

The Secret Testimony of the Peel Commission (Part II): Partition



LAILA PARSONS

This is the second installment of a two-part article on the recently released secret testimony to the Peel Commission. Part I (*JPS* 49, no. 1) showed how the secret testimony deepens our understanding of the structural exclusion of the Palestinians from the Mandate state. Part II now focuses on what the secret testimony reveals about the Peel Commission's eventual decision to recommend partition. It turns out that Zionist leaders were less central to this decision than scholars have previously assumed, and that second-tier British colonial officials played a key role in the commissioners' partition recommendation. British decision-making over the partition of Palestine was shaped not only by a broad ambition to put into practice global-imperial theories about representative government and the protection of minorities; it also stemmed from a cold-eyed self-interest in rehabilitating the British reputation for efficient colonial governance—by terminating, in as deliberate a manner as possible, a slack and compromised Mandatory administration.

THE REPORT OF THE PEEL COMMISSION appeared publicly on 7 July 1937. In its final pages, the report recommended partition as the only viable solution to the conflict between Arabs and Jews in Palestine. Partition was cast as a sharp break with previous British attempts to satisfy both the Jews and the Arabs and to convince them to live peacefully with one another. Partition was also explicitly presented as a better solution than cantonization, which, unlike partition, had been publicly discussed in the years leading up to the Peel Commission.

Although they sometimes blur together in the historiography, cantonization and partition were in fact very distinct from one another. Cantonization envisaged dividing Palestine into Jewish and Arab cantons, each with different degrees of autonomy. It did not entail population transfer, nor did it confer statehood on the cantons. Partition, by contrast, envisaged two ethnically homogenous sovereign states—one Arab, one Jewish—and entailed a significant transfer of populations, mostly moving Arabs out of the new Jewish state. But the key difference from cantonization was that partition would confer sovereignty on both states, even if there were to be strong treaty arrangements with Britain, and if certain areas, like Jerusalem, would remain under international control. Partition also meant radically different things to the Zionist and Palestinian leaderships. For the Zionists, it meant that at least some British officials were willing to endorse a

uni-national Jewish sovereign state in Palestine, which was a giant leap beyond the Balfour Declaration's weaker and more ambiguous formulation of a "national home." For the Palestinians, who expected full independence in all of Palestine once the Mandate was deemed to be no longer necessary, partition meant that at least some British officials were seriously considering taking away a significant area of their country and handing it over permanently to a European settler population.¹

Penny Sinanoglou and Laura Robson have described the broader imperial context of the Peel Commission's recommendation, a context in which partition and population exchanges were part of an imperial toolkit employed in places such as Ireland and India where representative government was deemed unworkable because of competing ethno-national claims. Where it seemed that a single, unified nationality could not be created, partition offered a way out. Partition also played an important role in post-World War I discussions of minority rights. Many British policy makers believed that there could be no representative government in territories containing a significant minority population that was unlikely to assimilate into the majority; in the case of Palestine, the Jews were reckoned to be such a minority. Each commissioner had experience working in other parts of the British Empire, including India, Kenya, Ireland, and Burma, where they had grappled with the problem of how to govern amid competing ethnonational claims of sovereignty over particular territories. The commissioners and British witnesses often cited their previous work in imperial administration during the Peel Commission's discussions of representative government, minority rights, and nationality in Palestine.²

Sinanoglou has also shown how cantonization—and even partition—had been discussed in British policy circles since 1929, and that Chaim Weizmann and other Zionist leaders knew about these discussions well before the Peel Commission arrived in Palestine. In a recent article, Motti Golani used documents drawn mainly from the Weizmann Archive to argue that Weizmann was the prime mover behind the Peel Commission's recommendation of partition and that he worked closely with Reginald Coupland to achieve his aims. These scholars did not have access to more than a few fragments of the secret testimony when they carried out their research because it had not yet been released by Britain's National Archives. In what follows, I shall describe and analyze the discussions of partition contained in the secret testimony, in order to deepen our understanding of how and why the Peel Commission came to recommend it as a solution. I draw two main conclusions that build upon recent scholarly work: first, that the secret sessions provided the venue where the idea of cantonization was discarded for the more radical idea of partition; and second, that Weizmann's role in recommending partition, while important, was secondary to the momentum driving it forward within the British system.³

The topic of cantonization came up only twice during the entire public testimony to the commission. And partition was never raised in the public sessions. In one of her articles on the Peel Commission, Sinanoglou wonders why partition was not vetted as a solution in the public sessions. She asks: "Why did the commission not take public evidence whilst in Palestine on the question of partition if it was clear that partition was under consideration?"⁴ She speculates that commissioners must have been concerned about breaking with procedure, given that partition was not included in the commission's terms of reference. She also suggests that the lack of

detailed questioning on partition during the public testimony gave the commissioners the excuse to present partition, in the final report, as a general objective, but without providing any detail about how it should be implemented. The secret testimony reveals that partition was in fact the subject of lengthy in-camera discussions by commissioners and witnesses. This explains, at least in part, why the topic was never raised in the public sessions. Indeed, the Arab Higher Committee's decision to refrain from giving testimony in the secret sessions made it all even easier for commissioners to break with their own terms of reference, and to use the in-camera sessions as a venue for exploring the feasibility of partition with Zionist leaders and British officials.⁵

Drawing on correspondence between Weizmann and his close confidant Avigdor Jacobson, and on records of meetings between Weizmann and Benito Mussolini in 1934, Golani shows that Weizmann began to support the idea of partition from as early as 1932. He argues that Weizmann was unhappy with the idea of cantonization because it would not lead to a uni-national sovereign Jewish state in Palestine, whereas partition would. In addition, Golani draws on private correspondence between Weizmann and Coupland to show that a private meeting occurred between the two men on Saturday 16 January 1937, while the commission was still in session in Palestine. This came after Weizmann had delivered his final round of secret testimony, and just days before the commission left Palestine. During this private meeting, which took place in the Jewish settlement of Nahalal, Weizmann and Coupland discussed the idea of partition. For Golani, the fact of this meeting between Weizmann and Coupland at Nahalal (not to mention further private contacts between the two during the ensuing months), when combined with the fact that Weizmann had come to believe in partition as early as 1932, constitutes clear evidence that Weizmann was the main impetus behind partition.⁶

For his article, Golani was able to review Weizmann's secret testimony because Weizmann had retained a copy of his own testimony in his private archive. But Golani did not have the opportunity to consult the entire secret testimony now available in the National Archives. Here, I put Weizmann's secret testimony, and what we now know from Golani about Weizmann's early support for partition, in the context of the secret testimony in general and the discussions about partition contained within it. In particular, I argue that Weizmann's main goal was to shift British thinking away from cantonization because Weizmann was firmly opposed to cantonization and afraid that the idea might be given further weight in the final report of the Peel Commission. I argue that despite Weizmann's undoubted part in the commission's final recommendation in favor of partition, his role was outweighed by the massive British colonial bureaucracy and its practice of devising elaborate solutions to ethnic conflicts. I also show how British decision-making around partition stemmed more from concerns about the efficiency and reputation of British governance than from the desires of interested parties on the ground, even when those interested parties were skilled lobbyists and had connections within the government.⁷

Throughout his secret testimony, Weizmann was asked repeatedly to consider the question of cantonization and—in his final session—partition. During the early questioning, he vehemently opposed cantonization, claiming that it would force the Jews to live in a ghetto. Weizmann also argued that such a solution was unnecessary because the Jews had no desire to dominate the Arabs, only to coexist with them, in a spirit of mutual nondomination, under British rule for the foreseeable future. Along with this principle of mutual nondomination, Weizmann emphasized

the parity principle, which was also official Zionist policy at that time. The parity principle held that in any arrangement for the governance of Palestine, Jews must have equal representation to Arabs. Both principles served to counter recent British attempts to establish a legislative council in Palestine that would have given more representation to the Palestinian Arabs than to the Jews because the Palestinians were the majority population.⁸

In Weizmann's third and final session, Coupland pushed him to spell out his views not of cantonization but of partition. Coupland raised the issue coyly, covering himself by *admitting for the record* that in doing so, he was moving beyond the terms of reference:

I do not wish to take up too much time over this matter, and in a sense I think it may be argued that it is really beyond our Terms of Reference, but looking ahead and supposing for the sake of argument, that your hopeful prospect of harmony proves unrealizable in the course of the next five or ten years, what practicable alternative might there be? With that question in your mind, would you comment on this scheme, which really deserves to be called *more* than cantonization?⁹

Coupland then handed Weizmann a well-known treatise on cantonization written by Archer Cust, who had served as assistant district commissioner in Jerusalem until 1935. After his retirement from service in Palestine, Cust emerged as one of the most forceful proponents of cantonization. As he handed Weizmann the document, Coupland made it clear that he himself was not entirely satisfied with Cust's scheme. He wanted Weizmann's opinion on an even more radical version of the plan:

But may I say that your examination of that scheme is not so interesting to me as your examination of the scheme pushed a stage further, that if after a period of federal partition the only solution, or a solution, seemed to be effective partition, meaning that in due course and under a treaty system these two blocks of Palestine become independent states of the type of Egypt and Iraq in treaty relations with Great Britain. That is really the ultimate point on which I want to get your view.¹⁰

This time, Weizmann replied that he had given the matter some thought and admitted that he had even had conversations with Cust concerning his scheme. Weizmann then presented his own map to the commissioners. The map is not in the secret testimony, but one of the commissioners said of it, "Your map amounts to saying let's create some kind of reserve for the Arabs in the hills and you Jews [will] keep off the hills." Even so, Weizmann was reluctant to commit himself, saying that it would be better to let more time pass before such a scheme was seriously considered. He suggested ten years would be enough: "If we were allowed to work and attend to our work and work more or less in the plains, then it may be more compact and possibly better." He said that the Jews did not yet possess enough land at the time, given that "in the coastal plain we have 550,000 dunums out of 3 million dunums."

Coupland, undeterred, brought Weizmann back to the basic principle of partition by asking: "Might it not be a final and peaceful settlement—to terminate the Mandate by agreement and split Palestine into two halves, the plain being an independent Jewish state, as independent as Belgium with treaty relations with Great Britain—whatever arrangements you like with us—and the rest of Palestine plus Trans-Jordania being an independent Arab state, as independent as

Arabia. That is the ultimate idea.” Weizmann replied: “Permit me not to give a definite answer now. Let me think of it.” Coupland ended the discussion coyly, as he had begun it, clarifying that he was not formally “making a suggestion,” but rather looking for Weizmann’s views on “a scheme that has been put before us.”¹¹

A plain reading of Weizmann’s secret testimony thus indicates that it was Coupland who was the prime mover behind the idea of partition during the secret sessions of the Peel Commission, and that Weizmann saw in him the personal drive and the skills that were required to push the other commissioners away from cantonization (which did not confer statehood on the Jews) and toward partition, and to British support for a Jewish state in Palestine. Yet Coupland’s interest in partition sprang from a different source than Weizmann’s. Sinanoglou and Arie Dubnov have shown how Coupland’s thinking was shaped by other imperial examples such as South Africa, India, Quebec, and especially Ireland, where partition in 1921 was deemed a success. Although understanding Coupland’s ideological commitments is important, the thorny case of Palestine also called for hard-headed pragmatism. Coupland wanted Weizmann’s support for the idea of partition—without Zionist support it would not get off the ground—but the impetus for Coupland’s relentless efforts stemmed more from his dissatisfaction with British rule in Palestine, which had not succeeded in bringing representative government to the Arab and Jewish communities and which appeared to him to be in drastic need of reform. The fact that partition meant the termination of the Mandate in effect solved this problem of bad governance.¹²

The secret testimony contains evidence to support this hypothesis, particularly with respect to the role of Douglas Harris. Harris served as officer for irrigation and development in the Palestine government. He was also seconded as a special advisor to the commission, along with Lewis Andrews, also a development officer in the Palestine government. Harris had already appeared before the commission when he gave public testimony, although he never mentioned in that testimony the issue of partition or cantonization. This was in spite of the fact that he had been involved in plans for cantonization during 1935 and early 1936. Sinanoglou discusses how Harris abandoned those initial cantonization plans in the face of strong opposition from Galilee District Commissioner Edward Keith Roach, who considered them unworkable.¹³ The secret testimony shows that by the time the Peel Commission was underway, Harris had begun supporting the far more drastic solution of partition. It was Harris, not Weizmann, who brought the detailed plans for partition into the secret sessions, and who advocated for it most forcefully and unequivocally. His command of on-the-ground facts, his technical training and expertise, and his previous experience of working on various cantonization plans made his testimony in favor of partition especially compelling. In Harris, the commissioners saw an ambitious young British public servant undertaking the hard work of providing the commission with evidence that was detailed and comprehensive enough to give the idea of partition some actual momentum. The commissioners interrogated Harris on the details of the idea with an intensity absent from the other discussions about partition. It was thus during the last Harris testimony in the secret sessions that partition was explored in enough detail to justify its inclusion in the final report as the only solution to the problem of conflict between Arabs and Jews in Palestine.

Harris’s testimony about partition fills five densely packed pages of the document. This is five times as much text as for any other witness who was questioned about partition, including

Weizmann. In fact, Weizmann's secret testimony about partition looks rather meager when juxtaposed with Harris's much longer discussion of the topic. The commissioners launched straight into questioning Harris about partition in a manner that suggests advance preparation, referring to a lengthy document that Harris had precirculated. There are also hints that substantive discussions between British officials had taken place beforehand. On at least one occasion, Coupland prompted Harris for specific information, prefacing his prompt with the phrase "In private conversations with you I gathered that you have formed views about . . ." ¹⁴ Harris brought a detailed map, which provoked a lengthy discussion about the boundaries envisioned in the partition plan, and about the transfer of Arabs out of the Jewish State. In addition, Harris testified about the status of Haifa; the linking of the putative Arab state to Transjordan; whether the Jews would be allowed an army; whether that army would include aircraft; the status of ports, rivers, and large orange groves; the future of the Rutenberg electricity works; how a customs regime would work; how much money partition would cost; and the status of the Mandate in the new arrangement.

Pushing back against Harris's obvious support of partition, some commissioners asked him if, instead of such a radical solution, simply restricting Jewish immigration and setting up an Arab Agency to balance the power of the Jewish Agency (JA) might be preferable. But Harris insisted that partition would be more attractive to the Arabs than piecemeal measures like restricting immigration. "I do not believe that any solution which closed the door to independence of some kind or another would ever be acceptable to the Arabs," he said. "Personally, I can see no possibility of any peaceful settlement under the present system. If a scheme of partition is possible at all, I cannot see why it is not as possible now as it will be thirty years hence . . . [partition] is a nettle that has to be grasped and the sooner it is grasped the better." ¹⁵

As mentioned in Part I of this article, Harris claimed that partition would eliminate the malaise at the heart of the British Government in Palestine. Coupland prompted him to expand on this: "In private conversations with you I gathered you have formed views about the over-centralization of government in this country . . . but that problem, like others, would be solved by the drastic proposal which you have put before us?" Harris replied: "Quite. There would be no government to decentralize." ¹⁶ To reiterate, the secret testimony shows that partition was seen by British officials as a solution to ineffective governance, and that it was thus Coupland, Harris, and Andrews who drove the idea of partition forward, not Weizmann.

Coupland and Harris also discussed the objections to partition that would inevitably arise, from both Jews and Arabs, and how best to respond. During Harris's testimony, Peel suggested that the British could deal with such objections to partition by presenting the idea in opposite ways to each side; his solution is expressed in a manner that is not only anti-Semitic but dismissive of the intelligence of Arab leaders: "I suppose that [the] hinterland question is the worst because one can see so clearly the Jews with their pushing menacing ways saying 'Yes, now we have filled up this place and you are tying us down.' . . . [So] to the Arab Kings you would say, 'This is a splendid scheme, we are putting Jews down on the Sand Dunes'; to the Jews you would say, 'We are giving you the best land of Palestine.' [In other words] you would have to make two speeches?" ¹⁷

Harris's testimony concluded with the discussion of partition. Commissioners posed no questions to him on any other topic. After a tea break, Harris was followed by Andrews, whose

testimony was similarly dominated by partition. Coupland asked Andrews to confirm that he supported Harris's suggestion of "this division into two states."¹⁸ Andrews agreed wholeheartedly. Andrews's main function, it seems, was to present evidence that, contrary to expectations, leading Arabs in fact favored partition—evidence that Andrews (supposedly) drew from informal conversations. Andrews's testimony almost reads as if he were establishing a formal internal record of a discussion of the Arab point of view in the event that the final report ended up recommending partition.

As usual, it was Coupland who pushed the hardest. He asked Andrews: "Have you any view as to whether the moderate Arabs would regard that proposal with any acquiescence?" Andrews replied, "Moderate Arabs would. In fact several Arabs have discussed it with me. Even the Mayor of Jerusalem has discussed it with me." Andrews went on to say that while the "younger radicals" would of course oppose it, there existed a large body of "moderate people who would, I think, agree to some sort of scheme of this nature. But at the moment they are following the other parties because they are in fear of their lives." Coupland then added, "Unless we said 'stop Jewish immigration for ever' and give them the self-government they demand there will be trouble anyway?" Here Coupland articulated an incipient British rationale for moving ahead with partition. Essentially Coupland was saying: absent our complete acquiescence to maximal Arab demands, we can be certain of some Arab opposition to any compromise; so let us decide to implement the plan—partition—that we think will be most effective, regardless of whether it is supported by a noisy minority of "young [Arab] radicals." Andrews ended his testimony by repeating that "in addition to the Mayor of Jerusalem," other "moderate" Arabs would favor partition.¹⁹

The fact that Andrews played the role of Palestinian spokesman is ironic. His private memos throughout the Peel Commission proceedings showed a level of disdain for Palestinians and their aspirations for statehood that was exceptional even in the prevailing context. For their part, many Palestinians detested Andrews because of his reputation for being unjust and pro-Zionist. The same mayor of Jerusalem—Husayn Fakhri al-Khalidi—whom Andrews cited as a supporter of partition, in fact considered Andrews to be utterly untrustworthy, describing him in his memoirs as a clever pro-Zionist British official who played a double game by ingratiating himself with Arab leaders. It is extremely unlikely that al-Khalidi would have confided to Andrews in the way that Andrews claimed he did. Palestinian rebels assassinated Andrews on 26 September 1937, just a few months after he gave this testimony.²⁰

The secret testimony reveals that Coupland, Harris, and Andrews faced an uphill struggle, given the strong opposition to partition from many in the Palestine government. The chief secretary, Hathorn Hall, called the idea "wholly artificial."²¹ When asked by the commissioners what he thought of partition, Mr. E. Mills, the officer for migration and statistics, said that he found the idea "quite impracticable."²² Some Zionists also voiced objections. Moshe Smelansky, president of the Farmers Union, was asked his opinion, and he said he did not believe that the gulf between Jews and Arabs should be "further widened."²³ Norman Bentwich, then a professor at Hebrew University, made a compelling case to the commissioners for cooperation between Arabs and Jews and the need for them to share a single state.²⁴

The commissioners closely questioned High Commissioner Arthur Wauchope on partition during Wauchope's final session. By this point, the idea had gained momentum. Obtaining the

formal endorsement of the high commissioner in official proceedings was a major desideratum, if partition were to be included in the final report. Wauchope remained scrupulously noncommittal in the face of Coupland's aggressive questioning. Viewing Wauchope as too sensitive to Arab reactions, Coupland emphasized that many "moderate" Arabs were on board with the idea, including "a member of the Arab College," also, "the Mayor of Jerusalem," and an "Arab district officer." Coupland even went so far as to claim that "the Jews have not suggested partition, it has come from the Arabs."²⁵ This is one of the most obvious examples of Coupland's dishonesty and manipulation throughout the process. Horace Rumbold, the ex-diplomat on the commission, held Coupland in very low regard. In a private letter to his son written just over a year later, Rumbold referred to Coupland as "an intriguing little professor" ("intriguing" in the sense of "scheming," not in the sense of "interesting"). In the same letter, still referring obliquely to Coupland, Rumbold told his son that partition plans had been made behind his back, that he had felt obliged to agree with partition so as not to split the commission, and that the commission had suffered from a vacuum in leadership because of Peel's grave illness during the proceedings—a vacuum that Coupland eagerly filled.²⁶ Wauchope parried Coupland's questions by saying that he could not comment without knowing more details, including knowing what the boundaries would be. He remained noncommittal on the topic of partition to the end of his testimony.²⁷

To sum up: although discussions of cantonization—and even partition—certainly took place in British and Zionist policy-making circles well before the Peel Commission ever arrived in Palestine, the secret testimony reveals that the in-camera sessions provided a forum where commissioners and witnesses could discuss the possibility of abandoning cantonization, which had been part of public discourse in preceding years, and endorse the more radical option of partition. The secrecy of the sessions in fact enabled British supporters of partition (namely Coupland, Harris, and Andrews) to break with the commission's terms of reference to promote their own vision. Weizmann's support for partition was an important part of this process, but he was not the prime mover, contrary to Golani's claims. Instead, the impetus for partition sprang from the blithe arrogance of particular British imperial actors who seem never to have doubted their competence to solve problems by applying theories far removed from realities on the ground. This conclusion leads us to question the actual extent of Zionist influence and power. True, Coupland and Weizmann had a private meeting while the commission was in Palestine, and they also corresponded with each other when the commission was back in London. But Weizmann instigated the meeting with Coupland in Palestine *after* he had given his final secret testimony. In other words, Weizmann could see in that final secret session how fervently Coupland was pushing for partition, and he used that knowledge to adopt his own interest in partition, an interest which he had developed independently from the British and which, according to Golani, Weizmann had kept secret from many of his own colleagues.²⁸

Golani's account of the private meeting between Coupland and Weizmann is partly based on a fascinating letter that Coupland sent to Weizmann in 1950, just before the publication of Weizmann's autobiography in the United Kingdom. In the letter, Coupland tells how he had been sent a copy of the pre-publication galleys of the English edition of Weizmann's autobiography, in order to review it. On reading the manuscript, Coupland was shocked to find that Weizmann had told the full story of their private meeting in Nahalal in the final days of the commission.

Coupland appears to have felt that Weizmann had broken one of the golden rules of British professional life: never bring private informal conversations into the public space. Coupland informed Weizmann that he had asked Weizmann's publishers to remove the account of their meeting because he was afraid that the "pro-Arabs" would use this information against him, by claiming that he had been "nobbled" by Weizmann and that he had "gone behind the back" of his colleagues on the commission.²⁹ Of course, Coupland *had* in fact gone behind the back of his colleagues, and the letter is evidence of at least some degree of collusion between the two men. But the letter's tone, which Golani does not focus on, is at once patronizing and wheedling: "I am sure you will understand it and forgive me for asking those Jewish friends in America to whom you had entrusted the publication of the book, if they could see their way to cutting out the story of our meeting . . . [and] if you are contemplating any changes in the revised edition you are proposing, might I suggest that the excision as made in the present English edition should also be made in the new American edition?"³⁰

Coupland also told Weizmann that there was no harm in Weizmann's referring to his views as expressed in the *public* proceedings of the commission, or even "that the idea of partition was first broached" by Coupland. Here Coupland makes it clear to Weizmann that the idea of partition came from him, not the other way around, and that he had therefore not been "nobbled" by Weizmann. Coupland goes on to refuse Weizmann's invitation to visit Israel. Weizmann was of course by now president of the new state: "I should intensely like to accept your most kind invitation to come and see how things are going for myself. But alas! I can't manage it this year. I was in Australia last winter and I go to New Zealand this next autumn. The few months at home must be given to a book I am writing on Welsh and Scottish nationalism."³¹ The mixture of politeness and condescension with which Coupland, a professor, turns down an invitation from a head of state, is breathtaking, even for an Oxford don. His underlying message was that he had moved on from Palestine to other academic projects, and that Weizmann should not overestimate their relationship, particularly as he had proven himself unreliable by publishing an account of a private informal meeting.

Correspondence in the spring and early summer of 1937 between Harris and Coupland and between Coupland and William Ormsby-Gore, the secretary of state for the colonies, has a more professional tone, one used by British imperial operators with each other, especially when collectively manipulating a deeply entrenched bureaucratic and procedural culture to get what they wanted. The correspondence took place as the report was being drafted, and just before its rollout on 7 July 1937. A letter from Harris to Coupland, written on 15 April, shows that Coupland had asked Harris for his views on details of particular aspects of the partition plan. Much of the language in Harris's eight-page reply ended up in the final report. And in a letter that Coupland wrote to Ormsby-Gore on 11 July, Coupland expressed his low opinion of the government in Palestine, and his concern that those at the top of that government might not be capable of the efficient and decisive work required to implement partition. He followed this by suggesting that Harris be promoted to head a new Department of Development that would, under the partition plan, help the new Arab and Jewish states develop their infrastructures. Coupland also recommended that Andrews be promoted and appointed district commissioner in the "Northern Division." According to Coupland, the success of partition rested on there being

someone able to show “firmness with both parties [Arabs and Jews] and Andrews [was] the only senior official who could be trusted to be as firm with the Arabs as with the Jews.” Of course, partition did not happen as Coupland expected it to in July 1937. But Andrews was promoted anyway, and Palestinian rebels assassinated him on 26 September of the same year. Coupland’s letter leads us to conclude that Andrews’s hard work to help Coupland achieve his objectives during the proceedings of the Peel Commission got him both promoted and killed. For all his grand theorizing about empire, Coupland was an academic, not a colonial official. The “intriguing little professor” was operating at a level far above his actual competence, a level with real-world consequences that continued to unfold long after he had moved on to his next project.³²

The same Colonial Office file that contains these letters also contains an internal memo marked “Very Secret.” Dated 29 June 1937, just a week before the commission’s report was published on 7 July, it addressed the delicate question of who outside of British government should be paid the courtesy of being told of the contents of the report before it was made public. The memo itself asserts that it was prompted by the fact that Weizmann was “pressing strongly for an advance copy of the Report.”³³ Weizmann did meet with Coupland a couple of times in the weeks leading up to the report, but there is no evidence that Coupland let him see the language he was drafting. On the contrary: the diaries of Blanche Dugdale, Arthur Balfour’s niece and a well-known supporter of Zionism, indicate that Weizmann was sent the report only after Cabinet had signed off on it, and just three days before it was released to the public. Here is how she describes Weizmann’s reaction:

God! What a day! Went to Zionist Office and found Chaim raging, after a telephone talk with Boyd (Billy Gore’s secretary) in which he learned he was not to get the report until Monday—i.e. three days before publication. I have never seen him so angry. . . . He made seeing the Report a question of confidence and [in a subsequent telephone conversation with Ormsby-Gore] finally warned Billy that H. M. G. could not in [the] future count on the co-operation of the Agency. I do not blame him. I blame Billy for the folly of denying Chaim this report.³⁴

The fact that Weizmann was not given a copy of the report to read and edit before publication allows us to surmise that the British wished to avoid repeating the mistakes of 1931, when Weizmann was allowed to edit the MacDonald letter before it was issued as policy. By contrast, it was some of the ideas in Harris’s 15 April memo to Coupland that were copied and pasted into the report itself. Harris’s lengthy testimony in the secret sessions was thus one phase in his sustained involvement in shaping the language of the report’s partition recommendation. The tendency in the historiography to overestimate Zionist prowess can obscure a proper understanding of the breadth and depth of British power during the Mandate. Coupland used Weizmann, just as Weizmann used Coupland, but for Coupland, Weizmann was an outsider. Coupland, Harris, Andrews, and Ormsby-Gore, on the other hand, worked together intimately, committed to the common codes and expectations of British imperial culture. Having said this, Weizmann and the JA were certainly closer to British power than the Palestinians were. They used their connections and lobbied relentlessly to obtain the most advantageous terms they could, including on the boundaries to be drawn into the final map. Despite Coupland’s and Andrews’s citation of conversations with “moderate” Arabs in order to claim, falsely, that the idea actually

came from the Arabs, the leap to partition occurred without the participation of the Palestinian leadership.³⁵

As mentioned above, Sinanoglou has traced the history of cantonization and partition thinking in British imperial circles to well before the Peel Commission arrived in Palestine. She and Dubnov have also explained Coupland's ideological background as a member of the Round Table movement and an imperial federalist, an ideological background that explains his commitment to representative government and the protection of minorities. But the discussions about partition in the secret testimony tell us that we also need to look for a more prosaic and practical explanation of why partition appealed to particular British decision makers at this particular moment: partition was attractive precisely because it would bring an end to the Mandate as it currently stood. Partition avoided the messiness of having to undertake internal reforms of an inefficient government preoccupied with the expensive military management of a widespread Palestinian revolt. It allowed the British to disentangle themselves from their responsibility to adjudicate between the Arabs and the Jews. And because the partition plan envisioned Britain's maintaining strong treaty relations with both states, it came at little cost to British influence in the region.

Toward the end of July 1937, Ormsby-Gore wrote to the conservative politician Lord Dufferin, asking him to sit down with Rabbi Stephen Wise, an American Jewish leader, who had requested a meeting with a British minister. Anticipating that Wise wanted to complain about the boundaries of the partition map in the Peel Report, Ormsby-Gore told Dufferin to encourage Wise (whom he referred to as "a very Americanized Jew, who likes arguing for arguing's sake") to face reality:

The Jews have got to consider whether they do or do not want a Jewish sovereign state. If they do, they can get it now, if they refuse now, they will never get it. . . . In default of a better alternative HMG must stick to the general lines of the Royal Commission's report. One thing is clear, the Royal Commission's report has blown the existing Mandate sky high. Why the British government should be willing to go on governing Palestine in the teeth of hostile Jewish criticism and Jewish attack on everything we have done, and are doing, while at the same time we British have, because of Palestine, aroused the hostility of the whole Arab and most of the Moslem World, we cannot see.³⁶

Ormsby-Gore went on to describe the British responsibility in Palestine as an "odious burden which has become intolerable, constituting a constant drain on British military and other resources and we get no thanks or gratitude from Jew or Arab." He told Dufferin to tell Wise that "failure to reach a settlement now may well result in a movement in our democracy to clear out and leave the Jews and the Arabs to fight it out with bloodshed."³⁷ The attitude here on the part of the secretary of state for the colonies is similar to that shown by Harris and Coupland in the secret testimony, when they discussed how partition would solve the problem of bad government. By this stage in the Mandate, at least some British colonial officials, exhausted by the prospect of cleaning up the mess they had made in Palestine, were thinking seriously about an exit strategy. It was time for Britain to move on. The same can be said of many individuals who worked for the colonial service, as well as those who participated in colonial commissions. Very few were deeply invested in the decisions they made in one place because most had moved on or were about to move on to other roles in different parts of the Empire.

This is the prosaic flip side of the global-imperial framework employed by Sinanoglou, Dubnov, and Robson, where the focus is on the *ideas* that traveled across imperial contexts. We can build upon and add depth to this scholarship by considering the effect that professional mobility had on the willingness of participants to fight for their ideas. Think of Rumbold, who said in the letter to his son that he went along with partition because he didn't want to split the commission. Rumbold had retired from the diplomatic service when he sat on the commission. He was returning to his garden in Tisbury, Wiltshire, after his stint in Palestine. Harris, who had served in India before coming to Palestine, did remain connected to Palestine policy for several years, becoming chairman of the Palestine War Supply Board in 1943 and secretary of the Ministerial Committee on Palestine in 1945. He was even involved in last-ditch attempts by the British to come up with a new partition plan before Britain announced its withdrawal from Palestine to the United Nations (UN) in September 1947. But then he moved on to Uganda, where he served as development consultant to the Uganda Government from 1947–56. Even Coupland himself, who was not a member of the colonial service, moved on after the partition plan failed to materialize in 1937. In 1942, he was appointed as a member of Stafford Cripps's mission to India and published his book *The Cripps Mission* shortly afterwards. This was just one of a series of publications by Coupland on Quebec, India, Scotland and Wales, and Africa. Palestine was one small piece of a long career made from empire; and apparently not an important enough piece for Coupland to warrant a book in its own right.³⁸

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One general lesson to be drawn from this two-part article is that the sheer grotesqueness of British racist discourse can deflect the historian's attention away from the prosaic mechanics of the day-to-day exercise of British imperial power in Palestine: the development projects, the government reforms, the visiting commissions, the problem-solving, and so on. Attending to the details of these events and processes will produce a more fine-grained analysis of the cooperation between the British government and Zionist institutions than we currently possess. The secret testimony confirms the structural exclusion of the Palestinians from British decision-making. No amount of paternalistic affection could counterbalance the day-to-day contact between Zionists and British colonial bureaucrats. The fact that some of those British bureaucrats held and openly expressed anti-Semitic views was not an obstacle to working closely with the Zionists. With every joint endeavor, the Zionists showed the British exactly how a Jewish state would work. They asserted their political rights; but they brought maps and irrigation plans into meetings. They debated the technicalities of government procedure with a detailed knowledge of how government functioned. They could do this because the terms of the Mandate encouraged cooperation between Zionist and British institutions in Palestine. By contrast, Palestinians built their own political structures without the support of the Mandate state, and many of those structures emerged from long-standing resistance to the British occupation of Palestine. The fact that the terms of the Mandate denied the Palestinians' political rights meant that it became increasingly difficult for Palestinian leaders to participate in the Mandate's institutional life without negating their own existence as political subjects. This structural exclusion of the Palestinians meant that the Mandate government and its subcontractor, the Zionist settler-colonial project, rolled on relentlessly without them.³⁹

A decisive moment in this unfolding Palestinian disaster was when the Peel Commission endorsed the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine by recommending partition. Weizmann and other Zionist leaders supported partition in principle, even if they were not happy with the proposed boundaries of the Jewish state. They gave it their support because, unlike cantonization, it bestowed statehood on the Jews. But the limits of Zionist influence were exposed when the Woodhead Commission arrived in Palestine in 1938 to ascertain whether or not the Peel partition plan was actually feasible, and decided it was not. By the time the Woodhead Commission report was presented to Parliament in November 1938, the momentum behind partition had dissipated, and it became clear that the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate would continue to underpin British policy in Palestine in the near future. This was despite Weizmann's intensive lobbying to keep partition alive. The British White Paper of 1939, motivated in part by the cost of suppressing the Palestinian revolt, rejected partition and called for an Arab state to be established in all of Palestine after ten years. British policy thus lurched back and forth, buffeted by immediate concerns, and without any overriding regard for Zionist desires to make partition the default outcome.⁴⁰

But the fact that a British official body had endorsed partition in 1937, and that a map of the Jewish state had been published in a British official report, was one of the factors that led to the emergence of partition as the organizing principle for Zionist plans after 1937. The Zionist leadership had been more privy to British thinking during the Peel Commission proceedings than the Palestinians were, partly because they had been in the room during the secret sessions whereas the Palestinians had not. This meant that Zionist leaders had a strong sense that at least some British officials were starting to think about the benefits of ending the Mandate. What is more, Ben-Gurion himself, who replaced Weizmann as the central figure of the Zionist movement after 1937, had been open to the idea of Jewish autonomy within a federated system before 1937, not only in Palestine but also in Europe. According to Dmitry Shumsky, the author of a recent book on the history of Zionist political ideology, it was "the Peel Commission's vision of implementing a maximal separation between the Jews and the Arabs of Palestine . . . that caused the Zionist leadership to imagine Jewish national life as uni-national, without Arabs living alongside Jews as a national collective. It is at this point that we see the first signs of a historical turning point in Ben-Gurion's consciousness."⁴¹ On the ground, technocrats in the Yishuv started to lay out the detailed infrastructure of the Jewish state with the Peel map in mind. The fact that the years immediately following 1937 also saw the widespread persecution, and then genocide, of European Jews, intensified these efforts, and rendered any alternative to Jewish uni-national statehood in Palestine moribund in the eyes of most Zionist leaders.⁴²

On the Palestinian side, the Peel recommendations were the final straw. The partition plan proved once and for all that British commissions of inquiry would never bring Palestinians the justice they sought. Palestinians intensified their efforts to elicit support from Arab leaders who exhibited strong pan-Arab sentiments. Convened by the Arab Higher Committee in early September 1937, the Bludan Conference in Syria was the largest pan-Arab meeting up to that point. The conference flatly rejected the Peel Commission's partition recommendation and affirmed that Palestine was an integral part of the Arab nation. Two weeks later, revolt broke out again in Palestine and continued until 1939. In the wake of Andrews's assassination, British repression was even more brutal than

before, and most of the Palestinian leadership was imprisoned or sent into exile. In the light of the human cost of the revolt for Palestinians, any Palestinian leader who negotiated with the British did so without the support of their population. The British White Paper of 1939, which did not give the Palestinians everything they wanted, but which was more favorable to them than to the Zionists, came too late. Before the Peel Commission, the White Paper could have been used by Palestinians to leverage British support for the work they were already doing to strengthen their institutions and to work toward full statehood. By 1939, any faith that might have once existed in British promises had vanished. To add insult to injury, Haj Amin al-Husseini, who continued to command the majority of popular support in Palestine as the exiled head of the Arab Higher Committee, was not even invited to the Saint James Conference in London that led to the 1939 White Paper.⁴³

Above and beyond Zionist plans on the ground, and Palestinian solidarity with pan-Arabism, the idea of partition remained in the background at the international level. In early 1947, the British finally announced that they were washing their hands of the Palestine problem and handing it over to the newly formed UN. The United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, the investigative body commissioned with the task of devising a solution for Palestine, used the Peel maps as the starting point for their own eventual partition maps. That partition recommendation was voted on in the General Assembly and passed on 29 November 1947. Following the vote, war broke out in Palestine and the fight over partition moved from the halls of the UN to the battlefield. That fight led to the establishment of the State of Israel, the ethnic cleansing of 750,000 Palestinians, and the erasure of Palestine from the map. Just ten years had passed since the Peel Commission first recommended partition, yet so much had changed. The terrible fact of the Holocaust provoked greater sympathy for Zionism worldwide, and the United States had replaced Britain as the great power in the Middle East.⁴⁴

Given that partition happened anyway in 1948, why should we care about who said what to whom during the secret sessions of the Peel Commission? A macroscopic approach would proceed on the assumption that the broad historical forces at work make the details of how power was actually exercised at a particular moment and in a particular place, such as the Peel Commission's secret sessions, trivial by comparison. I have argued that you cannot truly understand the workings of power without attending to the details of exactly how and why decisions were made by those who wielded it. By constructing a detailed narrative that focuses on the minutiae of how these decisions crystallized, we can shine a light down into the depths of power.

About the Author

Laila Parsons is professor of modern Middle East history at McGill University. She is the author of *The Druze between Palestine and Israel, 1947-1949* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 2000), and numerous journal articles on the 1948 war, on rebel soldiers in the interwar period, and on the place of narrative and biography in the historiography of the modern Middle East. Her most recent book, *The Commander: Fawzi al-Qawuqji and the Fight for Arab Independence, 1914-1948* (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2016), was the recipient of the 2017 Palestine Book Award and the Society for Military History's 2017 Distinguished Book Award.

ENDNOTES

- 1 *Palestine Royal Commission Report*, pp. 370–96. For the details of cantonization, see Archer Cust, “Cantonization: A Plan for Palestine,” *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* 23, no. 2 (1936): pp. 194–220.
- 2 Laura Robson, *States of Separation: Transfer, Partition, and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), pp. 105–68; Penny Sinanoglou also has a recent article, “Analogical Thinking and Partition in British Mandate Palestine,” in *Partitions: A Transnational History of Territorial Separatism*, ed. Arie M. Dubnov and Laura Robson (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019), pp. 154–72, where she discusses the broader imperial context of partition plans for Palestine.
- 3 Penny Sinanoglou, “British Plans for the Partition of Palestine, 1929–1938,” *Historical Journal* 52, no. 1 (March 2009): pp. 131–52; Motti Golani, “The Meat and the Bones’: Reassessing the Origins of the Partition of Mandate Palestine,” in *Partitions*, pp. 85–108; For Coupland and his ideological context, see Arie M. Dubnov, “The Architect of Two Partitions or a Federalist Daydreamer? The Curious Case of Reginald Coupland,” in *Partitions*, pp. 56–84.
- 4 Sinanoglou, “British Plans,” p. 150. In a later article, Sinanoglou speculates that partition must have been discussed in the secret sessions. See “The Peel Commission and Partition, 1936–1938,” in *Britain, Palestine and Empire: The Mandate Years*, ed. Rory Miller (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), p. 125.
- 5 For two brief mentions of cantonization, see Stein testimony and Jabotinsky testimony in Aaron Klieman, ed., *The Rise of Israel: The Royal Commission Report, 1937*, vol. 23 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1987), pp. 279–80, 375.
- 6 Golani, “The Meat and the Bones,” p. 108. Golani argues here that Weizmann devised the plan and then gave it to the British, who presented it as their own. For the meeting between Coupland and Weizmann, see pp. 103–8. I consulted the same letter where Coupland mentions his meeting with Weizmann and asks him to remove any mention of it from his autobiography. The letter is in the Weizmann Archive, Coupland to Weizmann, February 18, 1950, WA 14-2911. Norman Rose also has a detailed account of Weizmann’s connections to Coupland. See Norman Rose, *The Gentile Zionists: A Study of Anglo-Zionist Diplomacy, 1929–1939* (London: Frank Cass, 1973), pp. 123–50, which Golani does not cite. Golani’s account of when Weizmann started to support partition is different from that of Rose, who puts it four years later, in 1936. Dubnov discusses the transition from cantonization to partition during the period of the Peel Commission. He supports Golani’s position that the idea came from Weizmann to Coupland, not the other way around: Dubnov, “The Architect of Two Partitions,” pp. 74–76.
- 7 Golani, “The Meat and the Bones,” 316n14.
- 8 Secret testimony (henceforth ST) NA, FO 492/19, Chaim Weizmann testimony, pp. 214–16. For the Zionist policy of mutual nondominance, see Nimrod Lin, “The Arithmetic of Rights: Zionist Intellectuals Imagining the Arab Minority, May–July 1938,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 54, no. 6 (November 2018): pp. 948–64. (My thanks to Dan Heller for alerting me to this article.) For Weizmann on the parity principle, see ST, Weizmann testimony, p. 212. Weizmann went so far as to assert, on the basis of the principle of mutual nondomination, that even if the Jews were to become the majority in Palestine, Palestine would not become a Jewish national state: ST, Weizmann testimony, p. 211. (I am grateful to Gabriel Larivière for helping me develop this point.) By the end of 1935, Zionist leaders vehemently opposed the creation of a legislative council that reflected the then-current balance of populations; some figures in the Zionist movement opposed a shared legislative council even with parity. On this, see Yehoshua Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement: From Riots to Rebellion* (London: Frank Cass, 1977), pp. 149–54. In the House of Lords debate on Arthur Wauchope’s 1935 legislative council proposal, Lord Melchett forcefully represented the JA’s opposition to a legislative council. See 99 Parl. Deb. H. L. (5th ser.) (1936) cols. 772–79. (My thanks to Caroline Stitt for this reference.)

- 9 ST, Weizmann testimony, p. 380.
- 10 ST, Weizmann testimony, p. 380.
- 11 ST, Weizmann testimony, pp. 380–81. Sinanoglou has a thorough discussion of Cust in “British Plans,” pp. 142–44. Golani narrates the contact between Cust and Weizmann in “The Meat and the Bones,” pp. 100–102. Rose’s *The Gentile Zionists* has a similar account of the way that partition was raised during Weizmann’s secret testimony. Like Golani, Rose also draws on Weizmann’s secret testimony available in the Weizmann Archive, but he obviously did not have access to the entire secret testimony when he wrote the book in the early 1970s; see Rose, *The Gentile Zionists*, pp. 127–29.
- 12 Dubnov, “The Architect of Two Partitions”; and Sinanoglou, “Analogical Thinking,” pp. 167–72. In her “British Plans for the Partition of Palestine,” p. 135, Sinanoglou argues that the British saw territorial division as a possible solution to the problem of representative government in Palestine.
- 13 For Harris’s involvement in previous cantonization plans, see Sinanoglou, “British Plans for the Partition of Palestine,” pp. 145–47. Harris was also closely involved in issues relating to land sales during the Mandate; see Charles Anderson, “The British Mandate and the Crisis of Palestinian Landlessness, 1929–1936,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 54, no. 2 (March 2018): pp. 171–215.
- 14 ST, Douglas Harris testimony, p. 444.
- 15 ST, Harris testimony, pp. 439–41.
- 16 ST, Harris testimony, p. 444.
- 17 ST, Harris testimony, p. 443. Coupland’s low opinion of the Palestine government is confirmed in a private letter that he sent to William Ormsby-Gore several months later, CO 733/351/2, Coupland to Ormsby-Gore, 11 July 1937.
- 18 ST, Lewis Andrews testimony, p. 444.
- 19 ST, Andrews testimony, pp. 444–45.
- 20 One example of Andrews’s hostility to the Arabs can be found in CO 733/344/4, which is a long memorandum to the commission from ‘Izzat al-Atawna representing the Bedouins of the Naqab. Andrews, whom the Bedouins had trusted to deliver the memorandum, refuted every one of their claims in the margins. For al-Khalidi’s view of Andrews, see *Wa mada ‘ahd al-mujamalat: Mudhakkirat Husayn Fakhri al-Khalidi* vol. I (Amman: Dar el-Shorouq, 2014), pp. 204–5.
- 21 ST, Hathorn Hall testimony, p. 432.
- 22 ST, E. Mills testimony, p. 385.
- 23 ST, Moshe Smelansky testimony, p. 316.
- 24 ST, Norman Bentwich testimony, pp. 348–52.
- 25 ST, Arthur Wauchope testimony, pp. 455–56.
- 26 For Rumbold on Coupland, see Horace Rumbold to Tom Rumbold, 10 February 1938, Rumbold Private Papers, dep. 42, Bodleian Library, Oxford University.
- 27 On the split between the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office over partition in 1937, see Aaron S. Klieman, “The Divisiveness of Palestine: Foreign Office versus Colonial Office on the Issue of Partition, 1937,” *Historical Journal* 22, no. 2 (June 1979): pp. 423–41. For more on disagreements between the commissioners (including between Coupland and Hammond) during discussions about the final report, see Sinanoglou, “The Peel Commission and Partition, 1936–1938,” in *Britain, Palestine and Empire: The Mandate Years*, ed. Rory Miller (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 121–25.
- 28 Golani, “The Meat and the Bones,” pp. 96–100.
- 29 Coupland to Weizmann, 18 February 1950, WA 14-2911.
- 30 Coupland to Weizmann, 18 February 1950, WA 14-2911.
- 31 (Emphasis in the original) Coupland to Weizmann, 18 February 1950, WA 14-2911.

- 32 NA, CO 733/351/2 Harris to Coupland, 15 April 1937; Coupland to Ormsby-Gore, 11 July 1937.
- 33 NA, CO 733/351/2. Memo dated 29 June 1937, on who should be given copies of the report before it was formally published.
- 34 Norman Rose, ed., *Baffy: The Diaries of Blanche Dugdale, 1936–1947* (London: Valentine, Mitchell, 1973), pp. 48–49. Rose also has an account of this in *The Gentle Zionists*, pp. 136–37.
- 35 Roza I. M. El-Eini also details Harris's role in the language of the final report in *Mandated Landscape: British Imperial Rule in Palestine, 1929–1948* (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 318–24. For evidence that Weizmann was consulted on the boundaries and met with Coupland before the report was issued, see Rose, ed., *Baffy*, pp. 44–45. On the tendency to exaggerate Zionist prowess: Zionist leaders certainly had successes as shown in some of the traditional historiography of Zionism, which has a triumphalist tone, for example, see, Walter Laquer, *A History of Zionism* (London: MJF Books, 1972). Works that are very critical of Zionism also tend to emphasize long-term Zionist planning, for example, Nur Masalha, *The Expulsion of the Palestinians: The Concept of "Transfer" in Zionist Political Thought, 1882–1948* (Washington, DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992). The work of Norris, Fredrik Meiton, and others on development projects that are cited in this article also tend to emphasize Zionist success, albeit from a critical point of view. To my knowledge there is no work that focuses on the history of Zionist political and economic failures during the Mandate.
- 36 Ormsby-Gore to Lord Dufferin (n.d.), CO 733/351/2.
- 37 Ormsby-Gore to Lord Dufferin (n.d.), CO 733/351/2.
- 38 For the global-imperial framework employed by Dubnov and Robson, see the introduction to their edited book, *Partitions*, pp. 1–27. For Sinanoglou's most recent article that employs this framework, see "Analogical Thinking." For Harris's involvement in partition plans in 1947, see El-Eini, *Mandated Landscape*, pp. 360–69. Coupland's books included *The Quebec Act: A Study in Statesmanship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925); *Welsh and Scottish Nationalism: A Study* (London: Collins, 1954); *The Cripps Mission* (London: Oxford University Press, 1942); and *East Africa and Its Invaders from the Earliest Times to the Death of Seyyid Said in 1856* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1938). He was most famous for *Kirk on the Zambesi* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1928).
- 39 For the Zionist movement "acting like a state," see, Natasha Wheatley, "Mandatory Interpretation: Legal Hermeneutics and the New International Order in Arab and Jewish Petitions to the League of Nations," *Past and Present* 227, no.1 (May 2015): pp. 205–48. The fact that the British could both hold anti-Semitic views and support Zionism goes right back to Balfour himself, who in 1905 introduced the Aliens Act, which banned Jews from Eastern Europe from entering Britain. Balfour saw no contradiction between this and promising the Jews a "national home" in Palestine in 1917. For a history of the structures created out of Palestinian resistance, see, Abdel Razzaq Takriti, "Before BDS: Lineages of Boycott in Palestine," *Radical History Review*, no. 134 (May 2019): pp. 58–95.
- 40 For the decline of partition option, and Weizmann's efforts to keep in alive, see Rose, *The Gentle Zionists*, pp. 151–73. Although the White Paper remained British policy after 1939, there were continued attempts from within British policy circles to revive partition. See Lucy Chester, "'Close Parallels'? Interrelated Discussions of Partition in South Asia and the Palestine Mandate (1936–1948)," in *Partitions*, ed. Dubnov and Robson, pp. 140–53.
- 41 Dimtry Shumsky, *Beyond the Nation State: The Zionist Political Imagination from Pinsker to Ben-Gurion* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018), p. 209.
- 42 Shumsky, *Beyond the Nation State*, pp. 208–11. Shumsky convincingly debunks the view that Ben-Gurion was planning for Jewish statehood from the 1920s and that his writings that indicate otherwise were just a smokescreen. For a fascinating account of how the Peel maps guided the planning on "the new towns" in the Yishuv, see Shira Wilkof, "New Towns, New Nation: Europe and the Emergence of Zionist-Israeli National Planning between the Wars," in *Planting New Towns in Europe in the Interwar Years: Experiments and Dreams for Future Societies*, ed. Helen Meller and

Heleni Porfyriou (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), pp. 195–227. For the connection between the Peel map of the Jewish state and the electricity grid serving the Yishuv, see Fredrik Meiton, *Electrical Palestine: Capital and Technology from Empire to Nation* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), pp. 209–13.

- 43 For the effects of the Peel Commission and the ensuing outbreak of the revolt on Palestinian political structures, see Takriti, “Before BDS.”
- 44 For how the Peel maps connected to the UNSCOP map, see El-Eini, *Mandated Landscape*, pp. 360–69.