



# Policy of Deceit

Britain and Palestine, 1914–1939

PETER SHAMBROOK

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**‘The most comprehensive and incisive exposure of the origins of the British betrayal of Palestine.’ *Ilan Pappé***

‘Deeply researched, powerfully argued and meticulously documented... A strikingly fair-minded book about one of the shabbiest and most sordid chapters in the history of the British Empire.’ *Avi Shlaim, Emeritus Professor of International Relations, University of Oxford, and author *Three Worlds: Memoirs of an Arab Jew**

‘*Policy of Deceit* is the definitive scholarly work on the McMahon–Hussein Correspondence and its afterlives. With this empirically rich and analytically rigorous book, Peter Shambrook makes an important contribution to the study of Britain’s direct responsibility for the dispossession of the Palestinian people.’ *Abdel Razzaq Takriti, Arab-American Educational Foundation Chair in Arab Studies, Rice University*

‘An important contribution to the historiography of British rule in Palestine.’  
*Laila Parsons, Professor of Modern Middle East History, McGill University*

**On the centenary of the Palestine Mandate, Peter Shambrook reveals the truth of how the Israel–Palestine conflict was born in Britain.**

During the First World War, the British High Commissioner in Egypt, Sir Henry McMahon, entered into a secret correspondence with Hussein ibn Ali, the Sharif of Mecca. On behalf of Asquith’s government, McMahon promised the Sharif an independent Arab state after the war, if he would ally with Britain and launch a revolt against the Ottomans. Two years later, Lloyd George’s government declared that the region of Palestine would be for the global Jewish community. **Britain and pro-Zionist historians claim that Palestine was never part of the state guaranteed to the Sharif, but this is not true.**

Through a comprehensive analysis of official records and private papers, Peter Shambrook lays out how Britain abandoned its pledge to the Arabs. He reveals for the first time how successive British governments attempted to cover up the fact that the promise had ever been made, and exposes as a whitewash the 1939 Anglo-Arab Report issued in the wake of discussions with a visiting Arab delegation. Since then, no British government has investigated the matter, nor has there been any official acknowledgement of the truth, which Shambrook lays bare – along with its devastating consequences.



‘Shambrook’s conclusions will doubtless generate new debate about Britain’s role in fostering one of the most bitter international conflicts of the past 100 years.’

**Philip S. Khoury, Ford International Professor of History, MIT**

‘[A] superbly researched book... essential reading for anyone interested in understanding the roots of the tension between the Arab world and the West.’

**Raja Shehadeh, author of *We Could Have Been Friends, My Father and I: A Palestinian Memoir***

‘Shambrook’s deft handling of the primary sources brilliantly brings to life how British imperial officials and politicians contrived to determine then defend an increasingly problematic policy in Palestine.’

**Anthony Gorman, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Edinburgh**

‘Crisply, forensically and objectively, *Policy of Deceit* refutes once and for all the contention that Britain excluded Palestine from the Arab lands to which it pledged independence.’

**John McHugo, author of *Syria: A Recent History***

‘Shambrook conclusively scotches some of the myths and delusions that for over a century have surrounded Britain’s handling of the future of Palestine... A riveting account of a long-running saga of British double-dealing and evasion.’ **Adam Sutcliffe, Professor of European History, King’s College London**



**Peter Shambrook** is an independent scholar and historical consultant to the Balfour Project, which works to advance equal rights for all in Palestine/Israel. He holds a PhD in modern Middle Eastern history from the Faculty of Oriental Studies, Cambridge, and over the course of his career he has held a number of research positions, including at Durham University and at the Centre for Lebanese Studies in Oxford. He is the author of *French Imperialism in Syria, 1927–1936*. He lives in Durham.

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