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Author(s): Jonathan Gribetz

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ABSTRACT

This article offers a study of the Permanent Mandates Commission’s first discussion of Palestine—at its fifth session in 1924. The PMC was charged by the League of Nations with the task of monitoring the progress of the post-war mandates. The article argues that, in contrast to the way in which these meetings have been portrayed in previous scholarship (namely, as either virulently anti-Zionist or staunchly anti-Arab), the members of the commission generally engaged in a reasoned discussion of the challenges of enforcing the multiple and competing terms of the Palestine Mandate, mindful of the defined limits of the commission’s mission. The article pays close attention to the social and dialogical dynamics of the discussions and contends that sensitivity to these dynamics allows for a more compelling, nuanced understanding of the debate. It further suggests the need for careful consideration of the meaning of the charge of “bias” as an explanatory tool in historical analysis.

INTRODUCTION

IN SEPTEMBER 2011, AS PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS APPEALED TO the UN for recognition of a Palestinian state, attention once again focused on the role of international organizations in the dispute over the Holy Land. The story of the Arab-Zionist conflict since the mid-twentieth century can hardly be told without reference to the UN, which, perhaps most fundamentally, voted in 1947 to partition Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, a

vote that the newly founded State of Israel cited as a principle justification for its establishment.

Israel's founders asserted in their declaration of independence, "This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their independent state may not be revoked," only then adding that "it is, moreover, the self-evident right of the Jewish people to be a nation, like all other nations, in its own sovereign state." Thus, the UN's Palestine partition resolution was the critical partner of "the natural and historic right of the Jewish people" in legitimizing "the establishment of the Jewish State in Palestine, to be called Israel."¹

The central role Israel's founders, ascribed to a resolution of the UN General Assembly, stands in marked contrast to the way supporters of Israel, and the Israeli government, have perceived the UN and its legitimacy in more recent years. This sense was exhibited most clearly, immediately after Abbas's call before the General Assembly to admit Palestine as a UN member state, in PM Benjamin Netanyahu's assertion that the UN constituted a "theater of the absurd"—evidenced by its double standards and obsessive bias against Israel.²

From appealing to the UN as a source for Israel's legitimacy to publicly challenging the world body's own legitimacy, the history of Israel's relations with the UN is a fascinating one, indeed. However, the charge of anti-Zionist bias against an international organization that had once been sympathetic to Zionism actually predates the UN. This charge was leveled against the UN's predecessor, the League of Nations [hereafter LoN], and, particularly, the committee (the Permanent Mandates Commission [hereafter PMC]) responsible for assessing whether the mandatory powers properly carried out the League's post-war mandates. The British Mandate for Palestine, ratified by the League in 1922, enshrined within it the Balfour Declaration as the very purpose of Britain's administration of Palestine. Yet, by the first time that the Palestine Mandate came before the PMC in 1924, Zionists felt that the cards were stacked against them.

This article offers a close reading of the minutes of that first discussion of Palestine in the PMC and attempts to assess whether this sense of unfairness was warranted. Through this case study, I suggest that scholars of the history of Zionism and Israel should employ the charge of "bias" more thoughtfully than do the subjects of their research. This is not to say that the language of "bias" must be discarded altogether but that, in order for it to serve analytical rather than mere rhetorical purposes, it must be precisely defined, which, inherently, should yield more judicious application. Furthermore, in the realm of historiographical methodology, I propose

a revision to the way in which scholars read and employ the minutes of meetings. In particular, I attempt to show how a sensitivity to the social and logical dynamics of debate—rather than reading each statement as a discrete unit to be analyzed on its own—offers a carefully nuanced, and more compelling, understanding of what occurs in the meetings of any institution or organization, governmental or otherwise. This study thereby recommends a revision to the limited existing historiography on the subject.

MONITORING MANDATES

An inconspicuous line in one article of the League's covenant of 1919 assigned to a small group of unspecified individuals what appeared to be a simple task. "A permanent Commission shall be constituted," declared the final clause of Article 22, "to receive and examine the annual reports of the Mandatories and to advise the Council on all matters relating to the observance of the mandates." However, the task delegated to the PMC was, in the end, anything but simple. The difficulty of the task was especially pronounced regarding the most controversial and continuously contested of all the mandates: the British Mandate in Palestine. If, for the British, the Palestine Mandate was marked by a series of incessant attempts—through White Paper after desperate White Paper—to find the elusive interpretation of the mandate that might satisfy all parties, for the PMC, charged with *monitoring* Britain's fulfillment of its repeatedly reinterpreted obligations, this Mandate was the source of complex struggle and considerable difficulties as well.

The PMC's concern with the Palestine issue and how to ensure that its mandate be fulfilled in every detail persisted through the final meeting of the commission before the outbreak of WW II.³ This particular concern was already evident, though, beginning with the very first time the PMC addressed the Palestine Mandate, namely the commission's 5th Session in Geneva (23 October–6 November 1924).⁴ Sir Herbert Samuel, Britain's High Commissioner [hereafter HC] in Palestine, appeared before the PMC at these meetings to present Britain's report on the status of the Mandate. These minutes reveal the ways in which the members of the PMC understood the unique problems posed by the multiple, demanding, and—in the eyes of many—contradictory terms of Britain's mandate in Palestine.

In contrast to how this meeting has been presented in earlier scholarship and, indeed, in contrast to what one might have expected due to the politically charged nature of the subject (even then), I argue that the

PMC members, in their comments and questions, exhibited remarkable restraint and evenhandedness. The limits of the PMC's function were constantly acknowledged by its members: it was to determine whether the terms of the mandates were being fulfilled, not whether there was justice or even sense in these terms. The minutes of this session suggest that they strove to ascertain how all the terms of the mandate might possibly be simultaneously imposed.

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The PMC was not a monolithic organization. At the 5th session in 1924, it consisted of eight members along with a secretary and a representative of the International Labor Organization. Members were appointed by the LoN from different member countries. As a result, aside from speaking different languages (though they shared some as well), the members arrived with diverse experiences and distinct agendas. Because the members were indefinite appointees of the League and not of their countries' governments, they were not, at least in theory, beholden to the interests of these governments. In fact, by the LoN's policy, the members were not allowed to hold any office of direct dependence on their governments while serving on the PMC.⁵ Thus, consideration of the biographies of the members, not merely their countries of origin, is critical for understanding their work on the PMC.⁶

The most important commonality among the distinguished members of the PMC 5th session⁷ is that they had significant experience in colonial administration, but fewer than half were permitted to be nationals of countries holding LoN mandates. Marquis Theodoli di Sambuci (Italy) chaired the PMC from 1920 until 1936. An engineer by training and a council member of the Bank of Rome, he had served as under-secretary of the Ministry for the Colonies. The PMC's vice-chairman, Daniel François Willem van Rees (Netherlands), was a former vice-president of the Council of the Dutch East Indies and secretary general of the Dutch Colonial Institute. Alfredo Freire d'Andrade (Portugal) had served as the governor-general of Mozambique, and later as Portugal's minister of foreign affairs.⁸ Jean Baptiste Paul Beau (France) had been the governor-general of French Indo-China.⁹ The only woman on the PMC was Anna K.M. Bugge-Wicksell (Sweden), a jurist who had also represented Sweden at the first LoN Assembly.¹⁰ Sir Frederick John Dealtry Lugard (Britain) had a long career as a British colonial administrator, having served as H.C. of the Protectorate of



The Permanent Mandates Commission circa. 1920–1924.
Courtesy of the UNOG Library, League of Nations Archives

Northern Nigeria, governor of Hong Kong, and governor-general of the British colony of Nigeria. Leopoldo Palacios (Spain) had been a professor of moral and political sciences at the University of Madrid.¹¹ Though not officially members, there were two other participants in the PMC discussions: Harold A. Grimshaw (Britain) represented the International Labor Organization and William E. Rappard (Switzerland), a Swiss-American professor of economic history, was director of the League's Mandates Section and the secretary of the PMC. Together, they sat around a few tables in a small room in Geneva to discuss the mandates.¹²

In addition to considering the backgrounds of the members, we should recognize that in all meetings there develop a direction and momentum that are influenced by innumerable and often indeterminable factors.¹³ For instance, the participant with an assigned title of authority (e.g., in our case, Chairman Theodoli) might, by the social dynamics of the group, be able to determine the assumptions and agenda of the discussion. Similarly, the oldest, the most famous, or simply the most articulate or assertive member might be able to take the conversation in a direction in which others, had they the choice, might not have taken it. Moreover, those who felt less comfortable speaking the languages of discourse, French and English, might

have been less likely to join in the conversation. Gender, too, might have played a role. Bugge-Wicksell might have believed herself (perhaps correctly) to be the “token woman”, and thus felt compelled to raise questions that were regarded as appropriate concerns for a woman. One of her very few recorded comments during the discussion on Palestine was a question about “the legal age-limit for marriage”.¹⁴ Social and dialogical context are thus critical.

LOCATING “A LITTLE BIAS”, OR PREVIOUS SCHOLARSHIP ON THE PMC

In an article devoted to the 1924 PMC discussion of Palestine, the eminent Israeli scholar and archivist Yehoshua Freundlich¹⁵ contends that in the course of their discussion with Samuel, PMC members evinced anti-Zionist bias.¹⁶ “The members of the Mandates Commission,” he argues, “embarked on a prolonged enquiry, which conveyed a distinct tone of hostility towards Zionism, laced with a bit of provocation.”¹⁷ He points to two members, the Italian Theodoli and the British Lugard:

Theodoli, a devout Catholic who was related by marriage to the Lebanese Sursuq family, was described even by the cautious Herbert Samuel as occasionally showing “a little bias”. Weizmann considered him the most treacherous of the enemies of Zionism in Geneva. The British representative was a disappointment from the Zionists’ standpoint. Sir Frederick Lugard, an experienced former colonial officer . . . was on good terms with the Zionists, but in Geneva he fell in with the general tenor of the Commission, and his questions often embarrassed even Herbert Samuel.¹⁸

In this brief passage, and elsewhere in his article, Freundlich imputes bias based not so much on what a PMC member was recorded to have said but on how that member was perceived and described by a supposedly objective source. Above, he appeals to the alleged impartiality of “even” “the cautious Herbert Samuel”. If these members were indeed so belligerent, we would expect their hostility to emerge in the recorded minutes of the meeting; we would not have to rely on the retrospective impressions of interested parties.

Is this belligerence evident in the minutes of the meetings? Freundlich argues that indeed it is. Yet, at least on one occasion, he seems to have misread the text in demonstrating the PMC’s anti-Zionist biases. He acknowledges that for the most part, the PMC members confined their

discussion to “the implementation of particular items of the Mandate and did not suggest effecting substantial changes or raising questions regarding the legality of the document.” However, he writes, “Surprisingly, it was, of all people, the British representative [Lugard] who tried to move the discussion in this direction, but Samuel absolutely refused to discuss those topics and requested that Lugard withdraw his question.”¹⁹

According to Freundlich, it was only upon Samuel’s refusal to discuss the question of the legality of the Mandate, and particularly of its Zionist provisions, that the PMC was kept from descending into a debate that was beyond its legitimate purview. The PMC minutes²⁰ reveal a rather different story:

SIR F. LUGARD said that emphasis had been laid by the Arabs on certain pledges, one of which was based on the letter of Sir Henry McMahon and one on an official circular dated November 17, 1918. Was any validity attached by the Administration to these pledges?

THE CHAIRMAN thought it would be advisable not to put this question, which might be taken up when the Commission came to consider the Arab petitions. It was not the duty of the Mandates Commission to discuss the origin of the mandate but only to supervise its exercise and to ascertain whether it applied.

SIR F. LUGARD withdrew his question.²¹

By raising the issue of the various commitments that the British had made to the Arabs during WW I (commitments that might be interpreted as precluding the possibility of creating a Jewish National Home [hereafter JNH] in Palestine),²² Lugard, intentionally or not, was opening the field to the broader question of whether the Palestine mandate’s call for a JNH was legitimate. Thus far, Freundlich’s rendition of this exchange is accurate; it is the response, or more precisely, the respondent, to this comment where there appears to be confusion. According to him, it was Samuel who “absolutely refused” to discuss these commitments and it was Samuel who asked Lugard to withdraw the question. However, this was not Samuel but rather “the Chairman” of the commission, namely Theodoli, the very man to whom Freundlich, citing the “impartial” Samuel, attributes at least “a little hostile bias” toward Zionism.

This seemingly minor misreading had significant consequences. It is more complicated to argue that Theodoli was incorrigibly biased against Zionism²³ once we recognize that it was he, not Samuel, who insisted on keeping the discussion on the topic of enforcing the terms of the Mandate,

rather than questioning those terms. Freundlich's thorough archival research into various individuals' accounts of these events in contemporary letters and memos may have led him unwittingly to impose the impressions found in the archives onto the text of the minutes. Weizmann, as Freundlich tells us, considered Theodoli "the most treacherous of the enemies of Zionism in Geneva," a view Freundlich found expressed in Weizmann's 9 November letter to Emanuel Neumann and Morris Rothenberg,²⁴ and it is this view that Freundlich insists, notwithstanding the evidence, emerges from the text.

DEMANDING "IMPARTIALITY": A FRESH LOOK AT THE PMC MINUTES

A careful reading of the minutes of the PMC's 5th session reveals a different image of the values and goals of the PMC members as well as the intellectual dynamics in these meetings. There are, to be sure, limitations to the use of the minutes. The minutes are not a verbatim transcript of the words spoken by the participants; written in the third-person, they are presumably a somewhat abbreviated version of the discussion. Nonetheless, lacking a transcript, and given the considerable specificity of the minutes, they represent our most complete and reliable source on which to base our account of these meetings.²⁵

When the PMC finally reached the Palestine Mandate on its agenda,²⁶ Freire d'Andrade set the tone for the discussion even before Samuel entered the room. He explained:

The question of the Palestine mandate was a very important one. The Commission would have in this instance to be particularly careful to maintain an attitude which could give rise to no doubt as to its impartiality, the more so as the inhabitants of the mandated territory in question had reached a far higher state of civilization than those residing in territories under B or C mandates.²⁷

He saw Palestine as an exceptional case among the mandates, one that required particular sensitivity. What made Palestine different for him was the "far higher state of civilization" present among its residents—by whom he presumably meant both Arabs and Jews, though he did not say so explicitly—which required the Mandatory and the PMC to tread much more carefully than they might concerning a more "backward" society (perhaps he had Mozambique in mind). Of course, this was not simply

Freire d'Andrade's assessment; this was the explicit reason why the LoN's Covenant classified Palestine as an "A mandate", namely territories that had "reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory."²⁸ A hierarchical, social evolutionary view of societies was built into the mandate system; some territories were farther along in their teleological development than others and the former, by virtue of their advancement, merited more consideration and, in Freire d'Andrade's words, more apparent "impartiality".

Whether simply to pander to the Europeans' sensibilities or because its members shared these sensibilities, the Executive Committee of the Palestine Arab Congress employed these same social hierarchical assumptions in its petition to the PMC. This memorandum complained that Palestine was not granted "a sound real constitution". The British would not offer such a constitution, the Palestine Arab Congress charged, because of the British claim that "The inhabitants are not yet fit for such a constitution". However, the Palestine Arab Congress asserted:

This allegation contradicts both fact and actions of the same mandatory Power in other countries under its mandate. For the fact that there exists in Transjordan and Iraq (Mesopotamia) constitutions of a much higher grade, while the inhabitants of Palestine are manifestly more advanced in the scale of civilization and consequently of the capability of self-rule than either Iraq or Transjordan, shows how shallow this reasoning is.²⁹

This elite Palestinian Arab organization thus accepted—if only for the sake of argument—the notion of ranking territories on the basis of "the scale of civilization"; it simply contended that Palestine was "manifestly more advanced" than other mandates that had been granted greater political freedoms. The problematic social evolutionary assumptions behind the mandates system were pervasive—not only in European society but even among those communities whose place on the evolutionary scale was in question. Recognition of this ideology is critical for understanding the PMC debates.

On 28 October, the PMC welcomed Samuel to testify on behalf of the British Mandate in Palestine. Samuel, assisted by his First Assistant Secretary Edward Keith-Roach, joined the PMC in its modest conference room. In his opening address to the commission, Samuel focused on "the

relation of the Government with the Arab and with the Jewish sections of the population,” leaving aside “the positive and constructive work which had been accomplished in building up a new State, in ensuring public security, in caring for justice, public health, education, agriculture, and sound finance.”³⁰ These other issues had been addressed sufficiently, he hoped, in his written report. From the beginning of his involvement with Zionism and Palestine,³¹ he found Arab opposition to Zionist ambitions to be the most pressing problem, and thus the Arabs were his main focus in these remarks.

The primary issue that Samuel explained at the start was why his administration had thus far been unsuccessful in establishing a political body representative of the Jewish and Arab populations in the country. Article 2 of the Mandate required the British to help develop “self-governing institutions”. Samuel stressed that his failure to create these institutions had not been due to lack of British effort. “One of the first steps taken by the civil administration,” he insisted, “had been to establish an Advisory Council of prominent [Arab and Jewish] Palestinians to assist the Government.”³² Samuel outlined the multiple successive attempts that the British had made in this direction—for an Advisory Council, then a Legislative Council, and finally an Arab Executive Committee—each time only to be disappointed by Palestinian Arab rejection. Even as he bemoaned it, Samuel comprehended the Arab refusal to participate in the institutions that the British planned. The British specifically determined the demographic makeup of these proposed bodies so that the combination of the Jewish representatives and the British appointees would always hold a majority. The British knew that an Arab majority, which the Arabs would easily have had were the Council seats linked proportionately to the demographics of the country, would immediately try to frustrate any implementation of the JNH provisions of the mandate. The British Government decided against the claims of the Arabs, Samuel explains, for one clear and simple reason:

If a standing majority on the Council were created who were opposed to certain terms of the mandate, the Government of Palestine would have been placed in a permanent impasse, for, on the one hand, it would be obliged to carry out certain measures under the terms of the mandate and, on the other, a hostile majority in the Council would have opposed any attempt to execute those measures.³³

Responsible to Britain and ultimately to the LoN to carry out all the terms of the Mandate, Samuel did not believe he could reasonably create a system

that guaranteed that the Mandate would fail to establish a JNH, one of its central missions. Before continuing, as an apparent afterthought—but nonetheless a telling one—he offered another reason for rejecting an Arab-majority government: “Anyone who knew Palestine knew that an entirely Arab government was not likely to be an efficient one.” In this addendum, Samuel reveals his condescending perspective toward the Arabs of Palestine, one that occasionally appears elsewhere in his testimony.³⁴

Sympathetic, if patronizing, toward the Arabs, Samuel insisted that the commitment his government had made to the idea of a JNH in Palestine would not work in any way to the detriment of the Arabs. Samuel explained that his Government would “deal with the Arabs in regard to their possession of their land, their religion, their development generally, exactly as if no Balfour declaration has been made at all.”³⁵ Thus, the rights of the Arabs were to be protected vigorously by the British administration, in compliance with the requirement, also found in the fateful Article 2 of the Mandate, to safeguard “the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants”. This clause, according to Samuel, was not to be considered subordinate to the requirement of helping to lay the groundwork for the JNH. Protecting the Arabs was an independent responsibility.

Samuel expressed his outrage at the Palestine Arab Congress petition’s charges of discrimination against his administration and attacked a number of the specific allegations. The most important of these, according to Samuel, was that “the Government adopted a policy designed to impoverish the Arab landowners in order to compel them to sell their land to the Jews.” Samuel countered that “there was not the smallest foundation for that very disgraceful allegation,”³⁶ and he proceeded to describe an instance in which the British denied the claim of Jews to land in favor of the Arabs’ somewhat dubious legal, but nonetheless compelling moral, claim. Referring to the Beisan district in the Jordan Valley, he explained:

The Zionist Jews had hoped that a portion of this land, since it was State land, would be allotted to them in accordance with the terms of the mandate. After investigation, Sir Herbert Samuel had found that though the Arabs had no legal right to the land under Turkish [i.e., Ottoman] law, which the Administration had inherited, they had certain moral rights and he had come to an arrangement with the Arab cultivators whereby they retained the land and purchased it freehold for a modest sum, payable in installments.³⁷

Samuel raised this case to show that his government had supported the questionable rights of the Arabs even when they came into conflict with the

requirements of the terms of the mandate. Samuel argued that the British had exhibited equal steadfastness in their protection of the religious rights of the Arabs, as well as in promoting their education (in Arabic) and the health of the population.³⁸

When Samuel turned to the Jewish side, his focus was not on the parallel ways in which the British had advanced Jewish interests in Palestine since the beginning of the Mandate, but rather on the fact that the Jews would not be allowed to infringe on the rights of the Arabs. As the minutes record:

Sir Herbert Samuel passed on to the consideration of the Jewish population. The dominant fact in respect to the Jews in Palestine was that the Balfour declaration did not say that Palestine was to be the Jewish national home, but that a Jewish national home should be created in Palestine . . . There was no idea, therefore, that Palestine should be exclusively a Jewish national home. It was said, and he thought with truth, that over six million pounds had been expended by Jews and Jewish organizations in Palestine since the war . . . A large part of that money had percolated to the Arab population. If some of them had sold their land to Jews, this was often an advantage, because the purchase money had provided capital, previously lacking, with which Arab owners could better develop remaining land. There was considerable building activity throughout the country, not only in the towns but also in the Arab villages.³⁹

Samuel, in his first words ostensibly dealing with the Jewish population, in fact focused nearly exclusively on Arab interests. The Jews would not be allowed to make all of Palestine their National Home because of the significant Arab majority there; the Jews had invested heavily in Palestine, to the benefit of the Arabs; and the Jews had purchased land, which was to the advantage of the Arabs. Just as Freire d'Andrade's plea to his fellow members for "impartiality", even before Samuel walked in the door, is essential to keep in mind as we analyze the text of the minutes, so too Samuel's defensive opening words helped set the tone for the discussion and the direction in which the conversation would progress. The question Samuel implanted into the discussion was whether the welfare of the Arabs was sacrificed in imposing the JNH policy. Samuel's answer was that this definitively had not been the case.

With the stage thus set, we can more easily understand the first question of substance that a PMC member posed to Samuel that day. Van Rees asked: "What was the real conception of the Zionist elements as regards its establishment in Palestine in the future?" "Did it entertain the hope," he

inquired, “of one day establishing an autonomous kingdom on behalf of the Zionists, similar to the Kingdom of Israel?” Van Rees explained that he had heard of provocative comments from Zionists suggesting, *inter alia*, that they hoped to make Palestine “Jewish in the same sense as England was English.”⁴⁰

If read in isolation, these questions might be interpreted as antagonistic toward Zionism, but when read in light of Samuel’s opening remarks ensuring the limited nature of Jewish aspirations in Palestine, this question is understood as informational. Van Rees heard one thing from Samuel and read something else in the papers, and he wanted to understand the discrepancy and to learn the truth. “This declaration,” that Palestine ought to be as Jewish as England is English, “was of a character,” he warned, “which might well annoy the Arabs and he wondered whether it was really politic on the part of the Zionists to declare themselves in so categorical a fashion.”⁴¹ He did not criticize the Zionists for having this ambition, either because it was politically/pragmatically unrealistic or because it was morally problematic, but rather he criticized them for expressing this goal. This was a tactical suggestion; what he actually thought about the content of the claims is suggestively left open to speculation.

In contrast to my interpretation of Van Rees’s questions, Freundlich writes:

. . .the members of the Mandates Commission embarked on a prolonged enquiry, which conveyed a tone of hostility towards Zionism, laced with a bit of provocation. For example: What was the Zionists’ final goal in Palestine? What was the meaning of the demand that Palestine be Jewish in the same way that England is English? Did the Zionist Organization represent world Jewry? Why was Morgenthau an anti-Zionist? Why was there an organization in Britain which propagandized against Zionism? Why were most immigrants settling in the cities rather than in agricultural communities? Why had some 5,000 Jews left Palestine since the establishment of the Mandate?⁴²

In painting the picture of a commission “hostile towards Zionism”, Freundlich provides here seven examples, two of which are taken from Van Rees’s initial inquiry. Yet, as we have seen in the case of Van Rees, given his explicit appeal to tactics as opposed to principle, there seems to be reason to question the claim of hostility.

The same is true of the other five questions Freundlich highlights; read carefully, they do not appear quite as antagonistic as he suggests. Immediately following Van Rees’s exchange with Samuel, which concluded with

the HC's account of the diversity of opinion among world Jewry, Theodoli brought the conversation back to the terms of the Mandate. Theodoli noted "that under Article 2 of the mandate for Palestine the mandatory was responsible for placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as would secure the establishment of the Jewish national home." In order to be sure that the Commission was "loyal to the principles of this mandate", he wished to seek answers to a number of questions. Theodoli's explicit motivation for asking these questions was to ensure that the JNH clause of the mandate was faithfully fulfilled. He then asked:

Was Zionism to be regarded as representing the opinion of the main body of the Jews? Was the Zionist Organization to be regarded as the authentic interpreter of Jewish opinion? The task was to create a national home on behalf of the 14 million Jews who were scattered throughout the world and Zionism was only one of the elements of the Jewish people. The question arose whether the Zionists were in agreement with the other elements of the Jewish race. An explanation must be sought as to why men like M. Morgenthau did not share the views of the Zionists; an endeavor must be made to ascertain what were the questions of principle, religion and policy which at present divided the Jewish people. In other words, the Commission desired to ascertain whether the mandate, the object of which was to establish a Jewish National Home, was being actually applied and whether the 53,000 Jews present in Palestine at the time of the military occupation were in agreement with the 35,000 Jews who had since arrived.⁴³

Even in these questions—the epitome of the anti-Zionism Freundlich finds at the PMC—one finds something other than pure antagonism toward Zionism. Henry Morgenthau Sr., the former US ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, was, at the time, among the most prominent American Jews and an outspoken critic of Zionism. In 1919, three years after returning from his post in Istanbul, he joined with a group of like-minded American Jews in a letter intended to dissuade President Wilson from supporting the Zionist cause at the Paris Peace Conference. That letter, made public in *The New York Times*, at once expressed its signatories' "entire sympathy with the efforts of Zionists which aim to secure for Jews at present living in lands of oppression a refuge in Palestine or elsewhere," but protested against the demand for the "reorganization of the Jews as a national unit, to whom, now or in the future, territorial sovereignty in Palestine shall be committed."⁴⁴ Morgenthau took his opposition to Zionism further still, publishing

in 1921 (and re-issuing in 1922) his essay “Zionism a Surrender, Not a Solution.”⁴⁵ In his polemic against the ambition for Jewish sovereignty in Palestine he argued that this goal—which he insisted was the true aim of Zionist leaders, notwithstanding their recent adoption of the Balfour Declaration’s “National Home” formula⁴⁶—was politically naïve, economically impracticable, and principally undesirable. Speaking on behalf of those faithful to the possibility and even inevitability of the Jews’ full emancipation and acculturation in non-Jewish societies,⁴⁷ he declared, “We Jews of America have found America to be our Zion. I refuse to allow myself to be called a Zionist. I am an American.”⁴⁸ Though Morgenthau protested against the political ambitions of Zionism, he was instrumental in providing the struggling Jewish community of Palestine with necessary financial support at the start of WW I. He even claimed in 1916 to have negotiated with the Ottoman government to sell Palestine to the Zionists.⁴⁹

Jewish dissent from Zionism was not merely a curiosity; from the perspective of the PMC it was a matter of consequence. Article 4 of the Mandate demanded:

An appropriate Jewish agency shall be recognized as a public body for the purposes of advising and cooperating with the Administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish national home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine, and, subject to the control of the Administration, to assist and take part in the development of the country. The Zionist Organization, so long as its organization and constitution are in the opinion of the Mandatory appropriate, shall be recognized as such agency. It shall take steps in consultation with His Britannic Majesty’s Government to secure the cooperation of all Jews who are willing to assist in the establishment of the Jewish national home.

If the World Zionist Organization [hereafter WZO] did not represent world Jewry, then the British, according to the terms of the Mandate, might have to find a different organization to serve as the “appropriate Jewish agency”. This question, rather than a latent hostility toward Zionism, appears to underlie Theodoli’s questioning. If a Jew of the prominence of Morgenthau (an early supporter of Jewish colonization in Palestine) did not accept political Zionism (and thus the WZO), one had to question, Theodoli reasoned, whether the Zionists were indeed the best people to serve the role called for in the Mandate, a role assigned to the WZO on an explicitly contingent basis. There was no reason, in other words, for the mandatory to join forces with a minority group among the Jews when the

work toward creating a JNH (however defined) in Palestine might be done more effectively with another organization.

Supporting this reading of Theodoli's questions, Samuel's response did not address the question of whether there ought to be a JNH; rather, he focused exclusively on the question of the representative nature of the WZO. Samuel stressed that among the 14 million Jews of the world, there existed "different shades of opinion" and explained the various political and religious differences. Nonetheless, he insisted that "the main body of Jewish opinion was certainly . . . favorable to the Zionists" and he clarified that the WZO would not necessarily always serve as the Jewish Agency. There were, he noted, already efforts being made by the WZO to establish a broader Jewish Agency that would include non-Zionists as well.⁵⁰ Given that there is no record of Theodoli's response to Samuel's answer, he apparently felt that Samuel had addressed his concerns.

The PMC members' recognition that a fundamental purpose of the Palestine Mandate was to establish a JNH is further demonstrated by Freire d'Andrade's remarks immediately following the exchange just described. He was "not greatly troubled by the differences of opinion amongst the Jews." All that mattered for the PMC's purposes was that "The mandate for Palestine provided for the creation in the country of a Jewish National Home and in so far as there were Jews who wished to avail themselves of this concession they should be helped so long as the mandate was in force."⁵¹ Internal Jewish wrangling was beyond the PMC's appropriate scope of interest. As long as there were some Jews who wanted to participate in the effort to establish a National Home for themselves in Palestine, he argued, it was the Mandatory's responsibility to assist them.

This is not to say that Freire d'Andrade was pro-Zionist or anti-Arab, just as Theodoli's questions were neither pro-Arab nor anti-Zionist. Freire d'Andrade's statement was a simple acknowledgment of the duty of the PMC: to evaluate the extent to which the terms of the mandates were being fulfilled and to offer suggestions for doing so more fully. Freire d'Andrade, immediately following his assertion of commitment to the JNH idea, expressed deep sympathy for the Arabs who,

watching the arrival in the country of a considerable number of emigrants who were competing with them for labor, commerce and industry, supported by a strong organization, might well be dissatisfied; it could be easily understood that they might strongly oppose the new regime which was being set up . . . The Arabs, however, who were in the country, must think that they would have more the right of exercising a greater influence on the affairs of

the administration than newcomers. In this, one could not say that they were wrong.⁵²

Freire d'Andrade recognized that the mandate required the establishment of the JNH and, at the same time, he realized that this goal would foster resentment and opposition among the Arabs. His perspective—committed to all components of the mandate and sympathetic enough to both sides to recognize that a conflict seemed inevitable—was, I would suggest, representative of the general approach of the PMC members and the guiding philosophy of the commission as a whole.

Not every PMC member considered Arab-Jewish conflict to be inevitable, though. Beau thought it possible “to discover an arrangement which would enable Zionism to be reconciled with the interests of the Arabs.” Just after Theodoli prevented Lugard from pursuing his question about British commitments to the Arabs, Beau asked Samuel whether:

any general plan for the creation of Jewish colonies in certain defined regions had been drawn up under conditions which would not disturb the Arab community, in such a way as to create a number of Jewish centres which might later on form an autonomous government.⁵³

Beau wished to know whether a map had been drawn delineating those areas that the Jews would ultimately acquire—to eventually become an autonomous Jewish state—and those that would be left to the Arabs.

Beau, in this first discussion of Palestine before the PMC, was advocating the partition of Palestine (thirteen years before the Peel Commission's report).⁵⁴ His partition proposal called not simply for a *de facto* partition based on which territories could haphazardly be acquired by Zionists. Rather, he suggested that partition should be an *a priori* assumption of those purchasing the lands for the Zionists. Thus, he wondered whether there could be systematic coordination so that only those lands that were expected to become part of the Jewish autonomous regions would be procured. Beau stressed two considerations: “First, the need for carrying out the mandate—that was to say, to create a National Home for the Jews—and, secondly, the need for avoiding the development of economic and political unrest among the population.” He did not question the terms of the Mandate but took them for granted as he devised his own proposition.

In Beau's address, we encounter a fascinating combination of both social/racial evolutionary and socioeconomic approaches. Firstly, he explained “The Jews had given proof all over the world of their adaptability,

and probably no difficulty would be experienced as far as they were concerned." Regarding the "evolution of the Arab mentality," however, "he was not so certain," but he hoped that Samuel might be able "to hasten on the evolution of the Arabs towards direct collaboration with the Jews."

Beau, though, did not close with this call for Samuel somehow to prod the evolution of the "Arab mentality", but suggested that what was "at the root of the whole problem" was precisely what was always at root in European conflicts, namely "an economic factor". The Arabs witnessed Jewish immigrants flocking into their land and were anxious about the effects of the increased competition on their livelihoods. The problem was only aggravated, he noted, by the fact that the Jews had not merely agricultural ambitions, but national-political ones as well. Beau evaluated the Palestinian Arab perspective on the Zionists thusly:

The Arab people, strongly attached to the soil, were confronted with an organization which proposed to develop those Jewish colonies already established in various parts of Palestine, and was desirous of extending Jewish colonization throughout the whole land.⁵⁵

The Arabs were anxious that the wealthy WZO would help Jews take over their entire country and replace the Arab population. If the Arabs knew in advance that the Zionists did not intend to occupy the entire country, but just a limited part of it, as Beau suggested, perhaps the Arabs could make peace with the Zionist endeavor.

Beau's proposal, the only of its kind during the course of the PMC's meetings with Samuel, is critical for our discussion because, though remarkable in its prudence, it is in many ways representative of the approach of this PMC session. Beau did not cast doubt on the terms of the mandate, he accepted these terms, perhaps even espoused them, and yet also understood—from Samuel's presentations and from his own experience as a colonial administrator—that there were real problems that had to be confronted.

There was only one response to Beau's "partition plan": Samuel explained why, in his view, it was impracticable. He agreed, in principle, that "by the method of zoning, much trouble and possible friction would be avoided." He argued, however, that this plan would require the British to compel Arabs to sell their land to the Zionists, and Samuel was not prepared to do so.⁵⁶ "If the Jews were told that they were not to settle in certain areas, but could do so in other areas, it would be necessary," he insisted, "to ensure that land would, in fact, be available in the latter." Samuel argued that

there was no shortage of Arabs willing to sell their land to the Zionists. The problem was that there were some Arabs who were so “strongly attached to the soil” that they would refuse to sell it and therefore “any measure of compulsory land purchase would involve friction, much more serious than that which had so far been produced.”⁵⁷ To avoid strife, any planning that would be done would have to be informal. The WZO could, and did, try to purchase adjacent lots to “consolidate its holdings”, but this was all that could be done; the mandatory government could not be involved. There ended discussion of Beau’s scheme and the day’s proceedings.

Palacios opened Wednesday’s meeting by remarking on the Palestine Mandate’s “two distinct and separate aspects,” namely “the establishment in Palestine of a Jewish National Home” and “the development of self-government among the Palestine populations.”⁵⁸ In his view, both of these elements “were equally essential” and “should be developed simultaneously, with the same ardor and in the same missionary spirit.” Each one, “should be used to balance, moderate, correct, and assist the other.”⁵⁹ For Palacios for Theodoli, Van Rees, and Freire d’Andrade—the JNH idea was not negotiable; nor, though, was the obligation to preserve the rights and advance the interests of the Arab population. The challenge, which each of the PMC members recognized, was to determine how to accomplish both goals simultaneously.

DEFENDING THE “DUTCH GARDENER”

One PMC exchange at first glance appears to be a striking exception to the commission members’ generally balanced approach to the case of the Palestine Mandate. In a discussion on immigration to Palestine, Samuel explained that though it was the British government that determined the immigration capacity of the country (i.e., how many people from each trade could be absorbed in a given year), it was the WZO that handpicked the individuals to be granted the fixed number of visas that the British allotted. This policy, or perhaps Theodoli’s reaction to it, ignited a series of probing questions among his colleagues. Theodoli noted that with the WZO assigning the visas, only Jews would be chosen to immigrate. “This meant,” contended Theodoli,

that workers of the same trade who were not Jews could not obtain the vacant posts. If, for instance, there was a vacancy for 12,000 gardeners on the

schedule, all those positions would be filled by Jews, and thus, supposing a Dutch gardener desired one of those posts, he would not be able to obtain it.⁶⁰

The PMC chairman was clearly disturbed by the fact that Jews would receive preferential treatment in immigrating to Palestine. He raised a hypothetical Dutch immigrant perhaps so as not to appear chauvinistically concerned with fellow Italians or because, by invoking the Netherlands, his colleague, Van Rees, might share his concern. In fact he did.

First, Samuel explained that the local population had “first claim” to new employment so as to avoid “indiscriminate immigration”. However, if this hypothetical Dutch gardener truly desired to immigrate to Palestine, he would be permitted to do so as long as a Palestinian employer requested the Dutchman by name. The reason that the Jews had an advantage in this realm, argued Samuel, was that the WZO had the funds to guarantee the employment of Jewish immigrants and to provide for their welfare should any lose their jobs. “The advantage accorded to Jews by this method,” he concluded curtly, “was in accordance with Article 6 of the mandate.” It is surprising that Article 6 was not Samuel’s immediate response. After all, this clause of the Mandate required that the British, “while ensuring that the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced, shall facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions.”⁶¹ Samuel was compelled, by the terms of the Palestine Mandate, to help *Jews*, in particular, immigrate to Palestine. No other ethnic, national, or religious group is mentioned in this clause. Yet, notwithstanding this obvious answer, Samuel offered it only secondarily. He recognized, perhaps, that something else was at stake here and that a simple reference to the terms of the mandate would not suffice.

Bugge-Wicksell’s response to Samuel is further evidence that certain members were uninterested in Samuel’s appeals to Article 6. Flatly ignoring Samuel’s reference to the Mandate, she asked “whether nationals of another country would be allowed to set up an agency similar to that of the Zionist Organization if they wished to do so.” The PMC was supposed to ensure that the terms of the Mandate were being fully enforced but instead, bizarrely, its members were wondering why a Dutch gardener could not immigrate or whether a Dutch Gardeners’ Organization might be established to facilitate the immigration of this population. Samuel replied in apparent desperation: as long as the organization Bugge-Wicksell proposed was able to ensure employment to immigrants, such an organization, like the Near East Relief Organizations, would be possible.

Trying to change the subject, Samuel then remarked on the improved economic position of the Jewish colonists in Palestine. His attempt was for naught, however, as Van Rees concluded that there was:

a real discrimination against non-Jewish immigrants resulting from the fact that their admission was controlled by a certain number of strict regulations, while Jewish immigrants possessed the facilities obtained by the special organization which had been established to find them work. He asked whether a person of non-Jewish nationality could, without difficulty, enter Palestine when that person did not come in the capacity of a worker.⁶²

Try as Samuel might to defend the policy of preferential treatment for Jewish immigrants, these PMC members wanted to be sure that European Christians would still be able to enter the country. Given their otherwise rigorous commitment to upholding the terms of the Mandate throughout the rest of the meetings, one can only conclude that these individuals had something else on their minds, a concern that lurked beneath the surface, one that could not comfortably be spoken openly, but one that was powerful enough to cloud their generally reasonable judgment. I tentatively suggest that these members were thinking about Christian missionaries; European Christians had a long tradition of sending missionaries to the Holy Land⁶³ and some of the PMC members worried that under the British Mandate, this practice would no longer be permitted.

With this concern now considered socially or politically unacceptable to mention publicly, it had to be addressed in code. First, the code was the “Dutch gardener”. Samuel interpreted the code literally and focused on such a gardener’s particular case. Van Rees explicitly acknowledged that they were in fact interested in the potential immigrant who “did not come in the capacity of a worker”. Ensuring the rights of European Christian missionaries to continue their work in Palestine may have been what was truly underlying this peculiar exchange.⁶⁴

I have presented the preceding interpretation of this exchange within the PMC discussion for a number of reasons. First, this reading illustrates the advantages of a careful examination of the text of the PMC minutes. A hastier assessment may have regarded this as an instance of an anti-Zionist attitude that underlay the PMC meetings. The issue, however, may have had much more to do with the particular European Christian interests of certain PMC members than with a direct valuation of Zionism as such. Second, this discussion represents the way in which the direction of the conversation at the PMC was swayed by the voices of powerful

members. Chairman Theodoli was disturbed by the supposed discrimination against non-Jews (European Christian missionaries, perhaps) and the debate followed along with him.

Would the members who participated in this discussion have asked such seemingly unreasonable questions had it not been for the momentum of Theodoli's line of questioning? While counterfactual queries cannot be answered with certainty, there is compelling evidence suggesting that indeed they would not have done so. The clearest indication we have is from vice-chairman Van Rees who—just hours later—insisted that he was “particularly concerned with the application of the second part of Article 6 of the mandate, in which it was stated that the administration of Palestine would encourage the close settlement by Jews on the land.” He wanted to know precisely how Britain was encouraging specifically Jewish settlement. After Samuel's response about the Jewish-led initiatives, Van Rees, clearly unsatisfied with the level of British assistance to Jewish colonization, pushed Samuel further. Van Rees reminded Samuel that there was “a very clear provision in the mandate regarding this point” and that “he was not asking what the Jews were doing, but what the Government was doing.” Merely “a passive encouragement”, insisted Van Rees, was not sufficient to meet the demands of the Mandate.⁶⁵ Van Rees hounded Samuel, believing he had discovered a clause of the Mandate (an unambiguously pro-Zionist clause at that) that was not being properly fulfilled. He would not cease the interrogation until he was satisfied that Samuel recognized the deficiency and committed to resolving it.

What was it that changed from the time Van Rees asked Samuel why the British favored Jews (over Dutch gentiles, for instance) in immigration to the time Van Rees attacked Samuel for not sufficiently assisting Jewish settlement in Palestine? These both took place, after all, on the same day. I have suggested the possibility that Van Rees only pursued the first line of questioning under Theodoli's influence, but I offer two other possible areas of explanation. Theodoli, Bugge-Wicksell, and Van Rees pressed Samuel on the issue of non-Jewish immigrants to Palestine. Repeatedly, Samuel tried to explain and defend the British policy as reasonable and consistent with the terms of the Mandate, to no avail. What reversed the course of the conversation was the intervention of Lugard, perhaps the most famous and powerful member, who observed Samuel's exchange with these PMC members and declared that:

Article 6 of the mandate spoke of special facilities for Jewish immigration. This implied that Jewish immigrants should be placed in a favorable position.

According to the White Paper [of 1922], moreover, the Jewish immigrants were considered in Palestine “as of right and not on sufferance”. He had heard, however, of considerable restrictions. How, in practice, were these two principles harmonized?⁶⁶

Instead of inquiring, as did his colleagues, why the British were favoring the Jews in immigration to Palestine, Lugard asked why the Jews were not favored even more. With the power of Lugard’s influence (or logic?) thus ended the PMC members’ assault on this British policy. Perhaps, Van Rees—persuaded by Lugard—followed Lugard’s lead and returned to the text of the Mandate, demanding that all its various requirements be completely fulfilled.

Alternatively, the cause of Van Rees’s transformation may be found beyond the published PMC minutes. The Wednesday morning meeting began at 10:15 AM; the afternoon meeting started at 3:30 PM. There is no indication in the minutes as to what time the morning session ended, but an hour or two were likely reserved for lunch and some respite from the intense discussions. However, there is no reason to suppose that the various PMC members did not continue to converse informally about the particular issues facing their commission during these hours in which their comments escaped the meticulous recording of the PMC’s stenographer. One can only conjecture about what occurred during these conversations and what influence they had on the later deliberations of the commission. It was perhaps in a conversation over lunch that Van Rees was convinced to change his position. This recognition of such imperceptible dialogue necessarily leaves our analysis limited. Indeed, it is at this point that archival work, of the sort Freundlich has begun, becomes most useful, with personal letters and anecdotal accounts potentially filling in the gaps left by the very nature of meeting minutes.

CONCLUSION

The PMC is an understudied subject, perhaps due to the commission’s fundamental, institutionalized powerlessness. Yet it is precisely the impotence of the PMC to change Mandate policies that makes it a fascinating forum in which to observe the intellectual, rather than merely the political, struggles surrounding the Palestine Mandate. We have found that the general tenor of the PMC discussions reflected the members’ apparently sincere attempt to grapple with the challenges of enforcing a complex mandate,

to negotiate between the need to protect the position of Palestine's Arabs and the requirement to develop a National Home there for the Jews. This (ultimately futile) endeavor, rather than "bias", seems best to explain the PMC's first discussion of Palestine.

Our study of this early debate on Palestine within an international body illustrates the need for a fresh scholarly look at the PMC and Palestine, and for a more critical view of the use of "bias" as an explanatory tool. Finally, I suggest that the lessons of this study—the need to read carefully for historical context, personal dynamics, and complex motivations within the minutes of meetings—pertain no less (and, indeed, are necessary all the more so, given the challenges of establishing critical distance) as we write the more recent, and ongoing, history of the relationship of Zionism and Israel to the UN.

NOTES

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1. "Proclamation of the State of Israel," *Palestine Post*, 16 May 1948.
2. See: <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/full-transcript-of-netanyahu-speech-at-un-general-assembly-1.386464>.
3. The PMC 36th Session met in Geneva 8–29 June 1939.
4. Major debates regarding Palestine occurred 27 October–1 November 1924.
5. Campbell L. Upthegrove, *Empire by Mandate: A History of the Relations of Great Britain with the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations* (New York, 1954), 26.
6. There are no significant biographies of most of the 1924 PMC members. Below, I generally follow Upthegrove, *Ibid.*, 26–8.
7. Order in which they are listed in the minutes: PMC, "Minutes of the 5th Session (Extraordinary) held at Geneva from 23 October to 6 November 1924" [hereafter, PMCVM], 5. Pierre Orts of Belgium, a member of the PMC in 1924, was not present when Samuel met with the Commission, though Orts did participate in the 16th Meeting on 1 November when the report on Palestine was being prepared. See PMCVM, 12off. Chiyuki Yamanaka, the Japanese former counselor of the Embassy, who joined the PMC in 1924, did not attend any of these sessions. See Upthegrove, *Empire by Mandate*, 27.
8. See Eric Rosenthal, *South African Dictionary of National Biography* (New York, 1966), 7.

9. Beau was Governor-General of French Indo-China, 1902–08.
10. See <http://runeberg.org/authors/wicksann.html>.
11. See <http://www.filosofia.org/ave/001/a141.htm>
12. The LoN's archive photograph collection includes at least four undated photos of PMC meetings, offering visual images of the commission's working conditions.
13. On group dynamics theory, see, e.g., Noah Friedkin and Eugene Johnsen, *Social Influence Network Theory: A Sociological Examination of Small Group Dynamics* (New York, 2011).
14. PMCVM, 84.
15. While neither Arab nor Zionist representatives were allowed to attend the PMC meetings, they had the opportunity to submit written statements advocating their positions. However, whereas the memorandum submitted by the Executive Committee of the Palestine Arab Congress was received and extensively discussed by PMC members, due to procedural errors the Zionist memorandum never officially reached the commission. There were two approved avenues through which such petitions could be added to the commission's agenda: the route the Zionists chose required that the memorandum be submitted at least six months prior to the session intended to be discussed. Citing American Zionist leader Louis Lipsky's letter to PMC Secretary William Rappard, Freundlich explains that the Zionists missed the half-year deadline by a matter of months, demonstrating, to Freundlich, "the extent to which [the] London [branch of the Zionist Organization, which penned the memorandum] was out of touch with [the LoN in] Geneva," Yehoshua Freundlich, "The First Debate on Palestine in the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations," *Studies in Zionism* 5 (1982): 120.
16. Mirroring the Zionist View, Roger Heacock argues the reverse, that the PMC took a strongly anti-Arab position, "*Le système international aux prises avec le colonialisme: les délibérations sur la Palestine dans la Commission permanente des Mandats de la Société des Nations*," in Nadine Meouchy and Peter Sluglett, eds., *The British and French Mandates in Comparative Perspective* (Leiden, 2004), 129–42.
17. Freundlich, "The First Debate," 122.
18. *Ibid.*, 121–2.
19. *Ibid.*, 123.
20. Freundlich's only documentary source for this contention, *ibid.*, n. 45.
21. PMCVM, 68.
22. McMahon's letter to Sharif Hussein ibn Ali, "Sir Henry McMahon: The McMahon Letter (24 October 1915)," in *The Israel-Arab Reader: A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict*, ed. Walter Laqueur and Barry Rubin (New York, 2008).
23. Even with Theodoli's emphasis at the end of the meetings on Jewish immigration as a root cause of the problems in Palestine. In the discussions on the language of the PMC's report, Theodoli referred to Jewish immigration as "the kernel of the problem". He did not call for a cessation of immigration, but rather

that it be “regulated by the mandatory Power, taking into account the economic factor and the power of the country to absorb the incoming immigrants.” See PMCVM, 119–20.

24. Freundlich, 121, n. 35, refers again to 120, n. 27. Emanuel Neumann and Morris Rothenberg were both committed American Zionists. Neumann was the co-founder of Keren Hayesod in the U.S. in 1921 and was serving as its director at the time of the PMC meeting. In 1925, he headed the United Palestine Appeal.

25. Even more helpful would be the recorder’s original notes, which could help determine to what extent the minutes reflect the recorder’s own agenda.

26. 7th meeting, 5th session. The first six meetings dealt with the mandates of the South Sea Islands, the Cameroons, New Guinea, Nauru, and Togoland.

27. PMCVM, 47.

28. LoN, “Covenant,” Article 22.

29. This petition is included in PMCVM, 167.

30. PMCV, 55.

31. See Bernard Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel: A Political Life* (Oxford, 1992), especially on Samuel’s first visit to Palestine in 1920, 243ff.

32. PMCV, 55.

33. *Idem.*

34. Discussing Trans-Jordan, Samuel asserted that “an Arab administration could not be expected to reach the same standard of efficiency as direct administration by a European Power,” *ibid.*, 60.

35. *Ibid.*, 56. In April 1919, Samuel wrote to Balfour expressing the Zionists’ grievance that “the military administration there [in Palestine] usually proceed as though the Declaration of November 1919 had never been made.” Samuel then considered it problematic if the British were to act as though there had been no Balfour Declaration, whereas by 1924, at least with regard to dealings with the Arabs, this was now seen as a goal. Samuel to Balfour, 7 April 1919, PRO, FO 800/216, cited in Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel*, 239.

36. PMCV, 56.

37. *Ibid.*, 57.

38. *Idem.*

39. *Idem.*

40. This reputed ambition of Zionism thus phrased was explicitly repudiated by Britain two years earlier. “His Majesty’s Government regard any such expectation as impracticable and have no such aim in view,” declared the White Paper of 1922.

41. PMCVM, 63.

42. Freundlich, “The First Debate,” 122.

43. PMCVM, 63–4.

44. *The New York Times*, 5 March 1919.

45. Morgenthau initially wrote the essay in 1921. It was expanded and republished in Henry Morgenthau and French Strother, *All in a Life-Time* (New York, 1922).

46. “Nothing short of the full glory of their Zion,” Morgenthau insisted, “will long content the ambitious apostles of Zionism.” *Ibid.*, 389.

47. Morgenthau’s granddaughter called them “assimilationists”. See Barbara Tuchman, “The Assimilationist Dilemma: Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story,” *Commentary* 63.5 (1977).

48. Morgenthau and Strother, *All in a Life-Time*, 404.

49. On the peculiar Palestine “International Park” affair, see Heath W. Lowry, “The Young Turk Triumvirate, Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, and the Future of Palestine, December 1913–January 1916,” in *The Last Ottoman Century and Beyond: The Jews in Turkey and the Balkans, 1808–1945*, ed. Minna Rozen (Jerusalem, 2002), 2:151–64.

50. PMCVM, 64.

51. *Idem.*

52. *Idem.*

53. *Ibid.*, 69.

54. Beau’s proposal to divide Palestine into Jewish and Arab regions and eventually states was not the first. The idea of partitioning Palestine “in order to attain as quickly as possible a Jewish majority and Jewish autonomy in part of the country,” was proposed by Zionists, including Theodor Herzl in 1902 and by Arthur Ruppin in 1907. Eventually, the Zionists chose not to pursue this course so as to have a larger area for Jewish immigration and sovereignty. See “Partition of Palestine,” in *New Encyclopedia of Zionism and Israel*, (New Jersey, 1994), 2:1028–9. In contextualizing Beau’s proposal, it is also important to recall that in 1922, Trans-Jordan—which Samuel had brought under his administration’s control in 1920—was officially deemed exempt from the JNH provisions of the Palestine Mandate. Thus, Beau’s suggestion might be seen as a logical extension of this recent “partition”. See Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel*, 253, n. 90; Yitzhak Gil-Har, “Separation of Trans-Jordan from Palestine,” ed. Lee Levine, *The Jerusalem Cathedral*, Vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 1981); Avraham P. Alsberg, “Drawing up the Eastern Border in Eretz-Israel,” *Hatziyonut* 3 (1973): 229–46 [Hebrew].

55. PMCVM, 68.

56. Samuel’s perfunctory rejection of Beau’s suggestion is consistent with his insistence on only voluntary Arab land sales to the Zionists in a May 1919 meeting of the Palestine Advisory Committee, before his appointment as H.C. and his first visit to Palestine. “It may be possible that with complete agreement and goodwill a certain proportion of the Arabs may desire to remove to equally good or better land, possibly with some kind of financial inducement. If so, well and good, but any movement of that kind,” Samuel insisted, “must be absolutely voluntary and conducted without any form of pressure . . . There will be the most equitable and sympathetic treatment of the Arab populations of the country. If we were to go to Palestine to oppress other people it would be an unspeakable disgrace.” Draft minutes of meeting, 10 May 1919, Central Zionist Archives, Z4/16009, cited in Wasserstein, 240.

57. PMCVM, 69.

58. PMCVM, 69.

59. *Ibid.*, 71.

60. *Ibid.*, 73.

61. *Idem.*

62. *Idem.*

63. This was especially the case after Muhammad 'Ali's conquest of Palestine in 1831. See Alexander Scholch, "Britain in Palestine, 1838–1882: The Roots of the Balfour Policy," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 22.1 (1992): 40ff; Jacob M. Landau, "The Educational Impact of Western Culture on Traditional Society in Nineteenth Century Palestine," and Shimon Shami, "The Impact of Western Ideas on Traditional Society in Ottoman Palestine," both in *Studies on Palestine During the Ottoman Period*, ed. Moshe Ma'oz (Jerusalem, 1975); Alex Carmel, "A Note on the Christian Contribution to Palestine's Development in the 19th Century," in *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period: Political, Social and Economic Transformation*, ed. David Kushner (Jerusalem, 1986), 302–8.

64. Their focus on discriminatory immigration policies may have been influenced by the debates surrounding the US Immigration Act of 1924. It is likely that the concern with immigration (qualifications and limitations) throughout the Western world at this time also had some role in engendering this line of questioning.

65. PMCVM, 78.

66. *Ibid.*, 73.