

# **'It Is a Question of Which Civilisation You Prefer': Winston Churchill at the Crisis of Zionism**

by

Marjorie L. Jeffrey and Michael S. Kochin

"We are bound by our own consciences to civilisation."<sup>1</sup>  
Winston Churchill

Most of the literature on the critical period of political Zionism, from the Balfour Declaration of November 2, 1917, to the collapse of the British Mandate and the Israeli War of Independence, assumes that the principal parties involved—the Jews, the Arabs, and the British—had fundamentally conflicting interests. Winston Churchill was virtually unique in thinking that despite their apparent and bloody rivalry, Jews, Arabs, and Britons had, or could be made to have, a common and decisive interest in a Jewish state in Palestine.

Churchill's thinking on Palestine comes out of his liberal imperialism: his willingness to entertain the proposition on Palestine, as on India, on Ireland, on South Africa, and on every other imperial question in which he took part, that the stated wants of a subject people could be distinguished from their actual and legitimate interests. Justice in Churchill's view, requires attending to the real interests of the ruled, educating them in their own true interests to the extent possible, but always ruling with those interests clearly in view even when the opinions or passions of the ruled obstructed them.<sup>2</sup> All peoples, whether they accepted it or not, had an interest in fuller participation in the blessings of modern civilization, and the British, as rulers of a global empire, had the power



Winston Churchill and Sir Samuel Herbert at a tree-planting ceremony, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, March 28, 1921. In his address, Churchill described the Jewish national home in Palestine as a "blessing to the whole world, a blessing to the Jewish race . . . and a blessing to Great Britain." (Photo: Library of Congress, Matson Photo Collection/Public domain via Wikimedia Commons)

and—when led by visionaries such as Churchill—the vision to guide them in that participation. This kind of imperialism was controversial in Churchill's own era, and a

defense of it in our era is untimely, to say the least.<sup>3</sup>

Here we do not aim to defend—or to critique—Churchill’s understanding of empire. Rather, we will explore how Churchill’s understanding of the justice of Britain’s empire, especially in terms of its realization of the principles of civilization, appeared in his political actions and inactions with regard to Zionism and Palestine. Precisely because Churchill’s imperial and civilizational principles are so distant from ours, we must elucidate them in order to grasp his understanding of events and thus comprehend what Churchill did and what Jews, Arabs, and Britons suffered.

We think that there is a need for this kind of elucidation in the literature on Churchill and Palestine. Previous writers have delved into the question of Churchill’s role in the Zionist project and in the creation of the State of Israel, but the explanations that have been offered by historians, such as Michael J. Cohen and Michael Makovsky, do not take Churchill’s fundamental liberalism seriously. Cohen grounds what he perceives to be Churchill’s mistakes and missteps in antisemitism, while Makovsky ascribes them to “romanticism” or finds them inexplicable.<sup>4</sup>

In this paper, we take Churchill seriously—and on his own terms. As we shall show, Churchill was not a realist about international politics. He did not believe tragedy was inevitable; rather, he held a profoundly liberal belief that political leaders can be shown their legitimate common interests and therefore choose peace rather than war. Churchill’s judgments on Palestine may seem to twenty-first-century readers to reflect abstract moral principles rather than mid-twentieth-century political realities. Yet it was Churchill, and not the supposedly more realistic British opponents of his Palestine

policy, whether politicians or officials, who correctly assessed the military and political potential of the rival Jewish and Arab claimants to Palestine.

Let us open with a paradox: Winston Churchill was a lifelong Zionist. Yet, when he was prime minister during Zionism’s crucial years from 1940 to 1945, he did little or nothing to further Zionist aims, notwithstanding the Holocaust perpetrated during those years by the Nazis.<sup>5</sup> To explain the standard of values expressed in Churchill’s actions and his “inactions” regarding Zionism, we will first put on the table Churchill’s understanding of civilization, for “civilisation” is a vital term and concept throughout his speeches and writings.<sup>6</sup> We will examine Churchill’s statements and actions regarding Zionism, which he saw as a vehicle not only for Jewish national liberation and the advancement of British interests in the Near East but also for the advancement of civilized values both in Palestine and the world as a whole.

We will then be in a position to understand why for Churchill the real crisis of Zionism was not the Nazi Holocaust but rather began with the assassination of the British Minister of State in the Middle East Lord Moyne at the hands of Jewish terrorists. Since Churchill considered the Zionist cause to be one of world historical importance, this standard of values would seem to apply to other matters to which he ascribed equal or greater importance: for example, the decision to acquiesce to American global dominance as the price for defeating Hitler and checking Soviet communism. Churchill usually assumed that his audience would know what he meant by “civilisation,” though he would often refer to its attributes: the traditional Anglo-Saxon understandings of freedom, honor, and law; the deposit of Christian morals and ethics; and the European and

Anglo-Saxon literary tradition. The way that the Zionist cause supported Churchill's conception of civilization can only be understood in relation to what he understood civilization to be.

The one speech in which Churchill directly tackles the question "what is civilisation?" is his "Chancellor's Address" at Bristol University on July 2, 1938. Churchill began by identifying civilization with self-government:

There are few words which are used more loosely than the word "Civilisation." What does it mean? It means a society based upon the opinion of civilians. It means that violence, the rule of warriors and despotic chiefs, the conditions of camps and warfare, of riot and tyranny, give place to parliaments where laws are made, and independent courts of justice in which over long periods those laws are maintained. . . . The central principle of Civilisation is the subordination of the ruling authority to the settled customs of the people and to their will as expressed through the Constitution. In this Island we have to-day achieved in a high degree the blessings of Civilisation. There is freedom; there is law; there is love of country; there is a great measure of goodwill between classes; there is a widening prosperity. There are unmeasured opportunities of correcting abuses and making further progress.<sup>7</sup>

Churchill linked this Anglo-Saxon inheritance of freedom under law, and its attendant rights and liberties, with a universal principle of civilization, which he suggested could be spread throughout the world. At Bristol University, Churchill asked: "Why should not nations link themselves together in a larger system and establish a rule of law for the benefit of all? That surely is the

supreme hope by which we should be inspired and the goal towards which we should march with resolute step." He concluded:

Civilisation will not last, freedom will not survive, peace will not be kept, unless a very large majority of mankind unite together to defend them and show themselves possessed of a constabulary power before which barbaric and atavistic forces will stand in awe.

Here, then, we see the task which should command the exertions of the rising generation which fills this spacious hall, and which may bring to the life of Britain the surge of a new impulse towards the organization of world peace, and across the gulf of these eventful years prepare and bring nearer the Brotherhood of Man.<sup>8</sup>

In the fiery 1936 broadside, "What Good's a Constitution?," written as a pointed critique of Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1936 "Democratic Convention Address," Churchill attacked the claim that the citizen is meant to serve the state. He wrote that he himself held the opposing view: "I hold that governments are meant to be, and must remain, the servants of the citizens; that states and federations only come into existence and can only be justified by preserving the 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness' in the homes and families of individuals. The true right and power rest in the individual." Churchill responded to FDR's formulation of "making war on poverty" to warn of the dangers to civilization of FDR's formulation.<sup>9</sup> War is an extreme condition in which the state legitimately calls upon the individual to sacrifice his rights and liberties for the sake of the preservation of the political community. Churchill wrote:

One of the greatest reasons for avoiding war is that it is destructive to liberty. But we must not be led into adopting for ourselves the evils of war in time of peace upon any pretext whatever. The word 'civilisation' means not only peace by the non-regimentation of the people such as is required in war. Civilisation means that officials and authorities, whether uniformed or not, whether armed or not, are made to realize that they are servants and not masters.<sup>10</sup>

Churchill then set forth a formulation that he would sharpen two years later in his speech at Bristol University:

I judge the civilisation of any community by simple tests. What is the degree of freedom possessed by the citizen or subject? Can he think, speak and act freely under well-established, well-known laws? Can he criticize the executive government? Can he sue the State if it has infringed his rights? Are there also great processes for changing the law to meet new conditions? Judging by these standards, Great Britain and the United States can claim to be in the forefront of civilised communities. But we owe this only in part to the good sense and watchfulness of our citizens.<sup>11</sup>

Churchill's definition of civilization seems designed for potentially universal application. For Churchill, the spread of this "civilisation" throughout the world was both possible and good; thus, for him, Zionism is defensible insofar as it promised to bring the blessings of civilization to the peoples of Palestine.

But another aspect of civilization that Churchill often referenced in speeches and essays is that of Christianity—or at least, the Christian ethical and moral tradition. He held

Christianity in such high regard that he stated in a speech at MIT in 1949: "The flame of Christian ethics is still our highest guide. To guard and cherish it is our first interest, both spiritually and materially. The fulfillment of spiritual duty in our daily life is vital to our survival."<sup>12</sup> Churchill claimed that the heart of the Christian tradition was owed to the Jewish religion and race. In his 1920 essay, "Zionism Versus Bolshevism: A Struggle for the Soul of the Jewish People," Churchill wrote:

We owe to the Jews in the Christian revelation a system of ethics which, even if it were entirely separated from the supernatural, would be incomparably the most precious possession of mankind, worth in fact the fruits of all other wisdom and learning put together. On that system and by that faith there has been built out of the wreck of the Roman Empire the whole of our existing civilisation.<sup>13</sup>

Therefore, in Churchill's conception, at the heart of the civilization he promotes, and which is the end of all his endeavors, is a debt to the Jewish people. Churchill wrote that the establishment of a Jewish state is not only a debt owed by both the Balfour Declaration and by civilization itself but also a matter of good international policy for the sake of giving the Jewish diaspora a national alternative to international communism. He prophesied: "If, as may well happen, there should be created in our own lifetime by the banks of the Jordan a Jewish State under the protection of the British Crown, which might comprise three or four millions of Jews, an event would have occurred in the history of the world which would, from every point of view, be beneficial, and would be especially in harmony with the truest interests of the British Empire."<sup>14</sup> Despite occasional wavering, this remained Churchill's basic

attitude toward Zionism for the rest of his life.

Churchill felt that Western civilization owed the Jews a great debt it could never repay; this small wandering tribe had grasped an idea “of which all the genius of Greece and all the power of Rome were incapable.”<sup>15</sup> The idea of one God came from the Jews. It was this evaluative, civilizational perspective that most informed Churchill’s regard for this people. Churchill wrote of the Jews and the Greeks in his World War II memoirs:

No two cities have counted more with mankind than Athens and Jerusalem. Their messages in religion, philosophy, and art have been the main guiding lights of modern faith and culture. Centuries of foreign rule and indescribable, endless oppression leave them still living, active communities and forces in the modern world, quarreling amongst themselves with insatiable vivacity. Personally I have always been on the side of both, and believed in their invincible power to survive internal strife and the world tides threatening their extinction.<sup>16</sup>

Because in World War I Britain needed the help of the Jews, it promised the Zionists what they longed for most: a Jewish state in their historic homeland, Palestine.

For Churchill, honor required keeping the promises made to the Jews in the Balfour Declaration. Arthur Balfour, the British foreign secretary, wrote in a public letter to Baron Rothschild on November 2, 1917:

His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be

done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.<sup>17</sup>

In the Balfour Declaration, the British government pledged its support for the eventual creation of a “national home for the Jewish people,” which in the view of Balfour, Lloyd George, and Churchill meant a Jewish state in Palestine.<sup>18</sup> Churchill had no role in the formulation of the Balfour Declaration in 1917. He was minister of munitions at that point but without a seat in the cabinet, having been forced out after the Dardanelles disaster in 1915.

Churchill was appointed secretary of state for the Colonies by Lloyd George in 1921, with two particular responsibilities: Palestine and Mesopotamia. Lloyd George had two aims: to reduce spending on these areas and “to carry out the terms of the Balfour Declaration and facilitate the establishment of a Jewish National Home.”<sup>19</sup> For Churchill, the Balfour Declaration was a solemn promise made in wartime in order to prompt Russian and American Jews to support the Allied war effort and therefore one that must be kept.<sup>20</sup>

Churchill appointed Colonel T. E. Lawrence as his Arab affairs adviser. Lawrence facilitated the Lawrence-Feisal Agreement under which “in return for Arab sovereignty in Baghdad, Amman and Damascus, Feisal agreed to abandon all claims of his father to Palestine.”<sup>21</sup> Churchill planned to give Feisal the throne of Iraq and his brother Abdullah the throne of Transjordan, leaving Western Palestine as the location of the Jewish national home.

The Cairo Conference was convened by Churchill in March 1921 and was attended by forty leading experts on the Middle East. The first decision made at the Cairo Conference on March 17, 1921, was the separation of

Palestine and Transjordan, “thus enabling Britain to fulfill its wartime pledges to both the Arabs and the Jews.” At the conference, Churchill and Lawrence said they hoped that the presence of an Arab ruler “east of the Jordan would enable Britain to prevent anti-Zionist agitation from the Arab side of the river.” Lawrence spoke of pressure being applied on Emir Abdullah to “check anti-Zionism.”<sup>22</sup> Some Zionist leaders, including Chaim Weizmann and Ze’ev Jabotinsky, saw in this decision a betrayal of the Balfour Declaration’s promise to the Jews.<sup>23</sup> This would be the last time that Churchill pushed against the Jews’ territorial aspirations in the Middle East.

About two weeks after the Cairo Conference, Churchill went to Palestine, where he was greeted by Arabs shouting, “Down with the Jews” and “Cut their throats.” Churchill planted a tree on the site of the future Hebrew University in Jerusalem and gave a speech: “I believe that the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine will be a blessing to the whole world, a blessing to the Jewish race scattered all over the world, and a blessing to Great Britain.”<sup>24</sup> The following day Churchill spoke to a Jewish deputation of their responsibility:

[As] representatives of the Jewish nation all over the world . . . your conduct should provide an example for, and do honour to, Jews in all countries. . . . If I did not believe that you were animated by the very highest spirit of justice and idealism, and that your work would in fact confer blessing upon the whole country, I should not have the high hopes which I have that eventually your work will be accomplished.<sup>25</sup>

Churchill saw that a surge of Arab protests had emerged in Palestine after the Cairo Conference. “He recognized that the root cause of the conflict was not immigration but

the fundamental Zionist aspiration. What is exciting the Arabs is not immigration but the speeches of the Zionists, which were that the country would become Jewish. He does not mean it as a reproach; he realizes that the Zionists can only conduct propaganda in this way. But still, this is the main cause of the trouble.”<sup>26</sup>

Churchill “informed his officials at the Colonial Office that he believed it was impossible for Britain to grant any form of representation to the Arabs that would give them the power to halt Jewish immigration.” At the same time, he approved a proposal to limit Jewish immigration to a rate that could be easily absorbed economically. His strategy thus was to keep the door open for immigration, but to keep it slow enough that economic growth could keep up. In time, he hoped that the Jews would outnumber the Arabs. Then, and only then, would representative government in Palestine be possible within the parameters of the solemn promises of the Balfour Declaration. In February 1922, “Churchill’s officials had drafted a constitution for Palestine that would ensure that no Arab majority could stand in the way of continued Jewish immigration and investment.”<sup>27</sup>

A month later, the Arab delegation held a meeting in London to denounce Britain’s “Zionist policy.” The principal Arab speaker, Shibly al-Jamal (a Protestant Arab), spoke “about the necessity of killing Jews if the Arabs did not get their way.”<sup>28</sup> In support of the Arabs, the House of Lords voted in June 1922 against the implementation of the Balfour Declaration. Churchill got this vote reversed in the House of Commons. In the Commons debate, Churchill held up the economic good and prosperity that would come from the Zionist enterprise. Notably, speaking of the development of the region, he said: “I am told that the Arabs would have

done it themselves. Who is going to believe that? Left to themselves, the Arabs of Palestine would not in a thousand years have taken effective steps towards the irrigation and electrification of Palestine.”<sup>29</sup> In winding up, Churchill appealed to the honor of the House and said that Britain must keep the pledge she had made in wartime. The appeal was successful: only 35 votes were cast against Churchill’s Palestine policy, with 292 in favor.

Churchill’s 1922 White Paper served as the blueprint for the British Mandate in Palestine. It reiterated the goals of the Balfour Declaration but stated that the goal was “not the imposition of Jewish nationality upon the inhabitants of Palestine as a whole, but the further development of the existing Jewish community.” It also made it clear that in order for “the Jewish people to display its capacities, it is essential that it should know that it is in Palestine as of right and not on sufferance.” Therefore, “the existence of a Jewish National Home in Palestine should be internationally guaranteed, and that it should be formally recognized to rest upon ancient historic connection.”<sup>30</sup> The Churchill White Paper was submitted to the League of Nations and approved by the League on July 22, 1922.

Churchill’s statesmanship as colonial secretary fulfilled wartime promises made to the Arabs and also began to fulfill the wartime promises made to the Zionists. Churchill believed that the promise made in the Balfour Declaration had to be honored but not merely because of the promises made by Britain. He believed that this Jewish state would be a light to the world, a promise of civilization after the horror and destruction of World War I.

To sum up, Churchill’s program as colonial secretary charged him with implementing the Balfour Declaration. A Jewish “national

home” would be constructed in Western Palestine: this meant a Jewish majority and an eventual Jewish state. The Arabs would not be granted representative government so that they should not interfere: “The development of Representative institutions in Palestine was suspended owing to the fact that any elected body would undoubtedly prohibit further immigration of Jews,” Churchill told the cabinet on May 31, 1921. Moreover, the Jews might arm themselves freely, as long as they did not do so too openly.<sup>31</sup>

Out of office in 1930, Churchill explained to an American Zionist audience the twofold obligation contained in the Balfour Declaration to the Jews and to the non-Jewish communities of Palestine: “The two obligations are, indeed, of equal weight, but they are different in character. The first obligation is positive and creative, the second obligation is safeguarding and conciliatory. Our mandatory obligations to the Jews throughout the world, who helped us, and towards the Palestinian Arabs, who were the conscript soldiers of our Turkish enemy, are both binding.”<sup>32</sup>

Churchill expended much political capital through the 1920s and 1930s trying to convince Parliament to keep both those promises. The 1936 Arab Revolt made the British government reconsider its commitment to the Mandate and the Balfour Declaration. The government convened the Palestine Royal Commission, known after its chair as the Peel Commission. The purpose of this commission was to “examine the nature of Britain’s pledge to the Jews and Arabs, and to give suggestions for the future of the Palestine Mandate.”<sup>33</sup> Churchill testified extensively in front of the Peel Commission and was asked over a hundred questions. His answers are the most complete defense of his vision of the Jewish national home.

Before the Peel Commission, Churchill emphasized that the Balfour Declaration was a solemn promise made for weighty wartime considerations: "I insist upon loyalty and upon the good faith of England to the Jews, to which I attach the most enormous importance, because we gained great advantages in the War. We did not adopt Zionism entirely out of altruistic love of starting a Zionist colony; it was a matter of great importance to this country."<sup>34</sup>

By 1937, many British officials and politicians denied that a Jewish state in Palestine was still in Britain's national interest at the time, yet Churchill insisted on it as a matter of British honor:

In my opinion, all questions of self-government in Palestine are subordinate to the discharge of the Balfour Declaration—the idea of creating a National Home for the Jews and facing all the consequences which may ultimately in the slow passage of time result from that. This is the prime and dominating pledge upon which Britain must act.<sup>35</sup>

Churchill laid the whole picture out in one complex Churchillian sentence: "We said there should be a Jewish Home in Palestine, but if more and more Jews gather to that Home and all is worked from age to age, from generation to generation, with justice and fair consideration to those displaced and so forth, certainly it was contemplated and intended that they might in the course of time become an overwhelmingly Jewish State." Explaining the meaning and aim of the Jewish national home, Churchill replied:

The conception undoubtedly was that if the absorptive capacity over a number of years and the breeding over a number of years, all guided by the British government, gave an increasing Jewish

population, that population should not in any way be restricted from reaching a majority position. . . . Certainly we committed ourselves to the idea that some day, somehow, far off in the future, subject to justice and economic convenience, there might well be a great Jewish State there, numbered by millions, far exceeding the present inhabitants of the country and to cut them off from that would be a wrong.<sup>36</sup>

The justification for supporting the Jews is in part their civilizational contribution. No injustice, or, at least, "no harsh injustice" in Churchill's view, is done to the Arabs by building a Jewish national home in Palestine, because the Jews will make far better use of Palestine than will the Arabs:

Why is there harsh injustice done if people come in and make a livelihood for more and make the desert into palm groves and orange groves? Why is it injustice because there is more work and wealth for everybody? There is no injustice. The injustice is when those who live in the country leave it to be a desert for thousands of years. . . . If I were an Arab I would not like it, but it is for the good of the world that that place should be cultivated, and it never will be cultivated by the Arabs.<sup>37</sup>

For Churchill, not all peoples have achieved the same standard of civilization, yet all are capable of becoming more civilized. The resources of humanity are given to us for progressive purposes and belong to the people who can make the best use of them in the interests of all. Churchill's liberal imperialism is no less imperialistic for being liberal and progressive. Between the Jews and the Arabs, as he told the Peel Commission in 1937, "it is a question of which civilisation you prefer."<sup>38</sup>



Because the Jews are native to Palestine, the anti-colonial argument has no bite, Churchill claimed. Commission member Harold Rumbold, the former British ambassador to Berlin during Hitler's rise to power, stated that the indigenous peoples of Palestine were being subjected to an invasion by a "foreign race." Churchill refused to accept this characterization of the Jews but rather pointed out that it had been the Arabs who had invaded Palestine.<sup>39</sup>

When Lord Peel later tried to push him, Churchill replied, "I do not admit that the dog in the manger has the final right to the manger, even though he may have lain there for a very long time. I do not admit that right."<sup>40</sup> In replying to Lord Peel, Churchill applied the same principle of liberal imperialist justice in Palestine that he saw applicable elsewhere:

I do not admit, for instance, that a great wrong has been done to the Red Indians of America, or the black people of Australia. I do not admit that a wrong has been done to those people by the fact that a stronger race, a highergrade race, or, at any rate, a more worldlywise race, to put it that way, has come in and taken their place. I do not admit it. I do not think the Red Indian had any right to say, 'The American Continent belongs to us and we are not going to have any of these European settlers coming in here.' They had not the right, nor had they the power.<sup>41</sup>

Yet Churchill argued, the British should not support the Jews in doing injustice to the Arabs or in displacing or excluding them from the fruits of progress in Palestine: "As Burke says, if I cannot have reform without injustice, I will not have reform." Churchill states that the Jews ought not exclude the Arabs from employment and ought not to

refuse leasing land they own to Arabs.<sup>42</sup> Churchill had his testimony removed from the final report, writing to Peel soon after: "There are a few references to nationalities which would not appear suited to the public record."<sup>43</sup> Even the Churchill of 1937 thought his testimony too racially charged for publication.

In July 1937, the Peel Commission's report recommended the partition of the remaining Mandate territory into three parts: 1) a Jewish state consisting of a sliver of territory along the Mediterranean coast and the Galilee; 2) a permanent international mandate consisting of Jerusalem with a corridor to the sea at Jaffa; and 3) an Arab state consisting of the rest of Palestine, west of the Jordan. In his testimony before the Peel Commission, Churchill had been agnostic on Partition: "I have not thought sufficiently about it."<sup>44</sup>

Churchill was subsequently persuaded by the Revisionist Zionist leader Ze'ev Jabotinsky to oppose publicly, and in Parliament, the Peel Commission's recommendation of partition because the land allocated to the Jews was insufficient for a viable Jewish state. On July 28, 1937, Churchill told the Zionist activist Lord Melchett: "Your claim, which is based on moral not physical grounds remains unaltered. The world is going to go through stormy and perilous times. There will probably be wars; no one knows what the outcome of these will be. Through all this period causes will survive: little territories will not. The great cause of Zionism is capable of surviving two or three wars."<sup>45</sup>

In those "stormy and perilous times" for the Jews, Churchill's remarks may seem detached and unsympathetic. Yet the Jews of Palestine and the Zionist dream they embodied survived those times because they were sheltered from Rommel's *Afrikakorps*, not by their own

Hebrew army, navy, or air force but by the might of the British Empire. Instead of implementing partition, the Chamberlain government issued a new policy in its May 1939 White Paper that claimed that the erection of a Jewish national home in Palestine was now complete. Jewish immigration would be restricted, and there would be no independent Jewish state. Churchill, along with a small number of Conservative MPs and much larger number of Liberal and Labour MPs, vigorously and vociferously opposed the 1939 White Paper. Yet the 1939 White Paper was nonetheless approved by a 268–179 majority in the Commons and without opposition in the Lords.

Churchill joined the Chamberlain government as First Lord of the Admiralty on September 3, 1939. The 1939 White Paper nonetheless remained government policy as long as Chamberlain was prime minister, although Churchill attempted in cabinet deliberations to get it annulled. It is in the Admiralty period that we see the first glimmerings of Churchill's policy of inaction. Officialdom quickly learned that if it wanted help from the Royal Navy in implementing the White Paper's restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine, it would have to work around, or tunnel under, the First Lord.

On May 10, 1940, Churchill became prime minister at the head of a coalition government. Now he was able to repudiate the 1939 White Paper but only in internal discussions. Despite occasional false starts, the first Churchill government put forward no positive program for Palestine to replace the White Paper. Churchill's policy as prime minister remains the one he had already articulated as First Lord in a war cabinet memorandum on Christmas Day, 1939: "that the future of Palestine was one of the

questions which must find its place in the general peace settlement at the end of the war; and that meanwhile nothing would be done to prejudice the final form which that settlement would take."<sup>46</sup>

Not quite nothing. Montgomery ended the threat of a Nazi conquest of Palestine by defeating Rommel in 1942 at El Alamein. But putting that aside, even after Churchill became prime minister in May 1940, the Jews were not armed *en masse* despite his proposals, though they were not disarmed either. The gates of Palestine were not thrown open to those Jews who could make it there under wartime conditions. On the other hand, officials quickly learned that any immigration enforcement against Jews seeking refuge in Palestine must be carried out without it coming to the attention of the prime minister or the cabinet. "Our object," said one official, "is to keep the business as far as possible on the normal administrative plane and outside the realms of Cabinet policy and so forth." Whenever immigration enforcement measures came to Churchill's attention, he tried to stymie them: "What are you doing to my Jews?," Churchill challenged his Colonial Secretary Lord Lloyd.<sup>47</sup>

Strikingly, at a time when he had many pressing considerations outside of the Zionist cause, Churchill even battled Roosevelt on this issue of the Jewish national home. To quote Martin Gilbert: "The evolution of the Atlantic Charter, with its basic principle of one man, one vote, would have created on the 8th of May 1945 an Arab state in Palestine. Churchill made a special effort and fought successfully to exclude any of the provisions of the Atlantic Charter from Palestine, so as to enable the Jews not only to settle there, but in due course to become a majority."<sup>48</sup> Eight days after the Atlantic Charter had been signed, he wrote in a minute to L. S. Amery,

the secretary of state for India, that in his view the application of this particular pledge “would only arise in such cases when transference of territory or sovereignty arose.” It was surely not intended, he wrote, “that the natives of Nigeria or of East Africa could by a majority vote choose the form of Government under which they live, or the Arabs by such a vote expel the Jews from Palestine.” It was “evident,” Churchill added, “that prior obligations require to be considered and respected, and that circumstances alter cases.”<sup>49</sup>

A year later, when Roosevelt proposed a message to celebrate the anniversary of the Atlantic Charter, Churchill repeated these caveats, telegraphing the president from Cairo again, with particular reference to the pledge of self-government:

We considered the wording of that famous document line by line together and I should not be able, without mature consideration, to give it a wider interpretation than was agreed between us at the time. Its proposed application to Asia and Africa requires much thought. Grave embarrassment would be caused to the defence of India at the present time by such a statement as the Office of War Information has been forecasting. Here in the Middle East the Arabs might claim by majority they could expel the Jews from Palestine, or at any rate forbid all further immigration. I am wedded to the Zionist policy, of which I was one of the authors.<sup>50</sup>

Churchill had wanted a Jewish army as early as the 1921 Cairo Conference: “Bearing in mind the world-wide character of the Zionist movement, and the desire expressed by the Jews to help in their own Defence, it would be better to decide upon troops.”<sup>51</sup> But apart from a brief period in response to the 1936

Arab Revolt, when Orde Wingate organized the “Special Night Squads” that became the seed of the Palmach (the strike force of the Haganah, the Jewish community in Mandate Palestine’s official defense organization), the Mandate government had not armed the Jews in an organized fashion. Nonetheless, by October 1938, Palestine had more Jews under arms, the British believed, than British troops and police combined.<sup>52</sup>

In 1940, Churchill, still at the Admiralty, pressed for a Jewish military force. Churchill’s idea was “both to show the Jews that they were part of the Allied war effort and to give them some outlet for their feelings, that several dozen young Jews, after joining the British forces in Palestine, would parachute behind German lines to link up with Allied and Jewish resistance in occupied Europe.”<sup>53</sup> Churchill even pushed unsuccessfully for the dismissal of antisemitic British officers in high places who opposed the Jewish military force as an example to British officialdom. The Jewish Brigade of the British Army finally formed in time to deploy in the Italian Campaign in Fall 1944.

As the war in Europe labored to an end, Churchill began to consider postwar policy for Palestine and its Jewish population. In January 1944, the Churchill Cabinet approved the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, the plan to remain unimplemented until Hitler was defeated and unannounced until after the US Presidential election in November 1944. On January 25, 1944, Churchill wrote to Ismay: “we shall not proceed with any plan of partition which the Jews do not support.”<sup>54</sup>

On November 4, 1944, Weizmann lunched with Churchill at Chequers (the country home of serving British prime ministers). Churchill had just returned from Moscow and

Cairo. He repeated to Weizmann his support for a Jewish state and reassured Weizmann that Lord Moyne, the British Minister of State in the Middle East, would now support a Jewish state as part of the postwar settlement. Weizmann asked for a public statement, but Churchill told him that nothing could be said publicly “until the end of the German war, which might take from three to six months.”<sup>55</sup>

On November 6, 1944, the day before FDR defeated Dewey, Lord Moyne was assassinated by gunmen from the Lehi (*Lohamei Herut Yisrael*, Fighters for the Freedom of Israel), known to the British as the Stern Gang. Lord Moyne was “one of [Churchill’s] oldest friends, who had been his financial secretary at the Treasury twenty years before” and had been a member of Churchill’s Other Club (a dining club established by Churchill in 1911) for ten years. Churchill had been Lord Moyne’s houseguest in Cairo just ten days before his murder. Churchill demanded vengeance for the killing, writing to the British ambassador in Cairo that “it is of the utmost importance that both assassins should be executed.”<sup>56</sup>

Churchill condemned the murder in Parliament on November 17, 1944: “If our dreams for Zionism are to end in the smoke of assassins’ pistols, and our labours for its future to produce only a new set of gangsters worthy of Nazi Germany, many like myself would have to reconsider the position we have maintained so consistently and so long in the past.”<sup>57</sup> Churchill had supported the Zionists, because he was convinced of Zionism’s potential for promoting the progress of liberal and scientific civilization. The murder of Lord Moyne was for Churchill the first event that called the civilizational value of a Jewish state into question. His cabinet shelved the partition plan.<sup>58</sup>

From that point until the end of Churchill’s first premiership (November 1944–July 1945), Churchill did nothing to promote or to hinder the coming-into-being of a Jewish state. The murder of Lord Moyne had more effect on Churchill’s actions in regard to Palestine than the Nazi murder of six million Jews. Norman Rose states that “the Moyne assassination was a real turning-point. Something snapped in Churchill’s relationship with the Zionists. Despite his genuine affection for Weizmann, they never met again.”<sup>59</sup> Weizmann wrote to Churchill two weeks after the end of the war in Europe, begging him to use his influence to end restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine. Churchill responded that the question would have to wait until the peace conference of the Allies.

The Zionist leaders, particularly Weizmann and Ben-Gurion, were much distressed at this reply. Weizmann became very bitter, telling his colleagues: “Nobody cared what happened to the Jews. Nobody had raised a finger to stop them being slaughtered. They did not even bother about the remnant which had survived.” Churchill took his time crafting a response to Weizmann’s bitter second letter. In it, he laid out his argument for why the Mandate for Palestine should be transferred to the United States.<sup>60</sup>

The Labour Party, which defeated Churchill’s Conservatives and took office in July 1945, was pledged to a Jewish state. But influenced by permanent officials, in particular at the Foreign Office, sympathy for the Arabs and concern for the British strategic position in the Arab Middle East, the Labour Government quickly and completely turned on that policy. As Churchill wrote to his wife Clementine on August 24, 1945: “if it be true that the Labour government has thrown over their Zionist policy and mean to adhere to Chamberlain’s

White Paper there will be a row about that. Curiously enough, in this matter the government will be against their own party and I equally differ from the Tories.”<sup>61</sup> Of course, the Attlee government’s strategy depended on a weighing of Arab versus Jewish power that Churchill himself had never accepted.

Churchill was vociferous in opposing the Attlee government on Palestine. An upsurge in Jewish insurgent activity had led to a feeling that Britain might have to abandon the Mandate, leaving the Jews and Arabs to their own devices. This Churchill rejected: “Terrorism is no solution to the Palestine problem,” he wrote to Attlee on July 2, 1946, but he added: “Yielding to terrorism would be a disaster. At the same time I hold myself bound by our national pledges, into which I personally and you also and your Party have entered, namely the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine, with immigration up to the limit of ‘absorptive capacity,’ of which Britain, as the Mandatory Power, was the judge. . . . Several of my friends are far from abandoning Partition.” Attlee replied: “We shall not accept any solution which represents abandonment of our pledges to the Jews or our obligations to the Arabs.”<sup>62</sup>

Despite Attlee’s firm words, the Labour government surrendered the Mandate to the United Nations. On November 29, 1947, the UN General Assembly voted to the partition of Palestine into an Arab state, a Jewish state, and an internationalized Jerusalem. This partition was substantially more generous to the Jews than the Peel plan, giving them most of the Negev, or what is today southern Israel. On the partition vote, Britain abstained, but Churchill, in opposition, came out publicly in favor of Partition, whereas in 1937 he had opposed it.

The Jews accepted Partition; the Arabs rejected it. Britain helped to form a coalition of Arab states operating under the aegis of the British-sponsored Arab League to prevent the Partition by invading Palestine and crushing the Jews. One of the Arab armies that invaded Palestine, Transjordan’s Arab Legion, was British-officered and commanded by a British general. For the Legion’s actions, as Churchill wrote in a statement he never issued, Britain was responsible “in marked degree.”<sup>63</sup> The British had trained and armed the Iraqi and Egyptian armies, and every soldier of the Egyptian Army that invaded Palestine had to pass over the British-controlled and occupied Suez Canal.

Field Marshal Montgomery, chief of the Imperial General Staff and Viscount of Alamein, advised the Attlee government that the Arab estimates were correct and that the Jews would indeed be conquered. “He told me,” wrote Attlee years later in reviewing Montgomery’s memoirs, “that if there was a flare-up in the Middle East, the Arabs would ‘hit the Jews for six’ into the sea.”<sup>64</sup> Churchill’s estimate that the Jews of Palestine were numerous and organized enough to create and defend a Jewish state in Palestine proved more accurate. As Churchill said, looking back from January 1949:

I certainly felt that the spectacle of the Jewish settlements being invaded from all sides—from Syria, Transjordan and Egypt—and with a lot of our tanks and modern tackle was, on the face of it, most formidable, but I believed that that combination would fall to pieces at the first check, and I adhered to the estimate I had formed in the war of the measure of the fighting qualities and the tough fibre of the Zionist community, and the support which it would receive from Zionists all over the world.<sup>65</sup>

On June 19, 1948, Churchill had written to Brendan Bracken that “I cannot do any more on Palestine. Events must take their course.”<sup>66</sup> Yet as the Jews won their war against the Arabs and the British, Churchill continued to intervene in Parliament. On January 7, 1949, Israel Air Force (IAF) and Royal Air Force (RAF) planes had clashed over Sinai, with the IAF and ground fire shooting down five British Spitfires without loss of Israeli aircraft. On January 26, 1949, Churchill, leader of the opposition, gave his last parliamentary speech devoted to Palestine. Churchill excoriated the Attlee government’s Palestine policy and the Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin who had orchestrated it: “There has never been in my belief the slightest comprehension of the Palestine problem by the Right Honourable Gentleman.”<sup>67</sup> Churchill directly criticized Bevin for his “very strong and direct streak of bias and prejudice” and proceeded to comment:

Whether the Right Honourable Gentleman likes it or not, and whether we like it or not, the coming into being of a Jewish State in Palestine is an event in world history to be viewed in the perspective, not of a generation or a century, but in the perspective of a thousand, two thousand or even three thousand years. That is a standard of temporal values or time values which seems very much out of accord with the perpetual click-clack of our rapidly-changing moods and of the age in which we live. This is an event in world history.<sup>68</sup>

In that speech, Churchill called for immediate British diplomatic recognition of the state of Israel. At the end of this debate in the House, the Labour Government announced that Britain would recognize the state of Israel. It did so nine days later.

Against Hitler, Churchill had proclaimed as prime minister that Britain would go on with the fight to the end, “convinced that we are the defenders of civilisation and freedom.” “We shall, on the contrary, prosecute the war with the utmost vigour by all the means that are open to us until the righteous purposes for which we entered upon it have been fulfilled.”<sup>69</sup> Britain had to be a moral power, taking her stand on the highest values of civilization, unlike the “unmoral powers” such as fascist Italy.<sup>70</sup> In his first address as prime minister on May 14, 1940, Churchill told Britons in the words of the Book of Maccabees, that, like those Jewish warriors of old, they fought for capital-T Truth and capital-J Justice:

Today is Trinity Sunday. Centuries ago words were written to be a call and a spur to the faithful servants of Truth and Justice: ‘Arm yourselves, and be ye men of valour, and be in readiness for the conflict; for it is better for us to perish in battle than to look upon the outrage of our nation and our altar. As the Will of God is in Heaven, even so let it be.’<sup>71</sup>

Churchill wound up judging not just others but himself and the Britain he led by the standard of civilization to which he had pledged his highest loyalties. He spoke of Britain as “this strong City of Refuge which enshrines the title-deeds of human progress and is of deep consequence to Christian civilisation.” He could use those appeals in bureaucratic warfare; returning Jewish refugees was “an act of inhumanity unworthy of British name to force them to re-embark.”<sup>72</sup>

The claim that Britain could have preserved her empire by appeasing the immoral powers of fascist Italy and Nazi Germany was thus simply irrelevant according to Churchill’s standard of values. “Not only individual

death, which is the universal experience, stood near,” Churchill wrote in an unpublished note, “but, incomparably more commanding, the life of Britain, her message and her glory.”<sup>73</sup> Yet what is “the life of Britain” apart from her message and her glory?

In his speech accepting the leadership of the Conservative Party after Chamberlain’s death, Churchill said:

I have always faithfully served two public causes which I think stand supreme—the maintenance of the enduring greatness of Britain and her Empire and the historical continuity of our Island life.

Alone among the nations of the world we have found the means to combine Empire and liberty. Alone among the peoples we have reconciled democracy and tradition; for long generations, nay, over several centuries, no mortal clash or religious or political gulf has opened in our midst. Alone we have found the way to carry forward the glories of the past through all the storms, domestic and foreign, that have surged about us, and thus to bring the labours of our forebears as a splendid inheritance for modern progressive democracy to enjoy.<sup>74</sup>

Churchill’s Britain, he says, fought World War II only for civilization: “We are not seeking to enlarge our boundaries as a result of this war. We have fought it for great principles, and in the satisfaction of those principles we shall find our reward.”<sup>75</sup> He sought “a victory, won not only for ourselves, but for all; a victory won not only for our own time, but for the long and better days that are to come.”<sup>76</sup> If the justification of the British Empire is to be found in the principles it upheld, one ought not to regret too much the passing of that paramount power to the

Americans, if they would uphold the same principles.

Both the Little Englanders of Labour to Churchill’s left and the diehard Conservative imperialists to his right believed that the interest of Britain, narrowly and “realistically” conceived, could be a sufficient justification for foreign policy. That is why the claimed anti-imperialists of Attlee’s government could so easily adopt the most self-interested imperialist excuses for Britain’s Palestine policy after 1945. Churchill saw that that kind of petty imperialism was not sustainable in the postwar world. As he asked rhetorically of Field Marshal Alanbrooke on May 8, 1946: “How,” he asked, “can the United States be expected to send troops or aid to an establishment which will in future be represented as the British *place d’armes* in Palestine, in order to dominate or terrorize Egypt?”<sup>77</sup>

Churchill did not believe that human affairs are inevitably tragic. Despite the Soviet invasion of Poland in 1939, the Soviet massacre of Polish officers at Katyn in 1940, and the erection of a Moscow-controlled rival to the Polish Government-in-Exile in July 1944, Churchill claimed to Parliament on September 28, 1944, that there can be “a good solution” for both the Russians and the Poles.<sup>78</sup> To turn back to Palestine, Michael Cohen writes that “Churchill never in fact compromised generally accepted British interests for the sake of Zionism.” Cohen assumes that there was a conflict between Jewish and British interests, *à la* Chamberlain, in April 1939, arguing, “if we must offend one side, let us offend the Jews rather than the Arabs.”<sup>79</sup> We have not found any source that Churchill, as against many others, ever thought that way or even that he saw a real conflict between the deepest or most important interest of the Jews

and the Arabs in Palestine. Speaking to a delegation of Arabs in Palestine in 1921, Churchill said:

It is manifestly right that the scattered Jews should have a national centre and a national home to be re-united and where else but in Palestine, with which for three thousand years they have been intimately and profoundly associated? We think it will be good for the world, good for the Jews, and good for the British Empire. But we also think it will be good for the Arabs who dwell in Palestine, and we intend it will be good for them.<sup>80</sup>

In February 1945, Churchill imagined that the Jews and the Arabs could be reconciled under the aegis of the only impressive Arab ruler of that era, Ibn Saud:

I was greatly interested in meeting King Ibn Saud, the famous ruler of Saudi Arabia. I had the honour of entertaining this most remarkable man to luncheon in the Fayoum Oasis, and of expressing to him the thanks of Great Britain for his steadfast, unswerving and unflinching

loyalty to our country and the common cause, which never shone more brightly than in the darkest days and in the hours of mortal peril. His aid will be needed at the close of the war in reaching a solution of the problem of the Arab world and of the Jewish people in Palestine. I have hopes that, when the war is over, good arrangements can be made for securing the peace and progress of the Arab world and generally of the Middle East, and that Great Britain and the United States, which is taking an increasing interest in these regions, will be able to play a valuable part in proving that well known maxim of the old Free Trader ‘All legitimate interests are in harmony.’<sup>81</sup>

Despite all the horrors of his age, Churchill maintained his faith that “the good cause will not be trampled down. Justice and freedom will reign among men.”<sup>82</sup> What made Churchill unique among all those who dealt with Palestine is that he thought at each stage that justice could be done to Jews, Arabs, and Britons, provided all did their part in realizing both sides of Balfour’s promise.

This essay is dedicated to the memory of Lise van Boxel, colleague, teacher, and philosopher  
—χαλεπὰ τὰ καλὰ

**Marjorie L. Jeffrey** received her PhD from Baylor University and has taught at Clemson University in South Carolina, USA.

**Michael S. Kochin** is an Associate Professor in the School of Government, Political Science, and International Relations at Tel Aviv University in Israel.

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<sup>1</sup> Churchill, quoted in Martin Gilbert. See *Winston S. Churchill*, vol. 7, *Road to Victory, 1941–1945* (Heinemann, 1986), 691. See also “War and International Situation,” House of Commons, Feb. 22, 1944, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1944/feb/22/war-and-international-situation>

<sup>2</sup> For an exposition of Churchill’s views on “civilizing empire,” see Kirk Emmert, “Winston S. Churchill on Civilizing Empire,” in *Statesmanship: Essays in Honour of Sir Winston Spencer Churchill*, ed. Harry V. Jaffa (Carolina Academic Press, 1982). Lawrence James offers a historical and biographical survey that is more accurate on the historical context than in its analysis of Churchill’s thinking and motives. See Lawrence James, *Churchill and Empire* (Pegasus, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> See Bruce Gilley, “The Case for Colonialism,” *Academic Questions* 32, no. 3 (Summer 2018): 167–185. Originally published in 2017 by the *Third World Quarterly*, the article was withdrawn after publication because “the journal editor has subsequently received serious and credible threats of personal violence.” See publishers’ notice: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2017.1369037>

<sup>4</sup> Michael J. Cohen, *Churchill and the Jews*, 2nd ed. (Routledge, 2003), 324–325; and Michael J. Makovsky, *Churchill’s Promised Land: Zionism and Statecraft* (Yale University Press, 2007), 6, 9.

<sup>5</sup> Churchill, like other leaders at the time, Jewish and Gentile, failed to understand the scope of the Nazi war against the Jews: “I must say that I had no idea, when the war came to an end, of the horrible massacres which had occurred; the millions and millions that have been slaughtered. That dawned on us gradually after the struggle was over.” See Churchill, “Palestine,” House of Commons, Aug. 1, 1946, <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/1946-08-01/debates/58184e25-ea12-41a7-8c7c-1650fa722449/Palestine>

<sup>6</sup> We have used British spellings such as “civilisation” and “honour” when these words appear in quotations; elsewhere, we use the American forms “civilization” and “honor.”

<sup>7</sup> Winston S. Churchill, “Chancellor’s Address,” Bristol University, July 2, 1938, <https://winstonchurchill.hillsdale.edu/churchill-understanding-civilization/>

<sup>8</sup> Churchill, “Chancellor’s Address.”

<sup>9</sup> Winston S. Churchill, “What Good’s a Constitution?” in *The U.S. Constitution: A Reader*, ed. The Faculty of Hillsdale College (Hillsdale College Press, 2012), 737–744.

<sup>10</sup> Churchill, “What Good’s a Constitution?”

<sup>11</sup> Churchill, “Chancellor’s Address.”

<sup>12</sup> Winston S. Churchill, “MIT Mid-Century Convocation,” March 31, 1949, International Churchill Society, <https://winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1946-1963-elder-statesman/mit-mid-century-convocation/>

<sup>13</sup> Winston S. Churchill, “Zionism Versus Bolshevism: A Struggle for the Soul of the Jewish People,” *Illustrated Sunday Herald* (London), Feb. 8, 1920, 5; available also at [https://www.reddit.com/r/100yearsago/comments/f0opo8/february\\_8th\\_1920\\_winston\\_churchills\\_article/#lightbox](https://www.reddit.com/r/100yearsago/comments/f0opo8/february_8th_1920_winston_churchills_article/#lightbox)

<sup>14</sup> Churchill, “Zionism Versus Bolshevism.”

<sup>15</sup> Martin Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews: A Lifelong Friendship* (Henry Holt, 2007), 266.

<sup>16</sup> Churchill, *The Second World War*, vol. 5, *Closing the Ring* (Houghton Mifflin, 1951), 532–533.

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<sup>17</sup> Arthur Balfour, "Letter from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to Lord Rothschild," National Archives (UK), Nov. 2, 1917, <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/balfour-declaration/>

<sup>18</sup> See "Notes of a Conversation Held at A. J. Balfour's House," July 22, 1921, in Martin Gilbert, ed., *The Churchill Documents*, 2nd ed., vol. 10, *Conciliation and Reconstruction, April 1921–November 1922* (Hillsdale College Press, 2008), 1559. In that version of the meeting between Chaim Weizmann, Churchill, Lloyd George, and Balfour (attributed by the editor of Weizmann's papers to Weizmann), the narrator states that Churchill defended the High Commissioner for Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, by claiming that the latter's address on June 3, 1921, was compatible with a Jewish majority and an eventual Jewish state. In a letter to Ahad Ha'am on July 30, 1921, Weizmann gives a somewhat different account of Churchill's statements. He recounts as follows:

The conference I mentioned to you has taken place. We were able to get little truth out of Churchill. He supported the official views and everything said by Samuel, whom he quoted constantly. S[amuel]'s speech was discussed first of all. I pointed out that the speech was a repudiation of the Balfour Declaration. Ch[urchill] defended the speech. Ll[oyd] G[eorge] and Balfour admitted that the speech was unfortunate and they always had a Jewish State in mind. This greatly astonished Ch[urchill]. He admitted that 9/10 of Englishmen in Palestine are against Zionism, and that a section of the Jews are also against it. He further emphasized that it was essential to give Palestine an Elective Assembly, which Ll. G. opposed. It is obvious that Ll[oyd] G[eorge] does not respect Ch[amberlain] too much." See Weizmann to Ahad Ha'am, July 30, 1921, translated in Chaim Weizmann, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann*, ed. Leonard Stein et al., vol. 10, ser. A, July 1920–December 1921 (Oxford University Press, 1968), 233–234.

Whatever Churchill said at the meeting of July 22, 1921, his interpretation of the Balfour Declaration in subsequent speeches and actions was the one he had offered at the meeting with Balfour, Weizmann, and Lloyd George.

<sup>19</sup> Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews*, 45.

<sup>20</sup> Winston S. Churchill, "Remarks to a Palestinian Arab Delegation," in *Churchill Documents*, vol. 9, *Disruption and Chaos, July 1919–March 1921*, ed. Martin Gilbert, 2nd ed. (Hillsdale College Press, 2008), 1419–1420.

<sup>21</sup> Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews*, 46.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 50–51.

<sup>23</sup> See Chaim Weizmann to Winston Churchill, March 1, 1921, in Weizmann, *Letters and Papers*, vol. 10, 159–162.

<sup>24</sup> Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews*, 56–57.

<sup>25</sup> Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill*, vol. 4, *World in Torment, 1916–1922* (Heinemann, 1975), 569; Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews*, 53, 56–57.

<sup>26</sup> "Notes of Conversation with Nathan Sokolow, June 1921," in Gilbert, *Churchill Documents*, vol. 10, 1493.

<sup>27</sup> Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews*, 68, 74.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>29</sup> "Colonial Office," House of Commons, July 4, 1922, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1922/jul/04/colonial-office>; and Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews*, 81.

<sup>30</sup> For the 1922 White Paper, see "British White Paper of June 1922," *The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy*, Yale Law School, [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/brwh1922.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/brwh1922.asp)

<sup>31</sup> "Conversation at A. J. Balfour's House," in Gilbert, *Churchill Documents*, vol. 10, 1559.

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<sup>32</sup> Martin Gilbert, ed., *Churchill Documents*, vol. 12, *The Wilderness Years, 1929–1935*, 2nd ed. (Hillsdale College Press, 2009), 220, 2n.

<sup>33</sup> Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews*, 110.

<sup>34</sup> “Palestine Royal Commission: Notes of Evidence,” in Martin Gilbert, ed., *Churchill Documents*, vol. 13, *The Coming of War, 1936–1939*, 2nd ed. (Hillsdale College Press, 2009), 596–617.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 596–617, 603.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 601–603.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 602.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 602, 608, 611.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 605.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 616.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 603, 604, 610, 616.

<sup>43</sup> “Churchill to Peel,” March 16, 1937, in *ibid.*, 624; and Cohen, *Churchill and the Jews*, 79.

<sup>44</sup> Gilbert, *Churchill Documents*, vol. 13, 612.

<sup>45</sup> Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews*, 130.

<sup>46</sup> Winston Churchill, “The American Zionist Organization and His Majesty’s Government’s Policy in Palestine: War Cabinet Papers 67/3,” referred to in Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews*, 166–167, 324, 3n.

<sup>47</sup> Makovsky, *Churchill’s Promised Land*, 186.

<sup>48</sup> Martin Gilbert, “Churchill and the Holocaust: The Possible and Impossible,” US Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC, Nov. 8, 1993, <https://winstonchurchill.org/the-life-of-churchill/war-leader/churchill-and-the-holocaust-the-possible-and-impossible/> (accessed Oct. 2025); Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews*, 183; Churchill to FDR, Aug. 9, 1942, in Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, vol. 4, *The Hinge of Fate* (Houghton Mifflin, 1950), 890.

<sup>49</sup> Richard Toye, *Churchill’s Empire: The World That Made Him and the World He Made* (Henry Holt, 2010), 214.

<sup>50</sup> Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill*, vol. 6, *The Finest Hour* (Heinemann, 1983), 1163–1164.

<sup>51</sup> Gilbert, *Churchill*, vol. 4, 555.

<sup>52</sup> Michael J. Cohen, *Palestine: Retreat from the Mandate: The Making of British Policy, 1936–45* (Holmes & Meier, 1978), 71.

<sup>53</sup> Gilbert, “Churchill and the Holocaust.”

<sup>54</sup> Cohen, *Churchill and the Jews*, 253–255; Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill*, vol. 5, *The Prophet of Truth, 1922–1939*, Kindle ed. (Hillsdale College Press and RosettaBooks, 2015), 689.

<sup>55</sup> Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews*, 224–225.

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- <sup>56</sup> Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill*, vol. 7, *Road to Victory, 1941–1945* (Heinemann, 1986), 1050, 1051, incl. 5n, 1053; Cohen, *Churchill and the Jews*, 339.
- <sup>57</sup> Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews*, 226.
- <sup>58</sup> Cohen, *Churchill and the Jews*, 258.
- <sup>59</sup> Norman Rose, “Churchill and Zionism,” in *Churchill*, ed. Robert Blake and Wm. Roger Louis (Norton, 1993), 147–166.
- <sup>60</sup> Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews*, 242–246.
- <sup>61</sup> Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill*, vol. 8, *Never Despair, 1945–1965*, Kindle ed. (Hillsdale College Press and RosettaBooks, 2015), 154–155.
- <sup>62</sup> Gilbert, *Churchill*, vol. 8, 244.
- <sup>63</sup> Gilbert, *Churchill*, vol. 8, 411. On April 28, 1948, Bevin had defended the Arab Legion invasion of Palestine before the fact in a conversation with the US ambassador to Britain. See Ritchie Ovendale, *Britain, The United States, and the End of the Palestine Mandate* (Royal Historical Society and the Boydell Press, 1989), 286.
- <sup>64</sup> Lord Attlee, “Montgomery: My Assessment,” *The Observer*, Nov. 2, 1958, 4, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/monty-americans/docview/475386871/se-2?accountid=14765> (accessed May 2022). Kochin learned of this review in a public lecture by Yuval Ne’eman (1925–2006) at Tel Aviv University, ca. 2001. When the Attlee article was published in 1958, Ne’eman was the IDF attaché in London.
- <sup>65</sup> “Middle East,” House of Commons, Jan. 26, 1949, <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1949-01-26/debates/251e0075-50f2-48f0-8d03-45365384cffe/MiddleEast>
- <sup>66</sup> Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews*, 269–270.
- <sup>67</sup> “Middle East,” House of Commons, Jan. 26, 1949.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>69</sup> Gilbert, *Churchill*, vol. 6, 50, 642.
- <sup>70</sup> Gilbert, *Churchill Documents*, vol. 13, 609.
- <sup>71</sup> Winston Churchill, “Be Ye Men of Valour,” First broadcast as prime minister to the British people, BBC, May 19, 1940, Reproduced on the International Churchill Society website, <https://winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1940-the-finest-hour/be-ye-men-of-valour/>
- <sup>72</sup> Gilbert, *Churchill*, vol. 6, 664, 910.
- <sup>73</sup> Ibid., 322.
- <sup>74</sup> Winston S. Churchill, “A Speech at the Caxton Hall, London, on Election to the Leadership of the Conservative and Unionist Party” (1940), in *War Speeches*, (Cassell, 1951), 279; Gilbert, *Churchill*, vol. 6, 836.
- <sup>75</sup> Gilbert, *Churchill*, vol. 8, 28.
- <sup>76</sup> Winston S. Churchill, “Every Man to His Post,” Sept. 11, 1940, <https://www.nationalchurchillmuseum.org/every-man-to-his-post.html>; and Gilbert, *Churchill*, vol. 6, 778.

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<sup>77</sup> Gilbert, *Churchill*, vol. 8, 231.

<sup>78</sup> Gilbert, *Churchill*, vol. 7, 978.

<sup>79</sup> Cohen, *Palestine: Retreat from the Mandate*, xi, 84. Rose similarly writes “in this clash between two conflicting national interests [Zionist and British], it could not be expected that Churchill would choose the Zionist.” See Rose, “Churchill and Zionism,” 151. Rose does not show that Churchill perceived such a clash of interests.

<sup>80</sup> *Churchill Documents*, vol. 9, 1420; Cohen, *Churchill and the Jews*, 90–91.

<sup>81</sup> “Crimea Conference,” Feb. 27, 1945, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1945/feb/27/crimea-conference>

<sup>82</sup> Churchill, Speech of Feb. 4, 1943 to the New Zealand Division, Churchill Papers 9/161, [https://www.churchillarchive.com/catalogue-item?docid=CHAR9\\_161&st=Speech+of+Feb.+4%2C+1943+to+the+New+Zealand+Division](https://www.churchillarchive.com/catalogue-item?docid=CHAR9_161&st=Speech+of+Feb.+4%2C+1943+to+the+New+Zealand+Division) (accessed Oct. 2025, paywalled); and Gilbert, *Churchill*, vol. 7, 331.