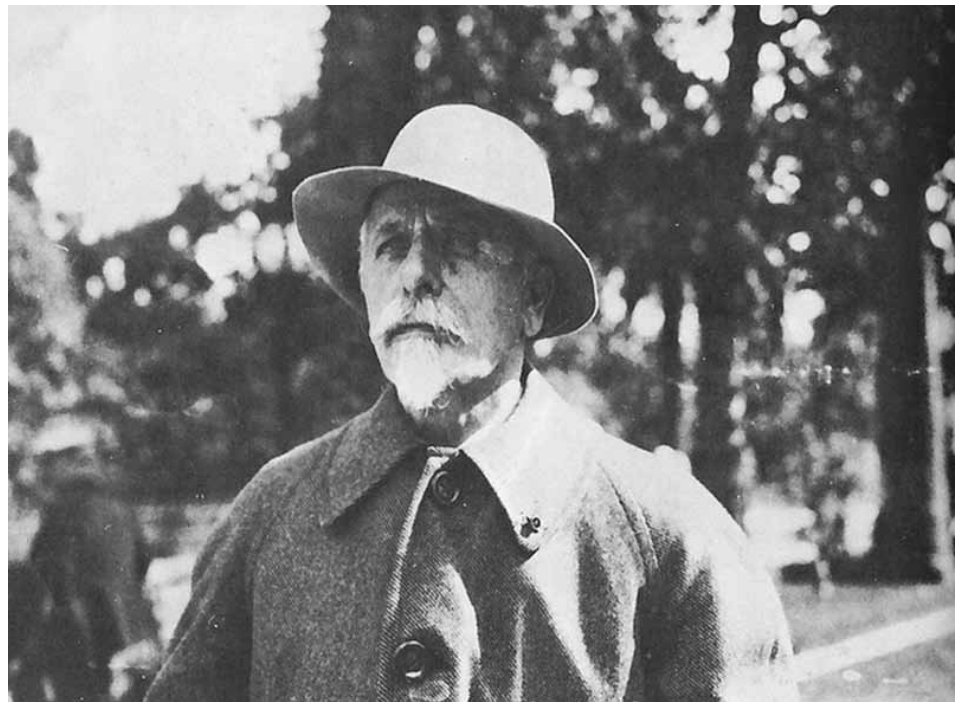


# A CONSPIRACY LLOYD GEORGE AND

There is not a single reference to Sir Basil Zaharoff in Lloyd George's *War Memoirs* & L.G.'s biographers completely ignore him. Yet the two men were closely associated throughout World War I and during the whole period of the 1918–22 Coalition Government. It is curious that objective biographers should have ignored this enigmatic figure who, as much as anyone, was responsible for the events which caused Lloyd George's fall from power.<sup>1</sup> **Cecil Bloom** traces the story of Zaharoff and Lloyd George.



**D**ONALD McCORMICK'S *THE Mask of Merlin* was published in 1963, some eighteen years after David Lloyd George died and forty-one years after he left prime ministerial office. Yet, although Zaharoff's obituary in *The Times* described his relations with Lloyd George as being 'close and cordial during the War',<sup>2</sup> this book represented the first attempt to cast light on the nature of Lloyd George's association with this very rich arms dealer.

Basil Zaharoff was considered by many to be a Machiavellian figure – disreputable and notorious for his consistent use of corrupt business practices – although newspaper tycoon Lord Riddell called him 'a wonderful man'.<sup>3</sup> French Prime Minister Clemenceau once called him 'the sixth power in Europe',<sup>4</sup> and one historian has written that Zaharoff had become 'a figure of European legend (or demonology) long before his death'.<sup>5</sup> It was once claimed that through Lloyd George he had the same influence on the

# Y OF SILENCE? D BASIL ZAHAROFF

British government that he had previously had on the French thanks to Clemenceau; and it was said that he knew most of the British Cabinet and was a personal friend of Bonar Law and of Cabinet minister Walter Long. The writer Osbert Sitwell met him several times and has recorded that when he first saw him there was 'something evil and imposing about his figure' and that he resembled 'a vulture'.<sup>6</sup>

His place of birth is shrouded in mystery. He was probably Turkish, born in 1849, but he sometimes claimed to be Romanian, Greek, Polish or Russian. He died in Monte Carlo in 1936. He started selling armaments in Greece in 1877 for the Anglo-Swedish company Nordenfelt, and stayed with the company when it was taken over by the British Vickers Corporation in 1897, continuing to work for Vickers for thirty years and becoming a director. There he formed a close association with its financial director, Sir Vincent Caillard.

Zaharoff was said to have been despised by King George V, yet he received a knighthood from him.<sup>7</sup> He became obsessed with gaining state honours; after receiving a number from the French government, one of his key objectives became the acquisition of British honours, which he termed 'chocolate' when referring to the matter in confidential documents. His unsavoury reputation resulted in a

number of fiction writers using his character in their novels. Andrew Undershaft, the unscrupulous arms dealer in George Bernard Shaw's play *Major Barbara* (1905) has, for example, been said to be based on Zaharoff, and many other eminent novelists including Upton Sinclair, Gerald Kersh and Eric Ambler have portrayed his character in their books. Nevertheless, he was generous and gave large sums to good causes as well as endowing university chairs – however it must be borne in mind that, in all likelihood, such generosity was principally intended to foster a favourable reputation.

So why were Lloyd George's connections with Zaharoff kept quiet over so many years? *The Times* reviewed McCormick's book in September 1963, but it was a very short review that accused McCormick of failing to provide evidence for the charges laid against the former prime minister and pronounced that a degree of questionable judgement seriously reduced the value of the biography. The book did not ignite any interest in a possible follow-up on the story until some years later. However, McCormick seems to have overlooked one crucial aspect of the relationship between the two men: he records simply that during the war Zaharoff was sent on 'various secret missions' by the prime minister, but gives no details. Yet

papers released by the Wiltshire and Swindon Archives Service in 1975, together with a number from both the National Archives and Parliamentary Archives, make it clear that Lloyd George used Zaharoff to conduct secret negotiations with the Turks – with the aim of bribing their leaders, eventually to the extent of \$25 million dollars – to get them to make peace with the Allies; and, as a result, Zaharoff did receive a number of honours. The archives also show the vigorous attempts made by Zaharoff's supporters in government to gain such honours for him. He was awarded first the Grand Cross of the British Empire, then the Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath, and eventually a knighthood.

In 1965 McCormick followed up on his first book by writing a biography of Zaharoff entitled *Pedlar of Death*, in which he repeated his earlier statement that Lloyd George had sent Zaharoff on various secret missions during the war. In this book Zaharoff is described as 'a super spy in the Lloyd George circle'.<sup>8</sup> However it appears that Zaharoff's early connection with Lloyd George was a hostile one: Lloyd George was attacking the pre-war activities of munitions manufacturers and Zaharoff saw him as a dangerous enemy. Later, though, he decided that it was in his interest to befriend the man he believed was going to become a key figure

Left: Basil Zaharoff in 1928

## A CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE?

in British politics. He took steps to find out as much as he could about Lloyd George – his weaknesses and his secrets – and for this he used Arthur Maundy-Gregory, later to feature on Lloyd George's behalf in the so-called honours scandal. It has been suggested that Zaharoff had a hold over Lloyd George because of a brief affair with Emily Ann Burrows, Zaharoff's former wife, but it was in 1915 when Lloyd George became Minister of Munitions in Asquith's administration that Zaharoff's relationship with Lloyd George strengthened.<sup>9</sup>

Zaharoff's principal involvement with Lloyd George began when the latter attempted to bribe the Turkish leaders headed by Enver Pasha with large sums of money to give up hostilities against the Allies, and it is this aspect of the relationship between the two men that forms the principal thrust of this article. But even before this, Zaharoff had been deeply involved with the British government when Asquith was prime minister. Through Caillard, he told the government in November 1915 that £1.5 million would allow him to bribe the Greek government into joining the Allies and start fighting the Bulgarians, thus shortening the war. As a result, money was transferred to Zaharoff – but eventually Asquith rejected Zaharoff's plan. Soon afterwards, however, Zaharoff went back to Asquith with a more ambitious scheme to bribe the whole of the Young Turk party (of which Enver Pasha was a leading figure) with £4 million, for which they would hand over Constantinople and the Dardanelles to the Allies before bolting to the United States.<sup>10</sup> However this proposal to bribe the Turks does not appear to have been followed up until, in May 1917, an intelligence officer who had been involved in the Greek discussions drew Prime Minister Lloyd George's attention to it after dialogues with Zaharoff and Caillard.

Lloyd George certainly became interested in the possibilities with regard to Turkey, although initially he did have some doubts about the project, believing that any arrangement would, at the very least, have to involve internationalisation for Palestine – putting it under the protection or control of two or more nations, presumably intended

to be the UK and France – but he then decided that Zaharoff should proceed with his mission. Some disclosure of these events did occur before the release of the official archived documents, but what is less well known is that, as part of this deal, Lloyd George was prepared to consider allowing Turkey to retain some form of light suzerainty over Palestine. One further thing that emerges from the papers now available is the very considerable extent to which the correspondence regarding Zaharoff's activities was kept secret from most government ministers and civil servants – and for this purpose Zaharoff was given the code name 'Zedzed', with 'Chairman' and 'Treasurer' being used on a number of occasions to indicate the prime minister and the chancellor of the exchequer respectively. In return for acting as an intermediary, Zaharoff was to receive some 'chocolate', and his obsession with gaining British honours is referred to in the correspondence on a number of occasions. Lloyd George did not usually deal directly with Zaharoff but used Caillard as intermediary because of the latter's business links with Zaharoff, and all was coordinated in Whitehall by Walter Long, the Colonial Secretary, who was the principal individual charged by Lloyd George to deal with both Caillard and Zaharoff. Long was an important politician and could well have succeeded Balfour as Conservative leader in 1911. He became a strong admirer of Zaharoff and pressed on many occasions for him to be awarded an honour.

Two separate attempts were made by Zaharoff, acting on Lloyd George's instructions, to bribe the Turks – the first in 1917 and then later the following year. The plan, as before, involved the Young Turks, who would flee with their money to the safe haven of the United States. The scheme to get the Turks to give up hostilities is now well documented and Archival papers provide important evidence of the use of Zaharoff in negotiations with the Turks conducted in Switzerland in 1917.<sup>11</sup> Discussions took place between the Turks and Zaharoff, who was empowered not just to discuss a separate peace with the Turks, but to suggest to them the possibility of Turkey retaining

**Zaharoff's principal involvement with Lloyd George began when the latter attempted to bribe the Turkish leaders headed by Enver Pasha with large sums of money to give up hostilities against the Allies.**

nominal suzerainty in some form over Palestine.

Nothing came of Zaharoff's Turkish mission in 1917 but, with Lloyd George's connivance, he made a further attempt to bribe the Turks in the following year. Before this, however, a separate effort was made to explore the possibility of peace with Turkey, but this did not involve Zaharoff. This effort is described in Lloyd George's *War Memoirs* as being 'not satisfactory' and consisted of a meeting in Switzerland in December 1917 conducted by Philip Kerr, one of Lloyd George's additional private secretaries. Kerr was empowered by Lloyd George and General Smuts, a member of the War Cabinet, to negotiate with Dr Parodi of Geneva, who was acting on behalf of opposition elements in Turkey, about the possibility of a peace deal. Parodi had had several conversations with members of the Turkish Red Cross Mission in Switzerland and he believed that, while Enver Pasha was a pure militaristic Germanophile who was confident of German victory, one small part of the Turkish government – an Ententeophile section – was interested in seeking peace if they could get moderate terms for this. These terms would allow for the establishment of Syria, Mesopotamia and Palestine as autonomous provinces – either as separate entities or federated together – but under the Turkish flag, which would have to be preserved as a symbol of the unity of the Ottoman Empire. Kerr informed these Turks, via Parodi, that while the Allies were determined to have Turkish administration withdrawn from these countries, they 'might be willing in the event of an immediate peace to consider the retention of the Turkish flag as the symbol of Turkish suzerainty provided it carried no executive authority'. However nothing came of these negotiations and there is no suggestion that any monetary sums were involved.<sup>12</sup>

Initially, Lloyd George did have some doubts about Zaharoff meeting the Turks for a second time, but early in December 1917 Caillard received Lloyd George's personal views on the strategy now to be used towards Turkey. Part of the plan was that Arabia should be made independent but

Palestine should become a protectorate similar to pre-war Egypt and that there should be autonomy for Armenia and Syria. Caillard was instructed to tell Zaharoff that he should proceed with his second mission.<sup>13</sup> Lloyd George had previously emphasised the importance of retaining possession of Mesopotamia but was, apparently, now prepared to consider some form of internationalisation for Palestine. The second mission, however, came to naught and the Turks withdrew from discussions

Interestingly, what appears to be a quite separate attempt at reaching peace with Turkey was made by the Foreign Office. Just seven days after Kerr's meeting with Parodi, orders were despatched on 25 December 1917 to the British minister in Berne to develop peace approaches towards the Turks and these specified that the government was not prepared to guarantee the Turkish flag in Palestine after the war although it would reconsider the possibility of leaving Syria and Mesopotamia within the Ottoman Empire. It does not appear that this peace effort got far.<sup>14</sup> Why the Berne minister was chosen for this task is unclear.

The whole episode, however, raises questions about Lloyd George's sincerity towards Zionism. David Lloyd George has gone down in history as probably the most sympathetic towards Zionism of all British prime ministers. A. J. Balfour's strong support for Zionism really arose after he gave up being prime minister and some historians have argued that the declaration made in the latter's name should in fact have been called the Lloyd George Declaration. From early in his career, Lloyd George showed an understanding of the Jewish problem and of the need for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. In his official biography of Lloyd George, Malcolm Thomson wrote that he had always been a Zionist supporter. 'Reared from infancy on Holy Writ, and with his mind impregnated with the sayings of the Hebrew prophets and psalmists, he instinctively associated Palestine with the Hebrew people and looked forward to the day when in fulfilment of ancient prophecy they should return to the land with which, though they had been exiled from it for nearly two millenniums,

their name was in effaceably linked in human history.'<sup>15</sup>

Lloyd George became an admirer of Chaim Weizmann, the Zionist leader, when, as minister responsible for munitions, he became acquainted with Weizmann through the latter's work on acetone production. He wrote that he considered it an honour to reckon Weizmann as one of his friends.<sup>16</sup> In March 1917 Balfour told Weizmann that in Cabinet Lloyd George had taken the view that it was of great importance for Palestine to be protected by Britain,<sup>17</sup> and later, at a secret session of the House of Commons in May 1917, Lloyd George was emphatic in stating that allowing Turkey to continue to rule over Palestine post-war was unacceptable.<sup>18</sup> Yet just a short while after this, he backed an initiative that could have resulted in Turkey being able to retain a degree of control over Palestine. The Zionists were never in favour of a peace with Turkey because they clearly understood that a comprehensive Turkish defeat was the best way to rid Palestine of despotic Ottoman control. Weizmann and his colleagues would have been appalled and dismayed had they known that Turkey may have been allowed to retain some form of control over Palestine and they would have felt grossly betrayed. Yet it appears that such a retention of control was contemplated by the same man who later wrote that 'Turkish misrule' in Palestine 'changed a land flowing with milk and honey' into 'a stony and unsightly desert'.<sup>19</sup>

So where does Balfour fit into this affair? There is no suggestion that he was complicit with Lloyd George's use of Zaharoff to seek peace with Turkey, but he must have been aware of Zaharoff's activities to a certain degree because there are letters to him from the British Ambassador in Paris, Lord Bertie, who saw a lot of Zaharoff. One letter from Bertie to Balfour stated that he had handed Zaharoff the insignia of the Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire on 19 April 1918,<sup>20</sup> and a further letter in August 1918 from Lord Derby, Bertie's successor as British ambassador in Paris told Balfour that Zaharoff had been in contact with Enver.<sup>21</sup> Another letter a month later mentioned that Zaharoff was visiting Switzerland to see

Turkish representatives.<sup>22</sup> Derby also told Balfour in October that Zaharoff had met Enver.<sup>23</sup> In April 1918 Balfour wrote to Caillard to thank him for sending him a message from Zaharoff, although there is no indication as to what this message contained<sup>24</sup> and Balfour sent a further letter to Caillard that same month to thank him for Zaharoff's 'last' report that was of great interest and importance, and Caillard was asked to pass on to Zaharoff Balfour's appreciation of his 'courage in carrying through a journey of this kind', with Balfour adding that he was hoping to see Sir Basil [sic] shortly.<sup>25</sup>

There appears, however, to have been a conspiracy of silence surrounding the whole issue of Lloyd George's attempts to seek a separate peace with Turkey. Zaharoff is not even mentioned in Lloyd George's comprehensive two-volume *War Memoirs* (neither is Caillard) and, while there are five references to Enver Pasha, none relate to the bribery attempt – although Lloyd George does emphasise the need to rid countries in the region of Turkish rule. He wrote, 'The history of the Mesopotamia Expedition is the condemnation of Turkish rule in that part of the world. The same applies to Syria, Palestine, Armenia. The Turks must never be allowed to misgovern those great lands in future.'<sup>26</sup> In his later work, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, a statement referring to Allied peace proposals in January 1917 is included that asserts that there should be liberation of the non-Turkish people who then 'lay beneath the murderous tyranny of the Ottoman Empire'.<sup>27</sup> The only official reference to the possibility that the Turkish flag could remain flying in Palestine is given in Kerr's report in the *War Memoirs*. Lloyd George is, of course, given as the book's author, but was he really aware that this statement went into his memoirs? Was this book edited by others? And why was he apparently happy to disclose Kerr's attempt to negotiate (if, indeed, he was party to this disclosure in his *War Memoirs*), yet completely omit Zaharoff's two efforts?

It is of interest to note that in his *Memoirs of the Peace Conference*, published in New York in 1939 as a reprint of *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, the reference to the

**There appears, however, to have been a conspiracy of silence surrounding the whole issue of Lloyd George's attempts to seek a separate peace with Turkey.**

## A CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE?

Kerr–Parodi discussions is omitted. Had he now spotted the reference in his *War Memoirs* to the possibility that the Turkish flag could remain flying in Palestine post-war? Furthermore, no effort appears to have been made in public to challenge Lloyd George's description of events. In the preface to his *War Memoirs*, Lloyd George wrote that his memory was fallible and 'I may have made a mistake in some details' but that he would welcome corrections.<sup>28</sup> He issued a new edition of these memoirs in January 1938 in which he stated that this new edition had allowed him 'an opportunity for checking the statements published in the first edition in the light of public criticisms, of facts brought to light by subsequent writings, and of the numerous letters written to me by men who took an active part in the events I narrate', but he did not, in the event, find it necessary to revise or correct anything in the first edition. He added that his aim was to tell the naked truth about the war.<sup>29</sup> If there had indeed been any objections about what he had omitted, he clearly chose to ignore them.

Intriguingly, a long review of these memoirs appeared in *International Affairs* in 1935 written by Lord Meston, who had been a prominent civil servant during the war years. Meston did refer to Lloyd George's policy on Turkey, but made no mention of the attempt to bribe the Turks.<sup>30</sup> Meston quoted Lloyd George's statement that the Turks should never be allowed to misgovern these great lands in future, so the presumption must be that Meston was unaware of Lloyd George's original plan even those eighteen years later. Yet Zaharoff's efforts to bribe the Turks had not been kept entirely secret. Shortly after Zaharoff's death, the Peterborough column in the *Daily Telegraph* carried a short piece in which Peterborough claimed that he had just seen letters and papers that showed that Zaharoff had met Enver Pasha in Switzerland and had lengthy talks with him but that Enver's price of about £1 million pounds was considered to be too high.<sup>31</sup> However this report apparently sparked no interest within any student of history. Similarly, when the full archive of documents on the matter was made available in 2005,<sup>32</sup> this also did not produce much interest.

**Shortly after Zaharoff's death, the Peterborough column in the *Daily Telegraph* carried a short piece in which Peterborough claimed that he had just seen letters and papers that showed that Zaharoff had met Enver Pasha in Switzerland and had lengthy talks with him but that Enver's price of about £1 million pounds was considered to be too high.**

Indeed, the most bizarre aspect of this whole affair is the curious silence maintained about Zaharoff's wartime activities on the part of historians and others who wrote about the period under consideration; and it is puzzling that Lloyd George's association with Zaharoff and his attempt to bribe the Turkish leaders both in 1917 and in 1918 have not attracted the attention of many of the biographers of Lloyd George. A large number of books have been written about Lloyd George's premiership, as well as about his life and the politics of the time (over fifty such works have been identified), and there are some that should certainly have made reference to his association with Zaharoff but did not do so. Kenneth O. Morgan's monograph about Lloyd George in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, for example, does mention Zaharoff, but merely as a 'sinister' figure who 'hovered' around Lloyd George.<sup>33</sup>

*Whitehall Diary* by Thomas Jones, published in 1969, purports to be a diary of the events of the time. Jones joined the Cabinet secretariat in 1916 and was deputy secretary of the Cabinet from 1916 to 1930, so one assumes he was cognisant of all government dealings at that time. He mentions a 'secret mission' carried out by General Smuts and Philip Kerr to meet Mendsdorff, the former Austro-Hungarian ambassador in London, to discuss possible peace with Austria, a mission carried out at about the same time as that of Kerr with Parodi, but the latter mission is not included in Jones' diary.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, Zaharoff, Enver and Caillard have not a single mention in the book. Jones earlier wrote a biography of Lloyd George in which there is also no reference to Zaharoff, although there is a simple statement, 'A ten million pound [sic] to Enver at the right moment it has been said might have changed the policy of Turkey.'<sup>35</sup> He did in this biography make reference to Kerr's discussions with Parodi but he omitted any mention of the possibility of Turkey retaining suzerainty over Palestine.<sup>36</sup>

Malcolm Thomson published his 'official' biography of Lloyd George in 1948 'in collaboration' with Lloyd George's second wife, Frances. Thomson himself worked under the same roof

as Lloyd George for fifteen years, part of which was during the writing of the *War Memoirs*, and yet he makes no mention of Zaharoff, Caillard or Enver.<sup>37</sup> Frances Stevenson became Lloyd George's personal secretary and mistress in 1913 and was on the government payroll until 1922. They married in 1943 after his wife's death and she wrote a diary that was published in 1971.<sup>38</sup> The diary covers the years 1917–1944, but some years such as the key one of 1918 are missing, for which there is no explanation, and there are no references to Zaharoff, Caillard or to Enver. Frances Stevenson also wrote a memoir, *The Years that are Past*, in 1967, which includes a chapter titled 'LG at No. 10'<sup>39</sup> – but again there is nothing on the Turkish venture or on Zaharoff. Yet there are at least two extant letters hand-written by Zaharoff and addressed to Frances Stevenson that indicate an association between Zaharoff and Lloyd George.<sup>40</sup> So it is clear that Stevenson must certainly have been aware of Zaharoff, and that the omission can only point to a deliberate decision on her part to exclude Zaharoff from any aspect of Lloyd George's life. Walter Long wrote his memoirs in 1923 and his book also contains no mention of Zaharoff, despite his many efforts to procure British honours for Zaharoff. Long wrote, 'I shall rely first of all on my memory and then upon the records which I have faithfully kept of various episodes in my life.'<sup>41</sup> But the Zaharoff episodes were apparently not to be revealed. A. J. Sylvester first knew Lloyd George in December 1915. He became Hankey's private secretary a year later, joined the Downing Street secretariat in 1921, and became one of Lloyd George's secretaries in 1923. In *The Real Lloyd George* he mentions that Zaharoff was 'a remarkable man' and great admirer of Lloyd George and that the two men had once had lunch together, but that is all.<sup>42</sup> The only chink of light is a footnote in Lord Beaverbrook's *Men & Power* (1956) that refers to negotiations for the surrender of Turkey being conducted by Zaharoff.<sup>43</sup>

Apart from the Peterborough column, it was not until the 1970s that there appeared the first specific disclosure that Zaharoff had been used by the government. Morgan's 1970 paper referred to 'the initiative

in wider diplomatic policy [that] rested even more firmly with the Prime Minister who used unorthodox aides such as Kerr and Zaharoff.<sup>44</sup> Morgan followed up this paper with a book published in 1979 in which he wrote that Lloyd George employed a number of 'unexpected' advisers such as Zaharoff but gave no further information about the association between the two men.<sup>45</sup>

The first book that did contain pertinent information about Zaharoff's negotiations with the Turks came a year after Morgan's 1970 paper when V. H. Rothwell published his *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy 1914–1918*. Rothwell disclosed that Zaharoff became a friend of Lloyd George and gave an account both of Zaharoff's Turkish activities and of his influence with the prime minister, revealing full details of the negotiations with Enver. Rothwell pointed to Zaharoff being authorised to put forward terms to the Turkish leaders – who were definitely assured that Turkey might retain nominal suzerainty in Mesopotamia and, apparently, also Palestine, although with no voice in the administration. As far as can be determined, Rothwell is one of the few writers to have commented on the secrecy of the Zaharoff negotiations. He wrote:

The fact that this curious episode has, apparently, never previously been brought to light owes much to Zaharoff's undoubted skill in political intrigue, to the fact that both Enver and Zaharoff returned the money to its source and to Enver's evident belief that Zaharoff was not a British agent and was working for the French.<sup>46</sup>

A year later, in 1972, Roberta Warman was also clear about Zaharoff's involvement in negotiations with the Turks. She outlined that during the last two years of the war Lloyd George did negotiate via Zaharoff with the Turks on a separate peace and that there was no evidence that the Foreign Office was aware of this. Caillard was said to be the usual point of contact between Lloyd George and Zaharoff. There is, however, in Warman's paper no indication of the offer of suzerainty to the Turks.<sup>47</sup> Anthony Allfrey's *Man of Arms*, published in 1989,

gives full details of the negotiations that Zaharoff conducted with the Turks and he seems to be the first to point out that after Zaharoff's death the Peterborough column in the *Daily Telegraph* did refer to these negotiations but that this gave no rise to concern elsewhere.<sup>48</sup>

Apart from Warman's paper and Rothwell's and Allfrey's books, no disclosures about Zaharoff's negotiations with the Turks then appear to have been made until the 1993 publication of the 'Missing Persons' addendum to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, which contains a short piece on Zaharoff that refers to negotiations with Enver.<sup>49</sup> The 2004 edition of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, however, does carry a full monograph on Zaharoff's life that states that, with Lloyd George's cognisance, he was sent to Switzerland to bribe Turkish leaders with £10 million in gold so that they would cease hostilities. There is, however, no reference to the proposal regarding eventual control of Palestine.<sup>50</sup>

And why has the issue of Turkish suzerainty over Palestine not been discussed by the many historians who have written on Zionist history? Isaiah Friedman, for example – one of the foremost writers on Zionist history with three important books on the subject published in 1997, 1998 and 2002 respectively – makes no reference to the possibility that, under Lloyd George's plans, Palestine could have remained to some extent under Ottoman control. As far as can be determined, only two such books mention the possibility that Turkey could have retained some form of control of Palestine after the war. David Fromkin, in *A Peace to End all Peace*, published in 1989, seems to be the first writer on Zionist history to draw attention to the matter as well as to Zaharoff's role in the whole saga.<sup>51</sup> Jonathan Schneer's *The Balfour Declaration*, published in 2010, discusses in some detail Zaharoff's role in the attempt to get the Turks to sue for peace.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, Schneer's book has more on Zaharoff's role and his relationship with Lloyd George than any other publication.

So why did Lloyd George hide his attempt to bribe the Turks? Was he anxious to avoid any disclosure of his relationship with a highly controversial figure, a person seen

**Maundy Gregory was also in the pay of Zaharoff; indeed, McCormick claims that Gregory was a 'listening post' for Zaharoff during the war and for some years afterwards.**

by many people as notorious and not to be trusted? That in his *War Memoirs* he mentioned the December 1917 Kerr–Parodi talks aimed at seeking peace with Turkey but omitted Zaharoff's efforts to bribe the Turks to leave the war surely points to a deliberate decision on his part not to mention Zaharoff's involvement. To that end, an interesting consideration arises in the figure of Arthur Maundy Gregory, the only person to be convicted under the Honours (Prevention of Abuses) Act 1925 (and whose behaviour in 1918 and central role in the honours scandal occasioned the act). Maundy Gregory was the key person used by Lloyd George to elicit money from wealthy men in exchange for national honours. However, Maundy Gregory was also in the pay of Zaharoff; indeed, McCormick claims that Gregory was a 'listening post' for Zaharoff during the war and for some years afterwards.<sup>53</sup>

Beaverbrook was the only person associated with Lloyd George's government who made any reference in subsequent writings to Zaharoff and no explanation can be offered for all the other participants making no reference to plans to bribe the Turks. Not one of these writers ever referred to any other connection between the two men. Even Peterborough's disclosure, published soon after Zaharoff's death, did not prompt these writers to mention this association and this does suggest there were many participants in the politics of the time who were prepared to shield Lloyd George from a disclosure of a relationship with a notorious individual. Lloyd George's acceptance that Palestine could post-war still fall under some sort of control by Turkey may also have been another, albeit minor, factor in the reluctance. As for the many distinguished historians who have written about Lloyd George's time as prime minister, it is strange that mention of his association with Zaharoff has rarely been made – and it almost suggests that they were according Lloyd George a degree of protection from disclosure of a relationship with an unsavoury and notorious individual who strutted the international stage. Certainly both Malcolm Thomson, who wrote the 'official' biography, and

## A CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE?

Lloyd George's second wife, who wrote two books on her husband's political life, have much to answer for. Has there been a conspiracy of silence regarding Lloyd George's dealings with Zaharoff and in particular those relating to the negotiations with Turkey?

Lloyd George continued his association with Zaharoff after 1918, and this gave rise to a good deal of criticism from political opponents – especially in the House of Commons – but these attacks did not specifically refer to the Turkish bribery efforts. As for Zaharoff, he once said that he had burned diaries covering fifty years of his life and *The Times* commented that 'those diaries must have contained a good deal of the history of our times'.<sup>34</sup>

*Cecil Bloom, a professional chemist, was Technical Director of a major multinational pharmaceutical and agricultural chemical corporation. In retirement, he researches many aspects of history, especially Jewish history, and his papers have been published in journals in the UK, US, Israel, South Africa and Australia.*

### Appendix

Zaharoff had an obsession with receiving honours from Britain and part of his motivation in negotiating with the Turks was the lure of a British honour. He refers to the possibility of being rewarded in this way for his efforts in a number of his letters; and, in correspondence with Caillard, used the code 'chocolate' while complaining bitterly at his difficulty in getting an award for his work. In a telegram to Caillard, he said that if Lloyd George considered his latest report to be as important as he had stated, then he should 'spontaneously there and then do the chocolate fraternities'.<sup>35</sup> He told Caillard in another letter that he feared that 'chocolate being done' would not occur.<sup>36</sup>

He first seems to have raised the issue in July 1917 but, at this point, Lloyd George refused to take immediate action.<sup>37</sup> Long also first asked Lloyd George in July 1917 to award the Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire to Zaharoff,<sup>38</sup> but a reply came from J. T. Davies, one of Lloyd George's secretaries, stating that no foreigners would be included in the forthcoming awards

**As for Zaharoff, he once said that he had burned diaries covering fifty years of his life and *The Times* commented that 'those diaries must have contained a good deal of the history of our times'.**

although 'he will be considered next time'.<sup>39</sup> Long then pleaded for an honour to be awarded to Zaharoff in the next honours list because he 'is in feeble health'.<sup>60</sup> At about the same time, Caillard told Zaharoff that he had spoken to Lloyd George and been told that it 'would be difficult to take *immediate* action' ('immediate' underlined), but he believed he could convince Lloyd George of its necessity.<sup>61</sup>

More letters were written on the subject in 1918, with the correspondence involving, amongst others, Lord Stamfordham, the king's secretary. A letter from Long to Lord Robert Cecil stated that Zaharoff was *very* anxious ('very' underlined) to have the GBE at once and that Zaharoff did not think any harm would be done if he received it.<sup>62</sup> Caillard must have written to Buckingham Palace at about this time because Lord Stamfordham replied to him to say that the king could do nothing until the prime minister made a recommendation.<sup>63</sup> Long then wrote to Lloyd George to tell him that Zaharoff was anxious for the GBE and that he (Long) understood that the Foreign Office were willing.<sup>64</sup> A letter from Long to Zaharoff informed him that the king would receive Zaharoff on 2 August 1918.<sup>65</sup> Two days later Long wrote to 'Eddie' (presumably someone in government or monarchy service) that the Foreign Office had 'made a mess' over the GBE – it should have been the GCB since 'the King cannot knight foreigners'.<sup>66</sup> And then in October Lord Stamfordham wrote to Long to tell him that the king consented to Zaharoff assuming the title 'Sir Basil' and being called this in the United Kingdom even though he had not formally received the accolade.<sup>67</sup> Long wrote immediately to Caillard in a letter marked 'Very Confidential' to tell him that the king had consented to Zaharoff assuming the title and that he could continue to call himself and be called 'Sir Basil', although this decision would not be officially communicated (by whom is unclear) to Zaharoff.<sup>68</sup> *The Times* eventually reported in May 1919 that 'Sir Basil [sic] Zaharoff was received by H.M. King George V who invested him with the Insignia of a Knight Grand

Cross of the most Honourable Order of the Bath'.<sup>69</sup>

One additional piece of information: Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin was asked in parliament by a Conservative MP to appoint a tribunal to inquire into allegations by Zaharoff's former secretary that Zaharoff had made corrupt payments to servants of the Crown. Baldwin refused to agree to this.<sup>70</sup>

### Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the Wiltshire and Swindon Archive Service for permission to refer to the Long papers and I would also like to thank Gavin Fuller, the *Daily Telegraph's* librarian, for providing me with the information on the Peterborough column.

- 1 Donald McCormick, *The Mask of Merlin* (MacDonald, 1963), p. 201.
- 2 *The Times*, 28 Nov. 1936, p. 17.
- 3 J. M. McEwen (ed.), *The Riddell Dairies 1908–23* (Athlone Press, 1986), p. 157.
- 4 *New York Times*, 28 Nov. 1936, p. 16.
- 5 V. H. Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy 1914–1918* (Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 175.
- 6 Osbert Sitwell, *Great Morning* (Macmillan, 1948), pp. 267–8.
- 7 H. C. G. Mathew and B. Harrison (eds.), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 1x (Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 982.
- 8 Donald McCormick, *Pedlar of Death* (MacDonald, 1965), p. 146.
- 9 Anthony Allfrey, *Man of Arms* (Wiedenfeld & Nicolson, 1989), p. 114.
- 10 A. J. Maiolo and T. Insall, 'Sir Basil Zaharoff and Sir Vincent Caillard as Instruments of British Policy towards Greece and the Ottoman Empire during the Asquith and Lloyd George Administrations, 1915–8', *The International History Review*, 34 (2012), pp. 1–8.
- 11 All details of Lloyd George's instructions to Zaharoff and the latter's negotiations with the Turks are given in: The National Archives (henceforth TNA), FO 1093/52 fos. 193, 196, 216, 246, FO 1093/54 fo. 346 and FO 1093/57 fo. 392 held at the Public Record Office, Kew; Parliamentary Archives (henceforth PA), Houses of Parliament, LG/F/6/1/6, LG/F/6/16b, LG/F/6/1/16c, LG/F/6/1/7 and LG/F/6/1/16c; and Long Papers

- (henceforth LP) 947/600 held by the Wiltshire and Swindon Archive Service, Chippenham.
- 12 David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs*, vol. 2 (Nicolson & Watson, 1933), pp. 1504–9.
- 13 Letter from Caillard to Zaharoff, 14 June 1917, TNA, FO 1093/52 fo. 193.
- 14 Jukka Nevakivi, *Britain, France and the Arab Middle East 1914–1920* (Athlone Press, 1969), p. 48.
- 15 Malcolm Thomson, *David Lloyd George Official Biography* (Hutchinson, 1948), p. 273.
- 16 P. Goodman (ed.), *Chaim Weizmann* (Victor Gollancz, 1945), p. 9.
- 17 Leonard Stein (ed.), *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann*, vol. 7 (Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 347.
- 18 Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill Companion*, vol. 4 1917–22 (Heinemann, 1977), p. 60.
- 19 Martin Gilbert (ed.), *Lloyd George* (Prentice Hall, 1969) p. 70.
- 20 LP 947/778 fo. 503g, 22 Apr. 1918.
- 21 Lord Derby, *Paris 1918: The War Diary of the British Ambassador*, ed. David Dutton (Liverpool University Press, 2001), p. 158.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 207.
- 23 *Ibid.*, p. 217.
- 24 TNA, FO 1093/55, f. 338, 22 Apr. 1918.
- 25 Letter from Balfour to Caillard, 28 Oct. 1918, TNA, FO 1093/56.
- 26 David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs*, vol. 1 (Nicolson & Watson, 1933), p. 1051.
- 27 David Lloyd George, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, vol. 1 (Heinemann, 1938), p. 58.
- 28 Lloyd George, *War Memoirs*, vol. 1, p. ix.
- 29 Lloyd George, *War Memoirs* (new edn., Odhams Press, 1938), p. v.
- 30 Lord Meston, 'Mr Lloyd George's Memoirs', *International Affairs*, 14 (2), March–April 1935, pp. 241–4.
- 31 *Daily Telegraph*, 30 Nov. 1936, p. 12.
- 32 *Ibid.*, 1 Apr. 2005, p. 8.
- 33 Mathew and Harrison (eds.), *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. xxi, p. 900.
- 34 Thomas Jones, *Whitehall Diary*, vol. 1 1916–1925, ed. Keith Middlemass (Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 42.
- 35 Thomas Jones, *Lloyd George* (Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 57.
- 36 *Ibid.*, p. 431.
- 37 Malcolm Thomson, *David Lloyd George Official Biography* (Hutchinson, 1948).
- 38 Frances Stevenson, *Lloyd George: A Diary*, ed. A. J. P. Taylor (Hutchinson, 1971).
- 39 Frances Stevenson, *The Years that are Past* (Hutchinson, 1967), pp. 91–114.
- 40 Letters from Zaharoff to Frances Stevenson, 12 Nov. 1928, PA 9/31/3/28; 19 Sept. 1931, PA 9/33/1/25.
- 41 Viscount Long, *Memories* (Hutchinson, 1927) pp. ix–x.
- 42 A. J. Sylvester, *The Real Lloyd George* (Cassell, 1947), p. 170.
- 43 Lord Beaverbrook, *Men & Power* (Hutchinson, 1956), p. 193.
- 44 Kenneth O. Morgan, 'LG's premiership: a study in Prime Ministerial Government', *The Historical Journal*, xiii (1970), p. 138.
- 45 Kenneth O. Morgan, *Consensus and Disunity: The Lloyd George Coalition Government 1918–1922* (Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 112.
- 46 Rothwell, *British War Aims*, p. 178.
- 47 Roberta M. Warman, 'The Erosion of Foreign Office Influence 1916–1918', *The Historical Journal*, 15 (1972), p. 143.
- 48 Allfrey, *Man of Arms*, p. 173.
- 49 C. S. Nicholls (ed.), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: Missing Persons* (Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 741.
- 50 Mathew and Harrison (eds.), *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. cx, pp. 60, 982.
- 51 David Fromkin, *A Peace to end all Peace* (Deutsch, 1989), pp. 266–7.
- 52 Jonathan Schneer, *The Balfour Declaration* (Bloomsbury, 2010).
- 53 McCormick, *Pedlar of Death*, p. 150.
- 54 *The Times*, 28 Nov. 1936, p. 17.
- 55 Telegram from Zaharoff to Caillard (date indistinct), TNA, FO 1093/54 fo. 317.
- 56 Letter from Zaharoff to Caillard, 13 Jan. 1918, TNA, FO 1093/54 fo. 275.
- 57 Letter from Caillard to Zaharoff, 10 July 1917, TNA, FO 1093/52 fo. 216.
- 58 Letter from Long to Lloyd George, 5 July 1917, LP, 947/778 fo. 503a.
- 59 Letter from Davies to Batterbee (Long's secretary), 6 July 1917, LP, 947/778 fo. 503g.
- 60 Letter from Batterbee to Davies, 9 July 1917, LP, 947/778 fo. 503g.
- 61 Letter from Caillard to Zaharoff, 9 July 1917, TNA, FO 1093/52 fo. 216.
- 62 Letter from Long to Lord Robert Cecil, 21 Jan. 1918, LP, 947/778 fo. 503d.
- 63 Letter from Stamfordham to Caillard, 12 Feb. 1918, LP, 947/778 fo. 503f.
- 64 Letter from Long to Lloyd George, 28 Feb. 1918, LP, 947/778 fo. 503f.
- 65 Letter from Long to Zaharoff, 1 Aug. 1918, LP, 947/778 fo. 503h.
- 66 Letter from Long to 'Eddie', 4 Aug. 1918, LP, 947/778 fo. 503j.
- 67 Letter from Stamfordham to Long, 23 Oct. 1918, LP, 947/778 fo. 503x.
- 68 Letter from Long to Caillard, 23 Oct. 1918, LP, 947/600.
- 69 *The Times*, 14 May 1919, p. 15.
- 70 Hansard, HC (series 5) vol. cccxviii, col. 1261 (2 Dec. 1936).

# LIBERAL HISTORY QUIZ 2014

Answers to the questions listed on page 21.

1. *On Liberty*
2. William Beveridge
3. R. H. Tawney
4. Jeremy Bentham
5. Charles James Fox
6. T. H. Green
7. Henry George
8. Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley (author of *Frankenstein*)
9. Lewes, in Sussex – Tom Paine, who wrote *The Rights of Man*, lived there from 1768 to 1774; since the 17th century, the town has had a tradition of opposition to the monarchy and pro-republican sentiments
10. W. H. Smith
11. L. T. Hobhouse
12. John Milton
13. *The Subjection of Women*, by John Stuart Mill
14. John Maynard Keynes
15. *Areopagitica*, by John Milton
16. Harriet Taylor (later Harriet Taylor Mill)
17. Adam Smith
18. Unservile State Group
19. John and Barbara Hammond
20. Conrad Russell