The Jewish Peril

GEORGE SHANKS & THE PROTOCOLS
OF THE ELDERS OF ZION

The Protocols Matrix

ALAN SARGEANT
THE PROTOCOLS MATRIX

George Shanks & the Protocols of the Elders of Zion
THE AUTHOR

I graduated in Literature & Linguistics at Sheffield Hallam University in 1993 before making the unlikely transition to Information Systems a few years later.

Inspired by the extraordinary success of my former employers, the Drum and Bass Arena I launched Crud Magazine in Sheffield in July 1999. Whilst Crud never achieved the huge commercial success of the ‘breakbeat’ website, it became something of a refuge for solitary Internet misfits and industry professionals. The site was used primarily as a springboard for emerging writers and as a fuelling station for freelancers looking to maintain a healthy contact base. The magazine's mainstay James Berry went on to work for The Independent, Metal Hammer, Q Magazine. Priya Elan became fashion editor at The Guardian after a stint at the NME. Irfan Shah eventually went on to co-produce and write the critically acclaimed documentary, The First Film featuring Sir Tom Courtenay and Sarah Lancashire, whilst Veteran editor and reporter, Gary Hill who made several generous and significant contributions, continued to work for Reuters in New York where he retired in 2013. In 2005 I moved from Sheffield and embarked on a languorous life with my young family in the Highlands of Scotland, where I continue to dodge success on a regular basis. Not always by design.
“Nothing is of greater consolation to the author of a novel than the discovery of readings he had not conceived but which are then prompted by his readers. When I wrote theoretical works, my attitude toward reviewers was judicial: Have they or have they not understood what I meant? With a novel, the situation is completely different. I am not saying that the author may not find a discovered reading perverse; but even if he does, he must remain silent, allow others to challenge it, text in hand. For that matter, the large majority of readings reveal effects of sense that one had not thought of.”

— Postscript to The Name of the Rose, Umberto Eco, p.3, Harcourt, Brace, Javanovich, 1984

“I set about reading or rereading medieval chroniclers, to acquire their rhythm and their innocence. They would speak for me, and I would be from suspicion. Freed from suspicion, but not from the echoes of intertextuality. Thus I rediscovered what writers have always known (and have told us again and again): books always speak of other books, and every story tells a story that has already been told. Homer knew this, and Ariosto knew this, not to mention Rabelais and Cervantes. My story, then, could only begin with the discovered manuscript, and even this would be (naturally) a quotation. So I wrote the introduction immediately, setting my narrative on a fourth level of encasement, inside three other narratives: I am saying what Vallet said that Mabillon said that Adso said …”

— Postscript to The Name of the Rose, Umberto Eco, pp. 19-20, Harcourt, Brace, Javanovich, 1984
What on earth possesses me to do all this?

No, I’m not a historian. On good days I like to think of myself as a ‘retro reporter’ sleuthing around the stories that should have been sleuthed a little more fully when they were news the first time around. Why bother? Because I have this crazy belief that solving the crimes and riddles of yesteryear can somehow prevent the confusion and injustices of tomorrow. Many of the narratives of history have much in common with conspiracy theory in that they are bodies of confabulation, made up of distortions, honest lies and sometimes outright invention. Whilst this was certainly true of The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion, which is a complete fabrication from start to finish, the same charge might also be levelled at everything from Ten Days that Shook the World (both the Eisenstein and John Reed versions), to accounts of the American Civil War, the Wall Street Crash and the NATO-backed intervention in Libya in 2011.

I don’t know about you but I grew up with this wild idea that ‘history’ should behave like photorealism, in that it should faithfully restore the events as they happened; that it should be a little bit more like ‘real-life’. But history, I’ve found, can only ever be at best a representational art form. This is no bad thing in theory, as the most successful modern democracies are all based upon a principle of representation. The problems occur when the principles of history become distorted through cultural or political gain or overly sanitised through diplomacy and foreign relations; when it becomes less realistic, more figurative and when virtually all the core values of representation have been discarded. And when history starts to act this way it behaves in the same chaotic way as conspiracy theory, jamming and eroding trust in those very same democratic processes it should, by rights, uphold. Instead of providing the broad panoply of facts and viewpoints that could help broaden our understanding of issues — however savage and politically incorrect— it instead gives us the rather narrow scope of a story, usually one that starts and ends with a bang and has another big band in the middle. But have you ever noticed that life doesn’t really have start times and end times? Time just keeps on stretching and evolving. Phrases like ‘Alan’s day started at 6.30am when the alarm clock rung’ are just lies. Alan’s day technically started at 12.00am when he was asleep and unconscious and nothing at all interesting was happening.
All of which brings us to the issue of multiple viewpoints. Where is the opinion of my cat in all of this? The cat might say, “Alan’s day got off to a false start when I leapt onto the bed at 1.30 in the morning and was rudely ejected from the bedroom with a volley of obscenities by my surly and thankless owner”. We left out the view of the cat because its viewpoint a) was not deemed worthy, b) because it didn’t really fit the rules of traditional narrative and c) because it made me look cruel and unkind.¹ It’s a silly example but it does have its equivalents within the ‘serious’ historical canon. After all, when was the last time you were told what the Cherokee Indians thought of the US Civil War or on whose side some of them fought? What was the workers view of the pharaoh Khufu when they were building his astonishing tomb at Giza? As with DVDs in the late 1990s, the ‘multi-angle’ feature never really took off with history-makers.² And like most things the reasons for this were probably consumer-led. So next time you find yourself describing your day to a friend, remember that the selection process you embark on, or the ‘excitement-algorithm’ and ‘filter’ you apply to your 24 hours of relentless nonsense to make it seem more remarkable, are all part of the lying process. Meaning doesn’t spring from things, it is ascribed to things.

The German philosopher Georg Hegel famously said, “The only thing that we learn from history is that we learn nothing from history.” It may well be true, but if it is true then it’s true for one reason only: we learn nothing from history because history all too often provides all the wrong facts and all the wrong lessons — either as the result of hubris, political correctness or some overriding impulse to prove a point (confirmation bias). The past is only a prison if the lies that put you in inside in the first place have never been fully understood or exposed. And yet, as we have found with The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, sometimes exposing the lies doesn’t always guarantee that everybody will be released. The truth doesn’t always provide the mass-amnesty we’d all hoped for.

¹ This is all set to change. On May 13th 2021 it was announced by the Britain’s Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs that animals are to be formally recognised as sentient beings in domestic law (See: Introduction of the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill as part of the Government’s Action Plan for Animal Welfare, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs and The Rt. Hon Lord Goldsmith, 13 May 2021).
² One notable exception to this in recent years, is Helen Rappaport’s ‘Caught in the Revolution’ (Windmill Books, 2016) which stitches together dozens of parallel viewpoints to paint a picture of what was happening on the ground during the February and October Revolutions of 1917.
Conspiracy theory narratives take root so deeply in our world because they conform to all the core principles of history-making; there’s a hero and there’s a villain, and there’s some kind of conflict or challenge going on in between (usually regarding ‘the truth’). Lies are even easier to maintain if they report something that happened long ago, when all the evidence to the contrary has been very conveniently buried beneath a landslide of other events and distractions. And it’s for this very reason The Protocols has been pulled out and re-served by various ‘truth-seekers’ for over a century. It was Jean Baudrillard’s belief that as humanity adjusts to globalization the modern world is not moving toward the end of history but “going into reverse”. Whether it is the aggressive determination of the Islamic State to return to the ‘Golden Age’ that flourished under the Abbassid Dynasty of the Middle Ages or the collective nostalgia of nationalist provocateurs and time-travellers (or time traders) like Donald Trump and Nigel Farage, there appears to be an increasing appetite for re-setting the world clock to zero and recycling the world of the past. My own feeling is that old and modern conspiracy narratives have played no small role in this trend, in the same way populist folklore and mythology could be said to have propagated and supported the paranoid fantasies of the Völkisch and Nazi movements of the early 20th Century. The matrix of past, present and future becomes clogged with glupe, and the clear paths it should provide become congested. The past has invaded our national immune system in such a devastating fashion that the supporters of Trump, ISIS or Farage are doing what the body does at the onset of a virus. They are flooding us with past experiences, past triumphs and past joys that act like neutrophils on the infected area. In this respect nostalgia is the cultural equivalent of a runny nose. The more imminent the danger posed by an uncertain future, the larger the dose released. In many ways it reminds me of what Jean Baudrillard described in Simulacra and Simulations: what society seeks through production, and overproduction, is the restoration of the real which escapes it. To those of us who struggle to cope with the world’s increasing evanescence the past is significantly more real (and much safer) than the present.

Conspiracy Theory narratives have become a deeply infectious carrier of extremist discourse whose ability to replicate and spread has increased exponentially with the arrival of the Internet. What mandate do I have to write about such things? I don’t have a mandate. Like any other inmate, I just dream of being free. Or if not free entirely, at least having access to a Game Station and being given a glimpse of the sky and a gasp of fresh air.
In the guide to *The Protocols* you now have before you, I’ve gone for the approach of a jumbled timeline. It’s a more honest approach in my view. Events may occur in real-time but our perception and processing of them is only ever a delayed and haphazard affair. In the time that it takes for the real world to get to the brain, it’s already old news, and the way we put back together, from the eye to the brain to memory, is seldom faithful to the way it happened. It’s usually one event that dominates and transforms all the others. In many ways this is a guidebook to a book that hasn’t been written yet, compiled loosely under headings arranged in order of their dominance in the point I’m trying to prove; namely that the author of the English translation of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was not some ‘lone wolf’ extremist out to exact revenge but part of an organized response by senior members of the British Establishment to a perceived revolutionary threat: the Bolsheviks of Russia. Although some of the evidence rests on the discovery of an article printed in Lord Alfred Douglas’s *Plain English* journal of January 1921 (‘The Blue Faced Ape of Horus’, see: pp. 56-59, p.93, p. 213) a wealth of supporting evidence can be drawn from the people Shanks knew, the people he worked for and from the analogous concerns of the anti-Communist campaign being rolled-out at this time. As with most historical narratives, there is someone or something on trial and a case being made to prove their innocence or guilt, or in this case of George Shanks, how it may be a little bit of both.

The ‘truth’ may not be out there, but rather a lot of overlooked details regarding the book that refused to die are out there. You just have to want to look.
Contents

Introduction

The Bolshevik Peril 19
The Committee on Russian Affairs 22
Still Courting Controversy 27
Bolshevik Plots Unmasked 29
New Wars, Same Old Mistakes 33
Conspiracy and Confabulation 36

Part I

The Protocols of the Elders of Zion 1903-1905: The Beginning - Almost

Exhibit No.1: Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion 44
Sergei Nilus 46
Pyotr Rachkovsky 50
Father Gapon and the 1905 Revolution 51
The League for the Attainment of Full Jewish Rights 51
Earlier Editions 52

Part II

The Protocols of the Elders of Zion 1917-1921: The Other Beginning

The Accused: George Shanks 56
What Else we know about George Shanks 60
Did Shanks work as Private Secretary to Sir Philip Sassoon? 63
How credible is the claim that Shanks worked for Sassoon? 65
Churchill, Sassoon and the San Remo Conference 66
Burtsev: ‘Startling Revelations’ at Common Cause 132
Protocols expert, Rutenberg ally 134
Exhibit No.12: Russian Government Committee 138
Exhibit No.13: New Europe (journal) 140
Witness for the Prosecution: Archibald Sinclair 140
Exhibit No. 14: British League of Jews 141
Witness for the Prosecution: Robert Hobart Cust 142
Witness for the Defence: Princess Ekaterina Radziwill 142
Radziwill’s New York Publisher and The Protocols 148
Recurring Villains 150
How credible is Radziwill’s story? 151
Did Radziwill work for US Military Intelligence? 152
Exhibit No.15: San Remo Conference 154
Witness for the Prosecution: Ze’ev Jabotinsky 155
Jabotinsky: Another Press and Propaganda Specialist 156
Did the publication of Shanks’ Jewish Peril assist in the campaign for Mandate Palestine 157
Exhibit No.16: Report by Sir Stuart Samuel on his Mission to Palestine 159
Witness for the Prosecution: Herbert Samuel 161
Witness for the Defence: Ivan Fedorovich Manasevich-Manuilov 162
Witness for the Defence: Daniel Pasmanik 163
Witness for the Prosecution: Anglo-Jewish Association 164
Witness for the Defence: Matvei (Mathieu) Golovinski 165
Witness for the Prosecution: Boris Brasol 167
Witness for the Defence: Arthur Balfour 170
A Russian Mandate Palestine (1903) 172
Jabotinsky: A common actor in the Russian and British Mandates 186
| Witness for the Prosecution: The Britons          | 189 |
| Witness for the Prosecution: Victor E. Marsden | 190 |
| Witness for the Defence: Léon Lvovitch Catoire | 192 |
| Witness for the Defence: Georges Catoire       | 193 |
| Witness for the Defence: Mikhail Sergeyevich Raslovlev | 193 |
| Exhibit No.17: Common Cause (Obshche Delo)     | 194 |
| Witness for the Prosecution: Pope Pius XI      | 195 |
| Witness for the Defence: Edouard Drumont       | 196 |
| Witness for the Defence: Blue Faced Ape of Horus (Plain English) | 196 |
| Exhibit No.18: Rue Victor Cousin               | 199 |
| Exhibit No.19: Will Eisner’s ‘The Plot’ (2005) | 200 |
| Witness for the Defence: Eyre & Spottiswoode   | 203 |
| Witness for the Prosecution: The British Fascisti | 203 |
| Appendix                                       | 208 |
| Bibliography                                   | 212 |
| Illustrations                                  | 216 |
INTRODUCTION

The former Russian Revolutionary Vladimir Burtsev, who was something of an expert on *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, once used an Italian proverb to describe his feelings about the hoax and the variety of emotions that they would often arouse: “Books sometimes have their own history”. Sergei Nilus, the first man to publish the work in his own name went one better. When confronted with the truth about its fabrication he nonchalantly rolled out the following explanation: “Did not the ass of Balaam utter prophecy? Cannot God transform the bones of a dog into sacred miracles? If he can do these things, he can also make the announcement of truth come from the mouth of a liar”\(^3\) What he was saying was this: it didn’t matter that the book was a fabrication because the message it was conveying was true.\(^4\)

Over the last five years the post-truth politics of Donald Trump has expressed much the same thing, only more succinctly; it’s not the facts that count; it’s the emotions that the ‘facts’ communicate. Like all the best bits out of the Bible — the story of the three wise-men, the story of the loaves and the fishes, the raising of the dead, Captain Nemo’s Nautilus submarine moored off the shores of Galilee waiting to whisk the disciples away after the hurly-burly of the crucifixion — when anyone has the audacity to question the scientific or historical basis for any of this, it’s routinely trotted out that irrespective of their dubiety, it really doesn’t matter whether any of these events really happened or not as they all possessed an ‘inner-truth’. And the very same

\(^3\) B’nai Brith Messenger, June 17 1921, p. 6

\(^4\) Pierre-André Taguieff reveals that Hitler applied much the same BS principle of ‘inversion rhétorique’ in *Mein Kampf*, even going so far as to say that all the arguments in favour of their inauthenticity served as evidence as they were authentic. See: Hitler, *Les Protocoles des Sages de Sion et Mein Kampf* (2020), Pierre-André Taguieff. Exegesis or eisegesis?
thing might be said of how different generations have responded to *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. And not only that, the same might also be said of how people have responded to the history of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. But before we get stuck within an infinitely recursive loop and lose ourselves in the debilitating quicksand of the historical meta-narrative, let’s slip a handful of coins to the ferryman and try to get back to the beginning. Well almost the beginning. The beginning would be when unseen forces within the Russian Secret Police stitched *The Protocols* together from the fabric of earlier satires and fictions and re-served them to the world as a factual account of a global Jewish plot through Tsarist soothsayer, Serge Nilus in 1905. It was living proof of what scholar and novelist, Umberto Eco had said all along: *all books spoke of other books, and every story told a story that had already been told.*  

It wouldn’t quite be the beginning, but then nothing ever was. Instead, we’ll go back to the second beginning when the harmless seeds of invention have fully bloomed into something more dangerous.

History records that the first British translation of *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* — revived under the altogether more sensational and urgent title, *The Jewish Peril* — was the work of one single, embittered émigré, George Shanks in January 1920. But even this, we must now concede, isn’t entirely true as letters discovered in the 1970s reveal that George Shanks had been assisted in his translation by Major Edward Griffiths George Burdon,

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5 The issue is discussed in Eco’s novel, *The Name of the Rose*, and forms the basis of his later novel *Prague Cemetery*, a fictitious history of the origins of The Protocols.

6 Shanks’ phrase ‘The Jewish Peril’ originally featured on placards and red posters attributed to Édouard Drumont and the anti-Semitic League during the notorious Dreyfus Affair in France in the late 1890s (Advent of Nemesis, Daily Mail, July 26 1899). The events are believed to have had some influence on Herzl’s decision to hold the first Zionist Conference in Basel in 1897, a gathering that became the inspiration for Golovinski’s *Protocols*. Herzl’s close friend was Bernard Lazare, an early supporter of Dreyfus. See: Le Peuple Juif, Conférence Faite à la Salle du Grand Occident, 29 Juin 1900 /Édouard Drumont, p.8
soon to be Major Burdon *OBE*, as a result of an honour he picked-up in the 1919 Queen’s Birthday Honours List.\(^7\) I also discovered recently that Shanks may have been working as a PA in Central Government at the time that he carried out the translation, something that has never been fully explored. The story told by historians like Colin Holmes, Gisela Lebzelter and Sharman Kadish is that the 24 year-old Anglo-Russian had arrived penniless in Britain after he and his fabulously wealthy family had their jewellery business requisitioned and their assets in Moscow seized by Lenin’s gun-toting swarm of Bolsheviks in the immediate aftermath of the October Revolution in 1917.\(^8\) A mixture of confabulation and wishful thinking would shape the myths that followed; Shanks had been a member of the early British fascist group, *The Britons* (there’s no evidence of this), he had been a contributor to the right-wing *Morning Post* under the editorship of H. A. Gywnne (there’s no evidence of this either, and the letters discovered in the 1970s show that H.A. Gywnne wasn’t even aware of his existence).\(^9\) In fact, it’s extraordinary to think that it took us this long to realise that there was something wrong with the narrative. But even in spite of the evidence to the contrary, which has been systematically downplayed, ignored or not investigated, the legend has evolved that the book published by *Eyre & Spottiswoode* in January 1920 was put together and delivered by a single acrimonious and anonymous exile. It wouldn’t be the first time that a lone-wolf theory has dominated analysis of right-wing extremism in Europe (or America). Eccentric oddballs are, in the absence of any real sense of cultural responsibility, a more convenient and

\(^7\) *Supplement to the London Gazette 21st August 1919*, Temporary Major Edward Griffiths George Burdon, O.B.E (Special List), 0613. The Special List is a reference to officers who may have had ordnance, linguistic or intelligence skills.

\(^8\) For more on the Shanks Family see: https://shanks-family.org

\(^9\) Britons Archive, Chawleigh, R.H. Cust to H.A. Gwynne, 11 Feb 1920/Plain English, Correspondence, Feb 5 1921, no.31, vol. II
consumable way of conceptualising the evils that exist within a dominant hierarchical group or a diffuse network of individuals, whose aims or ideologies are more likely to be shared by the ruling system, or whose actions in some way threaten to expose a chain of poor decisions made at the highest level (whether by Intelligence and Security agencies, religious institutions or elected ministers).

30,000 initial copies of the book were prepared for the press originally. Shanks is alleged to have solicited an original Russian copy of the book from the British Museum in autumn of 1919, carried out a translation and then approached the highly respectable government printers, Eyre & Spottiswoode Ltd with an order to produce a staggering 30,000 copies of the book at his own expense (by contrast only 20,000 copies of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s The Great Gatsby were pressed by Charles Schiber’s Sons during its initial run in June 1925). The anonymous publication of the book was then followed by a promotional campaign that had been so professionally devised that practically all of Britain’s national and regional newspapers had received a copy for review by the first week of February 1920. Any curiosity about the pamphlet’s anonymous author (who may or may not have existed) came to a premature end in July 1920 when another version of The Jewish Peril, this time published under the name of The Britons 10 formed the basis of a series of blistering articles published in the Morning Post. Almost immediately, any counter-challenges being made by the likes of Lucien Wolf focused on the

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10 The Britons was a proto-British fascist group founded in July 1919. On page 19 of his book, Lucien Wolf claims that there was reason to believe that The Jewish Peril had been “engineered by a more substantial hand reaching out stealthily from the arcanum of German Militarist Reaction”, a phrase first used by the Manchester Guardian on May 7 1920. Quoting the Socialists newspaper, Freiheit, they describe an unholy alliance between General Neil Malcolm, General Mannerheim and various Polish, Romanian, Finnish ‘White Guards’ against Lenin’s Bolsheviks in the Ukraine and Poland (see: The Myth of the Jewish Menace in World Affairs, Lucien Wolf, 1921, p. 19/’French and British Complicity’, Manchester Guardian, May 7 1920, p.20).
claims being made in Gwynne’s Morning Post and not on the source of the original anonymous pamphlet. It may have been an exact copy of the First Edition pamphlet printed-up by Shanks, but it was the Britons who stole most of the credit and eventually took on all of the blame. And it’s on The Britons that the blame has rested for the best part a hundred years, historians routinely sidestepping some of the claims made by Lord Alfred Douglas in January and February 1921, which left a more embarrassing breadcrumb trail to the door of the British Establishment. Conspiracy or confabulation? Deception or ‘honest lying’? It’s really very difficult to know. It is, however fair to say that the book’s basis in fabrication, and its immersion in misinformation has been faithfully extended to its own ongoing historiography. The outcome couldn’t have been more apt; I had found myself exploring the fake history of fake news.

All culpability was subsequently heaped on The Britons, who had no idea that Shanks even existed until June 1920, when the group began negotiating a deal with the 24-year old pamphleteer to use his translation in their own publication of The Jewish Peril.11 The original author slipped away unnoticed and remained incognito for some sixty years. How a man who had arrived ‘penniless’ and broken in Britain little more than a year before was

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11 Frank Dashwood Fowler (former engineer of the India Public Works Dept) acted as mediator between Shanks and the group. The author Nik Toczek covers this in his book, ‘Haters, Baiters and Would-Be Dictators’, Routledge, 2016. Fowler chaired the ‘The Society for Upholding Political Honour’ with former Chief of the British Legation in Bulgaria (Balkans), Sir Henry Bax-Ironsides who assisted the Committee of Russian Affairs’ Sir George Buchanan and Ralph Paget in Russian (Guchkov) efforts to create a Balkan League (Rumanian Studies, Vol.III, Rumania and the Great Powers before 1914, Paul W. Schroder, p.16). Bax-Ironsides eventually became a founding member of the Liberal’s anti-Bolshevik pressure group, Liberty League with John Hanbury-Williams who served with the Russian High Command for Britain in WW1 (The Times March 3 1920, p.12). A report of the group’s launch in The Times on March 3 1920 was followed by a very supportive letter from Shank’s uncle Aylmer Maude at the National Liberal Club (To the Editor of The Times, March 4 1920, p.10)
any position to pay such a huge sum of money to the highly reputable printers of ‘His Majesty’s Stationery Office’ has never been explained. However, after reviewing what we do know about Mr Shanks and after exploring his family background and career in a little more detail, the story that emerges about the British revival of *The Protocols* is very different to the one we know. Contrary to what has been assumed over the years, he translation and publication of the first British version of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion (The Jewish Peril)* in January 1920 appears not to have been the vitriolic outcome of a single penniless émigré getting his own back on the ‘Jewish’ Bolsheviks, but part of a complex propaganda offensive supported by Winston Churchill and more than likely conceived of by the very capable pro-Interventionist lobby, the *Committee on Russian Affairs*, during the last desperate hours of the Russian Civil War. I’ll be writing all this up in full at a later date, but the basic gist of it all is this, and I’ll try and present in the simplest of terms.

**The Bolshevik Peril**

Vladimir Lenin’s Bolsheviks seized power from the Provisional Kerensky Government (who had already dethroned Tsar Nicholas II) in October 1917, replacing the temporary ‘Liberal’ regime with a more maximalist communist hardcore, who rejected the governing apparatus of democracy in favour of a more authoritarian power centre representing the interests of the ‘proletariat’. This totally unexpected event destroyed not only the war aims of the Allies but also the trade and mineral negotiations that the allies had been carrying out with Imperial Russia during the December 1916 to October 1917 period. The Bolsheviks removed Kerensky and the Provisional Government, seized his

12 Political anti-Semitism in England, 1918-1939, Gisela C. Lebzelter, p.21
government buildings, arrested those defending them, signed a deal with Germany to end the war (the Brest-Litvosk Treaty in March 1918) and executed the Tsar and all his immediate family. They then embarked on a violent campaign of seizing the assets of Russian monarchists (the Russians with all the money) before systematically uncoupling all the various democratic mechanisms that had been put optimistically in place by Kerensky’s short-lived Constitutional Government in the spring and summer of 1917. The guarantees of Full or Equal Rights offered to the Jews of Russia in the immediate euphoria of the February Revolution 13, were immediately negated by Lenin whose vision for International Communism made all other religious or ethnic identities invalid. All cultural or spiritual aspirations were to be subordinated to the Soviet. Their dreams were now your dreams.

By the end of 1914, over £60 million had already been loaned by the Brits to Russia. The figure had increased substantially by October 1917 as promises were made, and deals thrashed out over Russia’s considerable oil and copper resources. When the Bolsheviks seized power, all Russia’s national loans and debts were cancelled by Lenin. If Britain France and America were to stand any chance of retrieving the vast fortunes lost in the loans and re-setting the campaign against Germany, it had little option but to join the counter-revolution against the Bolsheviks on the North Western front. And fast. Arriving in Murmansk just one day after the Brest-Litvosk Treaty had been signed, the allies would form a loose coalition of anti-Communist forces (traditionally known as the ‘pro-White Movement’). Among them were the armies of the Brits, the United States, France, in addition to a spirited but

13 Progress of Russian Jewish Emancipation, The Hebrew Standard, 22 June 1917, p.21
inexperienced foreign legion of able-bodied men that included the Serbs, the Poles, the Czechs, some Zionists, and a small number of Italians.

As far as the British public were concerned we were there to safeguard supplies and provide logistical and tactical support to the White Russian Generals Wrangel, Yudenich, Kolchack and Deniken in their fight with Lenin’s Bolsheviks and restore Tsar Nicholas II to the throne or, at the very least, the former Prime Minister Kerensky or the Grand Duke Michael as leaders. Unofficially we were there to engage in combat and destroy ‘the Reds’. British Prime Minister David Lloyd George favoured ‘limited’ intervention. His Munitions Minister, Sir Winston Churchill favoured an all-out ground assault. And it was this division among British ministers that saw the whole thing fall apart. The allies had arrived in Russia in March 1918 and by October 1919 the British and Americans had pulled out, allowing Lenin’s formidable Red Army to march into Archangel in February 1920 and declare an emphatic victory over ‘the Whites’. The date of their triumph, coincidentally enough, coincided with the publication of Shanks’ *Jewish Peril* and the execution of White Russian leader, General Kolchak. But this was not the end of it. The increasingly isolated pro-White Movement refused to concede defeat and ramped-up efforts to restore Britain and America’s full commitment to Wrangel’s forces, Kolchak’s armies having already pushed out of the way when the Reds stormed Omsk in January (his failure to pledge rights to Jews and ethnic minorities having lost him the support of the Socialist Revolutionaries and other separatists fighting with him). As Allied forces withdrew, the main focus of British, French and American efforts shifted to stalling the development of diplomatic relations with Lenin’s Soviet. The war was now on trade. All energies were now being poured into resisting the inevitable calls to recognise Lenin’s Bolshevik Soviet as the official government of Russia and start the inevitable negotiations.
The Committee on Russian Affairs

The man who had been leading Britain’s ‘Secret War’ with the Bolsheviks was Winston Churchill, the former Munitions Minister now serving as Secretary of War in David Lloyd-George’s Liberal Coalition Government and the Prime Minister’s fiercest critic on the uncommonly ‘difficult’ Bolshevik issue. Responding to a mixture of war-weariness from veterans unwilling to return to combat and divided sentiments among left-wing and Liberal Brits who believed, to varying degrees, that despite the unfavourable outcome of the Bolshevik victory, the October Revolution was legitimate and justified, Lloyd-George had always resisted efforts among back-bench Liberals and Conservatives to launch full scale military intervention in the counter-revolution in Russia. As a result of Churchill’s efforts, a special pro-Interventionist lobby had been formed to pressure the government (and convince the public) that Russia needed our support to remove the gate-crashing Bolsheviks. In July 1918 the Committee on Russian Affairs was formed under the patronage and direction of the former British Ambassador to Russia, George Buchanan. The Committee had the support of Britain’s most resourceful wartime propaganda specialists: Sir Bernard Pares, John Buchan, Harold Williams and Hugh Walpole — the very men who had formed the backbone of the British Russian Bureau that had worked so closely and so diligently alongside Military Intelligence in Petrograd during the war. Shortly after their formation, the British War Cabinet requested that a White Paper be drawn up that would give a blow by blow account of the Bolshevik abuses being carried out in Russia. If Britain was to go ‘all out’ with Lenin’s Bolsheviks after the Armistice had been declared, then its Coalition Government would need a firm moral basis to convince both its public and its Prime Minister to enter another war.
The report, which would eventually become known as the *Russia No.1 White Paper* (April 1919) — and more informally as the ‘Bolshevik Atrocity Blue Book’ — made frantic efforts to portray Lenin’s Bolsheviks as power-hungry Jewish radicals out to unleash their venom and frustration on the capitalist world at large. The war with Germany had officially ended and decisions would need to be made about continuing British efforts on the North Western front. For the White Russian generals leading the counter-revolution against the Bolsheviks, time was running out, and allied support was fading.

The *Daily Chronicle*, whose commentaries on the latest developments in Russia were being peddled by Intelligence and propaganda man, Harold Williams, was the first to draw attention to the fact (inaccurately for the most part) that practically all of the main Bolshevik officials were Jewish (and just quite possibly Lenin too). The magazine *Reality: Searchlight on Germany*, the official organ of the *National War Aims Committee* chaired by Churchill’s cousin (and Chief Liberal Whip) Freddie Guest repeated the claims just one week later. 14 By the time that the *Russia No.1* report was published, Sir Mansfeldt Findlay chief of the Legation in Christiana was able to provide all the clarity and sense of moral purpose that was needed to move things forward. In a telegraphic to the British Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour dated September 17th 1918, Findlay had written:

“I consider that the immediate suppression of Bolshevism is the greatest issue now before the world, not even excluding the war which is still raging, and unless, as above stated, Bolshevism is nipped in the bud immediately, it is bound to spread in one form or another over Europe and the whole world, as it is organised and worked by Jews who have no nationality, and whose one

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14 *Reality: Searchlight on Germany*, Issue 97, November 17th 1917, p.4. The report was a reworking of an article published Harold William’s *Daily Chronicle* on November 10th 1917 in which the real ‘Jewish’ names of several Bolshevik ministers were revealed.
object is to destroy for their own ends the existing order of things. The only manner in which this danger could be averted would be collective action on the part of all Powers.”

— Russia No.1 White Paper (April 1919) A Collection of Reports on Bolshevism in Russia, p.6

Allied efforts staggered on for a further six months before Britain and America finally withdrew its forces. A wave of strikes was spreading south from Glasgow and chaos was breaking out at military bases throughout the country as men grew restless at the government’s slow response in demobilising its units. Everybody just wanted to go home, reclaim their jobs, reclaim their families, reclaim their freedom, reclaim their lives.

Despite Britain’s eventual withdrawal from North Russia in October 1919, it was being reported in January 1920 that Churchill was now talking of ‘possible new military commitments’ to stave-off the ‘Bolshevik Peril’ in the Near East. Britain’s new War Secretary was simply not prepared to give up.

Churchill had first made use of the word ‘peril’ in a cautionary address in Sunderland in the first week of January 1920. Explaining the plans of the Bolsheviks — the “enemies of civilisation” to the crowd in the Spen Valley, Churchill roared that they were “out to destroy capital” and “sought to control monopolies” of the world: “they seek to exterminate every form of religious belief that had given comfort and inspiration to the soul of man. They believe in the International Soviet of the Russian and Polish Jew”, he went on.


16 Evening Mail, January 05 1920, p. 2. It seems unlikely that Churchill invented the phrase “Bolshevik Peril” but it certainly made regular appearances in press headlines pushing Churchill’s fears in various reports from November 1918 onwards. The actual phrase may
But where does George Shanks fit into any of this? Well according to at least two sources George was working in the Chief Whips office at the time that he completed his translation of *The Jewish Peril*. However, if these sources are correct, it would perhaps be fairer to say that Shanks was working in the office of Churchill’s cousin and advisor, Freddie Guest, chairman of the *National War Aims Committee* during the war. Contrary to popular legend, Shanks hadn’t arrived in England a penniless refugee in the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution, he’d come to England as a student where he’d enrolled at the University of London before the war. Shanks’ uncle, Aylmer Maude, a respected Russian scholar and translator and friend of Tolstoy, was a close associate of Britain’s foremost Russian Scholar, Sir Bernard Pares. Like their mutual friend Harold Williams, Maude and Pares were senior academic figures at the School of Russian Studies at Liverpool University. As anti-Bolshevik panic and hysteria began to increase during the autumn of 1918, the three of them, ‘Uncle Aylmer’ included, were recruited into the pro-Interventionist lobby, the *Committee on Russian Affairs*. Maude had an even more hands-on role to play, being deployed at the Government’s request to give lectures to the troops on behalf of the YMCA in Archangel, ‘ground zero’

have first appeared Germany. It’s one of the phrases that were popular in headlines during the war to convey a sense of imminent danger. I’d hazard a guess that it was a stock phrase used by the press in headlines of the period then recycled by Churchill and the pro-Interventionist movement. Shanks’ use of the phrase certainly suggests an awareness of press tactics. The best you might say is that there’s some evidence of linguistic and rhetorical congruity: it exists in, or rather inherits, a strong and rather specific semantic context (i.e. ‘Jewish Peril’ as a deliberate Semantic cognate of ‘Bolshevik Peril’). The highest number of times the phrase is used by the press occurs during the landing of British forces in Murmansk in March 1919.

17 *Political anti-Semitism in England, 1918-1939*, Gisela C. Lebzelter, 1978, notes no.34/37, p.182, MS, Shanks, File Nr.1 (Britons), Box B Gwynne Papers (University College of Swansea); Britons Archive, Chawleigh, R.H. Cust to H.A. Gwynne, 11 Feb 1920/Plain English, Correspondence, Feb 5 1921, no.31, vol. II]

18 In her *Russian Liberalism and British Journalism: the life and work of Harold Williams* (1876-1928) C. Alston refers to it as the Central Russian Committee, p.171. In his book *Vladimir Burtsev & the Struggle for Free Russia* (2017) Robert Henderson refers to it as Committee on Russian Affairs, p.214.
of the counter-revolution taking place on the North Western Front. Maude had arrived in Archangel in November 1918, and by February 1919 had replaced Morgan Philips Price as correspondent at the Manchester Guardian.

Philips Price’s job at the Manchester Guardian had been terminated rather abruptly when Sir Basil Thomson, ex-Chief of CID and Director of British Intelligence at the Home Office, began pressuring the Guardian’s editor, C.P Scott into removing his reporter for shamelessly pushing pro-Bolshevik propaganda. The situation couldn’t have been any more ironic. In 1916 Scott had been played a key role in setting up the War Propaganda Bureau under the Department of Information with Lord Northcliffe in 1916. His former colleagues on the advisory board were now pushing for a propaganda approach on Russia that would have considerably less subtlety and more in the way of bite. If anybody should have known propaganda when they saw it, it was Scott.

Letters and files available in the Mi5 archives reveal the lengths that Thomson went to have Philips Price removed from the Manchester Guardian, whilst letters in the Guardian’s Rylands Collections reveal Maude’s timely and generous offer to provide a series of reports that would put a more positive case forward for ‘limited intervention’. If Maude hadn’t put forward his services when he did, it’s entirely possible that Scott would have retained M.

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19 Chelmsford Chronicle, 25 October 1918, p.3.
20 Sunday Post 04 August 1918, p.4/ Memorandum on sixth report from the Select Committee on National Expenditure, Herbert Samuel (House of Commons Paper no. 9 of 1918), 1918, Command papers, CD. 9201, XV.287, vol. 15, 20th Century House of Commons Sessional Papers
21 Morgan Philips Price, TNA, KV2.566, 568/Rylands Collection, Guardian Collection, Editorial Correspondence of C.P. Scott, Letter from Alymer Maude to the Editor, Jan 17 1919, GDN/A/P53/16
Philips Price, who would have received little more than a slap on the wrist for breaking the protocol.

**STILL COURTING CONTROVERSY**

I am perfectly aware that many of these revelations won’t be popular. This is an entirely fresh look at the pamphlet’s translation and publication, rather like coming out of a dark tunnel and reengaging with the light. For a time the eyes can remain quite sensitive, the brain can become disorientated and the light can sting. Churchill remains a hugely divisive figure, who’s belligerent, erratic genius, clearly played a decisive factor in inspiring millions of Britons to triumph over Nazi Germany in May 1945. Despite the efforts of recent biographers like Geoffrey Wheatcroft to reassess the “unpopular, error-prone, reckless” flipside of the British Prime Minister, the call will inevitably go up that “Churchill saved Britain. End of story”.  

For this reason, the actions of the men included in this guide, need to be viewed in a very unique context, and within a very unique and dramatic sequence of events. We also have to acknowledge the pressure that Britain was under to ‘square-off’ the press and the public, as they responded to the report on the anti-Semitic abuses being carried out by our various allies in Poland and Russia. That *The Protocols* coincided with attempts to delay the reports of Sir Stuart Samuel into the pogroms in Poland (which threatened to de-rail the anti-Bolshevik campaign for good) might also be seen as the mitigating factor in pushing the country’s most visceral anti-Socialists to such disturbing, drastic actions. By the time that the *Jewish Peril* was published in May 1920, Britain and her allies had found themselves encountering a series of sudden crises both on the foreign

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and domestic fronts. Revolution was in the air. That previous November, Colonel Wedgewood had asked Churchill if mercy could be exercised in the case of Samuel Adelson and fifty-three other Jewish American soldiers of the Britain’s 38th and 39th Royal Fusiliers charged with mutiny in Palestine the previous year (Mutiny Court-Martial, Palestine, 03 November 1919, Volume 120). The disturbances had arisen from issues of demobilisation and to the treatment of the men in the battalion. A rash of army and naval mutinies were breaking out elsewhere too. Despite the fact that the war had ended, millions of men were still waiting to be demobilised. As unemployment grew, those men who had returned from war were perceived as being vulnerable to a small but persuasive minority of ex-servicemen's unions with a snarling militant bent. In February 1920, ex-staff Sergeant, Arthur Henry Wagstaff, clad in 14ft chains, was arrested in Paisley, after a mammoth nationwide tour of British towns and cities, petitioning the government to improve the treatment and rights of its ex-soldiers and demanding an immediate discharge for individuals convicted of mutinous offences. When he had arrived to a fanfare at Downing Street, the expression he used to describe Lloyd George (‘the Goliath of the Capitalists’) carried significant weight in Socialist Revolutionary circles. Churchill and the anti-Bolsheviks are likely to have viewed the chains that he was carrying as the portent of an even graver threat. The metaphor had its roots in a phrase lifted from Marx and Engel’s Communist Manifesto (1848): “You have the world to win, and only your chains to lose”.

23 The National Association of Discharged Sailors and Soldiers (NADSS) and the National Federation of Discharged and Demobilized Sailors and Soldiers (NRDSS).

BOLSHEVIK PLOTS UNMASKED

Responding to an increase in such threats in the last week of January 1919, the British Government had formed, on the request of Sir Walter Long of the British Admiralty, a Secret Service Committee.²⁵ The politics of the nation were fast becoming a security issue. The violent demonstrations among dock workers in Glasgow had led certain members of the British government to conclude that a ‘revolutionary movement’ was gaining ground in Britain's capitals. Sir Walter firmly believed that ‘elements of unrest, and what we call Bolshevism’ were more ‘general’ and ‘deep-seated’ that many had assumed. Later that summer his worst fears were being realised when Bolshevik courier, Aksel Zachariassen, was arrested in Camberwell, London. He was accused of being a personal emissary to Lenin and suspected of carrying plans for a mass strike devised by Russia for May Day 1920.²⁶ But Zachariassen was just the tip of the iceberg. The press were now reporting that Britain was literally teeming with Bolshevik messengers who were rumoured to have among them, members of the British Army taken prisoner during the allied intervention in the Russian Civil War. It was further alleged that these soldiers had been enrolled into ‘propaganda schools’ and coerced into supporting revolutionary activities in Britain, scheduled for 1920.²⁷ As far as Churchill was concerned Britain was sleepwalking into revolution²⁸ By February 8th 1920 he had made his first definitive statement linking Jewish Bolshevism with a secret global conspiracy. It came in the form of a 2000 word article for Edward Hulton’s

²⁶ Traitor’s Within, Herbert T. Fitch, Hurst & Blackett, Ltd., 1933, p.83/ Dundee Evening Telegraph 08 August 1919, p.1
²⁷ Bolshevist Gold, Manchester Evening News 08 August 1919, p.5
²⁸ For a timeline of all these events see: Man in Chains, Arthur Henry Wagstaff and the 1919 Revolution, October 3 2019 at https://www.monocledmutineer.co.uk/man-in-chains/
*Illustrated Sunday Herald* in which the 45-year old War Secretary made a desperate appeal to Britain’s Jews to prove that Bolshevism was not a “Jewish movement” by putting the full weight of their support behind Zionism and the securing a national homeland in Palestine. In the appalling, chaotic aftermath of 9-11, George W. Bush had issued a similar ultimatum to Muslims the world over: “you are either with us, or against us”. As R.W. Apple Jnr. of the *New York Times* would write in the days immediately following Bush’s statement, the White House was reaching into brand new territory as far as international practice was concerned. The war on terrorism was a new kind of war in which there was “no neutral states and no clear geographical confines”. Churchill was saying that the Jews of the world must now choose sides. It was “us or them”. You were either with us or against us. It was a fight against good and evil, light and dark. Within the crude, narrow limits of casual anti-Semitism Churchill had not only drafted a policy for the world’s first war on terror, he had also taken the first blundering steps towards unleashing the dominant logic of the modern era: the politics of bivalence. What had “just been a matter of semantics” was now a *matter of life death semantics*. Just a few months later, the “arch-Jew Lenin” reacted in kind. Addressing education workers at a conference in Moscow, Lenin scored out his vision for a dictatorship of the proletariat along much the same battle lines of bivalence: “*each man must choose between joining our side or the other side. Any attempt to avoid taking* 

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29 The newspaper’s editor was American, Henry Leyford Gates (1878-1937), whose Armenian genocide film, *The Auction of Souls* was produced as part of a propaganda campaign against the Ottomans in the Near East in 1919. The film would play a key role in Churchill’s war with the Bolsheviks and Ottoman Empire. His other papers included *La Francaise* in Paris and the *New York American* (1917 – under William Randolph Hearst). Its graphic scenes were heavily censored in Britain (‘Banned Film’, The Globe, Jan 19 1920, p.1). Also wrote the 1928 Bolshevik propaganda film, The Red Dance.

sides in this issue must end in fiasco. ” 31 By way of testament, Lenin and Bolsheviks had their Communist Manifesto. To balance things up, the allies had prepared their own ‘Weapon of Mass Deception’: the Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion, specifically re-conditioned and re-commissioned for destruction in the 20th Century. 32

There was no middle ground here, and certainly no compromise. The Bolshevik prospectus described by Churchill in his article for Hulton’s newspaper contained only one objective: “the overthrow of civilisation and the reconstitution of society on the basis of arrested development, envious malevolence and impossible equality.” 33 The Jews, Churchill went on, had the “mainspring of every subversive movement in the Nineteenth Century”. The “International Jews” as he called the Bolsheviks, were seeking to gratify their lust for blood and revenge” and bring down civilisation. 34 At the top of the page beneath the headline was a picture of Churchill on horseback inspecting his troops at the barracks of the 4th Queen’s Own Hussars in Aldershot. The regiment had a rather special place in history, having formed the second Calvary line at the Charge of the Light Brigade and the Battle of Balaclava, a clear reference to Britain’s previous triumph over the Russians in the Crimea. Churchill was very much back on a war setting and leading the charge.

32 ‘Weapons of Deception’ is not my line, it’s Will Eisner’s. See: The Plot, Will Eisner, W.W Norton, 2005, p.114
33 Edward Hulton’s Sunday Herald had a strong readership in his hometown of Manchester which probably had the largest community of British Jews outside of London. Former Clarion leader Robert Blatchford’s contributions to the newspaper also ensured the ears of the patriotic left-wing and democrats. It was a newspaper for the ‘common man’ and Churchill was a regular contributor.
34 ‘Zionism versus Bolshevism’, Illustrated Sunday Herald, 08 February 1920, p.5
With an already nervous public still reeling from the sinister warnings of Churchill’s ‘Zionism versus Bolshevism’ appeal, news came roaring out of America that another Bolshevik plot had been “unmasked”. Documents were said to have been brought before a Senate Committee in the US that revealed evidence of a Bolshevik plot to ignite a Revolution. A courier was found with diamonds to the value of three million roubles with instructions to arm demobilized servicemen. British Police were being told to search for an emissary from Russia who was in Britain with plans from Lenin to launch a Great Strike in May. 35 Jews were dealt a more worrying problem still when it was revealed by an anonymous writer in The Times on February 3rd that the Eastern Department of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs in Moscow had founded a *League for the Liberation of Islam* and was running a virulent propaganda offensive from Berlin on behalf of Lenin’s “adopted” political son, Mustafa Kemal. 36 The Palestine, Syrian and Egyptian Mandates were suddenly under a palpable new threat. Pan-Islamism was on the rise and it was the duty of every Jew and every Christian to rise up and fight against it: the Bolsheviks were in control of the ‘Moslem hordes’. 37

That the men and women of Britain were now encountering challenges on a totally unprecedented scale — and from an entirely new enemy — shouldn’t be underestimated, as difficult as it now is to distinguish between the hype and the actual dangers that this ‘enemy’ posed. To rouse the British Public to the threats posed by International Communism, the enemy had to be

36 Kemal had found himself in the unique position of being presented as a threat both as a Muslim and a ‘Salonika Jew’ (Lenin’s World Feelers: Unity of Race, Globe 22 November 1920, p.4). The message being pushed was that Muslims were bad, but ‘Jewish Muslims’ were even worse. Such was the sweeping nature of their global plot, it was believed that Jews were now impersonating Muslims.
37 ‘Red World Plot, Moslem Hordes to be Roused, Germany at Work’, The Times, Feb 03 1920
seen as coming from within. It doesn’t make it right, but this is how it was. Just as Anglo-Germans had bore the brunt of Britain’s wartime propaganda offensive, it was now the turn of the British Jew to sop up the anti-Bolshevik bile of the Committee of Russian Affairs, the Liberty League and that distinctly more venomous group, The Britons. It was a toxic mix: the cultural prejudices of the Edwardians were comingling with the ill-defined potions of deception and confabulation; a mixture of distortion, misconception and wilful lies — the chloramines of frustration and poor judgement.

NEW WARS, SAME OLD MISTAKES

On the 16th August 2021, one hundred years to the day since The Times reversed its position on the authenticity of The Protocols and exposed it as a hoax, the West has found itself at a similar crossroads. After twenty-years of fighting the United States of America and Britain have finally withdrawn from Afghanistan, leaving their former allies with the cruel, impossible task of either surrendering to Taliban forces or falling foul of the Sharia Law that has been dramatically re-imposed as part of a Second Islamic Emirate. The global press furore that has erupted in its wake this week is generally in agreement about one thing: the West has betrayed not only the people of Afghanistan, but those who had fought beside us. The interventionist stance that many of us abhorred has suddenly become a re-interventionist stance that we are now passionate to get behind. We hated going in, but we hated coming out even more. There’s no logic in love and war; its chaotic, wayward journey is only ever plotted under the direction of one thing: our emotions.

By taking this line it shouldn’t be in any way misinterpreted that I am indulging in some grovelling apologetics for the decisions made by Churchill and the Committee on Russian Affairs who chose to place the practicalities of
‘realpolitik’ over and above their own and Britain’s commitment to Jews the world over. It was clearly a reckless, harebrain move, and one that Britain, France and America worked hard at trying to reverse in the immediate years that followed. The murder of over six million Jews during the Holocaust period in Europe reveals the extent to which myths can escalate and a failure to acknowledge the part played by Britain and her allies in these monstrously careless narratives will virtually ensure that atrocities like these will happen again. During tense negotiations with a period we no longer understand, the interpreters arrive too late, and as is happening in Central Asia right, they are all too often left vulnerable and ignored. There are lessons to be learned from our mistakes, and the first lesson, more often than not, is understanding just what compelled us to make those mistakes in the first place.

The British Government’s failure to shut-down the threat posed by Shanks’ Protocols is best summed-up in an exchange by the Undersecretary of State Edward Shorrt in a debate on The Jewish Peril in the House of Commons on March 1920. It’s only fair to point out that Shorrt had been responsible for drafting up the Alien Restrictions (Amendment) Bill, heard in Parliament just 12 months previously and also for playing a key role in founding the Government’s brand new Secret Service Committee with Lord Curzon and Sir Walter Long. Like the 1905 Aliens Bill, the amendment proposed by Shorrt sought to drastically limit the number of Jews from Russia and Eastern Europe entering Britain as a result of a dramatic escalation increase in pogroms and fears that Bolshevik agitators would slip in with the refugees. Asked directly by serial left-wing troublemaker, Cecil L'Estrange Malone whether or not the ‘Jewish Peril’, as a cynical “mutilation” of an anti-

Semitic document first published in Russia to arouse anti-Semitic sentiments, was something he was prepared to ban. Shortt offered a frighteningly dispassionate reply:

*I understand that the booklet “The Jewish Peril” is an English translation of a book published in Russian in 1905 by Serge Nilus. This book went through three or four editions. I am not aware that the pamphlet is a mutilation of the book nor do I know what the object of Serge Nilus was in publishing his work. I fear that the law confers no powers upon me to procure the suppression of the publication.*

There is one other thing I’d like to mention before we get down to the nitty gritty. *Eyre and Spottiswoode Ltd*, the printing company that Shanks approached to produce the first 30,000 copies of The Protocols reveal another link to the rather mysterious *Committee on Russian Affairs*, as Pares, Williams and Robert-Seton Wilson — the creative backbone of the Committee — used this very same printing company to publish their journal, *New Europe*. A web of other connections between Shanks, *The Protocols* and the *Committee on Russian Affairs* can be found in the guide below. These notes, compiled under convenient ‘at a glance’ headings are intended to provide the basis for a series of semi-fictional conversations with Protocols expert (and Committee of Russian Affairs member) Vladimir Burtsev, provisionally entitled, ‘Conflabulations with Burtsev’ — the word ‘Confabulations’ referring to the production of false or erroneous memories produced with varying levels of intent (and sometimes no intent) to deceive. The story will take place in the Sorbonne district of Paris during the Nazi occupation of 1942 when the once razor-sharp mind of the ‘Revolutionary Sherlock Holmes’ and Protocols

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39 Hansard, Volume 127: Commons, Jewish Peril, debated on Monday 29 March 1920
expert has been partially dulled by the first signs of late-onset dementia. The story, which will take place at Burtsev’s last known address in the old Latin Quarter of Paris, 6 Rue Victor Cousin, will reveal a man haunted by his complicity of reviving one of the most tragic hoaxes in history as the Nazis begin to roll-out their terrifying Final Solution, and whose violent fear-matrix owed no small debt to The Protocols of the Elders of Zion.

CONSPIRACY AND CONFABULATION

The guide to The Protocols below should hopefully provide something of a cautionary tale for the post-truth generation. As far as the book’s first publisher Sergei Nilus was concerned, a story could confabulate its own truth by ignorance, omission or outright capricious invention. As long as the message conveyed was true (or at least perceived by the majority to be true), it didn’t matter. In many of the novelised histories of popular modern culture, myth, legend and history exist on the same ontological plane, and are defined by the same narrative customs. Real events and fantasy collide and fuse in a fashion that is almost impossible to divide. The subject of the work of ‘faction’ is typically viewed as being locked in an interminable cycle of masking and being unmasked, with the author usually coming to realize that there are no unchanging truths and that any intention they may have had was being routinely subverted, re-routed and re-drafted by the reader. It was regime-change at the level of text. The truth, we can come to realise, is always at one remove, infinitely deferred or postponed in a relentless cycle of bivalence and différance, with any attempt to uncover it, frustrated further still by the realisation that the author himself is frequently obliged to recycle the
lies and obfuscations that keep it buried. For Donald Trump’s legion of post-Truth followers it is the dominant fictions of the invisible elites that maintain the power systems that ensure the electoral majorities that keep their oppressive regimes in place. Trump’s response has been to wage a war that has not been unlike The Protocols; a pernicious yet surprisingly effective guerrilla campaign played out at the level of narrative. Today, ‘Conspiracy Theory’ both the dominant and the marginal, are locked in a messy, protracted power struggle. In a world without memory and a world without forgetting, reality is constructed at the level of language and emotion and history can be plundered as an infinite resource for each. The very first casualty of any war, as always, is the truth.

The French philosopher Jean Baudrillard once played a delightful inter-textual prank in which he attributed the statement, “The simulacrum is never that which conceals the truth—it is the truth which conceals that there is none ... the simulacrum is true” to Ecclesiastes in the Christian Old Testament. In actual fact, the statement doesn’t feature in Ecclesiastes at all. It was, however, a darkly effective way of illustrating his key point; the truth never really satisfies in quite the same way as the fake. Another Protocols academic, Umberto Eco (author of The Name of the Rose) provided a memorable demonstration of this in his essay, ‘Faith in Fakes’ (1983). Experts in the field of Semiotics (the study of words as the ‘sign-posts’ to things in the real world) have long realised that reality ceases to exist at the very point that language attempts to reveal it. The figurative replaces the lived-experience. The object it seeks to reveal is lost and a proliferation of myths and second-


hand truths mark its resurrection at a figurative level. Writing of *The Protocols* in his 2005 essay, *The Power of Falsehood*, Eco chews over the proposition that the truth is more potent, more persuasive and more constricting than even the authority of a king, the influence of wine and the fascination of women. But if experience tells us one thing, he writes, it’s that truth often takes a long, long time to prevail (p.273). It costs blood and it costs tears. If our reliance on the worlds and the word of religion and government is anything to go by, then we have been “living for millennia under the ‘power of falsehood’.”

Vladimir Burtsev had arrived at this sad conclusion himself many years before Eco. A deeply religious boy he had visited the one of the chapels at the Kremlin in Moscow. Here he had been drawn to and invited to kiss a particular relic. It was alleged that it had been one of the nails driven in the hands of Christ at the crucifixion, and which still bore the stains of his blood. His response to this had been one of profound elation. The boy was beset by the most intense of emotions. Reading John William Draper’s ‘The History of the Conflict between Religion and Science’ whilst convalescing a few months later, Burtsev realised that the nail he had seen had been nothing but a common nail and the blood was either that of an ordinary person, or worse still, an animal. The experience was to leave him with a lifelong sense of betrayal, and a lifelong pursuit of the truth.

In the end *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* is the zone where the actual and the imaginary collide in an unpredictable and often contradictory fashion. It’s an ambiguous dystopia, a heterotopia, a headspace.

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44 Vladimir Burtsev and the Struggle For a Free Russia, Bloomsbury Academic, 2017, pp. 9-10. The account may also have served as a metaphor for the sense of national betrayal he experienced as a result of the Bolshevik triumph over Russia.
It occupies several generational timezones, several different regions and communicates several (often contradictory) messages. It’s the gift that just keeps giving. And the one thing that it really does keeps giving us — is the slip.

As far as I can make out, the root of all these problems tend to lie within the system-based vulnerabilities of history-making itself which adapt instinctively to the various customs and habits of traditional of fiction-making, and make it surprisingly easy to hack. Routine failures of memory distort accounts, facts become partially obscured by style, observations are commonly overruled by objectives and the clumsy hand of the narrative often disrupts the chronological sequence. History is a culture’s Burgomaster in that it holds some kind of mayoral sway in the Kingdom of Falsehood, under the skewed tyrannical rule of institutionalized confabulation. The casual and almost automated way in which history is consumed only adds to its weaknesses. Perhaps if there was a more faithful way of recording events and encoding history, more of the truth would be preserved. Perhaps facts have no place in narrative. Maybe they should be encoded in anything but stories. With any luck Google will one day produce a search algorithm that can identify, penalise and filter-out the substantial volume of ‘low trust’ content that dominates ‘history’.

Yes books have their own histories. And histories of books, and books of histories about histories of books have their own freakish stories to tell. This is just one of them.

The remainder of this guide will take the form of a trial in which witnesses will be called and the evidence examined. For this reason I’ll make fairly casual use of court-like terms like exhibits and witnesses, more for the sake of
entertainment than as a gesture of any real deference for the rule of law, so please don’t take it too literally. And of course, we’ll include some pictures.

*Was the 1920 British translation of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion the work of ‘lone wolf’ anti-Semite George Shanks, or was it a part of a propaganda offensive conceived and financed at the highest levels of the British Establishment? You decide.*

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Contrary to what you might think there are some truly wonderful and forward thinking historians out there who dutifully acknowledge the part played by emotions and confabulation in the presentation of historical fact in the elusive and toxic playground that is ‘Russian Studies’ — Helen Rappaport, Robert Henderson and Simon Sebag Montefiore among them.

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Also a special thanks to the *Department of Early Printed Books and Special Collections* at The Library of Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin for their hard work and generosity in digging through their special collections.

Imitation, the Protocols taught us, may not be the sincerest form of flattery, but it's certainly its most pernicious
Part I

The Protocols
1903-1905

The Beginning — almost
Enter 24 yr old George Shanks, born in Moscow in 1896 and a former student of Sir Bernard Pares, Russian specialist at University College London. In 1916 he enlisted as a sub-lieutenant in the Royal Navy Air Service before being seconded to the Russian Government Committee at Empire House in Kingsway, London.

Unbeknownst to most, Shanks was the nephew of respected Tolstoy translator, Aylmer Maude, a colleague of British propagandists Bernard Pares and Harold Williams at the School of Russian Studies in Liverpool. In November 1918, Maude was invited by the UK Gov to join anti-Bolshevik forces on the North Western Front as part of a propaganda offensive.

In March 1919 Shanks resigns his commission and finds employment as an assistant at the government’s chief whips’ office. In Dec 1919 he pays his Majesty’s printers, Eyre & Spottiswoode to print 30,000 copies of his translation of Sergei Nilus’ Protocols of the Elders of Zion telling the fake story of a Jewish plot.

This book hasn’t been seen since 1905. No one knew it was a fake then. They’ll never know now. Oshino! A Jewish perf!
A GUIDE TO THE PROTOCOLS OF THE LEARNED ELDERS OF ZION

EXHIBIT NO. 1: PROTOCOLS OF THE LEARNED ELDERS OF ZION

The version of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* that we are familiar with today is now thought to have been commissioned by the former head of the Russian Secret Police, Pyotr Rachkovsky and authored by one of his agents, Mathieu Golovinski in Paris in 1905. There are however, numerous other accounts, most of them absurd, and most of them of incorrigibly racist. The most popular of the stories first put out was that they were the minutes of a ‘secret’ meeting at the First Zionist Congress of Basel in August 1897. Other stories have been put forward, one of them that the Protocols was written by ‘Cultural Zionist’ Asher Ginsberg. In fact, it’s probably fairer to say that there isn’t a Jew in the world who hasn’t been accused of writing it, Woody Allen included.

Evidence produced by Philip Graves of *The Times* of London in 1921 shows that *The Protocols* was literally stitched together from passages found in Maurice Joly’s *The Dialogue in Hell between Machiavelli and Montesquieu* (1864) and a chapter from a novel by Hermann Goedsche. Joly’s original book was intended to draw a parallel between the cruel, manipulative rule of the French Dictator, Napoleon III and Machiavelli. As you might have guessed, Joly's book was drawn up in the form of an imaginary dialogue in hell between

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45 The Russian Secret Police were also known as the Okhrana. There is a separate, detailed entry on Mathieu Golovinski elsewhere in the guide.

Montesquieu and the Italian ‘Prince of Darkness’, Niccolò Macchiavelli whose political treatise *The Prince* well and truly opened the door for no-holds barred realpolitik (‘the ends justify the means’ or better still, ‘State consequentialism’). The fact that it derives inspiration from Rome is a curiosity in itself, as this ‘sinister’ cabal doesn’t just have Russia in its sights but the holy seat of Christianity itself:

“When the time comes for us to completely destroy the Papal Court, an unknown hand, pointing toward the Vatican, will give the signal for assault. When the people in their rage throw themselves on to the Vatican we shall appear as its protectors in order to stop the bloodshed. By this act we will penetrate to the very heart of this court and then no power on this earth will expel us from it. The King of Israel will become the true Pope of the universe, the patriarch of the International Church.”


In a modern world that is more likely to invest its highest of earthly regards in ‘Paypal’ than in ‘Papal’ it’s difficult to really appreciate the full diabolical gravity of what is being said; the Jews were not just threatening to destroy the Holy Church, they were seeking something worse: they were going to use it as their host. It was the ultimate ‘War of the Worlds’ scenario, the ultimate ‘Body Snatcher’. If *The Protocols* were to be believed, the Jews were seeking to paralyse the very soul of Christian existence, and have us writhe around powerless in some lucid, unending nightmare. Even if they were observed seeking to help us, they were out to kill us. As far as *The Protocols* was concerned, the Jews and the rest of the world were locked in an impossible binary. Or, as my grandmother used to say, “they couldn’t do right for doing wrong”.

Golovinski’s *The Protocols* as it exists today is not only a hoax but a plagiarism, the passages having been only partially and crudely rewritten from Joly and Goedsche’s original texts. The book that was together by Golovinski between 1902 and 1905 takes the form of ‘secret revelations’ made by a “sinister” cabal of Jewish Masons who are found to be plotting the destruction of civilised society as part of a fiendish bid for Jewish-Masonic supremacy and “dominion the world over”. It is, for want of a better word, complete and utter fiction. The basic facts I would now like to bring before the court relate to the circumstances and individuals that gave rise to the revised edition of *The Protocols* that published by Sergei Nilus in December 1905 and which anticipate its revival (not only in terms of its themes but its intent) during the anti-Bolshevik campaign of the early 1920s.

**SERGEI NILUS**

In 1905 the *Protocols of the Elders* was rewritten and re-packaged as a preface to a book by a “strange” Christian mystic, Sergei Nilus, who, like Grigori Rasputin some ten years later, is believed to have made a very strong impression at the court of the Tsarina Alexandra Feodorovna. When challenged about the authenticity of the Protocols, Nilus is alleged to have exclaimed: “Did not the ass of Balaam utter prophecy? Cannot God transform the bones of a dog into sacred miracles? If he can do these things, he can also make the announcement of truth come from the mouth of a liar.”

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47 *The Great within the Small and Antichrist, an Imminent Political Possibility. Notes of an Orthodox Believer*, Sergei Nilus, 1905

48 B’nai B’rith Messenger, 17 June 1921, p.6
Revolutionary spy catcher, Vladimir Burtsev wrote that when a copy of the book was conveyed to Tsar Nicholas II, “he accepted it with the fullest confidence” exclaiming “what profundity of thought! ... What foresight ... what an exact execution of their programme!“ It was alleged to have been all the proof he need that the 1905 revolution had been “literally under the direction of the Elders”. A short time later, Burtsev alleges that a “more enlightened member” of the Tsar’s government had taken him to one side and revealed that they were a forgery, and the books from banned from sale. The reason for his change of heart? One “couldn’t defend a clean cause with dirty weapons.” It was, in actual fact, a variation on a phrase used by Socialist Revolutionary-turned-Zionist, Chaim Zhitlowsky in his battle with the Palestine-only demands of the Hovevei Zionists, when he was a passionate young Marxist in Tula: “A clean cause needs clean hands” (“Чистое дело требует чистых рук”). Much the same point of view would be repeated almost verbatim by ‘enlightened’ White Russian, Mikhail Raslovlev, when explaining his reasons for exposing the book as a fraud to Times journalist Philip Graves in 1921. The expression had first been used by Ukrainian revolutionary figurehead and historian, Mykhailo Drahomanov in an essay for the journal Molva (Молва or Rumour)

49 In a diary entry written in Tobolsk on 27 March/April 9 1918 by Tsar Nicholas II writes, “During the evening I began to read aloud the book by Nilus about the anti-Christ, with a supplementary ‘report’ on Jews and Masons. It was very contemporary reading” (Diary of Nicholas II, 1917-1918, Kent de Price, The University of Montana, 1966, p.195). Thanks to Helen Rappaport for pointing this out. It’s possible that by 1918 his faith in the book had been at least partially restored.

50 The Elders of Sion: A Proved Forgery, VI. Burtsev, The Slavonic and East European Review, Vol. 17, No. 49, July 1938, pp. 91-104

in 1876: “A clean job demands clean hands” and which was quoted in an essay published in Robert Seton-Watson’s and Sir Bernard Pare’s *Slavonic Review* in 1937. Zionist Chaim Zhitlovsky also resurrected the phrase in a letter in the early 1900s. ⁵²

By the time that Burtsev made his claims in the *Slavonic Review* the following year, it would appear that contagion of falsehood and confabulation had begun to infect his recollection of the Tsar’s words. What was going on here? Fading memories? False memories? Cryptomnesia? A fundamental attribution error? Perhaps the virus had taken root in *The Protocols* publisher Eyre & Spottiswoode, who, you might have guessed, were also responsible for printing the *Slavonic Review*. Perhaps it wasn’t lapsed memory at all, but a virulent case of SARs-Covid-2 related Brain Fog?

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By his own admission, Vladimir Burtsev (a Russian Don Quixote if ever there was one) had “an altogether unique knowledge of the police underworld” in Russia and abroad, but how reliable a witness he is in the matter of The Protocols is made a little more complicated by virtue of the fact that he was so very close to those whose agendas it suited in Britain. Even so, by 1938 he couldn’t fail but acknowledge that the “little empty book which did not deserve attention whatsoever” had energized Hitler’s Nazi Party and now threatened the whole world. Hitler had, he confessed, “devoted the whole government apparatus of a powerful Empire to propaganda of the ‘Protocols’. They were printed in millions of copies for circulation throughout the world.”

53 By 1938 their danger was clearer than ever. A new variant had taken hold in

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Germany, and the virus had been unleashed some forty years before was sweeping fast across Europe.

**Pyotr Rachkovsky**

Pyotr Rachkovsky, the notorious former Chief of Russian Secret Police in Paris (the Okhrana) was appointed Assistant Director of Police in St Petersburg under the Minister of the Interior Pyotr Durnovo in February 1905, as a wave of civil disorder became to break out across Russia. Both men had been brought-in as part of emergency measures to restore order in the city following the so-called *Bloody Sunday* demonstration of January 9th 1905. Durnovo replaced Pyotr Sviatopolk-Mirsky as Minister of the Interior and Rachkovsky replaced Aleksei Lopukhin as Chief of Police. Both men had been blamed for the failures to contain the ‘legalised unions’ that had organised the march on behalf the workers and whose agents, Father Gapon among them, had literally walked his righteous protesters right into the famous massacre.

Between February and March 1906, Rachkovsky is believed to have published a separate pamphlet inciting people to murder the Jews, who had found themselves being blamed for a series of national strikes and naval mutinies which had erupted in the wake of the *Bloody Sunday* demonstration the previous year (Leon Trotsky was among those leading calls for the National Strikes). The pamphlet was published through the anti-Semitic organs *Yaria* and *Novoe Vremya*. Press reports claimed that the pamphlet had been printed at the ‘Prefecture of the Police’. The Russian Prime Minister Count Witte, who had released an earlier statement saying Jews had nothing to fear, was denounced in the pamphlet as the leader of a ‘Jewish Conspiracy to bring about Russia’s destruction’ (The Manchester Guardian, March 13, 1906,
pg. 14). According to former revolutionary, Sergei Svatikov writing about *The Protocols* from his new base in Paris in August 1921, Rachkovsky had been publishing a large quantity of loose sheets, memoirs, confessions and letters written by himself, but attributed to groups and revolutionary militants he was desirable of incriminating.  

**FATHER GAPON AND THE 1905 REVOLUTION**

In the summer of 1905, Father Gapon, the leader of the *Bloody Sunday* demonstration who had miraculously escaped to London was commissioned by a wealthy Jewish patron to produce an earlier pamphlet pleading with Russia’s workers not to get involved in anti-Semitic violence that had spread as a result through Russia, and that instead they should support the Jews’ demands for tolerance and social equality (see: ‘My Acquaintance with Gapon’, S. A. An-sky, Collected Works, Publishing Association, St. Petersburg, 1911-1913, Volume 5).

**THE LEAGUE FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF FULL JEWISH RIGHTS**

By March 1906 a full-blown movement called the *League for the Attainment of Full Rights for the Jewish People of Russia* had been launched by Maxim Vinaver. The movement hoped to take advantage of the Tsar’s October Manifesto in which he had been promising the formation of the first full legislative assembly (a parliament or State Duma). This would entail (in theory if not in practice) the partial suspension of the oppressive Tsarist autocracy; that is, a more democratic power share with Russia’s people. Other

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54 Les faux de Ratchkovsky, A propos des Protocols de Sion, S. Svatlikov, La Tribune Juive, 26 August 1921

55 A review of the pamphlet can be found in The Hebrew Standard of 11 August 1905, p.2
groups called for a *Jewish National Assembly* (a Duma within a Duma) to legislate on issues specific to Russian Jews. These options were popular among the Jewish Bund and some (but not all) Zionists. Other called for separatist Jewish States within the various settlements that made up the Russian Empire. Russia’s Liberal Party (the Cadets), who stood to gain much from the Tsar’s plans for a State Duma, were reluctant to embrace either, fearing the disunity it would engender would lead to inevitable failure and collapse; they could not see how a nation within a nation would work on any practical level. Rachkovsky’s decision to revive *The Protocols* at this time would almost certainly have pleased as many Zionists and Bundists as it would their anti-Semitic rivals, the monarchists. The lack of support for the Jewish minorities within the Worker’s movement — and the challenges it faced from the Bundists and the Zionists — would eventually see the *League for the Attainment of Full Rights for the Jewish People of Russia* fracture and disband. It would subsequently be re-launched as anti-Zionist organisation, asking Jews to adopt their Russian culture and embrace instead their identities as Russian Nationals.

**EARLIER EDITIONS**

According to Socialist Revolutionary-turned anti-Bolshevik Vladimir Burtsev (who was already something of an expert on the *Protocols of the Elders* at the time of its revival in 1920), the first copy of the book was published by Black Hundred activist Pavel Krushevan in 1903. He claims that it ran as part of a series of essays in the Saint Petersburg daily newspaper *Znamya* between August 28–September 7th (see: *The Elders of Sion: A Proved Forgery*, The Slavonic and East European Review, V.L Burtsev, Jul, 1938, Vol. 17, No. 49)
The Great within the Minuscule and Antichrist, S. Nilus, 1905
Part II

The Protocols
1919-1920

The Other Beginning
When the British Embassy in Petrograd was raided in 1918 Victor E. Marsden of the Morning Post was imprisoned & tortured by the Bolsheviks. He never recovered his health and died in October 1920. Despite his death his name appeared on the latest editions of the Protocols. No one knows why.

The House should know that on the 31st August, 1918, the Embassy at Petrograd was raided by officials of the Bolshevik Government. Captain Cromie, the Naval Attaché, was shot on the staircase of the Embassy and his body mutilated. Victor E. Marsden of the Morning Post has also been arrested & detained.

On April 28th 1920 the San Remo Conference concluded in Italy, ratifying the terms of Balfour Declaration of 1917 in which Britain had promised a National Jewish Home in Palestine.

On Saturday May 8th 1920 The Times published a review of Shanks’ Jewish Peril. It had been written-up specially by the paper’s editor, Henry Wickham-Steed.

“THE JEWISH PERIL”
A DISTURBING PAMPHLET
CALL FOR INQUIRY.

From a Correspondent.

The Times has not as yet noticed this singular little book. Its diffusion is, however, increasing, and its reading is likely to pervert the thinking public. Never before have a race and a creed been accused of more sinister plots. He who lives in denials only to find beneath it another more dangerous because more secret? Have we, by shielding every fibre of our national body, escaped a “Pax Germanica,” only to fall into a “Pax Judaica”? The “Elders of Zion,” as represented in their “Protocols” are by no means kinder taskmasters than William II. and his kinsmen would have been.

All these questions, which are likely to obtrude themselves on the reader of the “Jewish Peril” cannot be dismissed by a shrug of the shoulders unless one wants to strengthen the hand of the typical anti-Semite and call forth his favourite accusation of the “conspiracy of silence.” An impartial investigation of these would be documents and of their history is most desirable. That history is by no means clear from the English translation. There would be no internal...
THE ACCUSED: GEORGE SHANKS

According to Art Historian, Robert Hobart Cust and Lord Alfred Douglas, the editor of the 1920s gossip journal Plain English, the man who had taken the 1905 Russian copy of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion and translated into English was George Shanks. The revelation was later confirmed in a private letter addressed to H. A. Gwynne, the long-time Editor of the Morning Post. In a review of the Jewish Peril the newspaper had attributed the translation to a Russian exile. It appears that they were wrong, and Cust wasted no time in correcting them: ‘Your reviewer suggests the translator is Russian. The actual translator is a Mr George Shanks, son of a highly respected English Merchant.’ Cust went on to reveal that Shanks had been assisted in the translation by a Major Edward Griffiths George Burdon OBE of the 4th Northumberland Fusiliers. Despite all this, scholars and historians still routinely trot out the story that the English translation of The Jewish Peril had been commissioned for publication by Gwynne and the Morning Post. The fact remains that if Cust had to tell Gwynne that the man who translated the Protocols of the Elders of Zion was Shanks and not a Russian, then Gwynne clearly had no idea who was behind the pamphlet, dispelling any notion that Gwynne had a hand in its original publication in February 1920.56 But a more astonishing find was yet to come.

After requesting a copy of the Plain English journal dated January 22, 1921, published little more than twelve months after Shanks’ Protocols pamphlet, I finally unearthed the truth; Shanks wasn’t just some vitriolic exile

56 Box B, R.H. Cust to H.A. Gwynne, 11th February 1920, Gwynne Papers, University College Swansea.
out to vent his fury on Lenin and the ‘Jewish’ Bolsheviks, he was in fact very dutifully employed by the British Government:

“This Sir Philip Sassoon, private secretary to Lloyd George, also has a private secretary of his own. Who is he? He is one Edward Shanks, a good looking young man who is by way of being a poet, and who (and here is the rub) was the first translator into English of the Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion. Mr Shanks's mother was a Russian, and he was born in Moscow. He obtained a copy of the Protocols in 1917, and translated it in 1920 for Messrs. Eyre & Spottiswoode, who published the translation in London ... Mr Shanks was made much of and taken to Downing Street, where he was installed in the Chief Whip's Office as a Clerk. From this office he was removed a few weeks ago and promoted to be private secretary of Sir Philip Sassoon.”

— The Blue Faced Ape of Horus, Plain English, No.29, Vol. II, January 1922, p.66

This wasn’t just any Chief Whips Office but the Chief Whips Office at 12 Downing Street under then Chief Liberal Whip of the Coalition, Captain. Frederick E. Guest (Freddie Guest), first cousin and adviser of War Secretary Winston Churchill. At the time that the report in Plain English went to press, the “good looking young man” was believed to have been promoted to the position of Private Secretary to Sir Phillip Sassoon, Private Secretary to Prime Minister David Lloyd-George. A few weeks later the Editor was corrected on a number of minor issues:

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57 The Scotsman 14 October 1922, p.9, The Scotsman 07 May 1920, p.4, Leeds Mercury 09 November 1920, p.6

58 The Blue Faced Ape of Horus, Plain English (journal), No.29, Vol. II, January 1921, p.66 (Department of Early Printed Books and Special Collections, The Library of Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin).
“In regard to your statement about young Shanks, the “private secretary” to Mr. George’s private secretary, there is a slight error. He certainly did translate The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion into English for Messrs. Eyre & Spottiswoode, His Majesty's Printers, but I doubt if his English was good enough to enable him to do it unassisted. He was, as you state, born and educated in Moscow, but his first name is George, not Edward”

— The Blue Faced Ape of Horus, to the Editor of Plain English, Patrick Hamilton, Tring, Plain English, No. 31, Vol. II, February 5th 1921

Three weeks later the Editor of Plain English apologised for their error after receiving complaints from not one but three men of that name:

"Some weeks ago we referred in the course of an article called “The Blue faced Ape of Horus” to a certain Mr. Shanks, who is translator of The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion and occupies a position in the Chief Whips Office ... By an inadvertence we endowed him with the Christian name ‘Edward’ whereas his real name is ‘George’ ... we have been asked by no less than three different persons to correct that they are not the Mr Shanks referred to in our article.”

— The Blue Faced Ape of Horus, to the Editor of Plain English, Plain English, No. 34, Vol. II, February 26th 1921

The three men who had demanded the correction (if demanded they had) were Edwards Shanks, poet and private secretary to the Editor of the London Mercury, the American Edward Shanks, the ‘Poet Laureate of Virginia”, and a chap of that same name in the offices where Plain English was printed. Several additional details, corroborated by finds in correspondence between Robert Hobart Cust and H. A. Gwynne during the 1970s, suggest that the information is correct. Given the regularity and speed with which Plain English received complaints, it’s perhaps
significant to note that no one had written in to correct the two of its most explosive claims: that George Shanks had worked in the Chief Whip’s Office and, furthermore, that he was now employed at No.10 Downing Street by Sir Philip Sassoon. The man who had written in to correct the editor of Plain English — Patrick Hamilton of Tring — seemed to know George well enough to know that he would needed to have had some help in his translation, which as we learned in the 1970s was absolutely true. The name of the man who assisted Shanks in his translation was ‘Edward’. Source of the confusion explained.

Several days after the Plain English revealed the story about Shanks and the Chief Whip’s Office, the journal’s Editor, Lord Alfred Douglas made the most unpleasant discovery: his obituary had been printed prematurely in the London Evening News. He had to notify the press that he wasn’t in the least bit dead, but on the contrary was in the very best of health. 59 The newspaper who had greatly exaggerated news of his death was owned by the Ministry of Information’s Lord Northcliffe and the report had been prepared by journalist and author Arthur Machen (London Evening News, Feb 4th 1921). Machen had been a senior propagandist for Northcliffé’s newspapers and had been responsible inventing the famous ‘Angel of Mons’ story. Lord Douglas sued for libel and Machen was removed from the newspaper a legal challenged from Douglas. 60

59 ‘I am Not Dead’, The Globe, February 4 1921, p.4
60 Years earlier, Machen had been a member of Douglas’ New Bohemian Society. It was Douglas who had given Machen his first real break in publishing.
WHAT ELSE WE KNOW ABOUT GEORGE SHANKS

- Shanks was born Moscow 27 August 1896 to Henry Robert Shanks, son of Moscow Jeweller and merchant, James Steuart Shanks (b.1826, St. Giles, London). His mother was Emilie Shanks (née Catoire, b. September 03, 1868) of French-Scottish extraction.
- Between 1914 and 1918 Shanks was a student at University College London (alongside his friend and business partner, the radio pioneer, Leonard Plugge).
- In 1915 Shanks enlisted with Royal Navy Air Service as Sub-Lieutenant and is duly enrolled into the Royal Aero Club. In January 1919 he is with a Seaplane Squadron at Alexandria (Egypt). On 19 April 1919 Shanks resigned his commission at his own request.

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61 Flight, 3rd September 1915: Volume 7, No.36, p.649
The addresses listed in Shanks’ Service Records during his time with the MOD in London include 10 Addison Crescent, Kensington, London – former home of Reverend John Moncrieff Smyth, Canon of Westminster.

In 1916 Shanks was deployed on ‘Special Service’ with the Imperial Russian Navy at RNAS Kingnorth. At some point became a member of the Royal Aero Club (flies a Caudron Bi-plane).

On 20th December 1916 George was seconded to the Russian Government Committee under Boris Anrep at Canada and India House, Kingsway, London (handling military supplies). The Committee was affiliated to Russo British Chamber of Commerce (with Sir Bernard...
Plain Journal reveals the translator of The Protocols is George Shanks, a clerk in the Chief Whips office at 12 Downing Street under Churchill’s cousin Freddie Guest.

On 2nd February 1918 his secondment to the Russian Government Committee was terminated. The Committee was under obligation to be wound-down after the triumph of Soviet Government in Russia’s Second Revolution in October, 1917. The ‘Whites’ were moving out, and the ‘Reds’ were moving in.

George Shanks was the nephew of Louise Maude Shanks and Aylmer Maude (friends and translators of the famous Russian novelist, Leo Pares). His address during this period is given as Carlton Hotel, a luxury hotel in London.
Tolstoy. After moving to London in 1913, another aunt, ‘Emily Shanks’ exhibited her works at the *Royal Academy of Arts in London* (1916, 1918). On his mother’s side George is the nephew of Léon Lvovitch Catoire of the *Moscow State Bank and Moscow State Duma* (see separate exhibit: Léon Lvovitch Catoire).

**Did Shanks Work as Private Secretary to Sir Philip Sassoon?**

According to the article that appeared in Lord Alfred Douglas’ disturbingly anti-Jewish *Plain English* journal in January 1921, Shanks served as Private Secretary to Sir Philip Sassoon at the Chief Whip’s office in Downing Street. Although an associate of Shanks writes a letter to the editor of the journal to correct his name (it was not ‘Edward Shanks’ he explains, but ‘George’ Shanks) his role at the Chief Whips’ office is not corrected and his awareness of personal details relating to Shanks’ family suggest the information the journal provides is credible. From this, it might be possible to infer that other details published in the journal on January 22 1920 were indeed accurate (see: Correspondence, The ‘Blue Face Ape of Horus’, Plain English, No.31, Vol. II, Feb 5th 1921). The claims made in the 1921 article were later repeated in the *American Gentile*, in June 1936. The man correcting *Plain English* on the matter of Shanks’ forename also makes the claim that George’s paternal grandmother was a woman of German-Jewish extraction called ‘Schilling’. If online genealogy records are correct, Shanks’ paternal grandmother was indeed *Marie Louisa* Schilling the wife of James Steuart Shanks, born in Brandenburg. However, it cannot be determined if Schilling was of Jewish extraction as the author of the letter suggested. Whether the family had been

62 https://www.geni.com/people/Mary-Louisa-Shanks/60000000053599181982
Jewish or not it’s entirely likely that she converted to Roman Catholicism or Russian Orthodox upon her arrival in Moscow. One thing we can be quite certain of is that contrary to what The American Gentile added its own version of the Plain English article some seventeen years later, Sir Philip Sassoon was NOT the Chief Whip of the Conservative Party, although he did enjoy prominent status within that party (serving as the Conservative MP for Hythe). The Chief Whips of the Conservative Party during the 1911 to 1922 period were book and art collector David Lindsay, 27th Earl of Crawford, Lord Edmund Talbot and Captain Leslie Wilson.

Sassoon (also an enthusiastic aviationist) served as Private Secretary to David Lloyd. Both he and his father were close friends of Arthur Balfour. The Plain Journal article of January 1921 specifically says that Shanks “was taken to Downing Street where he was installed in the Chief Whips Office as a clerk” and appointed as Private Secretary to Sassoon at a later date. 12 Downing Street has always been the Chief Whips office of the serving British Government. As a Coalition Government the office was have been under two Chief Whips: Freddie Guest, Chief Whip of the Liberal Coalition Government and Edmund Talbot, Chief Whip was the Conservative Party.63 If Shanks had worked for Sassoon (somewhat briefly) as claimed, his new office would have placed him at No.10 Downing Street, the home of the British Prime Minister.

It all likelihood Shanks was employed in the Liberal Government’s Chief Whips Office. Although a Conservative Member of Parliament for the best part of forty-years, Sassoon served at No.10 Downing Street under Liberal Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, as part of a Liberal-Conservative

63 The Round Table, Volume 11, December 1920, Carfax Publishing Company, p.616
Coalition Government. The Chief Whips office was next door at No.12 Downing Street.

How credible is the claim that Shanks worked for Sassoon?

As outrageous as it sounds, it could be perfectly true. Philip Sassoon’s uncle, Arthur Sassoon was both a close friend of Robert Hobart Cust’s uncle Sir Lionel Cust and King Edward VII. As part of a friend of Robert Hobart Cust who was the first to disclose that Shanks was the English translator of The Protocols and that they had a mutual friend in common, it certainly puts the three men in a particular social circle.

And there are other curiosities too. A cousin of Sir Philip Sassoon, Captain Sassoon Joseph Sassoon served alongside Raphael Farina in the Russian Section (G Branch) of MI5 from 1918 until his death in 1922. The maternal grandfather of both men was Russian Philanthropist, Baron Horace Günzburg, former-treasurer to the Tsar and supporter of Kerensky’s Socialist Revolutionary Party. Regularly described by the Press as the ‘Rothschild of Russia’, Günzburg had been in a circle of key British ally for years. In 1906, Günzburg was in partnership with Arthur Balfour Haig, Basil de Timiriazeff (Russia’s Minister of Commerce) and

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64 Robert Hobart Cust was a friend of Major Edward Griffiths Burdon OBE, the man who helped George Shanks translate The Protocols from Russia into English. Cust claims to introduced Shanks to Eyre & Spottiswoode, His Majesty’s printers.

65 The Sassoon Dynasty, Cecil Roth, 1941, p. 166
and Frederick William Baker (Chairman of the Venture Corporation). The company they founded, *Russian Mining Corporation Ltd* was registered at 3 Princes Street in Mayfair. His son Baron Alexander Günzburg (brother of his mother, Louise and Captain Joseph Sassoon’s uncle), had been made President of the Commission that had been duly dispatched to Europe and America by Russian Prime Minister Kerensky in July and August 1917.

**Churchill, Sassoon and the San Remo Conference (April 1920)**

Although Philip Sassoon was the only Jewish member of the British Delegation to attend the San Remo Conference in mid-April 1920 (which was to thrash-out a route plan for Balfour’s Jewish National Home in Palestine), historians generally agree that Philip had little interest in issues on Jewish matters (Israel’s first President, Chaim Weizmann, would also comment on his complete indifference). Sassoon’s biographer, Professor Peter Stansky would write that if Philip had been active on the issue “he would probably have been an anti-Zionist”.66 The racist insinuations made by Douglas in his article for *Plain English* dated January 22 1921, suggested that Sassoon was using his “immense wealth” to have the “affairs of the whole nation” in the “complete grip” of a sinister Jewish cabal, who were also out to suppress the *Plain English* journal. 67

Interestingly, at the time that Shanks’ *Jewish Peril (Protocols)* pamphlet started picking up its first reviews in the British Press in the spring

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67 *The Blue Faced Ape of Horus*, Plain English (journal), No.29, Vol. II, January 1922, p.66 (Department of Early Printed Books and Special Collections, The Library of Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin).
of 1920, Winston Churchill, author of supporting a article ‘Bolshevism versus Zionism’ (February 8th 1920) was staying as a guest at Sassoon’s luxurious coastal mansion Belcaire near Lympne in Hythe. During his stay Churchill’s anger and frustration was intensifying as a result of Britain’s failure to suppress the Bolsheviks and withdraw its troops from the North Western Front (October 1919). His frustration was doubly compounded by rumours that the British Prime Minister Lloyd George was preparing to negotiate trade with Lenin and formally recognise his Soviet Government. Curiously enough, when The Times of London reviewed Shanks’ Jewish Peril on May 8th 1920, a report in an adjacent column wrote that the British Government was about to enter talks with Russia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Georgy Chicherin (Tchitcherine) in Moscow.

‘The Sassoons of Iraq’ and Russian Intrigue

The KV2 files in the National Archives reveal that Mi5 had been intercepting encrypted messages between Chicherin and Russia’s exiled Prime Minister, Alexander Kerensky in the days and weeks that led-up to formal trade discussions between Britain and the Soviet. A former member of the Tsar’s Secret Police, still in deep-cover in Moscow, was reporting that Kerensky was being frequently alluded to at the Kremlin, and it was his belief that he was “now taking an active role in helping the Bolsheviks carry out their sinister designs” (KV 2/659, National Archives). A letter dated July 12th 1920 quoting

68 ‘Churchill at Lympne’, Pall Mall Gazette 15 May 1920, p.3
69 ‘General Wrangles Woes: The Negotiations with Tchitcherine’, The Times, May 8 1920, p.15
sources from a former member of the Russian Secret Service now based in Constantinople, claimed that Kerensky was also in touch with former Socialist Revolutionary (now leading Zionist), Pinchas Rutenberg, at this time a key player in Churchill’s restoration plans for Palestine. The letter, signed and dated Constantinople July 12th 1920, claimed that Kerensky had been assisting Rutenberg and a “certain Jewess” in Paris as part of the “sinister designs” of the Bolsheviks.70

Enquiries being made by Raphael Farina of Mi5 into Kerensky at Rust Hall

Rutenberg, who had been arrested alongside Ze’ev Jabotinsky in the aftermath of the ‘Jerusalem Massacre’ in April 1920, had been appointed a governor in St Petersburg by Kerensky shortly after the First Revolution of February 1917.

70 Political Report, Soviet Russia, Kerensky and the Bolsheviks, July 12 1920, TNA, KV 2/659
It would certainly be interesting to know if Mi5’s source in Constantinople was Mikhail Raslovlev, the man who would eventually provide Philip Graves of The Times of London with all the sources he needed to expose *The Protocols* as a plagiarised fake in August 1921. Although his motives remain unclear, Raslovlev is believed to have told Graves (who in turn would tell his Editor, Wickham Steed) that he believed the danger the Jews presented arose not from their revolutionary ideals but from their greed (see separate witness: Mikhail Raslovlev). It’s entirely possible that the former Okhrana agent sharing his intelligence on Kerensky and Rutenberg with Mi5 in July 1920 was seeking to undermine the relationship being built between Rutenberg, Kerensky and the British Government.

After Kerensky had been removed from office by Lenin’s Bolsheviks during the second revolution of October 1917, Kerensky had taken refuge in England. Shortly before talks of trade started proper in October 1920, a stream of encoded messages between Chicherin and Kerensky had been intercepted by Mi5. As a fugitive of the Bolshevik Government, Kerensky was in-hiding at Rust Hall. Here he would have been the guest of Rachel Beer (née Sassoon) who had been running Rust Hall as a VAD Hospital during the war. Beer was the daughter-in-law of German-born banker, Julius Beer and a former Editor-in-Chief of the Observer and Sunday Times. Rachel was a resourceful and capable woman who had played a critical role in exposing the truth behind the notorious miscarriage of justice, the *Dreyfus Affair* in the late 1890s. Rachel’s nephew, Captain Sassoon Joseph Sassoon was working in Mi5’s dedicated Russian Department, G Branch (National Archives, KV

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71 See Colin Holmes, ‘New Light on the Protocols of Zion’, *Patterns of Prejudice* 6, Nov-Dec 1977

72 Letter from Raphael Farina to Chief Constable Charles Prior, Tunbridge Wells Police, 12th February 1920, TNA, KV 2/659
Among other members of the family (the ‘Sassoons of Iraq’) was Philip Sassoon at the Prime Minister’s office.

‘Russia: “The Land of Unreality”’

Another entry in Kerensky’s security file dated 12 May 1920 reveals that Kerensky's friend, the Moscow-born Vladimir Zenzinov had been approached by celebrated Protocols dragon-slayer, Herman Bernstein in New York to write a book on the counter-revolution to convey the message to Americans that it was not only the 'Whites' who were challenging the Bolsheviks, but former Socialist Revolutionaries like himself. The book was never published in America but extracts had appeared in the Revue de Paris in April that year. 73

Reading Kerensky’s security file makes it abundantly clear that what Sassoon and the Prime Minister’s office needed most at this time was someone not only with the skills of being able of being able to translate into Russian at a moment’s notice, but someone with first-hand experience of Russian culture, and more crucially still, a sound grasp of the strength and weaknesses of Russian trade and industry. Shanks’ families, both the Shankses and the Catoires, had operated at the highest levels of Moscow trade and industry, but even this would have been unlikely to swing it alone. What would have been truly indispensable at this time were the utmost qualities of secrecy, discretion and loyalty to British interests. The Prime Minister was engaged in largely secret talks with the Bolsheviks, and among those he was likely to be excluding from developments, would be members of his own cabinet. This

73 Letter to Krymoff from V. Zenzinoff, 12.05.1920, TNA, KV 2/659. Zenzinov is also alleged to have played a role in the assassination of Russia’s Minister of the Interior, von Plehve. Kerensky was staying at Rust Hall with Dr. Jacob Osip Gavronsky who served as Kerensky’s publicist and press attaché during his short-lived government (March 1917-November 1917).
would put Shanks in an ideal position not only to assist in Lloyd George’s efforts to strike a deal with Lenin (perhaps using any remaining support Kerensky had among the Russian Trudoviks and the Socialist Revolutionaries) but to keep the likes of Churchill in the loop. Introductions could have been made, references provided and by the time of the Anglo-Soviet trade talks took place those members of the British Cabinet still backing the Whites in Russia would have eyes and ears where they needed them most — No.10 Downing Street. Everybody was happy. Nobody lost out.

For Churchill and Mi5, any back-channel contact between Prime Minister Lloyd George and Kerensky would have represented a significant security concern. A letter from Raphael Farina (Chief of Mi5’s G Section) to Commander Ernest Boyce in November 1919 expresses grave concerns about Kerensky’s relationship, real or imagined, with the Germans: “Has been recently in Berlin and is now reported to be in league with the Germans to the detriment of allied interests and to influence Russian public opinion against Admiral Kolchak’s government.” Within hours, another letter went out to the Postmaster General from the British Home Office demanding the interception and inspection of ‘all postal packets and telegrams’ addressed to Kerensky in London and Tunbridge Wells (Alexander Feodorovitch Kerenski, KV 2/658). Whilst many of their suspicions were likely to be unfounded, at least in part, hardcore anti-Socialists like Sir Walter Long and Winston Churchill were given all the excuse they needed to pursue a much tougher agenda against talks with Lenin’s Soviet. The news that leading counter-revolutionist and monarchist General Kolchak had been handed over to the Bolsheviks by Kerensky’s old party, the Socialist Revolutionaries in January 1920, gives the impression their fears were right. A few weeks later the General was executed. Churchill and the Allie’s determination to discredit the Bolsheviks using the ‘Iron Maiden’ mechanisms of existing anti-Semitism had left the Socialist
Revolutionaries — who had no shortage of Jewish radicals in their ranks — little option but to withdraw their support from Kolchack and the monarchist movement; if the monarchists re-took Russia then it would be the Jews who would be made to suffer.

Mi5’s initial concerns, predictably enough, had focused on Kerensky’s friendship with his ‘Jewish publicist’, Dr. Jacob Osip Gavronsky. In a Counter Bolshevism report prepared for Sir Basil Thomson in August 1919, the agent responsible conveyed his concerns in the most predictable of ways: “Kerenesky has more or less sold his soul to the Jews and Germans, and the former now look upon him as their saviour.” The agent may have been trotting out the same old prejudiced guff as his handlers in Whitehall, but he was correct about one thing: the Jews of Russia were now more vulnerable than ever, realising that their position in a future monarchist Russia had been dealt a devastating blow “by the actions of their co-religionist Bolshevik leaders”.

And this is something that Britain (and Churchill in particular) could work with on several fronts. Played correctly, the Jews wouldn’t need a place in Russia if they could be immigrated en masse to a new National home in Palestine. As per usual, Churchill was staring into the jaws of certain (and entirely preventable) defeat and eyeballing an unlikely triumph.

Fears were also being expressed about possible blackmail by Lenin’s Bolsheviks. Kerensky was in England alone. His wife Olga and their two boys Oleg and Gleb hadn’t been able to escape when the Bolsheviks had taken control of Moscow. They were being retained as leverage in negotiations with the West; guests of Lenin and the Cheka at the notorious Katorga labour camp.

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74 Counter Bolshevism, Agents Report, Copenhagen to London, 13.08.1919, TNA, KV2/658
Letter to dated December 31st 1919 with news that Kerensky’s letter would be published in *Common Cause* in Paris, the journal run by Protocols expert Vladimir Burtsev.

The head of Lenin’s new Secret Police, Felix Dzerzhinsky was unambiguous about the matter: “As long as they in our grasp,” he wrote, “Kerensky cannot do much harm abroad”. Their eventual release at the beginning of October 1920 just happened to coincide with Britain publishing a copy of a draft Trade Agreement with Lenin’s Soviet (Trade With Red Russia, The Times, October 5th, 1920). The release of a further 62 British prisoners followed, but with little or no fanfare in the press. It’s probably fair to say that Churchill’s concerns had been reasonable and that Kerensky’s position may well have been compromised by fears for his family and the future of Russia’s Jews. Exactly how Kerensky’s friends, Pinchas Rutenberg and Vladimir Burtsev (described at one point as Kerensky’s Chief of Police in Russia 75) featured in

75 Kerensky report, 31.05.1918, Captain Francis Cromie, Director of Naval Intelligence, ‘The Russians in Spain’
the Churchill-Kerensky matrix at this early stage remains uncertain but both men certainly make repeated appearances in Kerensky’s security file during this period, with Burtsev mainly mentioned in relation to Intelligence he was sharing with the Brits. Churchill’s response to the draft trade agreement was nothing less than furious. In fact, he opposed the draft so vigorously that he threatened Lloyd George with his resignation. At a Cabinet meeting in November that year he let rip with his frustration. As far as he was concerned agreeing to the draft in principle would amount to formal recognition of the Soviet Government and the counter-revolution would be terminated for good. Winston told his colleagues in the frankest of terms that they were “on the high road to Bolshevism”. 76 Within eight weeks Lloyd George found that Churchill’s skills were perhaps better employed as Secretary of State for Colonies, his regular tours of the Empire almost certainly keeping out of the country and away from Whitehall for much longer periods of time.

H. A. Gwynne’s The Morning Post, whose name would be eternally entwined with the Protocols legend, was responsible for a particularly aggressive anti-Kerensky report in July 1918:

“Made of the same paste as Rasputin and Protopopoff— the one a mystic the other a madman— Kerensky is the connecting link between them and the leaders of Bolshevism, Lenin and Trotsky. Russia, that land of unreality and immeasurable greatness, has beaten the record of the impossible in letting itself be governed for two years by this quintet of political epileptics. Intervention on the part of the Allies, must take place and they must hurry ...”

— Kerensky: Russia’s Evil Genius, Comte Gaston de Merindol, The Morning Post, 6th July 1918

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76 C. 62(20), November 18 1920, Cab. 23/23, ff. 106-107
Sassoon, Churchill and the Hythe Peace Conference (May 1920)?

At the time that all this was taking place, Sassoon was serving as Conservative MP for Hythe. In May 1920 Sassoon’s same Belcaire mansion was used to host the so-called Hythe (Lympne) Peace Conference. In attendance were Sassoon, General Maxime Weygand, Marshal Ferdinand Foch, Field Marshal Henry Wilson, David Gubbay, David Lloyd George, Philip Kerr, Alexandre Millerand, Austen Chamberlain and Maurice Hankey. A second conference was held at Sassoon’s mansion in June and a third in August. Discussion was dominated by the situation in Poland and the escalating problems in Russia. It was agreed that the allies would continue to assist Poland in her struggle for independence against the Bolsheviks. Although Churchill’s visited coincided with the conference the press were informed that his stay at the luxury mansion was not in any way related to the Conference.77 He was here, he insisted, on holiday. Inevitably, a slew of conspiracy rumours regarding Winston, Sassoon and the Conference began to be circulated by Lord Douglas in his magazine Plain English. These rumours were duly resurrected in America in 1938, in which they were braced by a similar ring of innuendo.78 Incidentally, Sassoon would also play a key role in the career of mosaicist Boris Anrep, Shanks’ superior at the Russian Government Committee in 1916. His mosaics appear in the entrance hall of the National Gallery.

77 Pall Mall Gazette 15 May 1920, p.3
78 Jewish Post, Indianapolis, Marion County, 20 May 1938, p.8
Witness for the Defence: The Other Chief Whip’s Office: Freddie Guest

As it has been noted already, if Shanks was working in the Chief Whip’s office in during the 1919-1921 period, as the article in the Plain English journal claims, then he was almost certainly working under Captain ‘Freddie Guest’ at No. 12 Downing Street.

A first cousin and confidant to Britain’s No.1 anti-Bolshevik Winston Churchill, Captain Frederick E. Guest served as Lloyd George and the Coalition Liberal Government’s Chief Whip from 1917 to April 1921 when he replaced his cousin Winston as Britain’s Secretary of State for Air. His promotion took place little more than eight weeks after Shanks had been exposed as a clerk in the Chief Whip’s office and at a time when The Protocols was continuing to tear holes in the Bolshevik’s defences. If there is any truth at all the story published by Plain English, then the arrival of Shanks at 12 Downing Street under Guest makes a little more sense. Guest had previous ‘form’ where propaganda of this nature was concerned. During the war Guest had served as Chairman and founder of Britain’s cross-party propaganda commission, The National War Aims Committee whose weekly newspaper, Reality: The Searchlight on Germany, managed to keep the British threat level fixed rather comfortably at ‘severe’ and conscription relatively buoyant for the full four years of the war. In November 1917, the NWAC’s newspaper was among the first to publically conflate Bolshevism with the so-called ‘Jewish Peril’. The report it published was a reworking of an article published by Harold Williams of the Daily Chronicle on November 10th 1917.

79 Reality, Issue 97, November 17th 1917, p.4
80 As previously mentioned, Harold Williams was a member of the Committee on Russian Affairs set-up by Pares and Buchanan. He was also a close friend of Shank’s uncle, Aylmer Maude.

in which the real ‘Jewish’ names of several Bolshevik ministers were revealed.

As Chief Whip to the Liberal Party, Guest was on very close terms with Times Editor Wickham Steed, the man who had made it his personal responsibility to review Shanks’ Protocols translation, the Jewish Peril in May 1920. As was fairly commonplace among men of high-standing in Liberal circles — and those wishing to retain a tight grip on security matters — both men were regularly seen in the company of Churchill’s Personal Secretary, Sir Archibald Sinclair and Intelligence man, Bruce Lockhart. Like Shanks, Captain Guest was also a keen and experienced aviator. In 1918 Guest was warned by Liberal John Howard Whitehouse ‘not to use this propaganda (the National War Aims Committee) to increase the hatred of the world’. At this time The National War Aims Committee operated in tandem with John Buchan and Lord Northcliffe’s War Propaganda Bureau, the propaganda wing of the Ministry of Information. Guest also featured prominently in the ‘Secret Memo’ affair of April 1919 when it was discovered that Churchill had sent out a circular to various military divisions for an update on the state of play where Russia was concerned. George Lansbury’s Daily Herald went ballistic: Churchill, the brand new Secretary of State for War, was placing Downing Street in a compromising situation. His memo marked ‘most secret and urgent’ had been addressed to the commanders of all British forces asking whether or not soldiers, many of whom are soon to be discharged, would be willing to serve in Russia. But there was another damning detail: the new Secretary of War was commanding officers if soldiers would be prepared to shoot on
striking workers in event of protests and civil unrest. He also requested a
review of soldiers’ prevailing attitudes to trade unions.  

Just how ‘penniless’ was Shanks?

Historians tend to report that the Shanks family arrived as penniless refugees in London in 1917/18 (as a result of the Bolshevik revolution). This is far from the truth. According to broadcaster Roger Bickerton, Shanks’ mother Emilie lived at 10 Great Stanhope Street in Mayfair. The former home of Liberal Peer Baron Wandsworth (Sydney Stern) the property was one of the exclusive streets in London. The family also had property at Addison Street in Kensington and in France. During his time with the Russian Government Committee in Kingsway, Shanks' address is listed as The Carlton Hotel, a luxury hotel on the corner of Haymarket and Pall Mall (see service records). The image of a ‘penniless’ exile stripped of his dignity and his fortune seems to have been something of a distortion from academics a little too eager to account for the malicious course of action he had appeared to have embarked on. Fair’s fair, the Bolsheviks had robbed his family of vast reserves of their wealth and income but they weren’t as destitute as some of their friends in Paris and Constantinople who had been forced to escape with nothing.

Supporting witnesses and exhibits

- On June 12th 1929 Shanks was made a Chamberlain of the Sword and Cape by the Pope in the Diocese of Southwark (The American Ecclesiastical Review 1929-10: Vol. 81, Issue 4). Curiously, this was a

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81 Trade Unionism and the Army, Daily Herald, May 13 1919, p.1

82 For more information on the National War Aims Committee see David Monger’s National War Aims Committee and British patriotism during the First World War, Liverpool University Press, 2012
period in which mysterious British Intelligence asset and bagman, Maundy Gregory (involved in the equally crude fake, the Zinoviev Letter) was alleged to have been selling Papal Honours.

❖ According to the official bulletin of France’s Ministry of Colonies, Protocols translator George Shanks was in receipt of a Colonial Orders award in January 1939 alongside his Radio Normandy co-founder Leonard Plugge. He was awarded by Minister, Socialist and Alfred Dreyfus defender Georges Mandel (Bulletin Official du Ministère des Colonies, 1939)

❖ In the 1930s Shanks became a founding-director of the *International Broadcasting Company* with radio pioneers Leonard Plugge and Roy Plumley (Desert Island Discs). The company played an initial role in British propaganda efforts in Europe but was controversially decommissioned during the early stages of the war.

❖ In August 1937 Shanks’ co-translator Major Edward Griffiths George Burdon left Shanks £5,000 in his will. A regional newspaper reported that Burdon asked for the remainder of his $104,000 estate to be distributed among family on the condition that NONE of his family should ever become Freemasons. Burdon also stipulated that a “box containing letters must be sent to George Shanks unopened” and that he “might deal with the contents according to instructions communicated to him” (Kington Times, 14 August 1937 p.4 – image overleaf)
Major Edward Griffiths George Burdon OBE leaves Shanks a box of letters in his estate in 1937

**Witness for the Defence: Edward Griffiths George Burdon (1873-1937)**

According to Robert Hobart Cust in his letter to the Editor of the *Morning Post*, H.A. Gywnne, it was Temporary Major Edward G. G. Burdon who assisted Shanks with his translation of The Protocols. During the first stages of the war Burdon had served with the Northumberland Fusiliers where he had risen to the rank of Honorary Major (E.G. G Burdon, 1914-1922, TNA, WO 339/72239). He had previously served with distinction in the Second Boer War (1899-1902). However, an injury in 1915 saw him placed on other duties. I have yet to view his full military service record but it does seem to be available at the War Office (War Office, WO 339/72239, Major E. G. G. Burdon). Here’s a quick look at what we know about him:
He was a talented linguist. His appearance on the 1919 Queen’s Birthday Honours list records his military status as ‘Special List’ which suggests advanced skills in Ordnance, Linguistics, or Intelligence.

Son of Reverend Richard Burdon, the owner of Heddon House in Northumberland and shareholder in Great Western Railway.

He left an estate of over £100,000 upon his death in March 1937. £5,000 and a box of letters (to remain unopened) was left to George Shanks.

Lived mostly in Pau, South Western France close to the Spanish borders. The French Press records his various residencies at hotels in and around Biarritz.

His home at Villa Belle Rive in Trescoey was also the registered address of Radio Luxembourg pioneer and journalist, Louis Merlin, appointed head of Propaganda at the Havas news and broadcasting agency during the Liberation of France from the Nazis. This may suggest a link between Shanks and Merlin, both of whom were associated with Radio Normandy/Luxembourg.

Burdon’s will and estate expresses his wish to have a “box containing letters must be sent to George Shanks unopened so that he might deal with the contents according to instructions communicated to him” (Kington Times, 14 August 1937 p.4). What did the letters contain? And what was so secret that they had to remain unopened?
Attempts to conflate Bolshevism with the ‘Jewish global plot’ and the ‘Unseen Hand’ fantasies of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* began to take shape in September 1918 when diplomats like Sir Mansfeldt Findlay and Sir Ralph Paget drafted the first of several reports for British Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour describing the chaotic scenes in Russia under the Bolsheviks. These and other reports were eventually included in the infamous *Russia No.1 White Paper: A Collection of Reports on Bolshevism in Russia* (April 1919). Historian Sharman Khadish writes that the report also became known alternatively as the ‘Bolshevik Atrocity Bluebook’ and the ‘Emmott Report’. This parliamentary White Paper had been requested by the War Cabinet from the British High Command in January 1919 and there are no surprises to learn that it punched-in the coordinates that the direction of propaganda would take in the years to come. The claims made in the No.1 Report (‘the Bolsheviks were composed largely of Jews’, ‘the Bolsheviks were in the pay of Germany’, the ‘Jews were behind the execution of Tsar Nicholas and his family’) would remain at the centre of the anti-Bolshevik narrative for years, before being picked-up, re-heated and re-served by the British Fascists in the 1920s and the Nazis in the 1930s. In a telegraphic to Balfour dated September 17th 1918, Sir Mansfeldt Findlay, chief of the Legation in Christiana wrote:

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83 It’s interesting that Sir Henry Bax-Ironsides who co-founded the *Society for Upholding Political Honour* with Shanks associate Frank Dashwood Fowler (1855-1940) had offered considerable support to Ralph Paget and George Buchanan in setting up *The Balkan League*. Likewise his proximity to Balkan expert Robert Seton-Watson of *New Europe* (printed like the Jewish Peril by Eyre & Spottiswoode).

“I consider that the immediate suppression of Bolshevism is the greatest issue now before the world, not even excluding the war which is still raging, and unless, as above stated, Bolshevism is nipped in the bud immediately, it is bound to spread in one form or another over Europe and the whole world, as it is organised and worked by Jews who have no nationality, and whose one object is to destroy for their own ends the existing order of things. The only manner in which this danger could be averted would be collective action on the part of all Powers.”
— Russia No.1 White Paper (April 1919) A Collection of Reports on Bolshevism in Russia, p.6.

Sadly, the challenges being presented by Findlay and his colleagues were based on a complete failure to understand the complex nature of issues pertaining to Jewish identity in pre-Revolution Russia. Findlay’s weak grasp of the issues at hand (“Bolshevism ... is organised and worked by Jews who have no nationality”) fails to recognise that Bolshevism and International
Communism was seeded on a complete rejection of Jewish National Identity and an embrace of a pan-National Communist Identity. As far as Lenin and even Trotsky were concerned, all other religious and ethnic loyalties were to be suppressed or eliminated entirely in the pursuit of a Communist International — an ideal that would transcend all religious and regional boundaries. The Russia No.1 Report of 1919 would be the first of three volumes of white papers produced between 1919 and 1921.

Exhibit No.3: Zionism versus Bolshevism (Winston Churchill, Illustrated Sunday Herald, February 1920)

This must rank as one of the most controversial press articles in the history of British Politics. Written by Winston Churchill, who was at this time serving as Britain’s Secretary of State for War, the deeply offensive appeal makes a rambling, ham-fisted case for a establishing a Jewish National Home in Palestine as a solution to the menace of Bolshevism — ‘the International Jews’. If there is one single piece of evidence to suggest that the 24-year old George Shanks was actively colluding with the pro-Interventionist lobby under Churchill, Harold Williams and the so-called Committee for Russian Affairs, it is probably this one article. Firstly, the article’s timing with The Protocols pamphlet is nothing short of miraculous. Shanks’ Jewish Peril received its first review by the Westminster Gazette on February 9th 1920 and Shakespeare sabre-rattling article was published in the Illustrated Sunday Herald just 24-hours before (Westminster Gazette, 09 February 1920, p.8).85

85 At this time, the Westminster Gazette was under the careful editorship of undiminished Liberal, J.A Spender.
It wasn’t a moderate affair by any standards, Churchill’s 2000 word article being published as a momentous full page special on page five of the newspaper on February 8th 1920. Anyone who has harboured an otherwise high regard for the War Time Prime Minister may be disturbed to learn that it draws substantially on the basic premise of the *Jewish Peril*: the Bolsheviks are engaged in a diabolical plot to dominate the world and destroy the established order of things. In his rush to make his point, Churchill literally lumps together ‘malevolent’ Jews like Karl Marx, Leon Trotsky, Bela Kun, Rosa Luxembourg and Emma Goldman for preaching the “gospel of the antichrist”. He also heaps no small amount of praise on Nesta Webster who had “so ably shown” that Jews had been the mainspring of “every subversive movement during the Nineteenth Century”. His worst fear was coming true: Jews were rising to prominence in these movements and seizing control. The exception to all this was Zionism which, as far as Churchill was concerned, presented a “more commanding” option for building Jewish national identity. Zionism was moreover, already becoming a factor “in the political convulsions in Russia, as a powerful competing influence to Bolshevism”. The struggle between the Zionist and Bolshevik Jews, Churchill enthused, was “little less than a struggle for the soul of the Jewish people”. Establishing a Jewish home in Palestine would “vindicate the honour of the Jewish name”. It was a simple proposition the War Secretary was putting forward to the Jews of Britain: you were either with us or against us. The Jew was asked to either support Britain’s not terrifically well defined plans for the Jewish National Home in Palestine or Britain would have no other option but to treat them as a Bolshevik and public enemy number one.  

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86 *Zionism versus Bolshevism,* Winston Churchill, Illustrated Sunday Herald, February 8th 1920, p.5
Zionism wasn’t popular at this time in America, Germany or Britain. You’ll probably guess where it found its strongest support; in the battle weary warzones of Russia and Eastern Europe, where pogrom after pogrom had left Jews with the bleakest of ultimatums. Churchill and his team were effectively creating a problem that only Palestine could solve. They were turning up the Fahrenheit and applying the pressure. 87

Although it would be an exaggeration to say that Jews responded positively to Churchill’s article in Britain, the Zionist Press of America were suggesting that the article was giving fresh “impetus” to the British Palestine Mandate and that donations to the recently formed Restoration/Foundation Fund, Keren Hayesod. 88 It was certainly curiously timed. The following month (April 1920) saw the Jerusalem Riots, the first alleged pogrom in the region and tough reminder for Britain of the challenges that lay ahead. But to what extent did Zionist leaders get behind the War Secretary’s divisive appeal and to what extent did they support the White Russians?

**Unlikely support among Zionists**

There’s no doubting that Zionist fighting units throughout Russia and Eastern Europe were supporting White Russian monarchists and Liberals in their conflict with Lenin’s Bolsheviks. In May 1920, just days after The Times of London threw the spotlight onto Shanks’ translation of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion (May 8th 1920) the New York Evening World ran a report that revealed details of how the Soviet authorities had arrested seventy-five

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87 ‘Zionism versus Bolshevism’, Illustrated Sunday Herald, February 8th 1920, p.5
88 B’nai B’rith Messenger, March 5 1920
members of the *All Russian Zionist Congress* after discovering “compromising documents” revealing close contact with Britain, France and America. It was alleged that the group had been operating a courier service between Russia and London. A further claim stated that over 30,000 Jewish legionnaires had pledged their service to White Russian armies through an agreement with England. Former American Ambassador to Turkey, Henry Morgenthau was separately alleged to have visited Poland on behalf of the Zionists and instructed them to get behind the Polish Imperialists (New York Evening World 18 May 1920). Morgenthau had been dismissed from his role as Turkish Ambassador in February 1916 after it was found that he had been engaged in ‘secret’ land purchases from the Ottomans in Palestine for the purpose of colonising the region after the war.\(^{89}\) Zionism at this time divided the Jewish communities and was particularly unpopular among the Jewish ‘assimilationists’ and ‘Reformist Jews’ of Great Britain, Germany and America (see separate exhibit: ‘The Letter of the Ten/League of British Jews’).

There is absolutely no doubt that a powerful section of British and American Jews like Philip Sassoon, Jacob H. Schiff and Lionel Rothschild — regarded as high priests of Capitalism by supporters of Lenin — were actively supporting the pro-Interventionist movement (anti-Bolshevik movement).\(^ {90}\) Although the level of Anglo-Jewish commitment shown to the White

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\(^{89}\) *The Sentinel* July 28 1916

\(^{90}\) Joseph H. Schiff, leading fundraiser for the American Jewish Congress cut off all ties with the Bolsheviks. His various banks had made substantial Liberty Loans to Kerensky’s Provisional Government (in March 1917 he had also donated a Liberty Statue). Although he supported a sizeable settlement for Jews in Palestine prior the Bolshevik revolution, he was against the idea of a nation’. He revised this opinion in 1919, and backed the British Mandate before his death that same year. Although Lionel Rothschild allowed his business address to be used by the Free Russia Press, he was closer in terms of politics to Burtsev and the Liberal Cadets.
Movement remains for the most part unclear, it’s certainly possible that Shanks’ translation of *The Jewish Peril* was being used to polarize debate, and have the whole thing collapse into a passionate confrontation between pro-Zionist and anti-Zionist Jews. The battle lines were being drawn: those Jews who refused to get behind the pro-Interventionists (pro-Whites) and the plans for the Palestine Settlement were lumped unjustly with the Bolsheviks. In many ways, Churchill’s ‘Zionism versus Bolshevism’ article for the *Sunday Illustrated Herald* in February 1920 sought to define the conflict order. It was afterall, the fundamental principle of all Culture Wars: polarizing groups and building increasingly dominant voting majorities. Sometimes the more outrageous and more emotive the issue, the more quickly and more securely the sides split into their respective rivalries. It’s one way of re-directing the energy flow from centre (and often neutral) ground to either one of the two extremes. The manufactured narratives of division create the necessary ‘bloc’ for political gains. If Sassoon had in any way sanctioned the publication of the *Jewish Peril* (which I doubt), or approved in any way Churchill’s rather disturbing ‘Bolshevism versus Zionism’ article (February 1920), then it was because it served the pro-Interventionist cause, and was not through any to any commitment to any ideological or religious sentiments about Palestine. It wasn’t that they were demanding that we ask the question, “What was the true nature of Jewish identity?” they were demanding that the Jewish community choose one of two impossible options. ‘Good Jews’ were being asked to choose Zionism whilst ‘Bad Jews’ were being corralled into taking their place alongside Lenin’s Bolsheviks. And that’s exactly how Churchill put it.
In May 1920 The Times of London had been teasing Shanks’ *Jewish Peril* pamphlet as “disturbing”, “prescient” and “just possibly authentic”. The report that put forward these points of view had been written and prepared personally by *The Times* Editor Wickham Steed, a man who was astonishingly close to the *Committee of Russian Affairs*’ Bernard Pares, Harold Williams and Robert Seton-Watson. Although it tried hard to convey a sense of judicious and detached neutrality, it was a provocative little piece that did its best to arouse...
the curiosity of its readers, reporting that the circulation of this “singular little book” was on the increase and that readers should be prepared for something that would make “disturbing reading”. Wickham Steed, wisely perhaps, frames his report within the context of an impartial review of the pamphlet’s reception and distribution. He starts by demonstrating his awareness of existing prejudices and the existence of the ugly ‘Semitic’ bogey. He even notes that it includes some very insidious allegations. But whereas most newspapers either refused to review it on that basis, or perhaps revealed it for what it was — an unintelligent “hoax” and the “ramblings of a clever but cranky brain”— The Times affects a thoroughly disingenuous position of neutrality, even going to the extent of demanding a formal enquiry into its authenticity, perhaps as a platform for further debate and (one might surmise) further promotion and sales of the pamphlet.

Supporting witnesses and exhibits

- The Times casts doubt on attempts by The Jewish Guardian and The Nation to expose it as a fake by claiming that these newspapers focus too narrowly on the author of the book (Sergei Nilus) and the political and religious context in which it was published originally.

- The report’s distinctive mock-cautionary tone is destroyed in an instant when Wickham Steed dryly writes that that “some of the features of the would-be Jewish programme bear an uncanny resemblance to situations and events now developing under our eyes” (i.e. Bolshevism). The Times editor then cites a number of passages from the Jewish Peril that chime with events in Russia (“we create a universal economic crisis”, “best results are obtained by violence and intimidation” and so forth). This statement was repeated in the later editions of The Protocols printed by The Britons.
The jury might like to note that the report in The Times is framed on the page by stories in other columns that build a supporting narrative. These include the defeat of General Wrangel and the subsequent advance of Bolsheviks, developments in Warsaw, Poland (note that the Palin Report on Pogroms had been prepared but was being delayed when this article went to press) as well as an update on aims of the Zionists and the Palestine Mandate (San Remo conference had just finished).

Vladimir Burtsev claims that the first Protocols had been published in 1905 to justify the pogroms in Russia, making it doubly interesting that that Britain was, during this period, actively engaged in delaying a report into the pogroms in Poland carried out by our allies in the war against Bolshevik Russia (see separate exhibit: Sir Stuart Samuel’s Report on Poland). Was the publication of Shanks’ *Jewish Peril* in February 1920 attempting a similar crisis management/damage limitation exercise? It may certainly have helped take the sting out of the atrocious allegations made in the final Samuel Report which eventually came after a considerable delay in July 1920.

A regional newspaper wrote of Shank’s *Jewish Peril*: “At best it is a bad joke and at the worst it is calculated to foster prejudice and bigotries that the twentieth can well dispense with.” (West Bridgford Advertiser, 28 February 1920, p.2). If only The Times of London had done the same.

It’s fair to say that the positive effects of negative (or in this case, slightly cautious) promotion have seldom been so profound.
Exhibit No.5: The Times of London, Jewish World Plot: 
An Exposure ... the Truth at Last (August 1921)

On August 16 1921 Henry Wickham Steed, the Editor of The Times of 
London who had penned the first rather ambiguous response to Shanks’ 
Jewish Peril pamphlet in May 1920, finally revealed that The Protocols had 
been a cruel and audacious hoax all along. Other newspapers on the both sides 
of the Atlantic may have already rejected it as the product of Tsarist fantasies, 
but this was a little different. This time the reporter had clear evidence of how 
it had been faked, and what textual sources had been used to fake it. It was 
written by The Times’ correspondent in the Near East, Philip Graves after 
being approached by Mikhail Raslovlev, a White Russian émigré and
monarchist now in exile in Constantinople. Raslovlev is believed to have handed Graves a copy of Michel Joly’s *Dialogue aux Enfers entre Montesquieu et Machiavel* and painstakingly gone through its pages, demonstrating, quite conclusively that *The Protocols* was not only a hoax but a work of plagiarism. Raslovlev, who had described himself as a fanatical anti-Semite, would subsequently move to Paris where he would have come into regular contact with *Protocols* expert Vladimir Burtsev.

**Other Witnesses & Exhibits**

- The article was framed on the page by a series of curiously related articles: an update on Palestine and the League of Nations (announcing the terms and administration for British Mandate Palestine) and Lord Northcliffe’s visit the White House to meet President Harding (Lord Northcliffe was the owner of The Times and the former chief of the Ministry of Information during the war). Within days he would also meet a committee of Zionist Leaders at the Hotel Graham in New York (Hebrew Standard, 5 August 1921). The group would include Louis Lipsky, General Secretary of the Zionist Organization of America. Within months America and Italy had announced that they would prevent the ratification of the Mandate for Palestine (The Sentinel, 27 January 1922, p.3).

- The revelation that the Protocols was a hoax coincided with Lord Northcliffe’s own change of heart on the Palestine issue (he thought Palestine was on course to becoming a second Ireland). The article that was published on August 16th 1920 carried another story in a neighbouring column, describing how Lord Northcliffe, at this time still owner of The Times, had been snubbed by the British Embassy during his visit to America. Was there some kind of additional
narrative being hinted at in the arrangement of these stories on the page? Did the withdrawal of support for The Protocols mythology reflect his opposition to the Palestine strategy?

Witness for the Prosecution: Harold Williams

Harold Williams (1876-1928) served as foreign editor and correspondent for The Manchester Guardian, Morning Post, Morning Chronicle and The Times in St Petersburg before, during and after the 1905 and 1917 Revolutions. He was also a colleague of Aylmer Maude, a fellow Russian scholar who was also the uncle of Protocols translator, George Shanks. Interestingly, Williams encountered another Protocols expert, Vladimir Burtsev for the first time in autumn 1905, shortly before the publication of The Protocols of the Elders of
Zion by Sergei Nilus in December 1905. Although eager to print his rejection of Nilus’ work, Burtsev was persuaded by members of the Russian State and St Petersburg police not to expose it as a fake, on the pretence that it would draw unnecessary attention to a hoax that had clearly been designed with provocation in mind. Williams’ significance within the anti-Propaganda campaigns of Churchill and the Committee of Russian Affairs shouldn’t be underestimated, with at least one historian, Charlotte Alston, describing him as Soviet Russia’s ‘Greatest Enemy’. 91

On November 10th 1917, just days after the triumph of the Bolsheviks in the October Revolution, The Daily Chronicle published a report revealing the ‘real’ Jewish names of several top Bolshevik (‘Leninite’) leaders including Trotsky (Bronstein), Zinoviev (Apfelbaum) and Kamenev (Rosenfeldt). The report went on to claim that Lenin’s ‘Jewish’ name was now believed to be ‘Leiderblum’. The man making these claims was Harold Williams, the Daily Chronicle’s correspondent in St Petersburg where he was carrying out semi-official work for the Ministry of Information and the British Russia Bureau (Intelligence/Propaganda unit). The claim was repeated by Reality: Searchlight on Germany, the vanguard publication for Captain Freddie Guest and the British Government’s National War Aims Committee in a report published on November 17th 1917. 92 His regular dispatches from St Petersburg were also syndicated in the Daily Telegraph and the New York Times.

Williams was not alone in his dedication to the anti-Bolshevik cause. His Russian wife, the Liberal politician, Ariadna Tyrkova (the first woman

91 Russia Greatest Enemy? Harold Williams and the Russian Revolutions, Charlotte Alston, Bloomsbury 2007
92 Reality: Searchlight on Germany, vol. 97, Nov 17 1917, p.4
member of the Russian Duma) matched his dedication blow for blow. The couple were long-time friends and supporters of Tolstoy and Christian Socialism. This brought Williams into close contact with Aylmer Maude and Louise Maude Shanks, uncle and aunt of George Shanks.

In 1916 Williams and Sir Bernard Pares were enlisted to work with the Anglo-Russian Bureau in St Petersburg under the strict control of the British Foreign Office and the Ministry (Department) of Information; first under Charles Masterman and then John Buchan at Wellington House. Here they specialised in writing articles for the Russian Press in support of the war efforts in Britain. The British Ambassador in St Petersburg, Sir George Buchanan oversaw its management and recruitment and Hugh Walpole was appointed the group’s Head. The Bureau (also known as the International News Agency) was to all intents and purposes the brain-child of Sir Bernard Pares, Britain’s foremost Russian scholar. 93

In June 1918 Harold Williams wrote to Protocols expert and anti-Bolshevik campaigner Vladimir Burtsev saying it was necessary for him to come to Britain. Immediately after this visit Burtsev organised an operation base for his journal, Common Cause in Paris (its production had been suspended for 12 months after his flight from St Petersburg in the aftermath of the October Revolution). The journal was re-launched on September 17th 1918, possibly with British support and financial backing. By October 1920, just five months after the review of Protocols in The Times, Burtsev’s journal

had changed from being a weekly and fortnightly publication to a daily publication.⁹⁴

In September 1919, just two months before George Shanks published *The Protocols (Jewish Peril)* for the first time in English in Britain, Burtsev was recalled to London by Sir Archibald Sinclair, the Personal Military Secretary to Secretary of State for War (and Air), Winston Churchill. Sinclair is generally regarded as Churchill’s direct link to British Military Intelligence. Sinclair was looking for Burtsev, a talented publicist and respected voice, to ramp-up the propaganda effort on behalf of the White Russians and the Allies.

Strangely, the casual and slightly confused anti-Semitism that defined Churchill’s ‘Bolshevism versus Zionism’ article in February 1920 had its roots in ‘From Liberty to Brest-Litvosk’, a book written by Harold’s wife Ariadna Tyrkova-Williams. On one page she writes: “Besides obvious foreigners Bolshevism recruited many adherents from among the émigrés who had spent many years abroad. Many had never been to Russia before. They especially numbered a great many Jews. They spoke Russian badly ... they behaved as invaders in a foreign country. Throughout the revolution generally and Bolshevism in particular the Jews occupied a very influential position. In the Tsarist Government the Jews were excluded from all posts. In the Soviet Republic all the committees and all the commissaries were filled with Jews.”⁹⁵ It’s probably fair to say that the Jewish-Bolshevik myth that took shape during this period was cultivated first by Russian Liberals like Ariadna Tyrkova-Williams, before being taken-up by British Liberals. From here it would take a sharp turn right where it would finally find its place among the vitriolic narratives of *The Britons* and *British Fascisti*. It may be possible to

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⁹⁴ Vladimir Burtsev and the Struggle for a Free Russia, Robert Henderson, 2018, pp. 214-215
⁹⁵ From Liberty to Brest-Litvosk’, p.298/299
argue that the challenge faced by Tyrkova-Williams and other Russian Liberals had its roots in the 1905 Revolution and the demands made by some groups and individuals for Jewish self-determination and national representation within the First Duma. The issue of Nationality had been divisive even then. Much later, British and Irish fascists like Reverend Denis Fahey would quote Ariadna Tyrkova-Williams’ book during the fascist resurgence of the 1930s.

In 1918 Williams and Tyrkova were recruited into the pro-interventionist Committee on Russian Affairs, a Churchill-backed pressure group comprising of current and former staffers of British intelligence and propaganda units in St Petersburg whose members included the writers John Buchan, Hugh Walpole, and the historian and academic Bernard Pares. To all intents and purposes it is a regrouping of Anglo-Russian Bureau which operated in St Peters burg prior to the October Revolution.

In 1922 Harold Williams and Ariadna Tyrkova-Williams published a novel called Hosts of Darkness. The novel used the same anti-Christ motif of Nilus’ original Protocols and which was repeated by Churchill in 1920 article, ‘Zionism versus Bolshevism’. Williams was in fact, highly regarded by Churchill.

Supporting witnesses and exhibits:

- In 1912 Harold Williams and his wife Ariadna Tyrkova were arrested on suspicion of military espionage in Russia. Their release was secured by H.A Gwynne of The Morning Post – the leading voice in support of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion in Britain.
Harold Williams and Sir Bernard Pares were to become lifelong friends and colleagues after meeting outside the Zemstvo Congress in Moscow in July 1905 (Russian Liberalism and British Journalism: the life and work of Harold Williams (1876-1928), Charlotte Alston, 2004, p.105).

In 1906 Williams was appointed ‘Reader in Modern Russian History’ at the University of Liverpool where he and Bernard Pares. Here they co-founded a School of Russian Studies alongside George Shank’s uncle and fellow Tolstoyan Aylmer Maude (Russian Liberalism and British Journalism: the life and work of Harold Williams (1876-1928), Charlotte Alston, 2004, p.106).

1916 Times writer Robert Seton-Watson and Sir Bernard Pares found the New Europe journal with contributions and support from Harold Williams and Times editor Wickham Steed (who personally reviewed Shank’s Protocols pamphlet for The Times in May 1920). The New Europe journal was printed by the same company (Eyre and Spottiswoode) that George Shanks would use to print the first 30,000 copies of the Protocols (Jewish Peril) pamphlet.

Williams was one of the first British Intelligence officers to recognise the potency of Russian Zionists in Britain’s ‘secret war’ with Lenin’s Bolsheviks. In a cable for the New York Times dated December 4th 1917 he writes: “Besides their manifold efforts in general Russian politics, the Jews are swelling the tide of the National Movements. The Zionists now are the strongest party among Russian Jews and they are overjoyed at the promise of Palestine.” (The Jewish Tribune, 21 December 1917 p.29/ New York Times, Dec 7 1917 p.4).

A report put together by Harold Williams in the spring of 1919 claimed that the Zionist Organisation of Russia had succeeded in enrolling over
600,000 adult Jews for the movement to establish a commonwealth in Palestine. Unlike in Europe and America, the Zionist ideal in Russia was reported to have “swept the Jewish masses ... like a tidal wave”. In Moscow and St Petersburg well known Zionists were being arrested for promoting Jewish National interests rather than the International interests of Communism (‘Zionists Make Splendid Propaganda in Russia’, Hebrew Standard 9 May 1919, p.11).

Witness for the Prosecution: Sir Bernard Pares

Pares was a respected authority on Russia from the early 1900s until the 1940s and the weight he carried in the anti-Bolshevik movements of the 1918 to 1922 period may be crucial to understanding the contexts for Shanks’ actions.

In 1907 Pares founded the School of Russian Studies at Liverpool University. Other faculty members included Shanks’ uncle Aylmer Maude and leading propagandist, Harold Williams. The project was followed by the School of Slavonic and East European Studies with Robert W. Seton-Watson in 1915. In 1916 the two men founded the New Europe journal. The journal was published by Protocols printing company, Eyre and Spottiswoode as was their subsequent publication, The Slavonic Review, which included contributions from Protocols expert and witness, Vladimir Burtsev.

During the First World War, Pares was responsible for organising British Propaganda and Intelligence efforts in Russia as part of the British Russia
It’s entirely possible that Pares was among the tutors of a young George Shanks at the University College London. Shanks attended the college between 1914 and 1915. In 1918 Pares was recruited into the pro-Interventionist *Committee on Russian Affairs* and the *Russian Liberation Committee*. These cross-party pressure groups demanded full military engagement against the Bolsheviks alongside Russian ‘Whites’.

*Bulletin of the Russian Liberation Committee, no.7, 5 Apr 1919*

In December 1920 Pares was reported to have addressed a meeting of the newly founded *People’s League* with Section-D (Industrial Intelligence) founder George Makgill (Westminster Gazette 27, April 1920). Subsequently re-named the *People’s Party*, it was made up of disaffected Liberals and Conservatives and launched by John Bull editor, Horatio Bottomley. Oswald Mosley claimed to have been a member.
Maude was a respected British Russian scholar who was friend and translator of the Christian Socialist and novelist, Leo Tolstoy. He was married to Louise Shanks Maude, the aunt of George Shanks, the first man to have translated *The Protocols* into English in December 1919. Maude’s arrival with the British Mission in Archangel in October 1918, as part of the Britain’s military operations against the Bolsheviks, suggests he may have been an active, if unofficial member of the pro-interventionist *Committee on Russian Affairs*, alongside his fellow academics Harold Williams and Sir Bernard Pares.
Extraordinarily, his letter rejecting Shanks’ *Jewish Peril* as a fake was printed in *The Times* within a few days as a direct response to the newspaper’s review of his nephew’s infamous pamphlet. Despite the protests he makes, Maude neglects to mention that the offending pamphlet he had before him had been translated and published by his own nephew, George.  

Maude signs the letter, ‘Aylmer Maude, National Liberal Club’. Interestingly, The National Liberal Club also played host to General Wrangel’s emissary Aleksei Aladin on his visit to London in October 1920. Wrangel was being supported at this time by Maude’s associate in Paris, Vladimir Burtsev and War Secretary Winston Churchill’s pro-Interventionist *Russian Affairs Committee*. And the connections don’t end there.

In November 1919 Maude was to write a favourable review of *From Liberty to Brest-Litvost* by his friends Harold Williams and Ariada Williams Tyrkova, a book which pushed no small amount of Bolshevik-Jewish conspiracies.  

Quotes were subsequently lifted from the book by the British Fascists of the 1930s to substantiate the idea of a global Jewish plot. How does any of this square with Maude’s apparent objections to *the Jewish Peril* in May 1920?

From 1918 until 1920 Aylmer Maude produced a regular stream of articles and letters for the British Press critical of Lenin and the Bolsheviks including the claim that the Bolsheviks were agents of Germany. His contributions to C.P Scott’s *Manchester Guardian* (1919) consisted of 26 ‘despatches’ compiled loosely under the title, ‘Letters from Archangel’, the city in North Western Russia that became the administrative and military centre of the Allied Intervention (Britain’s North Russian Relief Force).

96 *Jewish Peril*, To the Editor of *The Times*, *The Times*, May 12th 1920

97 Observer, Nov 16 1919, p.5
Aylmer Maude had been assisting the campaign at the YMCA (ostensibly a cover for his propaganda activities). Articles produced for the Manchester Guardian during this time included “Defence of Limited Intervention” (Feb 3 1919, p.9), “The Bolsheviks and Cheap Literature” (Feb 20 1919, p.10), The Abandonment of Shenkursk” (March 29 1919, p.11), “North Russia Campaign” (April 4 1919, p.9), “The Bolsheviks in Power” (April 7 1919, p.9), “Russia and Her Destiny” (The Observer Nov 2 1919, page.15), “Russia and the Truth” (Jan 22, 1920, p.14). His sudden appearance at the Manchester Guardian, however, may not have taken place without some intrigue of its own.

Aylmer Maude, the uncle of Protocols translator writing into The Times on May 12th 1920, just days after the newspaper had reviewed his nephew’s pamphlet.
Between January and February 1919 Aylmer Maude replaced (at least in a casual and temporary capacity) Morgan Philips Price as the Manchester Guardian’s correspondent on the Russian Civil War. Until the Bolsheviks seized power, Philips Price had been their chief correspondent in Moscow and Petrograd, but as their grip on power continued, so did Price’s support. This was immediately brought to the attention Sir Basil Thomson, the acting Director of Intelligence at the Home Office. He and MI5 had already to suspect Philips Price of pushing Bolshevik propaganda. By 1917 he was believed to be editing a Bolshevik journal (The Call) and promoting the idea that the Liberal Cadet faction of the temporary Kerensky Government was still imperialist, and as such was not fit for government. The newspapers’ popularity with Liberal and left-wing Britain meant the case for Churchill and the Allies demands for full scale military intervention were not being heard. Price was backing the Bolsheviks and his readers were hearing a rather one-sided account of the Allies and their efforts to dethrone Lenin.

On January 17th 1919 Maude mailed the Manchester Guardian’s editor, C.P. Scott a six-part series of articles giving his own rather glowing account of North West Russian Expedition (British and Allied Forces supporting the Whites). Maude was already in Archangel at the invitation of the British Government to lecture troops on Russia. 98 The very same day that he received Maude’s articles, C.P Scott would write to Sir Basil Thomson, head of CID at Special Branch thanking him for bringing to his attention his concerns about Philips Price. A pro-Bolshevik pamphlet entitled, ‘The Truth about the Allied Intervention in Russia’ published the previous August had appeared with Price’s by-line and the phrase, ‘Correspondent in Russia of the

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98 Chelmsford Chronicle 25 October 1918, p.3
Scott agreed that his correspondent was indeed stepping over the line.

After reviewing the various letters in his KV2 file, it is quite clear that a considerable amount of pressure was being put on Scott to remove M. Philips Price from his post at the Manchester Guardian. Some ten days later, shortly after receiving the six-part series of articles from Maude, Scott wrote to Philips Price informing him that he had no other option but to terminate his job as correspondent for the Manchester Guardian. In circumstances such as these it’s difficult not to view the arrival of a six-part series from Maude as having remarkably fortuitous timing. Maude even draws Scott’s attention to the same offending pamphlet as Thomson, adding the ominous line, “I should like to know what I am to say when I am asked whether Mr. M.P. Price has still any right to call himself a correspondent of the M.G?” Within days of Price’s departure Scott and the Manchester Guardian began to publish Maude’s six-part series of pro-Interventionist articles beginning with ‘A Defence of Limited Intervention’ on February 3rd 1919 (Manchester Guardian, Feb 3 1919, p.3). Within days, coverage of Allied intervention in Russia had received a much needed propaganda boost. It certainly seems as if the arrival of Maude in Archangel at the invitation of the British Government and the arrival of his generous six-part series of articles had been a carefully choreographed stunt to remove Philips Price from the Manchester

99 TNA, KV2/566/University of Manchester, Guardian Collection, Editorial Correspondence of C.P. Scott, GDN/A/P53/14
100 University of Manchester, Guardian Collection, Editorial Correspondence of C.P. Scott, GDN/A/P53/17
101 In a peculiar twist, it transpires that the name Archangel refers to St Michael who Christians believes came to do battle with the ‘Antichrist’ – whom the ‘Jewish’ Bolsheviks were frequently referred to during this period (the analogy features prominently in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion and is repeated in Harold and Ariadna Williams’ novel, ‘Hosts of Darkness’. Was the choice of this base deliberate?
Guardian in as smooth and painless a manner as possible. Was this work of Churchill and the Russian Affairs (Liberation) Commission?

For more on the pro-Bolshevik pamphlet been written and published by Philips Price entitled ‘The Truth About Intervention in Russia’ see ‘Letter to Major Matthews’, Jan 8 1919, Letter to C.P Scott 24 Jan 1919, TNA, KV 2/566.
17th January 1919. Scott bows to pressure from Sir Basil Thomson and removes M. Philips Price from the newspaper (TNA, KV 2/566).

On the same day, 17th January 1919, Aylmer Maude mails C.P Scott several article backing the British Mission in Archangel. Was this simply a coincidence? Or was he tipped off?
Witness for the Prosecution: Charles Hagberg Wright

Charles Hagberg Wright was among the very first men to reject *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* as a fake in March 1920. Like Shanks’ uncle Aylmer Maude and his aunt Louise Maude Shanks, Hagberg-Wright was a friend of Tolstoy, Burtsev and Teplov of the *Free Russia Library*. His article on Protocols can be viewed in the *Jewish Guardian* of March 5th 1920, *The Jewish Monitor* of 21 May 1920 and *The Nation* of March 27th 1920. It is conceivable that the copy of *The Protocols* that Shanks used came not from the British Museum as alleged (where it was discovered to have disappeared shortly after the publication of the Jewish Peril) but from Teplov and Burtsev’s library. Alternatively, it is possible a copy had been loaned from Charles Hagberg Wright’s *London Library* which is known to have received generous book donations from both Burtsev and Teplov over the years (see: Aleksei Teplov and the Free Russia Library, Solanus, New Series, Vol.22, 2011, Robert Henderson). Among the founding directors on the board of the London Library was Palestine champion, Arthur Balfour. It seems curious that both of the two men who were first to reject *The Protocols* as a fake had strong connections to its translator, George Shanks.

Supporting witnesses and exhibits

- Hagberg Wright was educated in Russia and Germany.
- He was active in the Russian Doukhobor campaign launched and supported by Aylmer and Louise Maude (the uncle and aunt of George Shanks).
- Like Maude, Hagberg-Wright was a respected translator of Tolstoy.
He provided up the costs of the legal defence for Aylmer and Louise Maude’s Tolstoyan friend, Vladimir Chertkov.

In 1908 Hagberg-Wright by provided the letter of introduction that got future Soviet Minister for Foreign Affairs, Maxim Litvinov a job at a publishing house in London.

Like Aylmer Maude, Hagberg-Wright was a lecturer at Bernard Pares School of Russian Studies with fellow Tolstoyan Harold Williams

**Witness for the Defence: Henry Wickham Steed**

The Editor of The Times of London who offered his support to Balfour’s plans for a Zionist/Jewish Palestine Settlement between 1915 and 1922.

Credited with personally reviewing George Shank’s Protocols (Jewish Peril) pamphlet in The Times of London on May 8th 1920. Although he makes superficial attempts to be seen to reserve judgement as regards the book’s authenticity, the coverage he provides makes a strong case for the work being genuine. The evidence he cites for this is based on current developments with the International Jewish Communists — Lenin’s Bolsheviks. He views their plots for ‘global domination’ as in some substantiating the ‘Unseen Hand’ conspiracy theory at the heart of The Protocols narrative.

He was on exceptionally close terms with Sir Bernard Pares and Robert Seton-Watson of the *New Europe* (Eyre and Spottiswoode) journal.
Witness for the Prosecution: Philip Graves

- Graves was *The Times* of London reporter who sensationally exposed the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* as a fake in August 1921. A short time later wrote a book largely critical of Britain's betrayal of the Zionists and the unreasonable arrest of the ‘fiery’ Ze’ev Jabotinsky — a close associate of Socialist Revolutionary turned Zionist Pinchas Rutenberg and Vladmir Burtsev. The book he wrote was called *Palestine: The Land of Three Faiths* (Jonathan Cape, 1923).

- Graves is believed to have been handed the evidence that proved that *The Protocols* was a forgery by Mikhail Sergeevich Raslovlev of the American Red Cross. Raslovlev had fled to Constantinople after the Russian Revolution of 1917. Although he was, by his own admission, a passionate anti-Semite, Raslovlev claims to have given the information to Graves because he was unwilling to “give a weapon of any kind to the Jews, whose friend I have never been.” It was never made clear why Raslovlev viewed it in these terms. The only group that seemed to be benefitting from any misplaced belief in their authenticity were the still unpopular Zionist lobby in Britain and America.

Exhibit No.6: Committee on Russian Affairs

The mysterious and very elusive, *Committee on Russian Affairs* (aka the Council of Russian Affairs, Central Russian Committee) was founded in October 1918 under the consummate supervision of ex-British Ambassador to Russia, George Buchanan and the respected academic Sir Bernard Pares at the invitation of British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour. This pro-Interventionist committee, received strong support from Winston Churchill, was comprised current and former staffers of British intelligence and
propaganda units which operated in St Petersburg during the war. Its members included the writers John Buchan, Sir George Buchanan, Hugh Walpole, the historian and academic Sir Bernard Pares, Alfred Knox, Harold Williams, Ariadna Tyrkova and Rex Leeper. Harold Williams’ brother Aubrey Williams was appointed the group’s Secretary. The fact that Shanks’ uncle, Aylmer Maude accepted a post with the British Mission in Archangel in October 1918, provides a strong indication that Maude was also among its recruits. Within weeks of arriving Maude had replaced the pro-Bolshevik reporter, Morgan Price Philips as correspondent for the Manchester Guardian (pressure from Basil Thomson, newly appointed director of Intelligence at the Home Office had expedited matters). The newspaper took on a pro-Interventionist bias practically overnight (call separate witness Aylmer Maude).

The Committee of Russian Affairs’ Rex Leeper, a member of Political Intelligence Department at the Foreign office, is an especially intriguing addition, as just a few years later he would play an unaccredited but no less central role in the circulation of another fake: the ‘Zinoviev Letter’. The Zinoviev Letter fabricated a totally imaginary plot between the Communist Party of Great Britain, members of the Labour Party and Lenin’s Soviet. The fake letter effectively brought to an abrupt end the government of Ramsay MacDonald in October 1924. The letter, faked by Henry Ford’s Protocols associate, Vladimir Orlov, was passed to Raphael Farina, Mi6’s ‘passport officer’ in Riga just seven days before Leeper arrived to assume his new post as Chief of the British Legation. Leeper took up his role alongside Farina (ex-chief of the Russian Section — G Branch — at Mi5) on September 22 1924. The incriminating letter that had been passed to his desk (alleged to have been conveyed from Comintern chief, Grigory Zinoviev to Arthur MacManus of the British Communist Party) was dated September 15th, the week prior to Leeper’s arrival. With Leeper at the helm, the letter (which might otherwise
have been dismissed) inevitably made its way to Farina’s ex-Mi5 section chief, Sir Joseph Ball and into the Conservative Party Central Office. Instead of enduring the usual protocols of Intelligence screening and analysis, the letter fell into the hands of a reporter and was speedily published by Lord Northcliffe’s Daily Mail on October 25th under the headline ‘Civil War Plot by Socialist masters: Moscow Orders to Our Reds — Great Plot Disclosed — MacDonald Will Lend Russia Our Money’ (Daily Mail, Oct 25 1924). It was published just four days before the General Election. Mi5’s Joseph Ball eventually left the service in the late 1920s to run the Propaganda Department at Conservative Party Central Office. In a curious twist, Leeper had just arrived from propping up General Wrangel’s regime in Poland where he had acted as Britain’s Charge d’Affaires. He would eventually become Head of the Political Intelligence Department at the Foreign Office in 1939.

Supporting witnesses and exhibits:

- Russian members of the Committee on Russian Affairs included Protocols expert, Vladimir Burtsev and his co-editor at the Common Cause journal, Daniel Pasmanik, a right-leaning liberal and Zionist.

- To all intents and purposes, the CRA was a regrouping of the Anglo-Russian Bureau which had operated in St Petersburg prior to the October Revolution.

- Both the Committee and Burtsev’s recalibrated journal, Common Cause was set up specifically to support White Russian monarchists and Russian Liberals in their war with the Bolsheviks during the Russian Civil War (1917-1922), pressing for direct military engagement from Britain and America.
Exhibit No.7: British Russian Bureau

This was a British propaganda organisation operating in Petrograd on behalf of the Ministry of Information and the Foreign Office during the war. Staff included novelist Hugh Walpole, Major C.J.M Thornhill, Harold Williams and one time, Bernard Pares. According to a report by Hugh Walpole dated October 1917, the organisation was tasked with providing counter-propaganda to German propaganda in Russia. It would also supply Russians with “correct information about the aims and activities of Great Britain in the war and about the life and institutions of the British Empire.” (TNA, FO 395/106, Oct 15 1917). The bureau (aka The Anglo Russian Bureau) operated under the direction of Ambassador George Buchanan.

Exhibit No.8: British Russian Club

The club was a more causal incarnation of the Anglo-Russian Bureau (aka. Anglo-Russian Commission) which operated as an official propaganda organisation in Petrograd on behalf of the Ministry of Information and the Foreign Office in Britain. Founded in the summer of 1917 at the invitation of Sir Robert Cecil, Professor Paul Vinogradoff and ‘Free Russia’ member Sergei G. Svatikov, the club brought together Russophiles and supporters of Allied Intervention from all fields and all parties (Sheffield Daily Telegraph 12 July 1917, p.5). Its founding member, Sergei G. Svatikov (at this time High Commissioner for Russia for the Kerensky government in Paris) was a close associate of Burtsev, both at his Byloe journal in St Petersburg and at the pro-Interventionist Common Cause in Paris during the Russian Civil War. In the mid-1930s Burtsev and Svatikov were both brought-in as expert witnesses at the so-called Berne Trials, which explored the authenticity of the Protocols of
the Elders of Zion as part of a legal bid to sue the Swiss national Front for spreading anti-Semitic propaganda.

Senior speakers and members at the British Russian Club included Secretary John Seymour Keay, Winston Churchill, George Buchanan, Lord Denbigh and Harold Williams. In the summer of 1918, the Foreign Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Arthur Balfour was forced to address some probing questions about Harold Williams’ employment at the Foreign Office in view of his position as a neutral journalist. Balfour responded by saying that Williams was not employed at the Foreign Office (officially he was an unpaid ‘volunteer’ at the British Russian Propaganda Bureau under Pares and Buchanan). The British Russian Club and Harold and Aridana Williams would subsequently work closely with the British Russian Relief Committee. The Club had its HQ at the First Avenue Hotel in Holborn.

The part that Svatikov and Burtsev played in exposing The Protocols as a fake in the 1930s was in stark contrast to their rather noncommittal response to the fake in the 1920s. On August 21st 1921, just one week after The Times of London dramatically exposed the Protocols of Zion as a forgery, Le Tribune Juive in Paris published an article by Svatikov who acknowledged that he Burtsev and other Russian historians had had proof the Protocols was fake since the First Revolution of 1917. If this was the case, then why Svatikov or Burtsev not speak out sooner? Both men had close contact with the British Coalition government. Why the delay? The pair’s activity within

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102 ‘Mr. Churchill and Russia’, Manchester Guardian, Jul 18 1919, p.8
103 Hansard, Volume 108: debate Saturday 15 June 1918, ‘Mr King to Mr Balfour’
104 Les Faux de Ratchkovsky: A propos des Protocols de Sion’, Le Tribune Juive, no.87, p.2
the Osvag (White Russian monarchist propaganda) often made them vulnerable to claims of anti-Semitism.

**Exhibit No.9: Russian Liberation Committee**

The Committee was a news and telegraphic agency founded by Russian émigrés Paul Miliukov, Petr Struve and spearheaded by Harold Williams and Ariadna Tyrkova Williams. The Committee was tasked with encouraging British Intervention in the Russian Civil war and discouraging recognition of Lenin’s Bolshevik government. It enjoyed good relations with the British Foreign Office. For more see: ‘The Work of the ‘Russian Liberation Committee in London: 1919-1924’, Charlotte Alston, Slavonica, 14:1, 6-17, July 19 2013.

**Exhibit No.10: Lord Northcliffe and Zionism**

Lord Northcliffe was owner of The Times of London at the time that The Jewish Peril article was published in May 1920 and when it was subsequently exposed as a hoax in August 1921. He is generally regarded as a casual anti-Semite who supported the Zionist cause from 1915 until 1922, when his position is generally perceived to have changed.

In my estimation, Lord Northcliffe’s support of Zionism has never been understood in its entire complexity. Contrary to what some scholars have claimed, there’s no firm evidence that Northcliffe withdrew his support for Zionism in 1922, but remodelled rather, it based on issues relating to the quality of Jewish Immigrants, the rights of Arabs (Palestinians) and the tax burdens placed on the British Public as a result of building the Jewish National Home in Palestine. His support for Zionism were always centred around his support for a British Outpost and the benefits that Zionism provided as a
practical alternative to Bolshevism, which was by 1920 being perceived as purely Jewish plot seeking global domination. The original vision set out by Sir Herbert Samuel and Arthur Balfour presented British Mandate Palestine as an Imperial ‘buffer state’; that is, a strong deterrent to any future ambitions on the part of Germany in the East. In the words of Wedgwood Benn, this was ‘not a pious dream’ but a practical and profitable use of Empire (see: Herbert Samuel: ‘The Future of Palestine’, January 1915).

The opinion regarding Palestine among Conservative and Liberal ministers was as divided as the Zionist Movement itself. Many supporters like Northcliffe sided with the likes of rightist Liberal Zionists like Ze’ev Jabotinsky and NOT the movement’s more Socialist exponents like Chaim Weizmann. It is also curious to note that Northcliffe and Wickham Steed’s support for Zionism altered dramatically with the split between Zionist leaders, Weizmann and Jabotinsky, and just as tighter limits on Jewish immigration to Palestine were being thrust upon the region by Churchill’s White Paper. Their change of heart also coincided with rumours that the British Government under Lloyd George and Lord Curzon were entering into trade discussions with Lenin and the Bolsheviks (The Times printed a story about rumours of these talks on the same page it published its infamous review of Shank’s Protocols (Jewish Peril) pamphlet. 105

During those first short years, the quality and volume of Jewish immigrants into Palestine had always been viewed as critical to the Palestine’s commercial and economic prospects. Making Palestine a prosperous place for investment meant prioritizing immigrants with the necessary skills and wealth. As Herbert Samuel explained in his 1915 proposal, The Future of Palestine,

105 Negotiations with Tchitcherin’, The Times, May 8th 1920, p.15
the Jews of Palestine accounted for only one-sixth of its population. An autonomous Jewish government would not be able to govern successfully with such a minority. It would inevitably lead to ongoing conflicts in the local region. Northcliffe made formal statements to the effect that they didn’t wish to Palestine locked in the kind of sectarian violence that Ireland had endured.

Supporting witnesses and exhibits:

- A ‘puff piece’ praising the efforts and discipline of Britain ‘Mules Corps’, its Jewish Legion, appeared in The Times in February 1918 (Times in February 1918, p.3). This battalion of Jewish volunteers was the brainchild of Zionist leader, Ze’ev Jabotinsky (see separate entry).

- Northcliffe and The Times were backing a stable environment for “full economic development for the country.” (The Settlement in Syria,” The Times, 19 September 1919). If it was to attract and sustain investors it could not be a “struggling state”. Rightist supporters of Zionism are likely to have backed a liberal ‘strongman’ like Jabotinsky for leadership and not a Socialist like Weizmann.

- Was it Claude Montefiore who said “no wonder that all anti-Semites are enthusiastic Zionists”? During this period Zionism was being championed as an antidote to the so-called ‘Jewish Peril’ — Bolshevism.

Witness for the Defence: Louise Maude Shanks

The Moscow-born Louise Maude is the aunt of Protocols translator George Shanks and a personal friend and colleague of Sir Charles Hagberg Wright, the first man to reject The Protocols as a fake in February 1920. She was also a
personal friend of Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy (whose works she would translate into English). Her husband Aylmer Maude, another close friend of Tolstoy, was an active member of the pro-Interventionist movement with his friends and university colleagues, Harold Williams and Sir Bernard Pares. Louise and her husband had lived with Vladimir Chertkov at a commune in Croydon run by Christian anarchist J.C. Kenworthy, founder of the Brotherhood Church. Kenworthy’s Brotherhood Church in Hackney would later be used by Lenin and other revolutionary to host the 5th Congress of the Russian Social Democratic labour Party in 1907. The couple had played a central role in helping the persecuted Doukhobor (oppressed Christian group) escape from Russia to Canada in the late 1890s. The couple was also very close to Father Gapon’s ghost-writer G.H. Perris, who acted as literary agent and adviser to the couple.

**Witness for the Defence: Vladimir Burtsev**

The vast majority of people have never heard of Vladimir Burtsev, among them many historians. This is a shame as Burtsev was a fascinating figure during the early and late revolutionary periods. So who is he? Burtsev has always been lavishly and lovingly described by his legion of fans today as the ‘Sherlock Holmes’ of the Socialist Revolutionary Party, and was responsible for exposing dozens of high-value Tsarist assets and agent provocateurs who thought to have been working for the Okhrana — the Russian Secret Police. Contrary to what you’d expect, he matured with a Liberal bias, and by 1919

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106 Curiously, another member of the Kenworthy and Tolstoy group who accompanied Aylmer and Louise Maude and the Doukhobors to Canada was Quaker, Capt. Arthur St John. In 1925, Arthur St. John’s home at 68a Parkhill Road in Hampstead would be used by Soviet ‘super spy’ and senior official at the Soviet Trade Offices, Jacob Kirchenstein (see: KV-2 1391/Daily Herald 18 November 1916, p.14). St John has used the address as the HQ of the Penal Reform League he had co-founded years before. Maude and St John would later have a more fractious relationship.
was siding with the White Russian Monarchists in the counter-revolution against the Bolsheviks. Because of his inevitable connections in the revolutionary movement and his prodigious depth of knowledge, Burtsev became an indispensable asset to the anti-Bolshevik mission, both in Britain and in France.

In June 1918 Harold Williams and the Committee of Russian Affairs wrote to Burtsev saying it was necessary for him to come to Britain. Immediately after this visit, Burtsev set up an operational base for his journal Common Cause in Paris (its production had been suspended for 12 months after his flight from St Petersburg). The journal had been re-launched on September 17th 1918, possibly with finance from the British. Clearly buoyed by the support he was receiving from the Committee of Russian Affairs in Britain his journal moved from being published weekly (and sometimes fortnightly) to being available as a daily read by the summer of 1920. In September 1919, just a matter of months before George Shanks published Jewish Peril for the first time in English, Burtsev was recalled to London by Sir Archibald Sinclair, the Personal Military Secretary to War Secretary Winston Churchill. Sinclair is regarded by scholars today as Churchill’s direct link to British Military Intelligence. Although the exact details regarding the meet are not known, it is assumed, given that the meeting coincides with British troops pulling out of Russia, it may be reasonable to speculate that Sinclair approached Burtsev with a number of desperate requests; he wanted him to ramp-up the propaganda effort on behalf of the White Russians and the Allies, in the hope that we can re-engage in the war at a later date and, for a short-time at least, refrain from revealing the true story of The Jewish Peril that Shanks was about to publish until such a time as necessary. It may also be

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that Churchill wanted him as a personal emissary to Wrangel in Poland. That Burtsev was sharing Intelligence with Mi5 and SiS is clear from the KV2 files in the British National Archives, so it’s not unreasonable to think he may have cooperated with Churchill’s Department in such a casual and ‘off the record’ capacity.

**DID VLADIMIR BURTSEV SUPPORT THE PUBLICATION OF THE PROTOCOLS AS A TACTICAL DEVICE AGAINST THE BOLSHEVIKS?**

This is a very difficult question to answer with anything firm. We know from a book that Burtsev published about *The Protocols* in 1938 that he had been following the various routes it had taken from 1905 at the latest.\(^{108}\) We also know that his status in this field saw him being called as an ‘expert witness’ at

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\(^{108}\) The Elders of Sion: A Proved Forgery, VI. Burtsev (The Slavonic and East European Review, Jul., 1938, Vol. 17, No. 49 (Jul., 1938), pp. 91-104). The book was published by Sir Bernard Pares’ School of Slavonic and East European Studies at University College London.
the sensational *Berne Trials* of the 1930s when attempts were made to sue the *Swiss National Front* for distributing anti-Semitic material (1933-1935). And his rejection of it then is not in question. 109

The problem (if there is one) is Burtsev’s failure to have responded in his usual vociferous manner to the pamphlet’s publication in Britain at a time when he was working directly with Sir Archibald Spencer and the *Committee on Russian Affairs* in Paris. Given the interest stirred in France and across the world as a result of both of The Times review and Henry Ford’s near simultaneous inclusion of ‘Le Péril Juif’ in *The International Jew* in America, it’s unlikely that Burtsev was unaware of it. The French Press certainly reported the pamphlet’s astonishing appearance in The Times 110 yet for a full 12 months or so Burtsev didn’t write a word about it. And when he did eventually publish, what was by his standards, a very terse response in April 1921, there was certain section of Jews who were somewhat disappointed with his “ambiguous” contribution to the debate. Of course there is always the possibility that Burtsev responded to the publication of *Le Péril Juif* anonymously, but this is an entirely speculative route to take and until any such evidence emerges, we should leave it to one side.

To understand the context of his response in April 1921, and moreover, the public reaction to his response, we will need to show the court another exhibit.

109 For more on this read Robert Henderson’s *Vladimir Burtsev & the Struggle For Free Russia*, 2017, pp.241-246 or Hadassa Ben-Itto’s *The Lie That Wouldn’t Die* 2005

Exhibit No.11: La Tribune Juive (April 1921)

*La Tribune Juive* (The Jewish Tribune) was a newspaper entirely devoted to the interests of Russian Jewish exiles in Paris. The article now under consideration was published in France on April 29th 1921, shortly after the appearance of revelations in America made by Polish-Russian aristocrat, Princess Katharine Radziwill concerning the fabrication of The Protocols. The Princess claimed she had seen the original manuscript being prepared in Paris, shortly before it was unleashed on Russia in 1905, and named the men who had been involved. The revelations had first appeared in interviews conducted with Radziwill in The American Hebrew in February 1921 and republished in full by the *La Tribune Juive* on April 1st. 111The opinion piece published by *La Tribune Juive* on April 29th was based not on the claims being made by Radziwill, but on the relatively muted response from the normally quite voluble Vladimir Burtsev. The article that the Editor of *La Tribune Juive* took offence with was printed in the *Common Cause* journal on April 14th 1921 (No.273). It’s probably worth including a sample:

“The press discusses the issue of the ‘Protocols of the Elders of Zion’. Its publishers never thought it necessary to say when, where and by whom these ‘Protocols’ were drawn up.

*Some XXs talk about others XX*

*There is no doubt that the ‘Protocols’ are fake. Their goal is clear: to hang on the Jews as many crimes as possible and thus justify the Jewish pogroms... Not so long ago we read in the “Jewish Tribune” an article entitled “The Truth About the Protocols of Zion”. It contained two extremely confusing

111 American Hebrew, 25 February 1921, Volume 108 Number 15 / La Tribune Juive, No.66, April 1st 1921, p.1
interviews with Ms Radziwill and Ms Herblat. In addition to a man named after the mythical character, the chairman of the Moscow court by the name of Nilus, the names she puts forward as the authors of the ‘Protocols of Zion’ are the former head of the gendarmes Orzhevsky, Rachkovsky, Golovinsky and Manuilov.

According to Mrs. Radziwill and Herblat, both met with Rachkovsky and Golovinsky in Paris in 1904-1905. It was here that they saw the manuscript of the ‘Protocols of Zion’, which they were writing at that time. Their story is completely confused. Rachkovsky was not in Paris in 1904-1905. Shortly before the Russo-Japanese War he was dismissed from service and recalled from Paris. During these years he was under police surveillance in Russia and, thus, could not meet with either Golovinsky or Manuilov in Paris. It is difficult to say what Mrs. Radziwill and Mrs. Herblat what is real and what is fiction.

Of course, the ‘Protocols of Zion’ themselves are of no great significance, but since they continue to attract the gullible both among the Russians and throughout the rest of Europe and America, it is advisable to clarify this issue for everyone again.

It has long been suggested that these ‘Protocols’ were created by Russian reactionaries associated with the police department. It is difficult to say whether such theories are true, but, in any case, it is difficult to envisage how the police department, with its special department for Jewish affairs, could fail to be interested in the authors of the ‘Protocols’ and have no information about them. Therefore, the archives of the police department and its representatives could tell us a lot of interesting things about them.

Since the spring of 1917, the archives of the police department have been at the disposal of researchers who had an interest in studying this falsification.
Those interested in studying such archives had the opportunity to study materials related to the ‘Protocols of Zion’ even before the arrival of the Bolsheviks. As far as we know, some of them have paid special attention to their history. It is only fair that we might expect some accurate information about the circumstances that led to the creation of these famous ‘Protocols of Zion.’

— Common Cause, No.273, April 14 1921

The objections raised by *La Tribune Juive* pertained to Burtsev’s apparent failure to offer unconditional support to Radziwill’s account. In doing so, the paper was concerned that Burtsev was lending support to the aims of the anti-Semites who were responsible for publishing *The Protocols*. From their point of view, Burtsev was placing too much emphasis played on the notorious Secret Police Chief, Pyotr Rachkovsky whilst downgrading the role played by other White Russian monarchists in the production of the fake. With his ‘super sleuth’ status still very much intact a lot was resting on Burtsev to fully endorse Radziwill’s story. Expectations had been high and he’d failed to deliver. Or at least that’s how it was being seen.\(^{112}\)

In fairness to Burtsev, the claims made by *La Tribune Juive* were only partially true. Burtsev didn’t deny that Matvei (Mathieu) Golovinski was the author of *The Protocols*. He simply pointed out certain inaccuracies in Radziwill’s story, rejecting outright that Rachkovsky was in Paris in 1905 and expressing his doubts that to Manasevitch-Manuiloff was involved. He also took issue with the claim that Manasevitch-Manuiloff had switched sides and was working for the Bolsheviks. However, in focusing on the inaccuracies of Radziwill’s account the editor of *Le Tribune Juive* believed that Burtsev was doing little to neutralize the threat posed by the *The Protocols* franchise now

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\(^{112}\) Un point de vue estrange’, *Le Tribune Juive*, No.70, April 29 1921
metastasizing rapidly across the globe. Burtsev was famous for exposing agent provocateurs and disabling provocation. In their estimation, the copies of The Protocols that George Shanks had published in Britain, and Boris Brasol had published in America were, quite literally, agents of provocation. If Burtsev was doing anything, he seemed to be skirting around the threat they posed, even to the extent of implying that it wasn’t really news at all. His ‘I don’t know what the fuss is all about’ opening statement carries a disingenuous loaded message: “From time to time the press discusses the issue of the ‘Protocols of the Elders of Zion’. He says it so casually and so unflappably that anyone reading it would think it was true. But it wasn’t. The press didn’t discuss the issue of The Protocols “from time to time”. The Protocols had been sitting in the archives of the British Museum collecting dust for the best part of fifteen years. The press knew nothing about it. Princess Radziwill said as much herself when she expressed surprise about: “all the noise that this falsehood” had aroused in England and America, despite it having gone “almost unnoticed in Russia” and had been “forgotten” about ever since.\footnote{American Hebrew, 25 February 1921, Volume 108 Number 15 / La Tribune Juive, No.66, April 1\textsuperscript{st} 1921, p.1}

It was a nimble piece of footwork. Instead of putting himself in a position where he had to defend his failure to respond in his customary forthright way to The Protocols story, Burtsev simply it turned around and said that it wasn’t much a story in the first place; it was yesterday’s news. In terms of spin, it was right up with Alistair Campbell and Dominic Cummings. A similar sleight of hand trick had been performed at the time of the so-called ‘Downing Street Memo’. As Professor Marc Pilisuk observed in an article for New York Monthly Review, at the time scandal broke in May 2005 the ‘sensational’ nature of the leak was completely downplayed. The response
from official spokesmen and from supportive media commentators was that it only proved what was already known to be true, “contributing to ample, already established evidence”. In short, it was dismissed as old news. And by doing so, they were able to avoid saying that anybody here had lied or covered up the truth. 114

La Tribune Juive responding to Burtsev’s Common Cause

(gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France)

Issues of spin aside, we do need to be clear about one thing; the Common Cause issue that Le Tribune Juive quotes, DOES say The Protocols was a fake. It also claims that most researchers were already aware it was a fake as they had had access to the files in the archives of the police department since 1917. It also acknowledges that its objective was clear: to blame the Jews for as many crimes as possible and thus justify the Jewish pogroms taking place at the time. But in my opinion, the narrative that Burtsev has crafted in this article was never intended to restore the credibility of The Protocols in the eyes of his readers; it
was to create a plausible explanation for why the Russian ‘Sherlock Holmes’ had failed to expose the work as a fake since its publication some 12 months earlier. He was trying to rescue his reputation.

Whilst his belief that the book is a forgery goes some way toward redeeming him in the eyes of his peers, there is still something quite concerning about some of the statements that Burtsev makes about the role played by Rachkovsky in 1905 and which formed the bedrock of Radziwill’s claims about witnessing its fabrication. Burtsev’s *Common Cause* article asserts that by 1905 Rachkovsky had been dismissed from Russia’s Secret Service and that he had remained under Police surveillance as a devious and untrustworthy pariah, until his death in 1911. That’s not entirely true. After the brutal events of Bloody Sunday when hundreds of peaceful demonstrators had been shot down at the Winter Palace, Rachkovsky had been reinstated as Chief of Police in St Petersburg and remained in that post until the summer of 1906. His brief was clear: clamp down on subversion and neutralize the threat posed to the Russian Liberals and the planned State Duma, and the series of fresh series of demands being placed before the Tsar from the various Jewish movements, encouraged by his proposals. However, at no point in his ‘October Manifesto’ had the Tsar promised ‘full’ or ‘equal’ rights to the Jews. The Manifesto had been published with only one scheme in mind: to de-energize the revolution whilst retaining something of an iron-grip on the existing status quo, and the overall rule of the Tsar. The demands for self-autonomy and a Jewish National Congress (a state within state) being by the Jewish Nationalists were not compatible with that idea. Nicholas and his

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115 The British Government adopted a similar approach with the Balfour Declaration of November 1917 which stopped short of actually promising a Jewish State. As one Israeli historian has pointed out, the richness of the English language lends itself very well to being vague.
advisers were attempting to unite and strengthen Russia, not see it fractured further. Within weeks of the October Manifesto being published on October 30th 1905, a League had been formed by Maxim Vinaver to attain ‘Full Rights’ for the Jewish People of Russia, with plans for its representatives to stand at the Duma’s first election the following April. In a pamphlet written by revolutionary poster-boy Father Gapon and the Socialist Revolutionary, Shloyme Zanvl Rappoport (aka. S. An-sky) in the summer of 1905, it was being argued that Russian Jews had as much right as Poles, Lithuanians, Belarusians and Ukrainians to have their own ‘special territory’ and ‘national autonomy’. 116 The Jewish Bund and the ITO (Territorial Zionists) had their own ideas. As far the Tsarist government was concerned, awarding special concessions to the Jews of Russia had never been part of the deal. The protests that erupted as a response to Bloody Sunday had led to a full scale revolution and whilst TsarNicholas II and his advisers was determined to make some concessions, issues relating to Russian National identity would need to be preserve; and this meant no concessions to Jewish ‘separatists’. The aim of the October Manifesto was rather simple: kill the revolution and carry on ruling.

Burtsev knew all about the role played by Police Chief Rakhovsky in scaling down the Revolution and suppressing the Jewish advances. We know this because Burtsev had worked closely with Pinchas Rutenberg who made the startling revelation that he had personally executed Father Gapon in the final week of March 1906 after learning of his alleged collusion with the Secret Police. Contrary to what he writes in the Common Cause article, Burtsev knew perfectly well that Rachkovsky was engaged at the highest level of anti-revolutionary and anti-Jewish plots during the 1905 to 1906 period.

116 My Acquaintance with Gapon, S. A. An-sky, Collected Works, Publishing Association, St. Petersburg, 1911-1913, Volume 5
What Radziwill had been claiming was entirely plausible. Rutenberg had described the execution of the ‘traitor’ Gapon and his secret talks with Rackhovsky in a sensational exclusive published in Burtsev’s Byloe journal in April 1909. The article caused global ripples and Burtsev even arranged for Rutenberg to travel to the United States to repeat the horrific story to Herman Bernstein. For Burtsev to allege that Rachkovsky was out of favour with the Tsarist Government at this time, was really nothing less than a lie.

Did the editor of La Tribune Juive have ulterior motives in criticizing Burtsev? It’s possible. The newspaper had been set-up just a year or so before by Jewish anti-Zionists to challenge British Mandate Palestine and the support among Zionists and former Revolutionaries of White’s Russia’s war on Lenin’s Bolsheviks. Burtsev’s Common Cause, had, by contrast, become something of the official organ of the White Russian movement in Paris, and was pushing its propaganda in the most aggressive of fashions. The founding editor of La Tribune Juive was Dr Reuben Blank, a friend of Jewish ‘Equal Rights’ campaigners, Lucien Wolf and Claude Montefiore (see: Bolsheviks and British Jews : the Anglo-Jewish Community, Britain, and the Russian Revolution, Sharman Kadish, 1992, p.104).

Did Burtsev actually write the article that offended La Tribune Juive? It’s a fair question to ask. Burtsev was certainly editor and director of the Common Cause newspaper at this time, even if his output there had been

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117 Delo Gapona’, Rutenberg, P. M, Byloe, no. 11-12, 1909, pp. 29-115
118 ‘How Father Gapon was Led to his Death’, The New York Times, translated by Herman Bernstein, Nov 7, 1909, p.1
reduced considerably as a result of his role as ‘emissary’ in Poland for General Wrangel and his work for the Russian National Committee.  

Despite the necessity of maintaining a cautious approach, there is no denying Burtsev’s dominance at the newspaper during the 1920-1921 period, as he is referred to in several articles reporting the activities of the publication. In an article for Common Cause published in October 1920, Burtsev is very much at the fore of its propaganda activities, re-fuelling speculation that Lenin was a German agent. According to a report published in La Charente on October 4 1920, Burtsev was now claiming that Lenin and the Bolsheviks had been in receipt of over 70 million marks for the purpose of agitation among the allies. It wasn’t the first time that such an allegation had been made. Both Princess Ekaterina Radziwill and Ariadna Tyrkova Williams had made the very same claim some months before.  

Burtsev: ‘Startling Revelations’ at Common Cause

That Burtsev wrote the article or was, at the very least, active in the production of Byloe during this period, may be supported by references elsewhere. A substantial extract from the No.273 Byloe article also makes an appearance in Alexandre Netchvolodov’s 1924 book, L’Empereur Nicolas II et Les Juifs (Tsar Nicholas II and the Jews). Here, the 273 article is attributed specifically to Burtsev. On March 11 1921, L’Univers Israelite mentions Burtsev by name in reference to a Common Cause article published on February 10th in which the names of 60 commissars and officials in Lenin’s Bolshevik regime are

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119 Vladimir Burtsev and the Struggle for a Free Russia, Robert Henderson, p.224

120 The Firebrand of Bolshevism, E. Radzwill (Small, Maynard and Co, 1919)/ From Liberty to Brest-Litovsk, A Tyrkova Williams, Macmillan, 1918
listed. *L’Univers Israelite* says it sees only ten Jews among the sixty names listed (*L’Univers Israelite*, March 11 1921, p.639).

On April 29 1921, little more than two weeks after the No. 273 article appeared in Byloe, *The Sentinel* newspaper in America, quoting the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* in Paris reported that Burtsev was about to publish ‘startling revelations’ regarding the origins of The Jewish Peril (The Protocols of the Elders of Zion). It is not known if these revelations were ever published. The Editor in Chief of the JTA at this time was Ukrainian-American Gershon Agron (Agronsky), a correspondent for *The Times* of the London and the *Manchester Guardian*, who had enlisted with Britain’s ‘Jewish Legion’ (the Mule Corps) during the war. By the 1940s Agron had been replaced by London’s Abraham Herenroth, a supporter, and later colleague, of Ze’ev...
Jabotinsky, founder of the Jewish Legion in which Gershon Agron had served during the war. During the war that followed, WW2, the JTA would work closely with British Intelligence. All things considered, it’s just possible that the ‘startling revelations’ about The Protocols that Burtsev was promising amounted to little more than that: empty promises. Having received a damaging blow to his credibility perhaps his decision to release this statement had been a spur-of-the-moment, knee-jerk attempt to restore his reputation among the Russian Jews of Europe — an indication, perhaps, that he was somehow on the case, and simply being as meticulous as ever. Sadly, a lack of funds saw his Common Cause newspaper close down in the final months of the year. If he did have any ‘startling revelations’ to share with his reading public he was certainly no longer in any position to print them.

Protocols expert, Rutenberg ally

Why Vladimir Burtsev chose not to speak out against the British, German or American editions of the Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion prior to April 1921 remains a mystery. By the time that his newspaper Common Cause had responded to Princess Radziwill’s exposé in April 1921, the pamphlets had been in circulation for almost a year and had commanded an astonishing amount of press attention both in Europe and America alike. It’s clear from both his own essay on The Protocols in 1938 and from Dr. Robert Henderson’s scrupulous biography of him in 2017 that he was “already something of an expert” on its notorious history (Henderson, p.241). The extent of his long-term interest in the book is perfectly apparent in the first few pages of his 1938 book. An extract reads:

121 Vladimir Burtsev and the Struggle for a Free Russia, Robert Henderson, 2018, p.224
“After the revolutionary movement of 1905, when political conditions in Russia underwent a sharp change, I returned thither towards the end of 1905, after fifteen years as an emigrant. My arrival almost coincided with the first edition of the “Protocols” in Petersburg, and I heard of them soon after they were published. At this time I was one of the editors of a widely circulated historical monthly, The Past (Byloe). Our periodical, in spite of the censorship conditions of the time, precisely because it was a historical magazine, could treat historically subjects touching on the most burning questions of current life. We published a good deal on the Jewish question, and on the Jewish pogroms which had taken place at that time, and thus conducted a definite propaganda directed against the anti-Semites. In view of this, one of our collaborators proposed to us to write a very sharp notice on the ‘Protocols’ as an undoubted forgery; but our editors refused outright to accept review of them, as they thought it inadmissible political and historical organ to take notice of obviously publications. We did not want to write on even in order to make another attack on the Government of that time, with which we were fighting over the Jewish question. We knew that even government circles were quite opposed to this publication and regarded it as an evident forgery. At that time there often came to our office the Director of the Police Department, Lopukhin, who was soon to be sent to Siberia with deprival of civil rights. At that time he was in opposition and gave us very valuable materials—among other things, on the Jewish question. In conversation with Lopukhin I saw he, like ourselves, regarded the ‘Protocols of Sion’ as a forgery undeserving of any attention. As recent Director of the Police Department—he was at the head of it from 1902 to the beginning of 1905—he was bound to know the truth about the origin of the ‘Protocols’ and their official sources. A little later, when I was again abroad as an emigrant, I was once again, in 1913-14, interested in the “Protocols”, when I realised that they might be utilised in the famous trial of Beilis in Kiev.”

— The Elders of Sion: A Proved Forgery, V.I Burtsev, 1938, p.96
It’s clear from the passage above that Burtsev wasn’t just aware of the book’s existence; indeed, so strong were his feelings about it that he was very nearly compelled to publish an exposé of the hoax as early as 1905. At this time the book had been receiving less than positive attention from the Russian Press. Even the crudely anti-Semitic, Novoye Vremya had featured an interview with A.A. Stolypin in which had voiced his own suspicion that The Protocols was a forgery. Why Burtsev had felt so compelled to publish an exposé of the story when it was being poorly received in 1905 and NOT when it was being lauded by The Times of London, and rampaging across Europe and America at the height of the Russian Civil War, is likely to remain unanswered.

Burtsev maintained contact with Russian Zionist leader, Gapon executioner and former Socialist Revolutionary Pinchas Rutenberg well into the 1930s. Rutenberg was another of the émigrés who would close relations with leading figures in the British Establishment, and one man in particular, Winston Churchill. In fact it was Churchill, now serving as Britain’s Colonial Secretary who awarded a one million pound contract to Rutenberg in September 1921 to build a hydro electric power station in Palestine. The scandal, known as the ‘Rutenberg Concession’ was highly controversial and discussion about awarding the deal to Rutenberg (a Socialist Revolutionary and self-confessed assassin) raged on for years. In the 1920s Burtsev shifted the focus of his investigations over to the activities of the Soviet Secret Police (GPU) in Palestine. A full account of his investigations and his continued contact with Rutenberg can be found in Vladimir Khazan’s essay, Pinhas

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122 L’Empereur Nicolas II et Les Juifs, Nevolodov, Aleksandr Dmitrievi, 1924 p.251
Supporting evidence and witnesses:

- Burtsev’s anti-Bolshevik propaganda in Paris was cut to much the same pattern as Harold Williams’ in Britain and Princess Radziwill’s in America. For instance, like Radziwill and Williams, Burtsev contended that Lenin was an agent of Germany, and the Bolsheviks had been in receipt of over 70,000 marks for the purpose of anti-war agitation among the allies (‘Lénine agent de L’Allemagne’, La Charente, Oct 4 1920). Was the story part of a coordinated campaign or did all arrive at this conclusion separately based on intelligence that was being handed to them by a common party?

- An article Burtsev published in Common Cause in 1918 draws attention to an article by Charles Repington in the Morning Post (a publication that serialised The Protocols during the summer of 1920). The article was entitled: “Britain Demands Intervention” and made passionate pleas to Britain to back all the counter-revolutionary forces against Lenin and the Red Army (see Burtsev’s backing for General Kolchak in the New York Times of 02 July 1918).

- In 1920/1921 Burtsev became an emissary (advisor and messenger) to White Russia’s General Wrangel in Poland. In October 1920 his Free Russia associate Alexei Aladin, a former confidant of Lenin in London who was now supporting Wrangel’s military campaign in Poland, was witnessed entering the National Liberal Club where both Churchill and

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Shank’s uncle Aylmer Maude sat as senior members. In a slightly concerning twist, it was reported that Wrangel’s armies and intelligence agents had been distributing copies of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* to foment pogroms against the Jews of Poland.

On April 27th 1920, at the time that the San Remo conference was taking place in Italy and just one week before Henry Wickham Steed reviewed Shanks’ *The Jewish Peril* in The Times, Burtsev published an article entitled, ‘Le Peril Bolcheviste’ in Common Cause (Le Radical, Paris, April 27 1920, p.3). The title echoes Shanks’ *Jewish Peril* in a rather distasteful way, and the timing is rather extraordinary given the fairly obvious way in which Shanks appears to be addressing the Bolshevik menace.

**Exhibit No.12: Russian Government Committee**

This was Imperial Russia’s armaments and supplies committee based in Kingsway London during the war. According to his service records, *Protocols* translator, George Shanks was seconded to the department from the 20th December 1916 to 2nd February 1918. The committee operated from Empire House, Canada House and Empire House.

The man in charge of Shanks at the Russian Mission was General Eduard K. Hermonius who would later get embroiled in a scandal featuring America’s Herbert Hoover and secret supply of arms to the White Russian forces of Yudenich. Hermonius’s niece, Nadia Zalesskaya was married to Sidney Reilly ‘Ace of Spies’.

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124 ‘An Emissary from General Wrangel’, Manchester Guardian, 04 Oct 1920, p.6
Shank’s immediate superior, the artist and mosaicist Boris Anrep, featured in a ‘39 Steps’ style mysterious death when 41 year old Nikolai Beliakov, a Colonel in the Russian Army was found dead in the sleeping compartment of an express train travelling from Glasgow to St Pancras. Beliakov had a bullet wound to right temple. A pistol was found at his side. He had spent the previous days on a business for the supplies committee in Glasgow. Anrep testified that he had been in poor mental health and had been diagnosed as having TB. The coroner, Home Office pathologist Bernard Spilsbury said he had found no evidence of TB. The incident took place in the last week of December 1916, and a verdict of suicide was returned.125

At the RGC in Kingsway, Shanks would have been working alongside Clara Sofia Namier. Her husband was Lewis Namier, a close friend of Robert Seton-Watson at the Ministry of Information and whose New Europe journal was printed by Eyre & Spottiswoode (Protocols publisher). In 1919 Namier struck-up a friendship with Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann. Namier, who went on to work at the Department of Political Intelligence at the Foreign Office, would continue to work closely with Seton-Watson on setting up pro-British buffer states in Eastern Europe. Sir Herbert Samuel’s ‘secret’ white paper, The Future of Palestine (1915) makes it clear that British Mandate Palestine had always been conceived as support mechanism for the British Empire, protecting the precious trading routes on the eastern flank of the Suez Canal. That Shanks’ timely translation of The Protocols coincided with Churchill’s efforts to expedite the Zionist project by heaping pressure on Britain’s Jews to ‘choose sides’, makes his proximity to Namier and his wife all the more interesting.

125 The Times, 4 January 1917, p.5
Namier says he couldn't recollect what first attracted him to his wife Clara, a Ukrainian Tatar. Given the rather cavalier way in which he could switch from ideal to the next over the years, it’s certainly possible that Clara’s position at the Russian Government Committee may have been a deciding factor in his interest.

**Exhibit No.13: New Europe (journal)**

The journal was founded in 1916 by R.W. Seton-Watson and ex-Russian diplomat, scholar and propagandist Sir Bernard Pares. Both men had astonishingly close ties to Times Editor Wickham Steed who personally reviewed Shanks’ *Jewish Peril* in May 1920. The pair also founded the Slavonic Review and the School of Slavonic and East European Studies. Their printing agency was Eyre & Spottiswoode Ltd, the same company used by George Shanks to publish the *Jewish Peril* pamphlet. Historian Andre Liebich describes Times Editor Wickham Steed as R.W Seton-Watson's “closest collaborator” during the WW1. Seton-Watson was Steed’s protégé before the war, just as Wickham Steed was to be his protégé’ after the war. 126

**Witness for the Prosecution: Archibald Sinclair**

Sinclair acted as Personal Military Secretary to Churchill during the period 1919-1921 and is believed to have provided a useful and private back-channel between Churchill and the Secret Service. In September 1919 he is alleged to have met with Protocols expert Burtsev. Eight weeks later Shanks' published his pamphlet, *The Jewish Peril*.127 At this time Burtsev was working in Paris

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126 The anti-Semitism of Henry Wickham Steed, May 2012, Patterns of Prejudice no.46, Andre Liebich, p. 192

127 Burtsev & the Struggle for Free Russia, Henderson, p.220
with maverick Zionist and pro-Interventionist, Daniel Pasmanik in support of the Whites, to whom Sinclair was closely connected (Guchkov).

Exhibit No. 14: British League of Jews

In Britain a group of Jewish businessmen and Orthodox leaders were actively engaged in anti-Zionist pressure groups. Their campaign eventually led to the founding of the British League of Jews in April 1919 featuring some of England’s most respectable Jewish figures including Leopold Greenberg, Lionel Nathan de Rothschild, Claude Montefiore, Sir Philip Magnus and Louis Samuel Montagu (Lord Swaythling). On April 22nd 1919 the group had signed the so-called ‘Letter of the Ten’ in response to an increasing number of articles in the Jewish Press which, the group lamented, “seemed to have no other effect than to encourage the adoption of the theoretic principles of Russian Bolsheviks among foreign Jews who have sought and found refuge in England” (‘Bolshevism and Jewry: a Repudiation’, Morning Post April 23 1919). As far as they the group was concerned, these articles were doing irreparable harm to the Jewish community. As a response to the pro-Zionist movement and the support for Lenin and the Bolsheviks among the Jews of Britain, the Jewish Guardian newspaper was formed as a rival to the longstanding pro-Zionist newspaper, The Jewish Chronicle. It was in fact the Jewish Guardian that was among the first of the Jewish newspapers to offer a formal rejection of Shanks’ Jewish Peril in March 1920 (see: Samuel Hagbert-Wright).
Witness for the Prosecution: Robert Hobart Cust

Cust was a respected art historian and associate of George Shanks and Major Edward G. Burdon. A letter found in the archives of Morning Post Editor, H.A Gwynne in the 1970s, revealed that it was that Cust’s friends George Shanks and Major Burdon who had been responsible for translating the first edition of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion that was published in London in January 1920. Robert’s cousin was Lionel Cust (son of Sir Reginald Cust) who served as Director of the National Portrait Gallery making Shanks’ alleged internship with Sir Philip Sassoon all the more plausible (Sassoon also had strong links to the gallery). Cust was also related to Lord Brownlow (Adelbert Salusbury Cockayne-Cust, 5th Baron Brownlow) who attended the wedding of the Spencer-Churchills.

Witness for the Defence: Princess Ekaterina Radziwill

The Princess was a Polish-Russian aristocrat, born in St Petersburg, who was the first person to reveal the full history of the forgery of The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion. As a long-time family friend of the Protocols author, Matvei (Mathieu) Golovinski, Radziwill claims to have personally witnessed his dramatic revision of the Protocols story in Paris, shortly before being published by Sergei Nilus in 1905 (‘Protocols Forged says Princess’, New York Times, February 25 1921, p.11). The manuscript she saw was written in French, and was itself a reimagining of an earlier work conceived by General Orgewsky (head of the third section of the Russian State Police Department) in 1884, just after the assassination of Alexander II. The script published under the name of Nilus had been printed under the auspices of the local Red Cross at Tsarskoye Selo, the Imperial Residence.
However, the insight that the Princess Radziwill provides into the whole affair may not be as impartial or clear-cut as one would hope; her previous publishing efforts in America making it difficult to resolve her motives. Shortly after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, Radziwill had undertaken a propaganda role in America not unlike Burtsev in France or Harold Williams in England, her carefully choreographed reports providing no end of support for General Wrangel in his war with the Bolsheviks in her home country of Poland. Members of her own family were also at the centre of that struggle, with Stanislas Radziwill fighting for Wrangel (and Jabotinsky), ally General Pilsudski.

![Princess Ekaterina Radziwill](image-url)
It wasn’t until the death of her Swedish-born husband in the United States that Radziwill was roped in to spearhead the country’s pro-Interventionist propaganda campaign. Once bedded down in New York she started to produce a regular stream of articles for the press and also a number of books. One such book was *The Firebrand of Bolshevism* (Small, Maynard and Co, 1919). Copies of the book were reviewed in advance by newspapers like the *New York Tribune* in January 1919 before its eventual publication in March. Many of the hysterical claims made in Radziwill’s book had already been prefigured by Harold Williams of *The Daily Chronicle* and the *National War Aims Committee* magazine, *Reality: Searchlight on Germany* in Britain. The book’s entire premise rested on just one thing: virtually all the Bolsheviks were Jews and Bolshevism was itself as expression of spiteful, Jewish Supremacism. It was a sentiment that her old friend Winston Churchill was in complete accord with. 128

According to Radziwill’s *The Firebrand of Bolshevism*, her 1919 book for Small and Maynard, the men who had led “the great betrayal of Russia” were not only Jews; they were also working as paid agents for Germany. It was the same claim being pushed by Harold Williams and his wife Ariadna Tyrkova on behalf of the *Russian Affairs Committee* in England, and at the very same time it was being pushed by Burtsev and Svatikov in Paris. There’s little denying it. The book is an intensely offensive account of the so-called German and Jewish influence among the Bolshevik leaders. The claims are as hysterical as they are inaccurate: “This Kameneff was another repulsive Jew” (p.203), “Leon Trotzky, was not a Russian but a German Jew” (p.10) — these

128 It is curious to note that she talks fondly of the young Winston Churchill in her 1914 British publication, ‘Memories of Forty Years’ (Cassell). She recalls Lord Randolph Churchill saying of Winston, “He is a curious mixture of American impudence and English caution, and I feel sure that later on his wildest acts in life will be very wisely premeditated.” (p.40). How right he was.
just being a handful book’s more odious and bizarre expressions. To put it more flippantly, Radziwill’s book is basically a ‘Who’s Jew’ of the Bolshevik Revolution.

However, the curiosities don’t end there. Just three months earlier in October 1918, Princess Radziwill had published an altogether different book, jot for Small & Maynard this time but for Cassell & Company, a publisher with its headquarters in Britain with offices in New York, Toronto and Melbourne. The firm’s London-based Editor was, Sir Arthur Spurgeon who played a key role in developing the War Propaganda Bureau during war. It was here that he oversaw the masterful reshaping of the department by John Buchan and his co-panel list, Sir Bernard Pares. A report Spurgeon produced as part of a parliamentary advisory committee with Pares and author and editor, Robert Donald in November 1917, identified the key weaknesses within the Ministry at Wellington House. Although its work had been carried out in a “machine-like groove”, the output was too similar in character and distribution. It had become a great publishing institution rather than effective propaganda agency. In their estimation they had focused too heavily on the wrong kind of pamphlets — “intellectual propaganda” — which was unlikely to have had much appeal to the “popular crowd” and the working classes. The material produced at Wellington House was considered more suitable for the leaders of the popular masses, rather than the actual masses themselves. With the situation in Russia deteriorating, and appeals to the working classes now very much to the fore, it was decided that all future campaigns should be placing far more weight more salacious, eye-grabbing material that was be likely to score more instantly with the working class. It was a point of view that was shared by Britain’s director for propaganda, Lord Northcliffe.
It was a damning report, but despite the claims made by both Spurgeon and Pares, the most persuasive means of forcing Masterman out of the head role at Wellington House and bringing Buchan in, came not from destroying confidence in the quality of his propaganda but through his extravagant and inexpert handing of department finances. In a report from the Select Committee on National Expenditure called by Herbert Samuel it was found that “inefficient and unsuitable methods had been adopted the Department at Wellington House in preparing propaganda for distribution.” The man whose discoveries supported this stinging criticism was explorer Ernest Shackleton, who told of having found 900 bales of propaganda literature weighing between 50 to 80 lbs each literature lying discarded in sheds and warehouses in South America. When attempts were made to get them distributed among the masses, they were found to be out of date. Concerns were also raised about the £126,000 being paid, mainly in cables to Reuters. 129

As result of this and Spurgeon’s earlier report, Charles Masterman was replaced by Buchan as Director. 130 Obviously, Radziwill’s output for Cassell & Company and the fairly dramatic fanfare her first book for them received in England in November 1914 (‘Memories of Forty Years’) makes it reasonable to speculate that no small number of the pages she wrote from 1917 onwards were pushing the interests of Britain and its allies. 131 The book ‘Russia’s

129 Memorandum on sixth report from the Select Committee on National Expenditure, Herbert Samuel (House of Commons Paper no. 9 of 1918), 1918, Command papers, CD. 9201, XV.287, vol. 15, 20th Century House of Commons Sessional Papers.
130 British Propaganda during the First World War, 1914–18, Michael L. Sanders, Philip M. Taylor, Macmillan, 1982, pp.259-26 / Reports on various branches of Propaganda Work and Recommendations, by Robert Donald, Arthur Spurgeon and Professor Bernard Pares, December 1918, TNA, War of 1914 to 1918 Information services, INF 4/4B. Cassell’s chief editor, Spurgeon received his knighthood in the 1918 Honours List for services rendered to the British Propaganda effort during the war.
131 Among Cassell’s more controversial book was W. T Stead’s The Truth about Russia (1888) which is alleged to have promoted Tsarism and Konstantin Pobedonostsev, an ultra-Orthodox associate of The Protocols’ Sergei Nilus, in the most favourable of terms. Through
Decline and Fall’, written prior to the October Revolution, heaped no small amount of praise on Russia’s Jewish soldiers for their heroic and patriotic contributions to the war effort with Germany. Here, in complete contrast to her book for Small & Maynard the following year, Radziwill gave her full and unequivocal backing to the granting of full and equal rights to Russia’s Jews:

“Unfortunately, ever since the war had broken out the military as well as the civil authorities looked on all Jews with suspicion, and considered them as dangers to the State ... notwithstanding that the fact that Jews without number had volunteered to join the ranks, without being obliged to do so, and were fighting the German invader side by side with the Russians."
— The Truth about Jews, Russia’s Decline & Fall, p.201

The author then moves on to applaud Deputy Freidmann of the Duma when he says, “In spite of their many hardships ... the Jews in Russia have known how to perform their duties as Russian citizens ... and have offered themselves freely to fight for our fatherland.” Curiously, Radziwill couldn’t praise them enough. So what had changed between her book for Cassell & Company in 1918 and her book for Small & Maynard in 1919? Well for one, America and Britain had entered the war pretty much on the assurance that the prospects of Russia were looking up and that a friendly Liberal government under the management of Alexander Kerensky would be in power. What changed quite simply, was the arrival of Lenin’s Bolsheviks. Initially this would have been viewed as a minor interruption in an otherwise smooth transition from Monarchist Empire to Republic, but by the time that

his friendship with Olga Novikoff, Stead was introduced to Alexander III who became his patron. There’s a tell-tale line in his book discusses the existence of a “Russo-Jewish ring which had set its heart on the exploitation of the country” (p.100).

132 Russia’s Decline & Fall, Princess Catherine Radziwill, Cassell and Company Ltd, 1918, p.212
Radziwill’s book for Small & Maynard had arrived on the shelves in America, the fear was setting in that the Bolsheviks could not be toppled. The costs of their unexpected triumph soared Lenin eventually cancelled all loans made to Kerensky by the UK, France and America during the prosperous first stages of his government. American bankers had made significant contributions to the Kerensky government (which promised equal rights to the Jews of Russia), and America and Britain’s reward were to be the large mining concessions in Kamchatka and the Ukraine that Kerensky had pledged in return. By December 1918, as the Allies prepared for full-scale military intervention, the attitudes of Britain, America and Radziwill to Russia’s Jews had reversed dramatically. Suddenly the Jews who had “offered themselves so freely to fight for their fatherland” were supporting the efforts of Germany and not Russia. Had Radziwill’s views changed as part of some personal epiphany or had she just been bought? Looked at from the most cynical of perspectives, Radziwill’s books simply appear to reflect a change in British and American policy on the Allies’ relations with Russia. It will come as no surprise to learn that her books after Russia’s Second Revolution have often being described as ‘Black PR’.

Radziwill’s New York Publisher and The Protocols

After a closer look at Radziwill’s publishing history, some other intriguing facts emerge. Small, Maynard and Co, the Boston-based company that published Princess Radziwill’s deeply anti-Semitic, The Firebrand of Bolshevism in 1919 was the very same company that published the first US edition of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion in January 1920. As in Britain, it transpires that the publisher of the first edition of The Protocols was linked to

133 Associated Press, Washington, 18th April 1919
the very people who would just one year later expose it as a fake (much the same sequence of acceptance and rejection was repeated by The Times of London between May 1920 and August 1921).

Radziwill’s publishers Small, Maynard also published the first US edition of The Protocols in 1920. Her previous publisher, Cassell had strong links to British Propaganda efforts.

So what prompted Radziwill to expose The Protocols as a fake in February 1921, after doing so much to further the fake’s objectives in her 1919 book, The Firebrand of Bolshevism? Fundamentally at least, her own book and The Protocols were rooted in a similar delusion, namely that the Bolshevik revolution was part of global master scheme launched by the world’s Jews. Both were complete and utter fictions even if one was more faithful to modern customs of ‘Yellow Press’ reporting. So what changed in January 1922 that prompted Radziwill to expose The Protocols as a fake? Did she experience the same change of heart (or plan) as Mikhail Raslovlev, the White Russian exile in Constantinople who revealed all of the secrets of its production to Philip
Graves of The Times of London that same year? Whilst it is really very
difficult to come up with anything firm, I’d hazard a guess that it was either a
change in US Policy on Russia or developments in her home-country of
Poland. Or both. 134

Recurring Villains

Interestingly, the man that Radziwill accuses of colluding in the fabrication of
The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, Ivan F. Manasevitch-Manuilov, is
revealed as having played a similarly malevolent role in her book, Rasputin
and the Russian Revolution (first serialized in the Evening Illustrated Ledger
in the US in November 1917). In her subsequent publication, Russia’s Decline
and Fall (Cassell, 1918), Russia’s Minister of the Interior, the Liberal
Politician, Alexander Protopopov also comes under scrutiny (as he does in
Rasputin). According to some accounts the author of The Protocols, Matvei
(Mathieu) Golovinski, was in the employment of Protopopov in 1916. This
may suggest that Radziwill’s decision to expose Golovinski and Manuilov was
in some way an extension of her anti-German objectives; that she was building
up, to some extent, an additional super-narrative. Of the two books only
Decline and Fall was published by Spurgeon’s Cassell & Company. Rasputin
was published by Britain’s John Lane, publisher of H.G. Well’s The New
Machiavelli (1911).

134 Lee Radziwill, the younger sister of Jackie Onassis, wife of US President John F. Kennedy,
became a member of the same Radziwill dynasty upon her own marriage to Prince Stanislaw
Albrecht Radziwill. Prince Ekaterina had married (and divorced) Prince Wilhelm Radziwill.
How credible is Radziwill’s story?

Several modern scholars have attempted to cast doubt on Radziwill’s account of seeing draft copies of The Protocols in Paris in 1905. Among them is Italian Protocols biographer Cesare De Michelis who claims that her good friend Golovinski wasn’t actually in Paris at the time the Princess claims. However, a trawl through the archives of the French press during this period reveals that Golovinski was living at 68 Grand Rue in Bourg la Reine in 1904 (Le Radical, Dec 11 1904, p.3) and the following year at 76 Rue Mouffetard (La Lanterne, February 17 1905 p.4). During this period he was giving lectures on everything from the Russian-Japanese War to the ‘love’ of Tolstoy. He also makes an appearance representing the legal defence at the ‘L’Antimilitarisme’ trials of December 1905, where he can be found standing alongside Fernand Labori, a man who had previously found fame as a lawyer at the trial of Alfred Dreyfus. 135 This last point is very interesting. In his Afterword to Will Eisner’s graphic novel, The Plot: The Secret Story of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, Professor Stephen Eric Bonner argues that the ‘Dreyfus Affair’ (which rattled on for some years during the late 1800s and early 1900s) not only led Theodore Herzl to organise the very first Zionist Conference in Basel (on which the ‘Jewish plot’ of The Protocols was alleged to have been based) he also argues that the ‘Dreyfus Affair’ was the first time that the Jews had been identified with the Liberal and Revolutionary forces of modernity, making Golovinski’s appearance alongside Fernand Labori (Dreyfus’ defence lawyer) an intriguing one, to say the least. In the archives of the French press,

135 Golovinski appears an expert during the trials of the ‘L’Affaire de L’Affiche Antimilitariste’ – an anarchist trial that took place in December 1905 (see: ‘Autres Dispositions’, L’Humanité : Journal Socialiste Quotidien, No.620, Dec 28 1905, p.1)
he regularly appears as *Docteur Golovinski*. In 1914 he uses the same title, *Docteur Golovinski* for his book, *The Black Book of German Atrocities*.  

![Image](image.png)

Dr. Mathieu Golovinski appearing with Dreyfus lawyer, Fernand Labori at the ‘Antimilitarism Trials’ in France (L’Humanité Dec 28 1905, p.1)

**Did Radziwill work for US Military Intelligence?**

One thing I haven’t been able to determine as yet, is whether Princess Ekaterina Radziwill was the Russian-American asset working for American Military Intelligence who American journalist, Hermann Bernstein revealed to have aided Lieutenant Boris Brasol in his US translation of *The Protocols*. Radziwill had certainly made her New York her permanent base, but whether

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136 I ran this by Stephen Eric Bonner but he passed no comment.
she had been awarded an American passport is another matter. Bernstein claims that when he returned as war correspondent for the *New York Herald* he was shown a document by an American Officer of the Military Intelligence Department and was requested to submit an opinion about its authenticity. The manuscript the officer gave to Bernstein was a translation of the so-called *Protocols*. The man then explained how the document had come into his possession. He said the document had been stolen by an “unknown woman” in France. Eventually it had found its way to Washington. After a period of investigation Bernstein was able to determine that it had been brought to the attention of a Russian-American woman working at US Military Intelligence by Russian Supplies Officer, Lieutenant Boris Brasol in February 1918. She was advised to present it to her employers as proof of the dangers presented to America and her allies by the Bolsheviks. Preparing for such a meeting, she duly translated it into English.\(^{137}\)

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\(^{137}\) Interestingly, Lt. Boris Brasol was working at the US version of London’s *Russian Government Committee*, where British translator Lt. George Shanks worked during this same period. In America it was called the *Russian Supply Committee* and would liaise regularly with London through its intermediary Sidney Reilly ‘Ace of Spies’ at 120 Broadway, New York.

\(^{138}\) A journalist for the New York Herald, the New York and Washington Post, Herman Bernstein claims that American Military Intelligence had played a role in distribution of The Protocols in January 1920 (see: The Sentinel, 1 April 1921, p.36)
Between April 19 and April 26 1920 a team of representatives from Britain, France, Italy and Japan met in Southern Italy to thrash-out a route plan for the development of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. This would eventually result to the full ratification of the Balfour Declaration first published in November 1917. Strangely, the first reviews of Shanks’ Protocols were printed just weeks before the meetings took place. The review of Shanks’ Protocols penned by Henry Wickham Steed of The Times of London was published some two weeks after the conference. In an adjacent column readers were given a series of foreign updates, one covering the latest developments in Poland and the other, the triumph of the Bolsheviks over General Wrangel’s White Russian forces in Russia.139 Just 12 weeks before, War Secretary

139 Jewish Peril, The Times, May 8th 1920, p.5
Winston Churchill had made his controversial appeal to the Jews of Britain to get behind plans for the Jewish Nation in an article for the Illustrated Sunday Herald. ‘Zionism versus Bolshevism’, published in February that year, had been designed to apply no small amount of emotional and moral blackmail to any Jew in Britain who wasn’t prepared to declare their support of Zionism or renounce the policies of the Bolsheviks (see separate exhibit: ‘Zionism versus Bolshevism’). The appearance of Shanks’ Protocols can only have added to the pressure on British Jews to prove their loyalty to the British Empire by backing the drive against the Bolsheviks and supporting our designs for British Mandate Palestine.

**Witness for the Prosecution: Ze’ev Jabotinsky**

Jabotinsky was a former Socialist who became a leader of the early Zionist movement, first in the Ukraine, then in St Petersburg and finally in Palestine who had also responsible for leading the British Jewish Legion. The ‘Mule Corps’, as it was known, had been founded to support British troops in their fight against the Ottomans during the mid to late stages of the First World War. Here he served as an honorary lieutenant in the 38th Royal Fusiliers. The first major review of *The Protocols* in *The Times* of London on May 8th 1920 took place just weeks after he and Pinchas Rutenberg had been arrested as part of an investigation into the ‘Jerusalem Massacre’ (the Nebi Musa Riots, 4th-7th April 1920). In the press reports that followed, speculation was rife that there had been a sinister contingent of Bolshevik agent provocateurs active among the Arab Palestinians who had taken part. The riot recalled the riots of Kishinev in 1903 in several ways, including allegations of collusion within the ruling administration (in Jerusalem, it was the British administration, in Kishinev it was Tsarist Russia). In the weeks and months that followed both these atrocities, Jewish efforts in support of the Palestine Settlement increased
across the globe and a surge in donations and support would be experienced by
in the various Restoration funds being managed by the Zionists. In July 1920
the Palestine Restoration Fund (Keren Hayesod) which had previously
operated on a casual basis, was set-up as a formal organisation to collect funds
for the establishment of the Palestine Settlement. Jabotinsky would sit on its
Board of Directors. Its HQ was located in London (75 Great Russell Street,
Keren Hayesod Central Bureau).

Jabotinsky: Another Press and Propaganda Specialist

Jabotinsky is generally believed to have taken up his position as Director of
the Palestinian Restoration Fund in London in September 1921, but he had
been active on board of the fund since its conception some years before.
Shortly after arriving, he entered into a battle for control of the fund with
Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann. In London he lived at Hotel London
Lancaster Gate before moving to Stafford House Maida Hill West. It was here
that he worked as part of the Zionist Executive (Political Department) in
charge of the Press and Propaganda Department (Rebel and Statesman, Joseph
B. Schechtman, 1956, p.371). In September 1921 he travelled to New York on
behalf of the fund. In spite of their wrangling over the future of the Zionist
movement, Weizmann had managed to secure his election to the group’s
Executive, possibly on the insistence of the British on the proviso that
Jabotinsky would assist Weismann (and the British) in their power-struggle
with Louis Brandeis in America over the direction the Fund was taking.

After the months immediately following the Jerusalem Massacre,
Palestine would also see a massive increase in immigration. The riots took
place just weeks before the San Remo Conference at the end of April 1920, a
series of meetings that would determine the fate of the Jewish National Home in Palestine.

In March 1921 the charges that Jabotinsky and Rutenberg had faced over attempts to arm the Jews during the ‘Jerusalem Massacre’ the year before were dropped after considerable pressure from the pairs’ supporters in Britain, among them Lord Northcliffe and Wickham Steed of The Times. Their release coincided with the first serious efforts to expose The Protocols as a fake in Britain and America (see witness: Princess Ekaterina Radziwill). Jabotinsky’s proximity to certain agents of the Zubatov and the Secret Police in St Petersburg in 1905 (Dr Josef Shapiro and Dr Henrik Shaevich among them) may suggest some discreet yet complex connection between the publication of The Protocols and the campaign to build consensus on both sides of the Atlantic for British Mandate Palestine.

Did the publication of Shanks’ Jewish Peril assist in the campaign for Mandate Palestine

If it rested solely on the forceful argument that alliteration alone provides, the idea that Shanks’ Protocols somehow propped-up plans for Palestine would be a compelling one. But this is a complex and controversial question, suggesting as it does no small amount of complicity from certain Zionist leaders. Although few spiritual Zionists would have tolerated such a cynical and far-reaching abuse, more offbeat Zionist leaders like Jabotinsky, who possessed a deep regard for the challenges and sacrifices of realpolitik could well have

140 Jabotinsky’s Zionist colleagues in Odessa, Dr Shapiro (Josef Saphir) and Dr Henrik Shaevitch were both long serving members of the so-called Zubatovchina with Father Gapon. Both men were at the centre of Tsarist efforts to immigrate thousands of Russian Jews to Palestine, as part of Russia’s own Imperial Mandate. See: The Story of My Life, Jabotinsky, p.75-76, 151, and The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl, London, ed. Raphael Patai, Herzl Press, 1960, Vol. IV, pp.1520-1525
offered some short-term support. Jabotinsky was, for instance, one of the very few Zionist leaders to have supported Dr Theodore Herzl’s discussions with Tsarist Minister, Vyacheslav von Plehve back in August 1903, a point of view which put squarely in the minority.141 His preparedness to negotiate and work with “the enemy” would also land him in trouble with the Zionist Organisation in the 1920s when it was learned that Jabotinsky had colluded with Ukrainian Separatist (and anti-Semite) Symon Petliura and his spkesman, Maxim Slavinsky. The Zionist leader’s passionate anti-Bolshevism had compelled him to deal with the devil and he duly resigned from the organisation after refusing to disclose the full extent of his arrangements with the pair.142

Following the Cairo Conference of March 1921 (and as a response to increasing tension), the Emirate of Transjordan was added to the British Mandate for Palestine. It was formally established on April 11th 1921. During this same month Herman Bernstein published his own expose of *The Protocols* in America. A few months later in June, Churchill made a Parliamentary address on Palestine. Jewish immigration was to be strictly controlled and an Arab solution sought with their right to self-determination preserved. In August 1921 Philips Graves of The Times (an old associate and friend of Jabotinsky) published the first full exposé of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. His report went significantly further than Radziwill’s account in that he explained in precise detail just how the book was put together and the works

141 After the brutal Kishinev Massacre of 1903, Herzl discussed the possibility of Russia funding the immigration of thousands of Russian Jews to Palestine with Minister of the Interior, von Plehve. Plehve’s attitude was that “as long as Zionism consisted in wishing to create an independent State in Palestine” it would be supported by the Russian Government. But Zionist plans to establish a Jewish State in Russia would not. See: London Daily News 26 August 1903, p.7/The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl, London, ed. Raphael Patai, Herzl Press, 1960, Vol. IV, pp.1520-1525

that it had plagiarised to do so (see witness: Philip Graves). Curiously, Jabotinsky is mentioned several times in Grave’s 1924 book, *Palestine: The Land of Three Faiths*. In the book, Graves criticizes his arrest and the unreasonable level of abuse he was to suffer.

Between the years 1905 and 1906 Jabotinsky had worked alongside Daniel Pasmanik at the Zionist newspaper, *Rassvet* in St Petersburg. Pasmanik, who held a respected post in the *Central Committee of the Zionists* during this period, would eventually become co-editor at Vladimir Burtsev’s *Common Cause* journal in Paris, the journal that would act as the semi-official organ of the White Émigré (monarchist, Liberal and anti-Bolshevik) movement during the Russian Civil War (1917-1922). He would later describe Pasmanik as a “fighter against the current tide” and was one of the few Zionist leaders to offer a flattering obituary upon his death in 1929 (Vladimir Jabotinsky, *Story of My Life*, 1936). A ‘puff-piece’ boasting the efforts and discipline of the Jewish Legion under its charismatic leader Jabotinsky appeared in *The Times* of London in February 1918 (p.3). This may well have been written by Graves.

**Exhibit No.16: Report by Sir Stuart Samuel on his Mission to Palestine**

This was a formal parliamentary report that investigated claims of terrifyingly brutal pogroms (Jewish massacres) by British-backed White Russian forces in Poland during the Russian Civil War with the Bolsheviks in 1918. The report was commissioned by Sir Stuart Samuel and performed by Captain Peter Wright. Britain was one of the last countries to publish its reports into the massacres. By May 3rd 1920 questions were being asked in the House of Commons with concerns being raised over the length of time the government
was taking in releasing the finding of the mission after its return in December 1919.\textsuperscript{143} The findings of the report finally emerged in the first weeks of June 1920, but its publication was delayed until the latter part of July.\textsuperscript{144}

Captain Wright and Mission had been dispatched to Poland in September 1919, just as Shanks was preparing to translate and publish \textit{The Protocols of the Elders of Zion}. The mission carried out its investigation in Poland for some three months, finishing in December. As Britain was backing the Polish Whites and Separatists in their fight against the Bolsheviks, some viewed the decision to delay the report into the atrocities as political in nature. The majority of Jews in Europe and America viewed Wright’s final report as a ‘whitewash’. It did acknowledge widespread killing but the nuanced way in which the report was presented, suggested that only a relatively small percentage of deaths could be attributed specifically to anti-Semitism with no proof of the direct involvement of Polish forces. The report had been prepared for publication on June 2nd 1920, just one week after the \textit{San Remo Conference} and just one month after Wickham Steed published his review of Shanks’ \textit{Jewish Peril} in The Times of London (May 8th 1920). It’s conceivable that the decision to ‘get behind’ the Protocols in some Liberal and Conservative circles was an attempt to justify or buffer (at a moral level) the outrageous excesses of the White Russians forces against the Jews in Poland during the 1918-1919 period (Cracow, Lodz, Vilna, Pinsk and Lemberg). Angry exchanges continued to be heard in Parliament regarding the delay in publishing the final report.

\textsuperscript{143} Hansard, Sir Stuart Samuel’s Commission, McLaren to Mr Harmsworth, House of Commons, Debate 03 May 1920 vol. 128 cc1686-7

\textsuperscript{144} Report by Sir Stuart Samuel on his Mission to Poland, House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, MISCELLANEOUS No. 10 (1920)
Although its failure to offer a fairer picture of the widespread abuses was fairly predictable in many respects, the report does contain some surprises. According to Captain Wright a contingent of Zionists legionnaires fought alongside Wrangel’s forces in Poland. His report further alleges that Zionist propagandists within these units may have exaggerated the scale and frequency of the atrocities (perhaps in an effort to convince European and American Jews that a National Home in Palestine was the only long-term option solution to Jewish persecution). However, Wright’s report offers little in the way of evidence for this conclusion and the pressure to attribute the violence to poor reporting and Zionist propaganda would have been immense.

**Witness for the Prosecution: Herbert Samuel**

Herbert Samuel was appointed the first Commissioner of Palestine in 1920. His proposal for a Jewish National Home in 1915 (The Future of Palestine) led to the Balfour Declaration of 1917, eventually paving the way for the State of Israel. His ‘secret’ white paper in 1915 set out a vision for Palestine as a colonial outpost and ‘buffer’ state, protecting allied interests on the Eastern Flank of the Suez Canal and from any future hostility from Germany. His use of expressions like the ‘British annexation of the country to the British Empire’ makes it abundantly clear that Samuel was not proposing an autonomous Jewish State, believing that such an outcome as this could only ever be viable when the Jews of the region had greatly increased their numbers. Neither did he see Palestine as a solution to the problem of the Jews in Europe. As Samuel was quick to point out in his paper, a country the size of Palestine could not cope with nine million Jews, but it could offer some relief to the Jewish populations of Russia. He did not view it as a home for all Jews but as a spiritual and intellectual centre that would empower Jews in the
Diaspora (foreign lands). He did not view it as an end to ‘assimilation’. It would simply raise the profile and status of Jews in other lands.\textsuperscript{145}

\textbf{Witness for the Defence: Ivan Fedorovich Manasevich-Manuilov}

Manasevich-Manuilov was the \textit{Vremya} journalist and former secretary to the Imperial Russian Ministry of the Interior and Prime Minister Count Witte who was accused by Princess Ekaterina Radziwill of being involved in the re-composition of \textit{The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion} with Tsarists agents, Mathieu Golovinski and Pyotr Rachkovsky in Paris in 1905.

Readers of Russian crime capers may notice that he has a habit of appearing on the fringes of a variety of sensational plots. As a reporter for the Russian newspaper \textit{Vremya}, Manasevich-Manuilov was the first to reveal the full details surrounding the murder of 1905 revolutionary figurehead, Father Gapon. It may also be noted that he was in regular contact with the priest in the weeks leading up to his death. At the time he was said be acting as conduit between Gapon and Rachkovsky as part of plans to revive the official working men’s unions formed under the former Police Chief, Zubatov. This was viewed by more liberal ministers, as a better way of managing industrial action and directing Russian workers away from radical Marxist groups.

Over the years Manasevich-Manuilov faced a number of embezzlement charges and bans before finally re-emerging as Private Secretary to ‘Mad Monk’ Rasputin. In the final months of 1916 he was duly arrested and charged over his over his links to Rasputin and additional

\textsuperscript{145} ‘Secret: The Future of Palestine’, Sir Herbert Samuel, Memorandum by British Cabinet Member, January 21 1915
allegations of collusion in German-espionage. He is alleged to have escaped from prison in the chaos of the February Revolution but it is more likely that he was released by the Kerensky Government, possibly at the request of Britain’s Secret Service who may have used his services to monitor the movements of the ‘mad monk’ prior to his assassination. The family of Police Chief Lopukhin, jailed for exposing Yevno Azef as an agent provocateur to revolutionary super-sleuth, Vladimir Burtsev during a train journey, claimed that it was Manasevich-Manuilov and not the former Police Chief Lopukhin who revealed the revolutionary double-agent Yevo Azev as a spy. Burtsev would later reject the claims made by Radziwill that Manasevich-Manuilov played a part in the forging of The Protocols.

**Witness for the Defence: Daniel Pasmanik**

Pasmanik was the maverick Zionist leader and publicist who moved from Socialism to the extreme Russian Nationalist Right after the Bolsheviks seized power in October 1917. He was revered by Jabotinsky who he joined at the Dawn (Rassnet) newspaper in St Petersburg in 1904/1905. After the triumph of Lenin and the Bolsheviks he joined Burtsev (who once described him as a “stubborn young fanatic”) in his support for the White Russian émigré movement in Paris. Here he assisted Burtsev in co-editing the journal *Common Cause* (Obshche Delo). Between November 1919 and April 1920 Pasmanik would give a series of provocative lectures which sought to clarify the links between Bolshevism and Jews and Bolshevism and Christianity (‘Le Bolchevisme et les Juifs’, La Tribune Juive, March 21 1921, p.5). Eventually he found himself estranged from the Zionist movement after admitting to having shaken the hand of Vlad Purishkevich, leader of vicious anti-Semites, the Black Hundreds who he and Burtsev had both befriended in Paris (see: ‘Revoliutisionnye gody v Krymu’, 1926). Curiously, Vlad Purishkevich is
alleged to have assisted British Intelligence figures in the disposal of Rasputin (who had Manasevich-Manuilov as his private secretary).

Pasmanik ended his days as a key figure in the anti-Bolshevik (pro-Interventionist) movement in Paris. In his final years he became a supporter of fascism under Mussolini. Despite his considerable early commitment and contributions to the spread of Zionism and ideas to pertaining to ‘Dual Nationalism’ in Russia and beyond, his death in 1929 went by largely unremarked on by the Jewish Press, his proximity to the Russian Whites and his high-regard for Italian Nationalism having alienated him from both the Zionists and Assimilationists. The one exception was Ze’ev Jabotinsky who produced a glowing obituary for his old friend and idol in Rassvet, the newspaper they had both worked on in Russia some twenty-five years before.¹⁴⁶

Witness for the Prosecution: Anglo-Jewish Association

At the time that his Zionism versus Bolshevism article went to press, Churchill’s rather uncompromising take on British Mandate Palestine was meeting stiff resistance from a large number of prominent Jewish financial, political and religious leaders including Lucien Wolf, Sir Stuart Samuel, Maxime Vinaver, Claude Montefiore and Ewan Montagu. These men backed Full and Equal Rights for Jews in the Diaspora (in their adopted foreign homelands), generally regarding the Palestine solution as a romantic and unnecessary ideal fraught with potential dangers. These men regarded Jews as

¹⁴⁶ It’s often assumed that Zionism was a tightly-bound and rigidly defined ideology that was somehow mass-produced and shrink-wrapped by Herzl in the late 1890s. This was not the case at all, as the life of Pasmanik illustrates perfectly well. Highly recommend reading: Jewish Liberal, Russian Conservative: Daniel Pasmanik between Zionism and the Anti-Bolshevik White Movement, Taro Tsurumi, Jewish Social Studies, Fall 2015, Vol. 21, No. 1 (Fall 2015), pp. 151-180
having a religious rather than national identity. It was this group that campaigned so fiercely on investigating and resolving the pogroms in Poland in 1919, not least because they feared that the resurgence of anti-Semitism was energizing (on quite a dramatic scale) the Zionist movement in Russia and Eastern Europe. Sir Stuart Samuel who dispatched Captain Peter Wright to investigate the alleged Pogroms in Poland in November 1919 eventually came to side with Lord Northcliffe on the issue of Zionism. In March 1922, shortly after The Times of London revealed that *The Protocols* had been a complete and utter hoax all along, Samuel issued a statement saying that he no longer wished to be identified with the Jewish National Movement (the Zionists). He was, however, still committed to the general idea of a British Mandate in Palestine (The Sentinel, May 12 1922). His reluctance to the embrace the Zionist vision, he would explain, was rooted in concerns over the scale and expense of building such a settlement and the deeply thorny issue of who would control the restoration funds; the two rival options being, the Anglo-Jewish Economic Council (which he presided over) or the Zionist Organisation (under men like Weizmann and Jabotinsky). In the end it was Samuel’s desire that the Economic Council should assume control of all Palestinian Affairs and that the Palestine Restoration Fund (Keren Heyesod) should collect and process funds. His earlier contribution of just one guinea to the Palestine Restoration Fund had perhaps articulated his views more sharply and more dramatically than any opinion he was ever likely to express.

**Witness for the Defence: Matvei (Mathieu) Golovinski**

If we were simply investigating the circumstances surrounding the creation of the original Russian edition of *The Protocols* in the early 1900s, then it would be this man who would be in the dock. Thanks to the testimony of Princess Ekaterina Radziwill in 1921 which were followed up and investigated by
revolutionary super-sleuth Vladimir Burtsev during the Berne Trials of the 1930s (and more exhaustively by Russian historian Mikhail Lepekhine in the 1990s) it is generally accepted that the lawyer, activist and Tsarist agent, Dr. Mathieu Golovinski was the man who personally sat down and plagiarised the works of Joly and Goedsche before stitching it all back together into the ‘Protocolstein’ monster we know and loathe today. For a detailed and hugely entertaining account of Golovinski’s life I would recommend reading Will Eisner’s 2005 graphic novel, The Plot: The Secret History of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, which traces his development from precocious aristocrat of “fragile social standing” and friend of the novelist Dostoyevsky and his family, to his work as a Clerk in the State Police (responsible for regularly faking documents in prosecutions) before allegedly drifting into an anti-Semitic society called The Holy Brotherhood. 147

Italian scholar Cesare De Michelis claimed that Golovinski wasn’t actually in Paris at the time that Radziwill alleges, but a trawl through the archives of the French press during this period reveals that Golovinski was living at 68 Grand Rue in Bourg la Reine in 1904 (Le Radical, Dec 11 1904, p.3) and the following year at 76 Rue Mouffetard (La Lanterne, February 17 1905 p.4). He also makes an appearance representing the legal defence at the ‘L’Antimilitarisme’ trials of December 1905 (for more details and images, see separate entry: ‘How Credible is Radziwill’s Story?’)

147 The Plot: The Secret History of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, Will Eisner, Umberto Eco, W.W. Norton, 2005
After many years in Paris, he appears to have gone back to Russia and found employment with Russia’s Minister of the Interior, the Liberal Politician, Alexander Protopopov. At the time that *The Protocols* was first exposed as a fake in Britain and America it was alleged that he had died in 1920, the same year that Britain’s George Shanks and Russia’s Boris Brasol had published their translations in England and America.

**Witness for the Prosecution: Boris Brasol**

Lieutenant Boris Brasol was believed to have provided the first translation of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in America in 1920. He served as lead prosecutor in the 1913 *Beillis Case* in which a Russian Jew was accused of a Blood Ritual murder (sacrificial slaughter that is again, totally mythical in origin).

From 1916 he worked as a lawyer at the *Russian Supply Committee* in New York (the US version of Lieutenant George Shanks’ *Russian Government Committee* in Kingsway, London). The munitions wing in which Brasol served was based at the Equitable Building at 120 Broadway in New York. The
Committee and its successor, the Division of Supplies of the Russian Embassy, coordinated and supervised the purchase of military supplies for the duration of the war. The Committee was inevitably plagued by repeated episodes of corruption and ‘cloak and dagger’ escapades featuring such colourful spying legends as Sidney Reilly ‘Ace of Spies’ (who had his offices at 120 Broadway), Tony Jechalski and its chief, Colonel Vladimir Nekrasov (HIA, Russia, Posol’stvo, File 370-12). ¹⁴⁸

Between 1917 and 1920 Brasol was tasked with spearheading the anti-Bolshevik propaganda campaign in the US press (see his two-page advertorial in the New York Times, May 19 1918).

¹⁴⁸ For more all this see: ‘American Relief Administration Scandal – Captain James V. Martin, Herbert Hoover & Russia’, Alan Sargeant, July 20 1919: https://pixelsurgery.wordpress.com/2019/07/20/first-russian-job-ara-relief-scandal/
In 1919 it is alleged that Brasol assisted American car manufacturer, Henry Ford with compiling his anti-Semitic Opus magnum, *The International Jew: The World’s Foremost Problem*. Those familiar with the tome will know that Ford and his acolytes surgically removed large chunks of *The Protocols* for an argument he was putting forward in his notorious four-volume set. Brasol is also known to have assisted Ford in the production of his newspaper, *The Dearborn Independent* (which serialised the book first in 1920).

The journalist Hermann Bernstein, whose professional contact with Protocols expert Vladimir Burtsev dated back to 1909, did much to expose *The Protocols* as a fake in the United States. In 1921 he claimed that Brasol had brought it to the attention of a woman working as an agent of American...
Military Intelligence as early as February 1919.\textsuperscript{149} He alleges that the woman’s superiors said they might be able to make use of it as part of their anti-Bolshevik propaganda. She is then reported to have assisted in its translation into English.

Herman Bernstein writing about Brasol and American Military Intelligence in April 1921

**Witness for the Defence: Arthur Balfour**

Balfour was the British Foreign Secretary most famous for making the wartime pledge of a Jewish National Home in Palestine in the *Balfour Declaration*, published within 24 hours of the Bolshevik takeover in Russia

\textsuperscript{149} The Sentinel, 1 April 1921, p.36
(November 9 1917). He was replaced as Foreign Secretary by Lord Curzon in October 1919. Curzon was ridiculed for believing in the authenticity of Shanks’ *Jewish Peril*. Although he took part in the drafting of the Mandate of Palestine, Curzon’s vision was significantly different to that of Balfour. Curzon anticipated that the region would eventually become the source of huge conflict (his daughter Cynthia would later become the wife of British Fascist Oswald Mosley). By contrast, Balfour’s interest in the Zionist cause dated back to 1903 and 1904 and his friendship with Zionist, Chaim Weizmann and the Chovevei Zionist pioneer, Joseph Massel when Balfour was serving as Conservative MP for Manchester East.

Massel had arrived in Manchester from Lithuania in 1882, where according to his obituary in the *Manchester Guardian* he had excitedly opened a printing-house and immediately set about publishing a book of original poetry and a collection of rare and ambitious translations (Manchester Guardian, 07 Sep 1912, p.10). Massel was eventually joined in Manchester by future Israeli President, Chaim Weizmann. At an address at the Derby Hall in Cheetham Hill in 1900, Rabbi Richard Gottheil (of New York) and Massel had already proposed a resolution to bring the Manchester Zionist movement under the management of the American federation (Manchester Guardian, 20 Aug 1900, p.6). 150 During this period Balfour would work tirelessly on the so-called ‘Uganda Scheme’, a precursor to the Balfour Declaration in which Britain proposed resettling thousands of Russian Jews in East Africa, plans

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150 Joseph Massel, born Yoysef Yechezkel Mazl in Vilna in 1850 had left his position as a Russian mining executive in 1887 to become a leading member of a movement in North West England pressing for support and funds to help bolster the small yet dignified Chovevei settlers in Palestine from the movement’s base on Cheetham Hill Road. For more on Massel and Weizmann see: *Chaim Weizmann: The Making of a Zionist Leader*, Jehuda Reinharz, 1985.
having been greatly accelerated as a result of the global backlash to the violence that had erupted in Kishinev during Easter 1903.

Whilst supported by Zionist leader Theodore Herzl, the Uganda proposal suffered a resounding defeat at the 6th Zionist Congress in Basel in August 1903. Among those who rejected it was Ze’ev Jabotinsky, who was evidently more supportive of the Tsarist Palestine proposals being made by von Plehve and supported by the Palestine-only ‘maximalists’ among Odessa Zionists. However, the pledges that von Plehve had been making had awakened hope in other Jewish nationalist groups in Russia, who perceived it as a sign that the Tsar was softening his approach to the Jews and might eventually concede to their demands for self-rule in Russia. This was not and never had been the case. As the Sixth Zionist Congress in Basel got underway in August 1903, Herzl made the mistake of publically acknowledging his ‘secret’ meetings with von Plehve. Within days von Plehve had made a formal and rather furious announcement to the press qualifying some of the statements he had made in his conversations with Herzl. So what was said in these conversations? As understanding this may prove crucial in understanding the dilemmas faced by the British as plans were being made to prepare the Palestine road-map.

A Russian Mandate Palestine (1903)

It’s worth remembering that much of what had been discussed between Herzl and von Plehve had already been discussed between Herzl and Kaiser Wilhelm a few years earlier. Palestine mandates had been conceived of before. First of all, there were several dimensions to Russia and Germany’s interest in pushing Zionism as broad spectrum solution its cultural and economic problems: on the one hand it would help extend the political influence of both countries in the
Middle East and on the domestic front, it would also starve The Bund and the Socialist Democratic and Revolutionary movements of some of their most powerful leaders and combat activists.

In the meetings and correspondence between Herzl and von Plehve in early August 1903, the Tsar’s minister was already conceding that the standard of living in the Pale Settlement (Russia’s Jewish reservation) was terrifically poor. The region was, he confessed, little more than a ghetto. It was Plehve’s belief that as long as the standard of living continued to deteriorate it was inevitable that more and more Jews would join the Revolutionary parties.

Writing from St Petersburg on August 12th Herzl spoke of a receiving a “long, satisfying letter from Plehve together with a personal note”. At a meeting in St Petersburg on August 8th Plehve had explained in the clearest and most dispassionate of terms how the Imperial Government of Russia now intended to “resolve the Jewish Question in a humane manner”. After much consideration they had decided to balance the needs of the Jews with those of the State. They had decided that the most practical way of assisting the Jews was to give aid to the Zionist movement which would consist of the following: effective intervention with His Majesty, the Sultan and obtain and charter to colonize Palestine with the exception of the Holy Places. The administration would be managed by the Colonisation Company and set-up with sufficient capital by the Zionists. Secondly the Imperial Government would provide a financial subsidy for emigration. It was hoped that the relationship that could be established between the Imperial Russian Government and Zionism

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151 The Jewish Labour Bund were the Zionists’ more Marxist rivals and were naturally perceived as a far more revolutionary threat in the region.


153 The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl, Vol IV, pp. 1520-152, August 9th 1903
whilst not "amicable" could at least be practical to them both.\textsuperscript{154} Just a few days before von Plehve had issued a circular to the Governor of Kherson banning Zionist activity in the Province, its passionate Nationalism disrupting any attempt to resolve the tensions between the Christians and the Jews in the region.\textsuperscript{155} This may seem a somewhat contradictory move in the circumstances, but one needs to differentiate between the types of Zionist views and activity being expressed at this time, and the semi-autonomous nature of some of Russia’s provinces. The problem here was that the Governor of Kherson had his own ideas about settling the Jewish Question. As far as he was concerned, the Jews had showed an encouraging response to his agricultural programs and possessed a strong belief in their abilities to cultivate the land. It just needed some encouragement. For him the best way of helping dissipate the National and cultural energy that extremists among them were harnessing, was to offer them a more equal share of the land that the Jews were farming and remove the obstacles to education. Worrying numbers of Jewish families were leaving for the United States and from America’s perspective at least, there needed to be some way of stemming the flood.\textsuperscript{156}

The meeting Herzl had with von Plehve a few days later went even better than the first. Whilst dismissing some of the criticism levelled by foreign governments on the way they handled the Jews in Russia, the Tsar’s minister accepted that if he were a Jew in Russia he too might be an enemy of the government. Things being what they were he was able to relay a message from the Emperor saying that “the creation of a Jewish State, capable absorbing several million Jews” would suit them best of all. However, they

\textsuperscript{154} The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl, Vol IV, pp. 1520-1521

\textsuperscript{155} New York Times 07 August 1903, p.3

\textsuperscript{156} Evening Mail December 21st 1903, p.2
weren’t prepared to lose all Jews, just those who were contributing little in the way of value to education or the treasury. In a way that mimicked the US ‘Anarchist Exclusion’ Act of March 1903, it was those who were “weak” and with “little property” that they were keenest to let go. More specifically, they wanted to keep the shrewd capitalist Jews of Russia — those with their trove of foreign investors and firm links with Jewish financial houses like the Rothschilds of Paris — and push those expressing Socialistic and revolutionary sentiments en-masse to the Turkish borders where they could then march fractiously into Jerusalem and disrupt the Ottoman Arabs. Writing in Vladimir Burtsev’s Byloe journal in 1918, Police Chief Sergei Zubatov would confirm that both von Plehve and the former Chief of Police Lapukhin had begun to see Zionism as a simple mechanism that could absorb large numbers of revolutionary Jews and compete successfully with Socialist principles. The careful recalibration of a Jewish national identity would direct the energy of the troublemakers in a completely different direction. Better still, another country. 157

To push matters along von Plehve indicated to Herzl that he would urge Count Witte to withdraw his decree prohibiting the sale of shares of the Colonial Trust whose main activities in Palestine were being carried out at this time by the Anglo-Palestine Bank — the Bank Leumi — founded as a joint stock company subject to English jurisdiction, framed according to English laws, and under the protection of England. 158 Just a few weeks later on October 3rd, the Zionist Actions Committee under the Presidency of Herzl made the collective decision to place any dividends granted to the shareholders


158 Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl, Vol. IV, p.1526
of the Colonial Trust at the disposal of the Actions Committee to cover the
costs of the various fact-finding missions to Palestine and East Africa. Among
those members of the Actions Committee making the appeal to the Trust was
Dr Yosef Shapiro (Sapir)\(^{159}\), the Zionist leader from Odessa who protest leader
Father Gapon had claimed had been receiving ‘material support’ from
Zubatov.\(^{160}\) In the first week of September Plehve had released a circular
ordering all funds being collected by the Jewish National Fund should be
redirected to the Odessa Committee, possibly as a result of the fund’s links to
British and German interests and it straying from the original programme of
establishing a State in Palestine (New York Times, September 2 1903, p.1).
The statement coincided with a demand put forward by ‘No’ voter Meir
Dizengoff, the revolutionary Odessa businessman who had been managing the
affairs of Ze’ev Jabotinsky’s self-defence militia under the watchful eye of
Okhrana agent, Henrik Shaevich. A few days after the vote had been cast,
Dizengoff pleaded that any monies raised for the National Fund should be
reserved exclusively for the Palestine project. Only by investing at least “three
quarters of the money” on land there now could the organisation prevent any
further attempts on using the cash for “any other use”. The rich, fertile soils
they needed were being seized by rival investors. They needed to act fast.
They needed to act now.\(^{161}\)

Some several months earlier in February 1903, shortly before the
Kishinev massacre, The *Jewish Voice of America* had been reporting that the

\(^{159}\) Philadelphia Jewish Exponent 02 October 1903, p.6

\(^{160}\) The Story of My Life, Father George Gapon, E.P Dutton & Co, 1906, pp. 91-97

\(^{161}\) Zionistenkongress. VI Basel 1903, Protokol de VI. Zionistenkongresses in Basel Vom. 23,
28 August 1903, p.287
Odessa Committee had appointed a body to deal exclusively with the purchase of land in Palestine and was instructing that all sums devoted to that purpose should be deposited with the Jewish Colonial Trust in London. By March that year a substantial tract of agricultural land had been purchased by rival stakeholders, whilst banker and philanthropist Edmond de Rothschild who had bankrolled the first Hovevei Zion settlement at Rishon LeZion in the early 1880s was now in possession of an additional four farming villages near Tiberias on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. The discovery of such a plot would have eventually left von Plehve with little option but clarify the Tsar’s position and immediately shut-down any fundraising activities that were likely to favour a rival nation.  

162 As one of the oldest groups seeking to colonize land for the purpose of farming Palestine, the Odessa Committee.

162 The Jewish Voice, 6 February 1903, p.8
(known alternatively as the Odessa Society) was the only Zionist group that Plehve was willing to do business with. Its aims were among the most transparent and most practical of its agents in Russia. And to cap it all, among the Committee’s most respected and senior members was Zubatov’s Dr. Shapiro (Yosef Sapir) whose support they could clearly rely on.

The next meeting Herlz had with von Plehve on August 13th 1903 went even better. Whilst dismissing some of the criticism levelled by foreign governments on the way they handled the Jews in Russia he accepted that if he were a Jew in Russia he too might be an enemy of the government. Things being what they were he was able to relay a message from the Emperor saying that “the creation of a Jewish State, capable absorbing several million Jews” would suit them best of all. However, they weren’t prepared to lose all Jews, just those who were contributing little in the way of value to education or the treasury. In a way that mimicked the US ‘Anarchist Exclusion’ Act of March 1903, it was those who were “weak” and with “little property” that they were keenest to let go. More specifically, they wanted to keep the shrewd capitalist Jews of Russia — those with their rich, private networks of foreign investors and firm links with Jewish financial houses like the Rothschilds of Paris. Those expressing Socialistic and revolutionary sentiments could be pushed en-masse to the Turkish borders where they could then march fractiously into Jerusalem and disrupt the Ottoman Arabs. Writing in Vladimir Burtsev’s Byloe journal in 1918, Zubatov would confirm that both von Plehve and the former Chief of Police Lapukhin had begun to see Zionism as a simple mechanism that could absorb large numbers of revolutionary Jews and compete successfully with Socialist principles. The careful recalibration of a

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163 Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl, Vol. IV, pp. 1534-1535
Jewish national identity would direct the energy of the troublemakers in a completely different direction. Better still, another country.\textsuperscript{164}

Whatever had happened between that last meeting with von Plehve and the Sixth Congress in Basel is not entirely clear, but whatever it was, it triggered a sharp reversal in tone and the unceremonious exit of Russia’s most controversial civil servant to date. Von Plehve’s position on the issue, publically at least, becomes a little more clear in the statement clarifying the Tsar’s position on the Jewish Question, and their commitment to the Palestine option that he released to Herzl and the press during the closing stages of Zionist Congress in Basel in August:

“As long as Zionism consisted in wishing to create an independent State in Palestine, and promised to organize the emigration from Russia of a certain number of its Jewish subjects, the Russian government was perfectly well able to be favourable, but from this moment when this principal aim of Zionism is found to be abandoned in order to be replaced by a simple propaganda of national Jewish concentration in Russia, it is natural that the Government cannot tolerate this new departure of Zionism. Its only effect would be to create groups of individuals, perfectly strange and hostile to the patriotic sentiments which are the power of every State.

That is why Zionism cannot be tolerated except on condition that it returns to its former plan of action. It could in that case count on moral and material support when certain of its practical measures should cause a diminution in the Jewish population of Russia. This support might consist in protecting the agents of the Zionists near the Ottoman

\textsuperscript{164} The Attitude of the Jewish and the Russian Intelligentsia to Zionism in the Initial Period: 1897-1904, J. Goldstein, The Slavonic and East European Review, Vol. 64, No. 4, Oct., 1986, pp. 546-556
Governments, in helping the action of emigration societies, and in even in supplementing the needs of these societies, evidently outside the means of the State, by means of contributions levied on the Jews.

I consider it necessary to add that the Russia Government, obliged to conform in its mode of action in the Jewish Question to the interests of the State, has nevertheless never departed from the great principles of morality and humanity. Quite recently it has enlarged the rights of domicile within the borders of the localities destined for the Jewish population, and nothing prevents it hoping that the carrying out of these measures will serve to ameliorate the conditions of living of the Russian Jews, especially if emigration diminishes their number. ——Tours, etc ...”

— London Daily News 26 August 1903, p.7

Within days of this letter being published Plehve released his circular ordering all funds being collected by the Jewish National Fund (which was ostensibly a fund being propped-up by British interests) should be redirected to the Odessa Committee under Jabotinsky’s mentor, Dr. Shapiro. What came next was even worse. On August 19th 1903 St Petersburg’s Chief of Police, Sergei Zubatov was dramatically fired by von Plehve. The support he had offered to the Zionists and the Jewish Independent Party had only served to heighten the self-awareness and nationalism of Russia’s Jewish populations. As far as Plehve was concerned, his schemes to introduce legalised worker’s unions in an effort to decelerate the spread of Revolutionary Socialism, and to legitimize the Zionist movement had backfired spectacularly. Chief Lapukhin had been warning that things were deteriorating fast. As a result the Jewish Independent Party under Dr. Shaevich was shutdown. Zubatov’s dismissal came some twelve months to the day that he had sanctioned the first Zionist Conference at Bialystok. His ‘Zubatovshchina’ was all but finished. But things may not have been all that they seemed.
The order from the Ministry of the Interior to re-direct the flow of funds to Shapiro and the Odessa Committee in the first week of September
165 does, suggests that Zubatov’s attempt to bolster the Zionist’s Palestine Settlement programme was still being actively pursued by von Plehve. He may have published a circular banning the greater part of Zionist activity in Russia, but the Palestine ‘Maximalists’ of Odessa the beating, practical heart of the original Bilu and Hovevei Zion movements, appear to have been one group who found themselves exempt from this new approach. Moreover, as receivers of all the various cash-donations to Jewish National Fund, they were benefitting financially and politically from the crackdown on their rivals. Although the real reasons for Zubatov’s dismissal have never been entirely clear to historians there are some clues to be found in a letter sensationally published the New York World a few months later in November.

The letter, written by Solomon Wiener of Manhattan was dated August 27th, was warning von Plehve of a British plot:

100 East Eighty-Second Street, New York, Aug 27th 1903

Excellency: Several months have gone since I laid before his Excellency Count Cassini, the Russian Ambassador at Washington my views about Rabbinical Judaism and Zionism and offered him my services to combat this danger and disclose this world swindle. Your Excellency how right I was. Zionism is a political experiment on the part of England and Dr Herzl and Dr Nordau are in English Pay. Having been unsuccessful in regard to Palestine they have hit upon an exodus to Africa and the above-named leaders are unscrupulous enough to lend their brethren (?) to destruction. I have a great desire to write a book about the whole

165 New York Times, September 2 1903, p.1
business which would completely justify the conduct of your
government but without your support as I can do nothing as His
Excellency Count Cassini will confirm.

S. Wiener
— The World, November 26th 1903, p.3

Within days of this letter being published, Russia’s von Plehve released
his circular ordering all funds being collected by the Jewish National
Fund — which was ostensibly a fund being propped-up by British
interests — should be redirected to the Odessa Committee under Dr.
Shapiro.

What was going on here, and who was Solomon Wiener? The New York
World reporter had made attempt to answer these questions, but the few details that were being offered only served to further
obfuscate the matter. The letter it was claimed, translated from its
original German, had been uncovered in Plehve’s ‘Secret Archives’. Whilst the newspaper doesn’t explain how the letter arrived in their
possession, the fact that it emerged shortly after von Plehve’s dismissal
of Police Chief Sergei Zubatov which would make one naturally think
that it may have arrived in the hands of the newspaper courtesy of the
vexatious former Police Chief himself. But the date of letter makes this
extremely unlikely. Zubatov was dismissed from his role on August 19th
1903 and was ordered to leave St Petersburg immediately. The letter is
dated August 27th and is likely to have found its way into von Plehve’s
‘secret archive’ sometime in September at the earliest. The fact that it
makes explicit mention to “his Excellency Count Cassini, the Russian
Ambassador at Washington” makes me inclined to think that the
publication of the letter had the full approval of Plehve and that it had
produced specifically for publication in the New York World. If Wiener’s
letter had a been a genuinely spontaneous effort intended only for the attention of Plehve, it seems doubtful that the writer would have needed to explain that Count Cassini was the Russian Ambassador in Washington. Von Plehve wouldn’t need this explaining. In my estimation this rather helpful clarification is clearly for the benefit of the American reader, who wouldn’t have had a Scooby who Cassini was. It’s the press equivalent of providing subtitles. In view of its intended recipient, the more natural expression is likely to have read: “Several months have gone since I laid before his Excellency Count Cassini, my views about Rabbinical Judaism and Zionism”. As Russian Government’s Minister of the Interior, von Plehve didn’t need to be told by Mr Wiener from New York that Cassini was their Ambassador in Washington. But the New York World report wasn’t just covering up the manner in which they may have obtained Wiener’s letter, it was also concealing the true nature of the letter’s intent. Although the accompanying report in the newspaper was obliged to point out that Solomon Wiener was a former Zionist himself, it failed to acknowledge the immense divide that opened up between the maximalists of Hovevei Zion — who Wiener was a member of himself — and Theodor Herzl, the man Wiener claimed to be in the pay of the British. This was undoubtedly a case of sour grapes and indications that the various factions of the Zionist movement were further splintering. Contrary to what modern conspiracy theorists think, and what The Protocols tried so pitifully hard to prove, the Zionist movement was not a homogenous movement. Their ideals different in many respects, and their loyalties were indeed divided by region to region.

The exclusive in the New York World newspaper wasn’t an attempt by a former Zionist to blow the whistle on the Zionist Movement per se; it was an attempt to destroy the watered-down version of Zionism
being bankrolled by the British Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain and its increasingly vilified founder, Mr Herzl. The problem wasn’t Zionism, it was the Ugandan Scheme; the British-backed compromise that would see the Jewish colony set-up in Africa and not Palestine. At the time the letter was published the offer was under serious consideration and an expedition was being prepared. If successful it would have been to the detriment of Russia and the United States; Russia because it robbed them of their stakes in a key Ottoman region, and the America because it would lure the raft of Jewish investors currently pumping power into Wall Street over to their much-loathed cousins, the Brits. Just as Chamberlain and Balfour were poised to capitalize on Zionism, the rug was taken from under them; Zionism was being sold as a British conspiracy. What made it all the more extraordinary, is that it was a small group of rival Zionists who were attempting to sell this idea in the press.

Wiener had done a consummate job of proving his credentials to the *New York World*. Claiming to be a blood relative of the man he was accusing of being an agent of the British Government — Dr Max Nordau — he boasted he had inside knowledge of the Zionist movement. He had lived in Russia for thirty years, having been born in Bialystock in the 1830s. ‘Cousin’ Max was likely to have won himself few friends in America after claiming in an interview with the press some six years previously that the Jewish race was intellectually, morally “and under certain conditions” physically superior to all the Aryan peoples, with the possible exception of the English (Indianapolis Journal 29 August 1897 p.14). It was exactly the kind of expression that would support Wiener’s claims and have the ordinarily supportive New Yorkers foaming at the
mouth and falling hook, line and sinker for practically any salacious claim he attempted pin on the pair. It was a Protocols-type device before The Protocols had even fully taken shape. Wiener was stirring up a hornet’s nest of casual anti-Semitism and turning it against his rivals in England. In a year when plans to restrict the number of Jews entering America had gathered pace with the launch of a new Exclusion Act 166, the chauvinistic basis of Nordau’s ‘Muscular Judaism’ was more likely to provoke some no less burly aggression from New York World readers. Wiener never explained just how he was related Nordau, but then neither did he explain how his Hovevei Zion brand of Zionism had become increasingly estranged from the bastardized version of Zionism being rudely re-imagined by Anglophiles Nordau and Herzl. For the sake of the argument he’d switched sides. He’d drilled his little stick of dynamite deep into the bedrock of American patriotism, taken a step back and watched it blow. Few readers would have known that his objections were the cruel and fractious outcome of bitter rivalries within the group, and not as he and the New York World were want to impress upon them, the shock and horror of a Reformed Jew — a non-believer.

Little of what Wiener was saying was new. Zionism had been viewed as peculiarly English invention for years. The celebrated Jewish Arabist Dr. Eduard Glaser was already of the opinion that Zionism as “nothing but an English catspaw for the partition of Turkey and the creation of a petty State”.167 The Americans and their pro-German allies

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166 America’s Anarchists Exclusion Act was effective from March 1903. It did little to prevent the immigration of anarchists and everything to disqualify the entry of Russia’s poorest and most needy Jewish travellers (beggars, the infirm, and the un-skilled).

167 Philadelphia Jewish Exponent 04 February 1898, p.6
were simply reheating an old debate. What made the story more sensational this time around was that it had a rather dramatic and exciting ‘whistleblower’ dimension. The claims being made this time around came from an ‘insider’ — a ‘turn’. It would be difficult to fault the creativity of the *New York World*. They had presented Wiener as a Jewish American patriot who had seen the error of his ways and now totally recanted the Zionist vision being offered by Herzl and Nordau. But this was not the case. To learn more about Solomon Wiener, see his entry in the appendix.

### Jabotinsky: A common actor in the Russian and British Mandates

Jabotinsky’s faith in Tsarist commitment to the project spearheaded by von Plehve and between Zubatov and the Odessa Committee in 1903 had been buoyed by the Tsar’s decision to allow the very first *All Russian Zionist Conference* to take place at the Hotel Paris in Minsk in 1902 (organised in part by Chief of Police Zubatov and Jabotinsky’s mentor in Odessa, Dr Josef Shapiro (Yosef Sapir). Zubatov had been convinced that the Jewish movement would come to reject a revolution if its energies could be channelled into taking a purely economic and liberal route. 168 This tactic, first used by the Tsarists, would subsequently, be adopted by Churchill and the anti-Bolsheviks in their championing of Zionism over Bolshevism. In many ways the British and American adoption of the Palestine Solution was based on a similar proposal being made Zubatov and von Plehve in 1902 and 1903, which imagined Palestine as a trading outpost for Imperial Russia. But the actual idea went back further still. As we now know, the idea had first been discussed by

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Herzl and Kaiser Wilhelm in Germany, when the Tsar’s third-cousin was entertaining the possibility of a Jewish-German ‘buffer state’.\textsuperscript{169}

The role of Jabotinsky in both mandates isn’t clear. He was certainly a critical player in the British Jewish Legion during the war, and his support at Northcliffe’s The Times is not in question. His old friend Pinchas Rutenberg (who Jabotinsky dispatched to America with Chaim Zhitlovsky to form an American Jewish Legion in 1915) certainly became the darling of Churchill. His relationship to the ‘Russian Mandate Palestine’ plans of 1902 and 1903 are a little less clear. On the one hand we have his proximity to Odessa Zionists, Dr Shapiro and Dr Shaevitch, who were working so very closely with Police Chief Sergei Zubatov in 1902 and 1903, and we also have his proximity to Alexei Suvorin Jnr, the son of notorious anti-Semite and Russian patriot, Alexei Suvorin Snr, the newspaper magnate who employed Ivan Fedorovich Manasevich-Manuilov at the Novoye Vremya, alleged to have taken part in the 1905 publication of The Protocols (see separate entries on Princess Ekaterina Radziwill and Ivan Fedorovich Manasevich-Manuilov). When Jabotinsky arrived in St Petersburg from Odessa in 1904 he immediately went to work at Alexei Suvorin Jnr’s Rus newspaper.\textsuperscript{170} A life-long member of the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society, Suvorin the Younger had been responsible for publishing the richly illustrated publication, ‘Palestine’ in the 1890s and the region and its fertile belt of holy sites had maintained a special place in his heart ever since.\textsuperscript{171} Whilst it’s entirely possible that Suvorin and his father


\textsuperscript{170} The Story of My Life, Vladimir Jabotinsky, Brian Horowitz, Leonid Katsis, 2015, Wayne State University Press, p.75 & p. 84. According to Jabotinsky, Suvorin Jnr. provided him with a formal salary he did not expect (400 roubles) and a place to live (Jews were not traditionally allowed to live in St Petersburg without special dispensation.

\textsuperscript{171} Palestina [Palestine.], Suvorin, A.A. (editor). St. Petersburg, 1898
were secretly backing the creation of a Jewish outpost in Palestine in collusion with a reactively small circle of Odessan Zionists like Dr. Shaevich and Dr. Shapiro (Sapir), there was no doubting his Russian Orthodoxy. Sir Herbert Samuel’s ‘Future of Palestine’ appeal in 1915 identifies a “deep rooted” sympathy that existed in the Christian world with the idea of “restoring the Hebrew people to the land which was in their inheritance” and an “intense interest in the fulfilment of the prophecies that foretold it”. The “annexation” Samuel explained, would create a settlement that would be better able to support pilgrimages to the sites of the Holy land. 172 Britain had certainly noted Russia’s remarkable activity in Palestine during the 1902 to 1903 period, especially in Jerusalem, where it had been buying land and establishing missions, schools, hospitals and monasteries on a fairly fanatical basis, much of it the work of Alexei Suvorin Jnr’s Palestine Society. By July 1903 it was being reported that there were in excess of 150 schools in the region and attention was now being turned to the Holy Sepulchre, which was at that time in the hands of the rival Greeks. The view of the Sultan was that Russia’s support of Zionism was being used as a pretext to increase their grip on the Holy Land using Jewish finances. 173

When all is said and done it’s entirely possible that the ‘Russian Mandate Palestine’ project being backed by Zubatov, Plehve and Herzl in 1902 and 1903 culminated in a furious backlash from ultra-Monarchists (and the ultra-Orthodox) and may even have played a supporting role in reviving *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* that was eventually published by Sergei

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172 The Future of Palestine, Herbert Samuel, January 1915
173 Globe 13 July 1903, p.4
Nilus in 1905. It’s a deeply issue that clearly demands further investigation. I have absolutely no doubt that we are only just scratching the surface.

Alexei Suvorin Jnr’s beautifully illustrated Palestine (1898)

**Witness for the Prosecution: The Britons**

*The Britons* were a fiercely anti-Semitic proto-fascist group involved in publishing several later editions of Shanks’ *Jewish Peril*. When practically all 30,000 copies of the first edition by *Eyre & Spottiswoode* had been sold,
Shanks negotiated a deal with the Britons to purchase the copyright on the translation (3d per copy sold).

In the early months of summer 1920, The Britons approached Eyre & Spottiswoode with a request to have a further 2000 copies printed but Eyre & Spottiswoode refused. As owners of the plates they sold them to The Britons for £30.00. A second edition was published in August 1920.

The group had been formed in July 1919 by Henry Hamilton Beamish.

**Witness for the Prosecution: Victor E. Marsden**

For whatever reason, the translation of the sixth edition of *The Jewish Peril* (The Protocols) printed by The Britons in November 1923 was attributed to Victor E. Marsden (b.1866, Salford, Manchester, m. Katherine Eldra von Wellmars in Toxteth Park, 1902). Marsden was a former Russian correspondent for H.A. Gwynne’s *Morning Post* and the author of *Jews of Russia* (1919). His appearance in the tale is a curious as well as tragic one, having been imprisoned in the notorious Peter Paul Fortress in the immediate aftermath of the Bolshevik assault on the British Embassy in Petrograd on August 31st 1918. The assault culminated in the appalling murder of Britain’s naval attaché, Captain Cromie, chief of British Intelligence in Russia for the British Naval Intelligence Division. According to reports, the Russia’s Secret Police (the Cheka) had stormed the British Embassy, murdered and mutilated Cromie, then rounded-up and arrested dozens of British Subjects who were occupying the Military Mission at the time, Victor E. Marsden among them.

Did Marsden really provide his own translation for The Britons? It’s doubtful, but not impossible, although the evidence against it overwhelming in many respects. Victor E. Marsden died in October 1920, a full two years
before his translation was ever published in later editions of The Protocols

published by The Britons. His obituary in The Times of London intimated that
his death had been the result of the torture he had endured during his
incarceration by the Bolsheviks. ¹⁷⁴ Prior to his death he had been terrifically
busy as correspondent on a 50,000 mile world tour aboard the HMS Renoun
with the Prince of Wales for The Morning Post, leaving precious little time to
translate a 30,000 word pamphlet from its original Russian. ¹⁷⁵ Marsden’s
death prior to the publication of the sixth edition on which his name appears
really begs the question: did Victor Emile Marsden really translate the Jewish
Peril for The Britons or was it placed there by way of a tribute to his
premature death in October 1920, which appears to have been sadly hastened
by his time in captivity in Russia? Was adding his name to the pamphlet the
post-war equivalent of adding a message or a picture to ammo and projectiles
sent hurtling toward targets during the war? Also, what possible logic could
there be in The Britons paying George Shanks and Eyre & Spottiswoode for
the publishing rights to The Protocols if Marsden had already prepared one for
their friends at The Morning Post by the time of his death in October 1920?

A letter to The Times of London from B.S. Lombard, former Chaplain
at the British Mission in Petrograd, announced a service at the Russian Church
in London in August 1924 in memory of Captain Cromie. It mentions Marsden
by name. ¹⁷⁶ According to probate records of 1951, Marsden’s widow,
Katherine Eldra Marsden left her entire estate to Reverend Mateusz Konstanty

¹⁷⁵ Pall Mall Gazette 27 February 1920, p.5
¹⁷⁶ ‘In Memory of Captain Cromie’, Letter to the Times, B.S. Lombard, p.6
Siemaszko, Bishop of Aspendos/Head of the Polish Orthodox Church in Exile. In the Polish-Bolshevik war, the Reverend had fought on the Polish side (England & Wales Government Probate Death Index 1858-2019).

Was there anything else in Marsden’s history that might support or else explain the addition of his name with the legend? If there is, it may be fairly obscure. In 1914 Marsden had translated ‘The King of the Jews’, a book of the stage play by Grand Duke Konstantin Konstantinovich of Russia. The book, published by *Funk and Wagnalls Company*, and was promptly banned in Russia after the Holy Synod declared it to be anti-Christian and worried that it may lead to resurgence in anti-Jewish Pogroms. An invite-only performance was allowed in St Petersburg at the Imperial Palace. The play drew significantly on the apocryphal (fake) text, the *Gospel of Nicodemus*.

**Witness for the Defence: Léon Lvovitch Catoire**

Catoire was the uncle of *Protocols* translator, George Shanks on his mother Emilie’s side. He was also the brother-in-law of Tolstoy friend’s Aylmer Maude. He was born in Moscow in 1864 and died in Paris in 1922. Léon was a member of the *Board of the Moscow Bank of Accounts* and several other commercial companies. From 1901 to 191 he served as adviser and board member to the Moscow City Duma. In 1913 Léon was elected to the post of mayor of Moscow. After the triumph of Lenin and the Bolsheviks in the October Revolution of 1917, he moved his family to Paris. In 1921 he was appointed *Treasurer of the Russian Refugee Education Society* (1921). He died at the Gare d'Orsay in 1922.
Witness for the Defence: Georges Catoire

A respected composer and maternal uncle of Protocols publisher George Shanks, Georges had embarked on his musical career as a student of Liszt and friend of Wagner. He was born in Russia in April 1861 and died in May 1926.

Witness for the Defence: Mikhail Sergeyevich Raslovlev

Raslovlev was the Russian monarchist émigré who is alleged to have met Philip Graves of The Times and presented to him a copy of Maurice Joly's book, *Dialogue aux Enfers entre Montesquieu et Machiavel*. The book provided all the evidence that was needed to prove once and for all that the infamous Protocols of Zion was a plagiarism, as well as a hoax. Raslovlev demonstrated conclusively that substantial portions of the book had been copied, or lifted, from Joly’s book.

At the time he made these revelations, Raslovlev was in the employ of the American Red Cross in Turkey, and Graves was the Constantinople correspondent for The Times of London. The textual evidence provided by Raslovlev formed the basis of a sensation exposé of The Protocols published by the Times in August 1921. 177 The original book by Joly was extremely rare —copies of it having been confiscated prior to its distribution in France in the 1860s. The book is a satire on Napoleon III’s draconian rule in France. Its author, Maurice Joly was duly arrested.

At first Graves made every attempt to avoid naming Raslovlev as his source, only ever referring to him only as ‘Mr. X’ and described as a Russian landlord with English connections, whose religion was Russian Orthodox, and

whose political sensibilities made him a constitutional monarchist. At the famous Berne Trial in the 1930s the question of his name came up, but it was never disclosed.

Exhibit No.17: Common Cause (Obshchee Delo)

This was a Pro-White Russian (anti-Bolshevik) journal based in Paris and active between the years 1916-1924 and 1929-1934. It was edited by Revolutionary Sherlock Holmes and Protocols expert, Vladimir Burtsev and co-editor, Daniel Pasmanik, a radical Jewish Nationalist and Russian Nationalist (Dual Nationalist). Pasmanik was also a close friend of Ze’ev Jabotinsky (see separate entry). The journal earned a reputation for peddling
Pro-interventionist propaganda on behalf of the Russian Whites, Britain and France during the Russian Civil War (1917-1922).

In March 1919 a Common Cause article drew attention to a report by Charles Repington of H.A Gwynne’s Morning Post (leading Protocols supporter) “Britain Demands Intervention”. The report pleaded with Lloyd George and Britain to back all the various White Russian and Monarchist forces against Bolsheviks. Burtsev also used the journal to promote articles by his old friend in St Petersburg (and fellow member of the Committee on Russian Affairs), Harold Williams. It many ways it functioned as the organ of the Committee on Russian Affairs in France, Burtsev having stepped-up its production significantly after his meeting with Churchill’s Personal Military Secretary Archibald Sinclair in October 1919 and Williams in 1918.

**Witness for the Prosecution: Pope Pius XI**

During the period in which George Shanks was awarded his Papal Honour, the Chamberlain of the Sword and Cape by Pope Pius XI, the Pope had been taking an aggressive stance on anti-Semitism within the church. Unlike Hitler, neither he nor his friend, the Italian fascist leader Benito Mussolini believed in sinister Jewish plots that formed the basis of The Protocols. In 1928 he ordered the dissolution of The Friends of Israel (Opus Sacerdotale Amici Israel) which had been formed by the Catholic laity and clergy to pray for the conversion of Jews to Christianity. The group, which had been active for years, was now being perceived as deeply offensive. It may be reasonable to speculate that Maundy Gregory, an occasional British Intelligence asset under Conservative handyman, Joseph Ball (and suspected Honours tout for Liberal

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178 The Pope and the Jews, Manchester Guardian, April 15 1928
Prime Minister David Lloyd George had played a hand in getting Shanks his papal honour (and quite possibly his friend Burdon’s OBE in 1919). Gregory was also accused of selling honours and dispensations for the Ukrainian government. His longtime business partner ‘Baron’ Harry Keen-Hargreaves and his brother John Keen-Hargreaves enjoyed very close relations with White Russian Prince Galitzine.

**Witness for the Defence: Edouard Drumont**

Drumont has an interesting but generally overlooked place in *The Protocols* story. The phrase ‘The Jewish Peril’ originally featured on placards and red posters attributed to Édouard Drumont and the anti-Semitic League during the notorious Dreyfus Affair in France in the late 1800s (Advent of Nemesis, Daily Mail, July 26 1899). Jewish journalist and diplomat, Lucien Wolf briefly describes Drumont’s attempts to revive the ‘old bogey’ the ‘Formidable Sect’ (another fiendish and entirely mythical Jewish cabal) in his book, ‘The Myth of the Jewish Menace in World Affairs’, written in November 1920. 179

**Witness for the Defence: Blue Faced Ape of Horus (Plain English)**

If you are wondering why the article that revealed Shanks as the translator of the Jewish Peril has been called as witness for his defence and not the prosecution, then the explanation is really quite simple. The objective of this trial to not to establish the complicity of Shanks in its translation (that has been proved beyond all reasonable doubt ever since the discovery of letters

between Shanks and the Britons and Robert H. Cust and H.A. Gwynne in the 1970s), it is to ascertain whether Shanks was acting on the specific instructions of the Committee on Russian Affairs and the Coalition Government’s Chief Whip’s Office.

The article was published on January 22nd 1921 and features two explosive claims. The first is that Shanks had been working as a clerk in Chief Whips Office at 12 Downing Street, and second that he had had more recently found employment at No. 10 Downing Street as the Personal Secretary to Sir Philip Sassoon, the Private Secretary to British Prime Minister and Leader of the Liberal Party, David Lloyd George.

A rather suggestive two-page spread on ‘Jews in Public Life’ appeared in the Illustrated London News just one week before Plain English broke the news about Shanks and Sassoon.

The ‘Blue Faced Ape’ story was published just as it was being reported that Jews from all over Central and Eastern Europe were immigrating to Palestine in their thousands. Just 24 hours earlier a story was circulated that
Sir Philip Sassoon, Lord Curzon and Lloyd George were among a party of 40 British Delegates heading to France to attend the 24th Paris Peace Conference. That same month, Prime Minister Lloyd George had re-appointed War Secretary Winston Churchill as British Secretary of the Colonies. The move could have served one of two purposes. Firstly, Churchill’s reach across the party divides, and his popularity with the Allies, would have been a considerable boost to getting the Palestine mandate ratified by France, Italy, Japan and America and its scope agreed by Parliament. Secondly, it would have kept him at arm’s length and occupied in foreign missions at a time when Lloyd George needed to kick-start discussions on trade with Winston’s much-loathed Soviet. The new Secretary of War and Air was none other than Lloyd George’s Chief Whip (and Churchill’s cousin), Captain Freddie Guest. Given that Churchill and Sassoon were public enemies, No.1 and No.2 in eyes of the Plain English journal, its publication couldn’t have been better timed. A week earlier, the Illustrated London News had run a two-page spread on the ‘Jew in public life’ which featured Sassoon’s portrait alongside Zionists Israel Zangwill, Chaim Weizmann, Lord Rothschild, Philip Magnus and Sir Herbert Samuel. 180 We are only left to guess at the possible subtext.

The editor of Plain English (dubbed a ‘High Catholic’ journal) was Lord Alfred Douglas (Bosie) the fiercely outspoken (and disgracefully anti-Semitic) former lover of Oscar Wilde. The journal had been launched in July 1920 as a successor to his somewhat older Academy journal. Douglas’s spat with Winston Churchill would eventually see him convicted to six months imprisonment in Wormwood Scrubs for libel over the so-called “Jutland Conspiracy”. The focus of the libel centred around allegations made by Lord Douglas in an article published just weeks before his revelations about Shanks

180 Illustrated London News, 15 January 1921, p.4
The article in *Plain English* on January 1922 that revealed that the man who translated *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* into English worked in the Chief Whips Office at 12 Downing Street

**Exhibit No.18: Rue Victor Cousin**

This is a street situated in the Latin Quarter of Paris. It was also the last recorded address of revolutionary ‘Sherlock Holmes’ and Protocols expert

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181 Westminster Gazette, 14 December 1923, p.3
Vladimir Burtsev. In an astonishment of fate it transpires that the property is just 800 yards from Impasse Maubert which features in Umberto Eco’s Prague Cemetery, a fictionalised account of The Protocols conception. Foucault’s Pendulum (which was the title of another novel dealing in modern and ancient conspiracies by Eco) can be found at the neighbouring Panthéon in the Sorbonne district. Did Eco base the Prague Cemetery’s mysterious shape-shifter Simone Simonini on Burtsev? On Golovinski? Or both?

Exhibit No.19: Will Eisner’s ‘The Plot’ (2005)

The Plot is a graphic novel published in 2005 that tells the fascinating story of the origins of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion and the impossibly destructive journey it embarked on through the years. It’s an absolute gem from beginning to end and features a foreword by Prague Cemetery and Name of the Rose author, Umberto Eco and an afterword from Professor Stephen Eric Bonner. It has to be said that Eisner has probably done more to inform the global conspiracy matrix of this crude yet amazingly successful hoax than any historian or biographer to date. His later, more personal work on Jewish Identity and issues relating to stereotypes, myth and identity, rank among some of the most compelling, original and accessible contributions to storytelling in the 20th and 21st Centuries.

In another delightful twist it appears that Eisner was born just minutes away from the original Protocols dragon-slayer, Herman Bernstein in New York. Bernstein famously went to war in the court rooms of America with Henry Ford during the early to mid 1920s over his anti-Semitic publications, The International Jew, which included substantial extracts from The

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182 Burtsev & the Struggle for Free Russia, Robert Henderson, p.251
Protocols. Eisner was brought-up in radical ‘Poale Zion’ district of Crotona Park, the Bronx, a district that was always bristling with cultural anguish and energy. Neighbours during this period included Zionist pioneers David Pinski, Nachman Syrkin and Chaim Zhitlovsky. According to the US census of 1920, Will and his father Samuel Eisner lived at 1451 Crotona Park Avenue whilst just a few years earlier, Bernstein had been residing at 1381 Crotona Park Avenue (US Census 1910). At the time that Eisner was born, Trotsky had also arrived from Russia and was lodging just a few blocks away at 1522 Vyse Avenue. In another of Eisner's novels, To the Heart of the Storm\(^\text{183}\), the author recalls his father's job painting background sets at Maurice Schwartz and David Kessler’s Yiddish Art Theatre at 181 2nd Avenue. The theatre played host to a regular programme of plays from the likes of S.Ansky, David Pinski, Sholem Aleichem and Maxim Gorky. Like Schwartz, Will’s father was from Western Ukraine. The sign in this graphic below features the celebrated Ukrainian actor Boris Thomashefsky.

\(^{183}\) To the Heart of the Storm, Will Eisner, Kitchen Sink Press, 1991, p.100
A scene from Eisner’s autobiographical To the Heart of the Storm recalling his father’s work at the Yiddish Theatre on 2nd Avenue.

Another of the theatres that employed Eisner’s father during the family’s first few years in New York was the 2nd Avenue Theatre owned and run by Maurice Schwartz and David Kessler. The Yiddish Art Theatre provided work for many other Galician creatives like his father, including Lemberg actress, Bertha Kalich. Legendary set designer, Boris Aronson also got his breaks with Schwartz during this period.

During the First World War the theatre hosted meetings for Socialist J.B.S Hardman, whose home at 2086 Vyse Avenue was a short walk from Trotsky at 1522 Vyse Avenue. Trotsky was in New York for the three months leading up to Russia’s First Revolution on March 8th 1917. It is of course strange to think that when Will Eisner was being born, the legendary revolutionary was probably sipping his tea and banging away at his typewriter just a few blocks away. Better still, Eisner was born on March 6th 1917, just 48
hours before the First Revolution and just weeks before Trotsky returned to Russia to alter the course of world events forever. Trotsky’s favourite haunt during his time in New York was the Café Monopole, at 144 2nd Ave (now Veselka), at the heart of the ‘Yiddish Broadway’.

Clearly *The Plot* wasn’t just a part of his Eisner’s legendary body of work but very much a part of his destiny.

**Witness for the Defence: Eyre & Spottiswoode**

This was the printer used by George Shanks to produce the first 30,000 copies of the First Edition of *The Jewish Peril* in January 1920. The plates were later purchased by The Britons for the princely sum of £30.00 after Eyre & Spottiswoode refused to print a further 2,000 copies. This was a highly reputable printing house that was often accompanied by the phrases, “His Majesty’s Printers” or “the King’s Printer”. The company was also responsible for the printing work of *His Majesties Stationery Office*, the government department responsible for printing the now legendary ‘Russia No.1 Report’ for the *Committee to Collect Information on Russia* for the British Cabinet in 1919. The printing house also produced *New Europe* and *Slavonic Review* for Russia and Balkans propagandists, Sir Bernard Pares and Robert. W Seton-Watson, the latter being especially close to Henry Wickham Steed, the Editor of The Times of London. It was Wickham Steed who personally reviewed Shanks’ *Jewish Peril* in May 1920. In 1938 the *Slavonic Review* published Vladimir Burtsev’s *A Proven Forgery: The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

**Witness for the Prosecution: The British Fascisti**

The phrase generally favoured for most nervous attempts to explain the British Fascisti is that it was “King and Country” fascism. Fascism that is, with small
‘F’, or indeed a capital ‘K’ and a capital ‘C’. It didn’t have the striking ‘Black Shirts’ of Fascism under Mussolini, nor did it have the cyanide pointed tips, and goose-stepping razzmatazz of Fascism under the Nazis. What it had (and had by the score) were hardline anti-Communists, determined to uphold the values of Conservative and Liberal Britain. Today they would probably be filed somewhere between the UKIP Party and the venomous keyboard warriors of the Conspiracy forums on the World Wide Wacky Web. But one thing they did have in common with the fascists of Germany was their shared distrust of the Jews and absolute loathing for the ‘Bolshe’. You only have to take a look at the headlines in their party journal, The British Lion to know how fabulously obsessive they were: ‘Bolshy Hymn of Hate’, ‘Our British Bolshies’ (a serialised account of how the Bolshe sparked a series of mutinies in France written by Etaples Mutineer and former Communist, James Cullen), ‘Bolshevism, Plain Questions and Answers’, ‘The Occult Movements’, ‘The Making of a Communist’. The British Fascisti wasn’t driven by any complex ideology, just a shared frustration with Socialism. The movement’s manifesto says it all: they admired the “patriotic devotion” of Mussolini’s Italy but not their Republicanism. They wanted to tighten immigration, safeguard agriculture, and strengthen the Second Chamber of Parliament, the House of Lords. These people were Monarchists pure and simple. Christian soldiers.

So stiff was the upper lip, and so bulldog was the breed that historians in Britain remain slightly reluctant to call the casual anti-Semitism and Boy Scout militarism that characterised the British Fascisti, fascism at all; not least because it was founded by the absolute force of nature that was Rotha Lintorn-Orman, a medal-winning woman of action, highly praised for her feats of daring-do driving ambulances in World War I. Whilst this is probably no place to examine the movement in any meaningful detail, it’s worth acknowledging that as a group, it was perhaps more notable for resisting the dark and sinister
direction taken by the *British Union of Fascists* and turning out top drawer British spies like Maxwell Knight and John Baker White (both remarkable men in their own ways). And it’s for this reason that I include it here, revealing as it does a curious revolving door between the anti-Communist rear-guard of British High Society and the British Secret Service. Just how much these doors revolved, and just how much they opened is likely to remain unknown, but author Henry Hemming has put forward a very plausible case for a casual but lively synergy between the movement and the nascent Mi5.  

The legendary George Makgill, founder of the mysterious Section D was believed to have acted as conduit, taking care of recruiting and shaping its more talented members like the future Spymaster Maxwell Knight for Sir Vernon Kell. There was nothing particularly unusual about this relationship. The war with Germany had engaged British Intelligence services to such an overwhelming extent that their grip on domestic threats, had left them underprepared and vulnerable for the wave of industrial action and civil unrest that immediately followed the armistice. George Makgill, a wealthy baronet and the former Secretary of the Anti-German Union, had been running his own informal Intelligence network on industrial matters for years, making him the go-to man for Sir Basil Thomson of Home Office Intelligence and Sir Vernon Kell at Mi5.  


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184 M: Maxwell Knight, MI5’s Greatest Spymaster, Henry Hemming, Random House, 2017

185 This informal organisation, casually referred to as the Makgill Organisation, had been set-up after Russia’s October Revolution and would eventually evolve into the no less informal, Industrial Intelligence Bureau (Service) and functioned alongside the *Committee to Collect Information on Russia* who compiled the Russia No.1 report in 1919.
set during a future war with Germany in 1942, tells the story of a revolution in Britain in which the government resigns, a Provisional Government is put in its place and a Republic is declared. The Revolution is the work of Edinburgh’s Alec Wilson and The Reds, a motley mob of Germans, Poles, Jews and Bolshevist Britons who take possession of London’s West End. It is only the good men of the Royal Air Force who manage to save the day. The *Montrose Standard* fittingly described the book as a judicious blend of “fiction and politics” which was “quite frankly and undisguisedly a propaganda novel”. The Protocols could not in fact, have had a more suitable partner publication.  

It’s interesting to note that the proximity of Makgill to Sir Bernard Pares of the Russian Affairs Committee (both were founding members of the

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People’s League in 1920). If nothing else it provides a plausible context for someone like George Shanks operating with the approval (if not the support) of the British Security Services.  

Manifesto of the British Fascisti, British Lion, 1923
APPENDIX

SOLOMON WIENER

Solomon Wiener had arrived in New York with good wife Frejda Rabinowicz in the mid-1880s. Within a few years he had set himself up a teacher and had a vision of setting up schools for immigrant children to help with moral and academic development. The first of the schools to bear fruit was the Hebrew Free School of Greenpoint in Brooklyn, a sincere and heartfelt project he had undertaken with fellow trustee, I. Gottlieb. As a means of supporting his meagre teaching salary Wiener started writing articles for journalist and publisher, Michael Singer, founder of several pro-Zionist and pro-German journals including The Immigrant and the Hungarian People’s Voice from his office on East 72nd Street on the Upper East Side of New York. By 1897 the two men had started work on a joint project called ‘Toleranz’. This German Jewish weekly, published in New York, lasted just two years before being re-launched as Der Zionist.187 It was this publication that brought Singer to the attention of Herzl who excited by the prospects of engaging a larger American audience, appointed him General Secretary of the League of Zionist Societies in the United States and tasked him with reporting on any progress being made.188

A short time later Singer co-founded the Orthodox “League of Zionists” with fellow Hungarian, Rabbi Philip Klein. As the popularity of Herzl’s Political Zionism swelled, the purity of the Palestine vision that defined

187 The Hebrew Standard, 2 April 1909, p.12
Wiener and Singer’s *Hovevei Zion* organisation became increasingly marginal. As a result, a variety of splinter groups began to emerge. In a desperate bid to unify the various bodies Herzl tasked the Manchester-born Hebrew Scholar Richard Gottlieb with launching the American Zionist Federation. As a result, Singer, Klein and Weiner were sidelined. Their response was to launch the United Zionists of Greater New York from Singer’s brand new office at Broom Street Lower Manhattan and it was Herzl’s failure to recognise the group in time for the 6th Congress in Basle in August 1903 that ostensibly led to the letter to the New York World and a series of further acrimonious discussions. According to the *New York Herald*, the group and its Basle delegate, Dr Joseph Bluestone had not followed the rules of the congress and recognised the authority of Gottheil’s Federation or paid the necessary union fees. They had been invited to the Congress only to restore some balance and resolve the differences between them. Upon the failure of discussions their representative Dr Bluestone was refused the right to vote on the British-backed Ugandan Scheme. Gottheil’s timing couldn’t have been worse. No sooner had their man been excluded from the crucial vote than he cabled the news offices of America that the Jewish Colonial Trust, operating through the Anglo-Palestine Bank of London, was setting up offices in New York (Philadelphia Jewish Exponent 04 September 1903, p.9). As the gulf between the concerns and expectations between Russian and German Jews continued to widen in America, relations took a turn for the worse and by 1905, Singer, Klein and Wiener’s United Zionists

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189 The New York Herald, August 28, 1903
190 Zionistenkongress VI Basel 1903, Protokol de VI. Zionistenkongresses in Basel, 28 August 1903, p. 247
was absorbed in Gottheil’s larger Federation, their demand that the Federation abandon its compromise with the broader aesthetics of Jewish assimilation, drowned out in the global backlash against the horrors of the Kishinev massacre and the increasing sense of urgency in reaching a swift and practical solution.

Responding to Wiener's letter in the New York World, Gottheil had said an article published by Wiener some months earlier entitled ‘Zionistic Liberia’ had been brought to his attention by a friend in England. Gottheil described how there was little doubt that it had been written for the purpose of getting it to the eye of Minister von Plehve and demonstrate the power and information Wiener had with regard to the issue. Furthermore, he was in the employ of persons who claimed to represent the Zionist cause. Gottheil saw it as further evidence that Russia was determined to install its own Jewish hierarchy as an Imperial and trading outpost, rather than see it established under a hostile British protectorate.¹⁹¹ Palestine’s location on the extreme eastern flank of the Suez Canal — the highway of the world — had made it one of the most important links in our communications with India and the Middle East. As Russia saw it, the Palestine Mandate would allow Britain to enjoy all its strategic advantages with few of the burdens: it would be peopled with a race devoted to its soils, committed to its commercial progress and passionate to defend it. Furthermore, the fractious British taxpayer wouldn’t have to forfeit a penny. And neither would the Russian’s. As author and explorer Sir Martin Conway was to describe: the Jews were an “overlapping people”: Oriental by race and Western in ideas. As a

¹⁹¹ World 26 November 1903, p.3
consequence they were out best and cheapest safeguard in Palestine. The more Jews that settled in Palestine the easier it would be to keep the Suez Canal open and free from local disturbance and foreign aggression. Though supporting in principle the industrial schemes being tendered by Pinchas Rutenberg, he had a message of caution against Zionism. Arabs and Jews had lived together in the region without friction for many years. Balance was most definitely needed with neither side ruling the other.\textsuperscript{192}

\textsuperscript{192} Westminster Gazette 17 November 1923, p.4
This is all I would recommend reading if you hoped to understand the various issues in all their wonderful (and worrying) entirety, but it would certainly suffice as a ‘snapshot’. They say that all books talk of other books? Well this is the bit of a book where we really do get to talk about other books.


_The Blue Faced Ape of Horus_, Plain English, January 22 1921

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_Vladimir Burtsev and the Struggle for Free Russia_. Robert Henderson, Bloomsbury Academic, 2017

_The Plot: The Secret Story of the Protocols of Zion_, Will Eisner, Umberto Eco, W.W Norton, 2005


Britons Files, Nr. 1, Britons Archive Chawleigh

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Files in MI5’s dossier on Morgan Philip Price of the Manchester Guardian, TNA, KV 2/566


The Jewish Peril, Charles Hagberg Wright, The Jewish Monitor 21 May 1920

Haters, Baiters and Would-Be Dictators, Anti-Semitism and the UK Far Right, Nick Toczek, Taylor & Francis, 2015

My Acquaintance with Gapon, S. A. An-sky, Collected Works, Publishing Association, St. Petersburg, 1911-1913, Volume 5


M: Maxwell Knight, MI5's Greatest Spymaster, Henry Hemming, Random House, 2017


America’s Secret war against Bolshevism, David S. Foglesong, 1995, The University of North Carolina Press


The Russian Spy System, David Soskice, The English Review, 1908-1937; Mar 1909
The article from Plain English dated January 22nd 1921 in which George Shanks (mis-typed ‘Edward Shanks’) is revealed as a clerk in the Chief Whip’s Office at 12 Downing Street.
Letter to Plain English dated February 5 1921 in which his Shanks’ forename is corrected
Formal corrections printed in Plain English dated February 26 1921 in which his Shanks’ correct forename is acknowledged.
George Shanks & The Protocols

Alan Sargeant

August 2021

Shanks’ Uncle, Aylmer Maude responds to The Times of London’s review of his nephew’s Jewish Peril pamphlet on 13th May 1921
A VICTIM OF THE BOLSHEVISTS.

BRITISH JOURNALIST'S CRUEL TORTURES.

The death occurred at Kensington-gardens-square yesterday of Mr. Victor Emile Marsden, who represented the Morning Post during the recent tour of the Prince of Wales, and who from 1911 to 1918 was the correspondent of that journal in Petrograd, where his career was brought to a close by the most cruel imprisonment at the hands of the Bolshevists.

He was arrested with other newspaper correspondents and British subjects at the end of August, 1918, when Captain Cromie was murdered at the British Embassy. Those arrested were taken to the Bolshevist Prefecture, where they were put in a large room occupied by upwards of 150 persons, including burglars, pickpockets, murderers, and other malefactors. The food, in addition to being insufficient, was of the worst possible kind and served in the most disgusting manner. From the dreadful experience of his Russian incarceration he suffered greatly in health before his release. At the middle of February, 1918, he reported that the Allied Embassies were leaving the capital for Helsingfors, "but," he added, "I have considered it my duty to remain on for the Morning Post until actually thrown out. The risks, however, are very bad." Mr. Marsden was directed by the Morning Post to return, but his devotion to duty forced him to remain. It was thought that the recent tour with the Prince of Wales had in some measure restored him to health, but a sudden collapse on Thursday morning ended fatally yesterday.

The obituary of Protocols translator, Victor E. Marsden, October 30 1920
Sir Philip Sassoon is alleged to have employed Shanks as his Private Secretary at No.10 & Downing Street. Here is Sassoon outside Chief Whips Office at No.12 Downing Street in April 1920.
Reality: Searchlight on Germany. Newspaper of Britain’s National War Aims Committee which published details of the ‘Jewish’ names of leading Bolsheviks in November 1917.
‘Letter of the Ten’. The League of British Jews respond to the campaign to conflate Russian with Bolshevism in April 1920.
ZIONISM versus BOLSHEVISIM.
A STRUGGLE FOR THE SOUL OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE.

By the Rt. Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL.

Mr. Churchill's old regiment, the Life Guards, at Aldershot, last year.

The National Russian Jews, in spite of the anti-Semitism of which they are the victims, have succeeded in becoming a part of the national life of Russia. As a result, the Jewish question has been reduced to a question of law and order, and the Jewish partido has been identified with the Russian people.

The Bolsheviki, on the other hand, have been able to use the Jewish question as a means of gaining political power. They have succeeded in gaining control of the Jewish working class, and they have used it as a lever to gain control of the whole country.

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Response to Churchill’s ‘Zionism versus Bolshevism’ article in the B’nai B’rith Messenger (USA) dated 5 March 1920
Response to Churchill’s ‘Zionismn versus Bolshevism’ article in the Minneapolis American Jewish World, 12 March 1920
Revolutionary Sherlock Holmes in the French Press of October 1920 alongside fellow revolutionaries Peter Struve, Grigory Alexinsky and Nikolai Vasilyevich Tchaikovsky
**Name (in full)** Shaaks, George.

**Date of Birth** 26th Aug 1895

**Date of Entry into Air Service** 11th Sept 1916

**Previous Service in E.M. Forces** 1st Sub Lt 24th 1915 - 10 9 16

**Father** Wm. Shaaks, Esq. Moscow, Russia.

**Next of Kin and Address**

**Previous Occupation if entered from Civil Life**

**APPOINTMENTS.**

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SECRET

THE FUTURE OF PALESTINE

The course of events opens a prospect of a change at the end of the war, in the status of Palestine. Already there is an interest among the European powers in the fate of the country, and it is clear that the situation will become more acute as the war progresses. The British have been active in establishing a Jewish state in the country, and it is likely that the French will follow suit. The Americans have also expressed an interest in the matter, and it is hoped that they will play a role in the future of Palestine.

From the standpoint of British interests there are some considerations to be taken into account. The policy of land settlement should be pursued as far as possible.

1. It would be desirable to settle the Jewish people in the lands which have been occupied by them in Palestine.

2. It would be necessary to establish a new state for the Jewish people, which would be independent of the existing Arab states.

3. It would be advisable to establish a Jewish university in the country.

4. It would be desirable to establish a Jewish hospital in the country.

5. It would be desirable to establish a Jewish army in the country.

6. It would be desirable to establish a Jewish police force in the country.

7. It would be desirable to establish a Jewish educational institution in the country.

8. It would be desirable to establish a Jewish agricultural settlement in the country.

9. It would be desirable to establish a Jewish cultural institution in the country.

10. It would be desirable to establish a Jewish scientific institution in the country.

11. It would be desirable to establish a Jewish medical institution in the country.

12. It would be desirable to establish a Jewish religious institution in the country.

13. It would be desirable to establish a Jewish social institution in the country.

14. It would be desirable to establish a Jewish charitable institution in the country.

15. It would be desirable to establish a Jewish economic institution in the country.

16. It would be desirable to establish a Jewish legal institution in the country.

17. It would be desirable to establish a Jewish political institution in the country.

18. It would be desirable to establish a Jewish artistic institution in the country.

19. It would be desirable to establish a Jewish athletic institution in the country.

20. It would be desirable to establish a Jewish literary institution in the country.

21. It would be desirable to establish a Jewish musical institution in the country.

22. It would be desirable to establish a Jewish dramatic institution in the country.

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