prompted a concerned Chaim Weizmann to write to Albert Einstein, 'I really do not know where this regime will lead usThe strategic position of Palestine under these circumstances loses almost entirely its importance'.³⁹ As domestic economic pressures increased, Weizmann feared that Britain would respond to the growing unrest in Palestine just as it had done in India—by pulling out.

What Weizmann, like so many others, either could not or would not recognise was the extent to which the war had eroded Britain's imperial capacity. Assertions of Palestine's continuing geopolitical importance were therefore underpinned by false, albeit not altogether unrealistic, assumptions regarding the Empire's future. In a letter to Selig Brodetsky, President of the Board of Deputies, Sidney Salomon (the Board's executive and press officer) expressed his relief that the organisation was 'taking a firm line of maintaining the friendship with this country which I am convinced is so essential if the National Home in Palestine is to become a reality.' He added that even if England withdrew from Egypt, it was inevitable that it would still remain a 'major factor' in Middle East politics.⁴⁰ It was even argued that the Egyptian demand for the withdrawal of British troops in the spring of 1946 increased Palestine's value as a permanent British bastion in the region.⁴¹

According to this analysis, Palestine's strategic assets were not limited to the geographic or military realm. The existence of a loyal Jewish population also contributed greatly to the territory's ongoing value. It was the clear intent of the

³⁸ 30/10/47 'Palestine: Strategic Considerations', Norman Bentwich Papers, (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem): A255/439.

³⁹ 21/2/47 *Letters and Papers*, xxii, 248-50.

⁴⁰ 17/12/46, BoD Papers, (LMA): ACC/3121/B5/8/3.

⁴¹ *JC* 17/5/46 Letter 14. Louis, *British Empire*, 90-100.

Balfour Declaration, a book review in the *Jewish Forum* claimed, to link British security in the Middle East 'to the development in Palestine of a Jewish community' of whose devotion 'the Government could be sure'.⁴² Speeches, articles and editorials also called attention to the *Yishuv's* unstinting support of the Allies, often contrasting it with the opportunistic wartime behaviour of both Palestine's non-Jewish occupants and the Mandate's Arab neighbours.⁴³ A memo drafted by the British Association for the Jewish National Home in Palestine noted the role of Jewish industry in sustaining the British war machine as well as the contribution of Palestinian Jews to the military campaign—via intelligence gathering, technical support, participation in the *Haganah's* crack force, the *Palmach*, or direct enlistment in the British military.

Some engaged in broader historical and racial comparisons. In choosing permanent regional allies, the *JC* argued, Britain could now opt for a Jewish Palestine, which was drawn to it by a common interest

in commerce and peace and by a common democratic tradition founded upon the ethics of a common Scripture, possessed of vigour, enterprise, and a passion for enlightened progress[Or] an Arab Palestine, clinging obstinately to a medieval feudalism ...fickle and prone to "adventures" like all virtual dictatorships or oligarchies, inevitably involved in the intrigues and ambitions of the mercurial Arab world.⁴⁴

The decision, the paper implied, was clear. Far from seeing itself as bearing an intolerable burden, Britain should give thanks for the existence of a Jewish Palestine pledged to imperial security and common ideals. A more moderate corollary to this argument emphasised the *Yishuv's* contribution to regional economic prosperity and 'social betterment'.⁴⁵

⁴² A.L., 'Britain Opens a Gateway', *JF* 3/46 87.

⁴³ 30/10/47 'Palestine: Strategic Considerations', NB Papers, (ZA): A255/439; I. Brodie, 'British and Palestinian Jews in World War II', *American Jewish Year Book* 48 (Philadelphia, 1946), 51-72.

⁴⁴ *JC* 10/5/46 Ed 10. See also 23/5/46 Weizmann to Oliver Stanley (Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs, 1942-1945), *Letters and Papers*, xxii, 145

⁴⁵ 'The Future of Transjordan', *JF* 3/46 6-7; 'The Arab States', *JF* 10/46 4-5. 'BoD Statement of Policy on Palestine Adopted 5 November 1944', LS Papers, (ZA): A185/18.

Two further cases were advanced in favour of retaining a partnership between Britain and the *Yishuv*. The first drew on historical precedent, citing Britain's traditional sympathy for Jewish aspirations in Palestine, the statesmanship leading to the Balfour Declaration (associated with men such as Churchill, Lloyd George and Smuts) and a nearly thirty-year relationship of mutual benefit.⁴⁶ From this perspective the 1939 White Paper was, to borrow Weizmann's phrase, merely an 'unpleasant intermezzo'.⁴⁷ Although wartime expediency may have favoured the Arab position, Britain's long-term interests lay with a Jewish Palestine.

A final argument employed the language of justice and fair play. Britain, the Board of Deputies reminded the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry (AACI), was obliged by international law to fulfil the conditions of its Mandate. 'British Jews believe that a solemn pledge, given under such auspices cannot be withdrawn or nullified out of considerations of expediency.'⁴⁸ As the AJA stressed in its own report to the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), this commitment was not merely legal but ethical as well.⁴⁹

Zionists and non-Zionists alike directed much of their moral ire at Bevin and the Labour Party. At its pre-election conference in May 1945, the Party had again asserted its opposition to the 1939 White Paper.⁵⁰ When it failed, once in power, to abolish the wartime policy, Anglo-Jewish responses emphasised the 'sanctity of the plighted word' and expressed disappointment at the apparent 'fragility of political promises made in

⁴⁶ 'BoD Statement 5th November 1944', LS Papers, (ZA): A185/18; *JC* 9/28/45 Ed 10.

⁴⁷ 'Testimony to the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine', Copy in LS Papers, (Oxford): 119. See also I. Cohen, 'Labour Government', *JF* 11/45 14-19.

⁴⁸ 23/1/46 'Memorandum Submitted to the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry into the Jewish Problem in Europe and the Future of Palestine by the Board of Deputies of British Jews', Copy in LS Papers, (ZA): A185/18. See also 'Meeting with Jewish Agency 15/4/47', LS Papers, (Oxford): 105.

⁴⁹ 'Draft of AJA Report to UNSCOP 23/6/47', LS Papers, (Oxford): 105.

⁵⁰ *JC* 25/4/45 6.

opposition'.⁵¹ On the whole, however, Anglo-Jewish critiques focused on the White Paper's incompatibility with what it believed to be commonly held principles of decency. In a (draft) letter to *The Times*, Leonard Stein argued that the 'intensity of Jewish tragedy'—along with Britain's 'vital interests' and a record of Jewish achievement—'amply justified' a renewal of the spirit of 1917.⁵² Similarly, a resolution adopted by the Board of Deputies in July 1947 expressed 'confidence that British public opinion will recognise the justice of the cause of the Jewish people in their long and tragic struggle against persecution'.⁵³ Another example put the case even more sharply. At a Zionist rally protesting the government's refusal to admit DPs into Palestine, students carried placards reading, 'Jews have always believed in British fair play; don't let us down.'⁵⁴

During the final years of Mandate, the government's continued refusal to revise its Palestine policies eroded Anglo-Jewish confidence. Addressing the AJA Council in January 1948, Leonard Stein lamented that the impending 'severance of the British connection [wa]s made all the more painful by the loss of British goodwill'.⁵⁵ No doubt, Anglo-Jewish entreaties—to abolish the White Paper, implement the recommendations of the AACI or admit the beleaguered Jewish refugees aboard the Exodus—functioned, at least in part, as petitions to the wider court of (international) public opinion.⁵⁶ Like the students marching from the East End to Trafalgar Square, Jewish leaders hoped either to appeal to more universal values and/or to shame their own politicians into action. To that end, some even insisted that Britain's good name and stature depended on its behaviour in Palestine.⁵⁷

⁵¹ JC 16/11/45 Ed 10; 'The Anglo-American Inquiry Committee', JF 3/36 1. See also 21/9/45 Weizmann to Clement Atlee, *Letters and Papers*, xxii, 54-5.

⁵² 23/3/45, 'Tentative AJA Letter to *Times*', LS Papers, (Oxford): 113.

⁵³ BoD Papers, (LMA): ACC/3121/C14/29/1.

⁵⁴ JC 12/7/46 Ed 10; 8/7/46 Jewish Telegraphic Agency Bulletin, LS Papers, (Oxford): 113.

⁵⁵ LS Papers, (Oxford): 106.

⁵⁶ JC 29/8/47 Ed 12. On the *Exodus* affair see N. Bethell, *The Palestine Triangle: The Struggle Between the British, the Jews and the Arabs, 1935-1948* (London, 1979), 316-43.

⁵⁷ 26/1/46 'Memo to the AACI', BoD Papers, (LMA): ACC/3121/C14/29/1.

Most British Jews were surely sanguine enough to recognise that ethical considerations were not the sole determinant of foreign policy. Yet the emphasis placed on this moral argument reflected the fact that its relevance extended beyond the realm of Palestine policy per se. Britain's traditions of philosemitism, tolerance and liberalism not only underpinned its historic support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine but safeguarded Anglo-Jewry's very existence. The outcome of events in Palestine was therefore critical in demonstrating the extent of Britain's commitment to these core values and in projecting the future security and stability of the British Jewish population.

* * *

Despite protestations to the contrary, the capacity of post-war Anglo-Jewry to assume international leadership was questionable. Its problem, in contrast with most of the Continent, was not demographic. In fact, thanks to the arrival of some 60,000 German-speaking refugees during the 1930s, Anglo-Jewry's ranks numbered in excess of 400,000.⁵⁸ By any other standard, however, the community faced serious disarray. Bombing had decimated the historic and spiritual centre of Anglo-Jewish life, London's East End, while the evacuation of children to locations lacking in religious and educational facilities had resulted in a decline in ritual standards.⁵⁹ The death of Chief Rabbi Joseph Hertz in 1946 not only deprived the community of its most august and prominent spokesperson but yielded a fractious battle over succession. According to some, Anglo-Jewry's physical disarray was also mirrored in the institutional sphere.⁶⁰ No less a figure than Cecil Roth, who had proclaimed British Jewry's ascendance (if only by default) to the ranks of great Jewry in 1945, insisted less than two years later

⁵⁸ Rubinstein, *History of the Jews*, 364.

⁵⁹ H. Soref, 'Anglo-Jewish Affairs', *JM* 1:1 (1947), 24-38; *JC* 9/3/45 Ed 10, 9/1/48 Ed 10; 'Anglo-Jewish Community in the War', NB Papers, (ZA): A255/781.

⁶⁰ R. Henriques, 'Unity and Expedience', *JM* 1:2 (1947), 9-15. Henriques was a founding member of the Jewish Fellowship and President, from 1946, of the Association of Synagogues of Great Britain, an umbrella group for Reform congregations.

that 'the traditional structure of Anglo-Jewry behind its impressive facade has suddenly shewn such deep fissures and weaknesses that a catastrophic collapse seems likely.'⁶¹

Although division was by no means limited to Palestinian questions, it manifested itself with particular intensity in this arena. Jewish representations to the AACI and the UNSCOP were made, amongst others, by the Board of Deputies, the Anglo-Jewish Association and the Jewish Fellowship. (This list does not include specifically Zionist groups like the ZF.) And four years after the dissolution of the Joint Foreign Committee (after which the Anglo-Jewish Association advanced its own policies on Palestine), the AJA withdrew from the Board altogether. As the abundance of correspondence between Leonard Stein and Selig Brodetsky suggests, there were attempts to mend the rift between these two organisations. From 1944 onwards, however, the Board's support for a Jewish state or commonwealth (preferably with a continued relationship to Britain) overrode considerable common ground on immigration.⁶²

Yet even had Anglo-Jewry been capable of forging a unified policy, it seems unlikely that it would have held much sway. Within the international Zionist movement, power now resided in Washington and Jerusalem. This change reflected several developments: the emergence over the previous decade of a virtual Jewish state-in-waiting (as well as the doubling of the *Yishuv's* population⁶³), vastly expanded—although by no means unanimous—American Jewish support for Zionism and a conviction within both quarters that Britain was unlikely to fulfil its promises in

⁶¹ Roth, 'The Collapse of English Jewry', *JM* 1:4 (1947), 12-3. See also Soref, '5707 in Retrospect', *JM* 1:6 (1947), 19-33, particularly 19, 26.

⁶² LS Papers, (Oxford): 113. See also 10/7/44 'Consultation with the Anglo-Jewish Association', BoD Papers, (LMA): ACC/3121/C11/10/10. In late 1944, the Chief Rabbi urged—without success—that the AJA resist presenting a separate memo to the government. 'To my thinking', he wrote Leonard Stein, 'even the difference on the Jewish Commonwealth is not unbridgeable.' 1/11/44 Hertz to Stein, BoD Papers, (LMA): ACC/3121/C11/7.

⁶³ J. McCarthy, *The Population of Palestine: Population History and Statistics of the Late Ottoman Period and the Mandate* (New York, 1990), 35.

Palestine.⁶⁴ The 1946 passage of the Zionist Congress presidency from the Anglophile Weizmann to David Ben Gurion merely symbolised the transition which had already taken place.⁶⁵

British Jews found themselves out of step in another dimension as well. The Zionist project had once commanded broad political and public sympathy at home. But by the end of the war, little enthusiasm remained. The increasing frequency and severity of Jewish guerrilla attacks, coupled with the cost of maintaining the Mandatory's police and military apparatus, only strengthened the popular conviction that Britain no longer belonged in Palestine.

'Unpolitical Zionists'?

Even Leonard Stein and the AJA would—with considerable reluctance—arrive at the same conclusion. The final section of this chapter will trace the evolution of their positions in the three years between VE day and May 1948 with particular reference to the following issues: the status of Jewish DPs in Europe, anti-British insurgency in Palestine and the rising incidence of domestic anti-Semitism. For Stein and the organisation which he led, a firm commitment to unrestricted immigration, growing awareness of the consequences of British-Jewish conflict—including, but not limited to, an increase of anti-Jewish rhetoric and activity at home—and belated recognition that opinion in Britain, America and the *Yishuv* favoured withdrawal, combined to produce measured support for Jewish statehood.⁶⁶ However, once the United Nation's

⁶⁴ S. Yotvat, 'London, Washington and Jerusalem: The Zionist Movement and the Shifting Centers of Power, 1921-1948', in M. Mor, (ed.), *Eretz Yisrael, Israel and the Jewish Diaspora: Mutual Relations* (London, 1991), 102-128.

⁶⁵ Conference proceedings are found in *JC* 27/12/46 6.

⁶⁶ For the purposes of this chapter, I will treat the two interchangeably. Stein appears to have played a very direct role in crafting the AJA's Palestine policies. Moreover, I have found no instance in the specified time period where Stein's personal papers advance a position at odds with that of the organisation which he headed. Finally, some members of AJA did support mainstream or statist Zionism. (For a full list of individuals. see Miller, *Divided Zion* 19, n. 5). However, the organisation did on the whole advance what could be best described as non-statist Zionism.

November 1947 vote set the stage for partition (Britain's refusal to enforce a decision unacceptable to the Arabs, along with considerable American support, as late as April 1948, for an alternate policy of international trusteeship, preserved some contingency⁶⁷), attention turned to how Jewish statehood would impact on Anglo-Jewry.

As a preface to this analysis, it is important to situate the AJA within the post-war Anglo-Jewish landscape. By the admission of its President, the organisation's 1944 membership was a mere 1,700 persons.⁶⁸ The Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland, by contrast, claimed as many as 31,000 members.⁶⁹ Changes at the Board of Deputies—the body which, notwithstanding considerable bipartisan criticism, best approximated the outlook of organised, affiliated Anglo-Jewry—offered a further indicator of the extent to which Zionism had become a majority creed.⁷⁰

If judged on numbers alone, the AJA belonged in the same category as the Jewish Fellowship, a group dismissed by both contemporaries and later historians as marginal.⁷¹ Yet thanks to the reputation enjoyed by men like Lord Reading, Stein and Neville Laski and, it could be argued, the residual influence of traditional politics of deference, the AJA's reach outstripped its popular mandate. (The same might have been true, at least to a lesser extent, of the Fellowship, whose roster of members included a Viscount and a Lord, as well as the illustrious last names of Henriques and

⁶⁷ Ganin, 'The Limits of American Jewish Political Power: America's Retreat from Partition, November 1947-March 1948', *JSS* 39:1-2 (1977), 1-36; Louis, *British Empire*, 495-531.

⁶⁸ 7/12/44 Stein to S.W. Rowson, LS Papers, (Oxford): 113.

⁶⁹ *JC* 2/2/45 6, 8/11/46 Letter 19; Shimoni, 'Non-Zionists', 104. Low Anglo-Jewish voting tallies for the 1945 and 1946 Zionist Congresses suggest that ZF membership was not synonymous with active involvement in movement politics.

⁷⁰ Ivan Greenberg, the *JC*'s editor until June 1946 (when he was fired for his public support of the Revisionists), and the Jewish Fellowship both attacked the Board's mainstream Zionist position. *JC* 13/4/45 Ed 10; *JU* 4/46 3, 12, 10/46 3, 11/46 2; D. Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry, 1841-1991* (Cambridge, 1994), 189-91.

⁷¹ 4/7/47 Henriques to Adolph Brotman (Secretary of the Board of Deputies), BoD Papers, (LMA): ACC/3121/C14/31; *JU* 4/46 1-2, 11/46 2; 1/47 3; Endelman, *Jews of Britain*, 234; Rubinstein, *History of the Jews*, 366-7. Rory Miller examines the Fellowship as part of a broader investigation of the content and significance of British anti-Zionism. He does not argue for its importance in a specifically Anglo-Jewish context. Miller, *Divided Zion*, 82-120.

Montagu. However, the radicalism of the Fellowship's politics, combined with the distance of its leadership from more mainstream Jewish causes, negated this potential advantage.⁷²) In examining the final stage of Anglo-Jewish non-Zionism—perhaps better described at this point as non-statist Zionism, practical concerns having largely eclipsed ideological ones—it is important to underscore its minority status. Its significance lies elsewhere: in the (ultimately unsuccessful) effort by what was once Anglo-Jewry's pre-eminent political class to balance the conflicting dictates of British policy and Jewish need, in the painful recognition that no such accommodation was possible and in the consequent adaptation of loyalties to the new status quo.

In 1945, as in 1939, immigration was the primary issue driving both British and Zionist politics. More than any other question, therefore, it provides the key to tracking the position of Stein and the AJA towards Palestine and towards its own government.

* * *

The AJA's first policy statement of this period, a late 1944 memo to the Colonial Secretary, opened by restating the organisation's opposition to the current White Paper. '[A] fresh start is now required,' as the 'desperate and urgent' needs of European Jewry—many of whom, it was predicted, would be unable or unwilling to return to their original homes—could only be satisfied in Palestine. Accordingly, the memo called for 'the necessary administrative changes, as to further the development of the Jewish National Home in an undivided Palestine [and to] facilitate and expedite the immigration and settlement of Jews desirous of making their homes in that

⁷² One curious addition to the Fellowship was Robert Waley Cohen. President of the United Synagogue, Waley Cohen was distinguished not only by his orthodoxy (most of the Fellowship's members, like their predecessors at the League of British Jews, claimed allegiance to the Reform movement), but by his long standing philanthropic involvement with the *Yishuv*. Although his biographer, Robert Henriques—who was, incidentally, President of the Fellowship—does not explain this affiliation, its motivation would appear twofold: unusually strong aversion to the prospect of an independent Jewish state and genuine interest in religious revival, the Fellowship's ostensible mission.

country.' It also anticipated an enhanced role for the Jewish Agency in co-ordinating the 'framing and execution of such plans'.⁷³

Over the course of the following two years, the AJA and Stein (in both his personal and professional capacities) reiterated support for unrestricted and rapid immigration, pursued within the context of continued British rule. The organisation's testimony to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, delivered in late January 1946, was a case in point. Speaking before the committee, Stein stated that 'what was essential to the healthy development of a Jewish National Home in Palestine did not include the establishment of a "Jewish State."⁷⁴ While these 'non-statist' Zionists continued to eschew total independence for the *Yishuv*, they did propose that higher rates of Jewish immigration be accompanied by a gradual movement towards self-rule. Not only was this in keeping with the traditional evolution of (white) settlements controlled by the Crown, but, if pursued in tandem with increased autonomy for Palestinian Arabs, offered a potential means of diffusing tension between the two communities.⁷⁵

For the AJA, any enthusiasm for self-government was tempered by a significant caveat. In one of his frequent letters to his Board of Deputies counterpart, Selig Brodetsky, Stein acknowledged that

If I were asked what I wanted, without being obliged to explain how I proposed to attain it ...the Palestine I should like to see is a Palestine with a predominantly Jewish population enjoying self-government within, or under the protection of the British Empire.

⁷³ Summary, *JC 26/1/45* 5.

⁷⁴ Compiled in 'Note for Palestine Conference Committee 1/11/46', LS Papers, (Oxford): 105.

⁷⁵ Self-government had been granted almost immediately to the other Middle Eastern territories under British mandatory rule. Although there was an abortive effort to establish an Arab-Jewish legislative council in the mid 1930s, neither London nor Jerusalem was willing—for pragmatic as well as moral reasons—to sanction Jewish minority rule. It could be argued, however, that the Jewish Agency's autonomy over welfare and education, along with the *Histadrut's* effort to structure Jewish labour and the creation of an independent Jewish military, yielded not just a separate Jewish civil society but, by the late 1930s, a state-in-waiting. Z. Tzahor, 'The Histadrut: from Marginal Organization to 'State-in-the-Making', in J. Reinharz and Shapira, (eds.), *Essential Papers on Zionism* (London, 1996), 473-508; D. Horowitz and M. Lissak, *Origins of the Israeli Polity: Palestine under the Mandate*, tr. C. Hoffman (Chicago, 1978), 16-156.

However, he continued, 'we want Palestine to become self-governing if and when, but not before, the Jews are in a majority.'⁷⁶ Concern over the political and ethical ramifications of Jewish minority rule was, as Jonathan Gribetz has noted, central to the AJA's rejection of the 1942 Biltmore Programme.⁷⁷ From this perspective, only a reversal of British policy, followed by several years of large-scale Jewish immigration, would produce a demographic scenario in which self-rule could be contemplated seriously.

'Every *humanitarian* issue that concerns a great number of people is necessarily also a *political* one.' According to the Revisionist Paul Riebenfeld, this 'simple truth' undermined the very notion of 'unpolitical' Zionism.⁷⁸ In the immediate aftermath of the war, Stein and the AJA did attempt to uncouple 'humanitarian' issues such as immigration from broader questions regarding Palestine's future status.⁷⁹ Yet by mid 1946, the impasse in resolving the DP crisis would yield a gradual shift in the AJA's Palestine policy. 'Unpolitical' Zionism was now in irreversible decline.

In June 1946, the AJA endorsed the AACI's recommendations for the admission of 100,000 refugees and continued development of an undivided Palestine.⁸⁰ One month later, Stein reiterated his organisation's opposition to independence for the *Yishuv*, declaring in an open letter that '[i]n the firm conviction that the demand for a Jewish State is ill-advised ...the Anglo-Jewish Association has consistently abstained from advancing it.'⁸¹ By the end of the year, however, the AJA—encouraged by Stein—began to accept the necessity of independence. As the AACI's report had emphasised,

⁷⁶ 8/7/44 Stein to Brodetsky, LS Papers, (Oxford): 113.

⁷⁷ Gribetz, 'Leonard Stein', 19-20.

⁷⁸ 'The Politics of the Unpolitical Zionists', *JF* 10/46 35. Italics in original.

⁷⁹ Summary, *JC* 26/1/45 5.

⁸⁰ Draft, 'Statement by the President on the Course of Events in Palestine, 3rd July, 1946-5706', AJA Papers, (Anglo-Jewish Archives, University of Southampton): AJ/244 /AJA6.

⁸¹ Compiled in 'Note for Palestine Conference Committee 1/11/46', LS Papers, (Oxford): 105.

'countries other than Palestine gave no hope of substantial assistance in finding homes for Jews wishing or impelled to leave Europe.'⁸² Nonetheless, it was also clear that the Arab states⁸³ would not sanction continued Jewish immigration into Palestine. Although he had reached his decision with great trepidation, Stein announced at the AJA's November meeting, 'the realities of the situation seem[ed] ...to point towards some form of partition.'⁸⁴

'Doubly Distressing'

The plight of Jews in the DP camps was not the only factor influencing reorientation at the AJA. Ongoing Jewish guerrilla attacks against Mandatory targets (civilian as well as military) also eroded support for the continuation of direct British rule.⁸⁵ Although the Irgun resumed its campaign against the British in 1944 (*Lehi*, by far the most militant of the Jewish underground groups, remained active throughout the war), the pace of activity escalated sharply in the final months of 1945.⁸⁶ By the fall of 1946, when the AJA began to move in favour of partition, a programme of 'constructive warfare' (conducted with loose coordination between the *Haganah*, *Irgun* and *Lehi*) produced disruptive sabotage operations. Most dramatically, on 22 July, the *Irgun*—acting on its own—succeeded in blowing up the British army headquarters, housed in the King David Hotel. Ninety-two people (including Jewish and Arab civilians) were killed in the process.⁸⁷

⁸² JC 3/5/46 1, 6.

⁸³ The Arab League, founded in Alexandria in 1945, identified itself immediately with the Palestinian cause. Its perceived strength, and the organisational weakness of the Palestinians' own leadership, was reflected in subsequent negotiations with the British. Y. Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity, 1930-1945* (London, 1986), 257-311; I. Khalaf, *Politics in Palestine: Arab Factionalism and Social Disintegration, 1939-1948* (New York, 1991), 90-197.

⁸⁴ Cited in Shimoni, 'Non-Zionists', 102.

⁸⁵ On the campaign see D. Charters, *The British Army and Jewish Insurgency in Palestine, 1945-47* (New York, 1989), 42-83. On intra-Jewish tensions during this period see M. Cohen, *Palestine and Great Powers*, Chapter 4.

⁸⁶ The *Irgun*, a late 1930s, Revisionist led breakaway from the *Haganah* (the labour-dominated Jewish defence movement) initially targeted Palestinian Arabs. S. Zadka, *Blood in Zion* (London, 1995), 15-127. J. Heller, 'The Zionist Right and National Liberation: From Jabotinsky to Avraham Stern', *Israel Affairs* 1:3 (1995), 85-109.

⁸⁷ JC 26/7/46 8; *The Times* 23/7/46 4, 5, 24/7/46 4, 6, 25/7/46 4, 5; Leitch, 'Explosion', 45-67; Zadka, *Blood in Zion*, 86-99.

Even before this incident, Stein and the AJA had already moved to cement their opposition to all Jewish violence against the Mandate. Several weeks earlier, when thousands in the *Yishuv*—including virtually all the members of the Jewish Agency leadership—were arrested in the aftermath of a particularly extensive guerrilla campaign, a presidential letter to the AJA membership condemned the instigating Jewish behaviour. Under such circumstances, Stein added, British Jews were obliged to support their government's efforts (known as Operation Agatha) to maintain public order and security. Yet the AJA's position was not altogether straightforward. Referring to British conduct during the arrest sweep (the designated day, 29 June 1946, became known to Jews as Black Sabbath—a commentary both on the draconian nature of the collective punishment and the fact that the action had taken place on the Jewish day of rest), Stein noted that such action was justified only where there was reasonable suspicion of implication in violence. And while criticising 'inflammatory [Jewish] propaganda from the United States', he also urged prompt British acceptance of the AACI's recommendations.⁸⁸

The news of Black Sabbath had prompted thousands of British Jews to participate in public protests. (Estimates of attendance at the London march ranged from 5,000 to 10,000 people. Similar events in Glasgow and Manchester drew a further 3,000.⁸⁹) The Board of Deputies, while not joining in demands for the immediate release of the *Yishuv* detainees, declared its 'complete solidarity with suffering Israel [and] with the suffering *Yishuv*'.⁹⁰ By comparison, the AJA's response was relatively subdued, even deferential. After the King David bombing—pictures of which appeared on the front pages of British newspapers—the organisation was prompt in expressing its 'deep

⁸⁸ 3/7/46 letter to AJA members, LS Papers, (Oxford): 105. See also AJA statement, *JC* 12/7/46 5.

⁸⁹ *JC* 12/6/46 7, 12, 19/7/46 12; 8/7/46 JTA Bulletin, LS Papers, (Oxford): 113.

⁹⁰ *JC* 5/7/46 15.

distress at the hideous outrage perpetrated' in Jerusalem.⁹¹ Yet in a speech delivered at the AJA's 1946 annual meeting, Stein once again affirmed that '[t]o say these things ...implies no uncritical acquiescence in British policy in Palestine.'⁹² Although hopeful that an opportunity for 'imaginative statesmanship' could be found, it is nonetheless striking that the AJA was willing—even in a climate of growing insecurity for Jews in Britain—to assert significant opposition to the government's position.

Stein reserved his harshest criticism for those who perpetrated and enabled Jewish violence against the Mandate. The combined insurgency campaign ended in late summer 1946, and the Haganah turned its focus to facilitating illegal immigration and preparing for conflict with the Arabs. Although the Haganah now cooperated (sporadically) with British intelligence, the *Irgun* and *Lehi* not only managed to carry out a further 286 strikes against British interests but diversified their strategies to include kidnapping, attacks on economic fixtures (including the oil pipelines) and the targeting of British officials outside Palestine.⁹³ From 31 October 1946, when the *Irgun* bombed the British Embassy in Rome, to 31 July 1947, when the bodies of two British soldiers were found hanging in a tree, the issue of Jewish terrorism reverberated at the AJA and in Britain as a whole.

For the AJA (as indeed, for most British Jews, Zionist or otherwise), the spectre of Jewish violence against the Mandate was without question deeply distressing.⁹⁴ To those who had endorsed the national home as a means of reviving the Jewish spirit, the actions of the Jewish underground appeared a perversion of core religious and

⁹¹ *JC* 26/7/46 8.

⁹² 21/1/47, LS Papers, (Oxford): 105.

⁹³ Charters, *British Army*, 61.

⁹⁴ For Board of Deputies statements condemning Jewish terrorism (seven were passed between 1944 and 1947) see BoD Papers, (LMA): ACC/3121/C14/31. Examples of *JC* editorials (from the tenures of Greenberg and his successor, John Shaftesley) include 4/1/46 10, 26/7/46 1, 3/1/47 12, 21/3/47 12, 1/8/47 12, 5/3/48 10.

cultural principles.⁹⁵ This violation was not only a philosophical defeat for the 'lofty ideals of the early pioneers' but threatened to deprive the Zionist movement of much-needed friends.⁹⁶ Writing in the first issue of the *Jewish Monthly*, the AJA's short-lived journal, Robert Weltsch argued that '[m]ost Zionists know that Zionism can reach its aim only in an "atmosphere of good-will."⁹⁷ Two months before his article was published, the British Cabinet—incapable of governing Palestine without recourse to an unacceptable level of force—had referred the territory's future to the United Nations.⁹⁸ Yet for someone like Weltsch, who did not wish to see Britain exit Palestine, Jewish militancy was self-defeating.

Others shared Weltsch's conviction that the Zionists could ill afford to forfeit sympathy for the Jewish position. With the liberation of the camps and subsequent Nuremberg trials, both the American and British public were confronted with incontrovertible proof of the attempted annihilation of European Jewry. If Jewish leaders were at times hesitant to trade explicitly on this victimhood, they nonetheless recognised that the humanitarian crisis faced by the survivors of Nazism coincided with a window of political opportunity. The destructive potential of Jewish terrorism was therefore considerable. In Britain, one writer claimed, 'the victims of Hitler are being replaced in the popular imagination and sentiment by the victims of the *Irgun*.'⁹⁹

One sign of the damage done could be found in the recruiting difficulties of the non-Jewish led 'British Association for Establishing a National Home in Palestine'.¹⁰⁰ Far

⁹⁵ Soref, 'Anglo-Jewish Affairs', *JM* 1:1 (1947) 32.

⁹⁶ Stein, 'Address to 1946 general meeting 21/1/47', LS Papers, (Oxford): 105.

⁹⁷ Weltsch, 'After Weizmann's Defeat', *JM* 1:1 (4/47) 11.

⁹⁸ On the failure of counterinsurgency see Charters, *British Army*, 132-68. In *The Seat of Pilate*, John Marlowe argues that racial factors prevented the use of a 'firm hand', as employed during the following decade in Malaya and Kenya. (London, 1959), 229.

⁹⁹ Soref, '5707', *JM* 1:6 (1947), 33.

¹⁰⁰ NB Papers, (ZA): A255/439. The organisation's guiding spirit was Wyndham Deedes, onetime intelligence officer to Allenby and chief secretary of the Mandate administration through much of the 1920s.

more worrisome was a rising incidence of anti-Semitism. To be sure, the increased public appetite for anti-Jewish rhetoric and behaviour was not fed solely by news from Palestine. The release of fascists interned under the Public Order Act and the crushing economic hangover from the war (victory had consumed twenty-five percent of the national wealth, and the population now faced high unemployment, painful rationing and, during the winter of 1946-1947, a severe fuel crisis) were both significant factors in the scapegoating of British Jews.¹⁰¹

From late 1946 onwards, the Jewish press reflected its readership's intensifying concern regarding anti-Semitism.¹⁰² Reporting included coverage of an attempted synagogue arson (believed to be linked to the *Irgun's* flogging of kidnapped British soldiers), the Board of Deputies' efforts to strengthen anti-defamation and libel legislation and the activism of the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen. At times the tone verged on the hysterical, most notably in the *JC* headline of 19 September 1947, which asked, 'Can It Happen Here?'¹⁰³ Yet there is little evidence that the August 1947 bank holiday riots, by far the most violent and widespread manifestation of anti-Semitism, were either planned or organised.¹⁰⁴ (The uniform condemnation by press and politicians also underscores the fact that overt anti-Semitism remained politically unacceptable.) Moreover, while the Foreign Secretary's tendency towards hostile and crude remarks gave rise to claims that he was an anti-Semite, this assertion does not withstand further scrutiny.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ K. Morgan, *People's Peace: British History, 1945-1989* (Oxford, 1990), 3-70. Tony Kushner argues that economic factors were the predominant cause of early post-war anti-Semitism. Although the case is overstated, it is notable, for example, that the Palestinian news which was thought to trigger the riots also coincided with the announcement of bread rationing. Kushner, 'Anti-Semitism and Austerity', 149-67; Charters, *British Army*, 60.

¹⁰² G.W. Webber, 'The Present Position of Anglo-Jewry', *JF* 10/46 75-85; *JC* 27/9/46 17, 18/10/46 17, 28/3/47 12, 5/9/47 17, 21, 12/9/47 Ed 12, 10/10/47 1, 14/11/47 1, 21/11/47 1, 19, 28/11/47 1.

¹⁰³ 14.

¹⁰⁴ Kushner, 'Anti-Semitism and Austerity', 149-67; *JM* 1:6 (1947), 22-3; *JC* 8/8/47 1, 15/8/47 1, Ed 12.

¹⁰⁵ For example 16/11/45 Weizmann to Felix Frankfurter (United States Supreme Court Justice and committed Zionist moderate), *Letters and Papers*, xxii, 72; Louis, *British Empire*, 390-91; A. Bullock, *The Life and Times of Ernest Bevin: Foreign Secretary 1945-51* (London, 1983), particularly 164-81, 254-8, 292-303.

Without question, however, the Jewish guerrilla campaign against the Mandate contributed substantially to a period of intense vulnerability for Anglo-Jewry. Most troubling were accusations of Anglo-Jewish culpability for attacks on British soldiers and officials. On 5 January 1947, the *Sunday Times*' leader accused British Jews of failing to take sufficient action against the perpetrators of violence in Palestine.¹⁰⁶ Members of the AJA were particularly vehement in refuting this claim. In his response to *The Times*, Leonard Stein noted that while it had condemned the outrages in Palestine 'in the most public manner and in the plainest terms, the Anglo-Jewish community [wa]s utterly powerless to influence the terrorist gangs.'¹⁰⁷ And in a speech to the House of Lords, the Marquess of Reading asked, 'I sometimes wonder, when people exhort us here to use our influence ...what action they have in mind that we take. What do they conceive that we can do in any way to moderate or restrain the activities of these wild and irresponsible men?'¹⁰⁸

Responsibility, it was repeated insistently, lay with the militants themselves, and with those who sanctioned their behaviour. Amongst the latter, the groups seen to be most obviously at fault were the Jewish population of Palestine, which offered tacit support for the extremists in its midst, and the leadership of the Zionist movement, which backed the creation of an independent Jewish state and Britain's removal, by force if necessary.¹⁰⁹ American Jewry was also singled out for censure.

The activities of Ben Hecht, Peter Bergson (Hillel Kook) and the American League for a Free Palestine, all of whom conducted fundraising and propaganda campaigns on

¹⁰⁶ 6.

¹⁰⁷ Copy in BoD Papers, (LMA): ACC/3121/C14/31.

¹⁰⁸ Cited in Soref, '5707', *JM* 1:6 (1947) 24.

¹⁰⁹ Simon, 'Jewish-British Feud', *JM* 1:5 (1947), 17-24; 13/4/48 'AJA Council Meeting', LS Papers, (Oxford): 106.

behalf of *Lehi*, represented the extreme of Jewish activism in the United States.¹¹⁰ However, the AJA found itself at odds not only with these self-professed radicals, but with American Jewry's institutional mainstream. (It is therefore hardly coincidental that the AJA—Stein in particular—maintained a close relationship with the American Jewish Committee, an organisation which had also rejected Biltmore and which remained opposed to statehood until late 1946.¹¹¹) At an April 1948 meeting of the AJA Council, Stein outlined the recent points of tension between his organisation and American Zionists and argued that the Jewish cause had been poorly served by the 'empty bombast of the Biltmore programme' and the tendency to 'bespatter Great Britain with abuse'.¹¹²

Stein's final comment points to a further, in this case unspoken, friction between British and American Jews. Following the termination of Lend-Lease in August 1945, the United States Congress agreed to a further loan of nearly \$4,000,000,000. One condition attached was that the pound would be made convertible one year after ratification (July 1947).¹¹³ Britain's post-war economic dependence (mirrored on a smaller scale with those who held positive sterling balances, including India and Egypt) also threatened to limit its freedom of action in foreign affairs. By creating the justification for political interference—an opportunity which the Americans exercised, if not in an entirely predictable manner, regarding Palestine—the loan therefore generated considerable Anglo-American tension.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ *JM* 1:4 (6/47), 47; D. Wyman, 'The Bergson Group, America and the Holocaust: A Previously Unpublished Interview with Hillel Kook/Peter Bergson', *American Jewish History* 89:1 (2001), 3-34; J.T. Baumel, 'The IZL Delegation in the USA, 1939-1948: Anatomy of an Ethnic Interest/Protest Group', *Jewish History* 9:1 (1995), 79-89.

¹¹¹ 14/4/47, 5/5/47, 15/6/47 Joseph Proskauer (AJC President) to Stein, 29/4/47 Stein to Proskauer, LS Papers, (Oxford): 105. M. Kaufman, 'The American Jewish Committee and Jewish Statehood, 1947-1948', *Siz* 7:2 (1986), 259-75.

¹¹² 13/4/48 LS Papers, (Oxford): 106.

¹¹³ P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Crisis and Deconstruction, 1914-1990* (London, 1993), 265-91; R. Clarke, *Anglo-American Economic Collaboration in War and Peace 1942-1949* (Oxford, 1982), 47-85.

¹¹⁴ Cohen, *Truman*, 109-46; id., 'The Genesis of the Anglo-American Committee on Palestine: A Case Study in the Assertion of American Hegemony', *Historical Journal* 22:1 (1979), 185-207.

As an organisation which prided itself on its patriotism, it not surprising that the AJA also resented the loss of Britain's historic position of leadership. American Jewry's record of philanthropic support for the Jewish national home was beyond reproach. Yet as well behaving in a way which was thought to exacerbate anti-Semitism, Jewish leaders in the United States were displaying little appreciation for Britain's thirty-year commitment to a Jewish Palestine. The current government's failings, while considerable, did not justify such abuse.

'An Undivided Allegiance'

By the summer of 1947, the AJA decided to endorse a modified partition plan. In the preparation of its memorandum to the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (Leonard Stein later testified before the committee¹¹⁵), it acknowledged that demands for implementation of the Mandate, or for the admission of 100,000 Jews, were insufficient.¹¹⁶ The AJA also rejected the maximalist position—a proposal for Jewish statehood—endorsed by American Zionists and the Board of Deputies.¹¹⁷ While admitting that it had 'no enthusiasm' for partition, the AJA cited the imperative for 'the prompt admission to Palestine of a least a considerable proportion of the Jewish displaced persons and refugees in Europe,' and for an accelerated movement towards self-government. The proposed programme would enable large-scale Jewish immigration and relieve Britain of responsibility for direct administration. It would also operate as a 'third alternative' to existing proposals, thereby avoiding the radicalism inherent in both statehood and an immediate, final partition.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ LS Papers, (Oxford): 119.

¹¹⁶ The AJA's plan appears to have been based on the cantonisation proposals discussed and rejected by the government during the previous summer. 23/6/47 'Draft of AJA Report to UNSCOP', LS Papers, (Oxford): 105. On cantonisation see Louis, *British Empire*, 420-38.

¹¹⁷ 14/5/47 Stein to R. Landman, LS Papers, (Oxford): 105; BoD Papers, (LMA): ACC/3121/C14/31; JC 25/7/47 5.

¹¹⁸ Copy in JM 1:5 (8/47), 42-44, 59.

At the time that the AJA memo was drafted, it was still plausible that Britain would retain some measure of responsibility for Palestine. Few in the Foreign Office imagined that the UNSCOP would find in favour of partition; that decision was thought to be tantamount to a declaration of civil war. (It was predicted instead that the committee members would recommend the creation of a binational, federal state, in which Britain could retain, as some still desired, a strategic foothold.) Yet once the committee published its pro-partition report on 1 September—of the committee's eleven members, only three (the representatives from India, Iran and Yugoslavia) were opposed—British evacuation became inevitable. As Richard Crossman explained in the *New Statesman*, 'we are now left with the choice of either clearing out, bag and baggage, or creating a Jewish state.'¹¹⁹ Since Britain had vowed that it would not impose a solution which was unacceptable to either party, the only remaining option was withdrawal. In an announcement to the United Nations on 26 September 1947, the Colonial Secretary, Arthur Creech Jones, made known the Cabinet's decision to terminate the Mandate.¹²⁰

For Stein and the AJA, this declaration, which was followed by the General Assembly's 33-13 vote for partition two months later, signalled the need to redirect energies towards problems which lay closer to home. The proposed borders of the Jewish state (drawn to include the coastal plain, part of the Galilee and the Negev desert, it not only retained a very substantial Arab minority but excluded an internationalised Jerusalem and its surroundings) remained a source of serious concern. So too was the 'loss of goodwill' implicit in Britain's refusal to implement the UN's partition plan.¹²¹ But with independence imminent, and domestic anti-Semitism still causing unease, a further

¹¹⁹ 23/9/47. Cited in Louis, *British Empire*, 473.

¹²⁰ Louis, 'British Imperialism and the End of the Palestine Mandate', in *End of the Mandate*, 20-23.

¹²¹ 'Statement by Stein to Council Meeting 27/1/48', LS Papers, (Oxford): 106.

question now came to the fore: 'How c[ould] British Jews put themselves right with British public opinion in the matter of Palestine?'¹²²

In an effort to confirm its own loyalty and to moderate the anti-British rhetoric emerging from the *Yishuv* and the United States,¹²³ the AJA paid tribute to its government's assistance in building the Jewish national home. An editorial published in the *Jewish Monthly* reminded its readers that 'Britain ha[d] not laboured in Palestine in vain ...[I]t was by British exertions that the Jewish National Home was brought into being and shielded while it struggled to its feet.' At a moment of decisive change in Palestine's destiny, the journal acknowledged that Jews and Britons alike felt 'relief at [Britain's] liberation from a burden which had become insupportable'.¹²⁴ Nonetheless, the nation's long record of administering Palestine deserved recognition and appreciation.

Another component of restoring Anglo-Jewry's image involved clarifying its relationship towards the future Jewish state. In a resolution passed on 27 January 1948, the AJA confirmed that Israel would have no claim on the allegiance of Jewish citizens of other countries.¹²⁵ Leonard Stein amplified this point in a speech to the AJA leadership.

There can be no room for any dual allegiance or dual loyalty ...The allegiance and loyalty of British Jews is and will remain an undivided allegiance and loyalty to Britain—allegiance and loyalty not merely in name and in law but in feeling, thought and deed. That being said, let me add at once that I can see now no inconsistency, between the whole-hearted acceptance of that position and a deeply sympathetic concern for the future of the Jews in Palestine.¹²⁶

¹²² 'Notes for Special Meeting, Palestine Committee 22/3/48', AJA Papers, (Southampton): AJ/37/6/1b/8.

¹²³ The prevailing belief at the time (maintained by many historians sympathetic to Zionism) was that the Mandatory authorities were not only failing to protect Jews caught up in the expanding civil conflict but were providing military assistance to the Arab countries preparing to attack the new state. W. Laqueur, *A History of Zionism* (New York, 1972), 583. For an alternative perspective see T. Segev, *One Palestine Complete: Jews and Arabs Under the British Mandate*, tr. H. Watzman (New York, 1999), 487-519.

¹²⁴ 2:2 (1948), 67-8.; 'Letter to *The Times* 15/4/48', LS Papers, (Oxford): 105.

¹²⁵ LS Papers, (Oxford): 106.

¹²⁶ LS Papers, (Oxford): 106. These themes recur in several articles published by Stein and the AJA during the first years of statehood. Stein, 'Relations with Israel', *JM* 3:2 (5/49), 77-84; 'A Decade in Anglo-Jewry 1940-1950', in *1951 Year Book of the Anglo-Jewish Association* (London, 1951), 7-17.

As Stein clearly recognised, the questions raised by the emergence of a Jewish state were not new. Undoubtedly however, the circumstances in which the Mandate ended, and an independent Jewish homeland came into being, demanded reconsideration and—at least to a degree—refashioning of Anglo-Jewish loyalties. The fates of the Empire and Palestine were no longer intertwined. Accordingly, Stein asserted, while it was entirely appropriate—even laudatory—to take an active interest in the progress of the Jewish state, there should be no confusion as to where both the roots and the future of British Jewry lay.

Within the Anglo-Jewish mainstream, the events of 1945-1948 yielded a virtual consensus on the need for an independent Jewish homeland. Even the AJA, which clung to a very particular interpretation of Anglo-Jewish loyalties, was forced to concede that Jewish and British interests in Palestine could no longer be reconciled. Yet although organised Anglo-Jewry would continue to reflect a variety of religious and political perspectives, the context in which the community functioned had changed dramatically. After 14 May 1948, Anglo-Jewry could no longer claim a special role in relationship to the Jewish national home. Equally, its leadership position in international Jewish affairs had been almost entirely supplanted. Although fears of spiralling anti-Semitism were not realised, the synthesis which British Jewry had forged between its Jewish interests and imperial patriotism had unravelled, a consequence of events in Palestine as well as Britain's diminished world stature. From the vantage point of 1948, what lay ahead was something of a brave new world.

Conclusion

In the final years of the nineteenth century, the outbreak of war in South Africa and the birth of political Zionism yielded a convergence of Jewish and imperial questions. Accusations of its responsibility for the conflict, combined with the opportunity to demonstrate support for Britain and its imperial mission, led the Anglo-Jewish establishment to assert its membership in the great brotherhood of the Empire. Yet the instinctive expressions of anti-Zionism prompted by the prospect of establishing a Jewish colony in the British-ruled territories of the Sinai or East Africa challenged Anglo-Jewish claims to a consonance of imperial and more particularistic interests. By 1917, as it became increasingly likely that Britain would support Zionist proposals for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, British Jewry's communal leadership would once again find itself arguing for Britain's imperial agenda while at the same time contending that a British-Jewish Palestine—although offering some a necessary refuge—would nonetheless endanger Jewish status. During the 1920s and 1930s outright anti-Zionism would give way to a new synthesis constructed between Anglo-Jewish and imperial interests. Even as the partnership between Britain and the *Yishuv* disintegrated, elite support and nostalgia for this vision of Palestine's future would persist.

What imprint did the end of the Palestine Mandate—and, more generally, the post-war demise of British imperial power—leave on the Anglo-Jewish establishment?¹ If, as John Darwin has asserted, the end of empire was 'surprisingly undisruptive in British politics', was its effect on the nation's Jewish population equally benign?² It is true that

¹ On the domestic impact of decolonisation see S. Ward, (ed.), *British Culture and the End of Empire* (Manchester, 2001), Introduction.

² *The End of the British Empire: The Debate* (Oxford, 1991), 1.

Britain's management of decolonisation did not—as seems to have been the case in France—generate significant domestic upheaval. (Explanations for this phenomenon encompass variously the rise of the welfare state, the impact of the Cold War and 1960s youth culture and the success achieved in presenting the Commonwealth as a reworking, rather than an abandonment of, the Empire.) However, it also appears unlikely that an imperial mindset—which had informed both national self-conception and perceptions of Britain's place in the world—could have been abandoned without substantial social and cultural consequences.³

The Anglo-Jewish establishment, perhaps more than most, had buttressed its identity on the primacy and morality of Britain and its Empire. Between 1917 and 1948, this took the form of support for a (practical, non-Zionist) British-Jewish collaboration in Palestine. The trauma and disorientation which British Jews experienced at the loss of a British-Jewish Palestine offer a foretaste—albeit particularly acute—of the decolonisation-induced malaise which developed in Britain at the end of the 1950s. It is therefore also worth considering whether Anglo-Jewry—whose own position as a leader of world Jewry had already suffered severe and irrevocable decline by the end of World War II—would interpret the global diminution of Britain's role through a distinctive lens. Although a definitive answer to that question must await future research, it is nonetheless clear that scholarship on the identity of twentieth-century Anglo-Jewry must contend with the Empire.

³ Ward, *British Culture*, 5-8; B. Porter, 'The Empire Strikes Back', *History Today* 46:9 (1996), 11-14.

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