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The section formerly called Bibliography of Periodical Literature has been renamed Bibliography of Recent Works in order to reflect the broad scope of its contents.

From the Editors



THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION has been the worst in U.S. history for the Palestinians. Given the United States' record of unconditional support for the State of Israel, this is a singular achievement. The three years of Donald Trump's presidency have included the closure of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) mission in Washington,¹ the withholding of \$364 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA),² the suspension of \$25 million in aid to Palestinian hospitals in East Jerusalem,³ the relocation of the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem,⁴ recognition of Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights,⁵ and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's double negative formulation of occupied West Bank settlements as "not inconsistent with international law."⁶ As the *Journal* went to print, the elected leader of the United States, alongside his Israeli counterpart, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu—both facing trial in their respective countries—unveiled the ostensible "Deal of the Century," which promises to strip Palestinians of yet more of their land and rights.

On 11 December 2019, the Trump administration moved the dispossession of the Palestinians to new terrain, taking its cumulative record of unconditional support to even higher levels: the U.S. president signed an executive order misleadingly promoted as a way to combat anti-Semitism on university campuses. However, the executive order does nothing to protect against xenophobic and white supremacist attacks on U.S. synagogues, Jewish community centers, or individuals in the rising tide of anti-Semitism that has swept the United States since 2016.⁷ A "Dear Colleague" letter on bullying and harassment in educational institutions released by the Department of Education in 2010⁸ made clear that anti-Semitic acts such as the use of swastikas, stereotyping Jewish people, and other mobilizations of hate speech triggered school administrators' responsibilities under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Jews, Sikhs, and Muslims are all groups protected from intimidation, harassment, and discrimination under Title VI, and the 2019 executive order adds no new protections to defend Jewish students against anti-Semitic attack.

The real targets of the executive order are students and faculty who work on, speak on behalf of, and/or are from Palestine. The last decade has seen a systematic and carefully orchestrated assault on the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement, which the executive order legitimizes and amplifies in what is now a century-long issuance of documents that repress, contain, and erase Palestinians. From the Balfour Declaration of 1917 to United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 in 1967, the Palestinians have been the unnamed objects of the very policy documents that undermine their destinies. By expanding the definition of anti-Semitism to include protests against Israeli state practices, Trump's executive order seeks to stigmatize and punish anyone who criticizes Israeli state violence or advocates for Palestinian rights.

The executive order relies on the definition of anti-Semitism developed by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). Adopted in May 2016, this definition includes two key "contemporary examples" that allegedly threaten academic freedom and freedom of speech: "claiming that the existence of the State of Israel is a racist endeavor" and "applying double standards by requiring of [Israel] a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation."⁹

This cynical weaponization of anti-Semitism renders virtually any critique of Israel racist. In recent months, the Department of Education has waged relentless attacks on academic freedom and free speech, targeting faculty, students, and programs, from the joint University of North Carolina-Duke Middle East center to New York University, and from the University of California, Los Angeles to Columbia University. In Trump son-in-law Jared Kushner's Orwellian framing, "anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism."¹⁰ Trump's executive fiat is so sweeping that the author of the IHRA definition himself, Kenneth Stern, has called Trump's adoption of it a suppression of political speech.¹¹ The executive order, which authorizes the use of federal monies to suppress the BDS movement, is, in the words of the U.S. Campaign for the Academic Boycott of Israel, "first and foremost a response to the success of the BDS movement in the U.S., and the broadening embrace among young students and progressive advocates of Palestinian human rights."¹² Digging deeper, what emerges is an attempt to control and contain what is said in the classroom and in university squares. The charge that calling out racism is itself a racist act will be familiar to many colleagues across temporal and disciplinary divides. More chilling still is the government's attempt to determine what teachers and students can or cannot say.

It is perhaps a tragic irony that at the very moment when Palestine's future appears most bleak, a nonviolent resistance movement like BDS is considered a serious threat to a state whose triumph in terms of territorial and military power has reached unprecedented heights. If nothing else, this executive order should serve as an invitation to reckon with the courtship between Zionism and white supremacy. It is in this context that the *Journal of Palestine Studies* is proud to continue carving out space for scholarship and analysis on Palestine and the Palestinians.

On the topic of quashing anti-Zionist speech and criminalizing Palestine solidarity activism, Ben White offers readers a historicized account of the Israeli government's well-resourced global campaign to undermine and suppress such activism. In his essay, "Delegitimizing Solidarity: Israel Smears Palestine Advocacy as Anti-Semitic," White shows how the concerted effort to equate Palestine advocacy and the BDS movement with anti-Semitism is taking place just as actual anti-Semitism is once again on the rise in Europe and North America. Harnessing such tropes to shield itself from scrutiny, Israel is mobilizing them internationally in concert with close allies like the Trump administration.

In her article "Palestine at the UN: The PLO and UNRWA in the 1970s," Anne Irfan provides a timely examination of the PLO's shifting relationship with the UN agency during a crucial historical period. Tracing a web of tension, competition, and cooperation, Irfan uncovers the PLO's complex struggle for international legitimacy and the centrality of the refugee condition to the question of Palestine.

An article by Laila Parsons is the second of her two-part investigation into the recently declassified secret testimony to the 1937 Peel Commission by exclusively non-Palestinian witnesses. In this installment, Parsons reveals yet more about the degree of collusion between British and Zionist officials, including their shared disregard for the interests and concerns of the Palestinians. The article focuses on the way that the secret testimonies contributed to the Peel Commission's endorsement of the idea of partitioning Palestine.

Two other contributions to this issue, one a report by Aseil Abu-Baker and Marya Farah, titled "Established Practice: Palestinian Exclusion at the Dead Sea," and the other a review essay by

Adam Hanieh of Andrew Ross's *Stone Men: The Palestinians Who Built Israel*. The Book examines aspects of Israel's exploitation of Palestinian resources and labor in the extension of its colonial project.

Finally, this issue includes a remembrance by Bashir Makhoul of the recently deceased Palestinian artist and critic Kamal Boullata which traces this renowned figure's trajectory and his outsized influence on our understanding of the history and practice of Palestinian art.

Rashid I. Khalidi
Sherene Seikaly

The *Journal of Palestine Studies* is happy to announce that Sherene Seikaly and Rashid Khalidi will, as of this issue, be coeditors of the *Journal* and jointly responsible for its content.

ENDNOTES

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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



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