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ZIONISM LOBBIES THE EMPIRES

A BROKEN TRUST: SIR HERBERT SAMUEL, ZIONISM AND THE PALESTINIANS, SAHAR HUNEIDI, FOREWORD BY WALID KHALIDI (2001)

London: I. B. Tauris, 340 pp.,
ISBN 978-1-86064-172-5, h/bk, out-of-print

THE PALESTINE DECEPTION, 1915–1923: THE MCMAHON-HUSSEIN CORRESPONDENCE, THE BALFOUR DECLARATION, AND THE JEWISH NATIONAL HOME, J. M. N. JEFFRIES, EDITED AND WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY WILLIAM M. MATHEW (2014)

Washington, DC: Institute for Palestine Studies-USA, 175 pp.,
ISBN 978-0-88728-320-8, p/bk, \$16.00

PALESTINE. THE REALITY. THE INSIDE STORY OF THE BALFOUR DECLARATION 1917–1938, J. M. N. JEFFRIES, WITH A NEW INTRODUCTION BY GHADA KARMI (2017)

Northampton, MA: Olive Branch Press, 800 pp.,
ISBN 978-1-56656-024-5, p/bk, \$30

ISRAEL'S ARMOR: THE ISRAEL LOBBY AND THE FIRST GENERATION OF THE PALESTINE CONFLICT, WALTER L. HIXSON (2019)

Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 324 pp.,
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Reviewed by Harry F. Clark, Independent Writer

Observers of US foreign policy are familiar with the 'Israel Lobby', the conger of institutions and individuals that wields influence on behalf of the state of Israel, as described by Professors John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt (2006, 2007). There is debate over whether the Lobby has autonomous power, or whether it expresses the 'strategic interest' of its host.

The debate extends to the 1917 Balfour Declaration, by which the British government 'view[ed] with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people', as sought by the Zionist movement. Recent investigations have illuminated the contention over the Declaration, including claims for its 'strategic value' to the British Empire, and the workings of the London Zionist lobby.

As recounted by Sahar Huneidi in *A Broken Trust*, the Balfour Declaration was immediately controversial, and by early 1923, its abandonment by the government seemed a real possibility (Huneidi 2001). The declaration greatly complicated Britain's occupation of Palestine, which it had captured from the Ottoman Empire in the First World War. The military administration was legally required to treat inhabitants impartially and to preserve the status quo, which precluded any development of the 'Jewish national home'.

There was great friction between the military administration and Palestine Zionists, and between the Zionists and the government in London. Palestinian Arab opposition led to violence in April 1920, with nine deaths, and in May 1921, with nearly 100 deaths. British investigations cited Zionist immigration and political ambitions as Arab grievances. The failure of the military administration to implement the national home led Britain in 1920 to form a civil administration, with the Zionist Sir Herbert Samuel as high commissioner. Fighting between nationalist Turkey and the Allies over Ottoman territory ended only in 1922, and until the Treaty of Lausanne was ratified in 1924, Palestine and other Ottoman domains were still occupied territory. Samuel's administration passed over 150 ordinances to facilitate development of the Jewish national home, even as Samuel complained of its dubious legality to the Colonial Office.

The Balfour Declaration entered post-war diplomacy at the Versailles peace conference, but British opposition grew, over the expense of the Palestine administration, and the betrayal of the Arabs and their loyal alliance against Ottoman Turkey. Press reaction, initially favourable, turned critical. In 1922 the House of Lords passed by 60-29 a motion against incorporating the Balfour Declaration in the Palestine mandate.

The wartime Liberal-Conservative government that had issued the Balfour Declaration fell in October, and was replaced by a Conservative government much less committed to it. The *Daily Mail*, Britain's largest-circulation newspaper, sent veteran reporter J. M. N. Jeffries to Palestine. Jeffries' articles, which ran in January and February 1923, translated and excerpted the correspondence between Sharif Hussein, leader of the Arab revolt against Ottoman Turkey, and Sir Henry McMahon, British high commissioner in Cairo. Jeffries' reportage was published in 2014 as *The Palestine Deception, 1915-1923* (Jeffries 2014).

The published correspondence confirmed that Palestine had not been excluded from the independent Arab state promised by Britain to Sharif Husain. In the Lords, influential Conservative peers called for the correspondence to be made public, noting that the government had not disputed the published text. They noted the opposition to Zionism of the 70 million Muslims in the empire.

In the House of Commons 110 Conservative MPs petitioned a Cabinet Middle East committee, as a matter of 'first class Imperial importance with far-reaching future results', that the 'definite PLEDGES' given to the Palestinian Arabs be fulfilled, and the 'whole population of Palestine with its 95% Arabs should be consulted' in the form of government. A Cabinet Middle East Committee admitted the views of the critics, but found it 'well-nigh impossible for any Government to extricate itself without a substantial sacrifice of consistency and self-respect, if not honour' (Huneidi 2001: 73, 75).

The chief government official in the post-war debate was Sir John Evelyn Shuckburgh of the Colonial Office. By his own account and others' Shuckburgh was heavily influenced by Chaim Weizmann, the chief Zionist

advocate of the Balfour Declaration. Shuckburgh kept Weizmann closely informed of government discussions, received him frequently at the Colonial Office, and consulted with his deputy when he was away.

The Cabinet Committee's affirmation of Zionist policy in July, 1923 was followed by ratification of the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine awarded Britain in September. In Huneidi's view ratification transformed the Balfour Declaration from political statement into legal fact, and superseded the Declaration in importance.

After *A Broken Trust* appeared, William M. Mathew, who introduced the 2014 edition of Jeffries' reporting, criticized Huneidi's view that 'the British felt honour-bound to adhere to the promises of 1917 and the undertakings of the Mandate', despite the debate. He acknowledged that 'the "honour" argument is in accord with a considerable body of documentary evidence, but [...] cannot be presented to the exclusion of powerful imperialist considerations' (Mathew 2013: 234).

In the 'Historical Prologue' to her book, Huneidi noted how the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 affected British views of the eastern Mediterranean, noted the occupation of Egypt in 1882, and cited Rashid Khalidi's *British Policy Towards Syria and Palestine, 1906–1914* (Khalidi 1980). Khalidi showed, inter alia, that by this time Britain viewed Egypt as its main interest, and the Ottoman Empire as dispensable.

Mathew acknowledges that appealing to ostensible Jewish influence for the war effort was a major motive for the Declaration. He also cites Herbert Samuel's 1915 proposal to the Cabinet advocating support for Zionism as the first official wartime interest in Palestine. Samuel's 'strategic' argument was widely endorsed within the government. Much annexationist/strategic advocacy was inseparable from Zionism, beginning with Samuel, who served as Liberal MP and in domestic ministries, with no responsibility whatever for foreign policy. His 1915 memorandum must be attributed to his Zionism.

Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen, who served in the Middle East and in London during the war, was an ardent Jewish Zionist. William Ormsby-Gore, Zionist advocate in government, and eventual colonial secretary, converted to Judaism in 1916. The Zionism of Liberal MP and *Manchester Guardian* editor C. P. Scott reflected that of his constituents and readers. Manchester was home to the second largest Jewish community in Britain, 35,000 in 1900, and supported active Zionist societies and colonization funds from the mid-1880s, earning it the name 'cradle of Zionism'.

Mathew does not separate British control of Palestine from British sponsorship of Zionism, which became practicable under the Conservative government in 1922. The debate about Palestine after the war was not about its strategic value, but about the wisdom of implementing the Balfour Declaration and the 'Jewish national home', against overwhelming Arab opposition. The distinction between controlling Palestine and the value of Zionism towards that end is confirmed by Britain's negotiations with Turkey for a separate peace during the war.

By late November 1917, the War Cabinet was discussing the withdrawal of Turkish forces and British occupation of Ottoman territory on the model of pre-war Egypt. Their Turkish interlocutor, through intermediaries, was Enver Pasha, head of the pro-German party in the Ottoman government, who had taken Turkey into the war. Peace with Turkey would have allowed British armies to concentrate on the western front, ended German designs in the Middle East, and isolated Germany and Austria.

In December, Britain paid a \$2 million bribe as earnest money, and on 9 January, Lloyd George conveyed that an additional \$10 million would be paid for surrender of the forts along the Dardanelles to allow free passage for British warships to the Sea of Marmara and Constantinople. A further \$2 million would be paid when Ottoman troops in Palestine and on the Hejaz railway withdrew to a line from Haifa to Deraa. 'Palestine would not be annexed or incorporated in the British Empire', and Ottoman sovereignty (however nominal) was to include flying the Ottoman flag (Schneer 2010: 357).

The Turks failed to agree when Britain was most interested, in early 1918, and the \$2 million was returned. By August 1918, when they resumed contact, Britain was confident of victory and not interested. The Turkish negotiations, at the time the Balfour Declaration was issued, were an epic, triple betrayal – of Zionism, of Britain's Arab allies, and of France, whose interests had been recognized in the Sykes–Picot agreement. The preservation of a rump Ottoman Empire, with Palestine under Ottoman sovereignty, but effectively a British protectorate, would have made Zionism a nuisance to Britain. The Turkish negotiations confirm that Britain's interest in Zionism was not far-sighted strategy, but one of many desperate ploys for momentary advantage in her pyrrhic struggle with the Central Powers. The negotiations also suggest that the Balfour Declaration's later confirmation was not due to Zionism's strategic value to Britain, but to the relentless lobbying of Weizmann and his colleagues, and to invested prestige and 'honour', as Huneidi argues. The negotiations also show that Lloyd George's widely cited 'Christian Zionism' was for nought.

Jeffries' reporting for the *Daily Mail* was followed in 1939 by a 700-page book, *The Palestine Reality*, which also has been reissued (Jeffries 2017). As Jeffries recounts, the opposition that Zionists and their British supporters thought was quiescent erupted again in August 1929, when violence claimed over 200 Arab and Jewish lives throughout Palestine. The ensuing investigations culminated in a White Paper by the colonial secretary that proposed limiting or ceasing immigration, and requiring government approval for land sales, but ignored questions of Arab rights and democratic government.

These limited measures moved the British establishment to a 'volcanic' defence of 'Britain's word' to the Zionists, but not to the Arabs, and not of Zionism's 'strategic' value. Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald published a 2700-word letter in the parliamentary record, qualifying the White Paper. The Arabs called it the 'Black Letter'.

The advent of Nazi rule in Germany in 1933 increased immigration sharply – from Zionist strongholds in eastern Europe, not from Germany. Resistance erupted in the April, 1936 general strike and armed revolt against British rule, which brought most of the countryside under Palestinian control. The ensuing Peel Commission proposed partition of Palestine, which was adamantly rejected, and the Arab cities joined the uprising. Only by early 1939 was the British Empire, with utmost brutality, able to subdue the exhausted Palestinians. As war with the Axis threatened, Britain issued the 1939 White Paper, finally limiting the Mandate. Immigration would be capped at 75,000 over five years, land sales would be restricted, and independence was promised within ten years.

Mathew stated that his article was 'offered as a critique of annexationist policies based not on informed evaluation', and that by 'the perverse ways of history', Zionism, 'rather than advancing British strategic interests in the Near East instead caused profound and persisting damage – the situation

in Palestine by the mid-1940s' (Mathew 2013: 232, 249). Yet Lord Curzon, Balfour's successor as foreign secretary, several imperial governors, the British military, civil servants, nearly 200 MPs and peers, and critics in the press, did make 'informed evaluations', and saw clearly the danger to British interests, which were acutely manifest well before the mid-1940s. The 'perverse ways' of the London Zionist lobby, incessant fact-creation in Palestine, and the refusal of British statesmen to admit error, overcame that opposition, which was strategic calculation.

The Balfour Declaration culminated Zionism's search for a great power patron that had led to the Ottoman, Russian and British empires. By early 1942, the entry of the United States into the Second World War signalled its emergence as the leading western power, another post-war disposition of Palestine, and a change of focus for Zionism. In May, 1942 the wartime American Zionist Emergency Committee organized a special meeting at the Biltmore Hotel in New York, which proclaimed the goal of constituting Palestine as a 'Jewish commonwealth'.

The 'Biltmore Program' also opened a campaign to enlist US government support for Zionism. This story, through Israel's establishment in 1948 to the aftermath of the June 1967 war, is told by Walter L. Hixson in *Israel's Armor: The Israel Lobby and the First Generation of the Palestine Conflict* (Hixson 2019). Hixson is distinguished professor of history at the University of Akron, and author of six books on US foreign policy.

Hixson dates the advent of the Israel Lobby from the Biltmore meeting, and the stentorian oratory of Cleveland Rabbi Hillel Silver, who represented a new, militant Zionist leadership. At the American Jewish Conference in 1943, convened to address Nazi conquest and Judeocide, Silver's advocacy roused the audience and helped consolidate Jewish opinion behind Zionism.

The Emergency Committee was reconstituted as the Emergency Council, under Silver's leadership. He engaged Cleveland journalist and Zionist Isaiah Leo Kenen to organize a comprehensive campaign. Kenen would become the chief agent of the Israel Lobby, whose efforts swiftly bore fruit. 'The signature strategy of the Israel Lobby – lining up support for the Zionist state in the US Congress – first materialized in the 1944 election campaign' (Hixson 2019: 35). The platforms of both political parties called for unrestricted Jewish immigration to Palestine; the Democratic platform called for a Jewish commonwealth, and the Republican criticized Roosevelt for not supporting the Balfour Declaration.

Yet the Lobby began in the inner circle of the White House. When Vice-President Truman succeeded Roosevelt, he retained two White House aides, Jewish Zionists David Niles and Samuel Rosenman. Hixson notes the key role of Niles as an ear and voice to Truman for the Lobby, and the role of Clark Clifford, counsel and special assistant for Palestine, who commissioned the Zionist request for US diplomatic recognition. Another study of this period notes that Clifford's aide Max Lowenthal frequently visited the Washington office of the Jewish Agency, and used its propaganda in White House memoranda (Cohen 1990: 78).

Hixson notes the role of leading Democratic fundraiser, businessman Abraham Feinberg, who became a perennial influence. Hixson also notes the role of Eddie Jacobson, Truman's First World War Army buddy and post-war business partner, who interceded with Truman at crucial points, to convey views and to obtain appointments for Weizmann, who worked Truman as he once had the officials of Whitehall.

The American Palestine Committee of hundreds of leading politicians and notables, with 75 chapters nationwide, was nominally gentile, but an organ of the Lobby. APC was founded in 1932 by the precursors of AZEC, who built on an earlier Zionist effort to organize gentile opinion. The APC was reorganized by AZEC in 1941. The Christian Council of Protestant clergy was founded at AZEC behest in December 1942 (Berman 1990: 84–86). Hixson's otherwise thorough account overlooks Zionist influence and perhaps presents gentile support as more independent than it was. He does mention APC's joint offices with the AZEC, after APC's merger with the Christian Council to form the American Christian Palestine Committee.

Hixson notes that despite Truman's religious and humanitarian sympathies for Zionism, he 'did not initially subscribe to the view that the Jews should form a religious state in the heart of the Arab world' (Hixson: 2019: 38). He also notes that the US military and diplomatic establishments opposed US sponsorship of Zionism as inimical to Arab good will and thus to US interests in the region's oil deposits, military basing rights, transport and communication. Hixson shows how the nascent Lobby overpowered Truman's official advisors at crucial points, from Truman's support for mass Jewish immigration to Palestine in 1945 to granting *de jure* recognition and a loan in January 1949.

The destruction of Arab Palestine and displacement of 750,000 refugees in the 1948 war, replete with atrocities, recalled the world war recently ended. US officials were acutely concerned for the effects of the refugee population and Israel's ongoing aggression on Arab politics and society, and thus on US interests. After Truman's re-election, his administration had somewhat more independence. Yet US proposals that Israel repatriate a quarter of the refugees, relinquish some territory beyond the partition borders, and agree to internationalize Jerusalem, were adamantly rejected. US attempts to withhold an Export–Import Bank loan were decisively quashed by the Lobby. Post-war diplomacy achieved only an armistice, when the Arabs were open to a comprehensive peace, given some Israeli concessions. For the next twenty years, the United States would attempt to 'balance' its need for Arab support and good will against the demands of Israel and its Lobby.

After Israel's establishment, the Lobby reorganized to exercise sustained pressure, and to serve the Israeli state. The AZEC gave way to a new American Zionist Council, with Silver in an honorary position; Kenen was joined by veteran Zionist Louis Lipsky, who described the Lobby as 'Israel's armour'. The AZC and Israeli diplomat Abba Eban sought to marshal American Jewish organizations, still not unanimous on Zionism, behind Israel, through an informal advisory group, which became the Council of Major American Jewish Organizations in 1959. The American Israel Public Affairs Committee was created in 1959, replacing the AZC, better presenting the Lobby, and staying ahead of federal scrutiny of its foreign agent status.

The Lobby continued to thwart US diplomatic initiatives and defend Israel's border wars and encroachments. Most concretely, the Lobby institutionalized US financial support of Israel.

Kenen and his colleagues well understood that if they could get Israel into the funding pipeline by means of intensive lobbying Congress, a regular program of funding would ensue. This scenario played out beyond their wildest expectations in the coming decades.

(Hixson 2019: 74)

The 'balance' approach remained under pressure during the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations. The October 1956 invasion of Egypt by Britain, France and Israel was strongly condemned by President Eisenhower, with wide public support. The Lobby was awkwardly placed, but rallied Congress to prevent Eisenhower and secretary of state Dulles from imposing sanctions. Israel delayed withdrawal by six months and obtained US endorsement of its claim of navigation rights in the Strait of Tiran. The claim was legally questionable, but the United States honoured it when called upon in spring 1967.

John F. Kennedy had supported Zionism and Israel during his congressional career, but as president had also opposed Israeli aggression in Syria, and supported a State Department plan for Israel to repatriate 100–150,000 Palestinian refugees. At the same time, Israel and the Lobby avidly sought to buy the Hawk anti-aircraft missile. The State Department agreed to the sale if Israel would accept the refugee plan. Myer Feldman, presidential deputy special counsel and liaison to the Lobby (and to the Israeli embassy), insisted that the United States should merely 'invite reciprocity' without requiring it. Kennedy approved, but Israel, backed by the Lobby, accepted the missiles and rejected the refugees. Kennedy was acutely concerned about nuclear proliferation, and pressed Israel to let the International Atomic Energy Agency inspect its nuclear reactor, but Israel accepted only limited US inspections.

In 1963 Senator J. William Fulbright, chair of the foreign relations committee, convened hearings revealing, *inter alia*, that Israel had laundered money through the Jewish Agency and its New York section to fund the US Lobby. Hixson cites the Institute for Research, Middle East Policy, and its director Grant Smith, who has written many books based on documents obtained through FOIA requests, including an account of the 1963 hearings (Smith 2007). Kenen and his colleagues were mortified by Fulbright's interrogation, but were never prosecuted under the Foreign Agent Registration Act, and they helped defeat Fulbright in 1974.

Following Kennedy's assassination, the Lobby recognized President Lyndon Johnson as 'the best friend that Israel could have' (Hixson 2019: 149). His favourite aunt Jessie, a member of the Zionist Organization of America, advised him, as they both later recalled: 'Lyndon, always remember this, never go against Israel [...] the Jews are God's people, and they are always going to be [...] that's their land [...] and nobody is going to take it away from them' (Hixson 2019: 148; Ben-David 2008).

His congressional record in support of Jewish immigration and refugees, and later in support of Israel, was unequalled. Abe Feinberg, Abe Fortas and Arthur Goldberg, among Johnson's many Jewish friends, were sources for the Israeli government, known by code names in internal documents, Hixson notes. For all that, the Johnson Administration still sought to maintain 'balance'. Israel and the Lobby pressed for the sale of offensive weapons, decrying Israel's weakness and vulnerability. Johnson accepted Israel's diversion of the Jordan and its rejection of refugee repatriation, but sought to have the tanks delivered from German inventory, to avoid public partiality to Israel.

Another complication was the sale of tanks and aircraft to Jordan, buffeted by regional politics, to preclude its purchase of Soviet arms via Egypt. Israel and the Lobby adamantly opposed such sales. A further complication was Israel's acquisition of ballistic missiles from France. In the midst of all this, Israeli Prime Minister Eshkol visited the United States. Robert Komer of the NSC proposed that Johnson ask Israel

not to keep trying to force us to an all-out pro-Israeli policy [...] not just because a balanced policy is essential strategically to keep the Soviets out of the ME, and economically because of oil but because it is as much in Israel's interest as ours.

(FRUS 2000: Doc. 63)

After the German gambit was exposed and disavowed, the United States proposed that Israel allow inspection of its reactor by the IAEA in return for direct sale of the tanks. Israel rejected inspections, and Johnson did not demur. Kenen credited a congressional campaign led by Lobby stalwart Rep. Emmanuel Celler of Brooklyn for a State Department announcement of tank sales directly to Israel.

The Lobby's resistance to the Jordan sale exasperated President Johnson, who left it up to the Lobby. Israel presented an extravagant shopping list, including aircraft, which the Pentagon sharply reduced, as their price for accepting the Jordan sale.

Meanwhile, Syria encouraged attacks on Israel by the Palestinian Al Fatah, which were minor, but like blood to a shark. In November, 1966 Israel attacked a Palestinian village with tanks and aircraft, demolishing 125 homes and ambushing the Jordanian forces sent to help. NSC officials thought that Israel wanted to topple King Hussein and conquer the West Bank.

In April 1967 an Israeli provocation in the Syria demilitarized zone became another assault with tanks and aircraft, including humiliation of the Syrian air force over Damascus. In May the Israeli foreign ministry sought to organize US support for Israel, while concealing its role in the campaign. 'This is a time when lobbying might mean life or death for Israel', Kenen proclaimed to his host, which mobilized like the Israeli military (Hixson 2019: 173). 'The Johnson administration came under stepped-up pressure to unleash Israel to launch a third Arab-Israeli war'. Kenen decried 'the fruit of appeasement', 'another Munich', and proclaimed that 'the cost of US surrender would be incalculable' (Hixson 2019: 178).

On Monday, 5 June, the day Israel attacked, the State Department press secretary proclaimed that the United States was 'neutral in thought, word, and deed' (Hixson 2019: 191). Johnson was furious, and the secretary of state qualified the statement directly to the press the same day. Johnson's Jewish friends remonstrated, and then scrambled to quash censure by the Lobby, which flooded Washington with demands for unequivocal support.

As Israel prepared to invade Syria, on 8 June, the *USS Liberty* electronic reconnaissance ship, clearly identified and steaming in international waters, was attacked and nearly sunk by Israeli air and naval forces, with 34 crewmen killed and 171 wounded. No one in the government believed Israel's claim that the attack was accidental, and many felt that the aim had been to conceal the attack on Syria. President Johnson was the unnamed source of a *Newsweek* story stating that Israel attacked deliberately. Yet a hasty, superficial US Navy investigation concluded that the attack was accidental, which has been contested ever since (Hixson 2019: 199–204; Al-Jazeera 2014; Scott 2009; USS Liberty Memorial).

On 7 June, Johnson was informed of the Israeli foreign minister's confirmation 'that Israel would not withdraw from newly occupied territory in absence of a "definitive peace"' (Hixson 2019: 198). Lobby figures from Johnson's inner circle outward avidly promoted this view. When hostilities ceased, the Lobby worked Congress intensively.

On 23 May Johnson had affirmed ‘what three presidents have said before – that the United States is firmly committed to the support of the political independence and territorial integrity of all the nations of the area’ (Hixson 2019: 175). On June 19, Johnson delivered a decisive speech confirming US support for a continuing Israeli occupation’, which outlined five principles for peace. The fifth affirmed the ‘importance of respect for political independence and territorial integrity of all the states of the area’. This would be achieved ‘only on the basis of peace between the parties’, including ‘recognized boundaries and other arrangements that will give them security against terror, destruction, and war’ (Hixson 2019: 210; FRUS 2004: Doc. 308).

Hixson notes that the phrase ‘only on the basis of peace between the parties’ meant that Israel ‘would be under no US pressure to carry out a prompt withdrawal, but rather could hold out until the Arabs entered into direct negotiations’. Likewise, the phrase ‘recognized boundaries and other arrangements’ meant that ‘the 1949 armistice lines were no longer binding’ (Hixson 2019: 210). Thus, Hixson states, ‘Johnson’s speech on June 19 marked the full flowering of the special relationship and the final interment of the “impartial” policy’. ‘Kenen knew in the wake of Johnson’s address that Israel and the lobby had prevailed, their path cleared to reap the spoils of victory by retaining the occupied territories’ (Hixson 2019: 211).

Hixson doubts that President Johnson could have secured the political support to force Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories, as Eisenhower had done in 1956, even had he sought to do so. Israel’s engorgement of the territories and general aggression have fundamentally shaped the permanent ‘Middle East crisis’.

Hixson writes somewhat defensively, as do many authors on the Israel Lobby. In his introduction, he argues that ‘the Israel lobby built on an existing cultural foundation of US affinity for Zionism while also constructing and enforcing additional bonds’ (Hixson 2019: 4). ‘American religiosity, encompassing widespread and enduring faith in the biblical narrative and biblical prophecy, undergirded growing US support for Israel’. ‘Both the Americans and the Zionists saw themselves as chosen peoples. Both were settler societies fired by their “manifest destiny” to inherit a promised land’ (Hixson 2019: 5). The immensely destructive consequences of the ‘special relationship’ compel us to examine these common assumptions more closely.

As noted above, Lloyd George’s Christian affinity for Zionism was for nought at the height of the First World War. In the 1930s and 1940s, Christian support for Zionism in the United States followed Zionist direction. Today, mainstream Protestant churches issue statements about Israeli atrocities and consider BDS resolutions (Schjonberg 2018; Paulsen 2018; Boston College 2007). A 2014 poll found that 40 per cent of evangelical leaders had changed their views on Israel and Palestine in the previous fifteen years (NAE 2014; Beiler and Hybels 2015). Mearsheimer and Walt found the pro-Israel Christians an ‘important “junior partner”’ to the Jewish pro-Israel groups, but noted that they lack the manifold financial and institutional resources of the Jewish groups, and advocate on many issues, but little on Israel (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007: 132).

Kirk Beattie’s study of Congress found that lobbying on Middle East/Israel issues was dominated by pro-Israel Jewish groups, and those by AIPAC; staffers could not name a single pro-Israel Christian group (Beattie 2015). Christians United for Israel became active after Beattie’s interviews; its first

executive director was Jewish attorney and former congressional staffer David Brog.

Amy Kaplan, in *Our American Israel*, argues that the novel and film *Exodus*, about Israel's founding, turned a foreign history 'into a familiar narrative of settling the frontier, and rebelling against a tyrannical Old World empire' (Kaplan 2018: 59). Author Leon Uris was Jewish, but knew little of Israel. He was a successful novelist and screenwriter, selected by MGM Vice President Dore Schary, an observant Jew who thought 'it was time to tell Israel's story' (Kaplan 2018: 66). *Exodus* was inseparable from the Israel Lobby, and from the Israeli government, which supported research and filming, a decade after Israel was established.

Today, the move of the US embassy to Jerusalem, the US withdrawal from the Iran nuclear agreement, escalation of sanctions and military confrontation, have little to do with Christian dispensationalist eschatology, or settler-colonial affinity. They have to do with \$259 million contributed to the Republican Party in the last two election cycles by Jewish billionaires, avowed advocates for Israel (Clifton 2019). Kaplan's 'our American Israel', rendered for Puritan settler sensibility, should perhaps be reconceived as 'our Israeli America', rendered for Israel's needs.

Hixson cites Noam Chomsky's *The Fateful Triangle. The United States, Israel and the Palestinians*, which first appeared in 1983, and in an updated edition in 1999 (Chomsky 1999). For the United States–Israel relationship in the 1940s, Chomsky spun a Cold War tale of US oil interests, crushing of the Greek left, and opposition to Soviet influence, after Israeli scholar (and CIA asset) Nadav Safran (Chomsky 1999: 17; Safran 1981: 571, 37–42; Lockman 2005). These are precisely the reasons why the foreign policy establishment opposed Zionism, and when Israel was established, sought unsuccessfully to repatriate Palestinian refugees, uphold the 1947 partition boundaries, and sponsor economic development. (Gendzier [2015] attempts to interpret the 1940s in 'strategic asset' terms; critique in Colgan [2017], response in Gendzier [2017], extended critique in Clark [2016].)

Chomsky's most important claim, for the period of Hixson's study, is that 'through the 1960s, American intelligence regarded Israel as a barrier to Nasserite pressure on the Gulf oil-producing states, a serious matter at the time, and to Russian influence. This conclusion was reinforced by Israel's smashing victory in 1967' (Chomsky 1999: 21).

The Yemen civil war, between the republican forces backed by Nasser, and forces loyal to the imam, supported by Saudi Arabia, is the usual example of 'Nasserite pressure' on the oil producers. Yet it was argued then and since that Nasser's forces became tied down in Yemen, to joint United States–Soviet satisfaction, did not threaten the oil-producing states, and that Yemen was not a major Cold War confrontation. In 1966 Johnson received Vice President Sadat and proposed that private discussions, rather than headlines and speeches, might lead to further aid agreements (Badeau 1968; Cohen 1994; Orkaby 2017).

When Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal in 1956, British Prime Minister Anthony Eden resolved to destroy him. British foreign minister Selwyn Lloyd defined 'the aim of any allied military operations as "the conquest of the Canal Zone and the destruction of Nasser"' at a meeting of British, French and Israeli officials near Paris (Alteras 1993: 174).

The spring 1967 crisis became critical as the UN Expeditionary Force withdrew from the Sinai peninsula and Gaza after an Egyptian request. This was

opposed by the United States (and by Israel) as likely to lead to war (FRUS 2004: Docs. 7, 11, 19, 20). On 17 May Johnson wrote Israeli Prime Minister Eshkol, urging restraint, a message he repeated on 21 May (FRUS 2004: Docs. 8, 30). When Nasser closed the Strait of Tiran to Israeli shipping on 22 May, Secretary of State Dean Rusk dismissed talk of 'unleashing Israel'. He sought to uphold Israel's claim in the Strait, via diplomatic initiatives and a naval flotilla.

The CIA's reports from this period are detached and analytical (FRUS 2004: Docs. 44, 45, 76, 79, 126, 143; Freshwater 1969; Robarge 2005). The CIA found Israel superior militarily, the likely victor, and rejected Israel's claim that Egypt planned to attack. It noted Arab miscalculations, and Nasser's political goals, albeit pursued at the risk of war. It found the USSR opportunistic but not the instigator. Several papers noted the damage to the US standing and interests of identification with Israel. Reports by two government interagency bodies anticipated many of the actions of the Arab oil-producing states after the October 1973 war, including an embargo and nationalization, and warned of long-term damage to US interests from an Arab-Israeli war, or forcing the Strait (FRUS 2004: Doc. 115, 148).

On 24 May the Saudi Petroleum Minister Yamani warned an Aramco executive in Beirut of nationalization, 'if not today, then tomorrow' if the US supported Israel. When asked 'why Saudi Arabia would object to our standing up to Nasser, Yamani replied, "We are all Arabs. Your government would be foolish if it does not keep out"' (FRUS 2004: Doc. 56). This echoed the US ambassador in Syria: 'Plan "isolate UAR from our ME friends" feeble if not ridiculous hope' (FRUS 2004: Doc. 117). The Arab oil producers did briefly impose an embargo, but supply was abundant and it was not effective (Daoudi and Dajani 1984).

Hixson cites a National Security Council meeting on 24 May, and there was an expanded Cabinet meeting on 26 May. In these meetings, while concerned for Israel's security, Johnson subordinated US support to constitutional processes and international diplomacy. On 26 May Johnson wanted 'enough for [Israeli foreign minister Abba] Eban to take home to convince the Israeli cabinet from deciding to strike', as the minutes recorded his views (FRUS 2004: Doc. 72).

At the end of the meeting, Supreme Court Justice Abe Fortas stated: 'We would not have a realistic choice between participating and not participating even if Israel provokes hostilities. He did not feel that we could say that Israel would be alone'. Vice President Hubert Humphrey stated that 'hostilities would face the President with the most serious politics imaginable. We will not be able to play with legalisms' (FRUS 2004: Doc. 72). On the evening of 26 May, Johnson and senior advisors met with Eban and his suite at the White House. Johnson emphasized 'with great deliberation' US constitutional constraints and international diplomacy, and repeated twice, 'with emphasis and solemnity', 'Israel will not be alone unless it decides to go it alone' (FRUS 2004: Doc. 77).

As Israel formed a 'national' government and Jordan allied with Egypt, NSC officials endorsed war in deluded, incoherent memos. On 31 May Harold Saunders wrote Walt Rostow: 'We have reversed the [balance] policy of 20 years'. The United States was moving towards 'a head-on clash with a temporarily united Arab world'. Saunders noted the economic 'parade of horrors', and found that 'whoever is the bigger winner, we are the sure loser', but still

espied 'a chance to split the moderates' even while 'letting Israel go' (FRUS 2004: Doc. 114).

On 4 June Walt Rostow wrote Johnson that 'the moderate Arabs [...] would prefer to have [Nasser] cut down by the Israelis rather than by external forces'. The 'radical nationalism represented by Nasser [...] is waning: Arab socialism and other such doctrines have not proved successful', suggesting 'the potentiality for a new phase in the Middle East of moderation' which 'depends on Nasser's being cut down to size' (FRUS 2004: Doc. 144).

On 30 May Eshkol wrote Johnson, asking for a statement of US support in the event of war, and for military coordination. On 3 June Johnson replied, emphasizing politics and diplomacy, as he had to Eban on 26 May. He did remark on 'intelligence coordination': 'We have completely and fully exchanged views with General Amit', cited by Hixson (FRUS 2004: Doc. 139). Mossad chief Meir Amit had travelled to Washington to meet with CIA director Richard Helms and defence secretary Robert McNamara on 1 June. Amit told Helms that the Strait of Tiran was not the real issue, that Israel would probably attack Egypt, and asked for US diplomatic support and supply replenishment (CIA 1967; FRUS 2004: Doc. 124; Parker 1996).

An Eisenhower or a Kennedy might have tried to do more, but Johnson held Israel off for over two weeks, before assenting to Amit's discreet fait accompli. Nasser and the Arabs, whose destruction was supposedly imperative, might have avoided their fate. The executive discussion centred on Israel's needs, not US interests, beyond procedural issues. The economic stakes and the wider views of US diplomats and other officials never entered. At the NSC meeting on 7 June, as his advisors exulted in the destruction of Nasser and Soviet prestige, Johnson said 'he was not sure we were out of our troubles', and that 'we are going to wish the war had not happened' (FRUS 2004: Doc. 194).

The ghost of 'balance' past would moan and clank its chains for another decade. The views in Johnson's 19 June statement were debated within the government. Johnson authorized the sale to Israel of the advanced F-4 Phantom fighter-bomber over opposition from McNamara and his successor Clark Clifford (Hixson 2019: 232–30; Cohen 1994: 305–06). Israel's obduracy led in March 1969 to the War of Attrition with Egypt, which ended in a cease-fire and strategic debacle in July 1970, when Soviet anti-aircraft defences grounded the vaunted Phantoms.

The October 1973 war, the oil embargo on the United States, supply disruptions and price increases, recession and inflation, were the greatest shock to the world economy since 1945 (Yergin 1992: 634–36). This bitter fruit moved the US foreign policy establishment to propose a two-state solution, and President Carter to try to implement it (Brookings 1975). On 1 October 1977, after months of manoeuvring and preparation, the United States and USSR issued a mild statement of principles for a Geneva conference (FRUS 2013: Doc. 120).

Four days later, at a meeting with President Carter and his advisors, Israeli foreign minister Moshe Dayan told the Americans that the United States–Soviet declaration was unacceptable, and threatened to invoke the Lobby. 'We need to have some agreed formula, but I can go to Israel and to the American Jews' (FRUS 2013: 674, Doc. 124). The United States and Israel issued a joint statement disavowing the United States–Soviet declaration, among other limitations. Egyptian President Sadat, despairing of any Geneva outcome, then made his journey to Jerusalem, leading to the separate peace with Israel

(Smith 2017: 349–51). This neutralized the largest Arab military power, freeing Israel to commit further aggression, and finally putting the shade of ‘balance’ to rest. The Israel Lobby and the state of Israel have been destabilizing, radicalizing forces in the United States and southwest Asia, from the late 1940s to spring 1967, to the present.

In his survey of Israel Lobby literature, Hixson notes that the ‘subject is a difficult one and typically there is a price to pay’, citing the attack on the Mearsheimer–Walt book ‘as an anti-Israel, if not anti-Jewish, diatribe’ (Hixson 2019: 6, 8). The exaggerated cultural, religious and strategic explanations are subtler discouragement, and carry an accusation of antisemitism, implicit and explicit.

The true defences against antisemitism are not orthodoxies that conceal the Israel Lobby, but the anti-Zionist traditions descended from the Enlightenment and Jewish emancipation, which advanced the modern status of people of Jewish background as a religious minority or secular citizens, in liberal society. Emancipation dissolved the corporate Jewish religious community and ended rule of religious law, as well as removed gentile restrictions. Zionism opposed liberalism, and sought to maintain difference and separatism. To the first Hebrew prose stylist Ahad Ha’am, and other Russian founders of Zionism, ‘it was assimilation, not antisemitism, that threatened the Jewish people most compellingly; it threatened not only western Judaism but all Jews, even in the cloistered, seemingly timeless confines of the Russian Pale’ (Zipperstein 1993: 80).

Diametrically opposed, the 1885 Pittsburgh Platform of Reform Judaism stated: ‘We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and, therefore, expect neither a return to Palestine, nor a sacrificial worship under the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state’ (Meyer 1988: 388).

Impoverished Yiddish speaking Jews left the Russian Empire by the million, not for Palestine, but for the United States. In liberal conditions, this population and their descendants began to abandon religion and communal affiliation and lost their Yiddish distinctiveness. Spinoza, the greatest of the seventeenth-century rationalist philosophers, is viewed as a key progenitor of liberal modernity.

Rosa Luxemburg, Marxist scholar, international revolutionary, and the greatest figure of socialism’s Second International period, wrote from jail in 1917:

What do you want with this particular suffering of the Jews? The poor victims on the rubber plantations in Putumayo, the Negroes in Africa with whose bodies the Europeans play a game of catch, are just as dear to me [...] I have no special corner of my heart for the ghetto; I am at home wherever in the world there are clouds, bird and human tears.

(Luxemburg 1999: 19)

Orthodox Judaism rejected Zionism, holding that Jews were a ‘people’ solely because they had been given the Torah by God, not in any national or cultural sense (Shapiro 2018: 37–103). Orthodox anti-Zionism is very conservative, but its rejection of peoplehood echoes that of classical Reform, in different terms.

During and after the Second World War and the Judeocide, the US Jewish public and most of the organized Jewish world rallied to Zionism, but some

Jews kept the liberal faith. Rabbi Elmer Berger was born in 1908 and educated at the Reform Hebrew Union College; with other Reform Jews he mounted a heroic rearguard action against Zionism in the 1940s, as the American Council for Judaism. After 1948 Berger became an advocate for Palestine; his ideas and activism were well known in the Arab world. He saw himself in an exilic, liberal tradition expressed in the prophet Jeremiah's advice to the Babylonian exiles. 'And seek the peace of the city whither I [God] have caused you to be carried away captive and pray unto the Lord for it, for in the peace thereof shall you have peace' (Berger 1951: 73–4, 81–82).

After the June 1967 war, the ACJ sought, implausibly, to criticize only Zionism, rather than Israel, and Berger left to found American Jewish Alternatives to Zionism, effectively gutting the ACJ. Berger drafted, with his Palestinian friend Fayez Sayegh, a Kuwaiti diplomat, the 1975 UN resolution 3379 on Zionism as a form of racism, and contributed to EAFORD's work on Zionism (International Organization for Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination) (Berger 1945, 1955, 1957, 1978, 1986, 1993, n.d.a, n.d.b; Kolsky 1990; Sayegh 1976).

While US Jewish opinion rallied to Zionism in the late 1940s, enthusiasm subsided in the 1950s, as antisemitism declined, Jews enjoyed the fruits of liberalism, and their socio-economic ascent continued. The flagship American Jewish Committee, founded as a civil rights organization by Reform notables in 1906, was in the 1950s concerned that 'Jews were not integrating themselves into mainstream U.S. life quickly enough or well enough. Not just antisemitism from Gentiles but the Jews' own reliance on obsolete European community models were seen as the culprits'. The AJC was 'not concerned that Jewish youth was receiving an insufficient Jewish education' but 'that the Jewish education that did exist was [...] promoting separatist, self-segregating and nationalist tendencies among the children' (Sanua 2007b: 94).

By the early 1960s, however, surveys showing widespread intermarriage, secularism and disaffiliation among the Jewish public ignited a crisis of 'Jewish continuity' in the organized establishment, and a flurry of programmes to combat it. This trend was fatally supercharged during the 'traumatic days of May and June, 1967, when Israel first seemed threatened by a new Holocaust, only to win a magnificent, almost miraculous victory, culminating in the reunification of Jerusalem'. 'Thousands of American Jews, including many who had been active in the community, discovered a depth of Jewish commitment and concern in themselves that they had not previously recognized' (Woocher 1986: 65). Around this time the 'Jewish continuity' and 'survival' advocates decided that 'the non-involvement of the young in Jewish affairs – their thinning Jewish identity – was a consequence of their insufficient awareness of the Holocaust' (Novick 1999: 186).

Another population survey in 1990 confirmed what was called the 'silent Holocaust' of liberalism, as did surveys in 2000, and again in 2010 (Sanua 2007b: 369–88; Nathan-Kazis 2013). The scourge was energetically opposed with measures such as programming against intermarriage, developing 'the Holocaust' and perpetual antisemitism as bulwarks of 'Jewish identity', and expanding separate Jewish primary and secondary education, whose nationalism and segregation had now become virtues. 'But now, it is known, based on the research of Jewish continuity, that the results from the supplementary schools have been dismal and that from day schools has not', stated an AJC board member in 1999 (Sanua 2007b: 373). The organized Jewish world's resistance to liberalism, comparable to the opposition to modernity in the Pale

of Settlement, matched its unwavering support for Israel, and opposed the erosion of 'Jewish identity' and support for Israel among the Jewish public.

Marxist internationalism persisted, even after the epic defeats of the Second World War. Isaac Deutscher was born in Poland in 1907, and ordained rabbi at age 13 after a stellar performance before his admiring examiners, but rejected that background emphatically, recalling later that 'we wanted to escape it and live in the modern world' (Deutscher 1968: 47). He joined the Communist Party of Poland, and became a renowned Marxist political and literary writer. After the Second World War and the Judeocide, he renounced his anti-Zionism and accepted the reality of the Jewish state, but never became a Zionist: 'For that I have been too strongly formed by an international European tradition, Polish and Russian, German and English, and above all, Marxist' (Deutscher 1968: 56).

In 1958, Deutscher described the tradition of the 'non-Jewish Jew', from Spinoza to Luxemburg, and asked, was 'the optimistic belief in humanity voiced by the great Jewish revolutionaries justified?' 'I cannot approach the issue from an exclusively Jewish standpoint; and my answer is Yes, their faith was justified' (Deutscher 1968: 14). He rejected the chimaera of 'socialist Zionism', and wrote acutely on Israeli chauvinism, the colonizing kibbutz, the June 1967 war, and 'Jewish identity': 'To someone of my background the fashionable longing of the Western Jew for a return to the sixteenth century, a return which is supposed to help in recovering, or re-discovering, his Jewish cultural identity, seems unreal and Kafkaesque' (Deutscher 1968: 47).

Maxime Rodinson was born in 1915 to a Jewish immigrant family in France, studied Near East languages, spent twenty years in the French Communist Party, and became a distinguished independent Marxist scholar of Islam and the Arab world. His *Europe and the Mystique of Islam* ranks with Edward Said's *Orientalism* (Rodinson 1983; Said 1978). While in Beirut after the war, he learned that the Nazis had murdered his parents, and considered but rejected joining the Zionists in Palestine. On the eve of the June 1967 war, as liberal Jewish opinion rallied to Israel, he published *Israel: A Colonial Settler State?* (Rodinson 1973). His *Israel and the Arabs* showed, inter alia, how activist Israeli politicians and generals, responding to crises largely of their making, drove events towards the June 1967 war (Rodinson 1982). His *Cult, Ghetto, State: The Persistence of the Jewish Question* began by examining 'Judeo-centrism', and stated:

Who is it that claims that Jews are eternally rooted in their Jewishness despite all the efforts of those who do not desire to belong to a Judaic religion or a Jewish people? Don't Zionists do this? Don't anti-Semites do it too?

(Rodinson 1983: 12)

Deutscher and Rodinson were seconded, after its founding in 1962, by the Socialist Organization in Israel, known for its publication, Matzpen ('compass' in Hebrew) (Matzpen) Matzpen membership included Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel and it attempted to publish in Arabic but was officially prohibited, while its Hebrew publication was censored; it also published the journal *Khamsin* (Rothschild 1984). Matzpen espoused a crude, untenable view of Israel as US 'strategic asset', but was otherwise forthright. The state of Israel

was born in the violent expropriation and expulsion from their country of the Palestinian Arabs [...] Within the territories occupied since 1967, the Zionist state employs a system of direct military repression to expel Palestinian Arabs from their lands and secure Jewish colonization [...] Within its own borders, the Zionist state engages in systematic national oppression of its minority of Arab citizens. The dark-skinned majority of the privileged Jewish community itself increasingly feels the sting of racist discrimination.

(Bober 1972: Introduction)

Matzpen expressly rejected the 'proletarian Zionism' of 'Marxist Zionist' Ber Borochov (Bober 1972: Borochovism). Matzpen co-founder Moshe Machover recognized an Israeli 'Hebrew nation', which echoed separately Israeli writer Boas Evron's view of secular Hebrew nationality, as a modern replacement for Zionist Jewish nationality (Machover 1989; Evron 1995).

Israel Shahak, a faculty member at the Hebrew University, with colleagues from Matzpen, and other critical friends, re-founded the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights (originally the Palestine League) after 1967 to document Israel's atrocities and injustices. Shahak was born in Warsaw in 1933, survived the Judeocide with some of his family, and emigrated to Palestine in 1945. He renounced religion after finishing his traditional religious education, and considered himself a secular humanist, inspired by Spinoza. He viewed Zionism as a reaction against liberal modernity and a secularization of the closed, pre-modern Jewish religious society.

Like Matzpen's, Shahak's views became notorious and he and the League were vilified and persecuted. In response, in 1974, he wrote 'What are my opinions?' which could be published only abroad. In it he stated: 'I am not afraid to say publicly that Israeli Jews, and with them most Jews throughout the world, are undergoing a process of Nazification' (Shahak 1974).

Shahak gained an international audience for his critiques of Zionism, Israeli foreign policy and Orthodox Judaism, and through his monthly translations from the Hebrew press, long before Israeli publications developed online English editions (Shahak 1973, 1997; Shahak and Mezvinsky 2004). Shahak recognized the importance of the US Israel Lobby.

Most recently, Shlomo Sand has rejected the canonical Zionist myths. In *The Invention of the Jewish People* he argued that there was no mass expulsion of the Jews from Palestine during Roman times, that proselyting and conversion were the sources of the Jewish populations in Yemen, North Africa and eastern Europe, and that there was no 'diaspora' to effect a 'return' (Sand 2009). In *The Invention of the Land of Israel* he argued that Jewish veneration of the 'Holy Land' was strictly religious, and 'never assumed the form of a mass aspiration for collective ownership of a national homeland' (Sand 2012: 19). In *How I Stopped Being a Jew* Sand wrote: 'I am today fully conscious of never having been a secular Jew, understanding that such an imaginary characteristic lacks any specific basis or cultural perspective and that its existence is based on a hollow and ethnocentric view of the world' (Sand 2014: 97).

In rejecting Zionism, Berger, Deutscher, Rodinson and the Israeli critics – Matzpen, Shahak, Evron, Sand and others – upheld in their diverse ways the canonical liberal view of Jewish people as a religious minority or secular citizens. The canonical liberal view defends all of us, against antisemitism, and also against Zionism's claims, including those of the Israel Lobby. The Lobby, in the name of a self-proclaimed national group within the constitutional

nation, usurps the democratic sovereignty embodied in representative government. The true 'fateful triangle' is the US imperial state, the Israel Lobby, and the Jewish state, which threatens its neighbours with nuclear annihilation (Keinon 2019). There is no reason to be defensive in criticizing this.

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