

# Volume I

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# AMBASSADOR HENRY MORGENTHAU'S SPECIAL MISSION OF 1917

By WILLIAM YALE

**A**TTEMPTS to explain world politics in terms of the clashes of sharply defined national interests have an air of unreality. This is because of the unequal interest of groups of the population in any particular course of official action. The little known and obscure, but historically important episode with which this article deals, describes the impact of one influential private group on foreign policy, even after the President of the United States had made an official determination of policy. It also throws light on the way in which a private group can operate through and with a foreign government, whose interests are parallel to its own, to change the direction of American policy. Similarly it illustrates how a foreign government can mould its relations with the United States (or with most countries) by developing a policy with a special appeal to particularly influential groups in that country.

The episode in question took place in the British fortress of Gibraltar on July 4, 1917. There a Special Mission which President Wilson had confided to Henry Morgenthau, Sr., suddenly came to an end. Three men decided that the times were not propitious for the United States to enter into negotiations for a separate peace between Turkey and the Allies.<sup>1</sup> As a result the way was cleared, first, for the campaign in 1917 in Palestine, which gave the British possession of the Holy Land, and then, for the Balfour Declaration of November 2, 1917, which assured the Zionists of a National Home for the Jewish people in Palestine.

The idea of persuading the Young Turks to terminate their alliance with the Central Powers seems to have originated in the mind of Henry Morgenthau, Sr., former American Ambassador to Turkey. As early as 1913 Mr. Morgenthau had taken a deep interest in the affairs of Palestine. He seems to have nursed the idea of persuading the Ottoman Govern-

<sup>1</sup> See below, conversation in 1920 between Dr. Chaim Weizmann and William Yale.

ment to cede Palestine to the Khedivate of Egypt, inspired, perhaps, by the example of the great founder of Zionism, Theodor Herzl, who had carried on negotiations with the Sultan of Turkey between the years 1898 and 1903.<sup>2</sup> At the time of his trip to Palestine, early in the year 1914, Ambassador Morgenthau, while passing through Egypt, had a conference with the Khedive, Abbas Hilmi.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Morgenthau informed the Khedive that negotiations between the Zionists and the Ottoman Government were nearing completion and that the Zionists were on the point of realizing their hopes and ambitions in Palestine.<sup>4</sup> The Ambassador said that he hoped the negotiations would soon be closed and that he could then return to Egypt with more interesting and definite information with regard to the plans of the Zionists for Palestine—plans which would concern His Highness, whose aid would be solicited.<sup>5</sup> That Mr. Morgenthau had not been unduly sanguine in his hopes was later attested to by General Clayton, chief of the British Intelligence Service in Egypt. In a statement to the Syrian Committee, in 1917, the General affirmed that before the war the Young Turks had agreed to give the Zionists a free hand in Palestine.<sup>6</sup> Earlier negotiations with the Turks thus may have led Mr. Morgenthau to believe that the Turkish leaders in 1917 would consider peace terms which would be acceptable to the Zionists as well as to the Allies.

On the afternoon of May 16, 1917, Mr. Morgenthau had a conversation with Robert Lansing, Secretary of State, in which he expressed the opinion that there was a possibility of prevailing upon the Turks to make a separate peace.<sup>7</sup> Mr. Lansing was the more impressed with Mr. Morgenthau's idea because that very morning the Secretary had had an interview with the private secretary of the American Ambassador to Turkey, who had left Constantinople on April 6 and who held the same views that Mr. Morgenthau did.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Mr. Lansing had just recently asked Mr. Balfour, the British Foreign Secre-

<sup>2</sup> Chaim Weizmann and Richard Gottheil, *What is Zionism?* The Zionist Organization, London Bureau, 1918, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> Henry Morgenthau (in collaboration with French Strother), *All in a Life-time*, Garden City, N. Y., Doubleday, Page, 1923, p. 221.

<sup>4</sup> William Yale, Special Agent, *Notes on the Zionist Question*, Report to the Department of State, no. 10, Cairo, December 31, 1917. <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States, The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920*, 2 vols., Washington, 1939-40, vol. II, pp. 17-19. <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

tary, what chance there was of making a separate peace with Turkey; and Mr. Balfour had replied that though he had nothing very definite on the subject, he had been advised that the Turks were "nibbling."<sup>9</sup>

Feeling that this might be an opportune time to get Turkey out of the war, and convinced that such negotiations should be attempted by the American Government because of Turkey's friendly attitude toward the United States, Mr. Lansing promptly reported to President Wilson on May 17, 1917.<sup>10</sup> He told the President that Mr. Morgenthau could get in touch with Enver, Talaat, and Djemal, the triumvirate who then ruled Turkey, by going himself to Switzerland where he felt sure that he could contact two former members of the Turkish Cabinet.<sup>11</sup> Mr. Lansing stated his own doubts about the success of such an attempt but said that if there were one chance in fifty of its succeeding, it ought not to be missed. The Secretary of State then asked the President whether he thought it worth while to send Mr. Morgenthau to Switzerland to make the attempt.<sup>12</sup>

The prospect of negotiating a separate peace with Turkey evidently interested the President, for after giving the matter further thought, he had a talk with Mr. Morgenthau on May 28 and again on June 7 when the question of the desirability of having Felix Frankfurter accompany him was discussed.

Mr. Morgenthau records in his memoirs that "In June, 1917, the President asked me to go abroad upon a secret diplomatic errand. . . ."<sup>13</sup> Interestingly enough it was Justice Brandeis, one of the leading American Zionists, who suggested that Mr. Frankfurter should accompany Mr. Morgenthau on his secret mission.<sup>14</sup> Justice Brandeis was even at that time playing a leading role in directing the affairs of the Zionists in the field of international diplomacy. He had had one or two interviews with Balfour, during the latter's visit to the United States in May, 1917, at which Zionism had been discussed. During these interviews Mr. Balfour had pledged his own personal support to Zionism, and Justice Brandeis had told the British Foreign Secretary that American Zionists emphat-

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>13</sup> Morgenthau, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

<sup>14</sup> Unpublished Lansing Papers, II-B, Morgenthau, June 7, 1917, in Library of Congress; see also *Lansing Papers, op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 17-19.

ically desired to see a British administration in Palestine.<sup>15</sup> The *New York Times* even reported that Mr. Balfour had conferred with Justice Brandeis on a Zionist Republic in Palestine.<sup>16</sup> Influential British leaders had long since begun to realize that the sympathy of American Jews for the Allied cause could be won by promising to try and obtain Palestine for the Zionists; and in this connection it had been suggested that Justice Louis Brandeis, as an intimate friend of President Wilson, should be approached.<sup>17</sup> Mr. Balfour, after his conversations with Justice Brandeis, and on his return to England, felt assured that the President's attitude toward Zionism was sympathetic.<sup>18</sup>

Justice Brandeis was at that time in close touch with the Zionist leaders in England and it is possible that it was he who informed Dr. Weizmann of Mr. Morgenthau's Special Mission to make a separate peace with Turkey.<sup>19</sup> On learning from America of this mission, Dr. Weizmann went to see Mr. Balfour and insisted that the attempt to negotiate a separate peace with the Turks should not be made.<sup>20</sup> The Zionist leader, who probably knew of the British War Cabinet's decision to launch a vigorous campaign against the Turks in Palestine in the late summer of 1917, did not look with favor upon a separate peace with Turkey which might have left the future disposition of Palestine in a very uncertain condition. The conquest of Palestine by an Allied military force would create a situation far more favorable to the plans of the Zionists.

Justice Brandeis may also have suggested that Mr. Felix Frankfurter should accompany Mr. Morgenthau to see that the former Ambassador did not do anything that would run counter to the plans of the Zionist leaders in the United States and Great Britain.

Naturally the President and the Department of State did not want the Germans and their allies to learn in advance that an attempt was going to be made by Mr. Morgenthau to sound

<sup>15</sup> Blanche E. C. Dugdale, *Arthur James Balfour*, 2 vols., London, 1936, vol. II, pp. 168-69.

<sup>16</sup> *New York Times*, May 11, 1917.

<sup>17</sup> J. M. N. Jeffries, *Palestine: the Reality*, London, 1939, p. 135. <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>19</sup> Editor's note: Dr. Chaim Weizmann's autobiography, *Trial and Error*, New York, Harper & Bros., 1949, published after this article was written, confirms the fact that Dr. Weizmann received his information from Justice Brandeis. See p. 195.

<sup>20</sup> See below, conversation between Dr. Chaim Weizmann and William Yale.

out the Turkish leaders in regard to a separate peace. Consequently, rather devious means were used to camouflage the Special Mission. The American press was informed that Henry Morgenthau, Felix Frankfurter, and Mr. Lewis Epstein were going to the Near East on an important mission connected with the prevention of massacres of Jews in Palestine and elsewhere.<sup>21</sup> The press notices went so far as to state that although the Special Mission had an official status, it had no connection with the plan to form an independent Jewish state in Palestine.<sup>22</sup> Even to its diplomatic agents abroad the Department of State gave no inkling of the true purport of Mr. Morgenthau's instructions. In a cable to the American Consul at Alexandria, Egypt, for Hoffman Philip, the former Counselor of the American Embassy at Constantinople, the Special Mission was described as being for the purpose of ameliorating the conditions of the Jews in Palestine.<sup>23</sup>

Nevertheless, there were those besides Justice Brandeis and Dr. Weizmann who knew of the somewhat romantic and quixotic nature of the Special Mission. Colonel House carefully recorded in his diary that Henry Morgenthau was leaving on a mission of his own devising. According to the latest plan Mr. Morgenthau intended to go to Egypt and endeavor to obtain an invitation from Turkish leaders to enter Palestine, on the excuse of aiding the Jews there. His real purpose, however, remained that of negotiating a separate peace.<sup>24</sup>

Shortly before Mr. Morgenthau sailed from New York the Colonel wrote him to say that those who knew the real nature of his Special Mission were looking forward eagerly to word from him.<sup>25</sup> Already arrangements had been made for Mr. Morgenthau to meet two leading Zionists en route to Egypt. This House considered inadvisable, and warned Mr. Morgenthau that the Zionists would not agree to his plan to make a separate peace with the Turks. Such, in fact, were the Colonel's doubts that he suggested that it would have been a better plan to see these two emissaries on the way back from Palestine.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>21</sup> *New York Times*, June 17, 1917. <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, June 20, 1917.

<sup>23</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1917*, Supplement no. 2, 2 vols., Washington, 1932, vol. I, p. 108.

<sup>24</sup> Unpublished Diary of Colonel E. M. House, entry of June 11, 1917.

<sup>25</sup> Unpublished letters of Colonel E. M. House; letter to Honorable Henry Morgenthau, June 13, 1917. <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

Despite Colonel House's warning not to talk about the real nature of the mission,<sup>27</sup> Mr. Morgenthau had discussed it with so many people in New York that it was a well-known "secret" among the Jews of the city.<sup>28</sup>

I myself learned of Mr. Morgenthau's Special Mission on June 20, in New York, having arrived there the day before, after a long trip from Jerusalem. Newly come from Turkey, I at once called upon Mr. Morgenthau. He told me that he was sailing the next day for Alexandria, Egypt, on a special mission for President Wilson to attempt to negotiate a separate peace with the Turks. He invited me to accompany him, but this I was unable to do and only went as far as the dock to see him and his party sail on the S.S. *Buenos Aires*.

Four days after Mr. Morgenthau had sailed, Secretary Lansing cabled Ambassador Page at London and advised him that Mr. Morgenthau had started and was due to arrive at Cadiz about July 1. The Secretary of State requested Ambassador Page to notify Mr. Balfour and to secure his consent to have Dr. Chaim Weizmann meet Mr. Morgenthau in Spain, as it was considered most important that Morgenthau see Weizmann.<sup>29</sup>

Mr. Lansing's cable to Mr. Page seems a trifle naïve, since Mr. Balfour had already agreed that Dr. Weizmann should attempt to persuade Mr. Morgenthau to abandon his mission. But at the time Mr. Lansing had no reason to be aware of such an understanding. In fact, there still is no data available on the agreement between Mr. Balfour and Dr. Weizmann other than a conversation between Dr. Weizmann and the writer in the winter of 1920. After the war was over, and when I had no official connections with either the Department of State or the War Department, I went out to Egypt on private business. One evening, on board an Italian liner sailing from Trieste to Alexandria, I had a talk with Dr. Weizmann in the smoking room after dinner. In discussing Turkey and Palestine, I told him about the strange invitation that I had received from Mr. Morgenthau to join his Special Mission of 1917 to make a separate peace with the Turks. I said that,

<sup>27</sup> Unpublished Diary of Colonel House, entry of June 11, 1917.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, entry of July 14, 1917.

<sup>29</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1917*, Supplement no. 2, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 109.

neither in my capacity as Special Agent of the Department of State in 1917 nor as American Military Observer with the British Forces in Palestine, had I been able to learn what had happened to the mission. Dr. Weizmann laughed and said that he would relate a very strange piece of history. He then told me the following story, which so astonished me that I can almost recall word for word what he said. Dr. Weizmann's account of the affair was substantially as follows:

Learning of Mr. Morgenthau's proposed trip to the Near East, Dr. Weizmann went to see Mr. Balfour and told him that Mr. Morgenthau's mission must be circumvented.<sup>30</sup> Mr. Balfour was surprised to hear that Dr. Weizmann knew of Mr. Morgenthau's plan and jokingly asked whether the Zionist leader had spies in the Foreign Office. Dr. Weizmann told the Foreign Secretary that friends in America had informed him of Morgenthau's mission.<sup>31</sup> Mr. Balfour said that an attempt to negotiate peace with Turkey at this time did not fit in with the plans of the British Government, which was as anxious to frustrate it as were the Zionists. But, said Mr. Balfour, this was a pet project of President Wilson's which the British Government could not openly oppose because Great Britain was so completely dependent upon aid from the United States. He added, however, that he would do everything he could to help Dr. Weizmann and his friends sidetrack Mr. Morgenthau. Dr. Weizmann replied that he could stop Morgenthau if Mr. Balfour would arrange to have Mr. Morgenthau stopped en route to Spain, and if he would make it possible for Monsieur Weyl, the French Zionist, and Dr. Weizmann to meet Mr. Morgenthau at Gibraltar.

Mr. Balfour had the British commander at Gibraltar instructed to invite Mr. Morgenthau on his arrival in Spain to inspect the fortress, where a banquet in his honor, at which Monsieur Weyl and Dr. Weizmann would be present, was planned. In the meantime, Monsieur Weyl and Dr. Weizmann were secretly smuggled on muleback across the Franco-Spanish frontier by an obscure pass in the Pyrenees. They waited in

<sup>30</sup> This meeting occurred after Mr. Balfour's return from the United States, hence sometime in June, 1917.

<sup>31</sup> As Justice Brandeis, a leading Zionist, knew all about the trip, and as Mr. Morgenthau had told several Jewish leaders in New York, Dr. Weizmann would certainly have been informed by some of them about a matter so close to Zionist interests.

Algeciras for Mr. Morgenthau's arrival at Gibraltar. Dr. Weizmann called the conference at Gibraltar a historical meeting, taking place, as it did, on America's national holiday in Britain's greatest fortress. There, he recounted, three Jews,—Weyl, a French Jew, Morgenthau, a German Jew by birth, and Weizmann, a Russian Jew by origin—decided whether or not the Allies should attempt to make a separate peace with the Turks. Dr. Weizmann said that the meeting was the more dramatic because their only common language was German.

After the banquet, the British commander and his staff withdrew, leaving the three men alone. Dr. Weizmann explained to Morgenthau that an attempt to make a separate peace with Turkey was foolish and would result in a failure which would make Mr. Morgenthau appear ridiculous. Dr. Weizmann said that he threatened Mr. Morgenthau with the opposition of the Zionist Organization because the plan ran counter to those of the Zionists, and proposed to Mr. Morgenthau that he give up his mission and make a visit to the Allied front in France where due honors would be accorded him. As a result, Dr. Weizmann said, Mr. Morgenthau abandoned the Special Mission.

The story as told by Dr. Weizmann was highly dramatic and very personal. However, it corresponds closely with the facts as known through official documents, letters, and diaries. On June 25, 1917, the Secretary of State cabled the American Ambassador to Spain, Mr. Willard, and informed him that Mr. Morgenthau had sailed from New York on the S.S. *Buenos Aires* and should arrive at Cadiz about July 1. Mr. Willard was instructed to telegraph, in special secret code, the American Consul at Cadiz to meet Mr. Morgenthau and inform him that British and French representatives would meet him at Gibraltar, and that Monsieur Weyl would go to Gibraltar also.<sup>32</sup>

On July 8, 1917, the two Special Agents, Morgenthau and Frankfurter, cabled the Secretary of State from Madrid a rather extraordinary and confused message about the conference at Gibraltar.<sup>33</sup> The cable stated that a conference, begun at Gibraltar on July 4, had lasted for two days, and that the reports of

<sup>32</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1917*, Supplement no. 2, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 109.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.



the representatives of England and France to their respective governments would contain a statement made by the American representatives to the following effect: that President Wilson had received intimations indicating Turkish dissatisfaction with the war and a readiness to free Turkey from German domination; that he was fully aware of the difficulties of detaching Turkey from Germany, and that the chances of doing so immediately were distinctly unfavorable. Nevertheless, the President had deemed it advisable to make the attempt in view of the great advantage to the Allied cause if such a detachment could be brought about. Moreover, the President, on approaching England and France, had obtained cordial support from their governments for the dispatch of a mission abroad for the purpose of sounding out the Turkish leaders. Contemporary concern in the United States about the Jews in Palestine furnished a ready excuse for sending such a mission composed of former Ambassador Morgenthau and Professor Frankfurter of the Harvard Law School.<sup>84</sup>

Morgenthau and Frankfurter further stated that in the light of a full report from Schmavonian, the former special legal adviser to the American embassy at Constantinople, and as the result of a thorough canvass of the situation by the British and French, the Special Agents (Morgenthau and Frankfurter) were convinced that, as a feeling of greater confidence prevailed at Constantinople because of a serious defeat of the British at Baghdad and the consequent insecurity of the British forces there, the time was not ripe to enter into negotiations, and that it was therefore useless to proceed to Egypt.<sup>85</sup>

This cable to Secretary Lansing is quite evidently an attempt by Morgenthau and Frankfurter to explain why they so suddenly abandoned the Special Mission they had been sent on by President Wilson less than three weeks before. In actual fact there had been no particular change in the political and military situation in Turkey. Rather the changes, if any, had taken place in London.

Mr. Schmavonian was an Armenian who did not enjoy the confidence of the leader of the Armenian Nationalists, Nubar Pasha. The latter remarked on September 20, 1917, at Les Ambassadeurs in Paris, that Mr. Schmavonian was unreliable

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 120-22. <sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

and was considered by the Armenians as a creature of the Committee of Union and Progress whose leaders ruled Turkey.<sup>36</sup>

The situation on the military front in Mesopotamia, in the Baghdad area, had actually undergone little change. British operations there throughout April "were very successful." Although there were indications that the Turks intended to regain Baghdad, nevertheless General Maude, the British commander, was confident of his ability to deal with any counter-offensive by the enemy; and, in the summer of 1917, the British Force in Mesopotamia had actually won for itself a position which was reasonably secure.<sup>37</sup>

But in London the attitude of the British War Cabinet toward Turkey had changed considerably. General Smuts had expressed very decided views upon the strategic importance of Palestine to the British Empire. And in May, 1917, the Prime Minister had come to the conclusion that Palestine could be made a decisive factor in the war. Lloyd George rested his conclusion on the belief that Turkey could now be knocked out of the fight, and that Palestine was the area in which to deal the final blow.<sup>38</sup> It was on June 5 that the British Cabinet decided to offer General Allenby command of the British forces in Egypt. Before Allenby left for Egypt, Lloyd George told him that "the Cabinet expected Jerusalem before Christmas."<sup>39</sup> This was two weeks before Morgenthau and Frankfurter sailed from New York on their Special Mission to make a separate peace with the Turks.

Mr. Balfour, having sailed from Canada for England on May 31, was in London shortly after the British Cabinet made its decision to appoint General Allenby commander-in-chief of the British forces in Egypt, with instructions to make a determined attack upon the Turks in Palestine.<sup>40</sup> Thus, before Mr. Morgenthau arrived at Gibraltar for the ill-fated conference with Dr. Chaim Weizmann and Monsieur Weyl, Mr. Balfour knew that the British War Cabinet was planning a serious offensive in the Holy Land.

<sup>36</sup> Unpublished Diary of William Yale, Special Agent of the Department of State.

<sup>37</sup> Roger Evans, *A Brief Outline of the Campaign of Mesopotamia, 1914-1918*, London, 1926, pp. 120-21.

<sup>38</sup> David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George*, 6 vols., London, 1933-36, vol. IV, pp. 1830-32. <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1834-35. <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 1687.

Furthermore, Mr. Balfour had become increasingly interested in Zionism, and his relations with the Zionist leaders had grown more and more intimate. He had helped Dr. Weizmann, who was worried about French and Italian claims in Palestine,<sup>41</sup> to bring the French around, so that by April 24, 1917, the Quai D'Orsay had agreed that an Allied victory in the Middle East would mean recognition of Zionism.<sup>42</sup> During June the negotiations of the Zionists with the British Government entered their final phase.<sup>43</sup>

Lord Rothschild and Dr. Weizmann called on Mr. Balfour at the Foreign Office in June and insisted that the time had come for a definite declaration by the British Government. Mr. Balfour asked them to prepare a draft of such a declaration so that he might obtain sanction for it from the War Cabinet.<sup>44</sup> The Foreign Secretary felt more assurance about his policy of supporting Zionism since his trip to the United States, where his conversations with Justice Brandeis had convinced him that he would have the sympathetic support of President Wilson.<sup>45</sup>

But Morgenthau's Special Mission for President Wilson did not fit in either with the War Cabinet's planned offensive in Palestine or with the proposals of the Zionists which had Mr. Balfour's support. Since it would hardly do for the British Government openly to oppose a pet project of the President at this crucial time, an alternative course had to be devised. Weizmann's offer to intercept Morgenthau at Gibraltar, and stop the Mission, provided that alternative.

The affair worked out as planned by Dr. Weizmann and Mr. Balfour; but the Morgenthau-Frankfurter cable of July 8, 1917, profoundly surprised and perturbed both the President and the Department of State.<sup>46</sup> In view of the real nature of Morgenthau's Special Mission, it is rather surprising to find that the Department of State's cable of July 14 to Special Agent Morgenthau reminded him that his "final instructions were to deal solely with conditions of Jews in Palestine." The President was annoyed that his Special Agents had expressed to representatives of the Allies views purporting to be his.

<sup>41</sup> Dugdale, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 167. <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 168. <sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 169-70.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 169-70. <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>46</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1917*, Supplement no. 2, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 129.

Morgenthau was ordered to report in detail on the purpose of the Gibraltar conference, and, together with Frankfurter, was instructed to proceed to Cairo to fulfill the publicly announced purpose of his mission.<sup>47</sup>

Mr. Morgenthau who, together with Professor Frankfurter, had left Spain for France, was worried by the cable from Washington. He replied on July 17 from Paris that nothing had been "done or said" by him which in any possible way exceeded instructions. He suggested that Professor Frankfurter should return to America to make a detailed oral report to the President, and stated that he and Mrs. Morgenthau would remain at Aix-les-Bains. He further said that he was prepared to proceed to Cairo, if the President wished him to after hearing Frankfurter's report.<sup>48</sup>

The irritation of the Department of State and of President Wilson was aggravated by Morgenthau's failure to telegraph on July 8 what his intentions were; and on July 12 the Department cabled Ambassador Willard at Madrid and inquired "by what route is Morgenthau proceeding to Cairo . . .?"<sup>49</sup> However, Mr. Morgenthau's cable of July 17 allayed the fears of the Department of State and of the President. The Acting Secretary instructed Morgenthau to remain in France until Frankfurter reported. But the Special Agent was politely warned to refrain "from discussing in any way, matter discussed with Department before your departure."<sup>50</sup> What had annoyed the President most was the impression Mr. Morgenthau gave that he had been authorized by Woodrow Wilson to express certain views in regard to the settlement of peace terms with Turkey.<sup>51</sup> The President, in an interview with Colonel House, asked the Colonel to assure Balfour that Morgenthau had not been authorized to express the President's views to anyone, nor to approach any Turkish leaders officially. Although he (Wilson) had expressed to Morgenthau his ideas about the disposition of Turkey, he had not expected that they would be revealed and he had not authorized Morgenthau to communicate them to anyone.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129. <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 130, 131. <sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139; cable of July 20, 1917.

<sup>51</sup> Unpublished Papers of Colonel E. M. House; notes on an interview with the President, July 13, 1917. <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

The Colonel noted in his diary on July 14, after a talk with Acting Secretary of State Polk, that "Morgenthau's trip had turned out to be a fiasco."<sup>53</sup>

The indiscretions of Mr. Morgenthau resulted in many rumors about the real nature of his Special Mission. Ambassador Elkus, returning from Turkey, told Colonel House that it was well-known everywhere that Morgenthau was on his way to Turkey to attempt to arrange a separate peace.<sup>54</sup> The *New York Times* published on August 15 a news item from the Foreign Affairs News Service to the effect that Mr. Morgenthau, on reaching the British lines in Palestine, intended to seek conferences with Turkish officials and to discuss with them the possibilities of a separate peace with Turkey.<sup>55</sup> But by this time the Special Mission was definitely at an end. The conference with Dr. Weizmann and Monsieur Weyl at Gibraltar on July 4, 1917, had terminated it effectively.

Mr. Morgenthau remained in France during July and August, and visited the British front there in August.<sup>56</sup> Mrs. Morgenthau received the ribbon of the Legion of Honor on August 15.<sup>57</sup> Dr. Weizmann had successfully accomplished the mission which he had been sent on by Mr. Balfour, and had sidetracked President Wilson's Special Mission to make a separate peace with Turkey.

Mr. Morgenthau never forgave the Zionist leader, and some years later publicly announced his opposition to the Zionist Movement in a statement issued by several prominent Jews, wherein they said: "We reject the Zionist project of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine."<sup>58</sup>

It is well-known that pressure groups influence foreign policy in its formative stages. It is equally well understood that such groups frequently endeavor, and sometimes contrive, to reverse policies once publicly announced. It is also a matter of historical record that foreign governments, even intimate allies, do not always accept the American lead. What is unusual about this episode is the fact that the leaders of a private interest group not only succeeded in circumventing the objects of secret diplomacy, but did so without attempting to mobilize public opinion.

<sup>53</sup> Unpublished Diary of Colonel House, *op. cit.* <sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *New York Times*, August 15, 1917. <sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, August 30, 1917.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, August 15, 1917. <sup>58</sup> Morgenthau, *op. cit.*, pp. 249-50.