

IRISH POLICEMEN IN THE PALESTINE MANDATE, 1922-1948

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Ph.D. Thesis

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Abstract

This thesis explores Ireland's influence on and involvement in the policing of British Mandated Palestine and, through an examination of five distinct but interrelated aspects of the Irish experience, assesses Ireland's impact on the policing of Palestine. Making use of an extensive variety of official and private papers, together with oral histories, it first examines the raising of the British Section of the Palestine Gendarmerie which, recruited from amongst the disbanding Royal Irish Constabulary (R.I.C.) in 1922, marked the beginning of significant Irish involvement in Palestine's policing. Official efforts to make this British Gendarmerie more politically palatable by obscuring the fact that it was being drawn from R.I.C. sources are explored as is the impact of its largely 'Black and Tan' composition on public perceptions of the force. Secondly, it looks at the British Gendarmerie as 'an Irish Constabulary', examining the extent to which, in terms of organisation and ethos, it was modelled on the R.I.C. and to which 'Irish'-style influences were imported into its successor, the British Section of the Palestine Police (BSPP) in 1926. The factors which influenced Irish R.I.C. personnel to enlist, particularly the part played by the Republican campaign against R.I.C. personnel in 1922, are also explored. Thirdly, it evaluates claims that 1) the British Gendarmerie followed the example set by its Irish parent forces in terms of personal behaviour and professional conduct, and that 2) the emergence of what were termed 'black-and-tan tendencies' in the BSPP in the 1930s and 1940s was a consequence of its own R.I.C. roots. Fourthly, it analyses the factors which influenced Irish enlistment in the BSPP between 1926 and 1947, with particular focus on the postwar period during which almost half of all Irish enlistments occurred. Finally, the extent to which 'Irishness' shaped the personal perspectives and professional experience of Irish BSPP personnel in the postwar period is examined. Throughout the thesis, the implications of its findings for an understanding of some of the wider aspects of Irish and imperial history are explored.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis represents my own work and has not been submitted in whole or in part, by me or by another person, for the purpose of obtaining any other qualification, and that all sources used have been fully and properly acknowledged.

Articles based on sections of this thesis have been published as follows:

- Seán William Gannon, ‘The formation, composition and conduct of the British Section of the Palestine Gendarmerie, 1922-26’ in *The Historical Journal*, lvi, no. 4 (2013), pp 977-1006.
- Seán William Gannon, “‘Sure it’s only a holiday’: the Irish contingent of the British (Palestine) Gendarmerie, 1922-1926’ in *Australasian Journal of Irish Studies*, xiii (2013), pp 64-85.

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Michael Francis Higgins, 1897-1967



Connaught Rangers (1912-20), Royal Irish Constabulary (1920-22), British Section of the Palestine Gendarmerie (1922-26) and British Section of the Palestine Police (1926-47).

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	I
DECLARATION	II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	III
TABLE OF CONTENTS	V
LIST OF TABLES	VIII
LIST OF FIGURES	IX
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	X
INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE SURVEY	1
CHAPTER ONE: ‘WITHOUT CONNECTION TO THE AUXILIARY DIVISION IN IRELAND’: THE FORMATION AND COMPOSITION OF THE BRITISH SECTION OF THE PALESTINE GENDARMERIE	36
1.1 INTRODUCTION	36
1.2 THE BACKGROUND TO THE FORCE’S FORMATION	37
1.2.1 <i>The problem of Palestine’s policing</i>	41
1.2.2 <i>The Palestine Gendarmerie</i>	46
1.3 THE FORMATION OF THE BRITISH GENDARMERIE	49
1.3.1 <i>‘Without connection to the Auxiliary Division in Ireland’</i>	55
1.3.2 <i>The recruitment process</i>	59
1.4 THE COMPOSITION OF THE BRITISH GENDARMERIE	63
1.4.1 <i>A Black and Tan force?</i>	65
1.4.2 <i>The changing composition of the British Gendarmerie</i>	70
1.5 CONCLUSION	76
CHAPTER TWO: ‘OUR IRISH CONSTABULARY’: THE BRITISH SECTION OF THE PALESTINE GENDARMERIE AS AN ‘IRISH’ FORCE	81
2.1 INTRODUCTION	81
2.2 THE ‘IRISH MODEL’ IN PALESTINE	81
2.2.1 <i>‘The question of the force’s disposition’</i>	85
2.3 ‘WHAT OTHER EMPLOYMENT WAS THERE?’	93
2.3.1 <i>‘The new dispensation’</i>	97
2.4 ‘YOU COULDN’T TELL WHAT THOSE RUFFIANS WOULD DO’	101
2.5 ‘SURE IT’S ONLY A HOLIDAY’	111
2.6 CONCLUSION	119

CHAPTER THREE: ‘THE IRISH WAY OF THINGS’: THE BLACK AND TANS IN PALESTINE, 1922-48	121
3.1 INTRODUCTION	121
3.2 INDISCIPLINE	122
3.2.1 <i>Fort Tregantle</i>	122
3.2.2 <i>The City of Oxford</i>	126
3.2.3 <i>‘A Legion of the Lost’?</i>	129
3.3 BRUTALITY	138
3.3.1 <i>‘Breaking heads’</i>	143
3.3.2 <i>‘At the cost of a few bruises’</i>	146
3.4 ‘IRELAND IN PALESTINE’	152
3.4.1 <i>‘A pervasive and pernicious influence’?</i>	154
3.4.1 <i>‘A repetition of the Irish show’</i>	164
3.4.2 <i>‘Out-door type of men’</i>	169
3.5 CONCLUSION	175
CHAPTER FOUR: ‘A STRONG SEASONING OF IRISHMEN’: THE BRITISH SECTION OF THE PALESTINE POLICE.....	179
4.1 INTRODUCTION	179
4.2 ‘YOU MEET THEM HERE FROM ALL OVER IRELAND’	180
4.3. THE REASONS FOR IRISH ENLISTMENTS.....	184
4.3.1 <i>‘A good opening’: 1926-1936</i>	184
4.3.2 <i>‘Ex-soldiers dressed in police uniform’: The Arab Revolt</i>	191
4.3.3 <i>World War II</i>	197
4.4 THE POSTWAR PERIOD	204
4.4.1 <i>‘A full blast campaign’</i>	205
4.4.2 <i>‘A ready response’</i>	210
4.4.3 <i>‘Of course, this was manna’</i>	217
4.4.4 <i>‘We were all getting bored’</i>	223
4.5 CONCLUSION	232
CHAPTER 5: ‘FROM THE ASPECT OF IRISHNESS’: THE IRISH EXPERIENCE OF THE BRITISH SECTION OF THE PALESTINE POLICE, 1946-48.....	237
5.1 INTRODUCTION	237
5.2 PERSONAL RELATIONS	238
5.2.1 <i>‘Like we were ourselves’</i>	247
5.2.2 <i>‘The fighting padre’</i>	254
5.2.3 <i>‘These things didn’t enter into it’</i>	259

5.3 PROFESSIONAL RELATIONS	264
5.3.1 <i>'Have you got your Arabic?'</i>	267
5.3.2 <i>'Preference whenever possible'?</i>	272
5.3.3 <i>Conduct and discipline</i>	277
5.3.4 <i>'There is no conscription in my country'</i>	284
5.3.5 <i>'They felt very betrayed'</i>	288
5.4 CONCLUSION	291
CONCLUSION	295
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	312
APPENDICES	335
APPENDIX A: <i>'A POLICEMAN'S LAMENT'</i>	335
APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE	336

List of Tables

TABLE 1: SCHEDULE OF DISCIPLINARY OFFENCES COMMITTED, 19 AUG. - 19 SEPT. 1924	134
TABLE 2: ANNUAL NO. OF HIGHWAY ROBBERIES, 1922-25	152
TABLE 3: PERCENTAGE OF IRISHMEN IN BSPP, 1936-47	183
TABLE 4: PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL IRISH BSPP ENLISTMENTS RECRUITED ANNUALLY, 1940-45	197
TABLE 5: MONTHLY DATA ON BSPP RECRUITMENT DURING MATHER & CROWTHER CAMPAIGN, 1946-47	208
TABLE 6: OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUNDS OF IRISH CIVILIAN ENLISTMENTS, JUNE 1945-NOV. 1947 ...	218
TABLE 7: HOME ALLOTMENTS, 1946-48	220
TABLE 8: NUMBERS OF BSPP PERSONNEL KILLED IN JEWISH TERRORIST ATTACKS, 1939-48	245
TABLE 9: PERCENTAGE OF BSPP CONSTABLES PROMOTED BY RECRUITMENT PERIOD, 1926-48	265
TABLE 10: PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE RATINGS RECEIVED BY IRISH BSPP RANKERS RECRUITED...	271
TABLE 11: BREAKDOWN OF DISCIPLINARY OFFENCES BY POSTWAR BSPP RECRUITS AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL OFFENCES COMMITTED	277
TABLE 12: CONDUCT APPRAISALS FOR BSPP POSTWAR RECRUITS	279
TABLE 13: SCHEDULE OF BSPP DISMISSALS/DISCHARGES, 1936-48	281
TABLE 14: SCHEDULE OF BSPP COMPASSIONATE DISCHARGES, 1936-48	287

List of Figures

FIGURE 1: FR. EUGENE HOADE, JERUSALEM, UNDATED (AUTHOR'S COLLECTION)	2
FIGURE 2: DOUGLAS V. DUFF AS BRITISH INSPECTOR, PALESTINE POLICE (E. O REILLY COLLECTION) ...	9
FIGURE 3: BRITISH GENDARMERIE OFFICERS WITH PALESTINE'S HIGH COMMISSIONER, LORD PLUMER, C. 1925 (D. BOCKETT COLLECTION)	65
FIGURE 4: UNIFORMED GENDARMES, NABLUS C.1923 (AUTHOR'S COLLECTION)	84
FIGURE 5: BRITISH GENDARMES IN JERUSALEM, C.1922. JOHN FAILS SECOND FROM RIGHT (R. FAILS COLLECTION)	104
FIGURE 6: ROBERT HOLMES AS R.I.C. CONSTABLE, C. 1921 (R. HOLMES COLLECTION)	118
FIGURE 7: BRITISH GENDARMERIE ASSEMBLED AT FORT TREGANTLE, APRIL 1922 (R. PORTER COLLECTION)	124
FIGURE 8: GUBERNATORIAL BUILDING AND BRITISH GENDARMERIE HEADQUARTERS, NAZARETH C. 1922 (H. MORRISON COLLECTION)	141
FIGURE 9: PALESTINE POLICE LED BY CAPTAIN FARADAY FACE RIOTERS IN JAFFA, OCTOBER 1933 (AUTHOR'S COLLECTION)	171
FIGURE 10: PALESTINE POLICE RECRUITMENT ADVERTISEMENT, C. JULY 1946 (AUTHOR'S COLLECTION)	207
FIGURE 11: HOADE TAKING POLICEMEN ON A TOUR OF JERUSALEM, UNDATED (M. HIGGINS COLLECTION)	255

List of Abbreviations

ADRIC: Auxiliary Division of the Royal Irish Constabulary

B.L.L.O: British Labour Liaison Office

BMH: Bureau of Military History

BSPP: British Section of the Palestine Police

CEM: Commonwealth & Empire Museum, Bristol

CIGS: Chief of the Imperial General Staff

C.P.M.: Colonial Police Medal

D.E.A.: Department of External Affairs

G.O.C.: General Officer Commanding

I.D.F.: Irish Defence Forces

I.R.A.: Irish Republican Army

K.P.M.: King's Police Medal

MECA: Middle East Centre Archive, Oxford

M.E.D.: Middle East Department

M.P.S.F: Mobile Police Striking Force

P.M.F.: (Palestine) Police Mobile Force

PENREC: Palestine Police pension records

PPAPR: Palestine Police personnel records

PPSRC: Palestine Police service record card

R.A.F.: Royal Air Force

R.I.C.: Royal Irish Constabulary

TNA: The (British) National Archives

Introduction and Literature Survey

This thesis developed out of an original research proposal which focussed on the attitude of the Irish Catholic Church to Zionism in the first half of the twentieth century. As part of preliminary investigations into its viability as a topic, a range of Catholic newspapers and journals sold in Ireland during this period were examined in an attempt to ascertain the extent to which Zionism figured in contemporary Irish Catholic consciousness and the attitudes of both contributors to and consumers of these publications to the Zionist project. This research revealed that several of the reports and commentaries on Palestine that they carried were written by Irish clergy working there on the ground, the most prolific of whom was Fr. Eugene Hoade. Born in Headford, County Galway in 1903, Hoade was educated at the Franciscan College in Multyfarnham and entered the Franciscan noviciate in Killarney in September 1921. A redoubtable scholar, he studied at the University of Louvain before moving to Rome where was ordained in July 1927 and received a doctorate in theology from the Gregorian University one year later. He was sent to Palestine in 1931 as vice-president of the Franciscan Terra Sancta College in Jerusalem, subsequently rising to president. In 1937, Hoade was appointed custodian of the Basilica of Gethsemane (the first Irishman ever to hold the position), serving until 1956 when he was expelled from Jerusalem by the Jordanian authorities.¹ He returned to Rome, taking up residence in the Irish Franciscan College, St. Isidore's, where he remained until his sudden death in March 1972.²

Although Hoade had strident pro-Arab sympathies, his writings from

¹ Gethsemane was situated in east Jerusalem which had come under Jordanian jurisdiction as a result of the 1948-9 Arab-Israeli war and was formally annexed by Amman in April 1950.

² Biographical information on Hoade is compiled from documentation in his private papers held at the Irish Franciscan Archive in Killiney, together with press reports. His controversial career in Palestine is discussed in Chapter V below.

Palestine, which were published in both religious journals and the national press, were largely apolitical, dealing mainly with Biblical history and archaeology (subjects on which he was an acknowledged authority) as well as issues of more contemporary



Figure 1: Fr. Eugene Hoade, Jerusalem, undated (Author's collection)

concern such as Palestine's social and religious customs, the revival of the Hebrew language and issues relating to the Christian holy places.³ In September 1938, he was appointed Catholic chaplain to the Palestine Police. Research into his chaplaincy

³ Hoade's *Guide to the Holy Land*, which went through twenty-three reprints between 1942 and 1984, is still highly regarded today. Eugene Hoade, *Guide to the Holy Land* (Jerusalem, 1942).

revealed an Irish presence at all levels of the force so significant and long-standing that further investigation seemed merited.

This thesis is the result. Its research objective is to reconstruct the history of Irish involvement with the police forces of British Mandated Palestine and, through an examination of five distinct but interrelated aspects of the Irish experience, assess Ireland's impact on Palestine's policing. It focuses on the two police forces in which most Irishmen served. The first is the British Section of the Palestine Gendarmerie (referred to hereafter as the British Gendarmerie), a striking force and riot squad raised by the Colonial Office in early 1922 to reinforce the locally-recruited Palestine Police force which was experiencing difficulties maintaining public order at the time.⁴ The second is the British Section of the Palestine Police (BSPP), formed in April 1926 from the remnants of the recently disbanded British Gendarmerie to support the main 'native' body of the Palestine Police but which, by the mid-1940s, comprised more than half of the force.

Chapter I provides a detailed reconstruction of the raising of the British Gendarmerie. Recruited overwhelmingly from among the disbanding Royal Irish Constabulary (R.I.C.) and its Auxiliary Division (ADRIC), this force marked the beginning of significant Irish involvement in Palestine's policing. It examines attempts by British officials to make the new gendarmerie more politically palatable by obscuring the fact that it was controversially drawn from R.I.C. sources and assesses the impact of its largely 'Black and Tan' composition on public perceptions of the force. Chapter II looks at the British Gendarmerie as 'an Irish Constabulary'. It first examines the extent to which, in terms of organisation, training and ethos, it was

⁴ The distinction between a gendarmerie and a regular police force is important for this thesis. Unlike a regular civil police force which is mainly concerned with the prevention and detection of crime, a gendarmerie is a paramilitary unit which performs security policing and other public order duties among civilian populations.

modelled on the R.I.C. and investigates whether 'Irish'-style influences were imported into its successor, the BSPP. It then explores the reasons why such a significant number of Irish R.I.C. personnel chose, as the 'police notes' column of the *Irish Times* put it, to 'transfer from the "Island of Saints" to the Holy Land' to join the British Gendarmerie, with particular focus on the part played by the campaign conducted against the R.I.C. by Republican elements in late 1921 and early 1922.⁵ The fate of Irish gendarmes after Palestine is also explored. Chapter III examines whether the British Gendarmerie followed the example set by its Irish parent forces in terms of indiscipline and approach to policing and assesses the extent to which the emergence of what were termed 'black-and-tan tendencies' in the BSPP during the Arab and Jewish revolts against the Mandatory in the 1930s and 1940s was a consequence of the force's own R.I.C. roots.

Chapter IV examines the BSPP's Irish contingent. The extent of Irish participation over the course of its twenty-two year career is investigated and the factors which influenced Irish enlistments in four distinct recruitment periods (i.e. 1926-36, the Arab Revolt, the Second World War and the postwar period) are explored. Particular attention is paid to the postwar years during which almost half of all Irish enlistments occurred, largely as a result of a recruitment campaign conducted by the Crown Agents for the Colonies in Britain and Ireland which is here, for the first time, explored. Chapter V examines aspects of the personal and professional experience of Irish postwar recruits and provides a comparative analysis with that of their British-born counterparts. Mindful of Keith Jeffery's exhortation that 'what needs persistently to be addressed' in studies of the contribution of Irish men and women to the British empire is 'the question of whether [their] *Irishness* ... both

⁵ *Irish Times*, 18 Mar. 1922.

individually and as a group, made any specific difference to their experience and service', it assesses the extent to which nationality shaped the personal perspectives and informed aspects of the professional experience of the BSPP's Irish contingent.⁶

The part played by Irishmen in Palestine's policing has not been previously explored: the few extant studies of Ireland and the Palestine Mandate focus on issues such as how the experience of Ireland informed British thinking on Palestine, the extent to which the Irish 'war of independence' provided a model for Jewish separatist and terrorist groups, and Irish opposition to the 1937 Palestine partition plan.⁷ Consequently, data on Irish involvement in the Palestine police services must be gathered almost entirely from primary sources, chief among these personnel records and the personal testimonies of former Irish Palestine policemen and/or their families. BSPP personnel records constitute the most significant part of two major archives devoted to the Palestine Police:

1. the Palestine Police archive held at the Middle East Centre Archive, St. Antony's College, Oxford (MECA) which holds service record cards for over 5,000 BSPP personnel
2. the Palestine Police archive formerly held at Bristol's Commonwealth & Empire Museum (CEM) but recently transferred to the British National Archives in Kew (TNA) which holds more than 6,000 BSPP personnel files and pension records.⁸

⁶ Keith Jeffery, 'Introduction' to Keith Jeffery (ed.), *"An Irish empire"? Aspects of Ireland and the British empire* (Manchester, 1996), pp 1-24, at p. 17.

⁷ See, for example, Rory Miller, "'An Oriental Ireland': thinking about Palestine in terms of the Irish question during the Mandatory era' in Rory Miller (ed.), *Britain, Palestine and the empire: the Mandate years* (Farnham, 2010), pp 157-76; Jonathan Spyer, 'The birth of the idea of revolt: the Irish example and the Irgun Tzvai Leumi' in Rory Miller (ed.), *Ireland and the Middle East: trade, society and peace* (Dublin, 2007), pp 43-55; Shulamit Eliash, *The harp and the Shield of David: Ireland, Zionism and the State of Israel* (London, 2007), pp 13-48 and Colin Schindler, *The triumph of military Zionism: nationalism and the origins of the Israeli right* (London, 2006), pp 143-7.

⁸ TNA has yet to make a decision on the future of these files and they are currently unavailable to researchers. The overwhelming majority of the personnel records held at MECA and CEM pertain to

BSPP personnel records survive for 68 per cent of Irish enlistments including over 90 per cent of those recruited in the postwar period. A quantitative analysis of personal and professional data extracted from these records was used to create a collective profile of the BSPP's Irish contingent. A collective profile of the force's British contingent, based on a 20 per cent sample of British enlistments, was created for the purpose of comparative analysis. The British Gendarmerie's personnel records have been lost, apparently destroyed by its commandant, Col. Angus McNeill, after the disbandment of the force in 1926.⁹ However, data extracted from the R.I.C. and ADRIC registers of service, British military records and British and Irish census returns and civil registration records were used to create detailed personal profiles of individual gendarmes from which collective profiles of the force's Irish and British contingents were constructed.

Personal interviews were conducted by this author with twelve Irish BSPP veterans at locations across Britain and Ireland. Another three Irish veterans provided detailed information via correspondence as did the families of a further twenty-two now deceased.¹⁰ Personal interviews with three more Irish BSPP veterans, two conducted by the Imperial War Museum and one conducted under the auspices of the Middle East Centre's Palestine Police Oral History Project, were also consulted. Personal interviews with fourteen British BSPP veterans conducted as part of this project were used for comparative purposes.¹¹ The families of thirty Irish gendarmes

constables and non-commissioned officers. Almost all the personnel records of police officers of gazetted rank (assistant superintendent and upwards) appear to have been lost during the evacuation of Palestine in 1948.

⁹ Angus McNeill, *Diaries*, vol. 4, 23 May 1926 (MECA, McNeill collection, GB 165-0197 [hereafter McNeill collection], File A no. 1, *Diaries* vols. 1-4 [hereafter McNeill diaries]).

¹⁰ Throughout this dissertation, author interviewees and correspondents are referred to by their forename and the first letter of their surname as are the subjects of correspondence conducted with BSPP families. Where information is taken from BSPP personnel records, the subject is identified by a three-letter pseudonym.

¹¹ To this end, the questionnaire created as the basis for author interviews with Irish BSPP veterans, included here as Appendix B, was modelled on that devised by the Palestine Police Oral History

provided detailed information on their ancestors to this author in conversation or through correspondence.

I

While imperial policing remained a minority interest among historians of the British Empire in the decades following the publication of Sir Charles Jeffries' seminal survey in 1952, the last twenty-five years have seen the emergence of a significant body of academic research on this subject.¹² Its prior neglect is curious given that, as David Anderson and David Killingray (whose edited collections of essays on colonial policing published in the early 1990s did much to stimulate wider interest) point out, the colonial policeman was, through his 'daily contact with the population and enforcing [of] the codes of law that upheld colonial authority ... the most visible public symbol' of imperial rule.¹³ Although British Mandated Palestine was not a colony in the technical sense, it was run like an imperial possession and policed along colonial lines.¹⁴ Therefore units such as the British Gendarmerie and the BSPP were, to all intents and purposes, colonial police forces. Palestine originally attracted less

Project.

¹² Charles Jeffries, *The colonial police* (London, 1952). A prior study by Charles Gwynn, *Imperial policing*, dealt mainly with the role of the British army in the 'policing' of public disturbances during emergency situations such as mutinies and insurrections or under martial law. In fact it was written as the textbook on the subject for use at Camberley army staff college where Gwynn was commandant. Interestingly Gwynn, who was from Donegal and a grandson of William Smith O'Brien, excluded the Irish revolution from his discussion, believing it 'inadvisable to draw on experiences in Ireland, instructive from a military point of view as many of them were'. Charles Gwynn, *Imperial policing*, 2nd edition (London, 1939), p. 8; Georgina Sinclair, 'Gwynn, Sir Charles William (1870-1963)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition [hereafter *ODNB online*], (<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/98221>), accessed 8 Aug. 2013).

¹³ David M. Anderson & David Killingray (eds), *Policing the empire: government, authority and control, 1830-1940* (Manchester, 1991); idem, *Policing and decolonisation: politics, nationalism and the police, 1917-65* (Manchester, 1992). Quotation from David M. Anderson and David Killingray, 'Consent, coercion and colonial control: policing the empire, 1830-1940' in Anderson & Killingray (eds), *Policing the empire*, pp 1-13, at pp 1-2.

¹⁴ Indeed, Britain's hegemony in the Middle East during this period has been variously described as an 'informal' and 'undeclared' empire. Glen Balfour-Paul, 'Britain's informal empire in the Middle East' in Judith M. Brown & Wm. Roger Louis, *The Oxford history of the British empire, vol 4: the twentieth century* (Oxford, 1999), pp 490-513; John Darwin, 'An undeclared empire: the British in the Middle East, 1918-39' in *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, xxvii, no. 2 (2008), pp 159-76.

attention in terms of new research on colonial policing than did India, Africa and indeed Ireland, but there is now a relatively substantial literature in existence. Research has to date dealt primarily with the police response to the Arab and Jewish insurgencies against British rule which, with varying degrees of intensity, lasted from April 1936 until the termination of the Mandate twelve years later. This focus on the 1936-48 period has meant that the British Gendarmerie has been largely ignored in terms of original research, meriting no separate studies and, at most, a few paragraphs in general studies of Palestine's policing. This perhaps partly derives from the paucity of obvious archival sources. The force's administrative records have not survived, probably destroyed by McNeill in May 1926, while what records survive at TNA are spread across departments and, in the case of the most substantial and significant cache, Colonial Office official correspondence on Palestine, CO 733/4 to CO 733/126, not yet fully indexed online.

Consequently, much of what has been written about the British Gendarmerie has been over-reliant on memoir. By far the most important source in this regard has been Douglas Duff. Born in Buenos Aires in 1901 where his father was British consul, Duff served with the merchant navy during the Great War after which, as a result of a vow made to God when his ship was torpedoed, he entered a monastery in Lincolnshire. He left just prior to being professed in April 1921 and joined the Black and Tans one week later, serving in Galway, West Riding. He was disbanded in February 1922 and joined the British Gendarmerie in early April, serving until it too was disbanded in 1926 when he transferred to the Palestine Police with the rank of 'British inspector'. Duff served with the force until 1931 when he was effectively dismissed after being tried on a case of police brutality. His cards had in fact been marked since 1928 when what was seen as his heavy-handed approach to an incident

at Jerusalem's Western Wall was blamed for triggering the series of events which led to the August 1929 anti-Jewish riots which left 250 people dead.¹⁵ Duff subsequently forged a career as an author, writing over one hundred books including several memoirs which dealt with his time in Palestine.¹⁶ Although, generally speaking, he held the British Gendarmerie in high regard, his books paint a rather unflattering picture of life in the force with the harshest criticisms reserved for McNeill at whose



Figure 2: Douglas V. Duff as British Inspector, Palestine Police (E. O Reilly collection)

door Duff laid the blame for most of the problems that arose. But much of what he wrote, particularly in relation to force indiscipline, is embellished, exaggerated or simply untrue.¹⁷ Why Duff chose to, at the very least, accentuate the negative can only be guessed at. Perhaps he felt he had scores to settle over his dismissal from the Palestine Police for he genuinely believed that he had been sacrificed by his superiors (some of them former gendarmes) on the altar of new-found political sensitivities:

¹⁵ In this view of this author, however, Duff's culpability is far from clear. See p. 140, n. 71 below.

¹⁶ These included *Sword for hire: the saga of a modern free-companion* (London, 1934); *Palestine unveiled* (London, 1938); *The rough with the smooth* (London, 1940); *May the winds blow* (London, 1948); *Bailing with a teaspoon* (London, 1953) and *On swallowing the anchor* (London, 1954).

¹⁷ This issue is explored in detail in Chapter III below.

'new Western ideas ... [had] entered the administration' in respect of police procedure in the wake of the 1929 riots and he admitted to being 'guilty by every single one' of the regulations to which they gave rise.¹⁸ Indeed, Duff's one surviving diary, which covers the period of his trial, recorded his anger at his treatment, and the depth of bitterness he felt over what he saw as his scapegoating is also evident in his books.¹⁹ However, Duff's exaggerations and inventions may have been motivated by more prosaic concerns, being merely a means to an end, the end being the production of the type of 'rollicking good yarn' in which he excelled and which earned him a comfortable living. Either way, while his memoirs are a valuable source for the British Gendarmerie (and, to a lesser extent the Palestine Police) they should be handled with care as histories.

The popularity of Duff's books and their long-standing status as the only widely-known firsthand accounts of British Gendarmerie life has ensured their enduring influence as historical sources. The only other published firsthand account, a series of six articles by a former British Gendarmerie sergeant, John Jeans, published in the *Malayan Police Magazine* in the early 1930s (which, while not uncritical, provided a more balanced view of the force) has languished in obscurity ever since.²⁰ Indeed, all subsequent discussions of the British Gendarmerie incorporate to some degree Duff's claims. Most significant in this regard is Edward Horne's *A Job Well Done* which, as the only general survey of the police services of Mandated Palestine,

¹⁸ Duff, *Bailing*, p. 209.

¹⁹ Unfortunately and intriguingly, the final pages of this diary, which would appear to have dealt with his guilty verdict, have been cut out. Douglas Duff, Diary Nov. 1930 - Aug. 1931 (MS in possession of E. O Reilly, Kent).

²⁰ John E. Jeans, 'The British (Palestine) Gendarmerie' in *Malayan Police Magazine*: Part 1, vol. 4, no. 8 (Aug. 1931), pp 230-3; Part 2, vol. 4, no. 9 (Sept. 1931), pp 257-60; Part 3, vol. 4, no. 10 (Oct. 1931), pp 283-6; Part 4, vol. 4, no. 11 (Nov. 1931), pp 310-13; Part 5, vol. 4, no. 12 (Dec. 1931), pp 338-41; Part 6, vol. 5, no. 1 (Jan. 1932), pp 25-8.

has itself been heavily referenced by historians.²¹ However, Horne largely eschews archival sources; that information on the British Gendarmerie which is not derived from Duff is based almost entirely on conversations or correspondence with former gendarmes. While much of it is of great interest, this type of reminiscence is sometimes unreliable as history, particularly when the subject strays beyond their own personal experiences. Consequently, many of Horne's assertions are contradicted by the archival record. From a factual perspective, his chapters on the Palestine Police are far better researched. However, the value of his analysis is diminished by his status as what might be termed an 'apologist' for the force, particularly the BSPP in which he himself served in the 1940s, and he is engagingly upfront about the fact that he has sought to put its best face forward.²² These criticisms notwithstanding, *A Job Well Done* contains a wealth of indispensable data and it is, and will long remain, the essential starting point for any study of the Palestine police services.

Among academic historians, discussions of the British Gendarmerie have been almost wholly concerned with the force's R.I.C. origins and the evidence this provides for the influence of an 'Irish ethos' on the development of colonial policing. The idea that the R.I.C. provided the dominant model for colonial policing was first advanced by Jeffries who argued that its paramilitary organisation, training and ethos and its centralised control made it a more 'suitable model for adaptation to colonial conditions... [than] the purely civilian and localised forces of Great Britain'.²³ According to Jeffries, the development of the colonial police could be divided into three phases. The first was 'one of more or less improvised arrangements for securing the basic essentials of law and order' in newly-acquired colonial possessions such as

²¹ Edward Horne, *A job well done: a history of the Palestine Police Force 1920-1948* (Lewes, 2003).

²² Edward Horne, Hampshire, Interview with author, 5 Aug. 2009.

²³ Jeffries, *Colonial police*, p. 31.

were implemented in Jamaica and Ceylon in the first half of the nineteenth century. The second, which began in the latter half of the nineteenth century and was introduced into British territories up to and including the first decades of the twentieth, was ‘the establishment of semi-military constabulary forces modelled upon the [R.I.C.] and organised mainly with a view to the suppression of crimes of violence and mass outbreaks against the peace’ while the third was the ‘conversion of these semi-military constabularies into civilian police forces’ which was ongoing, he believed, as he wrote.²⁴ Despite the fact that, as discussed in Chapter II below, the British Gendarmerie was a prime illustrative example of Jeffries’ ‘phase two’, he devoted just two short paragraphs to the force, both inaccurate in detail.²⁵

Jeffries’ assessment of R.I.C. influence on imperial policing has since been challenged by Richard Hawkins who argues that the fact that a given police force was government-controlled and paramilitary in character; included former R.I.C. personnel; and during the establishment of which the ‘example of the Irish force [was] explicitly considered’, is not in itself sufficient to prove that it was actually modelled on the R.I.C. and he suggests that the gendarmeries of continental Europe should also be used as comparators.²⁶ Yet Jeffries’ theory remains, as Hawkins acknowledges, very much the most influential. Most notably, Georgina Sinclair has argued for its continuing validity.²⁷ For Sinclair, the significance of the British Gendarmerie derives from the fact that it served as the conduit for the importation of the traditions of the

²⁴ Ibid., pp 32-3.

²⁵ Ibid., pp 153-4.

²⁶ Richard Hawkins, ‘The Irish model and the empire: a case for reassessment’ in Anderson & Killingray, *Policing the empire*, pp 18-31, at p. 19.

²⁷ Georgina Sinclair, *At the end of the line: colonial policing and the imperial endgame, 1945-80* (Manchester, 2006), pp 19-22. See also idem, “‘Get into a crack force and earn £20 a month all found’: the influence of the Palestine Police upon colonial policing, 1922-1948’ in *European Review of History*, xiii, no. 1 (2006), pp 49-65, at p. 51 and idem, ‘The Irish Policeman and the empire: influencing the policing of the British Empire-Commonwealth’ in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxvi, no. 142 (2008), pp 173-87, at pp 177-9.

R.I.C. into the Palestine Police which, she maintains, itself provided the dominant model for the colonial police from the early 1930s onwards, with the result that the R.I.C.'s imprint on colonial policing persisted until the empire's end. She does, however, take issue with Jeffries' assumption that the transmission of policing influences was unidirectional (i.e. from the British metropole to the empire), arguing that there was 'cross-fertilisation' between home and colonial forces.²⁸

While similarities between the R.I.C. and the Palestine police services in terms of issues such as government control, command structure, nomenclature and training are noted and, as discussed in Chapter II below, occasionally overstated by Sinclair and others (Sinclair's discussions of Palestine's policing are also littered with fundamental errors of fact), references to an 'Irish ethos' in this context generally pertain to the paramilitary character and function of the British Gendarmerie and the BSPP and the robust approach to policing to which, it is claimed, this occasionally gave rise. The view that the R.I.C. stood on the wrong side of Irish history perhaps explains its long-standing neglect by historians although this has been rectified in recent decades by new research, some of which challenges the orthodoxies of Irish nationalist historiography. Important surveys of Irish policing in the pre-independence period have been published by Donal O'Sullivan and Elizabeth Malcolm²⁹ and specific aspects of the history of the R.I.C. in revolutionary Ireland and, indeed, afterwards, have been addressed in journal articles and book chapters.³⁰ The Black

²⁸ Georgina Sinclair & Chris A. Williams, "'Home and away': the cross-fertilisation between 'colonial' and 'British' policing, 1921-85" in *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, xxxv, no. 2 (2007), pp 221-38. See also Gerry Northam, *Shooting in the dark: riots police in Britain* (London, 1988), pp 126-39.

²⁹ Donal O'Sullivan, *The Irish constabularies 1822-1922: a century of policing in Ireland* (Dingle, 1999); Elizabeth Malcolm, *The Irish policeman, 1822-1922: a life* (Dublin, 2006).

³⁰ See, for example, W. J. Lowe and Elizabeth L. Malcolm, 'The domestication of the Royal Irish Constabulary 1836-1922' in *Irish Economic and Social History*, xix (1992) pp 27-48; David Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish life: provincial experience of war and revolution* (Cork, 1998), pp 3-39; Charles Townshend, 'Policing insurgency in Ireland, 1914-23' in Anderson & Killingray, *Policing and decolonisation*, op. cit., pp 22-41; Paul Leonard, "'Spies in our midst': the boycott of the Royal Irish

and Tans and Auxiliaries have also been freshly scrutinised, with quantitative analyses of data extracted from the registers of service of the R.I.C. and the ADRIC by W. J. Lowe, A. D. Harvey and, most recently, D. M. Leeson providing an accurate picture of their composition, one which fatally undermines the popular notion that these men were drawn from the criminal classes – ‘jailbirds and down-and-outs’, ‘dirty tools for a dirty job’, the ‘scum of London’s underworld’ and so on and so forth.³¹ But while Leeson’s research in particular, together with Anne Dolan’s pioneering work on the violence of the Irish revolution, suggests that a reassessment of the causes of police brutality during this period is now required, the traditional narrative regarding the behaviour of the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries remains largely intact.³²

The view that these men behaved with similar licence in Palestine has been most recently advanced by Richard Cahill who claims, mainly with reference to Duff, that they went ‘went berserk’ in the country and were largely responsible for the notorious reputations earned by the British Gendarmerie and the BSPP.³³ However, as

Constabulary, 1916-21’ in Philip Bull, Frances Devlin-Glass and Helen Doyle (eds), *Ireland and Australia, 1798-1998: studies in culture, identity and migration* (Sydney, 2000), pp 313-20; Brian Hughes, ‘Persecuting the Peelers’ in David Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Terror in Ireland, 1916-1923* (Dublin, 2012), pp 206-18; Kent Fedorowich, ‘The problems of disbandment: the Royal Irish Constabulary and imperial migration’ in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxx, no. 117 (1996), pp 88-110. Mention must here be made of the painstaking work of Jim Herlihy, particularly his alphabetical index of its members, which has greatly facilitated subsequent research. Jim Herlihy, *The Royal Irish Constabulary: a complete alphabetical list of officers and men, 1816-1922* (Dublin, 1999); idem, *Royal Irish Constabulary officers: a biographical dictionary and genealogical guide, 1816-1922* (Dublin, 2005); idem, *The Royal Irish Constabulary: a short history and genealogical guide* (Dublin, 1997).

³¹ W. J. Lowe, ‘Who Were the Black and Tans?’ in *History Ireland*, xii, no. 3 (2004), pp 47-51; A. D. Harvey, ‘Who were the Auxiliaries?’ in *The Historical Journal*, xxxv, no. 3 (1992), pp 665-9; D. M. Leeson, *The Black and Tans: British police and auxiliaries in the Irish War of Independence* (Oxford, 2011). See also idem, ‘The scum of London’s underworld? British recruits for the Royal Irish Constabulary, 1920-21’ in *Contemporary British History*, xvii, no. 1 (2003), pp 1-38.

³² See, for example, Anne Dolan, ‘Killing and Bloody Sunday, November 1920’ in *The Historical Journal*, xlix, no. 3 (2006), pp 789-810; idem, ‘Ending war in a “sportsmanlike manner”: the milestone of revolution, 1919-23’ in Thomas E. Hachey (ed.), *Turning points in twentieth century Irish history* (Dublin, 2011), pp 21-38; idem, ‘The British culture of paramilitary violence in the Irish War of Independence’ in Robert Gerwarth & John Horne (eds), *War in peace: paramilitary violence in Europe after the Great War* (Oxford, 2012), pp 200-15. See also Charles Townshend, *The Republic: the fight for Irish independence* (London, 2013), pp 159-71.

³³ Richard Andrew Cahill, ‘“Going berserk”: Black and Tans in Palestine’ in *Jerusalem Quarterly*, 39

discussed in Chapter III below, the idea that the British Gendarmerie ‘went berserk’ in Palestine derives more from prejudice about its composition than evidence of its actual conduct and to equate its behaviour with that of its Irish parent forces is inaccurate and unfair. In a follow-up article, Cahill looks at how the term Black and Tan ‘went from being a mere description of a group of auxiliary police to describing an image or representation of a mode of behaviour that was given negative attributes’ in Palestine.³⁴ This is an interesting issue. But Cahill’s analysis is laboured and under-researched and ignores that fact that the use of the ‘Black and Tan’ label was not exclusive to Palestine during this time. Most notably, it was commonly applied to British security forces in India by militants such as Subhas Chandra Bose and pacifists like Gandhi alike.³⁵

Cahill is not alone in attributing responsibility for incidents of police brutality by the British Gendarmerie and the BSPP to the presence of ex-R.I.C. in their ranks. In fact, this has become something of an article of faith among historians of imperial policing. For example, in his classic analysis of counterinsurgency in the British colonial context, Charles Townshend argues that ‘the effect of the Black and Tan ethos on the infant police system in Palestine ... was predictably considerable’ while Nick Kardahji describes the influence of these men on the Palestine Police as ‘pervasive and pernicious’.³⁶ Charles Smith presents the most closely argued case,

(2009), pp 59-68.

³⁴ Richard Andrew Cahill, ‘The image of Black and Tans in late Mandate Palestine’ in *Jerusalem Quarterly*, 40 (2009), pp 43-51, at p. 44. This point has been taken up by Matthew Hughes who describes ‘Black and tan methods’ as ‘the neologism used to describe the brutality of the police force in Palestine’. Matthew Hughes, ‘A British “foreign legion”? The British police in Mandate Palestine’ in *Middle Eastern Studies*, xlix, no. 5 (2013), pp 696-711, at p. 698.

³⁵ Caoilfhionn Ní Bheacháin, ‘“Ireland, a warning to India”: anti-imperialist solidarity in the Irish Free State’ in Tadhg Foley and Maureen O’Connor (eds), *Ireland and India: colonies, culture and empire* (Dublin, 2006), pp 268-77, at p. 277, n. 2. See also Michael Silvestri, ‘“The Sinn Féin of India”: Irish nationalism and the policing of revolutionary terrorism in Bengal’ in *Journal of British Studies*, xxxix, no. 4 (2000), pp 454-86, at p. 483.

³⁶ Charles Townshend, *Britain’s civil wars: counter-insurgency in the twentieth century* (London, 1986), p. 92; Nick Kardahji, ‘A measure of restraint: the Palestine Police and the end of the British

contending that the manner in which he believes Black and Tan veterans serving in the Palestine Police were able to shape the ethos of the force led directly to the Farran affair.³⁷ These views are comprehensively critiqued in Chapter III below.

Some dissent from such views has already been articulated by John Knight who describes them as ‘questionable’ although he bases his belief on the mistaken assumption that ‘there is precious little information about the day-to-day activities of the British gendarmes’. Christopher Hammond agrees, asserting that claims for the formative influence of the Black and Tans on Palestine’s policing ‘cannot be wholly sustained’ and arguing that the decision to use gendarmerie-style forces derived from ideological factors.³⁸ In fact Hammond and Knight are at one in seeing the policing of Palestine as ‘ideological’ in nature. Making full use of the CO 733 series of colonial correspondence, Hammond presents the more developed discussion, arguing that, in terms of organisation, duties and distribution, the Palestine police forces of the 1920-36 period were configured with the primary aim of promoting the Jewish National Home: ‘security was only a secondary factor in determining what kind of forces should police Palestine’ as precedence was given to Zionist interests over the country’s actual policing requirements. ‘What determined the distribution and work of the security forces in the country was not the terrain or economics but Zionism’.³⁹

Mandate (M.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2007), p. 45.

³⁷ Charles Smith, ‘Communal conflict and insurrection in Palestine, 1936-48’ in Anderson & Killingray, *Policing and decolonisation*, above cit., pp 62-83, at p. 79. This article is basically a distillation of his Ph.D. thesis. See Charles Smith, ‘Two revolts in Palestine: an examination of the British response to the Arab and Jewish rebellion, 1936-48 (Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge University, 1989). The Farran affair is discussed at pp 23-6 below.

³⁸ John L. Knight, ‘Policing in British Palestine, 1917-1939’ (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2008), p. 318; Christopher Hammond, ‘Ideology and consensus: the policing of the Palestine Mandate, 1920-1936’ (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1991), p. 369. See also John L. Knight, ‘Securing Zion? Policing in British Palestine, 1917-1939’ in *European Review of History*, xviii, no. 4 (2010), pp 523-43.

³⁹ Hammond, ‘Ideology’, pp 129, 21. Moshen Saleh makes a similar case, arguing that ‘the essence of British military and security formula in Palestine was the smooth establishment of the Jewish national home with the minimum costs of lives and money’. Moshen M. Saleh, ‘British-Zionist military cooperation in Palestine, 1917-1939’ in *Intellectual Discourse*, xi, no. 2 (2003), pp 139-63, at p. 143.

Even the fact that the Palestine Police was composed mainly of Palestinian (primarily Arab) policemen during this period is seen as having an ideological importance in that it, not only provided the illusion of rule by consent which Hammond believes held the Mandate together, but fulfilled the 'pro-Zionist preference for a type of policing which would not antagonise the Arab masses'.⁴⁰ The British Gendarmerie was, he maintains, a prime example of 'ideological policing', being deployed to facilitate the removal of the increasingly anti-Zionist British army from Palestine and fulfil the essential requirement of having a policing force which did not require popular support and so could promote Zionist interests.⁴¹ Although Knight also sees the army's anti-Zionism as 'the overriding factor' in its removal from Palestine, he acknowledges the significance of what was in fact an equally, if not more critical consideration - the requirement to reduce the costs of maintaining Palestine's military garrison which the colonial secretary, Winston Churchill, believed to be inordinate and unaffordable.⁴² This Hammond underplays, suggesting that the fact that the British Gendarmerie turned out to be a relatively expensive force indicates that the economic argument made for its establishment was a smokescreen behind which ideological considerations were concealed. However, this runs contrary to the consistently expressed view of the Colonial Office, including Churchill himself, that every issue in the Middle East was secondary to the requirement for reductions in expense, and ignores the fact that the issue of imperial military expenditure had been exercising him since his time at the War Office when he bore no responsibility for Palestine's political future. The decision to use mainly locally-recruited rather than purely British police units in a country in which the pitfalls of relying on the former had been

⁴⁰ Hammond, 'Ideology', pp 368-9.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 168.

⁴² Knight, 'Policing', pp 96-100.

evident since 1920 was also driven by economics rather than ideology and followed the convention among the colonial police of having a 'native' rank and file.

Hammond and Knight are on a surer footing in arguing that the decision to disband the British Gendarmerie was informed primarily by ideological considerations. Most historians have cited a combination of a desire for cost savings and complacency on the part of the authorities regarding the security situation after four years of relative peace in Palestine as the reason for the decision to disband the force in 1926.⁴³ However, both Hammond and Knight correctly identify the critical part played by the ideological conflict between the Colonial Office and the Palestine Government over the British Gendarmerie's character, i.e. whether it was to operate primarily as a civil police service or a paramilitary striking force. The importance of this issue has also been highlighted by Jeffrey Rudd in his account of the formation of the Transjordan Frontier Force (TJFF).⁴⁴

The primary importance of Knight's thesis is its focus on the long-neglected Palestinian or 'native' section of the Palestine Police in the 1930s. The issue of its relations with the BSPP was previously touched on by Horne and by Joshua Caspi who described a relationship built on developing mutual respect and camaraderie, and by Christopher Hammond who painted a more negative picture in which relations were defined by the racial hostility of the British police towards their Arab and Jewish colleagues.⁴⁵ Knight takes a similar view to Hammond, arguing that, despite the lip-service paid to the ideal of personal and professional integration, the British and

⁴³ See, for example, Bernard Wasserstein, *The British in Palestine: the Mandatory government and the Arab-Jewish conflict, 1917-1929* (Oxford, 1991), pp 158-9; Joshua Caspi, 'Policing the Holy Land, 1918-1957: the transition from a colonial to a national model of policing and changing conceptions of police accountability' (Ph.D., City University of New York, 1991), p. 140; Martin Kolinsky, *Law, order and riots in Mandatory Palestine* (London, 1993), pp 25-7 and John Marlowe, *The Seat of Pilate: an account of the Palestine Mandate* (California, 1959), p. 113.

⁴⁴ Jeffrey Rudd, 'The origins of the Transjordan Frontier Force' in *Middle Eastern Studies*, xxvi, no. 2 (1990), pp 161-84.

⁴⁵ Horne, *Job*, p. 168; Caspi, 'Policing', p. 92; Hammond, 'Ideology', pp 273-6.

Palestinian sections remained segregated bordering on estranged, with serious repercussions for the overall efficiency of the force.⁴⁶ He also explores in detail the role of the Palestinian section, rescuing some of its senior officers from undeserved historical obscurity in the process.

II

Although the policing of the 1936-9 Arab Revolt traditionally attracted less attention in terms of research than the subsequent Jewish insurgency, it has been subjected to closer scrutiny in recent decades, with most studies concentrating on the failure of the Palestine Police to deal adequately with the crisis. Tom Bowden argues that the removal of the British Gendarmerie was ‘a major turning point on the public security front’ in Palestine in that it resulted in the Arab section of the Palestine Police ‘becoming increasingly predominant – despite [its] reluctance to prosecute rebellious fellow Arabs’ on religious and racial grounds.⁴⁷ This reluctance, which led to its professional collapse in both 1929 and 1936-9, derived from a stronger allegiance among Arab policemen to their own community than the ‘feeble one they felt for the Mandate’. Indeed, by 1936 ‘the Arab police were so deficient in allegiance to the Mandate that they had become much more of a threat to, than a guarantor of, public security’.⁴⁸ Knight is highly critical of what he terms Bowden’s ‘simplistic assumptions regarding the Arab police’, claiming that the commonly-held view that they displayed partisanship towards their own community when policing inter-

⁴⁶ Knight, ‘Policing’, pp 186-93. This issue is discussed in Chapter V below.

⁴⁷ Tom Bowden, *The breakdown of public security: the case of Ireland 1916-1921 and Palestine 1936-1939* (London, 1977), pp 166-7. See also idem, ‘Policing Palestine 1920-36: some problems of public security under the Mandate’ in George L. Mosse (ed.), *Police forces in history* (London, 1975), pp 115-30.

⁴⁸ Bowden, *Breakdown*, pp 151, 171.

communal conflicts is based on ‘assertion’ rather than evidence.⁴⁹ And while he does acknowledge their unreliability during the Arab Revolt, he attributes this less to racial/religious affiliations and pro-rebel sympathies than to the impossible situation into which the Arab police were thrust by having to inflict increasingly harsh punishment on their own people. The intimidation of themselves and their families to which this gave rise, often culminating in murder, inevitably led to the Arab section’s collapse.⁵⁰ Bowden’s conclusion that ‘a history of the Arab section of the Palestine Police is one of episodic collapse in the face of politico-religious tests and targeted terrorism’ is, however, generally sound.⁵¹ there is clear evidence of its unreliability during the inter-communal disturbances of 1920, 1921 and 1929 and while Knight is correct in noting its relative professionalism during rioting in 1933, these disturbances were not inter-communal but directed at the British administration itself.

Drawing heavily on Bowden, Joshua Caspi also maintains that the seeds of the failure of the Palestine Police were sown in 1926 when the gendarmeries were effectively replaced by a largely Arab police force. The dissolution of the British Gendarmerie (which he considers to have been ‘a decisive factor in the maintenance of law, peace and order in Palestine in the years of its existence’) stripped the security services of its most effective element and left them utterly ill-prepared for challenge presented by the 1929 riots.⁵² The capabilities of the Palestine Police were enhanced in the wake of the riots as a result of a root and branch reform of the force recommended by the police chief of British Ceylon and acknowledged imperial

⁴⁹ Knight, ‘Policing’, p. 58.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 255. Interestingly, Shawqi al-‘Abbushi, a large landowner and official of the Palestine Government, saw these murders as the ‘main reason’ for the failure of the insurgency. ‘Honest people were killed [by the rebels] and their families took revenge on the revolt’. Cited in Sonia el-Nimr, ‘The Arab Revolt of 1936-1939 in Palestine: a study based on oral sources’ (Ph.D. thesis, University of Exeter, 1990), p. 226.

⁵¹ Bowden, *Breakdown*, p. 169.

⁵² Caspi, ‘Policing’, p. 69.

policing expert, Sir Herbert Dowbiggan, and implemented by his protégé Roy Spicer, whom he had installed as inspector-general in 1931. But the force remained too compromised to mount an adequate response to the Arab Revolt, being too small and too dependent on its Arab section which showed itself once again to be unreliable in emergency situations involving its own community. Moreover, the insurgency caught the Palestine Police unawares which Caspi largely attributes to its reliance on its Arab section for intelligence (there being a near-absence of proficient Arabic speakers in the BSPP) which was not forthcoming. In the final analysis, the events of 1929 and 1936-9 proved that the disbanding of the British Gendarmerie and the dependence on the Arab police to which it gave rise was ‘a mistake that lost lives’.⁵³

Martin Kolinsky advances similar arguments to Caspi. He too considers the gendarmeries’ disbandment ill-judged, arguing that by virtually erasing Palestine’s ‘thin line of internal security’, it led directly to the horror of August 1929.⁵⁴ Kolinsky also maintains that the performance of the Palestine Police was significantly improved by the Dowbiggan/Spicer reforms, citing its success in quelling the 1933 riots, the killing of Sheikh Izzadin al-Qassam in November 1935, the provision of increased security for Jewish settlements, and a ‘better organised and diligent’ criminal investigations department (C.I.D.), although he too notes its over-reliance on the Arab section for intelligence.⁵⁵ But the force was, he argues, simply overwhelmed by the scale of the Arab Revolt.

According to Kolinsky, the Arab Revolt could still have been quickly checked by ‘an exceedingly active Government policy which relied on military initiatives to

⁵³ Ibid., p. 140.

⁵⁴ Kolinsky, *Law*, pp 28-30. Although Kolinsky presents the 1929 riots as being largely pre-planned by the Arabs, his case for this is rather overstated. Martin Kolinsky, ‘Premeditation in the Palestine disturbances of August 1929?’ in *Middle Eastern Studies*, xxvi, no. 1 (1990), pp 18-34. See also Pinhas Ofer, ‘The Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August 1929: appointment, terms of reference, procedure and report’ in *Middle Eastern Studies*, xxi, no. 3 (1985), pp 349-61.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 224.

root out extremist cells' requiring the early imposition of martial law and Charles Townshend agrees.⁵⁶ In a penetrating (if, at times, over-theoretical) discussion of the British response to the Arab Revolt, he argues that its handling was 'a textbook example of vacillation'.⁵⁷ For too long the British authorities refused to treat the insurgency as the national uprising it clearly was but as a crime wave, the suppression of which therefore fell to a Palestine Police force quite obviously unequal to the task. What was required, Townshend argues, was martial law. That the British recognised this was evidenced by the belated transfer of responsibility for the counterinsurgency to the army in late 1938. This included control of the Palestine Police which, as a result of the recommendations of Sir Charles Tegart,⁵⁸ the former Bengal police commissioner and counter-terrorism expert drafted in as 'advisor' to the Palestine Police in 1937, was itself being increasingly militarised in terms of both its composition (its establishment was increased almost five-fold, mainly with serving soldiers and ex-servicemen) and its approach to policing the insurgency. This militarization of the counterinsurgency led to punitive measures which, as Matthew Hughes and Jacob Norris have comprehensively documented, became increasingly brutal.⁵⁹ In fact so harsh were the methods used that, according to Townshend, any advantage accrued was outweighed by the political fallout – an irreparable breach in the relationship between the British administration and Palestine's Arabs. The existence of such a breach is, however, questionable. So too is his contention that the

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp 226-7. See also Martin Kolinsky, 'Reorganisation of the Palestine Police after the riots of 1929' in *Studies in Zionism*, x, no. 2 (1989), pp 155-73.

⁵⁷ Charles Townshend, 'The defence of Palestine: insurrection and public security, 1936-1939' in *English Historical Review*, ciii, no. 409 (1988), pp 917-49, at p. 918.

⁵⁸ See p. 91, n. 33 below.

⁵⁹ Matthew Hughes, 'The banality of brutality: British armed forces and the repression of the Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936-39' in *English Historical Review*, cxxiv, no. 507 (2009), pp 313-54; idem, 'From law and order to pacification: Britain's suppression of the Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936-39' in *Journal of Palestine Studies*, xxiv, no. 2 (2010), pp 1-17; Jacob Norris, 'Repression and rebellion: Britain's response to the Arab Revolt in Palestine of 1936-39' in *Journal of Imperial & Commonwealth History*, xxxvi, no. 1 (2008), pp 25-45.

failure to officially impose martial law meant that ‘the rebellion was stalled but never crushed’: Norris convincingly concludes that ‘a greater emphasis on British repression must be attributed to [its] collapse’.⁶⁰

While Kolinsky and Townshend focus on the limits imposed on police militarization in the 1930s, others explore its extent. Gad Krozier, for example, examines the manner in which attempts to civilianise the Palestine Police as part of the Dowbiggan reforms were halted by the outbreak of the Arab Revolt and, in his view, effectively scuppered by the pursuit of a more militarised approach to police counterinsurgency.⁶¹ This process is also cogently analysed by Sinclair who notes that Dowbiggan’s attempts ‘to transform the police into a civil-style operation were thwarted by the need for paramilitary policing as the security situation worsened’.⁶² Unlike Krozier, she highlights the contradictions inherent in Sir Charles Tegart’s approach in that, while he drew on the Dowbiggan report to argue that what was required was ‘a really efficient [civil] Police Force’, he in fact embraced a paramilitary solution when he realized that ‘the stark reality was that a theory of a civil police force ran counter to the harsh exigencies of the situation’.⁶³ Sinclair demonstrates that the same was true of the Jewish Revolt of the 1940s which, while it saw responsibility for counterinsurgency revert to the Palestine Police, inevitably led to the further militarization of the force in response to the deepening security crisis, most notably the formation of the gendarmerie-style Police Mobile Force (P.M.F.) in 1944 originally recruited from British military sources. The militarization of the Palestine Police in this manner was criticised two years later in yet another report on

⁶⁰ Townshend, ‘Defence’, p. 927; Norris, ‘Repression’, pp 40-1. See also Ted Swedenburg, ‘The role of the Palestinian peasantry in the Great Revolt, 1936-1939’ in Albert Hourani et al. (eds), *The modern Middle East: a reader* (London, 2004), pp 467-502, at p. 493.

⁶¹ Gad Krozier, ‘From Dowbiggan to Tegart: revolutionary change in the colonial police in Palestine during the 1930s’ in *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, xxxii, no. 2 (2004), pp 115-33.

⁶² Sinclair, *End*, p 105.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

the force, this time by the former inspector-general of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (R.U.C.), Sir Charles Wickham,⁶⁴ who argued that policemen resented a military atmosphere. But although he recommended the force's reorganisation on civil lines, he insisted that the P.M.F. be incorporated into the regular police force, thus preserving a paramilitary aspect: as in 1936-9, 'the worsening of the situation ... precluded any change to the military nature of the police'.⁶⁵

This process of militarization culminated in the formation of the 'Q squads' in March 1947, two commando-style snatch squads which, while nominally part of the Palestine Police, were run by army officers seconded for this purpose. These squads were instructed to use what were euphemistically described as 'unconventional' methods to tackle the Jewish insurgency which, broadly-speaking, meant actively mixing with the enemy to provoke confrontation but not to open fire first. Given the degree to which these instructions skirted the borderline of illegality, it is little wonder that the commandant of one of the squads, a highly-decorated military veteran and former Special Air Service (S.A.S.) commando called Roy Farran, believed himself to have been given, in his own words, 'a carte blanche' to deal with Jewish terrorists.⁶⁶

Rather predictably, this initiative ended in scandal. In May 1947, Farran's squad abducted Alexander Rubowitz, a sixteen year-old member of the 'Stern Gang' who was putting up anti-British posters in Jerusalem. The police initially denied all knowledge of his disappearance but an accumulation of circumstantial evidence gave rise to a press campaign which the British authorities could not ignore. The squads were quickly wound down and their members arrested before being eventually re-assigned to regular policing duties. Despite the fact that Rubowitz's body was never

⁶⁴ See p. 92, n. 37 below.

⁶⁵ Sinclair, *End*, p. 109. This issue is discussed in Chapter II below.

⁶⁶ Roy Farran, *Winged dagger: adventures on special service* (London, 1948), p. 348.

found, Farran was tried for his murder in September. He was eventually acquitted and continued to protest his innocence until his death in 2006 and indeed early accounts of the affair such as that by David Charters were ambivalent as to his guilt.⁶⁷ However, research by David Cesarani based on recently-released files at TNA has conclusively proved both Farran's culpability and the fact that the political, military and judicial authorities in Palestine were aware of it at the time, Farran having confessed to his superior officer, Bernard Fergusson, to having smashed Rubowitz's skull with a stone.⁶⁸ Cesarani describes the cover-up in which the authorities subsequently connived as an 'example of colonial misrule' which 'helped to strip British rule of whatever legitimacy it still had in the eyes of the Jewish inhabitants of Palestine and to many more around the world'.⁶⁹ Nonetheless, Farran remains something of a hero among veterans of the Palestine Police.⁷⁰

Horne maintains that while the 'Q Squads' were 'a good idea and the reasoning that led to their formation very compelling', their usefulness was compromised by the fact that they were run by soldiers rather than trained policemen.⁷¹ For Cesarani, however, the entire concept 'was based on a series of fallacies that rendered [them] totally inappropriate for Palestine': it was 'at best half-baked, at worst hare-brained' and the lessons learnt from the experiment 'amounted to

⁶⁷ David Charters, 'Special operations in counter-insurgency: the Farran case, Palestine 1947' in *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute*, cxxiv (1979), pp 56-61. Similarly with Thomas Mockaitis to whom it seemed 'highly unlikely' that Farran committed the crime; Horne who described Rubowitz as 'disappeared, presumed dead'; and Sinclair who simply stated that Rubowitz's murderer 'remained unidentified'. Thomas Mockaitis, *British counterinsurgency, 1919-60* (London, 1990), p. 44; Horne, *Job*, p. 566; Sinclair, *End*, p. 115.

⁶⁸ See David Cesarani, *Major Farran's hat: murder, scandal and Britain's war against Jewish terrorism, 1945-1948* (London, 2009) and idem, 'The war on terror that failed: British counter-insurgency in Palestine, 1945-1947 and the "Farran affair"' in *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, xxiii, nos. 4-5 (2012), pp 648-70. For self-serving personal accounts by Fergusson and Farran see Bernard Fergusson, *The trumpet in the hall, 1930-1958* (London, 1970), pp 227-40 and Farran, *Winged dagger*, pp 347-351.

⁶⁹ Cesarani, *Major Farran's hat*, pp 209, vii.

⁷⁰ See p. 290 below.

⁷¹ Horne, *Job*, p. 566.

a list of what not to do'.⁷² Charles Smith agrees, arguing that they 'had no logical or sensible role to play' in police counterinsurgency. And while Horne presents their behaviour as something of an aberration in terms of Palestine policing, Smith takes a diametrically opposite view. As in other territories, policing in Palestine was always, he argues, 'an uneasy compromise between the wish to govern with the consent of the population and the need to rule by force': 'Irish'-style paramilitarism had been a defining feature since the arrival of the British Gendarmerie in 1922 and, despite what he terms the apparent 'redefinition' of the Palestine Police by Dowbiggan/Spicer, it still 'remained an uneasy coalition of police force and riot squad' in the first half of the 1930s. But 'the state of almost permanent revolt that engulfed Palestine from 1936 was responsible for ensuring that the coercive side to policing predominated'. Therefore, the 'Q squads' were, he argues, 'a logical extension of what had been created in earliest days of the Mandate' and the Farran affair 'a fitting conclusion to the history of British policing in Palestine'.⁷³

Kardahji agrees. While he notes the formative influence of the undercover military units to which Farran and other members belonged during the war on the operations of the 'Q squads', he argues that 'it would be misguided ... to dismiss Farran as an aberration, bearing no relation to the rest of the Palestine Police force'.⁷⁴ On the contrary, he believes the 'Q squads' were 'crucial in shaping and nurturing police violence' during the Jewish Revolt.⁷⁵ Like Orde Wingate's Special Night Squads which had terrorised the Arab population during the 1936-9 period, 'every

⁷² Cesarani, *Major Farran's hat*, pp 217; idem, 'War', p. 664.

⁷³ Smith, 'Communal conflict', pp 77-9.

⁷⁴ Kardahji, 'Measure', p. 92. Y. S. Brenner cites international influences on the actions of the insurgents as well: 'terrorism in Palestine was a reflection of international "terrorism", lawlessness, and disrespect for human life which characterised the 1940s. The Jewish terrorists were trained by, or were taught the methods of the British commandos, the Russian "descent forces", the Polish and Yugoslav partisans and the French resistance fighters'. Y. S. Brenner, 'The "Stern Gang", 1940-48' in *Middle Eastern Studies*, ii, no. 1 (1965), pp 2-30, at p. 29.

⁷⁵ Kardahji, 'Measure', pp 99-100.

aspect of the design and execution of the [squads], the individuals selected to staff them and the training they were given, points to the conclusion that they were solely intended to terrorize with impunity'.⁷⁶ But the most interesting section of Kardahji's thesis concerns the reasons for police violence during the Jewish Revolt. Although, as noted above, he cites the 'pervasive and pernicious' influence of former Black and Tans as a central factor, he sees the proximate cause as the desire to avenge the violation by Jewish terrorists of 'a certain conception of honour and prestige' among the British security forces which was based on the belief that they, as instruments of the imperial power, held a monopoly on the exercise of force. Proper colonial power-relations could only be restored by harsh retaliation, sometimes against the wider Jewish population of Palestine.⁷⁷

One other study of the history of the policing of the Palestine Mandate merits mention. In her Ph.D. thesis, Elizabeth Bartels places the blame for the failure of the Palestine Police squarely on the British administration which, she maintains, pursued an 'imbalanced, self-interested approach to police power'. Based on a quantitative analysis of data on five categories of politically-motivated crime, she argues that the criminal justice which the British dispensed did not, in general terms, favour Arab or Jew, but 'whichever side most closely mirrored [their] interests' at any given time.⁷⁸ For example, as part of its efforts to quell the Arab Revolt, the Palestine Police attempted to disarm the Arabs while simultaneously arming the Jews (to assist in the insurgency's suppression and defend their own settlements) while Britain's far more measured response to the Jewish insurgency was dictated by considerations such as the fear that a general confrontation with the Jews would damage the war effort and

⁷⁶ Ibid., pp 88-90.

⁷⁷ Ibid., pp 66-7. This issue is discussed in Chapter III below.

⁷⁸ Elizabeth Bartels, 'Policing politics; crime and conflict in British Mandate Palestine, 1920-1948' (Ph.D. thesis, City University of New York, 2004), p. 186-7. These classes are political assassinations, weapons' smuggling, robbery and extortion, bombs and sabotage and illegal immigration.

Washington's resolutely pro-Zionist stance. Unsurprisingly, the policing system was also clearly biased in favour of Palestine's British community. For example, in cases of political assassinations, the police displayed a marked indifference towards inter and intra-ethnic killings (the latter accounted for the vast majority of the total; as Bartels notes, 'the Jews and the Arabs equally, and overwhelmingly, assassinated their own') while those responsible for the murder of British personnel were quickly apprehended.⁷⁹ While this sort of political expediency undoubtedly proved beneficial to the British in the short-term, it 'proved fatal to their long-term colonial goals' as the perception that Palestine's criminal justice system was capricious, inconsistent and inherently biased alienated both communities, leading inexorably to their revolts against British rule. Had the British been more even-handed in their approach to policing, she argues, the Mandate might have been retained. Despite this extraordinary conclusion (attributable, perhaps, to the fact that Bartels is a criminologist, not an historian), her thesis is a very valuable resource, containing much important data on political crime during the Mandate and the response of the Palestine Police.

III

In 1991, Christopher Hammond could claim that 'nearly all of what was known about Palestine's policing in the pre-1936 period came 'from writers who were ex-colonial policemen or government officials'.⁸⁰ While this situation has since altered appreciably, the memoirs of former Palestine policemen remain an indispensable source of information on the force. However, like Duff's books they must be treated with caution as histories.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 56.

⁸⁰ Hammond, 'Ideology', p. 15

Writing in 1988, Gerry Northam caricatured colonial police memoirs as being written:

with a tinge of romance ... in the fond drone of reminiscence by men who are comfortably returned to the safety of the home counties, mixing the first gin and tonics of the evening as their retirement clocks chime six⁸¹

and there is a tendency among veterans of the Palestine Police to look back on their service as a hugely positive experience despite the difficulties often endured. This derives from an admixture of pride in having served in a country with such deep religious and cultural resonances and a powerful sense of camaraderie instilled in Palestine and subsequently nurtured by a remarkably successful Palestine Police Old Comrades' Association (P.P.O.C.A.) which has been running since 1947. However, while evident in interview, this 'tinge of romance' is remarkably absent in most published memoirs.⁸² A notable exception is Joseph Broadhurst's *From Vine Street to Jerusalem*, its catalogue of tales of police derring-do masking a career as C.I.D. chief so unsuccessful that even Horne acknowledges his failures.⁸³ Broadhurst, who was specifically recruited from the London Metropolitan Police for the post in 1924, was held personally responsible by Dowbiggan for the fact that the C.I.D. was by 1930 failing in every area under its remit with the possible exception of fingerprinting. Broadhurst's statement that 'so secret had the Arabs kept their plans [for the 1929 riots] that they had taken the police and military intelligence department completely by surprise' proves, according to Eldad Harouvi in his history of Palestine Police C.I.D., that he 'did not fully comprehend the magnitude of the intelligence failure of

⁸¹ Northam, *Shooting*, p. 126.

⁸² However, as Efrat Ben-Ze'ev has pointed out in relation to British interviewees, the fact that the great majority maintained links with the P.P.O.C.A. throughout their lifetimes means that they 'probably over-represent those in whose lives service in the Palestine police was a major event'. Efrat Ben-Ze'ev, *Remembering Palestine: beyond national narratives* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 170.

⁸³ Joseph F. Broadhurst, *From Vine Street to Jerusalem* (London, 1936); Horne, *Job*, pp 466-8.

the body which he headed'.⁸⁴ He was dismissed in consequence, something his memoir omitted.

Far more forthright is Colin Imray's *Policeman in Palestine* which provides an insight into life in the force in the early 1930s, most memorable for its over-admiring portrait of Roy Spicer. Roger Courtney's contemporary and hence generally unfiltered account of his BSPP service during the Arab Revolt presents an at times disturbing picture of the police response while Harry Arrigonie devotes just one chapter of his memoir of his colonial police career to his service with the BSPP, noteworthy for its criticism of British army brutality during this time.⁸⁵ Gawain Bell, a colonial administrator seconded to Palestine in 1938 where he commanded the Palestine Police camel corps in Beersheba, devotes two chapters of his autobiography to his experiences, providing a valuable insight into the operations of this oft-forgotten unit of the force.⁸⁶

Thomas Curd's curiosity, *Rural Thoughts in the Holy Land* is of limited value being, as the title suggests, mainly concerned with the flora and fauna he encountered as a BSPP constable in the late 1930s.⁸⁷ Robin Martin's *Palestine Betrayed*, which spans the period from the outbreak of the Arab Revolt to the end of the Mandate, offers a wealth of interesting detail on the day-to-day activities of the BSPP although the frequent absence of context for incidents described is frustrating.⁸⁸ Memoirs by Jack Wood, Dennis Quickfall and Anthony Wright focus on life in the BSPP in the

⁸⁴ Broadhurst, *Vine Street*, p. 213; Eldad Harouvi, *Palestine investigated: the story of the Palestine CID, 1920-1948* (Kochav-Yair, 2011). I am grateful to Dr. Harouvi for providing me with draft chapters of the forthcoming English-language edition of this book.

⁸⁵ Colin Imray, *Policeman in Palestine: memories of the early years* (Devon, 1995); Roger Courtney, *Palestine Policeman: an account of eighteen dramatic months in the Palestine Police Force during the great Jew-Arab troubles* (London, 1939); Harry Arrigonie, *British colonialism: 30 years serving democracy or hypocrisy?* (Bideford, 1998).

⁸⁶ Gawain Bell, *Shadows on the sand* (London, 1983), pp 81-124.

⁸⁷ Thomas Curd, *Rural thoughts in the Holy Land* (East Sussex, 2000).

⁸⁸ Robin Martin, *Palestine Betrayed: a British Palestine policeman's memoirs, 1936-1948* (Ringwood, 2007).

postwar period (although Wood was recruited from the British army in August 1944) and the difficulties presented by the Jewish Revolt. Of these Wright's is the most immediate and engaging, being essentially an edited and annotated version of a diary he kept while in Palestine.⁸⁹ The most wide-ranging accounts are by Geoffrey Morton and Jack Binsley, both of whom enlisted in the BSPP in 1930 and rose to the rank of deputy superintendent.⁹⁰ While Morton's account is the better known, it is perhaps the less valuable in that it is more self-serving and controlled, befitting what is essentially a self-consciously constructed testimonial to what he considered a successful colonial policing career.⁹¹ Moreover, recent research suggests that some sections are downright mendacious, most notably his descriptions of the killings of two members of the Stern Gang in January 1942 and its leader, Avraham Stern, one month later, which have since been contradicted by others present. Indeed, it is unlikely that Morton could today successfully sue for libel (as he did four times during his lifetime) those claiming that he shot Stern in cold blood.⁹² Binsley's memoir is, on the other hand, self-deprecating and wonderfully indiscreet. Its importance in terms of this thesis is enhanced by the fact that it provides penetrating pen portraits of some Irish Palestine Police personnel and includes references to issues with particular relevance to the Irish contingent such as the promotion of Catholics in the force.

To date, no Irishman has written a memoir of his time with the BSPP. However one, Gerald Murphy, included in his autobiography a chapter on his short time with the force (April 1947-May 1948) while another, Patrick Byrne, published a

⁸⁹ Jack Wood, *One life: from Barnsley, then through the war to the Palestine Police and after* (Lincoln, 2006); Dennis Quickfall, *Shadows over Scopus: reflections of an ex-Palestine policeman* (Manchester, 1999); Michael Lang (ed.), *One man in his time: the diary of a Palestine policeman 1946-1948* (Lewes, 1997).

⁹⁰ Geoffrey John Morton, *Just the job: some experiences of a colonial policeman* (London, 1957); Jack Binsley, *The Palestine police service* (London, 1997).

⁹¹ Morton transferred to the police services of Trinidad and Nyasaland after Palestine.

⁹² For an account of these libel actions see Patrick Bishop, *The reckoning: how the killing of one man changed the fate of the Promised Land* (London, 2014), pp 225-35.

lengthy account of his time as a BSPP constable in the final eighteen months of the Mandate online.⁹³ One Irish member of the British Gendarmerie, Charles Belton, published an autobiography but it deals solely with his subsequent policing career in the New Zealand.⁹⁴ Accounts of the service of two other Irish Palestine policemen have been written by third parties. David and Jean Hewitt devote one chapter of their biography of George Burton to his ten years in Palestine (he served from 1938 until the Mandate's end): it is, however, of limited interest, being concerned mainly with his personal life. More interesting and insightful is Brian O'Rorke's biography of his father, Michael O'Rorke who served as an officer with both the British Gendarmerie and the Palestine Police.⁹⁵

As Hammond has intimated, the memoirs of British officials of the Palestine government are also a valuable resource. Although direct references to policing are rare in such works, they provide revealing insights into the political and social milieus in which British and, indeed, Irish Palestine policemen lived and worked. Sir Ronald Storrs' elegant *Orientalisms* remains the most famous, but of equal if not greater importance are lesser-known memoirs by Norman Bentwich, Horace Samuel, Humphrey Bowman and Edwin Samuel.⁹⁶ The best is Edward Keith-Roach's *Pasha of Jerusalem*, a sparkling account of his long career in the Palestine administration, including twenty years as governor of Jerusalem.⁹⁷ Autobiographies by former

⁹³ Gerald Murphy, *Copper mandarin: a memoir* (London, 1984), pp 22-33; 'Patrick J. Byrne's service in the Palestine Police, 1947-8' (www.landofbrokenpromises.co.uk/palestine/byrneweb/enlisting.html).

⁹⁴ Charles Belton, *Outside the law in New Zealand: leaves from a detective's notebook* (Gisborne, 1939).

⁹⁵ David & Jean Hewitt, *George Burton: a study in contradictions* (London, 1969), pp 34-42; Brian O'Rorke, *Policeman artist: the life, times and art of Michael Sylvester O'Rorke* (Self-published, 2006), pp 7-18, 74-7.

⁹⁶ Ronald Storrs, *Orientalisms*, 'Definitive Edition' (London, 1945); Norman & Helen Bentwich, *Mandate memories, 1918-1948* (London, 1965); Horace Samuel, *Unholy memories of the Holy Land* (London, 1930); Humphrey Bowman, *Middle-East window* (London, 1942); Edwin Samuel, *A lifetime in Jerusalem* (London, 1970).

⁹⁷ Edward Keith-Roach, *Pasha of Jerusalem: memoirs of a district commissioner under the British Mandate* (London, 1994).

colonial administrators such as Harry Luke, Alec Kirkbride, George Stewart Symes and William Stirling also contain interesting accounts of their service in Palestine.⁹⁸ Included in this category should be the diaries of Richard Meinertzhagen which, the evidence suggests, were more in the nature of memoir, being revised and, in some places, entirely re-written years after the incidents they purport to contemporaneously describe.⁹⁹ More reliable as diaries are those of Frederick Kisch, the British army officer who headed the Zionist Executive/Jewish Agency between 1923 and 1931 and maintained good relations with the British administration, and the journalist Hector Bolitho who travelled throughout Palestine in the early 1930s.¹⁰⁰ Also useful are the memoirs of British army officers who were stationed in Palestine. Most notably, H. J. Simson provided a damning indictment of the British response to the first phase of the Arab Revolt while Major R. D. Wilson and Captain Philip Brutton produced vivid accounts of the deteriorating security situation in the final years of the Mandate which also make for an interesting comparison, Wilson's being written in the immediate aftermath of the events he described and Brutton's with the benefit of fifty years' hindsight.¹⁰¹ Eric Lowe provides interesting insights into life as an ordinary British soldier in Palestine in the postwar period based on his own personal experience as a clerk with the Royal Army Ordnance Corps and the testimonies of over two hundred other rankers.¹⁰² Other memoirs, such as those of Sylva Gelber and Christina Jones

⁹⁸ Harry Luke, *Cities and men: an autobiography*: vol. 2 (London, 1953), pp 202-56 and vol. 3 (London, 1956), pp 13-41; Alec Seath Kirkbride, *A crackle of thorns: experiences in the Middle East* (London, 1956), pp 98-112, 136-41, 153-63; George Stewart Symes, *Tour of duty: autobiographical reminiscences* (London, 1946), passim; W. F. Stirling, *Safety last* (London, 1953), pp 111-23, 211-14.

⁹⁹ Richard Meinertzhagen, *Middle East diary 1917-1956* (London, 1959); Brian Garfield, *The Meinertzhagen mystery: the life and legend of a colossal fraud* (Washington, 2007), pp 229-33.

¹⁰⁰ F. H. Kisch, *Palestine diary* (London, 1938); Hector Bolitho, *Beside Galilee: a diary in Palestine* (London, 1933); idem, *The angry neighbours: a diary of Palestine and Transjordan* (London, 1957). The Palestine Zionist Executive was renamed the Jewish Agency for Palestine in 1929.

¹⁰¹ H. J. Simson, *British rule and rebellion* (London, 1938); R. D. Wilson, *Cordon and search: with the 6th airborne division in Palestine* (Aldershot, 1949); Philip Brutton, *A captain's mandate: Palestine 1946-1948* (London, 1996). See also Richard Gale, *A call to arms* (London, 1968).

¹⁰² Eric Lowe, *Forgotten conscripts: prelude to Palestine's struggle for survival* (Bloomington Indiana,

(who with her husband, ran the Quaker school for boys in Ramallah from 1922 until 1962) provide an intriguing mixture of incisive social commentary and political analysis from opposing political perspectives, pro-Zionist and pro-Arab respectively.¹⁰³ Also valuable in this regard are published collections of letters by British expatriates, those of Helen Bentwich, the wife of Palestine's attorney general, Norman Bentwich, and Thomas Hodgkin, a civil servant in the Palestine government and briefly private secretary to high commissioner, Sir Arthur Wauchope, being the most noteworthy.¹⁰⁴ The importance of published personal testimonies such as these is evidenced by the fact that they, together with the large collection of unpublished diaries, letters and memoirs held at MECA, provide much of the source material for some of the best general surveys of the Palestine Mandate, for example Joshua Sherman's *Mandate Days*, Naomi Shepherd's *Ploughing Sand* and Tom Segev's wonderfully written and researched, *One Palestine, Complete*.¹⁰⁵ Most recently, they have been expertly employed by Norman Rose in his fascinating account of its final years.¹⁰⁶ As regards other general surveys of British policy in Palestine, the relevance of Bernard Wasserstein's above-mentioned *The British in Palestine*, Nicholas Bethell's *The Palestine Triangle* and Michael Cohen's *Palestine: Retreat from the Mandate* to any study of British Mandate period has been generally unwithered by

2006).

¹⁰³ Sylva M. Gelber, *No balm in Gilead: a personal retrospective of mandate days in Palestine* (Ottawa, 1989); Christina Jones, *The untempered wind: forty years in Palestine* (London, 1975), pp 1-105.

¹⁰⁴ Jenifer Glynn (ed.), *Tidings from Zion: Helen Bentwich's letters from Jerusalem 1919-1931* (London, 2000); E. C. Hodgkin (ed.), *Thomas Hodgkin: letters from Palestine, 1932-36* (London, 1986). See also John C. Holliday (ed.), *Eunice Holliday: letters from Jerusalem during the Palestine Mandate* (London, 1997) and Nancy Parker McDowell, *Notes from Ramallah, 1939* (Richmond, 2002).

¹⁰⁵ A. J. Sherman, *Mandate days: British lives in Palestine, 1918-1948* (London, 1997); Naomi Shepherd, *Ploughing sand: British rule in Palestine, 1917-1948* (London, 1999); Tom Segev, *One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate* (London, 2000).

¹⁰⁶ Norman Rose, *A senseless squalid war: voices from Palestine 1945-1948* (London, 2009). See also Derek Hopwood's chapters on Palestine in *Tales of empire: the British in the Middle East* (London, 1989), pp 113-68.

age.¹⁰⁷ However, J. Bowyer Bell's classic account of the Jewish insurgency, *Terror out of Zion*, has been largely superseded by subsequent studies by David Charters, Saul Zadka and, indeed, Norman Rose, which use newly-available archival information to highlight the extent to which the Palestine Police formed the front line in this 'senseless squalid war'.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Nicholas Bethell, *The Palestine triangle: the struggle between the British, the Jews and the Arabs, 1935-48* (London, 1979); Michael J. Cohen, *Palestine: retreat from the Mandate: the making of British policy 1936-45* (London, 1978).

¹⁰⁸ J. Bowyer Bell, *Terror out of Zion: the fight for Israel independence 1929-1949* (Dublin, 1979); David A. Charters, *The British army and the Jewish insurgency in Palestine, 1945-47* (New York, 1989); Saul Zadka, *Blood in Zion: how the Jewish Guerrillas drove the British out of Palestine* (London, 1995). See also Bruce Hoffman, *The failure of British military strategy within Palestine, 1939-1947* (Tel Aviv, 1983); John Newsinger, *British counterinsurgency: from Palestine to Northern Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2002), pp 3-30 and James Barr's fascinating *A line in the sand: Britain, France and the struggle that shaped the Middle East* (London, 2011), which uncovers the part played by the French in promoting Jewish terrorism against the British Mandate.

Chapter One: ‘Without Connection to the Auxiliary Division in Ireland’: The Formation and Composition of the British Section of the Palestine Gendarmerie

1.1 Introduction

The foundation for Irish involvement in the policing of Mandated Palestine was formed by the British Section of the Palestine Gendarmerie. A 760-strong striking force and riot squad, it was raised in early 1922 at the instigation of the secretary of state for the colonies, Winston Churchill, to reinforce the locally-recruited police forces of Britain’s recently-acquired mandated territory which were experiencing difficulties maintaining public order at the time. The original draft of this British Gendarmerie which departed Plymouth for Palestine in mid-April was, through the agency of the Irish police chief and Churchill’s close friend, General Hugh Tudor, almost entirely drawn from amongst the R.I.C. and its Auxiliary Division, then in the process of disbandment as part of the recent Anglo-Irish settlement.¹ This chapter has a twofold focus. It begins by providing the first detailed description of the British Gendarmerie’s raising and recruitment and the first accurate analysis of its changing composition over the course of its four-year career. It then explores how concerns

¹ Three categories of police which formed part of the R.I.C. are relevant to this study, namely the ‘old R.I.C.’, the Black and Tans and the ADRIC. Given the confusion prevailing in both manuscript sources and literature over what constituted membership of each, it is best to define them precisely at the outset. A Black and Tan is here defined as any man, British or Irish, ex-serviceman or no, who joined the R.I.C. on or after 2 January 1920, the date on which the first R.I.C. constable was recruited in Britain. The term ‘old R.I.C.’ refers to those who joined the service prior to this date. The ADRIC or Auxiliaries, a ‘special Corps of Gendarmerie’ composed solely of ex-officers, was recruited from July 1920 onwards. As the Black and Tans were, unlike the ADRIC, fully integrated into the R.I.C., they and the ‘old R.I.C.’ are, taken together, referred to as the ‘regular R.I.C.’. However, it should be borne in mind when reading quotations below that some British ministers and officials, including Winston Churchill, Henry Wilson and Herbert Samuel, conflated the Black and Tans with the ADRIC and used the terms ‘Auxiliaries’, ‘Auxiliary Division’ and ‘Black and Tans’ interchangeably when referring to the two groups combined.

about the enlistment of Black and Tans and Auxiliaries into the British Gendarmerie led to official attempts to obscure its R.I.C. roots and assesses the extent to which the fact that the first draft of recruits was overwhelmingly drawn from the Black and Tans influenced perceptions of the force.

1.2 The Background to the Force's Formation

Military expenditure had become a serious concern for the imperial government in the early 1920s. The mediocre performance of the British domestic economy, combined with what L. J. Butler describes as an 'awareness that defence spending must not be allowed to obstruct the more interventionist social policy demanded by the new conditions of near democracy' at home, dictated a policy of general retrenchment, this despite the fact that Britain had not only emerged from the First World War with its empire intact, but had greatly increased its territorial extent in the postwar period through the formalisation of its control over occupied areas of the former Ottoman empire through the League of Nations' mandate system.² Under its auspices, Britain received a legal commission to administer these territories, namely Mesopotamia and Palestine (including Transjordan), with a view to preparing their populations for eventual self-government. According to the League of Nations' covenant, the assumption of responsibility for 'the well-being and development of such peoples' constituted 'a sacred trust for civilisation'.³ But Britain's readiness to act as a mandatory power in Mesopotamia and Palestine was driven by its own geo-political imperatives. Pre-war British policy towards the Ottoman empire had long been concerned with maintaining its territorial integrity in the belief that it protected British

² L. J. Butler, *Britain and empire: adjusting to a post-imperial world* (London, 2002), p. 4.

³ Covenant of the League of Nations, Article 22

(http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp#art22, accessed 6 Mar. 2014).

strategic and commercial interests such as the Suez Canal and the route east to India by forming a bulwark against European (primarily Russian) expansionist ambitions in the eastern Mediterranean. Therefore its dismemberment in consequence of the war meant that ‘the establishment of a new system which, like the old regime, would satisfy the strategic needs of the empire in the Middle East’ was required and the mandate system provided the opportunity of creating British-controlled ‘buffer zones’ between Russia and regional imperial lifelines.⁴

However, these ‘buffer zones’ had to be garrisoned by an army already thinly stretched across what the chief of the imperial general staff (CIGS), Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, called the ‘storm centres’ of the British empire such as India, Ireland and Egypt where concurrent upsurges in nationalist sentiment and political agitation appeared to pose a collective challenge to imperial stability, particularly given what Deirdre McMahon describes as ‘the clear interplay between each theatre as events moved to a climax in 1921-22’.⁵ The fact that British control of each of these countries was deemed of critical strategic importance (as Keith Jeffery has noted, ‘Southern Ireland was believed to be vital for home defence; Egypt and the Suez Canal constituted a key link in the chain of communications with the east; [while] India was quite simply the most important component of the empire’) meant that it was to Britain’s recently-acquired mandated territories that Winston Churchill turned when seeking to cut the cost of imperial defence.⁶

The formidable expense incurred by the army garrisons in Mesopotamia and

⁴ Keith Jeffery, *The British army and the crisis of empire, 1918-1922* (Manchester, 1984), pp 40. See also Balfour-Paul, ‘Informal empire’, pp 490-9.

⁵ Deirdre McMahon, ‘Ireland and the Empire-Commonwealth, 1900-1948’ in Judith M. Brown & William. Roger Louis, *The Oxford history of the British empire, vol 4: the twentieth century* (Oxford, 1999), pp 138-62, at p. 146.

⁶ Jeffery, *British army*, p. 32. See also John Gallagher, ‘Nationalisms and the crisis of empire, 1919-1922’ in *Modern Asian Studies*, xv, no. 3 (1981), pp 355-68 and John Darwin, *The empire project: the rise and fall of the British world-system, 1830-1970* (Cambridge, 2009), pp 375-93, 406-17.

Palestine began to seriously exercise Churchill during his final months as secretary of state for war in late 1920. Given the postwar economic realities, Britain could no longer afford to pursue a policy which, in respect of Mesopotamia (where the suppression of a general revolt against the Mandate that summer had cost £40 million and 426 British lives) he described as ‘pouring armies and treasure into these thankless deserts’ and he therefore set the reduction of military expenditure in the Middle East as his overriding objective when he moved to the Colonial Office in February 1921.⁷ To this end, he made the establishment within the Colonial Office of a separate Middle East department (M.E.D.), to which he intended full civil and military responsibility for these territories be transferred from the divided control of the Foreign, India and War offices, a precondition of accepting the seals.⁸ With the cost of Mesopotamia’s garrison running at over eight times that of Palestine’s, the M.E.D., headed by Sir John Shuckburgh as assistant under-secretary,⁹ first concentrated its attention there, formulating plans to cut British troop levels by two-thirds and replace them with locally-raised forces which, in line with Churchill’s policy of saving money by ‘introducing new technologies to perform old functions’, would be supported by the Royal Air Force (R.A.F.) which had demonstrated the efficacy of air policing during the recent revolt.¹⁰ And while Churchill insisted that ‘a similar agenda mutatis mutandis must be worked out for Palestine’, the situation regarding its 7,000-strong garrison was, as he admitted, more difficult as increasing

⁷ Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill, vol. IV, 1917-1922* (London, 1975), p. 496.

⁸ Churchill to David Lloyd George, 04 Jan. 1921 (UK Parliamentary Archives, London, Lloyd George papers, [hereafter LG], LG/F/9/2/51). For the interdepartmental wrangling which led to the creation of the M.E.D. see Helmut Mejcher, ‘British Middle East policy, 1917-21: the inter-departmental level’ in *Journal of Contemporary History*, xiii, no. 4 (1973), pp 81-101 & John McTague, *British policy in Palestine, 1917-1922* (London, 1983), pp 136-8.

⁹ Shuckburgh had transferred from the India Office where he had enjoyed a long and successful career. Roger T. Stearn, ‘Shuckburgh, Sir John Evelyn (1877–1953)’, *ODNB online* (<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36081>, accessed 13 Sept. 2013).

¹⁰ Butler, *Britain and empire*, p. 4. For discussions of ‘air policing’ in Mesopotamia during this period see David E. Omissi, *Air power and colonial control: the Royal Air Force, 1919-1939* (Manchester, 1990), pp 29-38 and Andrew Boyle, *Trenchard* (London, 1962), pp 385-95.

opposition to Britain's Zionist policy meant that, 'so far from this garrison being reduced I am more likely to be confronted with demands for increasing it'.¹¹

But factors other than simple economy drove Churchill's determination to reduce and eventually remove the army from Palestine. Most important of these was the fact that its relations with Government House in Jerusalem (the seat, since July 1920, of Palestine's civil administration under British high commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel) had become strained, the result of a gradual breakdown of trust over the army's increasingly unconcealed opposition to the Zionist project which Government House was duty-bound to support. While in some cases this opposition was quite evidently informed by an ingrained anti-Semitism, it mainly derived from the widespread belief that the Balfour Declaration of November 1917, which committed the British Government to use its 'best endeavours' to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine, clearly contravened the spirit of British wartime commitments to Arab nationalists regarding the future of the Ottoman Middle East.¹² The army's unease over what was seen as this breach of promise to Palestine's Arabs culminated in an October 1921 circular issued by the general officer commanding (G.O.C.) Egyptian Expeditionary Force (under whose remit the Palestine military garrison fell), Walter Congreve, which, whilst acknowledging that 'the army is officially, supposed to have no politics', argued that:

It is recognised that there are certain problems such as those of Ireland and Palestine in which the sympathies of the Army are on the one side or the other. In the case of Palestine, these sympathies are rather obviously with the Arabs who have hitherto appeared to the disinterested observer to

¹¹ Gilbert, *Churchill*, p. 533; Churchill, Memorandum to the Cabinet, 11 Aug. 1921 (British National Archives [hereafter TNA]. Cabinet papers [hereafter CAB], CAB/24/127). See also Paul Goalen, 'Churchill in the Middle East Department, 1920-22' in *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in History and Archaeology*, i, no. 1 (2004), pp 101-12.

¹² For the anti-Zionism of British officials and army officers in Palestine see McTague, *British policy*, pp 112-18, 180-6; Wasserstein, *British in Palestine*, pp 34-57; Segev, *One Palestine*, pp 92-7; Samuel, *Unholy memories*, pp 58-64 and Bentwich, *Mandate memories*, p. 73. The issue of British anti-Semitism during this period is discussed in Chapter V below.

have been the victims of the unjust policy forced upon them by the British Government.¹³

Whether true or not, the perception was, in the words of the M.E.D.'s military advisor, Col. Richard Meinertzhagen, that 'the whole of the [army] staff in Cairo from Lord [Edmund] Allenby and General Congreve downwards, have consistently worked against Zionism' and that the troops were 'saturated with anti-Zionist propaganda' stemming from this source.¹⁴ Congreve was certainly bitterly anti-Zionist in outlook, complaining to Sir Henry Wilson that 'we shall never have any peace in this country until [Zionism] is ended, nor self-respect either for it is a detestable and odious policy', and stoutly defending his circular (which Wilson had privately criticised as so 'unfortunately worded' that it ought to be withdrawn), insisting that he would 'stand or fall by it'.¹⁵ In Churchill's opinion, 'any officials, whether civil or military, who are publicly and confessedly opposed to the declared policy of His Majesty's Government should be replaced' and this, by his own reckoning, included almost 90 per cent of army personnel in Palestine.¹⁶ Therefore, the army's presence would have to be, not just reduced, but ultimately removed.

1.2.1 The problem of Palestine's policing

However, Churchill realised that the removal of British troops from Palestine was impossible without a thorough reform of the country's policing. In fact the issue of

¹³ Lt.-Col. B. J. Courling, 'Circular to all troops', 29 Oct. 1921 (Churchill College, Cambridge, Churchill Papers, [hereafter CHAR], CHAR 17/11).

¹⁴ Ironically, the atmosphere at the M.E.D. was, according to Meinertzhagen, also 'definitely hebraphobe'; Shuckburgh was, he claimed, 'saturated with anti-Semitism' while the department's assistant-secretary, Sir Hubert Young, did his 'utmost to conceal [his] dislike and mistrust of Jews'. However, there is no evidence in Colonial Office files to support such contentions. Meinertzhagen, *Middle East diary*, 19 Nov. 1921, pp 112-13; 21 June 1921, p. 99; 14 June 1922, p. 116.

¹⁵ Congreve to Wilson, 23 Nov. 1921 (Imperial War Museum, London, Sir Henry Wilson Papers [hereafter HHW], HHW 2/52B/41); Sir Henry Wilson, Diaries, 14 Dec. 1921 (HHW 1/36/12); Wilson to Congreve, 16 Dec. 1921 (HHW 2/52B/42); Congreve to Wilson, 30 Dec. 1921 (HHW 2/52B/45).

¹⁶ Churchill, Colonial Office memorandum, 11 Aug. 1921 (CHAR 17/13).

Palestine's policing had presented a problem for Britain since it began taking control of the country in 1917. Two distinct policing systems had operated there in the final years of Ottoman rule. The urban districts were patrolled by 'municipal' or 'town' police forces while the rural districts were policed by a gendarmerie which also acted as a riot squad which reinforced the municipal police in times of expected or actual emergency. Establishments were very low: there were only fifteen policemen stationed in Jerusalem's Old City while the municipal forces of both Jaffa and Gaza were just ten men strong. Gendarmerie units, of which there were five in the country, were also relatively small, each composed of two officers, twelve non-commissioned officers and about seventy other ranks.¹⁷

These systems had been largely sufficient for the circumstances prevailing in Palestine in the period prior to the Great War when the relative absence of serious crime, traffic duties and smuggling, coupled with the fact that criminal investigation was carried out by the office of the Turkish public prosecutor, meant that 'the Police were, to an undue extent, used merely as process-servers, messengers, Governorate guards or attendants, and tax collectors'.¹⁸ More importantly, the politically-motivated crime that came to dominate the policing of Palestine was practically non-existent. Anti-Zionism was by no means absent during the first wave of Jewish immigration into Palestine between 1882 and 1903. But 'to the extent that Arab attention had been drawn to the Jewish newcomers ... the issue was still largely seen in terms of immigration rather than Zionism', with resentment focussing on the fact that the Jews declined to become Ottoman subjects, thereby allowing them to avail of the privileges granted to resident foreign citizens under the capitulations agreed by Constantinople

¹⁷ Marcel Roubicek, *Echo of the bugle: extinct military and constabulary forces in Palestine and Transjordan, 1915-1967* (Jerusalem, 1974), pp 23-4. See also Caspi, 'Policing', p. 56.

¹⁸ 'Report on Palestine Administration, 1st July 1920-31st Dec. 1921' (typescript copy in TNA, Colonial Office files [hereafter CO] CO 733/22/619).

with various European powers.¹⁹ However, the Young Turk revolution of 1908 saw the first significant stirrings of Arab nationalist sentiment in Palestine: as Benny Morris has noted, ‘before 1908 Arab resistance to the Zionist project was mostly local and specific; after it nationalist, or at least proto-nationalist, resistance appeared’.²⁰ While this had reached critical levels by 1914, it did not really mature until after the war by which time outrage over the terms of both the Balfour Declaration and the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement, the details of which were published by the Bolsheviks three weeks later, had worked to mobilise Palestinian nationalist opinion.²¹ By the time British-Turkish hostilities in Palestine ended with the Armistice of Mudros in October 1918, it was obvious that Arab anti-Zionism was, despite the tendency of Zionist leaders to dismiss it as artificial and contrived, a real and deep-rooted phenomenon. The winter of 1918-19 saw the beginnings of organised Arab anti-Zionism with the formation of the Moslem-Christian Associations and extremist secret societies such as the Jaffa ‘Black Hand’, established in February 1919 with the stated aim of ‘killing the [Zionist] snail while it was [still] young’.²²

An upsurge in politically-inspired violence, coupled with a contingent increase in ‘ordinary’ crime, meant that the Turkish policing systems inherited by the British were woefully inadequate to the tasks they now faced.²³ Attempts were made, first by

¹⁹ Neville Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism before World War One* (London, 1976), p. 128.

²⁰ According to Morris, the Young Turk revolution ‘caused a temporary loosening of the reins of autocracy and ignited nationalist spirits in the Levant’. Benny Morris, *Righteous victims: a history of the Zionist-Arab conflict, 1881-1999* (London, 2000), pp 58-60.

²¹ The Sykes-Picot Agreement, signed between London and Paris in 1916, proposed the division of much of the Arab Middle East into British and French zones of influence in what, given Britain’s written pledge one year earlier to support postwar Arab independence, George Antonius described as ‘a startling piece of double-dealing’. George Antonius, *The Arab awakening: the story of the Arab national movement* (London, 1938), p. 248. For detailed accounts of the political and diplomatic manoeuvring which led to the Balfour Declaration see Jonathan Schneer, *The Balfour Declaration: the origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict* (London, 2010) and Ronald Sanders, *The high walls of Jerusalem: a history of the Balfour Declaration and the birth of the British Mandate for Palestine* (New York, 1983).

²² Quoted in Morris, *Righteous victims*, p. 90.

²³ The British noted that ‘the very intimate connection between political movements and crime in

the British military administration in Palestine, the Occupied Enemy Territory Administration (South),²⁴ and later by Samuel's government, to create through restructuring and reform a more modern and efficient police force. And, under the command of Lt.-Col. Percy Bramley, a former deputy inspector-general of the United Provinces Police Department of India who was appointed Palestine's commandant of police and prisons in July 1919, some successes were achieved.²⁵ But these efforts ultimately foundered on the rock of the force's overwhelmingly Arab ethnic make-up and the professional partisanship to which, in an increasingly racially polarised society, it inevitably gave rise.

In Ottoman times, Palestine's police forces had also been overwhelmingly Arab, a situation O.E.T.A. (South) attempted to remedy by stipulating that recruitment reflect the approximate ratio of the population's three major religious groupings, i.e. 70 per cent Muslim, 20 per cent Jewish and 10 per cent Christian. However, the poor pay and conditions on offer proved particularly unattractive to Jews who, generally speaking, had a higher standard of living than their Arab neighbours and, as a result, the force continued to be almost entirely populated by Arabs. By December 1921 there were 1,022 Arab policemen (other ranks) as opposed to just 100 Jews while one year later the figures stood at 1047 and 82 respectively.²⁶

This problem was compounded by the fact that sections of the Arab constabulary displayed clear sectarian-based bias in the discharge of their duties. As early as August 1919, British officials were complaining of the overt anti-Zionism of

Palestine is patent from the fluctuation in crime incidence throughout the period under review'. Report on Palestine Administration, 1920-1, fo. 620.

²⁴ More commonly referred to as O.E.T.A. (South).

²⁵ Bramley had been dismissed from the Indian police for malpractice. However, the Colonial Office did not become aware of this until January 1924 by which time Bramley had left Palestine. Shuckburgh to Ormsby-Gore, 10 Feb. 1925 (TNA, CO 733/103/109). See also Keith-Roach, *Pasha*, p. 75.

²⁶ Report on Palestine Administration, 1920-1', fo. 623; Government of Palestine, 'Report on Palestine Administration, 1922' (London, 1923), p. 39.

the Arab police, even claiming that many (including Jerusalem's assistant police commissioner) were members of the extremist Brotherhood and Purity Club which advocated resisting Jewish immigration by all possible means, including assassination and armed revolt while, in March 1920, the assistant administrator to Jerusalem's military governor was warning of the 'strongly pro-nationalist mood of the Arab civil police'.²⁷ That there was truth in these charges became evident during the Nebi Musa riots in Jerusalem one month later when Arab police deployed to restore order sided with the rioters and began themselves attacking Jews, leaving Bramley with no option but to withdraw, disarm and confine them to barracks.

The full extent of the problem of police partisanship was revealed during the May Day riots of 1921.²⁸ A commission of inquiry into these disturbances headed by Palestine's chief justice, Sir Thomas Haycraft, found that Arab policemen were 'unwilling to make an effort to stem the rage of their own peoples' towards Jews because 'racial passion had become infectious'.²⁹ In Jaffa some even became 'active participants in violence and crime of a serious order' and convictions were in fact recorded against Arab policemen on charges of 'homicide, theft, attempted rape and unlawful wounding'.³⁰ Five days later, a British R.A.F. pilot observed ten mounted Arab policemen participating in an attack on the Jewish settlement of Khedera.³¹ As in 1920, the Arab police had to be eventually disarmed and it was left to the British army to restore order. 'At the heart of the policing system, therefore, was a seemingly

²⁷ Wasserstein, *British in Palestine*, p. 63. See also idem, "'Clipping the claws of the colonisers: Arab officials in the Government of Palestine, 1917-48' in *Middle Eastern Studies*, xiii, no. 2 (1977), pp 171-94, at p. 175.

²⁸ For detailed accounts of these riots see Segev, *One Palestine*, pp 173-202 and Wasserstein, *British in Palestine*, pp 89-109.

²⁹ 'Palestine. Disturbances in May 1921. Reports of the commission of inquiry' [hereafter, the 'Haycraft report'] (London, 1921), p. 25. For an analysis of the findings of this report see McTague, *British policy*, pp 151-5.

³⁰ Haycraft report, p. 49.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.10.

irreconcilable divide; while it was necessary to employ Arab policemen they could not be fully relied upon to police communal conflicts'.³² While the behaviour of the Arab police led to furious Zionist demands for an influx of Jews into the Palestine Police, the fact is that Jewish members of the security forces had also joined the fray on their coreligionists' side. Most notably, the newly-recruited Jewish section of the Palestine Defence Force (P.D.F.), a gendarmerie-style militia in the making designed to assist the civil police, raced from their Sarafand base to Tel Aviv to fight the Arabs resulting in its immediate disbandment.³³ Meanwhile evidence presented to the Haycraft Commission described a murderous attack on an Arab family in Jaffa by a party of Jews commanded by a Jewish police sergeant.³⁴

1.2.2 The Palestine Gendarmerie

Haycraft believed that inadequate police training was the root cause of the problem and was convinced that an effective 'native' civil police force could be forged if this issue was addressed. That there was some basis for his belief was demonstrated by the Palestine Gendarmerie, a locally-recruited ethnically-mixed force under the command of British officers set up in the aftermath of the riots.³⁵ Responsible to the civil power, it was intended that it would act as a reserve to bolster the Palestine Police in times of emergency. Inaugurated in July 1921, its establishment was set at twenty officers (mainly British) and 500 other ranks of which one-third were to be Arabs, one-third

³² Hammond, 'Ideology', p. 89. For a near contemporary Zionist indictment of the Arab section of the Palestine Police during the 1921 riots see Samuel, *Unholy memories*, pp 70-81.

³³ The P.D.F. was to be comprised of one Arab and one Jewish battalion, each 600 men strong, but the Arab battalion had not been recruited by the time of the riots.

³⁴ 'Haycraft report', p. 29.

³⁵ The formation of such a force had first been proposed in spring 1920 by Congreve who argued that the practice of deploying the army 'to keep order and stop Arab raids from across Jordan' was detrimental to military efficiency. However, it was rejected on financial grounds and on the basis that the creation of 'a force intermediate between military and police was undesirable and unnecessary'. 'Palestine: Formation of Gendarmerie', May 1920 (TNA, T 1/12601).

Jews and one-third a mixture of Circassians and Druze. Its commanding officer, Lt.-Col. Frederick Bewsher, 'firmly believed that a body of men, recruited locally and of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, could be moulded together as a team of highly disciplined troops that could serve the country in a capacity far above the squabbles of different sections of the populace'.³⁶ And although there were to be some incidents of partisan policing by both Arab and Jewish gendarmes, Bewsher was, through a programme of tough intensive training, relatively successful in creating a unit largely devoid of the inter-communal animosities that scarred the Palestine Police.³⁷ In March 1923, Meinertzhagen could report that 'the complete absence of any religious or racial feeling is one of the most remarkable features in the Palestine Gendarmerie' while Samuel could report that 'no difficulties [had] been experienced on account of its composition' two years later.³⁸ One of the force's Irish officers, Captain Michael Fitzgerald, agreed. Reminiscing about his experiences fifty years later, he remarked that 'all my men became tremendous friends as time went on and I never had the slightest inter-racial trouble in my squadron'.³⁹

However, Government House soon decided that the Palestine Gendarmerie

³⁶ Horne, *Job*, p. 72.

³⁷ According to Edward Keith-Roach, Bewsher had 'the rare gift of getting all sections of the Native population to work together'. Keith-Roach, Colonial Office minute, 30 July 1924 (TNA, CO 733/71/483).

³⁸ According to Meinertzhagen, the force appeared to be 'animated by an esprit de corps which has successfully stifled religious and racial differences'. He made similar observations in his diary, noting that 'one sees the various sects fraternizing in the barrack rooms and the mess. Jew and Arab will even dance together, play in the same amateur orchestra and sing together'. Richard Meinertzhagen, 'Military Report on Palestine, 25 Mar. 1923 (typescript copy in TNA, CO 733/61/43); 'Report of the High Commissioner on the Administration of Palestine, 1920-1925', p. 3 (copy in TNA, CO 733/110); Meinertzhagen, *Middle East Diary*, 21 Mar. 1923, pp 129-30.

³⁹ Quoted in Horne, *Job*, p. 71. See also Fitzgerald to Horne, 4 Oct. 1970 (MECA, Palestine Police Old Comrades' Association collection [hereafter PPOCAC], Michael Fitzgerald papers, GB165-0224, G2 no.1, fo. 428-30). Born in Templederry, Co. Tipperary in 1893, Fitzgerald joined the R.I.C. in 1911 as a constable. He enlisted in the Irish Guards in 1915 and was commissioned into the Royal Irish Regiment two years later and posted to Palestine. He subsequently served with the 38th Battalion Royal Fusiliers (The Jewish Legion) before joining the P.D.F. as a captain in April 1921. When this was disbanded in the wake of the May Day Riots he was appointed a subaltern with the Palestine Gendarmerie in July 1921, rising to squadron commander in May 1922. For a detailed discussion of Fitzgerald's military career, see Neil Richardson, *A coward if I return, a hero if I fall: stories of Irishmen in WWI* (Dublin, 2010), pp 98-111.

could best support the police by relieving them of the burden of securing the country's frontiers against smuggling and cross-border raids, thus enabling them to concentrate on regular policing duties. It therefore began assigning to the gendarmerie increasing responsibility for border patrols so that, by the winter of 1921, nine-tenths of the force was engaged in such work.⁴⁰ In the meantime it fell to the British army to maintain public order and manage inter-communal conflict in Palestine, meaning that consideration would have to be given to the formation of a new back-up force for the police of similar efficiency and reliability to the Palestine Gendarmerie before the army could be removed. The requirement for such a force was underscored by the fact that the army's assumption of a policing role was unsustainable in the long-term. Not only did Congreve feel that it was 'to the detriment of ... military efficiency'.⁴¹ But, in the wake of the Amritsar massacre of April 1919, in which a detachment of Gurkhas and Sikh riflemen under Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer had deliberately shot dead several hundred non-violent protestors to (in his own words) 'punish' their defiance of his ban on such gatherings and 'produce the necessary moral and widespread effect' to deter others, the use of the army for policing purposes was deemed neither desirable nor, indeed, wise, not least by the army itself.⁴² That Congreve may have been himself prone towards what was quickly termed 'Dyerism' was suggested by his remark to Sir Henry Wilson following the deaths of five Jews in rioting in November 1921 that 'a real good killing of 500 or so [Jews] would be a great blessing for it would end the Balfour Declaration forever'.⁴³

⁴⁰ 'Report on Palestine Administration, 1922', p. 38.

⁴¹ Congreve to Wilson, 9 Nov. 1921 (HHW 2/52B/39).

⁴² Quoted in Derek Sayer, 'British reaction to the Amritsar massacre, 1919-1920' in *Past & Present*, no. 131, (1991), pp 130-164, at p. 144. In fact, the inadvisability of using troops as police had been recognised as early as 1915 when the army's suppression of inter-ethnic rioting in Ceylon left forty civilians dead. Martin Thomas, *Violence and colonial order: police, workers and protest in the European colonial empire, 1918-1940* (Cambridge, 2012), pp 66-8.

⁴³ Congreve to Wilson, 23 Nov. 1921 (HHW 2/52B/41). Wilson had himself expressed strong support

1.3 The Formation of the British Gendarmerie

This issue preoccupied Churchill throughout the summer of 1921 and he held a series of meetings with the M.E.D.'s assistant-secretary, Hubert Young, in late August to work out a scheme 'for raising the necessary forces to keep the country quiet' in the British army's absence.⁴⁴ Given what appeared to be the promising start made by Bewsher's new Palestine Gendarmerie, they first decided on another such force, a local gendarmerie to 'be raised as rapidly as possible' and include 'a high proportion of British officers and non-commissioned officers'. This gendarmerie would be supported by Indian infantry and cavalry battalions (Indian troop units being considerably less expensive than their British equivalents) and be paid for out of Palestine Government coffers.⁴⁵ Churchill submitted his proposals to the prime minister, David Lloyd George, on 3 September 1921 presenting them (given his firmly-held position that 'everything else that happens in the Middle East is secondary to the reduction in expense') solely in terms of economy.⁴⁶ The crux of the matter was, he argued, that 'Palestine simply cannot afford to pay for troops on a War Office scale ... [when] what is wanted ... is primarily an operation of police'. He therefore recommended that the army be replaced by a British-officered gendarmerie and police force backed up by two battalions of Indian troops, 'less in number than the present garrison and far cheaper'. In fact, for the current £500 annual cost of one 'ordinary private soldier ... you could easily get ... the highest class gendarmerie, like the Cape Mounted Rifles or the Canadian Police'. As in Mesopotamia, such a wide-ranging

for Dyer throughout the political maelstrom which followed Amritsar.

⁴⁴ Young to Churchill, 31 Aug. 1921 (TNA, CO 733/15/190).

⁴⁵ Churchill to Young, 2 Sept. 1921 (TNA, CO 733/15/194).

⁴⁶ Churchill to Shuckburgh, 12 Nov. 1921 (CHAR 17/15).

reorganisation of the garrison could only be achieved through the transfer of military control of Palestine from the War Office to the M.E.D. and Churchill asked Lloyd George for his support in steering this measure through cabinet.⁴⁷

The prime minister agreed and Churchill asked the M.E.D. to formulate 'proposals of a more or less detailed character' for implementing his scheme. But he had by now begun thinking in terms of a purely British gendarmerie rather than one that was merely British-led. This change in thinking was facilitated by developments in Ireland where the relative success of the July 1921 truce between the Irish Republican Army (I.R.A.) and Crown forces and creeping progress in the political sphere raised the possibility of peace and the consequent disbandment of the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries. Churchill hit on the idea of forming the new gendarmerie from their remnants, telling the M.E.D. that 'in the event of an Irish settlement being reached' he would consider taking to Palestine 'several companies of the Auxiliary Division'.⁴⁸ In this way he sought, in the words of M.E.D. official Gerard Clauson:

to kill two birds with the one stone, to create a small police force of high individual efficiency which would do the work of a much larger number of troops and be entirely self-contained, getting on without the host of auxiliaries which are so striking a feature of all military budgets, and at the same time to afford employment to a number of demobilized members of the R.I.C. and Auxiliary Division.⁴⁹

Churchill asked that Meinertzhagen contact the Irish police chief, General Hugh Tudor, and 'ascertain from him privately what sort of arrangement would enable us, in the event of an Irish peace, to take over a couple of Black and Tan companies'. But Tudor's advice had evidently already been sought for, when informed by M.E.D. officials that his proposed arrangement for garrisoning Palestine was larger by one

⁴⁷ Churchill to Lloyd George, 3 Sept. 1921 (LG/F/9/3/86).

⁴⁸ As noted above, Churchill conflated the Black and Tans with the ADRIC and used the terms 'Auxiliaries', 'Auxiliary Division' and 'Black and Tans' interchangeably when referring to the two groups combined. Churchill, M.E.D. minute, 11 Sept. 1921 (CHAR 17/15).

⁴⁹ Gerard Clauson, Colonial Office minute, 26 Dec. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/29/403).

battalion than the existing one and therefore unlikely to represent a cost saving, Churchill suggested that one battalion of Indian infantry be substituted by 'two companies of auxiliaries on the scale proposed by General Tudor subject to such alterations as climatic conditions may require, these being offset against the present exceptional conditions prevailing in Ireland'.⁵⁰ Meinertzhagen met with Tudor who told him that he could raise a force of 2,000 men 'complete with officers, transport, signals etc' and all at a reasonable cost. However, Churchill said he had never contemplated a force of this size; 'six or seven hundred would be quite sufficient in the first instance, and we can keep another couple of Indian battalions going for the time being till we see where we are'.⁵¹

With his plans for the British army's replacement now at an advanced stage, Churchill was ready to press for the transfer of military control of Palestine from the War Office to the M.E.D. On 12 November he informed Samuel that he intended 'to seek from the cabinet shortly the same complete control over the military forces in Palestine as has been accorded to the Colonial Office in respect of Mesopotamia', explaining that it would enable him to appoint a new pro-Zionist commander and replace most British army units with 'a smaller number of high class white [i.e. British] gendarmerie' which would 'be better and far cheaper than British troops with their enormous impediments and administrative services'.⁵² According to Churchill, these changes would in fact save between £1 million and £1.2 million over the course of the subsequent financial year. Samuel declared himself entirely in agreement with Churchill's proposals although he cautioned that the new gendarmerie should be

⁵⁰ Churchill to Sinclair, 30 Sept. 1921 (TNA, CO 733/15/199).

⁵¹ Meinertzhagen to Shuckburgh, 3 Oct. 1921 (TNA, CO 733/15/201); Churchill to Meinertzhagen, 10 Oct. 1921 (CHAR 17/15).

⁵² Churchill to Samuel, 12 Nov. 1921 (CHAR 17/11).

composed of men 'of good stamp and well disciplined'.⁵³ Two weeks later Churchill finally informed the War Office of his intention to assume military control of Palestine and appoint the R.A.F. as his military agents effective from 1 April 1922 and submitted his proposals for the reorganisation of the garrison to cabinet, including the formation of 'a Palestine gendarmerie of British nationality of a high individual status, aggregating about 700 men'.⁵⁴

These proposals were discussed at a meeting with Sir Henry Wilson and the secretaries of state of the departments involved on 19 December 1921. Wilson was himself adamantly opposed to what he termed Churchill's 'wild cat' schemes to largely replace the military garrisons of Mesopotamia and Palestine with R.A.F. squadrons; his idea of governing Palestine with 'hot-air, aeroplanes and Jews with a stiffening of Black and Tans' was, he warned Congreve, similar to past failed military experiments 'which cost this country hundreds of millions, thousands of lives and the loss, not only of territory, but of prestige'.⁵⁵ For Wilson, 'the Palestine problem [was] exactly the same as the problem of Ireland, namely two peoples living in a small country hating each other like hell for the love of God'. But, unlike Ireland, Palestine was 'one of those countries which [did] not belong us' and he believed that Britain should therefore withdraw and turn it over to the Jews.⁵⁶ Congreve himself was equally disparaging: 'the whole thing is a gigantic swindle by Winston Churchill to get his own way and be free of the War Office and camouflage expense by showing it under several headings.'⁵⁷

⁵³ Samuel to Churchill, 15 Nov. 1921 (CHAR 17/11).

⁵⁴ Churchill, Cabinet memorandum, undated Nov. 1921 (TNA, CAB 24/131).

⁵⁵ Wilson, Diaries, 1 Mar. 1921 (HHW 1/36/3); Wilson to Congreve, 11 Oct. 1921 (HHW 2/52B/34); Wilson to Congreve, 10 Dec. 1921 (HHW 2/52B/40).

⁵⁶ Quotations from Keith Jeffery, *Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson: a political soldier* (Oxford, 2006), p. 253.

⁵⁷ Walter Congreve, Diaries, 23 Mar. 1922. Congreve's diaries are held at the Royal Green Jackets (Rifles) Museum, Winchester.

Wilson claimed that Churchill openly admitted during the meeting that these schemes were ‘gambles’. But according to Meinertzhagen who was present, the CIGS ‘cut a poor figure’ and his arguments were ‘unconvincing and confused’ while Churchill was ‘head and shoulders above the rest in ability and his superior intellect dominated the conference’. As a consequence, Churchill’s proposals were agreed in principle and were approved by the cabinet two days later.⁵⁸ The following day, 22 December 1921, the M.E.D. met to discuss the raising and maintenance of the British Gendarmerie. Tudor was invited to attend and was formally charged with its creation and its administration prior to embarkation for Palestine.⁵⁹ He reported that ‘he already had a rough classification made of the men who were likely to be available’ among the Black and Tans and the ADRIC and ‘in what he might call Class “A” he could provide between 700 and 800 absolutely reliable men’. Many of the best officers and men of the ‘old R.I.C.’ would, he said, be available as well. He also outlined his proposals regarding the force’s terms and conditions which he was asked to incorporate into a draft scheme of contract.⁶⁰

Tudor submitted detailed estimates of establishment and costs for the British Gendarmerie, including a draft contract of employment, to the Colonial Office on 4 January 1922. The establishment was set at 700 men, divided into a headquarters and

⁵⁸ Wilson, Diaries, 19 Dec. 1921 (HHW 1/36/12); Meinertzhagen, *Middle East diary*, 19 Dec. 1921, pp 114-15; ‘Extract from conclusions of a conference of ministers held at 10 Downing Street’, 21 Dec. 1921 (TNA, CO 733/15/620).

⁵⁹ The fact that Tudor was charged with the creation of the British Gendarmerie has led him to be credited with its actual conception. However, according to Clauson, although it was ‘to all intents and purposes the creation of General Tudor ... its original formation was due to the inspiration’ of Churchill himself. This was confirmed by Tudor in a letter to Churchill from Palestine in which he noted that ‘your idea of using Black and Tans ... here has been a great success’. It was further confirmed by McNeill himself who told Leopold Amery that ‘we were formed at Winston Churchill’s instigation’ and referred to the British Gendarmerie as ‘the force conceived by you’ in a letter to Churchill in 1926. Gerard Clauson, Colonial Office minute, 26 Dec. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/29/403); Tudor to Churchill, undated Oct. 1922, (CHAR 17/25); McNeill to Amery, 19 June 1925 (MECA, McNeill collection, File A, no. 5); McNeill to Churchill, 7 Apr. 1926 (TNA, T 172/1551).

⁶⁰ ‘Minutes of a meeting held at the Colonial Office on Thursday, December 22, 1921 at 5 p.m.’, 28 Dec. 1921 (TNA, Treasury files [hereafter T], T 161/21); Grindle to Tudor, 24 Dec. 1921 (TNA, CO 733/15/639).

sixteen platoons. Enlistment was to be for a one-year fixed term with the option of yearly extensions. Pay was linked to that of the London Metropolitan Police and leave was to be accrued at the rate of one month per year. Pensions could be paid after ten years' service with compulsory retirement enforceable after twenty or on reaching age fifty.⁶¹ Tudor's proposals were largely approved at a meeting of the M.E.D. one week later and a contract incorporating them was subsequently drawn up.⁶²

A British Gendarmerie office staffed by a newly-appointed temporary adjutant, Captain (Arthur) Tyrell Blackett, and a typist was opened in the Air Ministry headquarters, Adastral House on Kingsway, London to administer the recruitment process.⁶³ On 10 January, official permission was given to the Crown Agents for the Colonies to make arrangements with Blackett for the printing of material relating to the recruitment of the force and, mindful that the disbandment of the ADRIC had already commenced, Tudor was told to proceed with enlistment four days later.⁶⁴ Consequently on 25 January, R.I.C. deputy inspector-general, C. A. Walsh, sent a confidential circular from Dublin Castle to all R.I.C. county inspectors south of the border informing them that it was proposed to recruit as a matter of urgency 'a limited number of young district inspectors and constables' for police service in Palestine. According to the circular, candidates should be 'unmarried and under thirty years of age, of superior education and first class records. Head Constables and Sergeants up to thirty-five years of age would also be considered'.⁶⁵ Candidates were first required to submit to the recruiting office a one-page application form detailing previous army

⁶¹ Tudor to Wood, 4 Jan. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/33/7-23).

⁶² Shuckburgh to Tudor, 16 Jan. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/33/27-8); 'Palestine Gendarmerie, terms of service', draft document (copy in TNA, CO 733/33/467-8).

⁶³ Blackett, a former officer with the British Army's Bedfordshire Regiment, was working the Irish intelligence service in Dublin at the time.

⁶⁴ Shuckburgh to Colonial Office, 10 Jan. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/18/144); Masterson-Smith to Shuckburgh, 14 Jan. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/33/289); Shuckburgh to Tudor, 14 Jan. 1922 (TNA, CO/733/33/292).

⁶⁵ C. A. Walsh, 'Palestine Gendarmerie', 25 Jan. 1922 (TNA, CO 904/178/186).

and policing experience and decorations awarded, together with character references. Those applicants favourably considered were called before a selection board for assessment and, if successful, sent for a medical examination.

Ex-Auxiliaries were recruited directly by Blackett's office. While some applied there themselves requesting an interview,⁶⁶ most prospective candidates were approached individually by post. In an unpublished account of his British Gendarmerie days, William Crewe, who had served as an ADRIC intelligence officer, recorded that he received a letter from Blackett inviting him to join the force as an orderly room sergeant. He accepted and was initially assigned to Adastral House where he was given the task of compiling lists from the service records of former Auxiliary cadets and writing to those he thought suitable inviting them to enlist.⁶⁷ Douglas Duff (who while not a cadet, was attached to the ADRIC's veterans and drivers' division) told a similar story in his memoirs: 'a letter arrived offering me service in the new force ... [it] asked me what rank I would be willing to accept and I promptly put "Major" in that section'. Three days later he received a further letter offering him the position of British Gendarmerie section leader.⁶⁸

1.3.1 'Without connection to the Auxiliary Division in Ireland'

However, the notoriety of the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries meant that the employment of former Irish policemen was a controversial issue in late 1921-early

⁶⁶ Former ADRIC 'B company' cadet John Jeans, for example, sent a 'feeler letter' to Adastral House seeking an interview which was quickly granted and after which he was given the rank of British Gendarmerie Q. M. sergeant. Jeans, 'British Gendarmerie' (part 1), p. 231.

⁶⁷ According to Crewe this 'was a nice cushy job after the bustle and turmoil of Ireland' in that it was 'nice to be able to pop out for "a cup of" ... without wondering if you would be able to get back to the office safe and sound'. William Crewe, 'British Gendarmerie of Palestine', 28 July 1959 (MS in possession of R. Porter, Belfast), pp 1-2.

⁶⁸ Duff actually enlisted in the British Gendarmerie as a constable. Nor was he recruited as a section leader but, as he elsewhere described it, 'a nonentity, a mere number in a rifle platoon'. Duff, *Rough*, p. 88 and *Bailing*, p. 40. For a detailed discussion of Duff's misrepresentations in his memoirs, see Chapter III below.

1922. Elements of the British armed forces did actively target ex-R.I.C. for recruitment at this time: in December 1921 the Irish Guards regiment, citing its close connection with the R.I.C., asked that it be given, in the wake of its disbandment, ‘every facility... to get in touch with any possible re-enlisting men or recruits’ while the R.A.F. advertised positions with its armoured car units in Palestine and Mesopotamia among those with at least ‘one year’s completed service in Ireland’.⁶⁹ But police forces took the opposite approach. The English and Welsh constabularies displayed a marked disinclination to accept applications from disbanded R.I.C. personnel, fearing the effects of large-scale recruitment from a paramilitary and increasingly discredited force. Meanwhile urgent enquiries by the British Government throughout January 1922 regarding vacancies for experienced R.I.C. officers in the constabularies of the dominions were, in the main, politely rebuffed.⁷⁰ And although the India Office attempted (with little success) to recruit ex-R.I.C. for the Indian police considering them ‘painfully experienced in handling crowds’, it ‘specifically tried to avoid recruiting members of the [ADRIC] or the “Black and Tans”’.⁷¹ The only constabularies willing to take on large numbers of disbanded Irish policemen were those of Northern Ireland which had recruited over 1,300 ex-R.I.C. by October 1922.⁷²

⁶⁹ McCalmont to Walsh, 6 Dec. 1921 (TNA, CO 904/178/135); ‘Volunteers Required for Service with the Royal Air Force’, undated (TNA, CO 904/178/183 & 191-194); ‘Re-Employment of Members of Police Forces’, 2 Feb. 1922 (TNA, CO 904/178/184). The R.I.C. had a long-standing arrangement with the Irish Guards under which it committed to recruit the regiment’s reservists ‘not exceeding 100 annually or 900 ... at any one time’ but it is not clear how many ex-R.I.C. the Irish Guards succeeded in recruiting after disbandment. And although Jeffery claims that ‘the Black and Tans ... provided many of the personnel for the R.A.F.’s armoured companies in Mesopotamia’, the R.A.F. appears to have had difficulty attracting ex-R.I.C., with its recruiting officer complaining from Gormanston in February 1922 that, for various reasons, ‘Special Service in the RAF compares unfavourably, in the men’s minds, with service in the Palestine Gendarmerie’. Herlihy, *R.I.C. short history*, p. 98; Jeffery, *British army*, p. 73; Trenchard to Tudor, 23 Feb. 1922 (R.A.F. Museum, Colindale, London, MRAF Viscount Trenchard papers [hereafter MFC76/1], MFC76/1/285).

⁷⁰ Fedorowich, ‘Problems’, pp 98-9.

⁷¹ Silvestri, ‘Sinn Féin of India’, p. 477.

⁷² C. A. Walsh, ‘Transfer of police to government of Northern Ireland’, 19 Jan. 1922 (TNA, CO

The dominion governments cited local unemployment and economic retrenchment as the reasons for their refusal to recruit ex-R.I.C. But these were convenient excuses to cover the real reason they were unwilling to help – ‘the sheer nature of the violence and the role played by the Black and Tans ... [which] conjured up scenes of barbarity and brutality which no dominion police force wanted to be associated with’.⁷³ Similar concerns were expressed regarding the British Gendarmerie, first by Meinertzhagen and later and more anxiously by Samuel, who told Churchill that while he had no objection to the recruitment of former Irish police into the new gendarmerie provided that the men selected were good character, it would be:

most desirable, if it could be avoided, that no public announcement should be made connecting the Black and Tans with our Gendarmerie. Their reputation, as a Corps, had not been savoury and if any idea was created in the public mind in England or here that the Black and Tans, or any part of them, were being transferred as a body to Palestine, the new Gendarmerie might be discredited from the outset.⁷⁴

Even Sir Henry Wilson had reservations, describing the Black and Tans in his diary as a ‘crowd of wild devils’ and ‘a gang of murderers’ whose deployment in Palestine would ‘no doubt’, he wrote Congreve sarcastically, lead to ‘profound peace in that somewhat uncertain country’.⁷⁵

Churchill did not reply to Samuel until mid-January 1922 when he assured him that, while recruits would largely be drawn from among disbanded Black and

904/178/157); Trickett, ‘Disbandment of R.I.C.: Cost of Compensation Allowances’, 5 Oct. 1922 (TNA, T 160/25).

⁷³ Fedorowich, ‘Problems’, p. 101. However, some non-policing positions in the dominions were advertised among the R.I.C. during the force’s disbandment. For example, the Government of Victoria, Australia offered farmland to ex-R.I.C. settlers on ‘specifically favourable’ terms and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company undertook to travel to Ireland to discuss the terms and conditions of a similar land settlement scheme in Western Canada with prospective R.I.C. applicants. C. A. Walsh, Circular, 24 Mar. 1922, (TNA, CO 904/178/227); C.A. Walsh, Circular, 8 Mar. 1922 (TNA, CO 904/178/207-208).

⁷⁴ Churchill to Meinertzhagen, 10 Oct. 1921 (CHAR 17/15); Samuel to Churchill, 11 Dec. 1921 (CHAR 17/11).

⁷⁵ Wilson, Diaries, 16 Mar. 1921 (HHW 1/36/3); Wilson to Congreve, 10 Jan. 1922 (HHW 2/52B/47).

Tans and Auxiliaries, there was ‘no question of taking over Irish units as such’ and he promised that the ‘connection of [the] new force with Irish auxiliaries will be given as little prominence as possible’.⁷⁶ But cognisance was immediately taken of Samuel’s concerns and efforts made to downplay the extent to which the new force would be recruited from R.I.C. sources. The issue was raised at the M.E.D. meeting of 22 December 1921 when it was decided that ‘recruitment and organisation be conducted with a view to eliminating as far as possible the moral connection between the new force and the Irish Auxiliary Division and of disposing of the inevitable idea that we are importing into Palestine the traditions of recent Irish politics’.⁷⁷ According to Shuckburgh, ‘it was a matter of political importance that the force should not be transferred as a unit to Palestine. The men should nominally be disbanded as an Irish and re-enlisted as a Palestine force’. However he realised ‘any form of recruiting was impossible as long as it was necessary to maintain secrecy in the matter’ and said he would seek a clear ruling from Churchill on this point.⁷⁸ Churchill told Shuckburgh that the public announcement of the British Gendarmerie’s formation was to be made ‘without connection to the Auxiliary Division in Ireland’ and instructed that it be issued from London, not Dublin, so as not to create the impression that the force was to ‘be formed in Ireland out of the elements on the spot’.⁷⁹ The official press communiqué issued on 17 January 1922 therefore made no mention of the R.I.C., stating simply that the new force would be recruited by special arrangement ‘from existing units to be disbanded during the current year’. However the Central News Agency in London reported the same day that this referred to the Irish police, leading the Government to issue an official denial that it was ‘considering the practicability of

⁷⁶ Churchill to Samuel, 14 Jan. 1922 (TNA, CO/733/33/293).

⁷⁷ Grindle to Tudor, 24 Dec. 1921 TNA, CO 733/15/639-40).

⁷⁸ ‘Minutes Colonial Office meeting, December 22, 1921’, op. cit.

⁷⁹ Churchill to Shuckburgh, 11 Jan. 1922 (CHAR 17/26).

employing officers and men of the Auxiliary Division of the Royal Irish Constabulary for police duty in Palestine'.⁸⁰

Dublin Castle was complicit in these attempts to downplay the British Gendarmerie's Irish associations by adopting a semi-secretive approach to the recruitment process. It was reported at the time that 'on disbandment or discharge each [R.I.C.] member ... receives a circular stating the conditions of service [in the British Gendarmerie] ... and inviting him to offer for enrolment'.⁸¹ In fact, Walsh's circular explicitly instructed that information was not to be generally circulated but that individuals considered suitable should be approached personally instead. He sought to further conceal the force's Irish origins by stipulating that no actual recruitment take place in Ireland. Rather, the details of those who could be personally recommended and were willing to serve should be submitted to Blackett in London while Tudor too was instructed that all enlistment take place outside Ireland.⁸² And, in another attempt to obscure the British Gendarmerie's R.I.C. roots, Tudor's proposed nomenclature for certain of its ranks such as 'under-officer' and 'cadet' was vetoed by Churchill on the grounds that these titles 'would ... unnecessarily emphasise the connection between this force and the Irish Auxiliary Division, which for various reasons is undesirable'.⁸³

1.3.2 The recruitment process

On 11 February 1922 Tudor advised the Colonial Office that a British Gendarmerie commandant would need to be appointed and the selection process immediately

⁸⁰ *The Times*, 18 Jan. 1922; *Irish Times*, 18, 20 Jan. 1922.

⁸¹ *Freeman's Journal*, 27 Feb. 1922; *Irish Independent*, 27 Feb. 1922.

⁸² Shuckburgh to Tudor, 14 Jan. 1922 (TNA, CO/733/33/292).

⁸³ They should, he stipulated, be replaced with 'sergeant' and 'constable' instead. Shuckburgh to McNeill, 7 Mar. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/40/22).

opened if the force was to be ready in time for the deadline of 1 April.⁸⁴ He strongly recommended the appointment of the director of the Irish intelligence services and his own deputy chief of police, Brigadier-General Ormond de L'Épée Winter, to the post, arguing that, not only would 'no one ... do the job better', but that Winter had 'the great advantage too of knowing the Police and Auxiliary material' from which the force was to be drawn and would 'be able to avoid taking men who are best left out'.⁸⁵ However Meinertzhagen told Shuckburgh that Winter would be 'wholly unsuitable' for reasons he would not commit to paper, but which probably derived from his unorthodox style and controversial record which had divided opinion in Dublin.⁸⁶ The War Office, he added, agreed. Meinertzhagen proposed instead Col. Angus McNeill, a forty-seven year-old Boer War and First World War veteran whom he described as, not only well-acquainted with Palestine, but 'devoted to the country and a great believer in its future'.⁸⁷ In fact, Meinertzhagen had already informally approached McNeill to gauge his interest in the position and had received a positive response. He was subsequently appointed by Churchill on 17 February.⁸⁸

Operating initially out of Adastral House, McNeill immediately began processing applications for the force of which over 900 had already been received, 400 from the ADRIC and more than 500 from the regular R.I.C.⁸⁹ He himself, in conjunction with the ministry of labour, took charge of the recruitment of disbanded

⁸⁴ Young, Colonial Office minute, 11 Feb. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/33/481).

⁸⁵ Tudor to Churchill, 18 Feb. 1922 (CHAR 17/22).

⁸⁶ Winter was subsequently appointed head of the R.I.C. resettlement branch. Michael Hopkinson (ed.), *The last days of Dublin Castle: the Mark Sturgis diaries* (Dublin, 1999), pp 32, 61, 250 n. 88; Wilson, *Diaries*, 16 Mar. 1921 (HHW 1/36/3); Patrick Long, 'Winter, Sir Ormonde de l'Épée (1875-1962)' in James McGuire & James Quinn (eds.): *Dictionary of Irish biography* [hereafter *D.I.B.*] (Dublin, 2010), vol. 9, pp 1000-01.

⁸⁷ Meinertzhagen to Shuckburgh, 14 Feb. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/38/688).

⁸⁸ McNeill was not, however, their first choice for the post. Meinertzhagen had drawn up a shortlist of six others, four of whom turned it down and two of whom were unavailable while Churchill had recommended Colonel Bernard Freyberg VC who had also declined. McNeill to Meinertzhagen, 13 Feb. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/38/690); Godley to Meinertzhagen, 11 Feb. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/33/482-3).

⁸⁹ MECA, McNeill diaries, vol. 1, undated prologue covering period 17 Feb. – 31 Mar. 1922, p. 1; Tudor to Churchill, 18 Feb. 1922 (CHAR 17/22).

policemen then living in Britain, calling those deemed promising before a selection board based in the recruiting office in Old Scotland Yard. Despite the terms of Walsh's circular and the instructions given to Tudor, interviews were, in the event, also conducted in Ireland, facilitated by McNeill's appointment as his second-in-command of Major Gerald Foley. The Limerick-born son of a prominent Church of Ireland clergyman, Foley had received a mathematics degree from Trinity College in 1909 and subsequently studied theology before joining the R.I.C. as a cadet in May 1911.⁹⁰ He was appointed a 3rd District Inspector one month later. He was commissioned into the Royal Irish Regiment in January 1916, serving under General Allenby in Mesopotamia, before returning to the R.I.C. three years later and becoming county inspector in Mayo.⁹¹ Foley was disbanded on 28 February 1922 and appointed assistant-commandant of the British Gendarmerie one week later. By his own account, he 'at once started in Dublin Castle to recruit serving members of the R.I.C. for the other ranks' and also joined with Tudor in forming a selection board for applicants for commissions, all of whom were serving officers of the R.I.C. or the ADRIC.⁹² According to one Limerick-based British-born recruit, Walter Harrison, 'word came round the canteen by word of mouth, and later by notices ... Enquiries were made in Dublin and Gerald Foley took the best that came forward' and sent them to London for a medical examination.⁹³ Those successful signed a one-year contract and were given a railway warrant to Plymouth and one pound for expenses and ordered to report to Fort Tregantle, an army encampment near Frame Head at

⁹⁰ Foley's theological training allowed him to lead religious services during the British Gendarmerie's voyage to Palestine, making what McNeill described as 'an excellent padre' (MECA, McNeill diaries, vol. 1, 16, 23 Apr. 1922).

⁹¹ Foley's obituaries incorrectly stated that he joined the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. *Palestine Police Old Comrades' Association Newsletter* [hereafter *PPOCAN*], no. 130 (1983), pp 56; *Irish Times*, 22 Dec. 1982.

⁹² Gerald Foley, 'Questionnaire, undated MS (MECA, PPOCAC, Gerald Foley papers, G2 no. 17, fo. 534); Gerald Foley, 'The Irish invade Plymouth' in *PPOCAN* no. 119 (1980), p. 39.

⁹³ Quoted in Horne, *Job*, pp 76-7.

Devonport where they would receive some preliminary training. Although Tudor intended that an eleven-strong advance party charged with preparing the fort for the new force would proceed there on 27 February 1922 with the main body arriving in small parties from 6 March, the logistics of the recruitment process and the remoteness of site (according to McNeill ‘a more inconvenient and out of the way spot could not well be imagined’) meant that the advance party, led by staff sergeant George Millar, did not arrive until 14 March with further drafts of recruits arriving almost daily from 28 March until early April.⁹⁴

The precise number of applications received for the British Gendarmerie is difficult to gauge. It was reported in early March that 3,000 had been received and, one week after the close of recruitment, the *Jewish Chronicle* put the final figure at between five and six thousand.⁹⁵ The fact that a panel composed of qualified but unsuccessful applicants drawn from R.I.C. sources was created from which future vacancies were to be filled, coupled with anecdotal evidence (for example, one disgruntled unsuccessful candidate, William Prosser, told the Colonial Office that he was in touch with several other Auxiliaries similarly passed over) indicates that recruitment was certainly over-subscribed.⁹⁶ Yet, writing in his diary at the end of March, McNeill mentioned only ‘many hundreds’ of applications from the R.I.C. and ADRIC meaning that if the figures reported in the press were accurate, there would have to have been a very large number of applications from outside the Irish police

⁹⁴ Born in Wexford in 1894, Millar was a former Royal Navy officer who joined the ADRIC in January 1921. ‘Minutes of a meeting held at the War Office to discuss with representatives of the Colonial Office the accommodation and maintenance of a force of Gendarmerie being formed in Great Britain for service in Palestine’, 21 Feb. 1922 (TNA., CO 733/33/81); MECA, McNeill diaries, vol.1, prologue, p. 2; *Irish Times*, 16 Mar. 1922; R.I.C. service record no. 77750.

⁹⁵ *Daily Mail*, 7 Mar. 1922; *Jewish Chronicle*, 7 Apr. 1922.

⁹⁶ A former ADRIC ‘F Company’ cadet, Prosser accused the Colonial Office of holding out the promise of employment in the British Gendarmerie as ‘a mere bluff to smooth over the difficult situation which arose on the disbandment of the Auxiliary Division’. Prosser to Colonial Office, 21 July 1922 (TNA, CO 733/39/286-9). See also *Evening Telegraph*, 13 Mar. 1922.

services.⁹⁷ This was unlikely, as although a stipulation included in initial drafts of the press communiqué on recruitment that no applications from non-R.I.C./ADRIC sources would be considered was dropped from the final text, recruitment was clearly focussed on the Irish police with McNeill himself later intimating that the selection board only looked beyond them when recruiting certain required ‘specialists’. What is certainly clear from an analysis of British Gendarmerie nominal rolls is that all but what Meinertzhagen called ‘a small sprinkling’ of non-‘Irish’ applications was ultimately successful.⁹⁸

1.4 The Composition of the British Gendarmerie

There has been some confusion over the numbers of officers and other ranks recruited as part of the original draft.⁹⁹ The 1922 Report on Palestine Administration stated that 38 officers and 724 other ranks were recruited, figures repeated in other official publications, while according to a nominal roll forwarded to Churchill by Samuel in July 1922, this draft consisted of 41 officers and 719 other ranks.¹⁰⁰ In fact forty-two officers were taken on at this time; the nominal roll excluded McNeill’s adjutant, Major William Martinson, who resigned from the British Gendarmerie in May 1922, ostensibly on medical grounds, but in reality due to the breakdown of his relationship with McNeill.¹⁰¹ And while the nominal roll contains numerous inaccuracies, an

⁹⁷ MECA, McNeill diaries, vol. 1, prologue, p. 3.

⁹⁸ McNeill to Mavrogordato, 29 Aug. 1924 (TNA, CO 733/73/410); Meinertzhagen to Thwaites, undated, Mar. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/33/96).

⁹⁹ The British Gendarmerie’s ‘other ranks’ were composed of non-commissioned officers (head constables and sergeants) and constables.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Report on Palestine Administration, 1922’, p. 39; ‘Nominal roll of all ranks of the British Section of the Palestine Gendarmerie’, Samuel to Churchill, 17 July 1922 (TNA, Home Office files [hereafter HO] HO 351/66). See also Report of the Palestine Royal Commission, Cmd. 5479. H.M.S.O., 1937 [hereafter Peel Commission report], p. 186.

¹⁰¹ Martinson had been commandant of the ADRIC depot at Beggar’s Bush in Dublin where, according to Duff, he had been ‘violently unpopular’. His omission is odd in that the nominal roll included Lts. S. J. Mitchell and Bertram Durlacher, both of whom resigned around the same time. It is as if McNeill

examination of the allocation of British Gendarmerie force numbers (which were assigned in strict numerical sequence in order of enlistment to other ranks and were not re-issued when those to whom they were allocated left the force) indicates that its figure of 719 rankers is most likely correct. Certainly the figure of 724 cited in official publications cannot be accurate as force numbers 723 and 724 were allocated to Constables Robert Croy and George Heal respectively, recruited in November 1922 as replacements for gendarmes who had departed the force by that time.

The original draft of British Gendarmerie recruits was, as intended, overwhelmingly composed of former members of the Irish police services. According to the July 1922 nominal roll, 25 British Gendarmerie officers were recruited directly from the Irish police (16 from the regular R.I.C. and 9 from the ADRIC) as were 690 of the rankers (565 from the regular R.I.C. and 125 from the ADRIC).¹⁰² However, a study of the R.I.C. and ADRIC registers of service and other sources reveals that these breakdowns are also inaccurate. Of the 42 officers, at least 35 (or 83 per cent) actually came from the Irish police, 21 from the ADRIC and 9 from the regular R.I.C. A further four, Captain Blackett, Major John Kershaw, Major Hallowell Carew and Lt. John Bockett, were recruited from R.I.C. intelligence while the British Gendarmerie quartermaster, Major Norman Songest, was assistant secretary to Tudor in Dublin Castle.¹⁰³ Of the 718 British Gendarmerie other ranks whose prior service it has been possible to establish, 693 were recruited from the Irish police services, 553 from the regular R.I.C. and 139 from the ADRIC while one, Constable Frank Swayne,

tried to write Martinson out of the force's history. MECA, McNeill collection, Diaries vol. 1, 8 May 1922; Deedes to Churchill, 19 May 1922 (TNA, CO 733/22/30-1); Duff, *Sword*, p. 95.

¹⁰² The Colonial Office provided a similar breakdown in December 1922 (TNA, CO 733/35/620).

¹⁰³ The British Gendarmerie transport officer, Captain Eddie Lawes, was also probably recruited from Irish intelligence as his name appears along with those of Carew and Kershaw on a 1923 New Year's honours list composed largely of Irish intelligence operatives. It has also been suggested that Major Caryl ap Rhys Pryce was recruited from R.I.C. intelligence but this remains speculative. *The Times*, 2 Jan. 1923; John Humphries, *Gringo revolutionary: the amazing adventures of Caryl ap Rhys Pryce* (Bro Morgannwg, 2005), p. 230.

was working as a clerk in the R.I.C. maintenance office in Dublin Castle.¹⁰⁴ Of the remaining twenty-five other ranks, twenty-three were recruited directly from the



Figure 3: British Gendarmerie officers with Palestine's high commissioner, Lord Plumer, c. 1925 (D. Bockett collection)

British army and one each from the Royal Navy and the London Metropolitan Police. Therefore, 95 per cent of the British Gendarmerie's initial intake of recruits had worked in the Irish police services.

1.4.1 A Black and Tan force?

Unsurprisingly then, official efforts to obscure the British Gendarmerie's Irish associations came to nothing. Indeed, the government's denial that the force was to be recruited from among the Irish police was from the start treated as risible. As the London correspondent of the *Freeman's Journal* pointed out, the phrase 'existing

¹⁰⁴ 'Constable Frank Swayne, Palestine Gendarmerie: treatment for tuberculosis' (National Archives of Ireland, Dublin [hereafter NAI], Dept. Taoiseach files [hereafter TSCH], TCSH/3/S4085).

units to be disbanded during the current year' used in the press communiqué could only refer to the Irish police while the official denial 'recalled the late Lord Salisbury's cynical dictum that one should never believe a report about a split in the British Cabinet till it was "officially" denied'.¹⁰⁵ The day after this denial was issued, the newspaper of the British establishment in Palestine, the *Palestine Weekly*, briefly reported the fact that the new gendarmerie would be recruited from R.I.C. sources and other newspapers followed suit over time.¹⁰⁶ It was also acknowledged in Parliament.¹⁰⁷ Widespread unease about recent police conduct in Ireland meant that attention focussed on the British Gendarmerie's Black and Tans to the extent that the force quickly came to be defined by their presence. For example, in March 1922 the London correspondent of the *Freeman's Journal*, under the heading 'Poor Palestine', noted that the new force was composed of 'some 700 Black and Tans' as did the *New York Times*, while among the questions put to Walter Congreve at a House of Commons committee meeting in December was 'How are General Tudor and his Black and Tans getting on in Palestine?'.¹⁰⁸ The same was true in Palestine itself where the British Gendarmerie was, from the start, defined in terms of its Irish origins. In April 1922, Helen Bentwich reported the arrival in the country of 'our Irish Constabulary'; the *Palestine Weekly* frequently referred to the force as the 'Irish gendarmerie' while the Hebrew press termed it 'the Irishmen'.¹⁰⁹ In fact, according to Duff, the British administration actually spread 'a great deal of judicious

¹⁰⁵ *Freeman's Journal*, 24 Jan., 17 Mar. 1922.

¹⁰⁶ *Palestine Weekly*, 20 Jan. 1922; *Sunday Times*, 26 Feb. 1922; *Irish Independent*, 27 Feb. 1922; *Freeman's Journal*, 27 Feb. 1922; *Evening Standard*, 28 Feb. 1922; *Jewish Chronicle*, 03 Mar. 1922; *Irish Times*, 18 Mar. 1922; *The Times*, 31 Mar. 1922.

¹⁰⁷ Hansard, House of Commons debates, 16 Feb. 1922, vol. 150 cc1197-8; 20 Feb. 1922, vol. 150 cc1630-1; 09 Mar. 1922, vol. 151 c1519; 01 May 1922, vol. 153 cc1003-4. The fact that British Gendarmerie recruitment was not properly discussed in either Westminster or Fleet Street was noted by William Prosser. Prosser to Colonial Office, 21 July 1922 (TNA, CO 733/39/288).

¹⁰⁸ *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Mar. 1922; *New York Times*, 31 Mar. 1922; Ormsby-Gore, Colonial Office minute, 15 Dec. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/35 /616).

¹⁰⁹ Glynn, *Tidings*, p. 82;

propaganda' about the British Gendarmerie's Black and Tan associations in order to enhance its ability to deter trouble-making (he reported being himself asked 'tremblingly' by an Arab brothel-keeper in Haifa whether he belonged to 'the new Police which she had heard had been sent to Palestine because of the murders we had committed in some land from which the English had been driven because of our brutalities') and, by October 1922, Tudor was telling Churchill that the British Gendarmerie had 'inherited the [Black and Tan] name here'.¹¹⁰

Shuckburgh indignantly dismissed the Black and Tan label as 'a convenient way of describing this force for controversial purposes'.¹¹¹ However, the R.I.C. registers of service illustrate the extent to which the British Gendarmerie's reputation as a Black and Tan force was, in terms of composition, deserved. Of the 553 other ranks recruited from the regular R.I.C., 473 were former Black and Tans while just 80 were ex-'old R.I.C.', meaning that two-thirds of the total initial intake of rankers was made up of ex-Black and Tans. The force's Black and Tan character was underscored by the presence of the 139 former Auxiliary cadets who were commonly conflated in the public mind with the Black and Tans.¹¹² Taken together then, former members of the Black and Tans and the ADRIC accounted for 85 per cent of the force's initial intake of rankers.

The perception of the British Gendarmerie as a Black and Tan force was further underscored by Churchill's appointment of Tudor to overall command. In light

¹¹⁰ Duff, *Sword*, p. 112 and *Bailing*, pp 27, 31; Tudor to Churchill, undated Oct. 1922 (CHAR 17/25)

¹¹¹ His indignation derived from the fact that he applied the term 'Black and Tan' to members of the ADRIC alone and therefore considered the British Gendarmerie's Black and Tan element to comprise less than 20 per cent of the force. The fact that the colonial secretary, the Duke of Devonshire (who had extensive estates in Ireland), referred to 'the so-called Black and Tans' suggests that he too was unimpressed by the label. Shuckburgh, Colonial Office minute, 20 Dec. 1922, Duke of Devonshire, Colonial Office minute, 29 Dec. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/35/616-7).

¹¹² Even today the term Black and Tan 'remains a convenient, sometimes incorrect and quite charged shorthand for all the auxiliary forces sent to Ireland to supplement the R.I.C.'. Dolan, 'British culture', p. 202.

of their long-standing friendship (they had known each other since the mid-1890s when they were both serving with the army in Bangalore), his appointment has been criticized as one which ‘typified that time-honoured expression, “jobs for the boys”’.¹¹³ This is, however, unfair. Although Percy Bramley had achieved some success as Palestine’s director of public security, he was neither liked nor admired in official circles. According to Hubert Young, who visited Jerusalem in late 1921, he was a man ‘for whom no one that I met ... had a good word to say officially’ and he had ‘heard on all sides that there was continual friction between him and the various Governors’ and certain of his subordinates including Frederick Bewsher and Major Alan Saunders of the Palestine Police, both of whom were highly regarded in London. Bramley also had a fractious relationship with Jerusalem’s Government House which was, in his view, overrun with Zionist ‘partisans and idealists ... both British and Jew’ who made difficult his department’s ‘endeavours to maintain a strictly impartial line of conduct in the non-partisan performance of [its] duties’.¹¹⁴ Young therefore deemed it essential that he be replaced by someone who commanded more confidence and respect before the British Gendarmerie arrived and there was near consensus among M.E.D. officials that Tudor was the ideal candidate.¹¹⁵

Churchill was actually considering Tudor for the post of G.O.C. in Palestine at

¹¹³ Hammond, ‘Ideology’, p. 119.

¹¹⁴ Young to Shuckburgh, 13 Feb. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/18/396-7); Bramley to Devonshire, 6 Nov. 1923 & 8 Nov. 1923 (Royal Commonwealth Society Library, Cambridge [hereafter RCMS], Bramley papers, Palestine 1923-1925 file, RCMS 64). After lunching with Bramley during a visit to London in mid-1923, McNeill described him as ‘very rabid and [threatening] all kinds of exposures of the Government in regard to their Zionist policy’ and ‘still foaming at the mouth’ ten days later. McNeill diaries, vol. 2, 25 June, 5 July 1923.

¹¹⁵ Keith-Roach severely criticised Bramley in his memoirs, claiming that he had proved ‘as able and unscrupulous in Palestine as he had been in India’ and was eventually ‘found out and allowed to retire’. Horace Samuel was also disparaging. Such criticisms notwithstanding, Bramley’s service in Palestine was praised ‘in the most appreciative and eulogistic manner’ by Samuel at a farewell dinner in March 1923 and his death two years later aged just fifty-eight appeared to evoke genuine sadness among former colleagues. Keith-Roach, *Pasha*, p. 75; Samuel, *Unholy memories*, p. 84; *Palestine Weekly*, 30 Mar. 1923; Bewsher to Sybil Bramley, 8 Mar. 1925 and undated typescript containing remarks from other letters of condolence received (MECA, PPOCAC, Percy Bramley papers, G1 no. 16); See also his obituary in *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, xii, no. 2 (1925), p. 202.

the time. But given that primary responsibility for public order would be devolving from the army on to the department of public security, Young argued that Tudor ('a really capable and experienced soldier who knows all about police work') should be appointed director of the latter instead, giving him control of the Palestine Police and both gendarmeries. Meinertzhagen agreed, advising Churchill that 'General Tudor's qualifications – his knowledge of Arabic, his experience of police work, his military record – make him peculiarly fitted for the post', not to mention that fact that he was 'familiar with the new [British] gendarmerie, they are practically his own child and they know and understand him'.¹¹⁶

All of this was essentially true. Prior to his two years as 'police advisor' in Ireland, Tudor had enjoyed a long and successful military career. After training at the Royal Military Academy in Woolwich, he was commissioned into the Royal Field Artillery in 1890, going on to serve in India, South Africa (he was severely wounded at the Battle of Magersfontein in December 1899) and Egypt where he spent four years. He served on the Western Front during the War, rising to the rank of major-general with command of the 9th (Scottish) Division. He continued to command this formation after the Armistice as part of the Army of the Rhine until it was disbanded in March 1919. Tudor had learned to speak Arabic while in Egypt and had passed a first-class interpreter's examination in the language.¹¹⁷ This was an important consideration for Palestine where, with few exceptions, the British security forces

¹¹⁶ Young to Shuckburgh, 13 Feb. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/18/397); Meinertzhagen, 'Draft note to Secretary of State', 22 Feb. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/18/406).

¹¹⁷ In 1942 Tudor complained to the B.B.C. about the pronunciation of Arabic place-names on its world service, citing this examination as his credentials for doing so. McNeill also noted his proficiency in the language. Joy Cave, *A gallant gunner general: the life and times of Sir H. Hugh Tudor, K.C.B., C.M.G.* (Imperial War Museum, Misc. 175, Item 2685), p. 343; MECA, McNeill diaries, vol. 1, 4 Mar. 1923. For additional biographical data on Tudor, see Michael Boyle, 'Major General Sir Henry Hugh Tudor (1871-1965)' in *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, xxxiv, no. 2 (2008), p. 65; Patrick Long, 'Sir Henry Hugh Tudor', *D.I.B.*, vol. 9, pp 508-9 and Gerald Ryan, 'Major General Sir Hugh ('Black') Tudor' in *History Ireland*, xiii, no. 5 (2005), p. 9.

were entirely ignorant of the local languages. He also, as Meinertzhagen pointed out, knew the gendarmes well and, during a series of valedictory inspections and addresses to detachments of the R.I.C., made a point of saying that he looked forward to meeting a number of them again in Palestine.¹¹⁸ In the event, Churchill decided to amalgamate the post of director of public security with that of G.O.C. and he offered it to Tudor in February 1922.¹¹⁹ He accepted. There was some disquiet on the ground in Palestine at his appointment as G.O.C. where the incumbent, General Alexander Wardrop, was respected and popular.¹²⁰ Nonetheless, Tudor ‘assumed command of all forces, civil and military, employed on imperial defence and internal security in Palestine in the dual capacity of General Officer Commanding and Inspector-General of Police and Prisons’ on 15 June 1922.¹²¹

1.4.2 The changing composition of the British Gendarmerie

While the British Gendarmerie was, and indeed still is, routinely defined in terms of its Black and Tan component, its Black and Tan character waned considerably during its lifetime, the result of changes in personnel which saw the proportion of former Irish policemen diminish with each passing year. An analysis of surviving force nominal rolls and other sources indicates that 250 of the 761 members of the original 1922 draft of British Gendarmerie officers and men were still serving in 1926, 233 of

¹¹⁸ *Irish Times*, 5 Apr. 1922.

¹¹⁹ Meinertzhagen stated in his diary that Tudor was given command of the British Gendarmerie at the meeting held on 19 December 1921 when he was, in fact, charged only with raising the force at this point. Either this is a misunderstanding on Meinertzhagen’s part or an example of the revision of his diary entries in the light of subsequent events for which he has become rather notorious. Meinertzhagen, *Middle East diary*, 19 Dec. 1921, p. 114.

¹²⁰ According to Congreve, ‘no one could have done better than Wardrop and [Samuel] wanted to keep him’. Samuel himself told the Colonial Office that he found Wardrop ‘most helpful and efficient’. Congreve to Wilson, 25 Mar. 1922 (HHW 2/52B/54); Samuel to Devonshire, 16 Nov. 1921 (TNA, CO 733/7/335).

¹²¹ Tudor had earlier been forced to quash rumours that he was being appointed to replace Sir Herbert Samuel as high commissioner. ‘Report on Palestine Administration, 1922’, p. 38; *Irish Times*, 13 Apr. 1922.

whom had been recruited from the Irish police services.¹²² Of the 719 rankers, 229 were still serving in 1926, 217 of whom had been recruited from the Irish police (156 from the Black and Tans, 51 from the ADRIC and 10 from the 'old-R.I.C.').

Of the 476 rankers recruited from among the Irish police services who departed the force during its four years in Palestine, 32 did so in 1922 when 21 resigned, 9 were dismissed and 2 deserted. A further five were invalided out in January 1923 while another fourteen died during the 1922-5 period. The majority of the remainder left at the expiration of their initial one-year contract in April 1923. Horne writes that one-quarter of the force was then discharged but the fact that over 330 new gendarmes were recruited over the course of 1923 indicates that between forty and fifty per cent of the original draft of rankers actually left at this time, mainly on account of their unhappiness with life in the force.¹²³

Disaffection crystallized around certain of the contract's terms and conditions. The Colonial Office had noted 'divergences between the terms originally circulated and those finally approved' before the main body of men left for Palestine in April 1922 and offered them the chance to back out.¹²⁴ While some did resign, most chose to proceed but the feeling that they had been ill-used festered and by January 1923 McNeill was warning that a significant proportion of the force (Meinertzhagen thought about forty per cent) would not renew the contract as it stood.¹²⁵ The first of these conditions was its one-year fixed term. Meinertzhagen argued that 'the

¹²² In addition to the above-mentioned July 1922 list, see 'Palestine Gendarmerie – nominal roll officers', 7 Apr. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/38/748-9); 'British Section Palestine Gendarmerie: revised nominal roll of members', 20 Nov. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/27/235-45); 'Nominal roll of British Section of the Palestine Gendarmerie by ranks showing dates of expiration of contract, Year 1925/26' (TNA, CO 733/95/478-86); 'Return of officers by grades of the British Gendarmerie on 1 May 1925' (TNA, CO 733/94/261-3).

¹²³ Horne, *Job*, p. 91.

¹²⁴ As this opportunity had not been afforded to the advance party, a small number of this group were repatriated at Government expense. Clauson, Colonial Office minute, 31 May 1922 (TNA, 733/22/28-9).

¹²⁵ McNeill, 'Notes on the British Gendarmerie', 3 Jan. 1923 (MECA, McNeill collection, File A, no. 3 [hereafter 'Notes']), p. 5; Meinertzhagen to Shuckburgh, 22 Feb. 1923 (TNA, CO 733/42/611).

uncertainty of such a short contract prevents the men from entertaining any idea of permanent employment' and McNeill agreed, telling the head of the Zionist Executive, Col. Frederick Kisch, in February that over 200 of his best men had announced their intention to resign over the issue. As late as August 1924, McNeill was still citing the absence of an extended contract as almost wholly responsible for the large number of resignations the previous year, arguing that 'a man naturally jumps at a job at home rather than stop on in the Force with the chance of being axed at the end of a year's service'.¹²⁶

The contract's second problematical condition was its stipulation that the payment of R.I.C. pensions be suspended for the duration of British Gendarmerie service. While suspension of existing police pensions was the norm for those accepting employment in other pensionable British police forces and was clearly stated in the British Gendarmerie contract, the reference to R.I.C. pensions in the material originally circulated to prospective applicants was misleading in this regard and the new recruits had expected that they would continue to be paid.¹²⁷ In any case, many agreed with Meinertzhagen that the British Gendarmerie, being 'raised on a yearly contract with no guarantee of continuance', could not properly be deemed a pensionable force and the non-payment of R.I.C. pensions therefore provided legitimate grounds for withdrawal.¹²⁸ So deeply did feelings run on the issue that Samuel believed that up to one-third of the force might resign on its account.¹²⁹ Tudor

¹²⁶ Meinertzhagen, 'Military Report' (TNA, CO 733/61/41); Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 14 Feb. 1923, p. 32; McNeill to Samuel, 29 Aug. 1924 (TNA, CO 733/73/412). See also 'Extract from shorthand notes of the first meeting of the Cabinet committee on Palestine, July 5th 1923' (TNA, T 161/21).

¹²⁷ According to Clauson, the reference was 'most dangerously phrased' and he recommended that it 'had probably disappear altogether' from the explanatory note to be circulated to those applying for the 1923 draft. Clauson, Colonial Office minute, 16 Mar. 1923 (TNA, CO 733/54/183).

¹²⁸ Meinertzhagen, 'Military Report' (CO 733/61/39-41).

¹²⁹ In fact, Samuel had warned the Colonial Office as early as July 1922 that large numbers of gendarmes would not renew their contracts over this issue and, citing the fact that ex-R.I.C. serving in the army and the air force were permitted to retain their Irish pensions, urged that members of the British Gendarmerie be allowed at least one-half of theirs. Samuel to Shuckburgh, 13 July 1922 (TNA,

agreed, telling the R.A.F. chief, Hugh Trenchard, that he faced 'losing about 230 of the best' and warning of further losses if rumours that the Egyptian government was setting up a British Gendarmerie-style force turned out to be true.¹³⁰ But the Colonial Office refused to address either issue; the result was mass resignations in April 1923.

The absence of listings of those resigning or relevant nominal rolls precludes a detailed breakdown of the approximately 130 R.I.C./ADRIC departures which took place in 1924-5. However, the fact that there were vacancies for thirty-six constables in February 1924 and that the establishment of other ranks was reduced to 453 one year later indicates that the majority left the force in 1925.¹³¹ The recruitment of replacements for rankers exiting the British Gendarmerie did not arrest the decline of its Black and Tan contingent. Between summer 1922 and January 1924 approximately 370 men were taken on for this purpose, very few of whom were ex-R.I.C./ADRIC.¹³² With the exception of twelve specialists required by the transport section, no further recruitment took place after this point as plans to wind down the British Gendarmerie as part of yet another reorganisation of the garrison gained pace. The reduction in force strength to 453 in spring 1925 meant that former Irish policemen still accounted for about 50 per cent of those serving at the time of disbandment one year later.

Unlike the other ranks, the British Gendarmerie's officer class maintained its 'Irish' cast until the end. Although only 16 of the 35 officers recruited from the Irish police services in 1922 were still serving in 1926 (some 4 from the regular R.I.C, 8

CO 733/29/361-2).

¹³⁰ 'They will soon get all our R.I.C. men as they will give the same rates of pay and the men will be able to draw full R.I.C. pensions'. Tudor to Trenchard, 17 Feb. 1923 (R.A.F. museum, MFC76/1/285). As head of the air force, Trenchard had ultimate military responsibility for Palestine. Vincent Orange, 'Trenchard, Hugh Montague, first Viscount Trenchard (1873-1956)', *ODNB online* (<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article.36552>, accessed 6 Aug. 2013).

¹³¹ Samuel to Thomas, 21 Feb. 1924 (TNA, CO 733/65/115).

¹³² An examination of the R.I.C. registers of service indicates that less than thirty of those recruited in the 1923-4 period were former members of the Irish police services. Almost all were recruited in 1923 from a waiting list composed of unsuccessful qualified applicants for the original 1922 draft.

from the ADRIC and 4 from the administrative and intelligence services), the facts that the strength of the officer corps had been reduced to 27 (five below the authorised establishment), and that replacement officers had been recruited from the British Gendarmerie's other ranks, meant that they still made up a majority of the officer corps.¹³³ Most of those departing simply resigned although at least four were effectively dismissed under the cover of contract non-renewal. Another three died.

The British Gendarmerie's Black and Tan complexion further paled with Tudor's removal from Palestine in April 1924. Ostensibly this was due to the fact that his combined post was then abolished but this was itself the direct result of his refusal properly to manage the role. Despite having been instructed by Churchill to keep 'his military and civil functions ... entirely separate ... and discharged through separate channels', Tudor had actively blurred them entirely.¹³⁴ This was particularly pronounced in the case of the British Gendarmerie which, while semi-military in character, formed part of Palestine's civil forces. Yet Tudor insisted on using his G.O.C. staff to administer the force and addressing all correspondence on force matters to the air ministry instead of the Colonial Office. One month after his arrival in Palestine, Trenchard asked him to desist from this practice, going so far as to enclose transcripts of minutes by air ministry officials expressing bafflement as to why Tudor was referring British Gendarmerie business to them instead of their Colonial Office counterparts. Yet Tudor persisted to the fury of both departments.¹³⁵

According to Clauson, Tudor's behaviour stemmed from his sheer inability, as a life-long soldier, 'to think along civil lines', arguing that while his appointment as police chief in Ireland had been technically a civil one, it was in essence a military

¹³³ Nine of the eleven men who attained commissioned rank during the force's four years were promoted from the ranks.

¹³⁴ Churchill, Memorandum on Tudor's appointment, undated, Feb. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/19/335).

¹³⁵ Trenchard to Tudor, 28 July 1922 (R.A.F. museum, MFC76/1/285).

position in that Ireland was a war-zone and the R.I.C. a military force during the entire period of Tudor's command. Tudor was, as a consequence, entirely ignorant of the manner in which an ordinary police force was administered and had run the British Gendarmerie 'on the same lines as the Auxiliary Division in Ireland, that is on military lines'.¹³⁶ He therefore treated orders given by the civil authorities 'with disrespect whenever it [suited] him to do so', particularly Government House towards which he was 'constantly adopting an attitude of independence', angering Samuel who actually shared his view of the British Gendarmerie as, primarily, a military force.¹³⁷ Samuel had little time for Tudor on a personal level either, being scandalised by his effective abandonment of his wife and children, the details of which were being aired in the courts and the press in the summer of 1923.¹³⁸ Lady Tudor had in fact travelled to Palestine in an attempt to resolve matters in February but Tudor had her travelling facilities stopped at Kantara and refused to see her: according to McNeill, who was unaware of the reason for her 'rather mysterious visit', she had remained in the country six days.¹³⁹ And while Trenchard thanked him on his retirement from Palestine 'for making our task here as easy as possible in running a new responsibility', Tudor had created so many problems for air ministry officials that, according to Clauson, they were firmly convinced that he had a fixed policy of obeying orders only when it suited him to do so.¹⁴⁰ McNeill also found Tudor

¹³⁶ This echoed Sir Henry Wilson's assessment of Tudor in Ireland the previous year, i.e. that, while he was 'a gallant fellow on service', he was 'a man of no balance, knowledge or judgement and therefore a deplorable selection for his [R.I.C.] post'. Clauson, Colonial Office minute, 26 Dec. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/29/403-4); Wilson, Diaries, 28 Mar. 1921 (HHW 1/36/3).

¹³⁷ Clauson, Colonial Office minute, 13 Sept. 1923 (TNA, CO 733/48/188).

¹³⁸ According to Samuel's son, his 'ideas of morality in general were puritanical in the extreme'. Samuel, *Lifetime*, p. 8.

¹³⁹ Lady Tudor did eventually succeed in seeing her husband but he insisted on a divorce. Legal wrangles over maintenance payments to her and his children continued for another five years. MECA, McNeill diaries, vol. 1, 15 Feb. 1923 & vol. 2, 12 July 1923; *The Times*, 3 July 1923; *Irish Times*, 3 July 1923; *Aberdeen Journal*, 23 July 1923; 'Divorce Court file 2359: Tudor versus Tudor' (TNA, J77/1990/2359).

¹⁴⁰ Trenchard to Tudor, 21 Nov. 1923 (R.A.F. museum, MFC76/1/285); Clauson, Colonial Office

impossible, describing him in his diary as ‘quite the worst commander I had ever served under’ – so dictatorial, capricious and utterly lacking in communication skills that ‘if he remains in command either I shall be under arrest for mutiny or he will be murdered by one of his own Black and Tans’. After seeing Tudor off for the last time from Palestine McNeill wrote: ‘I never wish again to serve under such a man. He has been no use to us officially or socially since he dropped out of the clouds ... twenty-one months ago’.¹⁴¹

1.5 Conclusion

The presence of ex-R.I.C. personnel in the ranks of the region’s police forces did not end with the British Gendarmerie. Two new forces, the Transjordan Frontier Force (TJFF) and the British Section of the Palestine Police (BSPP) were formed as part of the April 1926 reorganisation of Palestine’s security forces that led to the gendarmerie’s demise and disbanded members transferred to both. It has generally been assumed that the BSPP’s original establishment of five officers and 212 other ranks was filled from the British Gendarmerie but this was not the case.¹⁴² The five vacancies for officers with the BSPP were indeed filled by former gendarmerie officers as were six additional appointments in the ordinary (‘native’) section.¹⁴³

minute, 13 Sept. 1923 (TNA, CO 733/48/188).

¹⁴¹ MECA, McNeill diaries, vol. 2, 10 Aug. 1923, 26 Nov. 1923, 30 Mar. 1924. Ironically, Gerard Clauson subsequently expressed similar reservations about McNeill’s policing abilities, describing him as ‘a barrack-square soldier pure and simple’ whose relations with the department of public security were ‘distinctly strained’. Moreover, he did not have a ‘proper idea of official behaviour ... [and] had to be called to order several times for doing things in an irregular fashion’. Clauson, Colonial Office minute, 30 July 1924 (TNA, CO 733/71/481-2).

¹⁴² See, for example, Hammond, ‘Ideology’, p. 203; Knight, ‘Policing’, p. 109; Krozier, ‘Dowbiggan to Tegart’, p. 117; Horne, *Job*, p. 102; Smith, ‘Communal conflict’, p. 65 and most recently Michael J. Cohen, *Britain’s moment in Palestine: retrospect and perspectives, 1917-48* (Oxford, 2014), p. 213.

¹⁴³ All but one of the British Gendarmerie officer corps applied for these eleven positions. The five BSPP posts were filled by Raymond Cafferata, Eric James, James Munro, Frank M. Scott and Robert Worsley, the six in the ordinary police establishment by Gerald Foley, Alfred Barker, James Kyles, Tyrell Blackett, Stuart Forbes-Sharp and Michael McConnell. Two other British Gendarmerie officers,

Similarly with non-commissioned officers: British Gendarmerie N.C.O.s filled the twenty-one posts available while a further seven were appointed to newly-created British inspectorships in the ordinary section.

However, the 191 positions for BSPP constables were not fully subscribed. For while all 351 serving British Gendarmerie constables were invited to apply, only 116 did so and, of these, just 89 were accepted. Of this 89, 46 eventually turned down the offer for various reasons, leaving just 43 gendarmes initially desirous of a transfer.¹⁴⁴ Writing to the secretary of state for the colonies, Leopold Amery, in February, Palestine's new high commissioner, Lord Plumer, attributed the disappointing level of interest to the fact that the 'terms offered on disbandment appear prima facie better than terms of entry to [the] police' (an issue flagged as a potential problem by McNeill eight months earlier) and his success in having the terms of entry into the BSPP favourably revised in March led to a number of late applications and reconsiderations.¹⁴⁵ There was some dispute between the M.E.D. and McNeill as to numbers of constables that transferred to the force in April 1926 with Shuckburgh putting the figure at fifty-seven and McNeill maintaining it was just forty-three. An examination of the allocation of force numbers among the first intake of BSPP recruits indicates that a total of between sixty-three and sixty-five British Gendarmerie rankers had actually transferred by this time.¹⁴⁶ This figure presumably included the twenty-one N.C.O.s, suggesting McNeill's figure for constables was the

Michael O'Rourke and John Faraday, had transferred to the Palestine Police as assistant district commandants in September 1924 and July 1925 respectively.

¹⁴⁴ McNeill to Churchill, 20 May 1926 (TNA, T 172/1551); Howard to Shuckburgh, 10 June 1926 (TNA, CO 733/120/731-3).

¹⁴⁵ Plumer to Amery, 24 Feb. 1926 (TNA, CO 733/112/553-4); McNeill to Amery, 19 June 1925 (MECA, McNeill collection, File A, no. 5); Plumer to Amery, 27 Feb. 1926 (TNA, CO 733/112/707). For a discussion of Plumer's term as high commissioner see Geoffrey Powell, *Plumer, the soldier's general: a biography of Field-Marshal Viscount Plumer of Messines* (Barnsley, 2004), pp 298-317.

¹⁴⁶ Force numbers were allocated to BSPP rankers (non-commissioned officers and constables) during this period in numerical sequence as they enlisted allowing the order of recruitment to be determined. In later years, however, force numbers allocated to men that subsequently departed the force were re-assigned.

more accurate. At least another twelve rankers enlisted in subsequent months bringing the final total of N.C.O.s and constables to about seventy-five. Thus, although the 1926 'Report on Palestine administration' stated that most of the five officers and 212 other ranks were former gendarmes, the overall figure for British Gendarmerie-BSPP transfers was less than ninety.¹⁴⁷ Sinclair suggests (on the basis of a single document concerning R.I.C. pensions) that just twenty-three officers and men originally recruited from the R.I.C. transferred to the Palestine Police with a further three enlisting in the TJFF.¹⁴⁸ In reality, at least five British Gendarmerie officers and men transferred to the TJFF in 1926, all of whom were ex-R.I.C./ADRIC. Of those transferring to the Palestine Police (both the BSPP and the ordinary establishment), 82 were former Irish policemen, 51 ex-Black and Tans, 24 ex-ADRIC and 7 ex-'old-R.I.C.'.

McNeill was unhappy with the rate at which former gendarmes secured further employment and petitioned Churchill on their behalf, complaining that those who approached the Colonial Office were 'not very sympathetically received' while those who actually applied for positions in the colonial service were not receiving the consideration they deserved.¹⁴⁹ The Colonial Office countered that McNeill 'gave the impression that he thought that every member of the Gendarmerie had a definite claim to some other post in the colonial service' which was, it argued, certainly not the case. Moreover, these same men had turned down the opportunity to join the BSPP, meaning the Colonial Office had been required to recruit one hundred constables in Britain as a result. McNeill eventually backed down, asking only that 'my people have a "good run for their money" by which I mean that if one of my officers should

¹⁴⁷ John Jeans put the total figure at 'between thirty and forty'. 'Report on Palestine Administration, 1926 (London, 1927), p. 37; Jeans, 'British Gendarmerie' (part 6), p. 28.

¹⁴⁸ Sinclair, 'Irish policeman', p. 178.

¹⁴⁹ 'We were called "Winston's own" when we first came out here, and we look to you now'. McNeill to Churchill, 20 May 1926 (TNA, T 172/1551).

come up for consideration at any time, I should be referred to in cases of doubt'.¹⁵⁰

McNeill had also expressed disappointment at his own situation, complaining to Churchill that he had thought he 'was safely settled for about 10 years and burnt [his] boats accordingly' but now was faced with the prospect of looking for another job 'despite having got out of touch with everything at home'.¹⁵¹ In the event he was offered the directorship of a new government stock-breeding farm to be established at Duboya near Acre in 1926 on the recommendation of Lord Plumer who said he was as 'well qualified as a practical farmer and would do well' in the role.¹⁵² McNeill accepted and worked there until his retirement from Government service in May 1931. He remained in Palestine afterwards, living in the Arab village of Mazra'a in a house once inhabited by Baha'u'llah, prophet of the Baha'i faith of which Lilian McNeill became a devout and prominent member. The McNeills lived in Mazra'a until Lilian's death in August 1949 after which Angus moved to Cyprus where he died in 1950.¹⁵³

The recruitment of Black and Tans and Auxiliaries into the British Gendarmerie was a sensitive subject for British officials in 1922. Not only was Samuel reluctant to have his new force publicly associated with these discredited forces, but he held genuine concerns about the importation of large numbers of men of such notorious repute into the volatile cauldron of Palestine and Churchill found

¹⁵⁰ Antrobus to Furze, 4 Aug. 1926 & McNeill to Antrobus, 14 Aug. 1926 (TNA, CO 877/4/18); Shuckburgh to Marsh, 23 Apr. 1926 (TNA, T 172/1551). See also Churchill to McNeill, 24 Apr. 1926, 12 June 1926 (MECA, McNeill collection, File A, nos. 6 & 8).

¹⁵¹ McNeill to Churchill, 7 Apr. 1926 (TNA, T 172/1551). See also McNeill to Amery, 19 June 1925 (MECA, McNeill collection, File A, no. 5).

¹⁵² The project had been first proposed in 1921 but had been indefinitely deferred due to financial constraints. Plumer to Shuckburgh, 6 Apr. 1926 (TNA, CO 733/122/254); Plumer to Ormsby-Gore, 19 Feb. 1926 (TNA, CO 733/112/438-9).

¹⁵³ Mustafa Abassi and Henry Near, 'The general and the village: the 1948 war and its aftermath seen from the sidelines' in *Israel Affairs*, xiii, no. 1 (2007), pp 24-54; Lois Hainsworth, 'Lilian Vaughan McNeill', in *The Baha'i World*, xiv (1983), pp 779-82.

himself repeatedly reassuring him on this point.¹⁵⁴ But given the numbers involved, efforts to obscure the British Gendarmerie's 'Irish' roots were, as Shuckburgh realised, always certain to fail. Shuckburgh was also prescient about the fact that the recruitment of large numbers of former Black and Tans and Auxiliaries into the force would be used to stigmatize it by its enemies, some of whom genuinely feared a repeat of the Irish policing experience. Indeed, in January 1923 McNeill complained that 'propaganda against the force was rife' even before the British Gendarmerie arrived in Palestine in April 1922 while in December the under-secretary of state for the colonies, William Ormsby-Gore, was reporting the 'wide feeling in all [British political] parties about Black and Tans in the Holy Land'.¹⁵⁵ The question of whether the British Gendarmerie lived up to expectations in terms of its behaviour and conduct is addressed in Chapter III.

¹⁵⁴ See, for example, Churchill to Samuel, 10 Feb. 1922 (TNA CO 733/18/146); Churchill to Samuel, 30 Mar. 1922 (TNA CO 733/20/56).

¹⁵⁵ MECA, McNeill collection, 'Notes', p. 4; Ormsby-Gore, Colonial Office minute, 21 Dec. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/35/617). See also K. E. Robinson, 'Gore, William George Arthur Ormsby-, fourth Baron Harlech (1885–1964)', *ODNB online* (<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35330>, accessed 9 Oct 2013).

Chapter Two: ‘Our Irish Constabulary’: the British Section of the Palestine Gendarmerie as an ‘Irish’ Force

2.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the British Gendarmerie as ‘an Irish Constabulary’. It first explores the extent to which, in terms of organisation, training and ethos, it conformed to Charles Jeffries’ theory about the impact of the R.I.C. on the development of the colonial police and to which ‘Irish’-style influences were carried over into its successor, the British Section of the Palestine Police (BSPP). Using a wide variety of public records and private papers, and information provided by the families of former force members, the reasons behind the large number of Irish enlistments in the British Gendarmerie’s 1922 draft are then investigated, with particular focus on the part played by the campaign against the R.I.C. prosecuted by elements of the I.R.A. in the post-truce and early independence period. As part of this process, a collective profile of the Irish contingent in terms of issues such as age, previous occupation and military experience is created and a comparison with that of their British-born counterparts provided.¹ The fate of the Irish gendarmes after Palestine is also examined.

2.2 The ‘Irish model’ in Palestine

As has been noted, the theory of the ‘Irish model’ of colonial policing was first

¹ Following W. J. Lowe’s approach to the Black and Tans, a quantitative analysis of data collected on each individual gendarme has been used to construct collective profiles of the force’s national contingents. In the absence of British Gendarmerie personnel records, the profiles of individual gendarmes have been compiled from the R.I.C. and ADRIC registers of service, British military records, census returns and civil registration records.

proposed by Charles Jeffries in his seminal study, *The Colonial Police*, published in 1952. Jeffries advanced the idea that ‘the really effective influence upon the development of colonial police forces during the nineteenth century was ... that of the Royal Irish Constabulary’. Both its paramilitary organisation (i.e. ‘the rank and file lived in barracks, they were armed and trained in military exercises, and the senior officers were men with military experience’) and the fact that it operated as:

an agent of the central government in a country where the population was predominantly rural, communications were poor, social conditions were largely primitive, and the recourse to violence by members of the public who were “agin the government” was not infrequent

made it more ‘suitable for adaptation to colonial conditions’ than Britain’s civil and localised forces.² Jeffries’ model may, with some success, be applied to the Palestine Mandate although, as Knight has noted, his three phases there developed, not chronologically, but with ‘a great deal of “overlapping” or synchronicity’.³ As accounts of policing in the early years of British rule (c. 1917-20) make clear, this period closely conformed to Jeffries ‘improvisatory’ first phase as O.E.T.A. (South) attempted to fashion a new policing service by restructuring the remnants of its Ottoman antecedents, leading to the creation of the Palestine Police force in July 1920.⁴ Phase two, the establishment of R.I.C.-inspired paramilitary forces to suppress crime and curb public disorder, was inaugurated with the raising of the Palestine and British gendarmeries in 1921-2 while their disbandment in April 1926 ushered in the third phase which saw the formation of the BSPP and efforts to transform the Palestine Police into a professional civil police force.

The British Gendarmerie provided a prime illustrative example of Jeffries’

² Jeffries, *Colonial police*, p. 31. Jeffries’ clearcut distinction between the character and function of the British and colonial police in the nineteenth century has since been challenged by Mike Brogden. Mike Brogden, ‘The emergence of the police – the colonial dimension’ in *British Journal of Criminology*, xxvii, no. 1 (1987), pp 4-14, at pp 11-13.

³ Knight, ‘Policing’, pp 315-16.

⁴ See Roubicek, *Echo*, pp 23-4, 37-8; Caspi, ‘Policing’, pp 56-8; Horne, *Job*, pp 11-35.

phase two in that it was a semi-military emergency reserve accountable to Palestine's civil power; was recruited overwhelmingly from and largely modelled on the revolutionary-era R.I.C.;⁵ and was intended to assist the Palestine Police in tackling violent disturbances and serious crime. Like the R.I.C., the British Gendarmerie was armed and equipped as a military unit. In fact it was originally intended that the R.I.C. depots in Ireland would supply the weaponry, transport, and other equipment that the force required. However, according to Angus McNeill, 'so hurriedly was everything being handed over to the "Shinners" by Mr Secretary Cope that in the end we had to look elsewhere for practically everything'.⁶ The force quartermaster, Major Songest, who McNeill said 'plunged heart and soul into his job' on his arrival from Dublin did, however, manage to source the bulk of everything required with the single exception of transport (the R.I.C. had pledged to supply thirty Ford cars and thirty Crossley Tenders) which was eventually purchased in Palestine itself.⁷ Moreover, the British Gendarmerie uniform was, like that of the R.I.C., more military than 'civil' in style, the Colonial Office having stipulated that it should 'be similar in type to that in use in the British Army, except for the headdress which should be ... similar in type to that used by colonial forces'.⁸ It was, in consequence, sourced from the War Office (which had also supplied the R.I.C. uniform) while the headdress on which McNeill settled, a distinctive Stetson-style hat, was army issue in New Zealand although he added a thin red and green pugaree, the green, according to William Crewe, 'stressing the

⁵ The 1919-21 period saw the effective re-militarisation of the force which had, since the turn of the century, been gradually 'domesticated' through the placing of greater emphasis on civil policing duties at the expense of its paramilitary role. Lowe & Malcolm. 'Domestication', *passim*.

⁶ Sir Alfred Cope was the assistant under-secretary at Dublin Castle at the time. Clauson, Colonial Office minute, 25 Feb. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/33/78); MECA, McNeill diaries, vol.1, prologue, p. 4. For biographical background on Cope see Pauric J. Dempsey & Richard Hawkins, 'Cope, Sir Alfred William ('Andy') (1877-1954), *D.I.B.*, vol. 2, pp 836-8.

⁷ MECA, McNeill diaries, vol.1, prologue, pp 4-5.

⁸ Grindle to Tudor, 21 Dec. 1921 (TNA, CO 733/15/640).

continuity of the Gendarmerie and the [R.I.C.]’.⁹

Moreover, the British Gendarmerie was, like the R.I.C. before it, both barracked and trained as a paramilitary unit with a heavy emphasis on tough physical and military drill. In fact its instructor, John Wilkinson, had previously worked as an drill sergeant at the Phoenix Park depot and his British Gendarmerie training programme, which in addition to hours of ‘square-bashing’ included musketry and



Figure 4: Uniformed gendarmes, Nablus c.1923 (Author’s collection)

bayonet drill, closely followed the R.I.C. code as did the standards of barrack inspection and discipline that he strictly imposed.¹⁰ The force was also organised along paramilitary lines, its company structure and chain of command modelled on that of the ADRIC. Initial plans to divide the force into a headquarters squadron and sixteen fifty-strong platoons (to be, like the ADRIC, identified by letters) were

⁹ Crewe, ‘British Gendarmerie’, p. 3.

¹⁰ Born in Queen’s County in 1893, Wilkinson fought with the Irish Guards during the War (winning the Croix de Guerre) before enlisting in the R.I.C. in 1919 (R.I.C. service record no. 69637). He joined the British Gendarmerie as a sergeant on 14 March 1922 but was promoted to head constable on arrival in Palestine. For details of the R.I.C. training code, see Malcolm, *Irish policeman*, pp 76-84.

scrapped by McNeill for reasons of efficiency and ‘interior economy’ in favour of six companies each, as in the ADRIC, roughly one hundred men strong.¹¹ The force’s distribution was also similar to that of the ADRIC: British Gendarmerie companies were based in urban centres from where they were dispatched to deal with emergency situations and patrol the surrounding countryside.

2.2.1 *‘The question of the force’s disposition’*

Perhaps most importantly, the British Gendarmerie was, in terms of its function, also paramilitary in character: for while its role, like that of the ADRIC, was never officially defined, it was always envisaged as a semi-military force. Sir Herbert Samuel had initially suggested that ‘the question of the force’s disposition in Palestine may well be left open for the present to be finally determined in the light of future events’. But the M.E.D. quickly decided that it would act largely in the manner of a riot squad, its primary duty, according to Richard Meinertzhagen, being ‘to stiffen the existing Palestinian Gendarmerie [and Palestine Police] in quelling civil disturbances and in the purely military duty of securing the frontier against raids of a minor nature’.¹² McNeill himself later claimed that it had been instituted ‘entirely as a military force [which] came out here to relieve such Army units as then remained’ and he had, as a consequence, a tendency to treat his men as troops.¹³ As discussed in Chapter I, the British Gendarmerie’s paramilitary character was reinforced by the

¹¹ Horne, *Job*, p. 83; McNeill to Mavrogordato, 22 May 1924, (TNA, CO 733/86/476).

¹² Samuel to Churchill, 14 Jan. 1922, (TNA, CO 733/18/140); Meinertzhagen to Thwaites, undated, Mar. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/33/97).

¹³ According to John Jeans, it soon became evident that that the British Gendarmerie was ‘to be nothing more or less than a glorified military unit’ and the gendarmes merely ‘highly paid Tommies’. The resentment this caused the gendarmes, who considered themselves civil policemen, is discussed in Chapter III. McNeill to Amery, 19 June 1925 (MECA, McNeill collection, File A, no. 5); Jeans, ‘British Gendarmerie’ (part 3), p. 284. See also Salter to Ormsby-Gore, 4 Feb. 1923 (TNA, CO 733/62/36).

contentious exercise of General Tudor's dual command of Palestine's civil and military forces which resulted in its further militarization in terms of its administration and role.¹⁴

This led in turn to efforts by the Colonial Office to underscore the British Gendarmerie's civil status and function, insisting that it be administered solely by the civil authorities (i.e. the department of police and prisons on behalf of the high commissioner) except in times of general emergency when control would revert to the military command. Determined to resolve this ambiguity between its civil and military status, officials used the persistence of serious crime in Palestine to argue that the force be assigned a more traditional policing role. Gerard Clauson pointed out that, taking the Palestine Police and both gendarmeries together, there was one 'guardian of law and order' for every 322 inhabitants in Palestine as opposed to one per 644 inhabitants in England and one per 800 in Scotland and that, even in Ireland in 1919, this ratio stood at 1:390. Palestine's unacceptably high ratio derived, he believed, from the fact that the gendarmeries were not being employed as police, but were organised and utilised almost entirely as military forces. Therefore the British Gendarmerie should be 'turned into a regular workaday Police Force instead of being kept in reserve' and should 'not simply be ready to assist at any time in the maintenance of order in the larger towns ... [but] must be actually as a matter of routine maintaining that order'.¹⁵

Tudor disagreed, arguing that while the gendarmes should certainly be available to carry out certain police duties when required, it was 'impossible to regard them as Civil Police only or to place them under the command of a Civil Police

¹⁴ See p. 74 above.

¹⁵ Meinertzhagen to Thwaites, undated, Mar. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/33/97); Clauson, Colonial Office minutes, 12 Mar., 21 Sept. 1923 & 9 June 1924 (TNA, CO 733/43/113, CO 733/49/92 & CO 733/68/461).

Officer with no military experience'. Moreover, the Colonial Office's determination to remove troop units from Palestine made it imperative that the British Gendarmerie's military efficiency be maintained.¹⁶ He was staunchly supported by Samuel who, while he objected to Tudor's creeping militarization of the force in administrative terms, insisted on the paramountcy of its military function. Despite a three-year wrangle with the Colonial Office on the issue, this view of the force as a military unit did, thanks to Samuel's persistence, prevail. The British Gendarmerie never carried out routine police duties to any great extent and continued primarily as a striking force and riot squad until its disbandment. Tudor, as previously noted, became a casualty of the dispute, removed from Palestine in 1924 over his refusal properly to manage his dual civil/military role. But so too did the British Gendarmerie itself, disbanded in April 1926, not simply as a cost-saving exercise, but as an intrinsic part of Lord Plumer's efforts to end four years of ambiguity by adopting 'the principle that a clear distinction ... must be made between the forces to be employed on police duties and those who may be required to engage in military operations'.¹⁷

According to Sinclair, 'an Irish ethos in terms of training, practices and procedures remained *in situ* with the advent of the [BSPP]'.¹⁸ Certainly the BSPP, like the British Gendarmerie, did initially eschew routine policing duties which it left to the 'native' section and functioned as an emergency reserve and riot squad, making it

¹⁶ In fact Tudor regarded the gendarmes as more suitable than regular troops for the purposes of internal security, arguing that '300 mature men of the British Gendarmerie' were the effective equivalent on a cavalry unit and Indian infantry regiment combined. Tudor to Clayton, undated, Feb. 1924 (TNA, CO 733/66/125); Tudor to Clayton, 18 Aug. 1923 (TNA, CO 733/102/270).

¹⁷ Plumer to Amery, 30 Oct. 1925 (TNA, CO 733/99/728-9). In fact, correspondence between the Colonial Office and the Palestine Government relating to the British Gendarmerie's disbandment is almost entirely concerned with the conflict between its civil status and military role.

¹⁸ Similarities between the ordinary establishment of the Palestine Police and the R.I.C. in terms of general organisation and centralised control had been noted during the drafting of the Palestine Police Ordinance in 1921. 'Memorandum: ordinance for the regulation of the police in Palestine', undated, Jan. 1921 (TNA, HO 45/24727).

a gendarmerie in all but name.¹⁹ What Sinclair terms ‘Irish-style training’ was also preserved under the influence of its first commandant, Major James Munro, who subjected recruits to an *ad hoc* programme which he personally devised consisting largely of weapons’ training, crowd control and drill.²⁰ Indeed, in an anonymous letter published in the Arab newspaper, *Falastin*, in October 1930, disgruntled BSPP personnel complained that ‘had they joined a Line Regiment of His Majesty’s Forces, they would have had far less drill and discipline’.²¹ The training provided to the ‘native’ section of the Palestine Police was also R.I.C.-influenced. The police training school for Palestinian recruits, closed as a cost-saving measure in 1923, was reopened in Jerusalem’s Russian Compound in 1926 and Gerald Foley installed as its first commandant. More importantly in this context, Patrick Hackett, a former R.I.C. sergeant and British Gendarmerie head constable from Cork, was appointed his adjutant with the rank of British inspector. Hackett was an enthusiastic advocate of R.I.C.-style physical and military drill, ‘believing fervently in the lessons learned on the parade ground and ... [in] the wisdom of keeping to the ... regulations of service’.²² Equitation, which had formed part of the training given to R.I.C. cadets in Dublin, was also taught at the Russian Compound under the direction of Cyril Tesseyman, a former ADRIC ‘C Company’ cadet.²³ According to Horne, these men

¹⁹ According to one BSPP constable recruited at this time, ‘the very first thing we were taught was the quickest way into the Old City of Jerusalem in the event of serious trouble’. Davies to Horne, 7 Mar. 1970, quoted in Horne, *Job*, p. 106.

²⁰ Horne, *Job*, pp 317-21. Born in Scotland in 1894 Munro lived his early life in Canada. After five years in the British army, he joined the R.I.C. as a 3rd district inspector in July 1920 and earned a reputation for bravery. He joined the British Gendarmerie as a company commandant in March 1922. R.I.C. service record no. 72018; Duff, *Sword*, p. 94 & *Bailing*, p. 22; Horne, *Job*, p. 329; *PPOCAN* no. 101 (1975), pp 45-7; Witness statement of Thomas Hevey, 31 Aug. 1957 (Military Archives, Cathal Brugha Barracks, Dublin, Bureau of Military History witness statements [hereafter BMH, WS] no. 1668) p. 44; Witness statement of Michael Kilroy, 15 Apr. 1955 (BMH, WS no. 1162), p. 50.

²¹ *Falastin*, 18 Oct. 1930.

²² R.I.C. service record no. 65884; *PPOCAN* no. 101 (1975), p. 47.

²³ Born in Yorkshire in 1895, Tesseyman served with the East Yorkshire Regiment during the war after which he joined the ADRIC in October 1920. He enlisted in the British Gendarmerie as a sergeant in March 1922. R.I.C. service record no. 79167; *PPOCAN* no. 132 (1983), pp 64-5.

‘literally imposed their will and their style upon the recruits who had to undergo a long and arduous time at [the] school’.²⁴

But the BSPP’s ‘Irish ethos’ was soon heavily diluted as a result of the review of the Palestine Police carried out by Sir Herbert Dowbiggan in the wake of the 1929 riots. Dowbiggan’s philosophy, according to which policemen were civilians in uniform, was summed up in his dictum ‘a notebook is to the policeman what a rifle is to the soldier’ and he therefore deplored what he saw as the ‘tendency to look upon the [Palestine] police as an organisation to be run rather like a peacetime military’.²⁵ His report, published in 1930, recommended a root and branch reform which aimed at remodelling the force along civil lines similar to the London Metropolitan Police. As he told the then high commissioner, Sir John Chancellor, ‘it is a Police Force and not a Gendarmerie that is needed in Palestine’.²⁶ This process of effective civilianisation was enthusiastically implemented by Dowbiggan’s protégé, Roy Spicer, whom he had installed as police chief in Palestine in July 1931.²⁷ On arrival in Palestine he told the head of the Jewish Agency, Frederick Kisch, that ‘although he had served as a soldier throughout the War, he [was] essentially a policeman and [had come] to do a policeman’s job’ and he began by gradually stripping the BSPP of its ‘striking force’ status and assigning it regular policing duties alongside the ‘native’ section instead.²⁸ This change was reflected in a revised training programme. While Dowbiggan praised the training received by the Palestinian police, he was highly critical of the quality of

²⁴ Horne, *Job*, p. 318.

²⁵ Williams to Shuckburgh, 28 Apr. 1931 (TNA, CO 733/195/8/5). Dowbiggan had previously succeeded in establishing a largely unarmed civil police service in Ceylon. Georgina Sinclair, ‘Dowbiggan, Sir Herbert Layard (1880–1966)’, *ODNB online*, (<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/98050>, accessed 6 Oct 2013).

²⁶ Dowbiggan to Chancellor, 8 Apr. 1930 (TNA, CO 733/180/1/51). For a detailed discussion of Dowbiggan’s report and reforms see Krozier, ‘Dowbiggan to Tegart’, *passim*.

²⁷ According to the Zionist leader, Chaim Arlosoroff, Spicer regarded Dowbiggan as ‘Moses the Master’ and his report as the ‘Police Bible’. Quoted in Caspi, ‘Policing’, p. 91. See also Kisch, *Palestine diary*, 21 July 1931, p. 441.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

that given to the BSPP and a British police training school was established at his behest in 1931. Munro was appointed its officer commanding, teaching an intensive three-month long course which, while not dispensing with arms training, drill and military discipline, placed more emphasis on civil policing methods, first aid, languages and law. The syllabus followed the Palestine Police Manual, published by A. J. Kinsley-Heath, a non-‘Irish’ officer who had replaced Foley as commandant at the Russian Compound training school in 1927. According to Colin Imray who enlisted in the BSPP in spring 1932, Spicer told recruits to ‘regard [the manual] as your Bible and learn every word by heart’, although he noted a continuing emphasis on discipline which was regarded as ‘the keynote of life and the first essential of survival’.²⁹ The dominance of ‘Irish’-style training was further eroded in December 1932 by the transfer of Munro from the training school (he was appointed deputy district superintendent in Jerusalem) and his replacement by deputy superintendent Laurence Harrington, one of Bramley’s original cadre of Palestine Police officers who was non-R.I.C.³⁰ By 1934 Spicer was boasting that in addition to weapons’ training and drill, the BSPP’s syllabus consisted of ‘Criminal Law, Procedure Code, Laws of Evidence, Local Laws and Ordinances, Standing Force Orders, Practical Police Work and ... Arabic and Hebrew’.³¹ Although the BSPP’s ‘civilianisation’ was never completed, it was so sufficiently advanced by the time of the Arab Revolt that the manner in which the force’s ‘Irish ethos’ had been sapped was widely noted. As

²⁹ Imray, *Policeman in Palestine*, pp 2-3, 28.

³⁰ Sinclair states that the British Police Training School was established in 1926 and that Munro served as its commandant until 1946 with John Wilkinson as his chief assistant. But the BSPP did not have a dedicated training facility prior to 1931, its force strength being considered too low to justify the expense. A joint training school for British and Palestinian personnel was opened on Jerusalem’s Mount Scopus in April 1936 but Munro did not return to training duties until 1939. Nor was Wilkinson involved in training the BSPP: he resigned from the British Gendarmerie in April 1923 and joined the R.U.C. one month later, serving until his retirement in 1952. Sinclair, ‘Crack force’, p. 60 and *End*, p. 21.

³¹ Spicer to unknown, 30 Jan. 1934 (TNA, CO 850/40/7).

Angus McNeill complained to Churchill in December 1937; ‘Spicer tried to make [the police] word perfect at crime sheets, traffic duties and elementary law – but when they are called upon to go forth and take on a gang, they haven’t the foggiest’.³²

In this sense, the BSPP of the early 1930s was illustrative of Jeffries’ third phase in the development of imperial policing, i.e. the conversion of semi-military forces into civilian constabularies, although this process was frustrated by the crises caused within the Palestine Police by the Arab and Jewish insurgencies. The report of Sir Charles Tegart into the police response to the Arab Revolt was particularly influential in advocating a return to a more ‘Irish’ approach in that, while it paid lip-service to Dowbigganism, its recommendations worked to subvert it.³³ Most significantly, Tegart supported the revival of a mounted gendarmerie-style force to act as an emergency reserve (to be called the Rural Mounted Police) on the basis that, as he put it, ‘gangs of banditry, armed with rifles, cannot be dealt with by policemen with note-books’.³⁴ The Mobile Police Striking Force (M.P.S.F.) was duly established in 1940. Nicknamed ‘the punishment squad’, it was a paramilitary unit composed of what Horne described as ‘men who were good enough as policemen but were by nature rugged individualists who needed to be kept on a tight rein to get the best out of them’.³⁵ The trend towards ‘Irish’ gendarmerie-style policing was underscored in 1944 when the M.P.S.F. was replaced by the Police Mobile Force (P.M.F.), a fully militarised 2,000-strong striking force raised as ‘a mailed fist to use against the

³² McNeill to Churchill, 20 Dec. 1937 (CHAR 2/348).

³³ The son of a Church of Ireland clergyman, Tegart was born in Derry in 1881 although he spent much of his childhood in Meath. He joined the Calcutta police in 1901 and served as its police commissioner from 1923 to 1931. His success in suppressing rebellion in Bengal led to his appointment as police advisor in Palestine in October 1937. Jason Tomes, ‘Tegart, Sir Charles Augustus (1881–1946)’, *ODNB online* (<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36447>, accessed 7 Feb. 2013); Michael Silvestri, ‘“An Irishman is specially suited to be a policeman”: Sir Charles Tegart and revolutionary terrorism in Bengal’ in *History Ireland*, xiii, no. 4 (2000), pp 40-4. For hagiographical appraisals of Tegart’s career see J. C. Curry, *Tegart of the Indian Police* (Tunbridge Wells, 1960) and Percival Griffiths, *To guard my people: the history of the Indian Police* (London, 1971), pp 409-11.

³⁴ Quoted in Krozier, ‘Dowgiggan to Tegart’, p. 115.

³⁵ Horne, *Job*, p. 499.

terrorists'.³⁶

However, as discussed in Chapter III below, the extent to which the establishment of such forces was indicative of a resurgent R.I.C. ethos is a moot point. Nor did they herald a complete reversal of Dowbigganism in Palestine. First, these gendarmerie-style units were set apart from the regular police force which continued to be trained in and carry out routine policing duties throughout this time. Secondly, they were relatively short-lived. In fact, the P.M.F. was disbanded after just two years on the recommendation of Sir Charles Wickham, the recently-retired inspector-general of the R.U.C., commissioned to conduct yet another review of the Palestine Police in 1946, this time into its response to the Jewish Revolt.³⁷ In his final report, Wickham argued that the creation of the P.M.F. had led to the increased militarisation of Palestine Police and a commensurate decline in traditional police skills and urged that the revolt be tackled, not by paramilitarism (which he believed civil policemen abhorred), but by 'an intensification of their normal procedure and operation'.³⁸ But the implementation of Wickham's recommendations was thwarted by the intensifying Jewish insurgency and, three months before the Mandate expired, the district commander of the London Metropolitan Police, John Rymer-Jones (who had himself served as inspector-general of the Palestine Police between 1943 and 1946) could remark that the Palestine Police 'had necessarily abandoned police work as it was

³⁶ Cesarani, *Major Farran's hat*, p. 27. According to the then high commissioner, Sir Alan Cunningham, the P.M.F. was 'in fact an expansion of the earlier [M.P.S.F.]'. The P.M.F. never reached its official establishment of 2,000, its strength peaking at just under 1,000 and standing at just 724 at disbandment in 1946. Cunningham to Hall, 30 Sept. 1946 (TNA, CO 537/1696/27).

³⁷ Born in 1879, Wickham had enjoyed a distinguished military career before being appointed as R.I.C. divisional commissioner in 1920 with responsibility for the Ulster Special Constabulary. He became *de facto* police chief in Northern Ireland after partition and was appointed inspector-general of the newly-formed Royal Ulster Constabulary (R.U.C.) in June 1922, a position he held until his retirement in 1945. Patrick Long, 'Wickham, Sir Charles George' in *D.I.B.*, vol. 9, pp 921-2.

³⁸ 'They resent a military atmosphere, military discipline or being turned into military units where their efficiency inevitably must be judged as soldiers and not as police'. Charles Wickham, 'Report on the Palestine Mobile Police Force', 2 Dec. 1946 (TNA, CO 537/2269/50-3).

understood in Britain' by that time.³⁹

2.3 'What Other Employment was there?'

Reporting the arrival in Palestine of 'our Irish constabulary' in May 1922, Helen Bentwich was, as noted in Chapter I, referring to the British Gendarmerie's roots in the Irish police. Yet the first draft of the force was very much an 'Irish constabulary' in terms of its 'national' composition as well. The fact that nominal rolls of the 1922 draft did not record the country of origin of those listed has meant that the number of Irishmen recruited has hitherto been uncertain.⁴⁰ However, the R.I.C. registers of service, British military records and British and Irish census returns and civil registration records may be used to map the nationality of the majority of the men. Of the 670 British Gendarmerie rankers whose nationality has been determined in this way, at least 253 were Irish, indicating that 38 per cent of the force was Irish-born. Of the others, 60 per cent was British-born (52 per cent English, 7 per cent Scottish and 1 per cent Welsh) while all but one of the remaining 2 per cent was born to British parents overseas.⁴¹ Of the forty-two officers, just seven (or 16 per cent) were Irish although Captain Thomas Burke, born in Scotland in 1897, had Irish parentage. All of the others were British-born with the exceptions of Lt. John Faraday and Major William Martinson, born to British parents in California and China respectively.

The R.I.C. registers may also be used to map the breakdown of nationalities within the three categories of Irish police - the 'old R.I.C.', the Black and Tans and the ADRIC. All but one of the 80 other ranks recruited from the 'old-R.I.C.' was,

³⁹ Cited in Sinclair & Williams, 'Home and away', p. 226.

⁴⁰ See, for example, Fedorowich, 'Problems', p. 99 and Georgina Sinclair, 'Crack force', p. 51.

⁴¹ The exception was the Russian-born Constable Walter Jarka although he was, by 1922, a naturalised Briton. R.I.C. service record no. 78359.

unsurprisingly, Irish. Of the 455 ex-Black and Tan rankers whose country of origin has been determined, 153 (or 33.5 per cent) were Irish as were sixteen (or 11.5 per cent) of the 139 recruited from the ADRIC. So too was Constable Swayne, recruited from the R.I.C. maintenance office. At least four of the twenty-four other ranks recruited from the British armed forces, Constables Richard Ridley, Ambrose Kneafsey, Robert Kinninmount and C. F. O'Shea, were also certainly Irish although several others whose nationality has not been definitively established had typical Irish surnames such as Kelly, O'Farrell, Burke and McGowan. Seven of the forty-two British Gendarmerie officers were Irish-born. Four of these were recruited from the 'old R.I.C.' and two, Lt. Cecil Dignan and Lt. Harold Fitzgerald from Roscommon and Waterford respectively, from the Black and Tans while the seventh, Captain John McFarland from Leitrim, was an Auxiliary cadet, company unknown.

For the majority of the British-born recruits, the decision to enlist in the British Gendarmerie appears to have been motivated primarily by the need for employment. While the compensation packages received by disbanded members of the regular R.I.C. were deemed the most generous ever offered to departed Crown servants, they were, as the R.I.C. Tribunal itself acknowledged, 'in most cases insufficient in themselves to maintain the men and their families' and the majority still required work.⁴² So too did disbanded Auxiliaries who had only received a gratuity. But Britain was by now firmly in the grip of a postwar depression, with unemployment figures increasing almost five-fold between 1920 and 1921 and peaking at two million in 1922.⁴³ Interviewing British R.I.C. recruits in Gormanston in October 1920, the *Manchester Guardian* concluded that rising unemployment had been 'the pinch that

⁴² 'Royal Irish Constabulary Tribunal; brief summary of work', March 1928, (TNA, HO 45/13029), p. 1. The R.I.C. Tribunal was an advisory body established in London in 1922 to assist disbanded policemen. It closed in 1928, its work considered complete.

⁴³ W. R. Garside, *British unemployment, 1919-1939: a study in public policy* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 5.

[had] driven most of them to this hazardous job' and the British Gendarmerie presented itself as a convenient opportunity when they found themselves jobless again.⁴⁴ This view was succinctly expressed by Walter Harrison, the London-born Black and Tan who had enlisted as a British Gendarmerie constable in March 1922:

Our job was disappearing and what other employment was there? Most of us knew no other occupation except military or paramilitary service of some sort ... We all needed a job for which we were trained and here was a wonderful opportunity ... The more we thought about it the more the whole adventure appealed to us. It all seemed very attractive.⁴⁵

Harrison's claim that British-born gendarmes had known no career other than (para)military service was certainly true. Almost 95 per cent were ex-servicemen: all of the former Auxiliaries were, by definition, former army or naval officers and over 91 per cent of those recruited from the Black and Tans were military veterans.⁴⁶ That the majority had spent almost their entire working lives in the army and/or police is confirmed by the age profile of the British contingent; the average age of British gendarmes was 26.5 years and that of former Black and Tans, who comprised almost 70 per cent of the total, one year younger at 25.2 years.

This, as Harrison inferred, affected their prospects for future employment. First, many experienced difficulty reintegrating back into civil society after years of life in the forces. They were, according to Duff, 'utterly incapable of settling down to a quiet routine after [their] taste of excitement' in the army and/or Irish police and the prospect of policing in Palestine appealed to their sense of adventure.⁴⁷ Secondly, the fact that the majority were, in McNeill's words, 'fellows who [had] been at it since 1914', meant that they had no qualifications, profession or trade on which to fall back

⁴⁴ *Manchester Guardian*, 13 Oct 1920, quoted in Leeson, *Black and Tans*, p. 77.

⁴⁵ Quoted in Horne, *Job*, p. 76.

⁴⁶ While this is significantly higher than Lowe's estimate of 70 per cent for British Black and Tans in general, it corresponds to Leeson's figure of 90 per cent for his 'sample cluster consisting of the single largest monthly intake of British recruits; the 1,153 who joined up in October 1920'. Lowe, 'Black and Tans', p. 49; Leeson, *Black and Tans*, p. 69.

⁴⁷ Duff, *Bailing*, p. 19. See also *idem*, *Rough*, p. 94.

when their (para)military service came to an end.⁴⁸ Their relative un-employability in this regard, something recognised by the R.I.C. Tribunal, was compounded by the fact that work opportunities for ex-R.I.C. were particularly scarce in 1922.⁴⁹ As discussed in Chapter I, the notoriety of the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries led to reluctance on the part of the constabularies of Britain and the dominions to employ disbanded members and this appears to have extended to other prospective employers in Britain itself. By mid-March, former Black and Tans were complaining that ‘it tells against them when they mention their last employment’ when looking for work and they held a series of demonstrations in London to air their grievances at which the audiences were said to be ‘as little sympathetic as the employers’. This, coupled with the delay in the processing of R.I.C. pensions, meant that 3,000 such men were reportedly in need of financial assistance with many said to be destitute.⁵⁰

Similar factors undoubtedly contributed to Irish enlistments in the British Gendarmerie. The R.I.C. registers and British military records reveal that at least 54 per cent of the Irish contingent had previously served with the armed forces: almost 41.5 per cent of those recruited from the ‘old-R.I.C.’ were ex-servicemen, a figure rising to 54 per cent among those recruited from the Black and Tans, significantly higher than Lowe’s figure for Irish-born Black and Tans in general (40 per cent).⁵¹ Twenty-one per cent of Irish recruits had known no other career except paramilitary service and that the remaining 33 per cent had little experience of life outside the

⁴⁸ Duff was among them; ‘I had no other trade or profession and if I stayed at home I could find employment only in the ranks of the unskilled’. McNeill to Churchill, 7 Apr. 1926 (TNA, T 172/1551); Duff, *Bailing*, p. 18.

⁴⁹ R.I.C. Tribunal summary, p. 1.

⁵⁰ *Cork Examiner*, 13 Mar. 1922, pp 5, 10. In his July 1922 complaint to the Colonial Office, William Prosser stated that he was ‘in receipt of a whole sheaf of printed refusals from various [Government] departments’ while as late as January 1923 former R.I.C. constable Sidney Jones was complaining that ‘when I apply for any situation, they wish to know who I was last employed by and when I mention the R.I.C. I don’t get the situation, it seems strange but it is facts (sic)’. Prosser to Colonial Office, 21 July 1922 (TNA, CO 733/39/287); Jones to R.I.C. resettlement branch, 1, 19 Jan. 1923 (TNA, HO 144/22573).

⁵¹ Lowe, ‘Black and Tans’, p. 49.

forces is confirmed by their age profile. The average age of the Irish recruits was at 25.2 years, more than one year lower than that of their British counterparts. That of Irish-born ex-Black and Tans was at 24.6 years old, also one year younger than their British equivalents and one year younger than the average age of 25.5 years which Lowe gives for Irish-born Black and Tans in general. Also interesting in this context is the number of Irish-born other ranks drawn from the 'old R.I.C.' who had been seconded from the R.I.C. to the army during the Great War. At least sixteen of the forty-one Irish-born British Gendarmerie rankers who had joined the R.I.C. prior to December 1916 had volunteered for or been recalled to Irish regiments during the 1914-16 period, far in excess of the overall percentages for R.I.C.-British army transfers during this time. All of the British Gendarmerie officers recruited from the 'old R.I.C.' had also served with the army during the War.⁵²

2.3.1 *'The new dispensation'*

Furthermore, the employment situation in Ireland was, if anything, even worse than in Britain. Ireland had suffered three years of revolutionary upheaval and, as a predominantly rural economy with agriculture its largest single industry, it was far more sensitive to the slump in food prices, production and wages occasioned by the end of a wartime demand which had seen the Irish agricultural wholesale price index rise by 60 per cent between 1914 and 1916 and by a further 40 per cent in the

⁵² Between August 1914 and December 1916, 752 RIC officers and men transferred to the army (mainly to the Irish Guards) when the force strength stood at about 10,500. Herlihy, *R.I.C. short history*, pp 98-100. The career of British Gendarmerie constable Justin O'Neill was typical of these sixteen men. See R.I.C. service record no. 66653 and British army pension record , TNA, WO 364/2767.

following two years.⁵³ This situation was only worsening as the R.I.C. was disbanding and in September 1922, by which time the disruptive effects of the Civil War were being keenly felt, the Irish Labour Party was petitioning for the extension of the unemployment insurance scheme to jobless farm workers due to ‘the hardships that exist in the agricultural areas by reason of unemployment’.⁵⁴ There was, therefore, little possibility of a return to the land for the many former R.I.C. men who came from small farming stock.⁵⁵

The R.I.C. registers of service reveal that some 36 per cent of the Irish gendarmes came from agricultural backgrounds, four and a half times higher than the second largest occupational category, labouring, which accounted for just 8 per cent of the men and probably included some farm labourers as well.⁵⁶ The percentage of Irish gendarmes from farming stock rose to 54 per cent among those recruited from the ‘old R.I.C.’ while 30.5 per cent of those recruited from the Black and Tans had previously worked in agricultural employment, four times higher than Lowe’s estimate of 6.7 per cent for the Black and Tans in general and fifteen times higher than that for the British-born gendarmes which stood at only 2 per cent (a figure corresponding to Lowe’s estimate for British-born Black and Tans as a whole). The other main categories of pre-R.I.C. occupation for the Irish gendarmes were clerical (6 per cent), motor driver/mechanic (5.5 per cent) and shop assistant/sales (5 per cent). Just 10 per cent had a trade of some sort such as plumbing, weaving or carpentry while just one gendarme, Constable Arthur Ward from Roscommon, had come from the ‘professions’, in his case, teaching.

⁵³ Cormac Ó Gráda, *Ireland: a new economic history, 1780-1939* (Oxford, 1994), pp 389-90; David Johnson, *The interwar economy in Ireland: studies in Irish economic and social history, no. 4* (Dundalk, 1985), pp 3-5.

⁵⁴ Dáil Debates, 12 Sept. 1922, vol. 1, no. 3, c 135-6.

⁵⁵ Farmers’ sons were ‘reputed to be the mainstay’ of the R.I.C. which offered the security of ‘far better, uninterrupted wages ... a pension and paid leave’. Lowe & Malcolm, ‘Domestication’, pp 36-8.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

Employment prospects for Irish ex-R.I.C. were further affected by the still-festering resentment felt towards them on account of their wartime role. Walter Harrison's observation that 'all was coming to an end in Ireland for chaps like me ... If one was a loyalist, that is, if one was non-Irish, then one must get out' was even more so the case for the Irish-born R.I.C., many of whom considered that they had no future in the new Irish state.⁵⁷ Despite the 'domestication' of the force in the first decade and a half of the twentieth century, the rise of Irish nationalist sentiment, particularly in the aftermath of the 1916 Easter Rising, saw its progressive alienation from those it policed. In Clare, for example, the R.I.C. county inspector noted a considerably less friendly attitude towards the police as early as September 1916 and by December he reported that the police were 'regarded as enemies'. Anti-R.I.C. feeling intensified throughout 1917 and by April 1918 most barracks were no longer being supplied by local merchants with staples such as turf, milk, butter or eggs.⁵⁸ Declaring their history 'a continuity of brutal treason against their own people', the Sinn Féin leadership launched a countrywide campaign of social ostracism against R.I.C. personnel one year later which, according to David Fitzpatrick, soon 'gave the appearance of a systematic national crusade' or, in Charles Townshend's words 'a social war'.⁵⁹ So devastatingly effective was this campaign in personal, social and economic terms that many R.I.C. members considered their lives unrecoverable in Ireland even after I.R.A. hostilities had ceased.

Douglas Duff wrote of 'Irishmen in [British Gendarmerie] ranks for whom there was no home in Ireland under the new dispensation' and the final issue of the *Constabulary Gazette* carried a lengthy letter deploring the fact that there was 'little

⁵⁷ Quoted in Horne, *Job*, p. 77.

⁵⁸ Fitzpatrick, *Politics*, p. 8.

⁵⁹ Dáil Éireann debates, 10 Apr. 1919, vol. F, no. 6, c67; Fitzpatrick, *Politics*, p. 11; Townshend, *Republic*, p. 29. See also Leonard, 'Spies in our midst', *passim* and Hughes, 'Persecuting the Peelers', *passim*.

evidence throughout the country of the policy of at least “forgive” towards the R.I.C.’ and warning that ‘all may take it for certain that ... there will be no chance of other employment in this country’.⁶⁰ Indeed, as another correspondent had previously noted, ‘even if necessity compelled an Irish Government to employ a percentage of the Old Force’, anti-R.I.C. feeling was running so high ‘as to preclude any hope of a happy time for those employed’.⁶¹ The Irish chief secretary, Sir Hamar Greenwood, agreed, noting the bitterness of feeling towards the R.I.C. and the ‘consequent almost impossibility of [Irish members] finding any employment in their country’.⁶² The British Gendarmerie therefore provided an opportunity for those like John Fails who told the sociologist John Brewer (who conducted interviews with a number of ex-R.I.C. in the late 1980s) that he would have liked to return home to Limerick city but realised that he wouldn’t get work there.⁶³ By June 1922 Sir Alfred Cope was complaining that even the children of R.I.C. men were ‘being driven out of employment’ and that prospects remained poor two years later was confirmed by William Kennedy, a retired R.I.C. sergeant from Offaly.⁶⁴ Writing to his daughter, Florence, who was working as a nanny in Palestine at the time, he complained that his sons could not secure work as there was ‘nothing to be got for anyone at present in this country especially if you weren’t known to be a good Sinn Féiner’.⁶⁵ In fact some ex-R.I.C. were still complaining of their inability to secure employment on account of

⁶⁰ Duff, *Bailing*, p. 19; *Constabulary Gazette*, 28 Jan. 1922.

⁶¹ *Constabulary Gazette*, 6 Aug. 1921. The prescience of this correspondent was demonstrated by the controversy over the employment of ex-R.I.C. in the new Civic Guard the following year. See Brian McCarthy, *The Civic Guard mutiny* (Cork, 2012).

⁶² Greenwood to Treasury, 24 Feb. 1922 (TNA, CAB 24/134).

⁶³ The son of an R.I.C. sergeant, John Fails was born in Limerick in 1899. He served with both the Royal Munster Fusiliers and the Royal Irish Regiment during the war before joining the R.I.C. in December 1919. John D. Brewer, *The Royal Irish Constabulary: an oral history* (Belfast, 1990), p. 122; R.I.C. service record no. 69979; FR, Belfast, Correspondence with author, 28 July 2012.

⁶⁴ Cope to Collins, 22 June 1922 (NAI, TSCH/3/S1842).

⁶⁵ William Kennedy to Florence Kennedy, 27 Feb. 1924 (MS in possession of GF, Suffolk). Florence was in the employ of Eugene Quigley, the Sligo-born Palestine Police commandant for the Jerusalem-Jaffa district.

their wartime roles in the early 1930s although their claims were treated with suspicion by the Home Office, with one official remarking that even if true, these cases ‘served to show that, if [ex-R.I.C.] are unpopular, they are at any rate taking no steps to hide their identity’.⁶⁶

2.4 ‘You couldn’t tell what those ruffians would do’

The fact that 33.5 per cent of the former Black and Tans recruited into the British Gendarmerie were Irishmen (strikingly higher than the 20 per cent figure Lowe gives for the Black and Tans’ overall Irish-born contingent) underscores the significance of another factor driving Irish enlistments - the campaign conducted by I.R.A. factions against serving and disbanded police in the post-truce and early independence period. Despite the evident commitment of Crown forces to observing the ceasefire, assaults on the R.I.C. remained commonplace and continued well into the summer of 1922. Although some policemen were targeted in retaliation for real or perceived personal misdeeds, this campaign was largely indiscriminate and R.I.C. membership alone constituted sufficient cause for intimidation or attack. The I.R.A.’s director of publicity, Piaras Béaslaí, subsequently blamed attacks on the R.I.C. in the run-up to the truce on what he disparagingly called ‘eleventh-hour warriors’, i.e. hitherto undistinguished Volunteers who attacked soft police targets ‘when the danger seemed past’ in an attempt to burnish their revolutionary credentials and some of the attacks which occurred in its aftermath were probably similarly contrived.⁶⁷ Others were carried out by so-called ‘Trucileers’, men who joined the I.R.A. after the ceasefire took effect and felt they too had something to prove. But the persecution of R.I.C.

⁶⁶ H.S.M., Home Office minute, 22 May 1931 (TNA, HO 144/22600).

⁶⁷ Cited in O’Sullivan, *Irish constabularies*, p. 367.

personnel during this period largely resulted from a general breakdown in I.R.A. discipline, itself a consequence of poor-quality latter-day recruitment and a febrile political climate increasingly distinguished by interregional anarchy and a slide towards civil war. Yet the actions of what Dominic Price calls these ‘self-appointed executioners’ were seldom condemned by local I.R.A. commanders: those who described the murder of ex-R.I.C. in March 1922 as ‘abominable’ constituted the exception rather than the rule.⁶⁸

By the time recruitment for the British Gendarmerie opened in January 1922, great swathes of the force were in genuine fear for their personal safety, fears shared by General Tudor who reported that ‘conditions in Ireland are now proving that in a great many parts it would be extremely unsafe for members who are disbanded from the R.I.C. to live’.⁶⁹ The force’s representative bodies concurred, complaining that their members had not only been ‘abused, threatened and insulted in the streets since the Truce’ but subject to shootings and kidnappings as well.⁷⁰ In fact at least thirty R.I.C. members were murdered between December 1921 and April 1922 as the British Gendarmerie was being raised, including two sergeants shot in their hospital beds in Galway in March 1922 which Elizabeth Malcolm identifies as having ‘had a particularly serious impact on [R.I.C.] morale’.⁷¹ A further eleven were killed in the following two months.⁷² Many more were driven from Ireland under threatened sentence of death. General proclamations warning R.I.C. personnel not to return to their homes after disbandment were circulated in certain parts of the country while, in other areas, expulsion orders were sent to individual policemen or their families. That

⁶⁸ Dominic Price, *The flame and the candle: war in Mayo, 1919-1924* (Cork, 2012), p. 205.

⁶⁹ Tudor to Irish under-secretary, 5 Feb. 1922 (TNA, CAB/24/134).

⁷⁰ ‘Summary of Proceeding of Interviews of Representative Bodies with Chief Secretary’, 6-8 Feb. 1922 (TNA, CAB 24/134), p. 6.

⁷¹ Malcolm, *Irish policeman*, p. 220.

⁷² The I.R.A. also killed more than thirty members of the Ulster Special Constabulary during this period. Figures abstracted from Richard Abbott, *Police casualties in Ireland, 1919-1922* (Cork, 2000).

issued by the I.R.A. in Wexford was typical of these, in giving the recipient three days to ‘take your departure from the county ... returning on the peril of your life’.⁷³ Some expulsion orders were delivered in person: for example, Michael Flynn, an R.I.C. sergeant stationed in Liscannor, Co. Clare, was visited by masked armed men and given two days to leave the area with his family.⁷⁴ The banishment of ex-R.I.C. intensified even as the numbers being murdered declined: in June 1922, by which time the killings had effectively ceased, Sir Alfred Cope was complaining to Michael Collins of ‘a concerted movement for a wholesale expulsion’ which had started in the South was ‘rapidly extending’ to counties such as Carlow, Meath, Dublin, Cavan and East Galway. According to Cope, ‘even men who left the Force fifteen years ago are being victimised’ while in other instances, families were being ordered to leave their homes even after their R.I.C. relative had gone.⁷⁵

As early as December 1921 Churchill expressed the hope that ‘the Holy Land would afford [these men] shelter’ from danger.⁷⁶ And writing to Florence in April 1922, William Kennedy intimated that many of his former colleagues were using Palestine as a refuge:

All the R.I.C. are left here long since, not a police uniform to be seen ... things are not going very well in the old country. People don’t seem to be inclined to agree. I hear there is a lot of the R.I.C. volunteering to go out to Palestine where they are forming a new Force of some kind. You might see some of the boys that you knew in this country out there.⁷⁷

⁷³ This order also noted that ‘the sentence of death previously passed on you has been commuted owing to the temporary cessation of hostilities; you can consider yourself extremely lucky to be dealt with in such a lenient manner’. ‘Proclamation, Committee of Investigation, 3rd Eastern Division, H.Q. Wexford’, 11 June 1922. Copy in NAI, TSCH/3/ S1842.

⁷⁴ Flynn to R.I.C. Tribunal, 20 Dec. 1922, 19 May 1923 (TNA, HO 144/22575). Flynn immediately returned his hometown of Castletownbere. However, he was given twenty-four hours to leave there as well and moved with his family to Dover in July 1922.

⁷⁵ Cope to Collins, 22 June 1922, op. cit.

⁷⁶ Keith Middlemas, ed., *Thomas Jones: Whitehall diary, vol. I, 1916-1925* (Oxford, 1969), 7 Dec. 1921, p. 183.

⁷⁷ Florence subsequently married a British Gendarmerie constable, Redvers Bennett, a London-born ex-Black and Tan. William Kennedy to Florence Kennedy, 14 Apr. 1922 (MS in possession of GF, Suffolk); GF, Interview with author, 31 Jan. 2011.

That the British Gendarmerie provided a means of escape from the I.R.A. campaign was confirmed by John Brewer's interviewees. According to one, George Crawford, ex-R.I.C. from the Irish Free State:

Just could not go home ... They had to go away because some men after going home were shot at for going home even though they were disbanded and out of a job. A lot of them went to the Palestine Police.⁷⁸

And although only one interviewee, John Fails, actually joined the British



Figure 5: British gendarmes in Jerusalem, c.1922. John Fails second from right (R. Fails collection)

Gendarmerie, six of the seven who referred to the force cited the fear of Republican retribution as a factor in the decision of colleagues to enlist.⁷⁹ Fails'

⁷⁸ Brewer, *R.I.C. oral history*, pp 118-19.

⁷⁹ Brewer's interviewees gave various reasons for their own decisions not to go to Palestine, such as the fact that 'there was too much happening there at that time' and the fear of tropical disease. Meanwhile, the Sullivan brothers, two R.I.C. constables from Co. Cork, told Donal O'Sullivan that they 'did not consider the Palestine Police, as neither was anxious to renew acquaintance with the many former

decision to enlist was precipitated by a visit to his family home by ‘some I.R.A. people ... wanting to know where I was’ and indeed all but one of the thirty families of Irish-born British Gendarmerie members that provided information to this author cited the campaign against the R.I.C. as the most significant factor in their ancestors’ decisions to go to Palestine.⁸⁰ The extent of the actual danger faced by R.I.C. personnel during this period will probably never be known and, indeed, some of those who joined the British Gendarmerie such as John Fails were themselves unsure as to the level of threat that they faced:

Whether I’d have been in any trouble if I had been there [when the I.R.A. called] I don’t know. Some of these young fellows, you know, I think it was bravado.⁸¹

However, like him, they were taking no chances and the British Gendarmerie provided a convenient route to respite.

For some gendarmes, the general threats circulating against the R.I.C. were encouragement enough to enlist. Writing to his mother from Cork in March 1922, Constable Robert Holmes said he wouldn’t be returning home to Kilkenny:

The Republican crowd has posted up proclamations throughout the country warning police not to return home after disbandment so it would be risky and you couldn’t tell what those ruffians would do so [I] have decided to go out to Palestine for about 6 months or so until the country settles down ... [there] are 24 of us going so I won’t feel lonesome. Sure it’s only a holiday and the pay is good. It’s better than trying to live in this country at the present time.⁸²

Black and Tans who had joined’. Ibid., pp 118, 124-5; O’Sullivan, *Irish constabularies*, p. 377.

⁸⁰ The sole exception was that of Sergeant James Deegan who said that he had earned the respect of the I.R.A. while serving with the R.I.C. in Westport for saving the life of a local man from ‘Black and Tans’. Brewer, *R.I.C. oral history*, p. 122; DJ, Correspondence with author, 20 Feb. 2010 & 5 June 2012.

⁸¹ Brewer, *R.I.C. oral history*, p. 122. In May 1931, a Home Office official claimed to have ‘heard it suggested that many of the “threats” delivered anonymously to ex-R.I.C. men were in the nature of ill-conceived practical jokes’. H.S.M., Home Office minute, 22 May 1931 (TNA, HO 144/22600).

⁸² Born in Kilkenny in 1900, Holmes joined the R.I.C. in August 1918 (R.I.C. service record no. 69493) and was stationed in east Cork. He enlisted in the British Gendarmerie on 30 March 1922. Robert Holmes to Mary Holmes, undated letter, c. March 1922 (MS in possession of HR, Kilkenny).

Others enlisted because they were personally targeted. The account given by the son of Michael Higgins, an R.I.C. constable from Roscommon, is typical of the stories told by the descendants of such men:

When he came home after having joined the R.I.C. there was a threat against him. Someone threatened him and someone else, that they were going to get him. So his mother sent him to spend time with a relative in the country somewhere. No one knows with whom or where, to keep him out of the way. And it's from there he went to Palestine ... this other chap who was threatened with my father was actually killed.⁸³

RMP from the east of the country also felt unable to return home on disbandment, after having been shot and wounded while there on R.I.C. leave while HWR from Wexford left Ireland for Palestine the afternoon he was disbanded due to Republican threats including 'pressure' from his brothers who were prominent I.R.A. members. DMM from Meath joined the gendarmerie in similar circumstances the same day.⁸⁴ The descendants of other gendarmes described episodes ranging from insults and intimidation to physical injuries and damage to property while more told of enduring animosities towards Republicans on the part of gendarmes or their immediate families over incidents unspoken of since the time.

R.I.C. representative bodies complained that such targeting derived from the fact that 'individual members of the I.R.A. have sworn vengeance against individual Policemen who, peace or no peace, believe that they will not be forgotten for the work they did in the R.I.C.'⁸⁵ And while the reasons for which particular gendarmes were threatened is, at this remove, difficult to determine, materials such as R.I.C. reports, I.R.A. witness statements and press reports, coupled with information supplied by the gendarmes' descendants, provides examples of the issues at stake. For some

⁸³ HM, Gloucestershire, Interview with author, 28 Nov. 2009.

⁸⁴ BV, Waterford, Interview with author, 24 June 2010; RH, Canada, Correspondence with author, 27 Nov. 2011; OE, Meath, Correspondence with author, 24 Sept. 2011.

⁸⁵ 'Proceeding of Interviews of Representative Bodies with Chief Secretary', p. 6.

gendarmes the mere fact of their R.I.C. membership appears to have been sufficient to single them out. In his witness statement to the Bureau of Military History, the vice-commandant of the I.R.A.'s North Roscommon Brigade's 4th battalion, Thomas Lavin, told of discovering that 'a shop boy in Ballyfarnon' had applied to join the R.I.C.:

Before we had time to take any action in the matter the police came ... and took this man away. They knew he was in danger ... When the trouble was over in this country this man volunteered for service in Palestine and was killed there.⁸⁶

This was almost certainly Lawrence McNamara who joined the Black and Tans in March 1921. After disbandment he moved immediately to Britain where he joined the British Gendarmerie on 14 March 1922 and died of malaria in Jerusalem's military hospital six months later.⁸⁷ Others were targeted on account of their actions. R.I.C. district inspector Cecil Dignan had led police reprisals around Ballyvaughan in Clare after the killing of two marines there in May 1921. Realising that this precluded a return home after disbandment, he joined the gendarmerie as a platoon commander.⁸⁸ Another British Gendarmerie platoon commander, Major Michael McConnell, also appears to have been 'marked' for his wartime role.⁸⁹ In April 1942, by which time he had risen to the rank of assistant inspector-general of the Palestine Police, an attempt

⁸⁶ Witness statement of Thomas Lavin, 2 Sept. 1954 (BMH WS no. 1001) p. 7. Some references to the British Gendarmerie in BMH witness statements are, however, inaccurate. For example, Geraldine Plunkett Dillon claims that ADRIC second-in-command, Lt.-Col. Frederick Guard, joined the force after leaving Ireland and later died of T.B. In fact Guard went to Iraq with the R.A.F. in 1922 and died of pneumonia/malaria in 1927. Dillon also reports that Joseph Joyce joined the Black and Tans and the British Gendarmerie after having publicly identified for Crown forces the killers of his father, Patrick Joyce, the Barna headmaster executed by the I.R.A. as an informer in October 1920. But while Joyce did join the Black and Tans, he did not go afterwards to Palestine. Records show that he moved to Dublin after disbandment where he married in November 1922 and emigrated to America one year later. Witness statement of Geraldine Dillon, 14 Sept. 1950 (BMH WS 424), pp 3, 12-15.

⁸⁷ 'Death of Constable L. McNamara, British Gendarmerie' (TNA, CO 733/25/541-4).

⁸⁸ Dignan had narrowly escaped an attempt on his life in Miltown Malbay in July 1921 and the I.R.A. later raided his family home in Boyle in search of him. BCJ, Carlow, Correspondence with author, 8 Oct. 2011; R.I.C. county inspector's monthly report, Clare, July 1921 (TNA, CO 904/116/32); 'Irish Grants Committee files' [hereafter IGC], Charles Dignan, no. 571, passim (TNA, CO 762/38/7).

⁸⁹ McConnell became an R.I.C. district inspector in January 1920 and served as an adjutant in Gormanston.

was made on his life by the Stern Gang in retaliation for the killing of its leader, Avraham Stern, two months earlier. According to a leading member of the gang, McConnell's assassination would have 'achieved two goals – paying British intelligence for their murders, and paying the debt to the Irish Republican Army' which, he claimed, had sentenced McConnell to death before he had escaped from Ireland to Palestine in 1922.⁹⁰

Some British Gendarmerie constables had been involved in incidents or activities which would have, at best brought them to the I.R.A.'s attention, at worst made them marked men. For example, Adam Jones had shot dead a civilian in questionable circumstances near Limerick in May 1921 while Patrick Martyn killed a Volunteer, Sean Breen, during an I.R.A. ambush in Kilmihil in Clare in April 1920 in circumstances which Breen's comrades presented as cold-blooded.⁹¹ William Brownrigg was part of a convoy of Auxiliaries ambushed in Dublin's Great Brunswick Street in March 1921 which resulted in a gun fight during which three I.R.A. gunmen and two civilians were shot dead. Two Auxiliary cadets were also killed in the battle and Brownrigg gave evidence at the trial of Volunteer Thomas Traynor for their murder: Traynor, a father of ten from Carlow, was subsequently executed for the crime.⁹² Meanwhile, Martin Cassidy, drunk and with revolver drawn, had attempted to lure a Volunteer from his house in Limerick in the early hours of the morning, provoking a violent altercation which aroused the fury of the local I.R.A. leadership⁹³ whereas Albert Ferguson Fletcher had been a member of the intelligence

⁹⁰ Yaacov Eliav, *Wanted* (New York, 1984), pp 178-9; *Palestine Post*, 24 Apr. 1942.

⁹¹ Thomas Toomey, *The War of Independence in Limerick, 1912-1921*, (self-published, 2010), p. 609; *Limerick Leader*, 23 May 1921, p. 3; Witness statement of John Flanagan, 15 Dec. 1955 (BMH WS 1316), p. 11; Witness statement of Liam Haugh, 10 Jan. 1957 (BMH WS 474), pp 7-8; Pádraig Óg Ó Ruairc, *Blood on the banner: the Republican struggle in Clare* (Cork, 2009), pp 134-5.

⁹² Summary of evidence in case of Thomas Traynor' (TNA, War Office files [hereafter WO], WO/35/131/1).

⁹³ Although Cassidy was born in Scotland, his parents were from Queen's County and the family

section of ADRIC ‘F Company’ in Dublin Castle, what the I.R.A. called the ‘special gang’, more commonly known as the ‘Cairo Gang’.⁹⁴ Other gendarmes had appeared as witnesses in the courts martial of I.R.A. members.⁹⁵

Whether concerns for their personal safety influenced the decision of British-born gendarmes to enlist requires further research. The May 1921 attacks on ex-R.I.C. and the families of serving members across England and the shooting of Vincent Fovargue in Ashford, Middlesex one month earlier had demonstrated the length of the I.R.A.’s arm and some British gendarmes were tracked back to Britain.⁹⁶ Victor Seedwell, for instance, joined the British Gendarmerie in March 1922 after the I.R.A. called to his family home in Chesham while a death threat against Florence Kennedy’s future husband, Redvers Bennett, was delivered to his father’s London address.⁹⁷ At least two of those targeted in the May 1921 raids, Frank Brailsford and Henry Hawley, also joined the British Gendarmerie.⁹⁸ Interesting also in this context is the fact that the gendarmerie’s officer corps included a number of men whose notoriety in Ireland would have definitely have placed them in the I.R.A.’s crosshairs. Chief among these was the ‘much-wanted intelligence officer’ Major Carew whom the I.R.A.’s mole in Dublin Castle, Eamon Broy, ranked with General Tudor as bearer of one of the most ‘evil’ and ‘vile’ names in Irish history. Carew had in fact been slated for shooting on Bloody Sunday, escaping only because he had moved

returned to Ireland when he was four. R.I.C. county inspector’s report, Limerick, Sept. 1921 (TNA CO 904/116/840); *Freeman’s Journal*, 27, 30 Sept. 1921; WJ, Correspondence with author, 27 Oct. 2011.

⁹⁴ Fletcher is numbered ‘2’ in the famous photograph reputed to be that of the ‘Cairo Gang’.

⁹⁵ See, for example, the evidence of Constables Victor Jamison and John Kelliher in the trials for possession of seditious documents of Thomas Doyle and John Costello respectively (TNA, WO 35/123/31 & WO 35/123/1)

⁹⁶ Home addresses of British personnel were collected in Ireland and passed to I.R.A. units in Britain although one of those targeted, ex-R.I.C. constable Launcelot Ashby, was reported to have recognised two of his assailants from his time in Dublin. One man died as a result of the May 1921 attacks. *Liverpool Courier*, 16 May 1921; J. B. E. Hittle, *Michael Collins and the Anglo-Irish war: Britain’s counterinsurgency failure* (Virginia, 2011), p. 180; *Irish Independent*, 16 May 1921.

⁹⁷ SV, Bali, Correspondence with author, 7 Dec. 2011; GF, Suffolk, Author interview.

⁹⁸ ‘Sinn Féin Raids, 14 May 1921’, undated, May 1921, p. 1 (TNA, HO 144/4645); *Liverpool Courier*, 16 May 1921.

apartment the previous day.⁹⁹ Another was Captain Thomas Burke who had led the ADRIC raiding party which had tortured and killed the Loughnane brothers in Galway in December 1920 in what was one of the most savage episodes of the entire revolutionary period.¹⁰⁰ Lt. John Faraday led the ADRIC ‘G Company’ party which tortured and summarily executed the so-called ‘Scariff martyrs’ in Killaloe in November 1920. According to I.R.A. witness statements, the prisoners ‘received the most brutal treatment during their period of detention’ at ‘G Company’ headquarters after which they were taken out ‘with their hands tied behind their backs and riddled with bullets’.¹⁰¹ Yet another was Lt. Leslie Ibbotson, widely believed to have been involved in the murders of the mayor and ex-mayor of Limerick in March 1921. As the R.I.C. district inspector on duty in the city on the night in question, Ibbotson was accused by the widow of one of the victims of being ‘a party’ to the murders, a view still shared by local historians.¹⁰² Some British-born rankers had also been involved in notorious incidents: for example, Auxiliary cadets Kenneth Daniel and Guy Gripper were two of those dismissed from the ADRIC by its commandant, General Frank Crozier, as a consequence of the looting of Trim in February 1921 but subsequently reinstated at Tudor’s instigation.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Carew, who had been involved in the killing of Seán Treacy in October 1920, survived another assassination attempt in February 1921. Witness statement of Frank Saurin, 11 Aug. 1952 (BMH, WS 718), p. 9; Witness statement of Eamon Broy, 17 Nov. 1955 (BMH, WS 1285), p. 7; Hopkinson, *Last days*, pp 76-7; *Irish Independent*, 5 Feb. 1921.

¹⁰⁰ Patrick Moylett, a Galway business man and Sinn Féin court judge, also testified to Burke’s notoriety. Burke was killed in a traffic accident in Palestine in December 1925. Witness statement of Pádraig Ó’Fathaigh, 23 Oct. 1956 (BMH, WS 1517), p. 2; Witness statement of Patrick Moylett, 16 Dec. 1952 (BMH WS 767), pp 37-8, 43, 85; MECA, McNeill diaries, vol. 3, 9 Dec. 1925; *Palestine Weekly*, 18 Dec. 1925.

¹⁰¹ Witness statements of Joseph Clancy, 11 Mar. 1956 (BMH, WS no. 1370), pp 9-10; Sean Moroney, 20 July 1956 (BMH, WS no. 1462), pp 5-6; Michael Brennan, 11 Jan. 1955 (BMH, WS no. 1068), p. 68. For a detailed discussion of this incident, see Ó Ruairc, *Blood*, pp 189-92.

¹⁰² Although Ibbotson’s unpublished account of his R.I.C. service repeats the false ‘official’ line of the time which blamed Republican extremists for what he termed ‘these callous crimes’, there is in fact no evidence that he had any involvement. Toomey, *War*, pp 542-3, 550-2; L. H. P. Ibbotson, *Recollections of the Irish rebellion*, c. 1933 (MS in possession of IB, Queensland), pp 40-4.

¹⁰³ I am grateful to David Grant for this information.

2.5 ‘Sure it’s only a Holiday’

The numerical strength of the British Gendarmerie’s Irish-born contingent decreased during the force’s four years in Palestine as resignations, dismissals and deaths depleted the ranks of the original 1922 draft. Just sixty-one of its 253 Irish rankers were still serving when the force was disbanded in April 1926 while only five of those recruited as replacements for departing gendarmes were certainly Irish, although ten or so others who gave British addresses had typically Irish surnames. However, the reduction in the establishment of rankers in spring 1925 meant that, in terms of overall numbers, Irishmen still accounted for 13.5 per cent of the force at disbandment. Of the 192 Irish gendarmes who exited the force prior to disbandment, eight did so in 1922, four of whom were dismissed and four of whom resigned. Shipping lists and emigration records confirm that at least ninety-four Irish gendarmes left Palestine in 1923, eleven in 1924 and thirteen in 1925. A further eight died during the 1922-5 period, seven from natural causes and one by suicide. When the other fifty-eight Irish rankers departed Palestine is not certain but the indications are that the majority left as part of the spring 1923 exodus as all but three of those in question were directly affected by the R.I.C. pensions’ dispute.

The proportion of Irishmen in the British Gendarmerie’s officer corps remained much the same over the course of its career. Three of the seven Irish officers recruited as part of the original draft departed the force prior to disbandment. However, the gradual reduction in the officer corps’ official establishment to thirty-three meant that the percentage of Irishmen remained unchanged at around 12 per cent. The recruitment of replacements for officers departing Palestine in 1922-3 did not affect Irish representation at officer grade, this despite the fact that such

replacements were generally promoted from the ranks. In fact nine of the eleven men who attained commissions in this period were former British Gendarmerie rankers but only one, Lt. Michael Kelly, was Irish.¹⁰⁴

The majority of Irish gendarmes did not return to Ireland after Palestine. A survey of census returns, civil registration records, shipping lists and immigration records, in addition to information provided by their descendants, indicates that fully 70 per cent of those that departed the force in 1923 moved overseas as did 83 per cent of those known to have left in the 1924-5 period. Most made new lives in Britain or resettled elsewhere within the empire. An examination of Form 30A manifest sheets for 1922-4 indicates that more than half of these men went to Canada.¹⁰⁵ This was not surprising. In April 1922 the Canadian superintendent of immigration in London, J. Obed Smith, informed Ottawa that ex-R.I.C. were clearly ‘marked men’ in that there was ‘in general an open threat of their murder’. Although the Canadian government felt unable to proffer official assistance, a number of private land settlement schemes were targeted at ex-R.I.C., with the result that by October at least six hundred ex-R.I.C. had gone there.¹⁰⁶ Australia had proved another favoured destination for ex-R.I.C. (according to the R.I.C. resettlement branch, 433 former force members had emigrated there by the end of 1923) and some Irish gendarmes travelled there or on to New Zealand. Smaller numbers resettled in British colonial possessions across Africa and the Far East. And while the British Government’s Overseas Settlement Committee ‘naturally preferred to see [ex-R.I.C.] settled, and their capital applied in a productive manner within the Empire’, it did not ‘think it proper to discourage [them] from settling in the United States’, and several Irish gendarmes were among the 219

¹⁰⁴ The promotion of Irishmen in the British Gendarmerie is discussed in Chapter V below.

¹⁰⁵ This form was completed by all passengers bound for Canada between 1919 and 1924.

¹⁰⁶ ‘Department of Immigration and Colonization memorandum’, 17 Oct. 1923 (Library and Archives of Canada, Ottawa, ‘Royal Irish Constabulary – settling on land in Canada’, RG76-I-A-1/65067).

ex-R.I.C. who had emigrated there by the end of 1923.¹⁰⁷

While the range of occupations they pursued post-Palestine was diverse, a significant number remained in policing. Some joined constabularies in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States while others transferred to colonial police forces such as those of Kenya, Malaya and Hong Kong. Two, George Wilkinson and James McCahey, joined the Shanghai Municipal Police.¹⁰⁸ At least thirty-four of the sixty-one Irish British Gendarmerie rankers still serving at disbandment in April 1926 chose not to return home to Ireland. Nineteen transferred to the BSPP, accounting for more than one-quarter of the total number of gendarmes that opted to transfer despite the fact that Irishmen comprised just 13.5 per cent of the force by this time. A further two, Patrick Hackett and Richard Ryan, transferred to the ordinary establishment of the Palestine Police as 'British inspectors' while two of the gendarmerie's Irish officers, Gerald Foley and Michael McConnell, received commissions.¹⁰⁹ Michael O'Rourke had done so the previous year. About half of these men eventually retired to Ireland having spent most of their working lives abroad.¹¹⁰

Some Irish gendarmes were deterred from returning to Ireland by its difficult economic climate and the poor employment prospects to which it gave rise. Others felt a sense of political alienation from the 'new dispensation' in Dublin or were unready to resume their personal relationships with their families or their communities which had been soured by their R.I.C. service.¹¹¹ The extent to which

¹⁰⁷ R.I.C. Tribunal summary, p. 4.

¹⁰⁸ Some served in several different police forces. McCahey, for example, served in Shanghai until 1942 when he was briefly interned by the Japanese before being released as an Irish citizen. He went then to Australia where he served four years with the Commonwealth Investigations' Branch after which he joined the Hong Kong Police, rising to the rank of chief inspector. DD, Hong Kong, Correspondence with author, 13 July 2012.

¹⁰⁹ Ryan died of malaria three months after his appointment. Duff, *Sword*, p. 274.

¹¹⁰ Irish gendarmes who transferred to the BSPP in 1926 served an average of eighteen years with the force, with seven serving until the Mandate's end.

¹¹¹ See, for example, Paul S., Roscommon, Correspondence with author, 6 Oct. 2011; John A., Cork, Correspondence with author, 14 May 2011; RH, Canada, Correspondence with author, 27 Nov. 2011.

abiding anxiety over personal safety was a factor in the resettlement of Irish gendarmes overseas is difficult to assess. One of Brewer's interviewees, William Britton, claimed that many Irish gendarmes 'couldn't go back to their own homes [after Palestine] because they'd have been shot right away' and the air ministry also alluded to the difficulties to which gendarmes from 'Southern Ireland' might be subject in this regard.¹¹² Certainly, the situation of ex-R.I.C. in the Irish Free State was not fully resolved by the time the first group left Palestine in spring 1923, with sporadic incidents ranging from general intimidation, physical attacks and threats of expulsion being reported in areas of Waterford, Galway, Leitrim and Donegal.¹¹³ The fact that the British government refused to supply the addresses of Irish R.I.C. pensioners to Dublin two years later suggests that it still harboured concerns: in fact as late as 1931 the Home Office noted that while such information was supplied to the police forces of Great Britain and Northern Ireland when required 'for use in the administration of justice ... as regards the Irish Free State, addresses had not been furnished'.¹¹⁴ The question of whether this was still correct policy 'after so long a period' was, it added, a matter for consideration, particularly given that many ex-R.I.C. who had 'alleged that their lives would be endangered if they ever returned to Ireland [had since] taken the risk and no grievous harm [seemed] to have come to them', although one official cautioned that 'it must not be forgotten that Irishmen have very long memories in matters of this kind' and that, as one could 'never be sure of the "wild men"', it would be 'very rash to assume that [ex-R.I.C.] would now all be

¹¹² Brewer, *RIC oral history*, p. 117; Webster to Ormsby-Gore, 30 Apr. 1923 (TNA, CO 733/53/436).

¹¹³ *Irish Times*, 2 Apr. 1923; *Leitrim Observer*, 5 May 1923; *Irish Independent*, 6 Oct. 1923; *Freeman's Journal*, 16 Oct. 1923; *The Register* (Adelaide), 18 Oct. 1923.

¹¹⁴ 'Note of meeting between British Treasury and Irish Department of Finance administrators', 16 Feb. 1925 (NAI, Dept. Finance files, DF 37/11/24); 'Question of furnishing addresses and supplying information concerning former members of the Royal Irish Constabulary', Home Office memorandum, 17 Apr. 1931 (TNA, HO 144/22600).

safe'.¹¹⁵ The Home Office also noted that there had been 165 disbanded members 'regarded as being liable to risk by reason of their police service in Ireland' and for whom special precautions were required. Whether any Irish gendarmes were among them is unknown (information on the identities of these 165 men is restricted until 2038) but some gendarmes appear to have remained under some sort of Republican interdict after 1922.¹¹⁶ Cecil Dignan, for example, twice attempted to return to Boyle after Palestine but was 'run out of town because he had been too fond of the gun' and, according to his brother, ultimately had to leave Ireland on account of his R.I.C. service, while other gendarmes were reportedly refused permission to resettle in their former homes until the 1930s or 1940s.¹¹⁷

Britton claimed that many returning Irish gendarmes went to Northern Ireland 'for safety' and joined the R.U.C. which had been providing ready employment for ex-R.I.C. since its establishment in May 1922.¹¹⁸ However, a study of R.U.C. service records of personnel recruited between 1923 and 1926 indicates that only eleven former gendarmes joined the force during this time (ten in 1923 and one in 1926) and just five of these were from the Irish Free State.¹¹⁹ Whether some returning Irish gendarmes joined the so-called 'B Specials' is presently unknown as its records, held at the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), are not yet freely available

¹¹⁵ Ibid.; H.S.M. Home Office minute, 11 June 1931 (TNA, HO 144/22600).

¹¹⁶ Home Office to Office of the Paymaster General, 10 Sept. 1931 (TNA, HO 144/22600).

¹¹⁷ Dignan served two years with the Jamaica Constabulary after Palestine before emigrating to Australia where he died in 1942. MRP, Roscommon, Correspondence with author, 6 Oct. 2011; IGC file no. 571, passim; 'Appointment of C. Dignan as 3rd class inspector, Jamaica Constabulary' (TNA, CO 137/776); *The Argus* (Melbourne), 20 July 1942.

¹¹⁸ In October 1922, the government of Northern Ireland stated that 1,250 R.I.C. veterans had enlisted in the R.U.C., 350 of whom were native to the Irish Free State. The British Treasury put the total number of ex-R.I.C. in the Ulster police services at 1,347 at this time. Some ex-R.I.C. who applied to join the British Gendarmerie were turned down on the basis that they were more urgently required for the Ulster constabularies. Trickett, 'Disbandment of R.I.C.: Cost of Compensation Allowances', 5 Oct. 1922 (TNA, T 160/25); Brewer, *R.I.C. Oral History*, pp 117-9.

¹¹⁹ Police Service of Northern Ireland: Police Museum, Belfast, R.U.C. service record cards, nos. 3753, 3754, 3790, 3791, 3853, 3930, 3943, 3802, 3804, 3942 & 4442. I am very grateful to the museum's curator, Hugh Forrester, for his assistance during my visit.

to researchers.¹²⁰

Yet the facts that gendarmes from Northern Ireland comprised 18 per cent of those leaving Palestine in 1923 (corresponding precisely to their percentage of the force as a whole) but just 6.5 per cent of those that emigrated, and that over one-third of the gendarmes native to what had become the Irish Free State who returned to Ireland in 1923 settled in the 'six counties' may suggest that Northern Ireland was considered a haven by some.¹²¹ Furthermore, British civil registration records for the 1923-6 period indicate that 84 per cent of the British-born gendarmes who left Palestine in 1923 resettled in Britain. That this is, in percentage terms, almost eight times the number who returned home to the Irish Free State cannot be explained merely by economic factors. Employment prospects remained extremely poor in Britain during this time, particularly for the unskilled. Indeed, Major Carew returned from a visit to England in December 1922 'full of the desperate unemployment still at home' and began 'rubbing this into the ranks of his company' in an effort to dissuade them from resigning in April 1923.¹²²

The Irish gendarmes constituted but a small proportion of the ex-R.I.C. that left the twenty-six counties in 1922. In April the *Irish Independent* reported that 244 had travelled to Britain alone and that another 2,055 had declared their intention to depart and one month later Sir Hamar Greenwood told the House of Commons that 5,200 R.I.C. personnel were known to have left Ireland, approximately 2,000 of whom were Irishmen.¹²³ Although a definitive judgement must await the release of

¹²⁰ PRONI did conduct a search of these records for ten gendarmes this author thought the most likely candidates for joining the Specials between 1923 and 1926. However, while there were some possible matches, the records did not contain enough information to confirm identities beyond doubt. I am grateful to Avril Loughlin at PRONI for her assistance in this matter.

¹²¹ All but two of the nineteen gendarmes known to have emigrated in the 1924-5 period were from 'Southern Ireland'.

¹²² MECA, McNeill diaries, vol. 1, 28 Dec. 1922.

¹²³ Greenwood described the Irish ex-R.I.C. in Britain at this time as 'strangers in a strange land for

the 1926 census, it is generally assumed that the majority left as a temporary expedient and returned when they considered ‘the pacification of the country ... sufficiently complete’, i.e. within months, or at most, a few years.¹²⁴ And indeed, writing nine years after the force’s disbandment, one Home Office official noted that ‘numerous instances have come to my notice in dealing with [R.I.C. pension] commutation cases of men who received disturbance allowances on the ground that, on disbandment of the force, they had been compelled to quit [Ireland] and could never safely return, going back within a year or two and quietly settling down’.¹²⁵ Even Sergeant Michael Flynn who, as noted above, fled with his family to Dover after receiving two separate expulsion orders in 1922, had returned to his native Kerry by this time and perhaps even as early as 1924.¹²⁶ The Irish gendarmes were an exception, the available evidence suggesting that upwards of 70 per cent of these men never lived permanently in Ireland again. Of those who did return, some went on to hold prominent positions in Irish life (Gerald Tynan-O Mahoney, for instance, became a successful journalist and was appointed manager of the *Irish Times* in 1942 while, as attendant in the Old Library of Trinity College, Frederick Monahan became the *de facto* custodian of and guide to the *Book of Kells*) but occupational information provided by Irish civil registration records indicates that most lived quiet and ordinary lives.¹²⁷

The testimonies of the Irish gendarmes and their families indicate that the majority of those who did not return home had also expected to do so in the short-term. Like Robert Holmes, they considered Palestine merely ‘a holiday’ from which

which they fought so long and so well’. *Irish Independent*, 11 Apr. 1922; Hansard, House of Commons debates, 10 May 1922, vol. 153 c2288; 29 May 1922, vol. 154, c1716.

¹²⁴ Fedorowich, ‘Problems’, p. 107; Malcolm, *Irish policeman*, pp 221-3.

¹²⁵ H.S.M., Home Office minute, 22 May 1931 (TNA, HO 144/22600).

¹²⁶ Correspondence between Flynn and Home Office in TNA, HO 144/22575.

¹²⁷ R.I.C. service records nos. 81736 & 67273; *Irish Independent*, 19 Apr. 1948; *Irish Times*, 23 Nov. 1942, 4 Dec. 1972, 25 Apr. 1977; *Trinity News*, 1 May 1969.

they would return when the Irish situation calmed down. But by September 1922 Holmes had begun to despair of going back to Kilkenny in the immediate future:

Ireland is in an awful mess ... Is there any sign of a settlement at all? Apparently it is getting worse every day instead of improving. I hope that things will soon return to normal again.¹²⁸

He left Palestine in April 1923, returning to Ireland only to marry, before travelling



Figure 6: Robert Holmes as R.I.C. constable, c. 1921 (R. Holmes collection)

on to Britain where he died in 1935. Other gendarmes also expatriated themselves with varying degrees of finality. Michael Higgins served with the British Gendarmerie until 1926 when he transferred to the BSPP. He married and had three children in Palestine before retiring to Roscommon in 1947 where he died twenty years later. HWR went from Palestine to Canada where he permanently settled, returning to Wexford just once before his death when he and his family reconciled.

¹²⁸ Robert Holmes to Mary Holmes, undated letter, c. Sept. 1922 (MS in possession of HR, Kilkenny).

DMM, on the other hand, moved on to America and was never heard from again.¹²⁹ But perhaps the saddest cases of all were those like that of Constable Thomas Kilmartin from Roscommon. He left Palestine for New Zealand in 1925 and never came back. But he remained in close contact with his parents and siblings and, according to his daughter, always longed to return:

There was always a lot of talk of Ireland. I always felt he was sad. He would sometimes wipe a tear from his eyes.¹³⁰

For men such as these, Palestine became not a ‘holiday’ but the first phase of long-term or permanent exile.

2.6 Conclusion

The demonisation of the R.I.C. did not end in 1922. Deemed to have stood on the wrong side of Irish history, it suffered clear and comprehensive defeat in what Malcolm describes as the ‘political and propaganda wars’ over the manner in which the violence of the 1919-21 period was ‘remembered, interpreted and commemorated and, ultimately, justified ... at home, in school, on the hustings – and in the history books’.¹³¹ As a result, the plight of former force members in the revolution’s aftermath was generally overlooked or ignored. Moreover, the belief that the majority of Irish ex-R.I.C. eventually lived out their lives peaceably in Ireland served to facilitate a type of national amnesia about the fate of the non-negligible minority, those subjected to enforced or involuntary self-imposed exile well after Anglo-Irish hostilities had ceased.

The precise number involved is difficult to gauge. The R.I.C. resettlement

¹²⁹ U.S. death records reveal that he died in a traffic accident in 1940.

¹³⁰ R.I.C. record no. 70635; CM, Galway & KK, Wellington, Correspondence with author, 23 July 2012.

¹³¹ Malcolm, *Irish policeman*, p. 213.

branch reported that a total of 1,436 ex-R.I.C. had, with its help, permanently left Britain and Ireland by the end of 1923 and Fedorowich believes another 500 may have followed by the end of the decade.¹³² While the majority of these men were Black and Tans recruited in Britain, the resettlement branch noted that ‘a considerable number’ were ‘older members of the Force, all of whom were “Irishmen”’ who ‘in most cases [went] to relatives in Irish Catholic communities’ in the U.S.A. and Australia.¹³³ While Irish-born Black and Tans recruited in Britain are included in the figure of 1,436, those who enlisted in Ireland were most likely not, being counted in contemporary records with the ‘old R.I.C.’.¹³⁴ Neither were Irish ex-R.I.C. who remained in the U.K. after 1922 (of which there appears to have been a significant number) and nor were those Irish-born Auxiliaries who opted for exile.¹³⁵ So, while a more definitive picture must await the release of the 1926 census, the indications are that several hundred Irish ex-R.I.C. were in effect permanently expelled in the early independence period, a shameful chapter in the nation’s history which, the pioneering work of O’Sullivan, Fedorowich and Malcolm notwithstanding, has yet to be fully documented. The stories of the subset that joined the British Gendarmerie sheds some further light on this issue and the human costs it involved.

¹³² The figure of 1,436 included a small number of men who emigrated during the revolution itself. Hemming to Troup, 13 Dec. 1923, cited in Fedorowich, ‘Problems’, pp 105, 107.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

¹³⁴ An examination of the R.I.C. registers of service reveals that there were roughly 2224 Irish-born Black and Tans (including temporary constables), of whom 1273 were still serving at disbandment. In October 1922 the Treasury put the number recruited into the R.I.C. in Ireland on or after the 1 July 1919 and who were still serving at disbandment at 1229. Of this number, 122 were recruited prior to 2 January 1920, putting the number of Black and Tans recruited in Ireland who were still serving at disbandment at 1017. Therefore the number of Irish Black and Tans recruited in Britain was approximately 256.

¹³⁵ As Auxiliaries did not receive R.I.C. pensions, they were not entitled to assistance from the resettlement branch. On the evidence of the R.I.C. registers, there were approximately 230 Irish-born Auxiliaries.

Chapter Three: ‘The Irish Way of Things’: The Black and Tans in Palestine, 1922-48

3.1 Introduction

The British Gendarmerie advance party sailed for Palestine aboard the *City of Exeter* on 19 March 1922, with the main body of men following on 13 April and docking in Haifa sixteen days later.¹ They were then taken by train to the designated force headquarters at Sarafand, an army encampment twelve miles from Jaffa, where they were met by a reception party which included the band of the 19th Punjabis which celebrated the force’s R.I.C. origins by playing ‘old Irish marches’.² The force departed Palestine four years later to considerably less fanfare and has since acquired what David Omissi describes as ‘the nickname and reputation of its parent unit’ in Ireland.³ According to this reputation, the British Gendarmerie was a restive and unruly force, plagued by endemic indiscipline, and one whose approach to policing was defined by, at best heavy-handedness, at worst outright brutality. This chapter first examines the extent to which this reputation is justified. It then assesses the widely-held view that the transfer of former Black and Tans and Auxiliaries from the British Gendarmerie to the British Section of the Palestine Police (BSPP) in April 1926 was the signal cause of police brutality afterwards, particularly during the Arab and Jewish revolts against the Mandatory in the 1930s and 1940s.

¹ Shipping manifest for the City of Exeter, 19 Mar. 1922 (retrieved from www.findmypast.co.uk, 3 Dec. 2011).

² Frederick Monahan to AP, 8 Aug. 1969 (MS in possession of AP, Belfast).

³ Omissi, *Air power*, p. 66.

3.2 Indiscipline

The British Gendarmerie had acquired a reputation for indiscipline even before it landed in Palestine. In his report to the Colonial Office on the force's first year, Angus McNeill complained that 'on arrival propaganda against the force was rife and the smallest incident was ridiculously magnified'.⁴ This propaganda largely derived from prejudice and preconceptions about its composition rather than its actual conduct. The fact that the British Gendarmerie was actively recruited from R.I.C. sources had marked it out for suspicion from the start and, as discussed in Chapter I, official efforts to obscure its 'Irish' roots had been entirely unsuccessful. As late as December 1922, William Ormsby-Gore was remarking on 'the wide feeling in all [British political] parties about the Black and Tans in the Holy Land', a feeling which was only gradually assuaged by positive appraisals of the force's performance by Palestine's civil and military authorities.⁵ By January 1923 General Tudor was reporting that the British Gendarmerie had 'quite outlived "Shinner" propaganda out here anyway' while two months later Richard Meinertzhagen told Sir John Shuckburgh at the Colonial Office that 'the Black and Tan stigma originally attaching to it [had] vanished completely' in Palestine. The resignation of significant numbers of ex-R.I.C. from the force in April largely brought criticisms in Britain to an end.⁶

3.2.1 *Fort Tregantle*

The incidents of indiscipline 'ridiculously magnified' to which McNeill referred occurred during the assembly of the British Gendarmerie at Fort Tregantle prior to its

⁴ MECA, McNeill collection, 'Notes', p. 4.

⁵ Ormsby-Gore, Colonial Office minute, 21 Dec. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/35/617).

⁶ Tudor to Trenchard, 25 Jan. 1923 (R.A.F. museum, MFC76/1/285); Meinertzhagen to Shuckburgh, 7 Mar. 1923 (TNA, CO 733/43/116).

departure for Palestine. Problems with drunkenness had emerged there almost immediately with some gendarmes 'fighting drunk' even on arrival.⁷ This culture of heavy drinking was fuelled by a developing disillusionment with life in the camp. A 'lonely and discouraging place' at the best of times, Fort Tregantle was made even more inhospitable by 'torrential rain [which] reduced the camp to a quagmire of mud'. Spartan, damp accommodation, rudimentary facilities and poor messing added to the men's general discomfort.⁸

In his memoirs, Douglas Duff singled out two other issues which particularly rankled, both of which derived from the gendarmes' military pasts. The first concerned the British Gendarmerie uniform. Both officers and rankers were ordered to report to Fort Tregantle in mufti where they would be supplied with clothing and necessaries. But the men considered the uniform they received thoroughly sub-standard, consisting of what Duff described as 'ill-fitting khaki slops ... of a villainous wartime texture' and of which 'every man was heartily ashamed'.⁹ Corroboration of Duff's claims can be found in an official complaint lodged with the Colonial Office in July 1924 by a former British Gendarmerie constable, W. T. Knight, in which he stated that the uniform was 'most inferior in quality' and that practically all other clothing issued to recruits, including underwear, was second-hand and shabby.¹⁰ Even McNeill, who maintained that the British Gendarmerie was 'exceptionally well equipped' in this regard, conceded that some articles of uniform had been purchased from the army disposals board in 1922 and that 'certain unserviceable consignments' were eventually condemned.¹¹ However the fact that

⁷ Jeans, 'British Gendarmerie' (part 2), p. 257.

⁸ Horne, *Job*, pp 78-9. See also Jeans, 'British Gendarmerie' (part 2), p. 257.

⁹ Duff, *Sword*, pp 94-5 and *Rough*, p. 90.

¹⁰ W. T. Knight, 'Statement on British Section Palestine Gendarmerie', undated, July 1924 (TNA, CO 733/85/564-8), pp 1, 4.

¹¹ McNeill, 'Complaint by ex-Constable no. 932 W. T. Knight, late British Gendarmerie', 29 Aug.

Knight's complaint refers to the 1923-4 period (he was not part of the original 1922 draft but was recruited in June 1923) indicates that the issue of the uniform remained unresolved.

The second major source of disgruntlement identified by Duff was the British Gendarmerie's paramilitary character and ethos. As discussed in Chapter II, although



Figure 7: British Gendarmerie assembled at Fort Tregantle, April 1922 (R. Porter collection)

part of Palestine's civil forces, it was always envisaged as a semi-military unit and McNeill, from the beginning, treated his men like troops. But as far as the gendarmes were concerned, they had been recruited as civil policemen and they therefore strenuously objected in principle to the military-style training and discipline which was imposed. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that their drill instructor, John Wilkinson, was an exacting task-master who, according to Horne, 'pushed every detail of drill ... discipline and general efficiency to the point of endurance'.¹² Moreover, many gendarmes were, as ex-servicemen, veterans of several military campaigns. Duff's own platoon included 'one brigadier general, one naval post

1924 (TNA, CO 733/73/410-12), p. 1.

¹² Horne, *Job*, p. 79.

captain, and a whole shoal of ex-majors and ex-captains, many of them with the highest decorations'; in fact there had, he claimed, probably 'never been so many D.S.O.s, D.C.M.s, M.C.s, A.F.C.s and their equivalent medals, in addition to Foreign Orders, in such close proximity before'.¹³ Yet they were treated by McNeill as 'irresponsible private soldiers of no service' and subjected to a regime of 'irritating and futile' discipline and other 'petty, silly restrictions' which eventually 'broke the men's hearts'.¹⁴ Like the uniform, this issue remained a running sore with Knight reporting that members of the 1923 draft were explicitly told on arrival in Palestine that they were nothing but well-paid soldiers and 'that if anyone thought that he was a civil policemen he could get it out of his head at once'.¹⁵

Duff claimed that there were 'dozens of desertions every day' from Fort Tregantle on account of these issues and that 'well over one hundred' others immediately resigned when they caught sight of the ship that was to take them to Palestine.¹⁶ That the ship, an old Ellerman steamer called the *City of Oxford*, was entirely inadequate to the task of transporting such a large body of men is well-documented. Indeed McNeill himself was so appalled by its size and condition that he considered refusing to board.¹⁷ But Duff's claims regarding desertions were certainly exaggerated. John Jeans stated that 'several men were discharged as "not suitable for the force" ... before we left Devonport' while 'quite a number [of others] threw up the sponge without giving the job a fair trial'.¹⁸ This is supported by the July 1922

¹³ Duff, *Rough*, p. 90, *Bailing*, p. 20, *Sword*, p. 95. See also MECA, McNeill collection, 'Notes', p. 1; Meinertzhagen, Colonial Office minute, 18 June 1923 (TNA, CO 733/54/252); Munro to Horne, 10 July 1923 (MECA, PPOCAC, Munro collection, G2 no. 16).

¹⁴ Duff, *Sword*, pp 94-6.

¹⁵ Knight, 'Statement', p. 4.

¹⁶ Duff, *Sword*, pp 94-6 and *Rough*, p. 91.

¹⁷ The *City of Oxford* was chosen for reasons of economy. As the Ellerman line had a local connection with Palestine and could therefore secure a return cargo, it was 'in a position to offer more favourable terms for the outward journey'. MECA, McNeill diaries, vol. 1, 11 Apr. 1922; Gerard Clauson, Colonial Office minute, 10 Feb. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/29/59).

¹⁸ Jeans, 'British Gendarmerie (part 2)', p. 257.

nominal roll (a complete list of all those recruited since 1 March 1922) which recorded two desertions, six dismissals and sixteen resignations during the Fort Tregantle period. While these figures are not insignificant, they are a fraction of those cited by Duff.

3.2.2 The City of Oxford

Some of Duff's other claims on the subject of British Gendarmerie discipline were greatly overstated or entirely untrue. Take, for example, his account of indiscipline on the *City of Oxford*, particularly that in his first book, *Sword for Hire*, which probably did more to secure the British Gendarmerie's enduring reputation for indiscipline than any other incident he elsewhere described. It is, therefore, worth discussing in detail. According to Duff, intense anger over cramped and primitive conditions aboard the ship was exacerbated during the voyage when a violent storm in the Bay of Biscay caused seasickness so severe that most of the men couldn't leave their hammocks, even to use the latrines. Tempers flared when McNeill ordered the men to begin cleaning the ship immediately as the storm subsided, dismissing their spokesmen's objections that, not only were most men weak or still sick, but that as civilian policemen entitled to a second-class passage, they should have stewards to attend to such duties. Tensions were brought to the tipping point when McNeill placed these spokesmen in the cells and spilled over into mutiny that evening when he decreed with what Duff termed 'almost incredible stupidity' that all lights on the decks be extinguished at ten o'clock. Officers sent down to quell the disturbance were forced to retreat at gunpoint and McNeill himself was told by the mutineers that he could not hope to stand against six hundred armed men prepared to shed blood. 'Murder was very close' but the lights were eventually switched on and a tenuous peace restored.

According to Duff this incident set the scene for the rest of the voyage. Indeed, he described another near-mutiny two days later when McNeill denied the men shore leave when the ship docked for repairs at Gibraltar, relenting only when they angrily informed him that they were ‘second-class passengers going out to Palestine as policemen’ and were going ashore regardless of his orders.¹⁹

Duff’s description of the storm’s severity and the suffering it wreaked is fully corroborated by other sources.²⁰ But his account of the ‘mutiny’ is otherwise untrue. McNeill’s diary entry for the night in question simply records that ‘a nasty little incident occurred after lights out in no. 2 mess deck but it fizzled out very quickly. I think it was in the nature of a storm in a teacup and I shall not refer to it further’. In fact, so insignificant was what had occurred that McNeill clearly had no memory of it twelve years later when *Sword for Hire* (which he described as ‘most scurrilous’ and ‘a gross scandal’) was published.²¹ Nor does his diary allude to any difficulties regarding shore leave in Gibraltar, recording simply that he ‘obtained permission to allow all men not on duty to go ashore’.²² McNeill therefore contacted a number of his fellow British Gendarmerie officers querying Duff’s claims, the responses of four of whom have survived. Two, Captain Alfred Barker and Lt. Ralph Parker both of whom were, according to McNeill, ‘likely to have known had anything occurred ... [had] no recollection of any incident of the kind described by Duff on board the ship’.²³ Meanwhile Gerald Foley, in a lengthy rebuttal of Duff’s book, made no

¹⁹ Quotations from Duff, *Sword*, pp 96-101; *Rough*, pp 91-3 and *On swallowing*, pp 113-15.

²⁰ See, for example, Gerald Foley, ‘The British Gendarmerie of Palestine’ in *PPOCAN* no. 118 (1980), p. 42; Crewe, ‘British Gendarmerie’, pp 3-4; MECA, McNeill diaries, vol. 1, 14, 15 Apr. 1922; Jeans, ‘British Gendarmerie’ (part 2), p. 259; Salter to Ormsby-Gore, 4 Feb. 1923 (TNA, CO 733/62/37); *Daily Mail*, 6 May 1922.

²¹ MECA, McNeill diaries, vol. 1, 16 Apr. 1922; McNeill to Edward Keith-Roach, 19 Feb. 1935 (MECA, McNeill collection, File A, no.1); Angus McNeill, Diary 1934, 30 Oct., 4 Nov. 1934 (MS in possession of S. Fanshawe, Dorset). I am very grateful to Mrs. Fanshawe, McNeill’s granddaughter, for allowing me access to his later diaries.

²² MECA, McNeill diaries, vol. 1, 18 Apr. 1922.

²³ McNeill to Keith-Roach, 19 Feb. 1935, op. cit.

mention at all of the ‘mutiny’ and dismissed Duff’s claims regarding shore leave in Gibraltar as incorrect and his general portrayal of British Gendarmerie discipline as inaccurate.²⁴

Moreover, while the fourth of McNeill’s respondents, James Kyles, a former British Gendarmerie head constable major, clearly remembered the incident to which Duff referred, he provided a completely different version of events. According to Kyles, a gendarme named Anderson who was ‘very drunk in drunken company’ became violent when his hammock was cut down and, ‘tempers being [already] frayed, a general fight started among the drunks’. Order was eventually restored and three men spent the remainder of the voyage in the cells, one of whom was dismissed when the ship docked in Palestine. It was, he wrote, ‘nothing but a drunken brawl ... [which] only the brain of Duff could make a mutiny’.²⁵ Corroboration of Kyles’ account is found in Colonial Office files on British Gendarmerie dismissals which record that one gendarme, Constable Frank D’Alroy, was dismissed for ‘gross misconduct on board the S.S. City of Oxford at sea’ while the fact that he was charged only with being absent without leave and breaking arrest further undermines Duff’s report of a mutiny.²⁶ Nor was Kyles aware of any issue with shore leave in Gibraltar; it ‘was on at once. I did not know that there was any question of delay in it’ and he finished by saying:

I, of course, know nearly all of the incidents described by Duff in his book and there are few of any which are the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.²⁷

²⁴ Gerald Foley, ‘Remarks on Duff’s book by Major G. R. E. Foley’, undated typescript, c. 1935 (MECA, McNeill collection, File A, no. 1), p. 1. Nor is there any reference to disciplinary problems during the voyage in the first-hand accounts of William Crewe and John Jeans.

²⁵ Kyles to McNeill, 2 Feb. 1935 (MECA, McNeill collection, File A, no. 1).

²⁶ ‘Schedule of members of the British Gendarmerie who have been dismissed from the force’, 7 Feb. 1924 (TNA, CO 733/65/324); ‘Members of British Gendarmerie who have been dismissed from the formation of the force to 20 May 1924’ (TNA, CO 733/69/595-7).

²⁷ Kyles to McNeill’, 2 Feb. 1935, op. cit.

3.2.3 'A Legion of the Lost'?

Incidents of indiscipline in Palestine itself were similarly embroidered or embellished by Duff. For example, he claimed that 'discontent and savage disillusionment' over primitive living conditions at Safarand led to another near-mutiny and that poor messing there resulted in food poisoning so acute that one gendarme actually died. He also provided a lengthy account of a complete breakdown in discipline during an inspection of the British Gendarmerie by General Wardrop, prompting him to describe the force as 'the slackest, dirtiest, most useless and undisciplined mob that he had ever had the unhappiness to inspect'.²⁸ Conditions at Sarafand were undoubtedly as grim as Duff described (McNeill himself criticised its 'cramped and uncomfortable' accommodation, 'very bad sanitation' and the absence of 'proper cooks houses, meat safes or other anti-fly plant') but they did not cause serious unrest in the ranks.²⁹ While the men were obviously disgruntled, they merely formed a deputation to petition for better quarters which, according to John Jeans, was immediately pacified by 'a little tactful explanation' from their officers that it was a temporary arrangement and indeed all but the headquarters squadron had been dispersed around the country by mid-July.³⁰ Moreover, the only gendarme who died during this time (and who McNeill stated was the force's 'first loss from death') was Constable Albert Brock from Limerick who died on 4 May 1922 'after a severe and sudden operation for acute peritonitis'.³¹ Jeans also provided an entirely different version of Wardrop's inspection in which indiscipline played no part and which is corroborated in McNeill's diaries.³² Duff's account was also vehemently challenged

²⁸ Duff, *Sword*, pp 104-8; *Bailing*, pp 22-4; *Rough*, pp 99-100.

²⁹ MECA, McNeill collection, 'Notes', p. 2.

³⁰ Jeans, 'British Gendarmerie' (part 3), p. 283; Monthly reports on Palestine administration, June 1922, p. 9 & July 1922, p. 7 (copies in TNA, CO 733/23 & CO 733/24 respectively).

³¹ MECA, McNeill diaries, vol. 1, 4 May 1922.

³² Both Jeans and McNeill blamed what problems occurred with formation during the inspection on the

by Kyles and by Foley who condemned it as ‘absolute lies’.³³

To take elements of Duff’s account to task in this way is not to argue that indiscipline was not an issue in the British Gendarmerie for it certainly was. Despite the determination of its officers that as John Jeans put it; ‘the Irish way of things was not going to enter into the picture at all’, the disciplinary issues which arose at Fort Tregantle persisted in Palestine with alcohol remaining the major contributory factor.³⁴ According to Duff:

The quantity of alcohol soaked by the Gendarmerie was [so] prodigious [that] the canteen failed to keep up with the demand, and a whole row of native-owned pubs started business opposite the Barracks entrance ... there were very few sober men to be found inside ... after seven o’clock in the evening except for the guard and the Emergency picket.³⁵

Within two weeks of the force’s arrival, Helen Bentwich was describing ‘a rough-looking lot’ who were ‘already ... painting Jaffa red’ and who (the Bentwicks being ardent and idealistic Zionists) did not ‘fit in with the scheme for a moral Utopia which we were rather aiming at here’. In fact the gendarmes were frequently so ‘bellicose, swashbuckling, argumentative and ... drunk’ that, according to Horne, the city’s shopkeepers took to ‘locking and bolting their shops long before the usual time ... to secure their property before [they] arrived from Sarafand for an evening’s relaxation’.³⁶ McNeill, exasperated by such behaviour (‘why the deuce can’t they behave themselves instead of carrying on like undergraduates at a boat race night?’), attempted to curb it by imposing hefty fines on those involved and, according to John Fails, even barring the gendarmes from Jaffa.³⁷ He had considerable success in this

ineptitude of the officer in charge, Major Carew. Jeans, ‘British Gendarmerie (part 3)’, p. 284; MECA, McNeill diaries, vol. 1, 18 May 1922;

³³ Kyles to McNeill, 2 Feb. 1935, op. cit.; Foley, ‘Remarks’, p. 1.

³⁴ Jeans, ‘British Gendarmerie’ (part 2), p. 257.

³⁵ Duff, *Sword*, p. 111.

³⁶ Glynn, *Tidings*, p. 82; Horne, *Job*, pp 87, 91;

³⁷ ‘Jaffa and a village called Richon [Rishon Le-Zion] have been placed out of bounds to us now, owing to some of the fellows fighting and getting drunk in them’. MECA, McNeill diaries, vol. 1, 19,

regard and by December 1922 Meinertzhagen could tell the Colonial Office that ‘their standard of discipline and efficiency is high’, a view shared by Sir Herbert Samuel (who said that his positive appraisal was ‘certainly given without any prejudice in favour of Black and Tans!’) and General Tudor and by McNeill himself who rated force discipline ‘very satisfactory’ in his report on the British Gendarmerie’s first year of service.³⁸

Yet two years later W. T. Knight was complaining that British Gendarmerie Orders, which provided weekly summaries of disciplinary offences and punishments, ‘generally showed several sheets of offences’ and that the conduct of some gendarmes inside and outside the barracks was bringing ‘discredit on the force as a whole’.³⁹ He blamed indiscipline on the recruitment of ‘many unsuitable and undesirable men’ in 1923, claiming that some had previously been dismissed from Crown forces and others had served terms of imprisonment. There was doubtless an element of truth in Knight’s claims – two of those recruited with him had been dismissed from the R.I.C. - and concerns were also expressed at the Colonial Office about the quality of the 1923 intake.⁴⁰ In October 1924, one official minuted that, whereas the recruitment of the original 1922 draft of gendarmes was undoubtedly up to standard:

As regards the way in which vacancies which have occurred since then have been filled, I am not so sure; and judging from certain of the men whom I have seen on their arrival in this country on leave, I am inclined to think that the selection of recruits has within the last year or so not been very satisfactory.⁴¹

23 May 1922; Fails to Taylor, 24 May 1922 (MS in possession of FR, Belfast).

³⁸ F. J. Howard, Colonial Office minute, 19 Dec. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/33/619); Deedes to Shuckburgh, 18 Jan. 1923 (TNA, CO 733/60/206); Samuel to Devonshire, 8 Mar. 1923 (TNA, CO 733/43/116); Tudor to Deedes, 11 Jan. 1923 (TNA, CO 733/60/207); MECA, McNeill collection, ‘Notes’, p. 4. See also Report on Palestine Administration 1922, p. 38 and Meinertzhagen, ‘Military report’, (TNA, CO 733/61/9), both of which rated discipline as ‘excellent’.

³⁹ Knight, ‘Statement’, pp 1-2.

⁴⁰ These were British Gendarmerie constables William Treacy and William Cane. Knight, ‘Statement’, p. 1; R.I.C. service records, nos. 71518 & 75688.

⁴¹ Colonial Office minute, 10 Oct. 1924 (TNA, CO 733/73/405).

Duff was also disparaging. And while McNeill maintained that applicants for the 1923 draft had been 'carefully scrutinised', he added that 'a considerable number of ex-guardsmen were recruited on the recommendation of the Brigade of Guards Employment Society'. Yet he appeared very happy with the quality of those recruited from this source at the time and, according to Keith-Roach, actually preferred them to 'the original lot'.⁴²

Duff encouraged the view that poor-quality recruitment was also a factor in indiscipline in the 1922 draft by making much of its complement of misfits. He described it as a 'Legion of the Lost' which included what he termed 'several remittance-men who received fairly large sums each quarter-day on the one condition that they should never return to Britain', two excommunicated Catholic priests and other former religious, several struck-off solicitors, surgeons and undischarged bankrupts, an American convicted of murder in Mexico and a Russian prone to drunken near-murderous rages when not addressed as 'Your Highness'. According to Horne, such 'undesirable elements' accounted for up to one-quarter of the 1922 draft and force discipline only improved when McNeill had them discharged in April 1923 as their contracts expired.⁴³

This is all clearly untrue. Duff may have been technically correct about the Mexico murderer and there was indeed a Russian in the force.⁴⁴ But the R.I.C. and military records of the gendarmes do not support his claims regarding the presence of former solicitors, doctors or religious and, while the enlistment of some 'undesirables' is confirmed in other sources, it is clear that, contrary to Horne's claim, they

⁴² Duff, *Sword*, p. 136; McNeill, 'Complaint by ex-Constable Knight', p. 1; MECA, McNeill diaries, vol. 2, 8 June 1923; Keith-Roach, Colonial Office minute, 10 Mar. 1924 (TNA, CO 733/65/112).

⁴³ Duff, *Bailing*, pp 19-20; Horne, *Job*, p. 91.

⁴⁴ Major Caryl ap Rhys Pryce (who was not American, but Welsh) had, as a prime mover in the Magonista rebellion in Baja California in 1911, been indicted by the Mexican government for murder although he claimed never to have personally killed anyone. The Russian was Constable Walter Jarka (see p. 93, n. 41 above). Humphries, *Gringo revolutionary*, pp 193-8

accounted for a small percentage of the force.⁴⁵ Even McNeill, despite his initial insistence that the 1922 draft had been ‘very carefully selected and each case separately gone into’, subsequently admitted that ‘a few bad hats had found their way [in] possibly by means of false documents’ and acknowledged removing some troublesome individuals in spring 1923 by declining to renew their contracts:

I do hope that now the dissatisfied men have departed that the remainder will give no more trouble. Altogether officers, sergeants and constables have resigned and more have been pushed (emphasis McNeill’s).⁴⁶

Although what McNeill described as a ‘crowd of [these] time-expired men’ caused a ‘disgraceful row’ in Tel Aviv/Jaffa while awaiting their departure from Palestine, the fact remains that the majority of the ‘dissatisfied men’ who exited the force at this time were not undesirables but ordinary gendarmes who (as discussed in Chapter I) resigned of their own accord in protest over their conditions of their service.⁴⁷

The fact that British Gendarmerie Orders were destroyed with the force’s administrative records in 1926 precludes a comprehensive analysis of force indiscipline in Palestine. However, copies of those covering a four-week period in the autumn of 1924 which have survived in Colonial Office archives provide some indications as to its character and extent at that time of Knight’s complaint. They do not support claims of an endemic problem, recording an average of just twelve gendarmes punished per week among a force then about 600-strong. Furthermore, as illustrated in Table 1, all offences recorded were almost without exception of a trivial

⁴⁵ In fact, the British Gendarmerie’s officer corps contained a far greater proportion of misfits than its other ranks. For example, Major Carew was, according to John Jeans, ‘to say the least, a little eccentric’, his antics leading his colleagues to christen him ‘Mad Carew’. Captain John Laidman was a thoroughgoing cad of whom McNeill obviously despaired while Captain Esmé Howard was a chronic alcoholic who was twice hospitalised due to ‘excessive and sustained intemperance’. Jeans, ‘British Gendarmerie’ (part 3), p. 284; Horne, *Job*, p. 90; NM, Geneva, Correspondence with author, 7 Dec. 2011; MECA, McNeill diaries, vol. 2, 9 Nov. 1923; McNeill, ‘Esmé Hume Howard, confidential report on discharge’, 28 July 1924 & Storrs to Symes, 9 Dec. 1925 (TNA, CO 733/127/2/24-6).

⁴⁶ MECA, McNeill diaries, vol.1, prologue, p. 3 & vol. 2, 25 Apr. 1923; MECA, McNeill collection, ‘Notes’, p. 4.

⁴⁷ MECA, McNeill diaries, vol. 2, 24, 25 Apr. 1923.

nature, the majority concerning unauthorised absences or infringements of leave. Claims of more serious disciplinary issues are also unsupported by the available

*Table 1: Schedule of disciplinary offences committed, 19 Aug. - 19 Sept. 1924*⁴⁸

Nature of Offence	Total
Absent without leave	21
Overstaying leave	3
Irregular conduct on duty	5
Improperly attired on duty	4
Improper use of weapon	1
Unauthorised use of vehicle	1
Loss of police property	1
Insubordination	2

evidence. Colonial Office files on British Gendarmerie dismissals for the 1922-4 period indicate that the number of discharges for disciplinary offences was relatively small.⁴⁹ Just seven gendarmes (two officers and five other ranks) were sent home during the force's first year in Palestine (i.e., May 1922 to May 1923) which, in addition to the six gendarmes expelled from Fort Tregantle and Constable D'Alroy, worked out at just 2 per cent of the force, while two officers and eleven rankers (or less than 2 per cent of the force) were expelled in the following twelve months. These figures compared very favourably with the number of dismissals among the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries in Ireland which Lowe estimated at 4.7 per cent, a figure rising to almost 7 per cent if one includes those recorded under what he termed 'the ambiguous category discharged'. And in fact almost 8 per cent of the 'sample cluster'

⁴⁸ Data based on British Gendarmerie force orders enclosed with Samuel to Thomas, 26 Sept. 1924 (TNA, CO 733/73/408-43).

⁴⁹ See 'Schedule of members of British Gendarmerie who have been dismissed', op. cit.; 'Members of British Gendarmerie dismissed to 20 May 1924', op. cit.; 'Constable Middlemiss, British Gendarmerie' (TNA, CO 733/23/179-80); 'Constables A. McLeod, T. King and J. J. Gavin: dismissals from British Gendarmerie' (TNA, CO 733/27/539-44); 'Lieut. G. H. Luxton and Major E. E. Barrows; resignation from British Gendarmerie' (TNA, CO 733/28/40-58) 'Constable Goulder: dismissal from the British Gendarmerie' (TNA, CO 733/85/503-8); 'R. C. N. Callender, late of British Gendarmerie' (TNA, CO 733/75/432-7).

of Black and Tans analysed by Leeson was dismissed.⁵⁰ The British Gendarmerie also compared very favourably with the BSPP in this regard. The BSPP had an overall official dismissal rate of 7.3 per cent during its twenty-two year career while a further 3.8 per cent were involuntarily discharged under Section 7 (3) of the Palestine Police Ordinance, a catch-all clause used from 1943 onwards to remove personnel considered 'unsuitable for further police employment'. Although Section 7 (3) discharges were not always effected for disciplinary reasons (for example, the clause was sometimes used to remove policemen who contracted unauthorised marriages with 'Palestinian subjects' or who were deemed temperamentally unsuited or, in some cases, intellectually incapable of police work), they constituted in many cases a dismissal in all but name.⁵¹ The British Gendarmerie also compared very favourably in this respect with the gendarmerie-style M.P.S.F. where the dismissal rate among serving members and former members who transferred to other sections of the BSPP ran at an astonishing 20 per cent. The low rate of dismissals from the gendarmerie is even more striking given the fact that Tudor and McNeill were rather quick to resort to dismissal (or, in the case of officers, forced resignation), Tudor believing that it was in the force's best interests that undesirables 'be got rid of as quickly and with as little publicity as possible', and he and McNeill were actually criticised by the Colonial Office for effecting dismissals without complying with proper procedure.⁵² Although the British Gendarmerie Ordinance gave McNeill what Clauson described as worryingly 'arbitrary powers of dismissal and non-renewal contract', he often failed to apply them properly (Clauson referred to one disciplinary process as 'a

⁵⁰ Lowe, 'Black and Tans', p. 50; Leeson, *Black and Tans*, p. 69.

⁵¹ BSPP personnel had been forbidden to marry Palestinians without the consent of the inspector-general since 1934. Sidney Moody, undated memorandum, enclosed with Hathorn Hall to Parkinson, 15 Mar. 1934 (TNA, CO 733/250/5/73-4).

⁵² Tudor to Samuel, 22 Nov. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/28/45); Thomas to Samuel, 29 Apr. 1924 (TNA, CO 733/65/329-30); Samuel to Thomas, 20 June 1924 (TNA, CO 733/69/593-4).

drumhead court-martial'), resulting in several appeals.⁵³

Furthermore, most of the offences for which gendarmes were dismissed were on the lower end of the seriousness scale compared to those for which members of the Irish police services were discharged, ranging from the relatively commonplace such as insubordination, theft, malingering and neglect of duty to the more bizarre such as 'the wilful removal of clothing without permission' and 'attempting to commit suicide': just eight of those dismissed in the two years in question were convicted of an offence involving assault, usually the striking of a superior officer. Moreover, according to Jeans, some of the gendarmes dismissed in 1922 deliberately set out to be discharged; disillusioned with life in the force and refused leave to resign, they orchestrated their own dismissal by committing petty crime.⁵⁴ Nor is Horne's claim that the mass exodus of members of the 1922 draft in April 1923 led to an improvement in force discipline supported by the evidence. As noted above, there were actually more dismissals from Palestine in the 1923-4 period than there had been in the previous year (i.e., thirteen as opposed to seven). Moreover, nine of those dismissed in the 1923-4 period were members of the new 1923 draft.

The incidents of indiscipline which did occur were less a function of the force's 'Black and Tan' composition than its actual role. Knight argued that they partly derived from the fact that 'the men have no job to do and consequently lose all sense of responsibility' and he did have a point.⁵⁵ As a striking force and riot squad, the gendarmes spent considerable periods, as one Colonial Office official put it, 'marking time between successive emergencies', a situation compounded by the fact

⁵³ Clauson, Colonial Office minutes, 6 Oct. 1922, 1 June 1923 (TNA, CO 733/25/489, CO 733/45/148). For McNeill's capriciousness in this regard see 'Constable J. E. Mummery of British Gendarmerie', 27 Feb. 1923 (TNA, CO 733/42/413-26).

⁵⁴ Jeans, 'British Gendarmerie' (part 3), p. 284. Similar claims were subsequently made with regard to the BSPP. See *Falastin*, 18 Oct. 1930.

⁵⁵ Knight, 'Statement, pp 1-2.

that the British Gendarmerie's four years in Palestine were the quietest of the Mandate era. As another Colonial Office official colourfully put it, McNeill and his men appeared to be 'waiting expectantly for the veil of the Temple to be rent in twain' while, in the meantime, doing 'nothing in particular'.⁵⁶ To be fair to McNeill, he had anticipated that the force would require additional employment in Palestine and attempted to settle the matter with the Colonial Office immediately on docking in Haifa. Informed that any such decisions would have to await the arrival of Tudor he decided to, as far as was practicable, 'act first and ask afterwards' in this regard.⁵⁷ He instituted programmes of patrolling and reconnaissance work, inspection, guard and escort duties (the high commissioner replaced his own Palestine Police security detail with a British Gendarmerie escort and the force also provided escorts for religious processions, tax collectors and convoys of tourists) and even supervising road works and repairs which, for those not assigned specific roles within the force such as drivers, orderlies and clerks, he hoped would fill the bulk of the working day. But despite these efforts to occupy its time, the British Gendarmerie was under-utilised and, just six months after its arrival in Palestine, Shuckburgh was warning Government House in Jerusalem of an expected 'organised attack' on the force in the House of Commons on the grounds that it was 'useless, expensive and inefficient'.⁵⁸ McNeill countered that his men had patrolled 400,000 miles of road and repaired and re-opened to traffic over 85 miles of track during this period (which, in itself, gives an indication as to how much time the force had to 'mark').⁵⁹ Yet one year later Knight was complaining that he had 'failed completely to discover the real function of the

⁵⁶ Colonial Office minute, 10 Oct. 1924 (TNA, CO 733/73/406); Roland Vernon, Colonial Office minute, 9 Aug. 1924 (TNA, CO 733/72/61). Colin Imray described life in a BSPP striking force in the early 1930s in a similar way: 'more often than not there were interminable period of boredom, waiting for something to happen'. Imray, *Policeman in Palestine*, p. 56.

⁵⁷ MECA, McNeill diaries, vol. 1, 14 May 1922.

⁵⁸ Shuckburgh to Deedes, 21 Dec. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/60/214).

⁵⁹ MECA, McNeill collection, 'Notes', p. 3.

force' during his year of service, its chief duties appearing largely to consist of guarding, policing and administering itself.⁶⁰

This under-utilisation gave rise to boredom and restlessness among the men. Moreover, some of McNeill's other efforts to occupy their time (particularly the continuing emphasis on drill and parade which remained pathologically unpopular and often extended past noon) led to what one gendarme described as a 'distinctly Bolshie' attitude in the ranks on account of 'the clumsy and tactless way in which they [were] handled'.⁶¹ Indeed, in July 1923 the *Irish Times* police expert column reported that 'numbers of the men returning from Palestine ... were not over-pleased with their experiences' while W. J. Bigg at the Colonial Office noted six months later that 'gendarmes who come home on the termination of their engagement almost invariably complain of their treatment'.⁶² Alcohol provided a convenient respite from which incidents of indiscipline inevitably followed.

3.3 Brutality

The British Gendarmerie was considered a success by those on the ground in Palestine. As early as October 1922, Tudor reported to Churchill that it was having 'a great influence already in keeping things quiet' and two years after its arrival in Haifa, Meinertzhagen was describing it as 'the backbone of the defence and security of Palestine'. Samuel agreed, telling McNeill that 'he depended on [it] entirely out here

⁶⁰ Knight, 'Statement', p.1.

⁶¹ Complaint of unidentified member of British Gendarmerie, 12 Sept. 1923, enclosed with Boosé to W. J. Bigg, 21 Sept. 1923 (TNA, CO 733/53/224-5).

⁶² Although Bigg believed that there was 'probably very little to these complaints', they were such a serious irritant to McNeill (who dismissed them as 'frivolous') that he successfully petitioned the Colonial Office to revoke the right of British Gendarmerie rankers to lodge complaints there. *Irish Times*, 14 July 1923; Bigg, Colonial Office minute, 2 Jan. 1924 (TNA, CO 733/53/221); MECA, McNeill diaries, vol. 2, 12 May, 20 Aug. 1923. See also Brewer, *R.I.C. oral history*, p. 124.

for political peace'.⁶³ Therefore, the announcement of its disbandment in early 1926 was met with dismay, at least among Britons and Jews. Describing it as 'a disagreeable surprise', the *Palestine Weekly* said the force had become an institution and that the sense of security felt by Palestine's inhabitants during times of trouble 'was associated with the close proximity of a company of British gendarmes to a number of centres in the country'. The semi-official organ of the Anglican Church in the country, *Lines of Communication*, lamented the loss of this 'very efficient body of men' and the decision to disband also 'met with the dissatisfaction of the Hebrew Press'.⁶⁴ Writing in the mid-1930s, Charles Gwynn argued that the British Gendarmerie had 'brought about its own dissolution by the very effectiveness with which it maintained order' and this reflected the prevailing view of the time according to which the force was the victim of its own success.⁶⁵ For example, the *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* maintained that 'the reason for [the gendarmes'] disbandment is that they have done their work so well' and Lord Plumer agreed, remarking to McNeill that it was 'an irony that the British Gendarmerie have done their work so thoroughly and expeditiously that they are no longer required in the country and must go'.⁶⁶

The force's success in maintaining public order has been partly attributed to a robust approach to policing, itself a function of the fact that it was overwhelmingly composed of former Black and Tans and Auxiliaries who, in Matthew Hughes' words,

⁶³ Tudor to Churchill, undated Oct. 1922, 21 Sept 1923 (CHAR 17/25); Meinertzhagen, Colonial Office minute, 10 Mar. 1924 (TNA, CO 733/65/113); MECA, McNeill diaries, vol. 3, 23 June 1924.

⁶⁴ Churchill was also unhappy at the force's disbandment: 'how foolish the Colonial Office have been to deprive themselves of this admirable instrument just as it has been brought to a high standard of efficiency'. *Palestine Weekly*, 2 Feb., 9 Apr. 1926; *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 5 Mar. 1926. Churchill to Marsh, 15 Apr. 1926 (TNA, T 172/1551).

⁶⁵ Gwynn, *Imperial policing*, p. 222.

⁶⁶ 'The development and waning of the police forces in Palestine, 1922-26', unsigned article in *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, xiii, no. 4 (1926), pp 365-7; McNeill to Churchill, 7 Apr. 1926 (TNA, T 172/1551). See also Stuart Kermack, 'Memoirs of work in the judicial service in Palestine, 1920-1930' (MECA, Stuart Kermack collection, GB165-0169), p. 12 and Ben-Tzion Dinur (ed.), *Sefer Toldot HaHaganah*, vol. 2 (Tel Aviv, 1972), p. 204.

‘easily transferred the violence of Ireland to Palestine’.⁶⁷ According to James Barker, the British Gendarmerie was recruited in Ireland specifically for this purpose: Churchill wanted ‘a tough corps of fighters’ to assist the Palestine Police in imposing law and order and the R.I.C. ‘matched this description’. Charles Smith agrees, claiming that ‘almost all of the very first recruits were enrolled because of their experience in fighting guerrilla warfare in Ireland’ as does Hughes, who notes that they ‘came with experience of that brutal [Irish] conflict, imbuing the force with a robust ethos when it came to policing the country’.⁶⁸ This transfer of ‘Irish’-style policing to Palestine led to what Cahill describes as ‘several brash and brutal activities’ between 1922 and 1926.⁶⁹

Cahill supports his claims about the British Gendarmerie’s heavy-handedness with reference to Douglas Duff whom he presents as a thoroughgoing brute who ‘bullied his way about, enforcing immediately and spontaneously his ideas of justice’.⁷⁰ However, the primary examples of Black and Tan-type brutality cited by Cahill took place during Duff’s time as an inspector with the Palestine Police and not while a British gendarme. For instance, the violence which attended the forcible removal of a screen separating male and female Jewish worshippers at the Western Wall in Jerusalem in which Cahill says Duff ‘played a dubious role’ took place in September 1928 while his maltreatment of a group of Bedouin occurred in the aftermath of the Jericho earthquake which devastated Palestine in July 1927.⁷¹ Cahill

⁶⁷ Hughes, ‘British foreign legion’, p. 697.

⁶⁸ James Barker, ‘Policing Palestine’ in *History Today*, 58, no. 6 (2008), pp 52-9, at p. 54; Smith, ‘Communal conflict’, p. 79; Hughes, ‘Banality’, p. 333. See also Charles Townshend, ‘In aid of the civil power: Britain, Ireland and Palestine, 1916-1948’ in Daniel Marston & Carter Malkasian (eds), *Counterinsurgency in modern warfare* (Oxford, 2008), pp 21-38, at p. 31.

⁶⁹ Cahill, ‘Going berserk’, pp 65-6.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p 62.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp 62-3. While there is general agreement in the literature that Duff used what Segev calls ‘excessive force without good judgement’ during the Western Wall incident and Helen Bentwich described him in her diary as ‘the wrongest sort of police officer’ to send in to deal with the situation,

does provide two evidential examples of ‘brash and brutal activities’ by gendarmes, both of which are taken from Duff. The first occurred in Nazareth in July 1922 when, angered at being allocated sleeping quarters in what Duff described as the cramped, sweltering and mosquito-infested attic of the town’s gubernatorial building, the



Figure 8: Gubernatorial building and British Gendarmerie headquarters, Nazareth c. 1922 (H. Morrison collection)

British Gendarmerie company stationed there sequestered the offices of the Arab civil servants in the storeys below, defenestrating a clerk in the process.⁷² The second

the evidence suggests that claims of police brutality were wildly exaggerated by the Zionist authorities. Almost all complaints made by Jewish worshippers present concerned their being pushed or shoved during the melee which they themselves acknowledged having instigated and, according to an official memorandum on the incident, no one was injured in the scuffle. Yet, according to Edward Keith-Roach, one local Jewish newspaper said the incident was ‘a blacker spot in the history of mankind’ than the Spanish Inquisition. The entire incident was in fact precipitated by the refusal of the beadle at the Wall, Rabbi William Gladstone Noah, to honour his pledge to remove the screen the previous evening. Indeed, he had been accused by a Jewish policemen two years earlier of fomenting inter-communal strife by feeding stories of Arab harassment of worshippers at the Wall ‘in order to disturb the peace of the Jewish nation’ and, in the process, present himself as its defender, thereby keeping his position as beadle secure. Segev, *One Palestine*, p. 297; Glynn, *Tidings*, p. 169; reports on Western Wall incident by Duff, Keith-Roach, William Wainwright and Harry Luke, including a schedule of the official complaints received, Sept. 1928 (TNA, CO 733/60/16); Keith-Roach, *Pasha*, p. 120; Kolinsky, *Law*, p. 35; Trevich to Police inspectorate, Jerusalem, undated Nov. 1926 (TNA, CO 733/118/342).

⁷² Duff, *Bailing*, p. 33.

incident took place the following October when a drunken gendarme gloatingly showed Duff ‘an old cigarette-tin containing the brains of a man whose skull he had splintered with his rifle-butt’ during an operation in Nablus the previous night. The British Gendarmerie had been called in to quell a serious public disturbance which followed attempts to conduct a city census, part of a national survey which had been misrepresented by political agitators as a means of registering Arabs in advance of deportation to make way for Jews. According to Duff’s colourful description, the gendarmes ‘waged a terrific fight in the night-filled rabbit-warren of lanes and side streets ... joyously with pick-shaft and rifle-butt, less than 100 men against 4000, dodging tiles and every kind of missile, including a few pistol bullets, until they had cleared the maze of cobbled lanes in the *Suq*’. By the end of the operation, ‘several skulls were broken [and] a few were killed’.⁷³

That Duff’s account of the defenestration at Nazareth (for which he is the only source) may be accurate cannot be discounted and it is reminiscent of another episode of casual brutality by gendarmes that he previously related.⁷⁴ However, the British Gendarmerie operation in Nablus was reported in the press and recorded by McNeill. McNeill’s account, received first-hand from the company commander in Nablus, Major Carew, while broadly similar to Duff’s, described a more modest affray (Carew had ordered his men to ‘unfix bayonets and clear the streets with butt-heads if necessary. In two minutes, literally, the show was over and not a “Nablusi” to be seen except those lying on the floor’), while *Falastin*’s report on the incident made no mention of the gendarmes’ assault on the crowd, merely stating that they surrounded Nablus prison to protect it from attack and ‘patrolled the city all day’, a surprising omission if Duff’s version was accurate given the paper’s anti-British credentials.

⁷³ Ibid., pp 45-6; *Sword*, p. 114.

⁷⁴ Duff, *Bailing*, p. 22.

And while the *Jewish Chronicle* did note ‘several injuries’ there were no reports of any deaths, casting further doubt on Duff’s story.⁷⁵

3.3.1 ‘Breaking heads’

Nevertheless, the British Gendarmerie clearly took a very robust approach during what McNeill took to calling ‘the battle of Nablus’ which secured it a name for brutality. Prior to this incident, its fearsome reputation derived from its origins rather than its actions: police brutality in Ireland had been widely reported in the Palestine press and, as noted in Chapter I, the British authorities in Jerusalem played up the British Gendarmerie’s Irish associations to enhance the force’s deterrent effect. This reputation, combined with what Meinertzhagen called ‘the moral effect’ produced by the British Gendarmerie’s appearance (i.e. the sight of these men of ‘exceptional physique’ patrolling the country on horseback and in armoured cars), had been largely sufficient in itself to prevent breaches of the peace throughout the summer of 1922.⁷⁶ In early July, for example, the force had maintained public order during a two-day strike in Jerusalem by the power of its presence alone which, according to the acting governor, Harry Luke, ‘produced a very good effect ... both on the over-bold and the over-timid’.⁷⁷ The mere presence of the British Gendarmerie had also been sufficient to preserve public order during the official proclamation of the British Mandate in

⁷⁵ *Falastin*, 28 Oct. 1922; MECA, McNeill diaries, vol. 1, 23 Oct. 1922; *Jewish Chronicle*, 3 Nov. 1922. See also *Doar Hayom*, 29 Oct. 1922.

⁷⁶ Meinertzhagen described the British Gendarmerie as ‘a magnificent lot of men’ and McNeill also professed himself ‘tremendously impressed with [their] fine physique and good appearance’. Indeed, according to their R.I.C. records, 84 per cent of the gendarmes recruited from amongst the Black and Tans met the R.I.C.’s then minimum height requirement of five feet eight inches which, based on Leeson’s ‘sample cluster’, just fifty-five per cent of the Black and Tans themselves had reached. Sixty per cent of these gendarmes met the pre-war standard of five feet nine inches which only one-third of Black and Tans had managed to meet. Meinertzhagen, ‘Military report’ (TNA, CO 733/61/38); Meinertzhagen, *Middle East diary*, 11 Apr. 1922, p. 116; MECA, McNeill diaries, vol. 1, 7 Apr. 1922; Leeson, *Black and Tans*, p. 69. See also Fitzpatrick, *Politics*, p. 23.

⁷⁷ Quoted in Hammond, ‘Ideology’, p. 152.

Jaffa two weeks later. Similarly in Jerusalem where, according to Helen Bentwich, the Government was so 'noisy about their force – the new gendarmerie very much in evidence and lots of armoured cars' that 'nobody has dared to express any great opinion about [the Mandate's proclamation] either side'. The same day in Haifa, a detachment of gendarmes had dispersed a seething crowd of protestors using nothing more than an R.I.C.-style drill manoeuvre. A show of strength by the British Gendarmerie had been enough to maintain public order during a large rally by the Muslim-Christian Association in Jaffa in September as well.⁷⁸

The method of crowd control employed in Nablus, which McNeill described as 'breaking heads' with rifle butts and batons, confirmed for Palestine's Arabs that the force's 'Black and Tan' reputation was well-deserved.⁷⁹ Indeed, it was probably intended to do so. The chief secretary to the Palestine Government, Sir Wyndham Deedes, told McNeill that news of the incident 'had had a very good effect all over Palestine' and McNeill himself attributed the fact that there was little public disturbance on the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration two weeks later, and just one other serious disturbance during the force's four years in Palestine, to the strong impression his 'band of toughs' had produced.⁸⁰ This reputation was compounded by the fact that, although the British Gendarmerie evidently retained its ability to maintain or restore public order by its mere presence or minimal active intervention, 'breaking heads' effectively became the force's *modus operandi* when dealing with riotous assemblies. In January 1923, for example, its arrival helped restore order in

⁷⁸ MECA, McNeill collection, 'Notes', p. 3; Glynn, *Tidings*, p. 87; Duff, *Bailing*, 36-8; *Doar Hayom*, 14 July, 18 Sept. 1922.

⁷⁹ In addition to standard-issue police batons, the gendarmes also used what were variously described as pick handles or 'six-foot ash staves' against rioters while Douglas Duff always carried a blackthorn shillelagh he had picked up in Galway which he 'used fairly freely' on such occasions. Jeans, 'British Gendarmerie' (part 4), p. 310; Duff, *Bailing*, pp 59, 130, 153.

⁸⁰ MECA, McNeill diaries, vol. 1, 23 Oct., 2 Nov. 1922; McNeill to Churchill, 7 Apr. 1926 (TNA, T 172/1551). The anniversary had been marked by serious inter-communal rioting the previous year. See *The Times*, 4 Nov. 1921 and Samuel, *Unholy memories*, pp 82-4.

Jaffa following the murder by Jewish extremists of the city's former police chief, Hassan Tawfik el-Said, by stampeding protestors which 'put such heart into the Palestine Police that they used their batons freely and did rather splendidly'.⁸¹ In March, it was called upon by the Palestine Police to disperse an Arab demonstration at the Damascus Gate in Jerusalem's Old City and 'quickly did the trick, breaking a few heads in the process', while in September 1924 it dispersed 'a mob of 30 fanatical dervishes armed with spears' in Hebron by administering them 'a proper hammering'.⁸² What Duff described as the British Gendarmerie's reputation for 'prowess and bloodthirstiness' was further enhanced by its manner of combating brigandage which frequently consisted of shooting on sight and to kill.⁸³

That the Arab population bore the brunt of British Gendarmerie violence has been interpreted as evidence that it was established to protect Jewish lives and promote Zionist interests: a riot squad that did not mix with nor require the support of the majority Arab population was, according to Hammond, 'exactly suited to Zionist needs'.⁸⁴ Indeed Tudor sourly remarked to Norman Bentwich that the gendarmes 'had to leave Ireland because of the principle of Irish self-determination, and were sent to Palestine to resist the Arab attempt at self-determination'.⁸⁵ But in reality the British Gendarmerie was deployed mainly against Arabs because they were responsible for the great majority of serious public order incidents during the 1922-6 period: as Stuart Kermack, an official in the Palestine judiciary put it, 'there [was] no doubt that when riots took place, they were started by the Arabs or ill-disposed leaders among them.

⁸¹ Tawfiq was targeted over his alleged lynching of Jews during the 1921 Jaffa riots although recent research in Israel suggests that he was uninvolved. Tudor to Trenchard, 25 Jan. 1923 (R.A.F. museum, MFC76/1/285); *Doar Hayom*, 18 Jan. 1923; *Haaretz*, 5 June 2009.

⁸² MECA, McNeill collection, 'Notes', p. 3; MECA, McNeill diaries, vol. 1, 14 Mar. 1923, 1 Sept. 1923.

⁸³ See, for example, Duff, *Bailing*, p. 31; *Doar Hayom*, 27 Aug. 1922, 25 July 1923;

⁸⁴ Hammond, 'Ideology', pp 168-9, 210. See also Knight, 'Securing Zion?', p. 524.

⁸⁵ Bentwich, *Mandate memories*, p. 87.

The Jews had no motive at that stage to start trouble'.⁸⁶ Moreover, the British Gendarmerie dealt with those Jewish disturbances that did occur in a similarly robust manner. In July 1923, it broke up a violent dispute between the powerful Zionist organisation of trades union, the Histadrut, and workers affiliated with a new political organisation, Hapoel Hamizrahi, in Tel Aviv, resulting in twenty-three arrests and several injuries.⁸⁷ The Histadrut attacked the municipal authorities for 'calling in the violent police' whom it accused of 'spilling Jewish blood' while the left-wing newspaper, *Hapoel Hatzair*, portrayed the Histadrut as peaceful protestors brutalised by 'the Irishmen'.⁸⁸ The British Gendarmerie also forcefully restored order between two groups of Jews fighting over the issue of Hebrew-speaking schools in August 1924 while the Histadrut complained that the British Gendarmerie used unnecessary and excessive violence to break up a strike-related disturbance involving its members in Haifa one year later.⁸⁹ Indeed, McNeill could boast to Churchill in April 1926 of having given 'both Arabs and Jews ... a taste of our methods' and having 'early established a name for impartiality'.⁹⁰

3.3.2 'At the cost of a few bruises'

Douglas Duff believed that the British Gendarmerie's violence towards Palestine's 'native' populations derived mainly from racism. 'Most of us', he wrote, 'were so infected by the sense of our own superiority over "lesser breeds" that we scarcely

⁸⁶ Kermack, 'Memoirs', p. 12.

⁸⁷ The Histadrut had objected to the use of Hapoel Hamizrahi workers at a building site on Allenby Street and sent 200 men to disrupt the project.

⁸⁸ *Doar Hayom*, 17, 19, 26 July 1923; *Hapoel Hatzair*, 20 July 1923. See also *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 16, 20 July 1923; *The Times*, 19 July 1923.

⁸⁹ *Doar Hayom*, 8 Aug. 1924; 23, 25 Aug. 1925. According to Jeans, the British Gendarmerie also had, on occasion, to quell violent disturbances between the various Christian denominations in the Churches of the Holy Sepulchre and the Nativity. Jeans, 'British Gendarmerie' (part 4), p. 311.

⁹⁰ McNeill to Churchill, 7 Apr. 1926 (TNA, T 172/1551).

regarded these people as human ... To us all non-Europeans were “wogs” whether Muslims, Christians or Jews’.⁹¹ Certainly, the rough treatment of Palestine’s ‘native’ populations was sometimes rationalised with recourse to racist views. For example, in June 1936, newly-recruited BSPP constable John Briance remarked to his parents that ‘there is apparently only one method of handling the Arabs, with the exception of the Bedouin, that is by ruthless white domination’ while in his semi-fictionalised travelogue, *Palestine Unveiled*, Duff quoted a British police officer as stating that ‘Arabs only understand brute force ... The only thing is to scare them, to frighten the living daylights out of them’. Roger Courtney believed this was true of all sections of Palestine’s ‘native’ population: ‘the Asiatic, whether Christian, Jew or Muslim, obeys only the strongest force’.⁹²

Racism doubtless gave rise to a more robust approach than might otherwise have been taken by the British Gendarmerie but its importance should not be overstated: British attitudes towards the Arabs in particular were more complex than these quotations (all of which date from the Arab Revolt) would suggest.⁹³ In any case, the violence of the ‘breaking heads’ approach was essentially a function of the challenges the British Gendarmerie confronted. The force was only deployed when civil disturbances had moved beyond the control of the police and a strong-armed response was required. For instance, the protest against the census in Nablus had quickly escalated into a riot during which three enumerators were abducted and nine arrested ringleaders released from police custody by the crowd. By the time the gendarmes were called in the point for a preventative or more passive approach had long passed. According to Tudor, the violence that followed the murder of Tawfiq El-

⁹¹ Duff, *Bailing*, pp 36, 46, 176.

⁹² Briance quoted in Hughes, ‘Banality’, p. 352; *Palestine unveiled*, pp 60-2; Courtney, *Palestine policeman*, p. 176.

⁹³ This issue is discussed in Chapter V below.

Said ‘might well have been worse’ than the 1921 riots had the British Gendarmerie not stepped in and ‘nipped it in the bud.’ And although the demonstration at Jerusalem’s Damascus Gate was initially composed of what McNeill called a ‘harmless crowd ... [of] about 150 schoolboys ... which half a dozen London policemen could have handled’, the mismanagement of the situation by the Palestine Police led to a dangerous escalation which it took ‘breaking heads’ to defuse.⁹⁴ Meanwhile, the gendarmerie’s violent dispersal of the Histadrut in Tel Aviv in July 1923 was deemed ‘necessary’ by *Doar Hayom* in light of the ferocity of the attack on the Hapoel Hamizrahi workers and it condemned the trade union’s ‘violence and lies’.⁹⁵

Furthermore, the violence of the British Gendarmerie’s approach to riot-control was limited compared to the conventions of the time, particularly the army’s frequent use of live fire to quell civil unrest across the region, even in Amritsar’s aftermath. In fact, Samuel lauded the gendarmes’ ability to impose public order without shooting, telling the colonial secretary that they could ‘dispose of an unruly crowd at the cost of a few bruises when a company of [troops] would probably find themselves obliged to fire’ and he petitioned for an increase in the force’s establishment on this basis alone.⁹⁶ McNeill had noted approvingly that ‘no firing was resorted to’ at Nablus (something also remarked on in *Falastin*) while Tudor made a similar point after the January 1923 rioting in Jaffa, telling Trenchard that ‘there were no deaths and no bad blood’ and no requirement for troops as a result of the British Gendarmerie’s intervention.⁹⁷ This remained the case even in situations where

⁹⁴ Tudor to Trenchard, 25 Jan. 1923 (R.A.F. museum, MFC71/1/285); MECA, McNeill diaries, vol. 1, 14 Mar. 1923.

⁹⁵ *Doar Hayom*, 20, 26 July 1923.

⁹⁶ Samuel to Devonshire, 23 Feb. 1923 (TNA, CO 733/62/46-7). See also remarks of Meinertzhagen cited in Samuel to Devonshire, 7 Mar. 1923 (TNA, CO 733/43/116).

⁹⁷ MECA, McNeill collection, ‘Notes’, p. 3; *Falastin*, 28 Oct. 1922; Tudor to Trenchard, 25 Jan. 1923

gendarmes themselves came under physical attack.⁹⁸

The British Gendarmerie's recourse to lethal force against brigands should also be judged against the standards of the time. Ruthless professional highwaymen had long presented problems for Palestine. However, in August 1922 Government House noted a 'most disquieting ... resuscitation of Political Brigandage' and, by the summer of 1923, the *Palestine Weekly* was describing an 'orgy of crimes, unchastened brigandage, murder and highway robbery ... which will alarm the most phlegmatic'.⁹⁹ Palestine Police chief, Arthur Mavrogordato, attributed this state of affairs to the refusal (which he supported) of the British security forces to countenance a 'Turkish' approach to tackling ordinary and organised crime, which routinely involved the infliction of barbaric corporal punishments on individuals and the imposition of collective punishments on entire districts or tribes.¹⁰⁰ There could be no doubt, he argued, 'that our failure to apply these methods, which the criminal classes are used to, is interpreted as a sign of weakness'. In particular, the failure to apply the type of stringent punitive measures that had followed attacks on the police in Turkish times had seriously undermined the deterrent capabilities of Palestine's civil security forces, resulting in a spate of attacks on police and gendarmerie patrols by armed gangs which culminated in the death of four gendarmes in June 1923.¹⁰¹

The British Gendarmerie's approach was also considerably less severe than

(R.A.F. museum, MFC71/1/285).

⁹⁸ For example, three gendarmes were injured and one officer kicked in the stomach during the September 1924 disturbance in Hebron. The entire 30-strong mob was arrested. MECA, McNeill diaries, 1 Sept. 1924.

⁹⁹ 'Report of Palestine administration', August 1922, p. 9 (copy in TNA, CO 733/25); *Palestine Weekly*, 29 June 1923.

¹⁰⁰ 'Any bother anywhere and they would ride in and string up a random number of locals to their own olive trees. If they could identify the miscreants so much the better, if not anybody would do'. Fergusson, *Trumpet*, p. 77.

¹⁰¹ Tudor agreed, bemoaning the fact that outlaws were aware that 'when a policeman is shot, no specially stern measures are taken under a British administration'. Mavrogordato, 'Report of the Palestine police and prisons', 23 July 1923, p. 9 (copy in TNA, CO 733/49/124-34); Tudor, 'Report on police and gendarmerie', 15 Aug. 1923, p. 1 (copy in TNA, CO 733/49/100-107).

that adopted by the police forces of British Transjordan which, like those of Egypt and French Syria, were, according to Mavrogordato, 'highly oriental in their methods'. Palestine had become in consequence a 'happy hunting ground' for Jordanian and Syrian armed gangs which felt they had little to fear from Palestine's police and gendarmeries.¹⁰² Indeed, members of a Druze gang that killed three gendarmes in June 1923 and were subsequently apprehended by the French Syrian police told their captors that they had begun operating in Palestine 'owing to the pursuit in Syria having become too hot for them'. The fact that their treatment by the Syrian police was far harsher than that which they would have received at the hands of the British Gendarmerie was noted by Palestine Police commandant, W. F. Sinclair and by John Jeans: 'the French dealt with them and I believe most of them were shot. Perhaps this was far better than handing them over to us, as there is no doubt that proof, as required by British law, would have been difficult to get'.¹⁰³

That the methods employed by the British Gendarmerie were considered appropriate to the challenges it confronted was underscored by reaction to the 1929 anti-Jewish riots. McNeill remarked to Churchill shortly after the gendarmerie's disbandment that he hoped the Government would 'not have a rude awakening. The country is quiet at the moment [but] so was Ireland before the worst bust-up'.¹⁰⁴ And indeed, the Shaw Commission of inquiry into the riots lamented the decision to disband the force which it felt could probably have prevented the carnage, a view

¹⁰² Mavrogordato, 'Report', p 8. See also 'Peel Commission report', p. 186.

¹⁰³ Jeans, 'British Gendarmerie' (part 6), p. 27.; Sinclair to Mavrogordato, 20 June 1923 (TNA, CO 733/46/314-5). See also remarks by Mavrogordato on the severity of the Syrian police published in the *New York Times*, 25 Apr. 1926. The perceived leniency of the British security forces in Palestine remained an enticement to bandits after the gendarmerie's disbandment. According to Imray, the notorious brigand, Abu Jildeh, who terrorised Palestine in the early 1930s, moved his operations to Palestine from Syria when 'life had been made too dangerous for him' there after his father and brother were killed by the French police. 'He hoped no doubt that the British would be less aggressive than the French towards him and his kind'. Imray, *Policeman in Palestine*, p. 70.

¹⁰⁴ McNeill to Churchill, 7 Apr. 1926 (TNA, T 172/1551).

shared by Harry Luke, the acting high commissioner at the time.¹⁰⁵ McNeill's wife Lilian agreed, remarking that the riots had served the government 'well right for not keeping on ... the good old B.G.'¹⁰⁶

The British Gendarmerie's serving of summary justice on brigands was also commended rather than condemned. For example, after the killing of the notorious bandit Abdul Kader Darwish by a 30-strong detachment of gendarmes near Ludd in July 1923, the governor of Ramleh, W. F. Miller, expressed the thanks of the Palestine Government for 'the very efficient and proper way in which they did their work' and the *Palestine Weekly* enthusiastically editorialised its support:

May the British Gendarmerie continue their successful efforts and wipe out the present plague of lawlessness and remove, once and for all, any grounds for public complaint. The coming of the Black and Tans roused the utmost confidence in the country that now, at last, we were to be freed from the highway pests which had so long infested the country. We hope this confidence will finally be justified'.¹⁰⁷

Statistics regarding the prevalence of 'heinous' crime in Palestine between 1922 and 1925 suggests that the confidence of the newspaper was well-placed. As Table 2 illustrates, the number of highway robberies fell dramatically during this period while,

¹⁰⁵ 'Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbance of August 1929, Cmd. 3530, H.M.S.O., Mar. 1930 [hereafter Shaw Commission report], p. 145; Luke, *Cities vol. 3*, pp 16, 21. See also report of the British Government's Committee of Imperial Defence cited in Martin Thomas, *Empires of intelligence: security services and colonial disorder after 1914* (London, 2008), p. 237 and Duff, *Bailing*, p. 202.

¹⁰⁶ Lilian McNeill to Angus McNeill, 25 Aug. 1929 (MECA, McNeill collection, File C, no. 1).

¹⁰⁷ Darwish was responsible for a number of attacks on the British Gendarmerie, including the murder of its paymaster, Captain Swann, in June 1923. Douglas Duff maintained that he played a central role in Darwish's killing, claiming that he had, with Sgt. James Evans, jumped into a pit where Darwish had taken refuge and shot him dead. However, Jeans gives entire credit for the operation to Evans and does not mention Duff at all. Duff habitually placed himself at the centre of events at which his mere presence is sometimes doubtful. For instance, he gave a colourful description of his role in the Mounterowen ambush near Leenane on 23 April 1921 but, according to his R.I.C. record, he was not transferred to Galway until 7 June. Duff also claimed to have led an eighteen-day campaign to neutralise cattle smuggling around the Dead Sea in 1927. However, according to Gerald Foley, not only did Duff not lead what was in fact a four-day expedition, but was only included in the party because he was an ex-sailor and had visited the Dead Sea previously. Miller to McNeill, 24 June 1923 (TNA, CO 733/47/27-8); *Palestine Weekly*, 6 July 1923; 'Report on Palestine administration, January 1923', p. 15 (copy in TNA, CO 733/42/15-16); Duff, *Sword*, pp 72-5, 149-51, 215-19 & *Rough*, pp 81-5; Jeans, 'British Gendarmerie' (part 5), p. 340; Foley, 'Remarks', p. 2.

as a percentage of the total number of heinous crimes committed, they fell from 31 per

*Table 2: Annual no. of highway robberies, 1922-25*¹⁰⁸

Year	Total
1922	180
1923	177
1924	93
1925	71

cent to 11 per cent causing Samuel to remark that ‘the spirit of lawlessness has ceased ... all the brigands have been hunted down and either, shot, executed or imprisoned’.¹⁰⁹ Although much of the credit for this reduction was due to the Palestine Gendarmerie which bore primary responsibility for tackling brigandage, the monthly ‘Reports on Palestine administration’ for 1922-5 confirm that the contribution of the British Gendarmerie was substantial and significant.¹¹⁰

3.4 ‘Ireland in Palestine’

Although, for Cahill, there was a direct causal connection between what he considers the brutality of the British Gendarmerie and the force’s R.I.C. roots, its policing methods cannot be equated with those that earned the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries international notoriety. Certainly, the use of lethal force against Arab brigands echoed the strategy adopted against I.R.A. guerrillas during 1919-21. But there was no parallel in Palestine at this time with the semi-sanctioned policy of reprisals against Republicans and their communities for attacks on the R.I.C. Retaliation for attacks on the British Gendarmerie targeted the perpetrators alone: even in cases where gendarmes were killed, the force did not wreak revenge on the wider Arab community.

¹⁰⁸ Data extracted from the annual ‘Reports on Palestine Administration’ for the years 1922-5.

¹⁰⁹ ‘Report of the High Commissioner, 1920-5’, op. cit., p. 4.

¹¹⁰ See also Duff, *Sword*, pp 112-13 and Dinur, *Sefer*, p. 204.

In fact the extreme and often indiscriminate violence towards people and property which came to define the Irish reprisals' policy was reminiscent of the 'Turkish methods' the British Gendarmerie deliberately eschewed.

That a force freshly drawn from the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries did not behave with similar licence lends support to Leeson's thesis that historians have tended to overvalue character-based or dispositional explanations at the expense of circumstance-based or situational assessments when analysing the actions of the Irish police. In his view, the savagery that they sometimes displayed in Ireland derived, not from their alleged low moral character or brutalisation during the Great War, but from the situation into which they were thrust – a vicious guerrilla insurgency against which they formed a wholly inadequate front line:

Terrorised by the guerrillas, and shunned by the people: enraged by the deaths of their comrades, and inflamed by drink; incited by their officers, and encouraged by faint official censure – the police took to reprisals as a form of rough justice.

'Even ordinary men', Leeson believes, 'would have committed atrocities under circumstances like these'.¹¹¹

But these men operated in a very different environment during their time with the British Gendarmerie. Despite the persistence of the deep-rooted Arab-Jewish tensions that had given rise to the bloody clashes of 1920 and 1921, Palestine was largely peaceable when they arrived in April 1922 and remained so during their four years of service. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, they were not a primary target for violence during this time; what outbreaks did occur in the 1922-6 period were inter or intra-communal and not directed against the British administration or its security forces. Therefore the stresses and strains under which they had laboured during the Irish revolution were entirely absent in Palestine and indeed Tudor himself

¹¹¹ Leeson, *Black and Tans*, pp 191, 224. See also Dolan, 'British culture', pp 202, 204-7.

described the country as ‘a rest cure after Ireland’.¹¹² That the British Gendarmerie would most likely have behaved in a very different manner had it found itself the focus of an I.R.A.-type insurgency was indicated by McNeill’s proposals for tackling the Arab Revolt of the 1930s: ‘I should try to spread terror in the land ... you would only have to be really brutal and bloodthirsty for about a month and [the Arabs] would be eating out of your hand’.¹¹³

3.4.1 ‘A pervasive and pernicious influence’?

The claim that the British Gendarmerie ‘went berserk’ in Palestine is, in the final analysis, based not on an assessment of its actual conduct, but on assumptions as to how former Black and Tans would have behaved. In fact so strong are these assumptions that police brutality in Palestine after 1926 has been widely interpreted as what Dolan has termed the Black and Tans’ ‘immediate legacy’.¹¹⁴ Based on the belief that over 200 gendarmes with R.I.C. backgrounds transferred to the BSPP in 1926, it is argued that the brutality which at times characterised its response to the Arab and Jewish revolts was a function of the fact that it was, in Townshend’s words, ‘directly descended from the Black and Tans’. As a consequence, ‘the effect of the Black and Tan ethos on the infant police system in Palestine’ was, he argues, ‘predictably considerable’.¹¹⁵ Dolan agrees, quoting a British army officer stationed in Palestine in the mid-1930s to the effect that some policemen with R.I.C. pedigrees ‘admitted that Ireland had changed them, that when it came to their time in Palestine

¹¹² Tudor to Churchill, 1 Oct. 1922 (copy in R.A.F. museum, MFC76/1/285).

¹¹³ McNeill to Churchill, 20 Dec. 1937 (CHAR 2/348).

¹¹⁴ Dolan, ‘British culture’, p. 215.

¹¹⁵ Townshend, ‘Defence’, p. 931 and *Britain’s civil wars*, p. 92. See also Krozier, ‘Dowbiggan to Tegart’, p. 130; Cahill, ‘Going berserk’, pp 65-6; idem, ‘Image’, p. 46 and Kardahji, ‘Measure’, p. 45.

they just “turned a blind eye”, shot first and did not care to ask questions later’.¹¹⁶

Certainly, police counterinsurgency during the Arab Revolt of 1936-9 quickly evoked memories of revolutionary Ireland. Just two months after its outbreak, the Anglican archdeacon for Palestine, Transjordan and Syria, Rev. Weston Henry Stewart, declared himself ‘seriously troubled at the “Black and Tan” methods of the police’ which, he subsequently told the British prime minister, Stanley Baldwin, were the cause of the continuing insurgency.¹¹⁷ By September 1938, Palestine’s high commissioner, Sir Harold MacMichael, was noting what he described as ‘occasional ... black and tan tendencies’ among the police while, one month later, the military governor of Jerusalem, Major-General Richard Nugent O’Connor, also referred to their ‘black and tan methods’ as did the colonial secretary, Malcolm MacDonald.¹¹⁸

Recently-recruited BSPP constable Sydney Burr described in his letters the methods and tendencies in question, casually recounting incidents of horrific brutality and cold-blooded murder as well as the wanton destruction of property. In December 1937, he told his parents that ‘any Johnny Arab who is caught by us now in suspicious circumstances is shot out of hand’ or while ‘trying to escape’.¹¹⁹ Ten days later he wrote of how, in response to the attempted bombing of a café frequented by BSPP personnel, his unit had ‘descended into the sook [sic] and thrashed every Arab we saw, smashed all the shops and cafés and created havoc and bloodshed’. Following another attack on the police, his unit received orders to enter a village and:

decimate the whole place which we did, all animals and grain and food

¹¹⁶ The source for this statement is an unpublished highly anecdotal memoir by the officer in question, Brigadier J. V. Faviell. Dolan, ‘British culture’, p. 215.

¹¹⁷ Stewart to Matthews, 17 June 1936 & Stewart to Baldwin, 16 July 1936 (MECA, Jerusalem and East Mission papers, GB165-016 [hereafter JEMP], Box 61, File 1).

¹¹⁸ MacMichael to MacDonald, 5 Sept. 1938, cited in Smith, ‘Communal conflict’, p. 71; O’Connor to Jean O’Connor, 2 Nov. 1938, cited in Hughes, ‘Law and order’, p. 12.; MacDonald to MacMichael, Sept. 1938 (TNA, CO 733/371/3).

¹¹⁹ Burr to parents, 19 Dec. 1937 (Imperial War Museum, London, Sydney Burr collection, 88/8/1 [hereafter Burr collection]).

were destroyed and the sheikh and all his hangers on beaten with rifle butts. There will be quite a number of funerals their [sic] I should imagine'.¹²⁰

Other British policemen told similar tales, including of interrogation under torture.¹²¹

What Hughes described as this 'systematic, systemic, officially-sanctioned policy of destruction, punishment, reprisal and brutality' by the police (and, indeed, the British military) essentially created what Segev terms an 'Ireland in Palestine'.¹²² This parallel was in fact drawn at the time: writing in *The Spectator* in October 1938, H. G.

Wood described the situation in Palestine as bearing:

a sinister resemblance to Ireland in 1920 and 1921. The Arab extremists in open rebellion are adopting the procedure of Sinn Fein and the methods of Irish gunmen, [while] the authorities in the struggle to repress disorder are indulging in reprisals reminiscent of the black-and-tans'.¹²³

The *Irish Independent* leader writer agreed:

For months past, as we read of ambushes, reprisals, curfews and the shooting of prisoners "while trying to escape", only one conclusion fastened itself upon the minds of the Irish people – that what looks very like the Black-and-Tan regime of 1920-21 has been revived in Palestine.¹²⁴

The response of the BSPP to the Jewish Revolt was, generally-speaking, far more

¹²⁰ Burr to parents, 29 Dec. 1937; Burr to parents, undated, c. Dec. 1937; Burr to Alex, non-dated, c. Dec. 1937. In spring 1938, Alan Saunders was compelled to issue a circular forbidding what he described as the 'wilful and wanton destruction of property and of foodstuffs'. Saunders, Circular to all districts and divisions, 14 March 1938 (MECA, JEMP, Box 65, File 5).

¹²¹ See, for example, the letters of Constable John Briance quoted by Hughes in 'Banality', pp 327, 347 and Constable Reubin Kitson, Interview with the Imperial War Museum, 26 Apr. 1989 (IWM 10688). There are also allusions to or reports of BSPP brutality during the Arab Revolt in the memoirs of former force members such as Courtney, *Palestine policeman*, pp 176, 238; Martin, *Palestine betrayed*, pp 90-1 and Binsley, *Palestine Police*, pp 104-6, 119-20. For allusions to and reports of police torture see Stewart to Baldwin, 2 June 1936; Irving to Weston, 29 Dec. 1937 & 'Allegations of ill-treatment of Arabs by British Crown forces in Palestine', 19 June 1939 (MECA, JEMP, Box 65, File 5); Cleaver to aunt, 10 Feb 1937 (MECA, Percy Cleaver papers, GB165-0358) and Courtney, *Palestine policeman*, pp 214-5.

¹²² Hughes, 'Banality', p. 353; Segev, *One Palestine*, p. 415. See also el-Nimr, 'Arab Revolt', pp 204-7.

¹²³ *Spectator*, 14 Oct. 1938.

¹²⁴ *Irish Independent*, 10 Jan. 1939. See also *Aberdeen Journal*, 26 July 1938.

restrained. Dictated by political considerations, this relative restraint was facilitated by the authorisation of large-scale counter-terrorist operations such as ‘Agatha’, ‘Elephant’ and ‘Shark’ which, by acting as official reprisals, maintained force morale by making policemen less likely to take matters into their own hands and creating what the British secretary of state for war, John Lawson, described as ‘a Black and Tan situation’ in Palestine.¹²⁵ However, the incidence of excess on the part of the police was still sufficient to re-evoked memories of Ireland, particularly in the postwar period when they were routinely compared to the Black and Tans.¹²⁶ In Britain for example, the National Union of Tailor and Garment Workers in London passed a resolution in July 1946 expressing its ‘particular abhorrence at the violent attacks on Jews in the worst Black and Tan traditions’ while in August the colonial secretary, George Hall, felt himself obliged to defend the Palestine Police against Black and Tan comparisons in parliament, insisting that there was ‘no danger at all of this police force ... becoming anything like the Black and Tans’.¹²⁷ Meanwhile in the United States, the Political Action Committee for Palestine published a full-page advertisement in the *New York Times* accusing the British Government of ‘mercilessly subject[ing] the Jews of Palestine to barbaric treatment by far exceeding the “Black and Tan” era of Ireland’; in February 1947, William Ziff told the *New York Journal-American* that ‘the Jews [were] going through their Black and Tan period’, while in April the chairman of the American Zionist Emergency Council, Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, charged Britain with ‘reviving the Black-and-Tan days of Ireland in the Holy

¹²⁵ Quoted in David French, *The British way in counter-insurgency, 1945-1967* (Oxford, 2011), p. 68.

¹²⁶ For incidents of ‘unofficial’ reprisals by the BSPP during the Jewish Revolt, see *Palestine Post*, 19 Nov. 1946; 3, 5, 7, Jan., 9 Apr. 1947; Bethell, *Palestine triangle*, p. 339; Gelber, *Balm*, pp 221, 250-1; Zadka, *Blood*, p. 80.

¹²⁷ Cahill, ‘Image’, pp 48-9; Hansard, House of Commons’ debates, 31 July 1946, vol. 426, cc934-5, c1017 & 1 Aug. 1946, c1315.

Land'.¹²⁸ Suspicions that the spectre of Ireland was by then stalking Palestine were confirmed for the BSPP's critics by the revelations of the Farran affair.¹²⁹

Yet the contention that police brutality during the Arab and Jewish Revolts was a legacy of the R.I.C., either directly through the formulation of counterinsurgency policy by Palestine police officers with R.I.C. pedigrees, or indirectly through the importation into the Palestine Police of a Black and Tan ethos from Ireland via the British Gendarmerie, is highly questionable. The first point to note in this context is that, as discussed in Chapter I, the number of ex-R.I.C. who transferred from the British Gendarmerie to the Palestine Police in 1926 has been greatly over-estimated. Fewer than 100 British Gendarmerie officers and men transferred to the Palestine Police (both the BSPP and the ordinary establishment), of whom eighty-two were ex-R.I.C./ADRIC, a fraction of the figure hitherto believed. And while former members of the Irish police services did account for more than one-third of the BSPP during the latter half of the 1920s, a decrease in their actual numbers due to natural wastage, coupled with dramatic increases in the BSPP's establishment over the course of the 1930s meant that, as a percentage of the overall force, they precipitously declined. The precise rate of this decline is difficult to track, although it is known that seventeen resigned from the BSPP within weeks of its formation.¹³⁰ An analysis of surviving nominal rolls, Government of Palestine civil service lists, Palestine general service medal rolls and other disparate sources

¹²⁸ *New York Times*, 10 July 1946, 23 Apr. 1947; *New York Journal-American*, 28 Feb. 1947. See also *Irish Democrat*, Aug. 1947.

¹²⁹ See, for example, *Irish Press*, 23 June 1947. For details of the Farran affair see pp 24-6 above.

¹³⁰ Horne, *Job*, 102. According to Horne, most were dissatisfied with the rates of pay which were lower than those they had enjoyed in the British Gendarmerie but others were unhappy with the general terms and conditions which made them feel 'themselves to be neither fish nor fowl'. One such recruit was John Keown, a former British Gendarmerie constable from Fermanagh, who transferred to the BSPP in April 1926. He subsequently refused to sign the contract 'owing to ... conditions of everything in general and the conditions in which the Force is being organised'. Keown to Munro, undated, c. May 1926 (TNA, CO 733/114/510).

indicates that only forty-three ex-R.I.C. and Auxiliaries were still serving in the BSPP at the time of the Arab Revolt when force strength reached 2,800 and that just twenty-five remained in the postwar period when it averaged around 3,500-strong.¹³¹

According to Bernard Fergusson, the presence of what he described as ‘a handful’ of former Black and Tans in the BSPP in the mid-1940s was ‘a fact made much of by the Force’s political enemies in England’ and writing in 1949, Arthur Koestler partly attributed the BSPP’s status as (in his opinion) ‘one of the most disreputable organisations in the British Commonwealth’ to the fact that there were ‘Black and Tan veterans in leading positions’.¹³² This view is still current today. For example, Kardahji describes the influence of former Black and Tans on the force as ‘pervasive and pernicious’ while Smith goes so far as to claim that the manner in which he believes R.I.C. veterans were able to shape the outlook and ethos of the Palestine Police (he points, in this context to the fact that by 1943, ‘ex-“Black and Tan” men held five of the eight positions of district commander [i.e. district superintendent] in the force’) led directly to the Farran affair which he describes as ‘a logical extension of what had been created in the earliest days of the Mandate’ through the introduction of Black and Tans. Cahill agrees.¹³³ Some ex-R.I.C. did go on to hold senior positions in the Palestine Police during the insurgencies of the 1930s and 1940s. Yet there is little evidence that they shaped police counterinsurgency. In fact all of the drastic developments introduced between 1936 and 1948 were instituted

¹³¹ The British Treasury figure of twenty-five ex-R.I.C. still serving in the BSPP in 1939 cited by Sinclair is correct in so far as it refers to former members of the regular R.I.C. alone. However, eighteen ex-ADRIC were also still serving in the BSPP at this time. Jones to Salter, 30 Mar. 1939 (TNA, T 164/180/9); Sinclair, *End*, p. 22.

¹³² Fergusson, *Trumpet*, p. 33; Arthur Koestler, *Promise and fulfilment: Palestine 1917-1949*, 2nd edition (London, 1983), p. 15.

¹³³ Kardahji, ‘Measure’, p. 45; Smith, ‘Communal conflict’, p. 79; Cahill, ‘Going berserk’, pp 65-6 & ‘Image’, p. 46. The five superintendents in question were Raymond Cafferata, James Munro, Alfred Barker, James Kyles and Eric James. Another, ex-ADRIC ‘B Company’ cadet Frank Montgomery Scott, was superintendent of prisons at this time, a position to which he was appointed in October 1934.

by Palestine police officers with non-‘R.I.C.’ pedigrees or external agents.

For example, the foundations for the brutal police response to the Arab Revolt were laid by Roy Spicer who, just two months into the uprising, told Michael Fitzgerald, then deputy superintendent in Nablus, that while ‘he he knew it was un-British to use terrorist methods ... the situation would never be got in hand otherwise. When one party used terror the other party had to retaliate with the same methods’.¹³⁴ In fact Spicer was quickly ‘retired’ from Palestine over his sanctioning of such a hard-line approach.¹³⁵ The most notorious innovation of this period, the Arab Investigation Centres, in which suspected rebels were interrogated under a variety of Turkish-style tortures were established by Sir Charles Tegart:¹³⁶ although Sinclair presents him as an example of ‘officers with an R.I.C. or R.U.C. background ... [chosen] as problem-solvers’ during colonial policing crises, Tegart’s association with the Irish police consisted of five (abortive) months working in Irish intelligence in 1920 and his expertise in counterinsurgency was entirely gained in the Indian Colonial Police where he had worked from 1901 until 1931.¹³⁷ The infamous M.P.S.F., which has been compared to the ADRIC, was created by Alan Saunders, a career colonial policeman with no experience of Ireland, while its organisation and ethos was formed by its first officer commanding, Captain Claude Wilkinson, one of eight army officers seconded to the Palestine Police in 1938 to assist in quashing the Arab Revolt.¹³⁸

¹³⁴ Quoted in Bowden, *Breakdown*, p. 230.

¹³⁵ Spicer remained bitter about his treatment, complaining five years later that the Colonial Office was staffed by ‘a dreadful set of unprincipled liars who will sacrifice any of their servants in order to cover themselves on being challenged’ in the House of Commons. Spicer to Faraday, 16 June 1941 (MECA, John Faraday collection, GB165-0101 [hereafter Faraday collection], Box 2, File 2)

¹³⁶ These centres so appalled Edward Keith-Roach, then governor of Jerusalem, that he warned the high commissioner that he would not tolerate the presence of one on his patch. Keith-Roach, *Pasha*, p. 191.

¹³⁷ Sinclair, ‘Irish policeman’, p. 180. For Tegart’s work with Irish intelligence, see Paul McMahon, *British spies and Irish rebels: British intelligence and Ireland, 1916-1945* (Woodbridge, 2008), pp 1-2, 38-9 and Hittle, *Michael Collins*, pp 142-3, 254-9.

¹³⁸ Wilkinson was replaced in July 1941 by William Denton who became the only M.P.S.F. officer with an R.I.C. background. R.I.C. service record no. 70297. See also Denton’s application form for a BSPP inspectorship, 30 June 1930 (TNA, CO 733/180/2).

Counterinsurgency during the Jewish Revolt was also driven by non-‘Irish’ officers or outsiders. The most significant innovation of this period, the Police Mobile Force (P.M.F.), was ‘the brainchild from conception to fulfilment’ of the then inspector-general of the Palestine Police, John Rymer-Jones, and was commanded by Col. Robin Stable who was seconded from the army for this purpose.¹³⁹ Cahill notes that the detailed scheme for the P.M.F.’s organisation, training and equipment was devised by Michael McConnell. But he did so at the request of Rymer-Jones who ‘laid down the broad details of what was required to him’: indeed, the force was nicknamed ‘Rymer’s Babes’.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, its original complement of officers and men was drawn, not from the ranks of the regular police, but from the British army (its first draft consisted of 800 soldiers who had seen active service during the war) and, although under the nominal control of the Palestine Police, it operated quasi-autonomously.

Similarly with the ‘Q squads’, the most controversial counter-terrorist initiative of all. They were established at the behest of William Nicol Gray, a former 45 Commando Royal Marines commandant with no experience of policing, who was parachuted in as Rymer-Jones’ successor in March 1946. They were organised and operated by Bernard Fergusson, a former commander with the Chindits in Burma who was seconded from the army to work in police counterinsurgency, and were commanded by two army officers, Roy Farran and Alistair McGregor.¹⁴¹ While some squad members were recruited from the BSPP, others came via the army and air force

¹³⁹ Horne, *Job*, p. 555.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 515-16. Sinclair mistakenly states that Rymer-Jones was ex-R.I.C. while Cahill makes much of the fact that he had briefly served with the army in Ireland during the revolution. But, as with Tegart, Rymer-Jones’ approach was shaped by his more extensive experience elsewhere. Sinclair, *End*, p. 33, ft. 64; John Rymer-Jones, Interview with Imperial War Museum, 1989 (IWM 10699).

¹⁴¹ See pp 24-6 above. Interestingly, McGregor’s son, Captain James McGregor, commanded the Military Reaction Force in Northern Ireland in the early 1970s, an undercover counterinsurgency unit which ran a similar operation to the ‘Q Squads’.

and, like the P.M.F. before it, the 'Q squads' worked independently of the regular police. In fact, as noted in Chapter II, the one officer with an R.I.C. background involved in determining the police approach to the Jewish insurgency, Sir Charles Wickham (who had direct experience of how unsuited the R.I.C. had been to countering the I.R.A.'s challenge) urged that it be tackled, not by 'Irish'-style paramilitarism, but by an intensification of regular civil policing.

The idea that the excesses of the BSPP can be attributed to the importation of a 'Black and Tan' ethos from Ireland via the British Gendarmerie is also questionable. Certainly in its early years, the BSPP itself operated as a gendarmerie-style striking force along the lines of the ADRIC. However, as discussed in Chapter II, it had been largely 'civilianised' as a result of the Dowbiggan/Spicer reforms which sought to fashion 'a police force rather than a gendarmerie' through what one BSPP constable recruited in spring 1937 described as a training programme 'very much accentuated to being policemen rather than soldiery'.¹⁴² While never completed, this process of civilianisation was so sufficiently advanced by the time of the Arab Revolt that its detrimental effect on the force's paramilitary character and capabilities was widely noted. Most significantly, the 1937 Peel Commission reported that although the BSPP stopped performing normal policing duties and acted as a gendarmerie when civil disturbances occurred, it was 'not able to deal with widespread disorder which took the form of street rioting and urban demonstration' meaning that troops had to be, invariably, deployed.¹⁴³ And as his sideswipe about 'policemen with notebooks' made clear Tegart agreed, believing that, far from being imbued with a Black and Tan ethos, the BSPP had been essentially emasculated by Spicer to the point where it

¹⁴² Geoffrey Owen, Transcript of interview with John Knight, 13 June 2006 (MECA, GB165-0403), pp 2-3.

¹⁴³ 'Peel Commission report', p. 198.

actually required an influx of ‘the tough type of man ... who knows as much of the [terrorist] game as the other side’.¹⁴⁴

It is also worth noting in this context that ex-R.I.C. had held senior positions within the Palestine Police throughout the 1926-36 period (according to Horne, Mavrogordato tended to promote only ‘the favoured few who had come from the “Irish” force of 1922’) when the police response to violent disturbances was lauded in official reports as appropriate and measured.¹⁴⁵ For example, the Shaw Commission of inquiry into the 1929 riots praised the BSPP which, it stated, was deserving of ‘the highest tribute’ that lay within its power to bestow, its members having ‘acted up to the finest tradition of British service and, when faced with circumstances of grave danger, displayed signal personal courage’, and it singled out ex-R.I.C. officers such as Raymond Cafferata, Harry Leeves and James Kyles for special praise.¹⁴⁶ Kyles was again ‘highly commended’ in September 1931 for the manner in which, as acting deputy superintendent in Nablus, he dealt with serious clashes between Arab demonstrators and the police which resulted in forty-two arrests, ‘in particular for the highly commendable restraint he displayed in difficult circumstances’, while Leeves was awarded the K.P.M. for gallantry in 1933.¹⁴⁷ Despite strident Arab criticism of police heavy-handedness during the 1933 riots, the Murison Commission of inquiry

¹⁴⁴ Quoted in Krozier, ‘Dowbiggan to Tegart’, p. 128.

¹⁴⁵ Horne, *Job*, p. 168. While mindful of the biases they might exhibit, such reports and particularly their enclosures, provide the best available assessment of BSPP conduct, the judgements of both Arabs and Jews being entirely shaped by communal loyalties and political perspectives. For example, although the Jews accused the police of refusing to employ lethal force against Arab marauders during the 1929 riots until it was too late, the Arabs themselves complained of ‘the severity of the Police which had reached a limit that they thought was unheard of in a civilised country’ while what Arabs condemned as the ‘unnecessary use of force [and] the premature use of rifles’ by the police during the 1933 riots was lauded as heroic by Jews. Chancellor to Passfield, 5 Oct. 1929 (TNA, CO 733/175/40); *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 26 Dec. 1933, 7 Jan. 1934; *Palestine Post*, 12 Feb. 1934; *The Times*, 10 Feb. 1933. See also Jewish criticisms of Gerald Foley’s conduct during the 1929 disturbances, driven by pique that he dealt equally firmly with Jewish and Arab rioters, in *The Times*, 6, 7 Nov. 1929.

¹⁴⁶ ‘Shaw Commission report’, p. 146.

¹⁴⁷ J. R. Kyles, Palestine Police record of service, p.1 (Commonwealth & Empire Museum, Bristol, Palestine Police Archive, Personnel Records [hereafter PPAPR]); *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 24, 28 Aug. 1931.

into the events also found that the police had acted with ‘restraint and forbearance’ and that the evidence did not disclose ‘a single incident in which any member of the police departed from or exceeded or failed to observe any instruction laid down in the Manuals upon which the police are instructed to act in case of disturbance’. It also commended senior officers such as John Faraday, Gerald Foley and Michael McConnell for having ‘performed their duties efficiently and with restraint’ and noted that there was ‘nothing in their conduct which is open to criticism’.¹⁴⁸ The actions of the only other ex-R.I.C. mentioned in the Murison report (James Munro, Michael Fitzgerald and police inspector Frederick Mosedale who had commanded parties of police in Jerusalem, Nablus and Haifa respectively) were also deemed appropriate.¹⁴⁹ The manner and context in which Fitzgerald was praised by Douglas Duff in his memoirs as someone who, while intolerant of inefficiency on the part of those he commanded, ‘glossed over as far as he possibly could ... everything else’, does suggest that he may have tacitly sanctioned inappropriate police conduct although there is no evidence to support this.¹⁵⁰

3.4.1 ‘A repetition of the Irish show’

In any case, an examination of BSPP brutality during the 1930s and 1940s presents evidence for the primacy of circumstance-based explanations over the more character-based assessments currently favoured. Unsettled by the violence of the 1929 anti-Jewish riots, Raymond Cafferata had predicted ‘a repetition of the Irish show’ if Arab

¹⁴⁸ Report of the Commission appointed by His Excellency the high commissioner for Palestine by notification no. 1561, Nov. 1933 [hereafter Murison report], p. 38. See also *The Times*, 10 Feb. 1934; *Palestine Post*, 9 Feb. 1934.

¹⁴⁹ Murison Report, pp 26-7, 31, 33-4.

¹⁵⁰ Fitzgerald was Duff’s superior officer when he was tried and dismissed in 1931. Fitzgerald left the R.I.C. in 1915 after just four years of service, well before the excesses of the Irish revolutionary period. Duff, *Sword*, p. 281.

grievances were not in some way assuaged and the outbreak of the 1936-9 revolt proved him right on many levels.¹⁵¹ As had been the case in Ireland in 1919, the British administration in Palestine was initially reluctant to interpret the violence of 1936-9 as politico-nationalist in character, treating it instead as akin to a crime wave which, as the guardians of law and order, the police were expected to suppress: as late as December 1938, Major-General Bernard Montgomery could ask on arrival in Palestine whether the revolt was ‘a national movement or a campaign of professional bandits’, before settling on the latter.¹⁵²

As in Ireland where the I.R.A. was characterised as a collection of ‘criminals and corner boys’, ‘a secret society of assassins’ and, most commonly, a ‘murder gang’, the defining of politically-motivated offences as common crimes was partially deliberate in Palestine: as Ted Swedenburg has noted, ‘British officialdom and press routinely branded the mujahidin as “outlaws”, “bandits”, “gangsters” and “highwaymen” in order to discredit the [Arab] movement’s nationalist aims’.¹⁵³ But, as in the case of the ‘tribal’ and ‘semi-wild’ Catholic Irish whose ‘civilisation [was] different and in many ways lower than that of the English’ and whose objection was ‘not so much to the British Government as to any form of Government, National or Local’, it was also borne of colonial condescension which saw the Arabs as incapable of evolved national consciousness and organised political opposition to imperial rule.¹⁵⁴ Indeed, the Arabs were unfavourably compared to the Irish in this regard. For

¹⁵¹ Cafferata to his mother, 29 Nov. 1929, quoted in Segev, *One Palestine*, p. 325. Cafferata, a former section leader with ADRIC ‘C Company’, was acting police district superintendent in Hebron where the worst of the rioting occurred.

¹⁵² Quoted in Townshend, ‘Defence’, p. 946.

¹⁵³ Ted Swedenburg, *Memories of the revolt: the 1936-1939 rebellion and the Palestinian national past* (Minneapolis, 1995), p. 94. See also French, *British way*, pp 60-1. In respect of Ireland, see Peter Hart, *The I.R.A. and its enemies: violence and community in Cork, 1916-1923* (Oxford, 1998), pp 134-42 and Dolan, ‘Ending war’, pp 23-4.

¹⁵⁴ Quotations are taken from the British army’s official ‘Record of the Irish Rebellion’ and a Dublin District military intelligence summary, written in 1921 and 1922 respectively. Quoted in McMahon, *British spies*, p. 168. W. F. Stirling, district commissioner in Jaffa from 1920-3, made a similar point

example, in September 1923, Tudor had told Churchill that he didn't think that Palestine would ever 'become anything like Ireland. [The Arabs] are a different people and it is unlikely that [they], if handled firmly, will ever do much more than agitate and talk'.¹⁵⁵ In *Palestine Unveiled*, Douglas Duff used an exchange between a British police inspector and a visitor to Acre jail concerning the execution of Arab insurgents there to illustrate what he saw as the racism informing this type of thinking:

- They are nothing but a gang of toughs looting and killing for what they can make out of it. They're not patriots, they're criminals.
- I suppose that you served in the Royal Irish Constabulary, didn't you?
- ...
- I did and it was a far better and safer job than this one.
- Some of the men who were hanged during the Troubles of 1919, '20 and '21 were also condemned as criminals. Kevin Barry and the rest.
- That's different, they were white men.¹⁵⁶

So, like the 'domesticated' R.I.C. before it, the BSPP found itself forming the front line against a sometimes vicious guerrilla-style insurgency to which its recent 'civilianisation' under Spicer had rendered it incapable of handling other than by brutal coercion which, as in the case of the R.I.C., served as a testament to force weakness rather than force strength. As in Ireland, the targeting by rebels of outlying police stations forced an humiliating retreat to urban centres by an ill-equipped and inadequately trained constabulary and the increasing assumption of responsibility by the military for the counterinsurgency. In Palestine, this culminated in the granting by Harold MacMichael of full operational control of the police to the army in September 1938 although responsibility for the day-to-day maintenance of public security was

about the Arabist explorer and author, St. John Philby, claiming that he had turned down the post of British resident in Transjordan because 'as an Irishman, he was "agin" the Government, or indeed *any* Government'. Sinclair, *Safety last*, p. 117.

¹⁵⁵ Tudor to Churchill, 21 Sept. 1923 (CHAR 2/126).

¹⁵⁶ Duff, *Palestine unveiled*, pp 73-4.

left in police hands. The army's approach to the rebels was itself frequently savage (indeed, two months into the revolt former high commissioner Sir John Chancellor accused the army of running a 'Black and Tan' regime in Palestine)¹⁵⁷ and 'under the military aegis, any constraining influences on those police officers who felt restricted by the conventions of normal police behaviour were quickly removed'.¹⁵⁸ This, coupled with the fact that the police were left to do what Binsley described as the 'dirty work' such the expropriation of produce from Arab villages in lieu of collective fines, and exacerbated by tensions caused by the rising police casualty rate (by the time the revolt was suppressed in 1939 thirty-four British and seventy-two Palestinian policemen had been killed), took a severe toll on force discipline and morale, leading to the inevitable emergence of 'black-and-tan tendencies'.¹⁵⁹ As BSPP Constable Reubin Kitson noted, 'it's very difficult when you're being attacked not to retaliate in some way and [we] did retaliate ... when the so-called terrorism became critical, in order to fight terrorism, we became terrorists more or less.'¹⁶⁰

The excesses of the BSPP's response to the Jewish Revolt of the 1940s were also driven by situational factors. Despite being even more untrained for and unsuited to the task that it had been during the Arab Revolt, the force again found itself forming 'the first line of defence against the insurgency, and supposedly the chief means of rooting it out'.¹⁶¹ Indeed, Bernard Montgomery, who visited Palestine in June 1946, noted that at what he described as 'a time when the situation was clearly about to boil over ... [the BSPP] was no more than 25 per cent effective' while one year later a British journalist stationed in Palestine estimated that 'there were only 800

¹⁵⁷ Quoted in Knight, 'Policing', p. 289;

¹⁵⁸ Smith, 'Communal conflict', p. 70-1. Jack Harte, who served with the Royal Irish Fusiliers during this period, also noted that 'the men's inclinations bordered on the Lynch Law philosophy'. Jack Harte, *To the limits of endurance: one Irishman's war* (Dublin, 2007), p. 30.

¹⁵⁹ Binsley, *Palestine Police*, p. 99.

¹⁶⁰ Reubin Kitson, IWM interview.

¹⁶¹ Cesarani, *Major Farran's hat*, p. 26.

“thoroughly trained” police (of the 4000 British officers) capable of counter-insurgency policing’.¹⁶² As in the late 1930s, the strain this placed on the force led to occasional collapses in discipline and morale. The situation was exacerbated by anger at the rising police casualty rate: like the R.I.C. which considered the I.R.A.’s method of ‘hit and run’ warfare to be, as the British army’s record of the rebellion described it, ‘in most cases barbarous, influenced by hatred and devoid of courage’, BSPP personnel were enraged by the murder of their colleagues by (as they saw them) cowards who shirked a fair fight.¹⁶³ As Kardahji notes, this offended ‘a certain conception of honour and prestige’ among members of the British police and military which derived from notions of ‘what was classed as “honourable” conduct’ during armed conflict, and from race-based ‘ideas about Britain’s role as an imperial power and the place of its police officers and soldiers in relation to the subjugated peoples of the Empire’, according to which the former dispensed justice to the latter and ‘held a monopoly on the exercise of force’.¹⁶⁴ The sense of wounded pride and insulted honour to which Jewish terrorist attacks gave rise could only be assuaged by harsh retaliation, sometimes against the wider Jewish community. This led to a culture of revenge which culminated in the ‘Q squads’ (‘it seems likely that much of Farran’s motivation was a simple desire to exact vengeance for actions against the security forces’) and several desertions to the Arab militias in the final months of the Mandate.¹⁶⁵ So intense was the pressure placed on the BSPP by the Jewish insurgency that the Jesuit writer, J. W. W. Murphy later remarked that many Irishmen working in

¹⁶² B. L. Montgomery, *The memoirs of Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery of Alamein* (London, 1958), pp 378-9; Sinclair, ‘Crack force’, p. 55.

¹⁶³ Quoted in McMahon, *British spies*, p. 164. See also Dolan, ‘British culture’, p. 210. For BSPP casualties during the Jewish Revolt, see Table 8, p. 244 below.

¹⁶⁴ Kardahji, ‘Measure’, pp 66-7.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 92. For the activities of BSPP deserters see Kardahji, ‘Measure’, pp 72-85; Uri Milstein, *History of Israel’s war of independence, vol. 3: the first invasion* (Maryland, 1998), pp 103-112 and Larry Collins & Dominique Lapierre, *O Jerusalem: the bitter epic struggle for the city of peace* (London, 1971), pp 161-2, 179-83.

Palestine in the final years of the Mandate, having ‘now realised, as never before, what the strain of conflict with an underground enemy can do to human nature’, were surprised that the BSPP’s reaction was not more robust. And while ‘not in the least condoning Black-and-Tan methods of reprisal, [they] knew how strong can be the temptation to resort to them in extremity’ and wished that the Black and Tans themselves had exercised the same restraint in Ireland ‘as [they] now saw exercised towards the Jews in the face of worse provocation’.¹⁶⁶

3.4.2 ‘Out-door type of men’

This is not to suggest that the BSPP did not count among its members some men who were violent by nature. Like all forces of its kind it had its fair share and a few of those that justly earned reputations for brutality did have R.I.C. backgrounds. The most notorious was Douglas Duff who, on the evidence of his memoirs alone, was prone to outbursts of extreme aggression and violence and was unashamedly upfront about favouring an approach to policing so heavy-handed (‘we ... risked our commissions daily by having to use methods that ... could have landed us in the dock’) that the expression ‘to duff up’, used as a slang-word for rough treatment/torture in the colonies, was almost certainly coined in his honour.¹⁶⁷ Indeed, just five years after Duff’s effective dismissal for brutality, Archdeacon Stewart was using the term with reference to the treatment of suspects by the BSPP and noting that ‘the phrase itself is significant to anyone who remembers, as I do, the days before the

¹⁶⁶ J. W. W. Murphy, ‘Irishmen in Palestine, 1946-1948’ in *Studies: an Irish quarterly review*, xl, no. 157 (1951), pp 81-92, at p. 88.

¹⁶⁷ Duff was careful to distance himself from the personal practice of water-boarding and suspension by hoist although he admitted to witnessing the torture of suspects by his Arab subordinates on numerous occasions and using the information they extracted. Duff, *Bailing*, pp 168, 189. For complaints of police torture during Duff’s time as a Palestine Police inspector see *al-Huquq*, no. 3 (1927).

present Inspector-General'.¹⁶⁸ Although Duff himself admitted that by the late 1920s 'all this police business had turned me into a heartless, callous machine' he nevertheless remained unrepentant about his actions, believing that the 'end' of public security justified the often distasteful means through which he felt it had to be occasionally achieved.¹⁶⁹ Alan Sigrist, a former ADRIC cadet and British Gendarmerie corporal, also earned an unenviable reputation in this regard among Palestine's Arabs. As acting assistant police superintendent in Jerusalem in the mid-1930s, he was 'notorious across the city for his savage truncheon-wielding attacks on Arab townfolk – until "their bodies were broken"', leading to a near-successful attempt on his life in June 1936 which Hughes describes as 'a pro-active attack against a hated local official'.¹⁷⁰

The culpability of other ex-R.I.C. accused of brutality is, however, less clear. Captain John Faraday, for example, was transferred from his post as assistant police superintendent in Jaffa to Beersheba in January 1934 after numerous complaints about the manner in which he quelled Arab rioting in Jaffa the previous October which culminated in live fire that left twelve Arabs dead. Faraday vigorously defended his actions although he did admit with 'much regret' to striking an Arab leader whom he had under arrest.¹⁷¹ Although exonerated by the Murison Commission of inquiry into the riots to the point of being singled out special praise ('his ability, personal courage

¹⁶⁸ Stewart was referring to Roy Spicer who assumed command of the Palestine police in 1931, the year in which Duff was dismissed. Stewart to Hathorn Hall, 2 June 1936 (MECA, JEMP, Box 65, File 5). See also Segev, *One Palestine*, p. 310.

¹⁶⁹ Duff, *Sword*, p. 275. Dolan notes that Duff's memoirs 'are far more brutal than anything he experienced ... in Ireland' but this probably derives from the fact that Duff joined the R.I.C. just three months prior to the July 1921 truce. Dolan, 'British culture', p. 215.

¹⁷⁰ Matthew Hughes, 'A history of violence: the shooting in Jerusalem of British assistant police superintendent, Alan Sigrist, 12 June 1936' in *Journal of Contemporary History*, xlv, no. 4 (2010), pp 733-4. See also *Palestine Police Magazine*, January 1937, pp 22-3; *PPOCAN*, no. 131 (1983), pp 49-50.

¹⁷¹ 'Report of Mr. J. A. M. Faraday M.C. on October 27th 1933 disturbances', 29 Oct. 1933 (MECA, Faraday collection, Box 1, File 1); Faraday, Statement to Spicer, 31 Oct. 1933 (Faraday collection, Box 1, File 3).

and discretion ... were wholly admirable'), he remained a hate figure among the Arabs and his house was attacked in the early months of the Arab Revolt.¹⁷² Faraday was awarded the K.P.M. for distinguished service in January 1937.¹⁷³ But two years later his superiors were noting his shortcomings, describing him as 'hot-tempered and lacking in self-control ... [and] apt to destroy the value of his work by his subsequent actions'. And although Saunders believed him to be 'a very gallant officer' with 'a



Figure 9: Palestine Police led by Captain Faraday face rioters in Jaffa, October 1933 (Author's collection)

good command of men' who as 'essentially an out-door police officer' had done his 'best police work in the desert area of Beersheba', he recommended him for transfer from Palestine to a territory where conditions were 'less exacting'.¹⁷⁴

Raymond Cafferata enjoyed a similar status to Sigirst and Faraday but among

¹⁷² Murison report, p. 38. For detailed statements by Faraday and other BSSP officers on their actions during the 1933 Jaffa riots, see MECA, Faraday collection, Box 1, File 3)

¹⁷³ Congratulating him on his K.P.M., Gerald Foley noted that 'you got lots of abuse in the past and it is past time for a bit of the other thing'. Foley to Faraday, 7 Feb. 1937 (Faraday collection, Box 1, File 1).

¹⁷⁴ MacMichael to MacDonald, 25 Feb. 1939 (TNA, 733/389/11/22). Faraday was subsequently transferred to Transjordan.

Palestine's Jews. As police chief in Hebron during the 1929 riots when an Arab mob massacred sixty-seven of the city's Jews, he was accused of having done too little to protect them (according to the Jewish National Council he actually 'enabled [the] murderers to murder'), earning him enduring Jewish enmity.¹⁷⁵ The evidence suggests, however, that Cafferata did everything he could to prevent the massacre, but simply hadn't the resources. He was the only British police officer in the city and commanded a force just thirty-three strong, all but one of whom were Arab and eleven of whom were in his words 'old men – and practically useless'.¹⁷⁶ Cafferata's infamy among Palestine's Jews was compounded by what they saw as his heavy-handed approach to policing during the Jewish insurgency. He directed the police during a cordon and search operation in the Jewish settlement of Ramat HaKovesh in November 1943 during which one inhabitant was killed and fourteen were wounded (the fatality, Shmuel Wolinetz, was reportedly shot by Cafferata himself) while a similar action in Kibbutz Givat Chaim two years later left seven Jews dead and several others seriously injured. He was also accused of the torture of an Irgun operative, Asher Trattner, in Haifa in 1944, shortly after which Trattner died. Yet these episodes were not as clear-cut as his critics presented. The violence employed the police at Ramat HaKovesh was provoked by the extreme aggression of the inhabitants who, according to the military commander on the day, attacked the

¹⁷⁵ Quoted in Kolinsky, *Law*, p. 57. See also Maurice Samuel, *What happened in Palestine: the events of August 1929, their background and their significance* (Boston, 1929), 116-120 which bitterly articulates the charges levelled against Cafferata at the time and Eliav, *Wanted*, pp 11-12, which illustrates the depth of feeling which remained towards him at the end of the Mandate and beyond.

¹⁷⁶ Report by R. O. Cafferata, A.D.S.P. Hebron, 23rd and 24th August, 1929' (MECA, Cafferata collection, LA 2 no. 5, para. 8). Kolinsky and Segev, both of whom exhaustively analysed evidence presented to the Shaw Commission, concluded that Cafferata did the best that he could and this is also acknowledged in the Haganah's official history. Kolinsky, *Law*, pp 49-51, 77; Segev, *One Palestine*, pp 316-27; Dinur, *Sefer*, p. 321. See also *The Times*, 2 Sept. 1929; letters from former British Gendarmerie colleagues, Oct.-Nov. 1929 (MECA, Cafferata collection, LA 2, nos. 19-22); Character reference from J. R. Chancellor, 24 May 1946 (Wirral Archives Service, Cafferata papers, YPX/26/2).

security forces ‘like demented wild beasts’¹⁷⁷ while Trattner told his brother shortly before his death that he was not tortured by the police.¹⁷⁸ Nonetheless, Cafferata became a marked man and narrowly escaped an attempt on his life by the Irgun and Stern Gang in 1946.¹⁷⁹

Smith and Cahill see Cafferata as exemplifying the general unsuitability of former Black and Tans and Auxiliaries for the policing of Palestine: in fact for Smith his career ‘symbolised the Palestine police force’ in that he was promoted to district superintendent despite being previously recommended for transfer from the country due to his poor knowledge of police procedure.¹⁸⁰ Reservations were certainly expressed regarding Cafferata’s suitability for continued service during a review of the superior officer corps in 1939 by Sir Charles Tegart and Alan Saunders. But these reservations concerned, not ‘black and tan tendencies’, but his lack of executive and administrative skills. Cafferata was, they felt, essentially ‘an out-door type of man’; a ‘lion-hearted ... born leader of men’ who was expert in riot control and what MacMichael described as ‘the general rough and tumble’ of policing in the field but whose knowledge of ‘real police work’ was ‘limited’ and whose administrative abilities were ‘poor’. He was, they concluded, lacking in the mental capabilities required to ‘cope adequately with the problems of police work’ in Palestine.¹⁸¹

Cafferata was not seen as an isolated case. Two of the other four former Black and Tans and Auxiliaries serving as district superintendents with him in 1943, James

¹⁷⁷ He added that during ‘internal security work in Ireland and India [he had] never before witnessed a more violent and fanatical reaction to those engaged in the search’. Karadahji, ‘Measure’, pp 15-16; Segev, *One Palestine*, pp 455-6. See also Horne, *Job*, pp 279-81 and Hoffman, *Failure*, pp 12-13.

¹⁷⁸ Trattner seems to have died from a lack of proper medical attention to a leg wound inflicted during his capture. Segev, *One Palestine*, pp 473-5;

¹⁷⁹ Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *Political assassinations by Jews: a rhetorical device for justice* (New York, 1992), pp 217-18.

¹⁸⁰ Smith, ‘Communal conflict’, p. 79; Cahill, ‘Going berserk’, p. 65.

¹⁸¹ MacMichael to MacDonald, 25 Feb. 1939 (TNA, CO 733/389/11/23); MacMichael to Tomlinson, 4 Apr. 1939 (TNA, CO 733/389/11/14). See also MacDonald to Thomas, 28 Mar. 1939 (TNA, CO 733/389/11/16-17).

Munro and Eric James, had also been deemed lacking the executive and administrative skills considered essential at this level (as indeed were three other superior officers with non-R.I.C. backgrounds).¹⁸² However, like Cafferata, they were believed to be performing commendably in their current roles: Munro was described as ‘an admirable officer commanding the police training school’ while James was praised as ‘a very competent, conscientious No. 2’.¹⁸³ In contrast, the remaining two district superintendents with R.I.C backgrounds, Alfred Barker and James Kyles, came highly recommended. Saunders judged Barker ‘wholly suited in every way’ for service at superior level while MacMichael considered him so ‘fitted in every way for promotion’ that he recommended his advancement even though it involved the passing over of two officers serving with the force since 1920. Saunders appraised Kyles as ‘a most capable officer’ possessing both ‘drive and vision’ and MacMichael agreed, describing him as ‘an officer of very good administrative ability’ and noting that ‘district commissioners and successive military commanders [had] spoken highly of [his] abilities’.¹⁸⁴

Yet, in terms of their possession of the skills required for superior office, Barker and Kyles clearly represented the exception rather than the rule amongst ex-R.I.C. in that several such men serving in the BSPP’s lower gazetted ranks were appraised as unsuited for executive or administrative office although performing well in their current ‘out-door’-type roles; for example, Michael O’Rorke (‘doing admirably as a headquarters officer’), Reginald Townsend (‘an efficient divisional

¹⁸² Saunders, ‘Memorandum: superior officers’, undated, c. Mar. 1939 (MECA, Sir Charles Tegart collection. GB165-0281, Box 3, File 4).

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.; MacMichael to Ormsby-Gore, 24 Mar. 1937 (TNA, CO 733/325/11/33-8); MacMichael to MacDonald, 6 Dec. 1939 (TNA, CO 733/389/1/8). Frank Scott was also highly commended for his police and prison work over the course of his career. See, for example, Quigley to Mavrogordato, 2 May 1928, Spicer to Scott, 4 June 1932 & Shaw to Scott, 17 May 1946 (MECA, F. M. Scott collection, GB 165-0255).

police officer and wholly reliable'), Jack Hegarty ('an extremely capable officer whose police work has justifiably earned high praise') and Cyril Tesseyman (in terms of experience and ability 'the best officer available' for frontier force command).¹⁸⁵ A few had, however, more chequered careers. Despite being judged 'especially fitted for the command of a rural division' and promoted to assistant superintendent in April 1937, Harry Leeves was reverted to the rank of British inspector in December 1938 'on account of unsatisfactory conduct' and compulsorily retired four months later.¹⁸⁶ Another, former ADRIC 'P Company' cadet Harry Goddard, had been awarded an M.B.E. for distinguished service and was described as having 'shown good organising skills' while in charge of Jewish supernumerary police. But by November 1938, MacMichael was pressing for his transfer from Palestine on the grounds that he was, not only 'wholly unsuitable for commanding rank', but that his own superiors did not trust him although 'nothing can be proved against him'. Six months later he was convicted of taking bribes in return for allowing illegal Jewish immigrants into Palestine and dismissed from the force although the extent of his culpability is still unclear.¹⁸⁷

3.5 Conclusion

In his interview with the Imperial War Museum in 1989, John Rymer-Jones asked to be allowed address criticisms that former Black and Tans had served as district superintendents during his time as inspector-general of the Palestine Police.

¹⁸⁵ 'Saunders memorandum', op. cit.; MacMichael to Ormsby-Gore, 24 Mar. 1937, op. cit.

¹⁸⁶ MacMichael to Ormsby-Gore, 24 Mar. 1937, op. cit.; MacMichael to MacDonald, 23 May 1939 (TNA, CO 733/389/1/3).

¹⁸⁷ MacMichael to Ormsby-Gore, 24 Mar. 1937, op. cit.; MacMichael to MacDonald, 15 Nov. 1938 (TNA, CO 733/359/8/18). See also *Palestine Post*, 11-23 June 1939 and Giveon Cornfield, *Zion Liberated: the life and times of Max Seligman* (Michigan, 1990), pp 73-8.

Dismissing such criticisms out-of-hand, he said that, not only were officers such as Cafferata, Barker and Kyles ‘some of the most splendid chaps’ with whom he had worked, but that former Black and Tans had proved themselves throughout their service in Palestine to be a ‘most remarkable collection of fine men’ and he deplored what he described as ‘a great move to try (particularly by the Jews) to say how frightful they were’.¹⁸⁸

Rymer-Jones was hardly a disinterested observer. But the fact remains that the majority of ex-R.I.C. who served with the Palestine police forces during the British Mandate had uncontroversial careers. What John Jeans called ‘the Irish way of things’ never prevailed in the British Gendarmerie. The available evidence indicates that its disciplinary record was generally good and was certainly far better than that of its Irish parent forces during the revolutionary period in Ireland while reports of Black and Tan-type brutality by gendarmes were greatly exaggerated. Like any force of its kind, the British Gendarmerie had its complement of men like Douglas Duff who seem to have been violent by nature: as John Fails told Brewer: ‘there was some of the police there then that knocked them Arabs about a bit. Oh, they were rough, yes’.¹⁸⁹ But far from ‘going berserk’ as a unit, the force spent most of its time confined to barracks ‘marking time between successive emergencies’ and according to McNeill, confronted just two serious disturbances during its four years in Palestine. Furthermore, the manner in which it dealt with these emergencies was generally appropriate and measured. The ‘breaking heads’ approach employed to quell civil disturbances was undoubtedly robust and McNeill was proud of the fierce reputation his ‘band of toughs’ earned. But it was far less violent and lethal than the methods

¹⁸⁸ He had, he said, been familiar with their performance behaviour since the days of the British Gendarmerie when he was serving with the British army in Egypt. Rymer-Jones, IWM interview.

¹⁸⁹ Brewer, *R.I.C. oral history*, p. 122.

employed against civilians by other local security forces at this time and in no way equated to those with which the Black and Tans and the ADRIC tried to impose public order in Ireland.

The emergence of 'Black and Tan tendencies' in the BSPP during the Arab and Jewish revolts against the Mandatory is well-documented. But to blame this on the transfer of a Black and Tan ethos from Ireland via the British Gendarmerie is simplistic at best: even those brutalities actually perpetrated by former members of the Irish police services are more satisfactorily explained with reference to the circumstances in which they found themselves operating in Palestine rather than their 'Black and Tan' backgrounds and claims to the contrary are based more on assumptions about how such men would have behaved than an assessment of their actual conduct. These assumptions are rooted in the traditional narrative of the Irish revolution which has interpreted the brutality of the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries as a function of their alleged low moral character and brutalisation by the Great War. So powerfully imprinted on the public mind was this idea of character-based 'Black and Tannery' that the term has been since the mid-1930s a byword for police brutality, not just in Ireland (where, historically, it served the important purpose of absolving the I.R.A. of any responsibility for the culture of wanton violence unleashed by the conduct of its own campaign), but also in Britain and beyond. The attribution of police brutality in the Palestine Mandate to the presence and influence of former Black and Tans, their base natures further brutalised by their experiences in Ireland, therefore seems so logical a conclusion to draw that it does not appear to require the formality of evidence. But the argument that police brutality in the Palestine Mandate was the R.I.C.'s 'immediate legacy' is actually based on a logical fallacy; being a 'post hoc, ergo propter hoc'-type proposition which assumes that because episodes of police

brutality in Palestine occurred after the arrival of the Black and Tans, they therefore occurred as a consequence.

Chapter Four: ‘A Strong Seasoning of Irishmen’: the British Section of the Palestine Police

4.1 Introduction

This chapter takes as its subject the second of the Mandate-era police forces in which significant numbers of Irishmen served; the British Section of the Palestine Police (BSPP), formed in April 1926 from the remnants of the disbanded British Gendarmerie. First, the extent of Irish participation over the course of the BSPP’s twenty-two year career is investigated. The numbers of Irishmen serving in the force were not officially recorded. However, the extensive collections of BSPP personnel records held at MECA and (formerly) at CEM record nationality. While these collections pertain mainly to personnel recruited in the 1940s, they contain a sufficiently large cache of records relating to enlistments from the second half of the 1930s to facilitate statistical analysis and, although only a handful of records for men recruited in the 1926-36 period survive, their nationalities can, in most cases, be determined through shipping lists, census returns and civil registration records. Secondly, the factors which influenced Irish enlistments in four distinct recruitment periods (i.e. 1926-36, the Arab Revolt, World War II and the postwar period) are examined. The personal testimonies of surviving Irish former force members and the families of those now deceased, together with data extracted from BSPP personnel files, are used for this purpose. Particular attention is paid to the postwar years during which almost half of all Irish enlistments occurred, largely as a result of a recruitment campaign conducted by the Crown Agents for the Colonies in the summer of 1946 which is here, for the first time, explored.

4.2 'You meet them here from all over Ireland'

A small number of Irishmen served in the Palestine Police prior to the formation of the BSPP. Its first commandant, Percy Bramley, had 'long considered the necessity of keeping British police officers in all the important posts until such time as the most eligible of the Palestinian officers could be said to have "won their spurs"' and he appointed, in July 1920, a cohort of British officers to head his new force.¹ Almost all were recruited from O.E.T.A. (South) and vacancies which subsequently arose were also mainly filled from military sources. A small number of these officers were Irish, most notably Captain Eugene Quigley, Major William Wainwright and Captain James Wesley Mackenzie.² Although Quigley stood apart from the others in that he had R.I.C. experience (having served as a constable from 1908-14), his path from the British military to the Palestine Police was typical of these men. He enlisted in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers shortly after the outbreak of the Great War and was sent to the Western Front in December 1915. There he received his commission and was awarded the military cross, before being promoted to captain in August 1917. He transferred to the 40th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers nine months later, serving first in Egypt and later in Palestine where he was seconded to O.E.T.A. (South) as a deputy assistant administrator in November 1919. Quigley joined the Palestine Police as a British reserve inspector in July 1920 and officially relinquished his commission one month later, retaining the rank of captain.

But significant Irish enlistment in the Palestine Police did not begin until the

¹ Horne, *Job*, p. 35.

² Quigley and Wainwright went on to have high profile careers in the force while Mackenzie is remembered as the first Palestine police officer to die on active service, drowned in April 1922 'in a gallant attempt to save the life of a brother Palestinian officer' who had been thrown from his horse into the River Jordan. Report on Palestine administration, 1922, p. 38. See also 'Death of Captain J. W. Mackenzie', 16 Apr. 1922 (TNA, CO 733/21/2-5); *The Times*, 21 Apr. 1922. The best known of this officer corps, George Bryant, was born in Bath to parents from Sligo. His exploits were the subject of a book-length treatment by Douglas Duff. Douglas Duff, *Galilee galloper* (London, 1935).

raising of the BSPP in April 1926. As discussed in Chapter I, it was originally envisaged that its establishment of 217 officers and men would be filled from the disbanded British Gendarmerie. However, fewer than 100 gendarmes actually transferred. This necessitated the recruitment of additional constables in Britain with the result that the BSPP's full establishment was not achieved until mid-1927. The peaceable state of Palestine led to a reduction in force strength over the course of the following two years (the number of rankers fell to 166 in 1928 and 142 in 1929) but it dramatically increased following a recruitment campaign in the wake of the August 1929 riots, reaching 357 by the year's end and 631 one year later. The BSPP's strength continued gradually to rise over the course of the 1930s and, following large-scale recruitment during the Arab Revolt, stood at 1,285 by January 1938 and just over 2,800 by the end of 1939.³ Force strength fluctuated during the Second World War but steadily rose in its aftermath, peaking at about 3,800 in 1947 after an intensive recruitment drive which formed part of the response to the deepening Jewish insurgency.⁴ By the end of the Mandate in May 1948 somewhere in the region of 10,600 men had served in the force.⁵

Prior to the August 1929 riots, almost all of the Irishmen serving in the BSPP were former gendarmes. Nineteen Irishmen transferred from the British Gendarmerie in 1926, accounting for 10 per cent of the BSPP's original force strength which stood at 197 by the year's end. Only a handful of the approximately 170 BSPP constables

³ Figures taken from Knight, 'Policing Palestine', pp 129-30 and Haining to MacMichael, 17 Jan. 1939 (TNA, CO 733/389/13/56).

⁴ From 1940 onwards, BSPP force strength always fell short of its official establishment. Most strikingly, despite an approved establishment of 5,452 in September 1946, its 'actual effective strength' was just 2,714. Clark, Colonial Office minute, 4 Nov. 1946 (TNA, CO 537/1696/2).

⁵ As noted in Chapter I, BSPP rankers were allocated force numbers which were re-assigned when they departed the force. However, they were also issued with a unique recruit number, assigned in strict numerical sequence in order of enlistment. The highest recruit number noted by this author on BSPP service record cards is 10,514 which, being issued on 10 November 1947, must have been one of the last allocated. The majority of BSPP officers are known to have been promoted from the ranks where they would have been assigned force and recruit numbers; therefore the number of officers not included in the figure of 10,514 was relatively small.

recruited in Britain between May 1926 and July 1929 were certainly Irish. However, a low level of Irish departures from the force, coupled with the above-mentioned reductions in force strength, meant that the percentage of Irishmen in the BSPP had actually increased to just over 14 per cent by the time of the August 1929 riots. This percentage declined as a result of the recruitment drive initiated in the wake of these riots: just 8.5 per cent of the BSPP constables recruited by the end of 1930 were Irish. This decline was exacerbated by resignations and deaths so that by December 1930, the BSPP's Irish contingent accounted for just over 9 per cent of the force. A further decline in the numbers of Irishmen recruited in the years leading up to the outbreak of the Arab Revolt - just 5 per cent of enlistments between January 1931 and March 1936 were Irish - was somewhat offset by a low number of Irish departures with the result that the proportion of Irishmen during this period averaged at 8 per cent. As Table 3 illustrates, this figure climbed gradually during the Arab Revolt: Irishmen accounted for 9.5 per cent of new enlistments during the latter half of 1936, rising to 11.5 per cent in 1937 and levelling out at 9.5 per cent in 1938 and 1939, while constituting just 5 per cent of those exiting the force during the same period. The Second World War years saw marked variations in levels of Irish enlistments and by December 1945 the percentage of Irishmen in the force had declined to 8 per cent. However, the postwar years saw a sharp rise in recruitment from Ireland: 15 per cent of those recruited in 1946 were Irish as were 19 per cent of those recruited in 1947. The enlistment of relatively significant numbers of Irishmen in the BSPP was noted at the time. In June 1939 Sir Charles Tegart publicly remarked that the force was then 'flavoured with a strong seasoning of Irishmen' and, by the summer of 1947, a visitor to Ireland from Palestine with 'an intimate knowledge' of the BSPP was telling the *Irish Times* that 'he had rarely visited a police station in Palestine where he did not

find an Irish member'.⁶ Irish visitors to Palestine also noted the presence of large numbers of Irish police: an Irish photographer with the *Associated Press* in Jerusalem reported meeting several compatriots who were serving in the force ('you meet them here from all over Ireland – the Palestine Police Force is full of them').⁷ Indeed, in

*Table 3: Percentage of Irishmen in BSPP, 1936-47*⁸

YEAR	% ENLISTMENTS	% FORCE
1936	8	9.5
1937	11.5	10.8
1938	9.5	11.1
1939	9.5	11.2
1940	10.5	8
1941	3.5	7.5
1942	6	7.2
1943	8	7.1
1944	6	6.8
1945	6.5	8
1946	15	14
1947	19	17.5

July 1947 the *Irish Times* reported that 'the percentage of Irishmen in the Palestine Police at the moment is higher than in any other disciplined body in the British Empire, excluding, of course, purely Irish units' of the army and this percentage did in fact peak at 18.5 per cent at this time. However, the newspaper's subsequent assertion that there were 1,400 Irishmen in the Palestine Police in the final months of the Mandate was a wild over-estimate; fewer than half this number was still serving

⁶ In Nazareth station, for example, he had 'found a Corkman working side by side with two Limerick men and three Dubliners'. *Palestine Post*, 4 June 1939; *Irish Times*, 1 July 1947. This was also noted by Irish Palestine policemen themselves: according to BSPP constable Patrick T. from Galway, 'you wouldn't go anywhere without [meeting] an Irishman. They were everywhere'. Patrick T., Hampshire, Interview with author, 27 Aug. 2012.

⁷ *Connaught Tribune*, 9 Aug. 1947.

⁸ Source: BSPP personnel records and Colonial office statistics on force strength.

when the force was disbanded in 1948.⁹

4.3. The reasons for Irish enlistments

Discussing the factors which influenced Irish enlistments in the British army during the Second World War, Bernard Kelly noted that there was usually:

No single explanation ... Irish volunteers often had multiple reasons for enlisting. The decision to join up was highly personal, sometimes emotional, other times highly rational

and the same applied to Irish enlistments in the BSPP.¹⁰ Yet, within the confluence of contributory factors that influenced each individual decision to enlist, a signal motivation can generally be discerned. These varied over the years. The personal testimonies of former force members and/or their families, together with an analysis of data contained in BSPP personnel files and an examination of the historical contexts in which enlistments took place, provides sufficient evidence to draw tentative conclusions about those which prevailed in each recruitment period.

4.3.1 'A good opening': 1926-1936

As noted above, the high proportion of Irishmen in the BSPP in the period prior to the August 1929 riots was the result of transfers from the British Gendarmerie. The reasons why one-third of Irish gendarmes still serving when the force was disbanded in 1926 chose to remain on in Palestine have been touched on in Chapter II.¹¹ Almost all had previously served with the R.I.C. and some continued to use Palestine as a refuge of sorts; although any physical danger to them had by then passed, they felt

⁹ *Irish Times*, 1 July 1947, 18 Feb. 1948.

¹⁰ Bernard Kelly, *Returning home: Irish ex-servicemen after the Second World War* (Dublin, 2012), p. 28

¹¹ See pp 113-14 above.

unready to return home to Ireland, their relationships with family and/or community still fractured or fragile on account of their wartime role.¹² For others a transfer to the BSPP provided a convenient route to continued relatively well-paid employment at a time when the economic climate in Ireland remained poor. It also offered prospects and over half of these men did make the BSPP their career, serving until retirement, death or the force's disbandment. In fact, 40 per cent of the Irish gendarmes that transferred to the BSPP in 1926 remained until disbandment compared to just 17.5 per cent of their British-born counterparts.

Prior to September 1929, BSPP recruitment was confined almost exclusively to the British armed forces, particularly the Brigade of Guards, on the basis that soldiers and ex-servicemen would require minimal vetting and training. Indeed, the Crown Agents boasted that the first draft of policemen sent to Palestine in the wake of the 1929 riots (three-quarters of whom were former guardsmen) was recruited in 'just over a week'.¹³ Nonetheless, contrary to the claim of Jack Binsley that 'up until 1931 former servicemen only were recruited', civilian enlistments were always accepted: however, the fact that the BSPP, in common with all colonial police services, did not publicly advertise positions at this time (those desirous of joining were expected to apply to the Crown Agents themselves) meant that the numbers were low.¹⁴ Therefore, although the restriction of British military service records for the post-1920 period precludes a definitive judgement, those Irishmen who enlisted during this time were probably all ex-Irish Guards, a regiment from which it was considered 'an easy step to the [Palestine] police'.¹⁵

Binsley, who enlisted in August 1930, described how the economic privation

¹² The fact that shipping lists record that some of these men did not return to their localities while on home leave during this period may be significant in this context.

¹³ *The Times*, 11 Sept. 1929. See also *Palestine Post*, 14 May 1934.

¹⁴ Binsley, *Palestine Police*, p. 18.

¹⁵ *Irish Times*, 13 Feb. 1932.

suffered by British-born ex-servicemen impelled them to join the BSPP at this time and this probably applied equally to Irish-born former guardsmen, most of those who enlisted being resident in the Britain at the time.¹⁶ For example Edmund D. from Fermanagh, who enlisted in September 1929, had been released from the Irish Guards a few weeks earlier and had remained in London looking for work.¹⁷ However, the inability of the army to supply the numbers required by the BSPP in 1929-30, coupled with the fact that in March 1930 Sir Herbert Dowbiggan recommended that BSPP constables be recruited from civilian life (it was difficult, he believed, to re-educate soldiers and ex-servicemen for civil policing duties), led to an increase in enlistments from non-military sources.¹⁸ Roy Spicer, newly-installed as inspector-general of the Palestine Police agreed, considering recruitment from civilian sources essential to building the professional civil police force to which he aspired. This led to the occasional placement of BSPP advertisements in the British daily press which resulted in a further rise in civilian enlistments that continued until the outbreak of the Arab Revolt.

While this emphasis on recruitment from civilian sources did lead to an increase in enlistments from Ireland, the fact that BSPP vacancies were not widely advertised kept the numbers low. Economic difficulties formed the backdrop to enlistments from Northern Ireland as the prolonged international depression, particularly the introduction of global tariffs to which it gave rise, plunged its export-led economy into crisis. Although the small numbers involved means that generalisations regarding their decisions to enlist must be treated with caution

¹⁶ 'It was better than the dole'. Binsley, *Palestine Police*, pp 9, 17.

¹⁷ Fergus D., Cork, Correspondence with author, 2 June 2010.

¹⁸ This change in approach was noted by Geoffrey Morton: his first application for the BSPP was turned down in September 1929 largely due, he felt, to his lack of military experience but he was accepted six months later when 'so much stress was not laid on service with the armed forces'. Morton, *Just the job*, pp 17-18.

(Northern Ireland provided just one-fifth of total Irish enlistments in the September 1929-April 1936 period), personal and professional data extracted from BSPP personnel files, census returns and civil registration records such as family addresses, fathers' occupations, education levels and employment history indicate that high unemployment was the primary factor influencing enlistments: recruits were largely drawn from the urban working classes employed in the sectors most affected by the depression – manufacturing and industry.¹⁹ The remainder was mainly recruited from the R.U.C. which, like other U.K. police forces, began circulating calls for volunteers for the BSPP in the early 1930s at the Crown Agents' request.²⁰

South of the border, the effects of the depression were compounded by the 'Economic War' with Britain which severely impacted on the agriculture-dependent economy of the Irish Free State. However, data compiled on BSPP enlistments suggest that this was not, for the majority, the central concern. First, just one-fifth of BSPP enlistments came from the agricultural sector and almost all of these were from small farming backgrounds which were least affected by British protectionist policies and most immediately felt the beneficial effects of both the reduction in the burden of the land annuities and the extension of unemployment assistance to farmers in 1933.²¹ Secondly, two-thirds of recruits came from urban areas, more than half of them from Dublin alone. But, unlike in Northern Ireland, they were not drawn from the urban working classes where unemployment had risen steadily during the final years of the Cumann na nGaedhal government and, significant gains in industrial

¹⁹ 'By 1932, the unofficial unemployment rate was 28 per cent, or seventy-two thousand registered out of work, to which could be added another thirty thousand unregistered unemployed'. Unemployment during this period peaked in July 1935 when 101,967 were out of work. Jonathan Bardon, *A history of Ulster* (Belfast, 1992), pp 526-9.

²⁰ *Irish Times*, 25 Jan. 1930.

²¹ This is not to say that these enlistments were not motivated by economic concerns, but they were most likely those that perennially affected the 'small farming' sector in Ireland. Indeed some, such as Martin C. from Connemara, were resident in Britain when they joined the BSPP, having already left their family holding in search of work. Mary B., Mayo, Correspondence with author, 3 Feb. 2012.

employment during the 1932-6 period notwithstanding, had remained high.²² On the contrary, an analysis of addresses and fathers' occupations indicates that most were from solidly middle-class backgrounds and those for whom BSPP personnel records survive appear to have been in secure employment themselves. The high socio-economic status of the majority of Irish Free State enlistments was further underscored by the fact that 60 per cent had attended secondary school at a time when the lack of free access meant that 'academic secondary training was a privilege' so 'economically and socially discriminatory' that just 10 per cent of primary school students went on to second level.²³ Candidates with a secondary education were strongly preferred by Spicer whose plans to make the BSPP the recruitment ground for the officer class of the colonial police depended on the recruitment of constables who were, to his mind, not just sufficiently well-educated to handle 'severe examinations in law, procedures and foreign languages', but would 'fit socially' into colonial society as well.²⁴ This led to the enlistment of significant numbers of what one Colonial Office official referred to as 'the "public school" type of man' during this time.²⁵

In late 1930, Palestine's high commissioner, Sir John Chancellor, noted that the BSPP was attracting men looking for 'brief spells of adventure abroad [who] were

²² Irish protectionist policies implemented in the 1930s were the main contributory factor to an annual increase in industrial employment of over 6 per cent between 1932 and 1938 which saw 50,000 new jobs created. Nevertheless, the impact of the Great Depression and a steep decline in emigration consequent on the introduction of U.S.A. immigration quotas kept unemployment figures high, peaking at 145,000 in January 1936. Ó Gráda, *Ireland: new economic history*, pp 406-16.

²³ D. H. Akenson, Sean Farren and John Coolahan, 'Pre-university education, 1921-84' in Hill (ed.), *A New History of Ireland, VII*, pp 711-56, at pp 725-6.

²⁴ *The Times*, 27 Jan. 1938. One former BSPP constable described Spicer as 'the high priest of social snobbery'. Arrigionie, *British colonialism*, p. 24.

²⁵ Downie, Colonial Office minute, 20 Nov. 1934, cited in Hammond, 'Ideology', p. 273. In June 1933 it was reported that 'the number of British constables of public school education now in the Palestine Police Force is considerable' while Spicer himself declared the following year that the force contained 'a great number of a splendid type of young Britisher who is of good birth, well educated, and suitable in every way for rapid promotion in the Colonial Police Service'. *Irish Times*, 3 June 1933; Sinclair, *End*, pp 115-16.

not likely to make the Police Service their career' and in late 1931 its contract's terms and conditions were revised to make it 'sufficiently attractive to draw the required type of young recruit who [would] look to service in the Force as his life's career'.²⁶ While some Irishmen certainly saw the BSPP as an opportunity for adventure, others saw it as providing what the Irish peer, Lord Powerscourt (whose son and heir, Mervyn 'Pat' Wingfield, had recently enlisted), referred to as 'a good opening' into the colonial service.²⁷ As the policing of Palestine's inter-communal conflict required 'a substantial element of men unconnected with either Arab or Jew' the BSPP, unlike most other colonial forces, recruited a 'British' rank-and-file.²⁸ It therefore provided a route of access into the colonial police for men unqualified for entry at officer level and the fact that, on Dowbiggan's recommendation, the opportunity of promotion to commissioned rank was made available to constables of outstanding merit meant that 'many men entered the Palestine Police in its lowest rank as a means of qualifying themselves for officer rank elsewhere in the Colonial Service'.²⁹ Indeed, a majority of Irish Free State enlistments from this time made colonial policing their life's work, serving multiple tours with the BSPP and transferring to other services afterwards.

Their choice of a colonial career appears to have been informed by a socio-cultural self-identity steeped in historical affinities with Britain for which colonial service was, if not quite conventional, then at least uncontroversial. For example, 40 per cent were Protestant when, according to the 1936 census, non-Catholic Christian denominations accounted for just 5 per cent of the state's population. Moreover, many

²⁶ Chancellor to Passfield, 17 Nov. 1930, quoted in Hammond, 'Ideology', p. 273; Chancellor's office to Cunliffe-Lister, 19 Nov. 1931 (TNA, CO 733/195/8/26).

²⁷ *Irish Times*, 1 Sept. 1932.

²⁸ Jeffries, *Colonial police*, p. 165.

²⁹ John J. Tobias, 'The British colonial police: an alternative policing style' in Philip John Stead (ed.), *Pioneers in policing* (Pennsylvania, 1997), pp 241-61, at p. 255.

'British colonial police', p. 255. The promotion of the first BSPP constable to commissioned rank in the summer of 1933 was reported in Ireland. *Irish Times*, 3 June 1933.

Roman Catholic enlistments came from families with a tradition of Crown service, their fathers having served in the British army, the R.I.C. or the Irish civil administration in the pre-independence period. That enlistments from the Irish Free State were drawn largely from this demographic is underscored by the fact that the only public forum providing information on colonial police recruitment during this period was the *Irish Times*, still very much a unionist and pro-Empire newspaper.³⁰ It carried a regular ‘police expert’ column which advised potential applicants on the processes involved by means of published responses to postal queries submitted by members of the public, under the guise of which it very occasionally republished BSPP advertisements that had recently appeared in the British press.³¹

Mervyn Wingfield did not, in the event, pursue a career in colonial service. Ironically, given his socio-economic status, his decision to pursue a colonial career had a greater economic dimension than most. The Powerscourt estate was in dire financial difficulties due to a combination of recent ancestral extravagance and the compulsory purchase of tracts of its lands under the terms of the 1923 Land Law (Commission) Act. By the time of Wingfield’s enlistment, his father ‘had begun to see himself as a poor man, whose under-qualified son was going to have to find a job’.³² He first worked as a recruiting sergeant in Northern Ireland before going to the Sudan to work on a cotton plantation but he was let go due to ‘depressed conditions’. One year later he joined the BSPP. As his father told the press, ‘there was nothing else

³⁰ While Todd Andrews’ description of the *Irish Times*’ readership under editor, John Healy, who died in May 1934 as ‘almost exclusively ... Church of Ireland clerics, Trinity dons and the remaining occupants of the “big house” and their minions’ is undoubtedly exaggerated, its editorial outlook was defined by what the newspaper itself subsequently referred to as ‘West-Britonism’. According to Fearghal McGarry, ‘its price of threepence [also] restricted its readership to the professional classes’. Mark O’Brien, *The Irish Times: a history* (Dublin, 2008), pp 66-7, 80-1; Fearghal McGarry, ‘Irish newspapers and the Spanish Civil War’ in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxiii, no. 129 (2002), p. 71.

³¹ See, for example, *Irish Times*, 9 Dec. 1933, 9 Nov. 1935, 25 Jan. 1936. This column had been running since 1910 when it was entitled ‘R.I.C. and Police Expert’.

³² Penny Perrick, *Something to hide: the life of Sheila Wingfield, Viscountess Powerscourt* (Dublin, 2007), p. 37.

for him to do; jobs are difficult to find now'.³³ Indeed Wingfield resigned from the BSPP after just five months to marry Sheila Beddington, a wealthy heiress to whom he had become engaged while in Palestine and who quickly provided the capital which saved the Powerscourt estate from ruin.³⁴

4.3.2 'Ex-soldiers dressed in police uniform': *The Arab Revolt*

The profile of Irish BSPP enlistments altered considerably during the years of the Arab Revolt, the result of a dramatic increase in the numbers of serving soldiers and ex-servicemen recruited. While, as noted above, a small number of Irish ex-servicemen had been recruited by the BSPP prior to April 1936, they accounted for 15 per cent of all Irish enlistments in the latter half of that year. This figure climbed to 50 per cent in 1937 and 99 per cent in 1938 before falling to 82 per cent in 1939. With three-quarters of Irish enlistments during the Arab Revolt taking place in 1938-9, the overall figure stood at 85 per cent for the entire period. This reflected the official recruitment policy of the BSPP during this time. While Sir Charles Tegart, in his capacity as advisor to the Palestine Police, recommended the recruitment of secondary school graduates for the C.I.D. and other key positions, he urged that serving soldiers and ex-servicemen be specifically targeted for the regular force in the belief that their military training and experience made them more suited than civilians to confronting

³³ *Irish Independent*, 1 Sept. 1932. Alvin Jackson has noted the manner in which colonial service sometimes served as 'a form of outdoor relief for impoverished Irish gentlemen'. Alvin Jackson, 'Ireland, the union and the empire, 1800-1960' in Kevin Kenny (ed.), *Ireland and the British empire* (Oxford, 2004), pp 123-53, at p. 140. See also Jeffery, 'Introduction' to *An Irish empire*, p. 17.

³⁴ Wingfield became the 9th Viscount Powerscourt in 1947. Morton's claim that the thirty-strong draft with which he was recruited included 'the heir of an impoverished Earl' is a reference to Wingfield: although originally recruited in 1930, Morton left the BSPP in early 1932 but re-enlisted within months. *Irish Times*, 1 Sept, 10 Nov. 1932; Morton, *Just the job*, p. 19. See also Imray, *Policeman in Palestine*, p. 20 and *Palestine Police Magazine*, June 1947, p. 1.

the challenges presented by the continuing Arab insurgency.³⁵

This mass enlistment of what the high commissioner, Sir Harold MacMichael, referred to as 'in effect ex-soldiers dressed in police uniform' altered the BSPP's Irish contingent in three ways.³⁶ First, it considerably raised its age profile: prior to the Arab Revolt, the average age of Irish enlistments had been 22.5 years but this increased to 27.5 years during the period of the revolt itself. Secondly, it led to a significant increase in the numbers enlisting from Northern Ireland; these accounted for 45 per cent of the total number of Irish enlistments in both 1937 and 1938, rising to 74 per cent in 1939. This led in turn to a commensurate increase in the numbers from the urban working class: 77 per cent of Northern Irish enlistments during the Arab Revolt came from this background, two-thirds of these from working class areas of Belfast alone where a survey conducted in 1933-8 found that 36 per cent of those assessed were living in absolute poverty.³⁷ Thirdly, it changed the demographic from which enlistments from the Irish Free State were drawn. While the Irish middle-class continued to provide recruits during this period, an examination of BSPP personnel files and civil registration records indicates that the overwhelming majority (82 per cent) of enlistments was now drawn from the Catholic small farming and urban working class stock which had, since the late 1920s, been providing the British armed forces with most of their 'southern' Irish recruits. The change in socio-economic status of Irish Free State enlistments caused by the recruitment of soldiers and ex-servicemen was underscored by their level of education: not only did the percentage of recruits with a secondary education fall to 23 per cent but one-third of the remaining 77 per cent had a primary schooling so basic that they achieved only third-

³⁵ Cited in Krozier, 'Dowbiggan to Tegart', p. 128.

³⁶ MacMichael to MacDonald, 8 Feb. 1939 (TNA, CO 733/389/13/35).

³⁷ Diarmuid Ferriter, *The transformation of Ireland, 1900-2000* (London, 2005), p. 434.

class army certificates of education during their often lengthy military service, a qualification described by the *Journal of the Army Educational Corps* in 1935 as roughly equivalent to ‘the standard one expected of a boy of 11’ in terms of literacy and numeracy.³⁸ Just 5 per cent held a first-class army certificate without which Spicer, in an attempt to maintain the ‘quality’ of his recruits, had initially insisted ex-servicemen would not be accepted.³⁹

The factors which motivated Irish soldiers and ex-servicemen to enlist were essentially economic in nature. A mixture of farmers, labourers (who comprised one-third of the total), factory workers, shop assistants, iron moulders, platers, bricklayers and driver/mechanics, economic imperatives had most likely driven them to join the British armed forces in the first place and, indeed, also kept them there – 70 per cent had served or were serving for seven years or more. In the case of ex-servicemen who, in terms of Irish BSPP enlistments, outnumbered serving soldiers by more than two-to-one during this period, the persistence of economic problems, particularly north of the border, meant that these imperatives still applied when they were discharged.⁴⁰ BSPP personnel records indicate that 54 per cent had been released from the army in the twelve months prior to joining the force: almost all were unemployed when they enlisted or had been able to secure temporary work only. Similarly with the 46 per cent who were a longer time out of the armed forces, ranging from two years to twelve. Just over half of this number was unemployed when they applied to join the

³⁸ Cited in Jim Beach, ‘Soldier education in the British army, 1920-2007’ in *History of Education*, xxxvii, no. 5 (Sept. 2008), p. 688. See also A. C. T. White, *The story of army education, 1643-1963* (London, 1963), p. 71.

³⁹ According to David French, even the first-class army certificate was an unexceptional educational qualification, establishing ‘a standard of knowledge that was about a year below that of a G.C.E. ordinary level examination’. David French, *Army, empire and the Cold War: the British army and military policy, 1945-1971* (Oxford, 2012), p. 178.

⁴⁰ The economic depression in 1930s Northern Ireland was ‘unrelenting ... Between 1931 and 1939, 27 per cent of the insured workforce was unemployed’ and almost 30 per cent of insured industrial workers were jobless in February 1938. Bardon, *Ulster*, p. 529.

BSPP, citing reasons such as ‘slackness of work’ and ‘depression in trade’ while a further one-third was engaged in seasonal or casual work. For men such as these, the BSPP evidently provided much-needed employment.⁴¹ The case of Edward Smith from Ballymena was typical: he served twelve years in the British army before becoming a coal miner in 1937. However, ‘a coal slump was on so he turned to the Palestine Police’.⁴²

The reasons why Irish-born serving soldiers decided to transfer to the BSPP during the Arab Revolt are less easy to establish. But the fact that their average age was 29.5 years and that two-thirds had been serving with the British armed forces for seven years or more may indicate that they were in sight of the end of their service. To men such as these, the BSPP offered, not just the chance of continued employment unavailable at home at the time, but what one described as an opportunity to ‘better’ himself through enhanced career prospects and increased social status.⁴³ Although Arthur Koestler placed the BSPP at ‘the lowest level’ of Palestine’s British social hierarchy, it still had higher status than the army.⁴⁴ The comparative ‘cachet’ it bestowed was alluded to by Binsley in describing his first sailing to Palestine: ‘To us, the meals on the *Orama* seemed wonderful after army fare and to be called “sir” by the stewards made us feel good: somewhat like being in the officers’ mess’.⁴⁵ Central to this was the remuneration on offer. Anderson and Killingray describe the colonial police as a ‘Cinderella service’ in that ‘conditions of work and terms of pay rarely

⁴¹ For other examples, see ‘Training and experience’ sections of BSPP attestation forms included in CEM, PPAPR files for BDE, Dublin; EAS, Belfast; RAJ, Belfast; AAW, Portadown; MDR, Newtownards; BTE, Tyrone; MDP, Dublin.

⁴² Smith was initially turned down by the BSPP as he did not meet the physical standard. However, he appealed to Sir Charles Tegart for whom his wife worked as housekeeper in London, promising ‘to do well ... if accepted’. He was and did, being promoted to sergeant in 1946 and receiving the George Medal in January 1947 for rescuing three soldiers from the rubble of the King David Hotel six months earlier. HM, Gloucestershire, Correspondence with author, 7 Aug. 2013.

⁴³ DBJ, Antrim, Attestation form (CEM, PPAPR, DJB).

⁴⁴ Koestler, *Promise*, p. 15. See also Sherman, *Mandate days*, pp 33-4.

⁴⁵ Binsley, *Palestine Police*, p. 10.

[kept] pace with local civil servants' but the BSPP was in fact relatively well-paid, certainly compared to the army.⁴⁶ The basic monthly salary for constables in the 1930s was £11 'and all found' (after paying their 'dhoby' and a voluntary mess contribution they were left, according to Spicer, with 'an average of £10 a month pocket money') and this could be supplemented by allowances. Indeed, Spicer claimed to have been told 'times out of number' by ex-servicemen recruited into the BSPP that 'they have never had so much money to spend in their lives'.⁴⁷ This undoubtedly provided an incentive to Irish soldiers, particularly those serving with units such as the Royal Irish Regiment, the Royal Ulster Rifles and the Irish Guards which performed tours of duty in Palestine during the Arab Revolt and were therefore aware of the remuneration on offer in the BSPP. Indeed, 45 per cent of Irish soldiers and ex-servicemen recruited into the BSPP at this time had served in one of these three regiments: moreover, all but one of those recruited from the Royal Irish Regiment and the Irish Guards were either what were termed 'local enlistments' (i.e. recruited while stationed in Palestine) or were recruited shortly after their return to the U.K.⁴⁸

An indication that the desire of many Irish soldiers and ex-servicemen to 'better' themselves through increased pay and enhanced prospects was influenced by their families' poor financial circumstances is provided by data on home allotments, a sum of money deducted from a policeman's salary at source by the Crown Agents for the Colonies and remitted to a designated recipient. A survey of BSPP personnel

⁴⁶ Anderson & Killingray, 'Consent, coercion', p. 11. According to Spicer, 'general conditions' in the BSPP also compared 'favourably with any other British Police serving under the Colonial Office'. Spicer to Wauchope, 5 Dec. 1934 (TNA, CO 733/250/7/39).

⁴⁷ *The Times*, 27 Jan. 1938.

⁴⁸ The Royal Ulster Rifles served in Palestine from November 1936 until the end of the Arab Revolt. The Irish Guards, stationed in Cairo since 1936, was sent to Palestine from July to October 1938 while the Royal Irish Regiment arrived as the Irish Guards was leaving, remaining until the end of March 1939. For the operational histories of these regiments see David Murphy, *The Irish brigades, 1685-2006: a gazetteer of Irish military service, past and present* (Dublin, 2007).

records indicates that almost 70 per cent of those recruited between April 1936 and December 1939 paid a home allotment, 20 per cent higher than the figure for British enlistments. Sixty per cent of these payments were remitted to parents or persons acting *in loco parentis* such as aunts/uncles and siblings and a further 20 per cent was paid to wives or fiancées.⁴⁹ The fact that 55 per cent of Irish enlistments initially remitted at least half of their monthly salaries, the maximum proportion permissible, and that 10 per cent applied to send more, suggests that this money was required back in Ireland, particularly given that, in some cases, correspondence in the personnel files of the allottees shows that they felt that they could not afford the sums they were sending.⁵⁰

Generally speaking, the small number of civilian enlistments during the years of the Arab Revolt (they accounted for just 15 per cent of total Irish enlistments) had a higher socio-economic status than serving soldiers and ex-servicemen. The majority was drawn from middle class family backgrounds and were themselves working in what would today be termed more 'white collar' roles; managers, clerks, insurance agents, commercial travellers and salesmen as well as a few third-level students. Three-quarters had received an academic secondary education or higher and several came from families with a tradition of Crown service. The factors influencing their decisions to enlist were also similar to those which operated on civilian enlistments in the September 1929-April 1936 period: for most the BSPP provided, not just an opportunity for adventure, but 'a good opening' to a respectable career. Thomas D. from Downpatrick was probably typical of these men. The son of an R.U.C. (and former R.I.C.) sergeant, he was, according to his son:

⁴⁹ The other 20 per cent of Irish home allotments were paid mainly to 'self' or friends.

⁵⁰ See, for example, BLJ, Limerick, to inspector-general, 17 Sept. 1941 (CEM, PPAPR, BJJ fo. 17a); DRT, Dublin, to inspector-general, 10 May 1943 (CEM, PPAPR, DRT fo. 29b); CDB, Dublin, to inspector-general, 9 Sept. 1941 (CEM, PPAPR, CDB fo. 6a).

imbued with a desire to see distant lands by an uncle who had served in the Iraqi Camel Corps, and realising the limitations facing him in Ulster (generally speaking and also as a Catholic), [he] travelled to a colonial police recruiting office in Liverpool hoping to go to Hong Kong, Malaya, Kenya or Southern Rhodesia, but they were recruiting only for Palestine.

After five years in the BSPP he transferred to the clerical establishment of the Palestine Government where he worked until the end of the Mandate, after which he served as an immigration officer in Tanganyika and Brunei.⁵¹ Indeed, 55 per cent of Irish civilian enlistments during the 1936-9 period made the colonial service their career, transferring to territories as diverse as Rhodesia, Zanzibar, Hong Kong, Papua New Guinea and the Caribbean islands when their contracts in Palestine expired.

4.3.3 World War II

Almost one-fifth of the Irishmen who enlisted in the BSPP did so during the Second World War. As Table 4 illustrates, enlistment levels fluctuated year on year, and over half of the total number joining did so in the final twelve months of the conflict.

Table 4: Percentage of total Irish BSPP enlistments recruited annually, 1940-45

Year	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
Total	15.5	4.5	12.5	14	29	24.5

Enlistments from Northern Ireland initially outstripped those from the twenty-six counties of southern Ireland (referred to hereafter simply as ‘Ireland’) by almost two-to-one and, despite a more even balance in the numbers recruited from each side of the border from 1942 onwards, Northern Ireland had provided 55 per cent of total Irish enlistments by May 1945.

Serving soldiers and ex-servicemen accounted for just over half of Irish BSPP

⁵¹ Michael F., South Africa, Correspondence with author, 5 Dec. 2011; Thomas D., Palestine Police pension record no. 2242 (CEM, Palestine Police archive, Pension records [PENREC], Box no. 4).

enlistments (51.5 per cent) in the 1940-5 period, with the former outnumbering the latter by almost five to one. The socio-economic profile of those recruited from Northern Ireland was broadly similar to that of those who had enlisted during the Arab Revolt, the great majority (81 per cent) being drawn from the urban working classes - unskilled or semi-skilled workers such as labourers, machinists, riveters, welders, moulders and mechanics from the manufacturing sector and industry. However, there was some change to the profile of soldiers and ex-servicemen recruited from Ireland in that the proportion drawn from Catholic small farming and working class stock fell to 64 per cent, eighteen percentage points lower than the figure for the 1936-9 period. That this change was reflective of the increasing influence of non-economic factors on the decisions of citizens of Ireland to join the British armed forces at this time (primarily the quest for adventure, but also endo-recruitment, pro-British loyalties and even anti-Nazi idealism) was underscored by the fact that almost all of the remaining 36 per cent came from more middle-class backgrounds – a mixture of Catholics and Protestants employed in ‘white collar’ roles, three-quarters of whom had received secondary education or higher.⁵²

Most of the relatively small number of Irish ex-servicemen recruited by the BSPP during the war were most likely looking for work. Indeed, almost all enlisted in 1944-5, having been recently demobilised in the U.K. where, as the War Office subsequently noted in the context of BSPP recruitment, ‘employment at a reasonable wage [was] not so easy to find’.⁵³ Although the recall of army reservists and re-enlistment of other ex-servicemen greatly limited the numbers of Irish ex-servicemen available for or desirous of joining the BSPP in the early years of the war, a small

⁵² For discussions of the reasons for which citizens of Ireland volunteered for the British armed forces during the war, see Richard Doherty, *Irish men and women in the Second World War* (Dublin, 1999), pp 27-46 and Kelly, *Returning home*, pp 28-34.

⁵³ Acton to Gater, 5 Dec. 1945 (TNA, CO 537/1698/22-3).

number did enlist at this time.⁵⁴ Their reasons for doing so are difficult to discern, their personnel files providing few indications as to the factors at play. However, the fact that they were with few exceptions from Northern Ireland which experienced a steady increase in unemployment during the first year of the war is probably significant in this regard.⁵⁵ The recruitment of serving soldiers into the BSPP began in 1942 as part of the Palestine Government's attempt to fill 600 vacant positions, more than one-third of them resulting from a spate of resignations and dismissals from the force during the previous two years.⁵⁶ Twenty-five per cent of the total number from both sides of the border who left the British armed forces to join the BSPP during the war did so in 1942-3 following calls for volunteers from the War Office. A further 60 per cent enlisted in 1944, the overwhelming majority in response to a recruitment campaign for the newly-formed P.M.F. which was conducted amongst serving members of the British armed forces. This figure declined to 12 per cent in 1945 as the conflict in Europe wound down: although the War Office agreed to release serving soldiers who volunteered for the BSPP at this time, most had their sights set on demobilisation rather than further overseas service. With few exceptions, all serving soldiers who transferred to the BSPP in the 1940-5 period had joined the army prior to or in the early months of the war, with 40 per cent having served eight years or more. For some, the BSPP provided a welcome respite from military life and the rigours of war.⁵⁷ For others, it offered the chance of continued employment when the conflict came to its inevitable end: indeed, in March 1944, the then inspector-general, John Rymer-Jones, noted that the decisions of a recent draft of 400 recruits had been

⁵⁴ An estimated 20,000 Irish reservists from both sides of the border were called up in the first year of the war. Clair Wills, *That neutral island: a cultural history of Ireland during the Second World War* (London, 2007), p. 51.

⁵⁵ Unemployment had reached almost 72,000 by November 1940. Bardon, *Ulster*, p. 562.

⁵⁶ The reasons for these resignations and dismissals are discussed in Chapter V below.

⁵⁷ For an account of how disillusionment with military life led one British-born soldier to volunteer for the P.M.F. in August 1944, see Wood, *One life*, pp 109-11.

‘influenced no doubt by the desire to get settled in a good postwar job at the earliest possible date’.⁵⁸ For men like CDT from Dublin, it also offered attractive terms and, most importantly, prospects: ‘my ambition was to make a career of this type of life and ultimately obtain a commission and a transfer to another colonial police force’.⁵⁹ Indeed, the facts that the ‘pay and living conditions offered by the Palestine Police [were] superior to anything offered by the Forces’ and that the prospect of advancement to commissioned rank was ‘better than the possibility of corresponding advancement in the Forces under peace conditions’ was noted by BSPP recruiters in 1946.⁶⁰

Just under half of Irish wartime BSPP enlistments were civilians. Initially Northern Irish civilian enlistments far exceeded those from Ireland and, despite a marked increase in the percentage figure originating from south of the border from 1943 onwards, they still accounted for 60 per cent of the overall wartime total. The level of civilian enlistments was greatly boosted in the final months of the war. Restrictions on the recruitment of operational troops in the run-up to the Allied invasion of Nazi-occupied Europe brought P.M.F. recruitment to a shuddering stop before even half of its 2,000-strong establishment had been filled, resulting in the launch of a fresh recruitment campaign by the Crown Agents in December 1944 which also targeted civilians. This saw advertisements placed in a wide range of British newspapers and magazines. That two of Northern Ireland’s main dailies, the *Belfast Telegraph* and the *Irish News*, were included brought this campaign to the attention of men in the six counties while the sale of British newspapers in Ireland alerted prospective candidates there too. The British press had always been popular

⁵⁸ Rymer-Jones, ‘Extract from report on organisation of Police’, 14 Mar. 1944 (TNA, CO 733/450/4/31).

⁵⁹ CDT to inspector-general, 22 May 1946 (CEM, PPAPR, CDT).

⁶⁰ L. L. Brighton, ‘Palestine Police Force recruitment campaign: publicity proposals’, 14 Feb. 1946, p. 4 (TNA, CO 733/451/8/154-66).

south of the border: British dailies accounted for an estimated 38 per cent of the daily newspaper market in the early 1930s and the Sundays sold an average of 350,000 copies per week, yielding a potential readership of one million (or one-third of the Irish Free State's population).⁶¹ The imposition of increased tariffs on imported papers by the new Fianna Fáil government in 1932 and 1934 led to a precipitous decline in circulation which was compounded by the onset of the war. Nevertheless, certain titles, particularly the Sundays (which were exempted from the tariffs), maintained healthy sales during the war years, the adverse impact of distribution problems and Irish press censorship on circulation largely offset by the withdrawal of other popular titles such as the *News of the World* from the Irish market and the hunger for 'foreign' news.⁶² As is noted below, the British Sunday newspapers were one of the main sources through which men from Ireland became aware of BSPP recruitment in 1946. That they were also important in this regard eighteen months earlier was subsequently acknowledged by the Crown Agents which noted receiving 'many applications in recent years from southern Irishmen as the result of advertisements in Northern Ireland and in English newspapers' and in fact almost half of civilian enlistments during the war years did so in the aftermath of the December 1944 recruitment campaign as did 35 per cent of those recruited in Northern Ireland.⁶³

The reasons Irish civilians joined the BSPP during the war are difficult to

⁶¹ Kieran Woodman, *Media control in Ireland, 1923-1983* (Galway, 1985), p. 47; John Horgan, *Irish media: a critical history since 1922* (London, 2001), p. 35.

⁶² Irish circulation figures for the British press are not available for 1944 so the readership of those that carried the advertisement for BSPP in December cannot be determined definitively. However figures compiled by the office of the Irish press censor in April 1940 provide some indication as to their circulation during the war. Although the Northern Irish dailies and the *Manchester Guardian* had modest circulation, each selling an average of 3,400 copies a day, the circulation of the *Sunday Times* and *The People* regularly exceeded 220,000 copies per week. Robert Cole, *Propaganda, censorship and Irish neutrality in the Second World War* (Edinburgh, 2006), p. 36; Donal Ó Drisceoil, *Censorship in Ireland, 1939-1945: neutrality, politics and society* (Cork, 1996), pp 188-199.

⁶³ Crown Agents to Gray, 25 May 1946 (TNA, CO 537/1697/68). The Crown Agents received over 6,100 applications for the BSPP as a result of the December 1944 recruitment campaign of which 552 were selected for interview. Anderson to Eastwood, 3 Apr. 1945 (TNA, CO 537/1698/43).

determine: personal testimonies from this period are rare and personnel files provide little evidence of underlying patterns or trends in this regard. However, purely economic imperatives were unlikely to have been the proximate cause. Half of enlistments originating in Ireland came from middle class backgrounds and were themselves employed in business or the professions, their relatively high socio-economic status underscored by their possession of an academic secondary education. Another one-quarter had attended a vocational school and were in skilled and stable employment in Ireland while a further one-fifth was in well-paid employment in the U.K., having been recruited by the British ministry of labour to work in the burgeoning war economy in the early part of the conflict. The majority of civilian enlistments from Northern Ireland, where the demands of the war economy saw the high unemployment rate of 1940 fall to just 5 per cent by 1944, also had relatively high socio-economic status. Sixty-four per cent were employed in supervisory or clerical grades in manufacturing and industry, while another 24 per cent were drawn from commerce and the professions. Moreover, 58 per cent had secondary school education (which was, as in Ireland, fee-paying at this time), two and a half times the percentage figure among soldiers and ex-servicemen.⁶⁴ Furthermore, just 7 per cent were Catholics who, generally speaking, had a lower socio-economic status than their non-Catholic neighbours.⁶⁵

Why, then, did these men join? Tracey Connolly identifies ‘a greater quest for social and economic advancement’ as a contributory factor to the decision of an

⁶⁴ Writing to Sir Herbert Dowbiggan in 1944, John Rymer-Jones noted that while recent drafts from the military were of most excellent quality, ‘their educational standard [was] a bit low’. Dowbiggan was sitting on a selection board in London at the time. Rymer-Jones to Dowbiggan, 3 May 1944 (TNA, CO 733/450/4/26).

⁶⁵ That the low percentage of Catholic enlistments in the BSPP during the war did not derive from a reluctance to join British forces is evidenced by the fact that Catholics were volunteering for the British army ‘out of proportion to their numbers in the population and in an environment that was especially unsympathetic to them’. Brian Girvin, *The Emergency: neutral Ireland, 1939-45* (London, 2006), p. 263.

estimated 198,000 citizens of Ireland to emigrate to wartime Britain and many Irish BSPP enlistments from both sides of the border evidently saw the force in a similar light.⁶⁶ The December 1944 press advertisement not only detailed the attractive remuneration on offer, but promised ‘good opportunity of promotion for the right men’ and some certainly joined in pursuit of a policing career.⁶⁷ Several had been rejected by the R.U.C. for failing to meet its minimum height requirement or were recruited directly from the Northern Irish police services, suggesting that they sought career entry or advancement through a move to the colonial police. Almost all remained in policing after leaving the force. Indeed one-third of all Northern Irish civilian wartime enlistments transferred to other police services after Palestine as did 41 per cent of enlistments from Ireland.

Other Irish enlistments, particularly those who were recruited from Ireland in the first half of 1945, were simply seeking adventure. Their imaginations enthralled by the war, they saw the BSPP as a means of escape from a country which, while clearly not the ‘Plato’s cave’ described by F. S. L. Lyons, began to appear to them increasingly cloistered and confined, the sense of insularity fostered by Irish neutrality underscored by the stringent censorship regime and the strict regulation of travel between Ireland and Britain. Indeed, the great majority of those recruited from Ireland at this time never lived permanently there again. The quest for excitement and adventure was also a factor in Northern Ireland where their exemption from conscription left its young men with a choice as to how they satisfied this desire. That they would choose the colonial police over the regular army was perhaps unsurprising

⁶⁶ Connolly cites as evidence an article in *The Bell* by Seán Ó Faoláin in 1943 in which he makes this point, writing that ‘men are leaving home who were content enough to stay hitherto’ due to ‘the seed of ambition’. Tracey Connolly, ‘Irish workers in Britain during World War Two’ in Brian Girvin and Geoffrey Roberts, *Ireland and the Second World War, politics, society and remembrance* (Dublin, 2000), p. 128.

⁶⁷ *Belfast Telegraph*, 11 Dec. 1944; *Irish News*, 11 Dec. 1944.

in an area of the U.K. where levels of voluntary recruitment into the British armed forces ‘remained embarrassingly low’, exceeding one thousand per month on just three occasions in 1941-2 despite first-hand experience of the Blitz, and where even the ‘civil defence services continued to experience difficulty in attracting sufficient personnel’.⁶⁸ Moreover, the fact that advertisements for the BSPP presented a tour of duty as ‘important National Service’ allowed Northern Irish enlistments to claim they were, albeit belatedly, “doing their bit”.

4.4 The postwar period

Almost half (47 per cent) of the total number of Irishmen who enlisted in the BSPP did so during the final two years of the Mandate. The catalyst for their recruitment was an intensive recruitment campaign launched by the Crown Agents for the Colonies in the summer of 1946. Despite the compulsory retention of BSPP personnel during the war years, force strength had been severely depleted through mass resignations and natural wastage, while attempts to make good deficiencies through recruitment had been only partially successful. For instance, the recruitment of 705 new BSPP constables in 1945 was offset by the mass departure of men who could no longer be compulsorily retained.⁶⁹ By the end of the year, the BSPP was still 48 per cent under strength when the intensification of Jewish terrorist activity meant that a full establishment was, more than ever, required. The sense of despair felt on the ground was articulated five months later by Michael McConnell, then on the cusp of retirement as deputy inspector-general of the force:

⁶⁸ Bardon, *Ulster*, p. 562; Brian Barton, *Northern Ireland in the Second World War* (Belfast, 1995), p. 52. See also Robert Fisk, *In time of war: Ireland, Ulster and the price of neutrality, 1939-45* (Dublin, 1983), pp 522-4.

⁶⁹ In November 1945 alone, ‘497 men whose services were compulsorily retained or who did not wish to continue to serve were discharged’ and a further 87 were waiting to be released. Note on BSPP recruitment, undated, c. Feb. 1946 (TNA, CO 537/1697/114).

The manpower situation is going from bad to worse every day and we are at our wits end in finding ways and means for stretching further our already over-strained British police resources. It is most alarming and distressing ... On the eve of our departure from Palestine and the end of our active connections with the Force, the Inspector-General [Rymer-Jones] and myself are most depressed at the outlook, and fear that unless recruitment improves considerably at once, irreparable damage will be done to a great Force.⁷⁰

4.4.1 'A full blast campaign'

McConnell's despair notwithstanding, efforts to tackle the BSPP manpower crisis were already underway by this time. In January 1946, Rymer-Jones, accompanied by assistant superintendent Lt.-Col. Leslie Brighton, had travelled to London where he met with representatives of both the Colonial Office and the Crown Agents to formulate a response. It was agreed that no improvement in the situation could be expected without a full-scale promotional campaign. In the words of the assistant under-secretary at the Colonial Office, Trafford Smith:

The fact must be faced squarely that we seem to have exhausted the possibilities of police recruitment propaganda in a limited sphere without a publicity campaign ... [Thus] it is necessary to attack on a much wider front by stimulating the interest of the general public in the doings of the Palestine Police'.⁷¹

This was to be achieved through the wide dissemination of information through posters, broadcasts, lectures and a short promotional film. This campaign, to be co-ordinated by a professional publicity officer, would, it was hoped, not only fill the 2,613 immediate vacancies which existed but 'establish the publicity machinery which [would] provide automatically some 500 recruits per annum to replace estimated annual wastage and so maintain the force at full strength'.⁷²

⁷⁰ McConnell to Cafferata, 7 May 1946 (CEM, PENREC, Box no. 7, 'R. O. Cafferata' file).

⁷¹ Smith, Colonial Office minute, 11 Jan. 1946 (TNA, CO 733/451/8/2).

⁷² Minutes of meeting on Palestine Police recruitment held at the Colonial Office, 10 Jan. 1946 (TNA,

The possibility of a large-scale press campaign was also discussed. But, given the scarcity of newsprint in the postwar period and the competition for advertising space to which this gave rise among government departments and the armed forces, it was decided to leave any final decision to the publicity officer it was proposed to hire. In the event, the Colonial Office decided to entrust the campaign to an advertising agency instead and engaged the services of Mather & Crowther Ltd in April 1946.⁷³ Despite acknowledging that ‘the famine in newspaper space at present available [would] seriously restrict [its] extent’, the agency made a four-month long press campaign the primary plank of its strategy.⁷⁴ Launched in mid-June, this saw the placing of advertisements for the BSPP in eleven national Sunday newspapers and 96 provincial titles, as well as a number of men’s magazines and youth publications. A supplementary marketing campaign consisting largely of posters and cinema slides was undertaken in cities and towns with populations exceeding 50,000 persons: the slides were shown in 400 cinemas and 50 theatres throughout the summer of 1946 while posters were displayed at 9,000 sites nationwide and were perceived to be so successful in generating applications that postering was extended to smaller towns in October.⁷⁵ Much additional effort was expended on encouraging schoolboys to join the BSPP in lieu of their national service in the belief that it was ‘the 16-18 year old field of boys setting out for the first time in life, from which the best recruits [were] to be drawn’.⁷⁶ To this end, 1,350 school headmasters and 964 youth club leaders were

CO 733/451/8/171-3); Brighton, ‘BSPP publicity proposals’, p. 2.

⁷³ Mather & Crowther was the leading advertising agency in London and had previously carried out several successful publicity campaigns for the Government. By the late 1950s, it had earned a reputation as ‘the leading creative agency’ in the U.K. Jeremy Tunstall, *The advertising man in London advertising agencies* (London, 1964), p. 66.

⁷⁴ Boggan to Hall, 10 Apr. 1946 (TNA, CO 733/451/8/123).

⁷⁵ Mather & Crowther, ‘Interim report on Palestine Police recruitment campaign’, 9 July 1946 (TNA, CO 733/451/9/96-100).

⁷⁶ Smith, Colonial Office minute, 11 Jan. 1946 (TNA, CO 733/451/8/2). According to Smith this was the view of Rymer-Jones and was accepted by the Colonial Office and Crown Agents for the colonies. See also Brighton, ‘BSPP publicity proposals’, p. 3.

TO MEN BETWEEN 18 AND 28
(INCLUDING THOSE ABOUT TO BE CALLED UP)

How to Get Into a Crack Force —Earn £20 a month & All Found

*A Vital Job — a MAN'S Job —
Ask yourself "Would I Suit?"*

If your health and intelligence are good, if you're single and want a *man's* job — one of the most vital jobs in the British Empire — if you like the glamour of serving in a crack force in a country of sand dunes and orange groves, historic towns and modern settlements — if you prefer this type of life on good pay *that you can save* . . . here's how you can get into the Palestine Police Force.



A typical job of work in Jerusalem — a smart well-trained constable controls traffic of all kinds in the sunny streets of the capital.

THE FACTS

(Parents also please read)

The Palestine picture is not as some often imagine — one of constant turbulence, but young men of integrity and intelligence are needed to police it — fairly and firmly. Men of the right character (toughness alone is not called for) are hand-picked and carefully looked after. If you think you're the right type of young man for the Palestine Police send off this coupon *now*.

CONDITIONS: You must be physically fit, be 5 ft. 6 ins. or over and have normal eyesight.

PAY: £20 a month to start with. Extra pay for specialists (you are given training first!) Pensions for long service.

ALL FOUND: Smart uniform. Good rations, excellent accommodation, skilled medical treatment. (Your pay is your own!)

LEAVE: 2 months at home after 2 years. 3 months after 3 years. 2 weeks per year local leave (visits to Egypt, Syria, Cyprus, etc.) Camels, horses, cars, motor-cycles, speed boats, radio, sport, etc.



The Desert Patrol on the watch for hashish smugglers. On this job camels are more suited than are modern trucks.

JOIN

THE PALESTINE POLICE FORCE

AND HAVE A MAN'S JOB!

(Remember this when registering for National Service)

COUPON Dept. of Crown Agents for Colonies, 4, Millbank, London, S.W.1.

Please send me illustrated prospectus and application form: I enclose my
NAME.....
ADDRESS.....
AGE.....

Figure 10: Palestine Police recruitment advertisement, c. July 1946 (Author's collection)

circularised by Raymond Cafferata, now head of a newly-opened Palestine Police office in London, requesting their co-operation in this regard. He also undertook a lecture tour of youth clubs and schools as part of this process and advertisements were placed in school magazines.⁷⁷

In terms of stimulating interest in the BSPP, the 1946 recruitment campaign was deemed a considerable success, generating 29,380 enquiries by the end of what the Treasury described as the ‘full blast campaign’, i.e. mid-June to the end of September 1946.⁷⁸ Half of these were a demonstrably direct result of the efforts of

*Table 5: Monthly data on BSPP recruitment during Mather & Crowther campaign, 1946-47*⁷⁹

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Interviewed	541	1,249	712	759	487	506	456	509	379	237
Selected	207	562	514	461	324	274	236	254	186	138
Appointed	69	71	129	342	243	368	199	133	171	121

Mather & Crowther as key numbers or coupons provided in newspaper advertisements were enclosed. The extent to which the remaining 50 per cent were a consequence of the agency’s campaign is unclear but, despite claims to the contrary by the Crown Agents (which was inveterately hostile to what it saw as Mather & Crowther’s encroachment on its territory), it was doubtless significant.⁸⁰ However, the number of enquiries received was just 15 per cent of the 200,000 which, based on data on normal BSPP applications to appointments ratios provided it by Lt.-Col. Brighton, Mather & Crowther originally told the Colonial Office would be needed to secure the

⁷⁷ ‘By taking advantage of a specialised and manly service, that period [i.e. national service] can be turned into an excellent mental and physical training ground for their after life’. Cafferata, Circular to school headmasters, 28 June 1946 (TNA, CO 733/451/9/102).

⁷⁸ Russell Edmunds to Smith, 13 Sept. 1946 (TNA, CO 733/451/9/38). The campaign was scaled back in October (insertions were restricted to one or two per month in the Sundays, six national dailies and just six of the original 106 provincial newspapers) and ended in March 1947.

⁷⁹ Source: Monthly Colonial Office statistics (TNA CO 733/451/7 – CO 733/451/9).

⁸⁰ Colonial Office minutes, 6, 9 Aug. 1946 (TNA, CO 733/451/9/6-8).

required 2,600 recruits and around which it designed its marketing campaign.⁸¹ Furthermore, of the 24,128 enquirers to whom application forms were issued (the remainder being ineligible to apply on grounds such as age, marital status, occupation or illiteracy), just 6,018 were completed and returned, but fewer than half of this number even qualified for interview. That a similar proportion of applicants were deemed 'unqualified' for interview during the course of 1945 and the first half of 1946 (the Crown Agents received 9,391 completed applications between January 1945 and the end of June 1946 of which 4,719 qualified for interview) suggests that the publicity campaign had essentially failed to target its intended audience and, indeed, the campaigns' director at the British government's Central Office of Information (C.O.I.) suggested that Mather & Crowther's choice of media may have resulted in 'a large number of enquiries from an unsuitable type'.⁸² The number of actual appointments was also less than satisfactory, particularly given the cost per recruit incurred by the campaign which, according to C.O.I. estimates, was between ten and fifteen times higher than that involved in obtaining a recruit for the armed forces.⁸³ Indeed, the number of appointments during the 'full blast campaign' was much the same as that during the six months prior to its launch when, as the Crown Agents gleefully observed, its 'own modest recruiting arrangements [alone] were in force'.⁸⁴ Mather & Crowther laid the blame for this at the door of the Crown Agents itself, where it claimed that the machinery for dealing with enquiries and applications

⁸¹ Boggan to Hall, 10 Apr. 1946 (TNA, CO 733/451/8/123). It seems likely that Mather & Crowther misunderstood Brighton on this issue. According to the agency, he stated that just one in twenty-five of those interviewed were ultimately appointed to the BSPP but an analysis of the figures for the January 1945-June 1946 period indicates that it was actually one in four, or 25 per cent.

⁸² Shelton, 'Contact report', 7 Mar. 1947 (TNA, CO 537/2268). For data on applications and appointments prior to the Mather & Crowther campaign, see TNA CO 733/451/9/79.

⁸³ The C.O.I. put the cost of recruiting a Palestine policeman at £30 as compared to £2 for a member of the armed forces. However, Mather & Crowther disputed these figures, putting the total cost of its campaign from June 1946 to March 1947 at £21 per recruit. Shelton, 'Contact report', op. cit; Mather & Crowther to Smith, 17 Mar. 1947 (TNA, CO 537/2268).

⁸⁴ Downie to Gater, 2 Oct. 1946 (TNA, CO 733/451/9/33-5).

was inadequate and the approach to interviewing unnecessarily stringent. There was some justice in its complaints about the manner in which applications were processed and the Treasury voiced similar concerns.⁸⁵ In fact Brighton had expressed doubts about the ability of the Crown Agents to cope with the anticipated flood of applications as early as April 1946, leading it to offer guarantees on this point.⁸⁶ But its claim that the conduct of interviews was a contributory factor to the low level of appointments was contradicted by a Colonial Office official who sat in on a series of interviews in mid-August and stated that the standard set was ‘certainly not one anybody could describe as unreasonably high’ and that he ‘entirely agreed with all the decisions taken’.⁸⁷

4.4.2 ‘A ready response’

While the overall effectiveness of Mather & Crowther’s promotional campaign in Britain may be open to question, it undoubtedly contributed in a significant way to enlistments from the island of Ireland. In Northern Ireland, the insertion of advertisements in five daily newspapers with a combined circulation of over 220,000 ensured broad and cross-community coverage, as did the inclusion of Belfast in the supplementary marketing campaign which saw sixty posters displayed around the city. Although Mather & Crowther felt that ‘local papers [had] on the whole failed to produce results commensurate with the expenditure involved’, those in Northern Ireland were relatively successful in this regard. In fact, the *Belfast Telegraph* was, by July 1946, the most successful provincial newspaper in terms of cost per reply, which

⁸⁵ Boggan to Sabine, 30 July 1946; Russell Edmunds to Smith, 13 Sept. 1946 (TNA, CO 733/451/9/82-4, CO 733/451/9/38-9).

⁸⁶ Crown Agents to Rymer-Jones, 8 Apr. 1946 (TNA, CO 537/1697/90).

⁸⁷ Pedler, Colonial Office minute, 17 Aug. 1946 (TNA, CO 733/451/9/63-4).

came in at just one-third of the national average.⁸⁸ And although this cost had doubled by the time the main press campaign finished in mid-September, the paper still outperformed all but four provincial titles in this regard. Other Northern Irish newspapers, while not as successful, also produced relatively good results, with both the *Irish Daily Telegraph* and the *Northern Whig* placed in the top ten.⁸⁹ As a consequence, the *Belfast Telegraph* and the *Northern Whig* were among only seven provincial papers chosen for continued insertions when the press campaign was extended in October 1946.⁹⁰

The impact of Mather & Crowther was even more significant south of the border. Although the agency omitted the twenty-six counties from its plan of campaign, advertisements placed in the Northern Irish and British newspapers resulted in a flood of applications, the mass circulation British Sundays (sales of which soared in the postwar period) being particularly influential in this regard. In fact, all of the Irish former BSPP members interviewed by this author who were resident in Ireland when recruited cited advertisements in British Sunday titles as providing their impetus to apply. The Crown Agents did not keep separate statistics for applications and interviews in Ireland. But the facts that, as Table 5 above illustrates, the opening of interviews for Irish candidates in August 1946 coincided with a large increase in the overall figure for interviews the same month, and that the high figure for appointments in October was attributed to the inclusion of Irishmen recruited as a result, indicate that they were substantial. That the BSPP recruitment

⁸⁸ Mather & Crowther, 'Interim report on recruitment campaign', op. cit.

⁸⁹ The number of traceable responses generated by the Northern Irish dailies between June and September 1946 was as follows: *Belfast Telegraph* (219), *Northern Whig* (126), *Irish News* (49), *Belfast Newsletter* (41), *Irish Daily Telegraph* (40). Mather & Crowther, 'Palestine Police: final cost per reply to completion of returns for first campaign running from mid-June to mid-September 1946', 5 Nov. 1946 (TNA, CO 733/451/10/67-71).

⁹⁰ Boggan to Smith, 8 Oct. 1946 (TNA, CO 733/451/9/24-7); Shelton to Smith, 21 Nov. 1946 (TNA, CO 733/451/10/44).

campaign was ‘meeting with a ready response’ in Ireland at this time was confirmed by the *Irish Times* in a well-sourced report on the issue at the end of August which noted that an estimated ‘several hundred young men’ had applied in the previous few months.⁹¹

Mather & Crowther’s relative success south of the Irish border was largely due to the decision to conduct interviews in Dublin. This decision was taken in the context of an earlier recruitment campaign by the Crown Agents that specifically targeted Ireland. As noted above, the Crown Agents did not, as a rule, place official advertisements for the BSPP in the southern Irish press although the *Irish Times*’ ‘police expert’ column occasionally re-printed those running in Britain. The recruitment crisis of the 1940s led the Crown Agents to reappraise its approach. Ireland’s censorship regime precluded the placing of advertisements in Irish newspapers during the war year but in May 1946 advertisements for BSPP constables were placed in the classifieds’ sections of both the *Irish Times* and the *Cork Examiner*.⁹² Although the Crown Agents reported ‘a large response’ and ‘numerous applications’ as a result, six weeks after its launch the Colonial Office was describing the campaign as ‘rather a failure’ in that ‘only 30 recruits were secured from about 500 applicants’.⁹³

The Colonial Office identified the unwillingness of candidates to travel to Belfast for interview as a contributory factor. It was therefore decided to conduct the remainder of the interviews in Dublin instead and on 13 June, Norman Archer of the office of the British representative in Ireland approached the Department of External Affairs (D.E.A.) to seek its permission. Anticipating that the possible negative impact

⁹¹ *Irish Times*, 27 Aug. 1946.

⁹² ‘British Section Palestine Police: recruitment report for April 1946’, undated, c. May 1946 (TNA, CO 537/1697/84); *Irish Times*, 08 May 1946; *Cork Examiner*, 10 May 1946.

⁹³ Crown Agents to Gray, 25 May 1946 (TNA, CO 537/1697/68); Smith to Shaw, 3 July 1946 (TNA, CO 451/9/124).

on public opinion of open recruitment for a Crown force in Ireland might give the Irish government pause, Archer gave assurances that ‘there would be no publicity and no advertising’: applicants would, he said, be notified of the time and place of the interview individually by post. That the D.E.A. did have sensitivities in this regard was illustrated by the fact that, while it said that it had no general objection, it asked that any interviews be held, not in a hotel as Archer proposed, but in either the offices of the British representative or at the British Labour Liaison Office on Merrion Square (B.L.L.O.).⁹⁴ Archer agreed and a three-man panel of interviewers from the Crown Agents arrived at the B.L.L.O. one week later to assess the first batch of remaining applicants from the May press campaign, returning to Dublin at intervals until the last week of July when the final 150 were interviewed. The panel maintained a more permanent presence in the city from early August when the assessment of applications generated by Mather & Crowther began.

Despite the Crown Agents’ attempts to conduct its business beneath the public radar, the *Irish Times* reported the holding of interviews at the B.L.L.O. While the revelation caused no immediate controversy, it became the subject of subsequent Dáil debate. On 23 January 1947, the then independent T.D. for Monaghan, James Dillon, tabled a Dáil question, asking Eamon de Valera in his capacity as minister for external affairs whether he would be issuing an official denial of recent allegations by the American author and publisher, William Ziff, concerning BSPP recruitment in Ireland. Speaking at a press conference during the 22nd Zionist Congress in Basle the previous December, Ziff, a prominent supporter of the Revisionist Zionist movement, had accused the British authorities of recruiting Mosleyites and other anti-Semites for

⁹⁴ Leo T. McCauley, Memorandum, 13 June 1946 (NAI, Department of Foreign Affairs files [hereafter DFA], 385/6). The B.L.L.O. had been established during the war to oversee the recruitment of Irish citizens for the British war economy.

the BSPP, before going on to say that ‘in Dublin recruits were promised 80 dollars per month and the all the pickings’ by which was meant, he explained, ‘all the loot they can pick up’.⁹⁵ Infuriated by what he termed this ‘disgusting lie’, Dillon also asked de Valera whether he had ‘taken any steps to require the Zionist organisation to repudiate this blackguard [Ziff] or to put on record the fact that he [was] a liar and a fraud in making these allegations’.⁹⁶ De Valera replied that he had seen advertisements for the BSPP in ‘English newspapers’ in circulation in Ireland which ‘did not bear out the statement made by this gentleman’ and this was certainly true: those placed by Mather & Crowther famously offered remuneration of ‘£20 pounds a month and all found’ (with ‘all found’ explained as meaning that ‘smart uniform, good food, excellent accommodation [and] skilled medical treatment’ was provided free of charge) and, in using the word ‘pickings’ Ziff was, as the D.E.A. noted, being ‘probably deliberately tendentious’.⁹⁷

On the broader issue of BSPP recruitment, de Valera told Dillon that apart from the aforementioned advertisements, he had no knowledge or evidence of any efforts being made to recruit for the force in Ireland and concluded by stating that he was ‘perfectly certain that there are very few Irishmen, if any, who would want to take up that occupation’.⁹⁸ De Valera’s denial to Dillon suggests a reluctance to publicly address an issue he considered potentially controversial. For although the note of information prepared for him by his officials as background to Dillon’s

⁹⁵ *Irish Independent*, 20 Dec. 1946. The Revisionist movement, so-called because it demanded a revision of the political principles of mainstream political Zionism which it saw as too moderate, advocated a Jewish state with a Jewish majority covering both banks of the River Jordan.

⁹⁶ Dáil Debates, 23 Jan. 1947, vol. 104, cc187-8.

⁹⁷ ‘Note for minister’s information’, unsigned, 21 Jan. 1947 (NAI, DFA, 340/12/5). Ziff had form in this regard. In its review of his book, *The rape of Palestine*, the *Palestine Post* noted that its ‘errors, misstatements, perversions and inventions [which could] be counted by the thousand, literally’, were ‘inspired by blind hatred’ of the British and mainstream Zionists. A subsequent review described his principal motive as being ‘to slander the British ... in terms which to him cannot be too extravagant’ and his ‘method of controversy... to invent one’s facts to fit one’s preconceived notions’. *Palestine Post*, 22 Jan. 1939; *International Affairs*, xxiii, no. 2 (1947), p. 271 & xxiv, no. 4 (1948), p. 610.

⁹⁸ Dáil Debates, 23 Jan. 1947, op. cit.

question did not refer to the fact that permission had been granted to conduct interviews in Dublin, he cannot have been unaware that it had, particularly given that all of his senior staff at the D.E.A. had been apprised: Archer's approach had been made to the department's assistant secretary, Leo McCauley, and his memorandum on the matter recorded that he had consulted with the departmental secretary, Frederick Boland, and was initialled by William Warnock and Cornelius Cremin.⁹⁹ Moreover, the note of information did refer to an article about the ongoing demand for Irish labour in Britain published in the *Irish Independent* two weeks earlier which stated that 'it was from the Liaison Office that a recent big effort was made to recruit Irishmen for the Palestine Police' and the fact that de Valera did not advert to this in his answer underscores his unwillingness to address the issue.¹⁰⁰

This was confirmed in an exchange with the Fianna Fáil T.D. for Dublin South, Robert Briscoe, two weeks later. On 12 February, Briscoe asked de Valera whether his attention had been drawn to the *Irish Times*' claim that a representative of the Crown Agents was interviewing for the BSPP in Dublin and he sought clarification regarding 'the policy of the Government in connection with this matter'.¹⁰¹ Although his close friendship with Ziff was probably a factor, the impetus for Briscoe's intervention was his Zionist convictions.¹⁰² He was a committed and, by his own account, active Revisionist who claimed to have 'worked closely with [Revisionist leader Vladimir] Jabotinsky in organising [the] Irgun on the lines of the I.R.A.'. The extent of what he calls this 'collaboration' is unclear. But he was

⁹⁹ Warnock was first secretary in the D.E.A.'s 'treaties, communications and general' section while Cremin was counsellor.

¹⁰⁰ *Irish Independent*, 9 Jan. 1947.

¹⁰¹ Dáil Debates, 12 Feb. 1947, vol. 104, no. 6, cc 804-5. See also NAI, DFA 340/12/5.

¹⁰² Briscoe vigorously defended Ziff against an attack by Dillon in the Dáil two months later which resulted in Briscoe's removal from the chamber. He had previously felt obliged to defend him to Dan Breen, who had accused Ziff of being a pro-British agent. Dáil Debates, 24 Apr. 1947, vol. 105, no. 5, cc 1318-9; Breen to Briscoe, 14 Nov. 1941 & Briscoe to Breen, 17 Nov. 1941 (NAI, DFA/10/P/40). See also *Irish Times*, 27 Oct. 1945.

certainly regarded as a Revisionist sympathiser by British intelligence and by G2 (the Irish army's intelligence directorate) which 'regularly accused [him] of furthering Zionist interests at Ireland's expense' and kept a file on his activities.¹⁰³ So too did the Garda Síochána's C3 intelligence section although it doubted his involvement in 'militant activity' at this time.¹⁰⁴ Briscoe would not have relished the strengthening of the BSPP, particularly with his own compatriots.

Although the extent of de Valera's knowledge about his department's co-operation with Archer is unclear, he was by now at least aware of the possibility that interviews were being held in Dublin: the note of information prepared for him by his officials rather vaguely stated that 'we understand that such a representative may have come here occasionally within the framework of the activities of the [B.L.L.O]'. However, de Valera evaded this aspect of Briscoe's enquiry in his delivered response, merely stating that he had seen the *Irish Times*' article to which the deputy referred but that BSPP recruitment was not something in which the government could intervene (although Archer's approach to his department suggests otherwise). However, both the minister and his officials appear to have been genuinely unaware of the scale of BSPP enlistments from Ireland during this time (asked by Briscoe whether he could confirm the *Irish Times*' assertion that 'several hundreds of young men' had already joined the BSPP, de Valera restated his belief that it was unlikely that Irishmen would, in fact, join that force), having been advised by both the employment branch of the Department of Industry and Commerce and the

¹⁰³ Eunan O'Halpin, *Defending Ireland: the Irish state and its enemies since 1922* (Oxford, 1999), pp 220-1; Robert Briscoe, *For the life of me* (London, 1958), p. 264. For more on Briscoe's Zionism see *ibid.* pp 263-82, 290-308 and Eliash, *Harp and shield*, pp 33-43, 106-7.

¹⁰⁴ 'He has no capital and depends for livelihood on political connections which he exploits for commercial purposes. Following Jew political activity which might have embarrassed Irish Government, Briscoe was warned off by De Valera'. J. J. O'Sullivan, *Diary transcripts*, 3 Oct. 1947 (Bodleian Library of Commonwealth & African Studies, Oxford, John James O'Sullivan papers, MSS. Medit s.38 [hereafter O'Sullivan papers], fo. 83). See p. 234 below.

Department of Justice that the numbers were negligible, this despite the fact that there had in fact been hundreds of enlistments in the previous year.¹⁰⁵ Both the Garda Síochána and G2 also appeared to know little. According to the D.E.A., the Gardaí had no information regarding BSPP recruitment in Ireland other than the advertisements in the British newspapers while as late as August 1947 Dan Bryan, the head of G2, told Frederick Boland that he knew nothing of BSPP recruitment in Ireland other than the fact that the British authorities were ‘looking for recruits for this force amongst men likely to have been demobilised from their fighting services’, this despite the fact that recruitment had been mainly targeted at civilians since mid-1946.¹⁰⁶

4.4.3 *‘Of course, this was manna’*

BSPP enlistments from Ireland outnumbered those from Northern Ireland by almost three to one in the postwar period.¹⁰⁷ The majority of those recruited on each side of the border were ‘civilians’, having no prior service in either the British or Irish armed forces: civilians accounted for 73 per cent of enlistments from Ireland and 74 per cent from Northern Ireland. The wide reach of the advertising campaign is also evidenced by the fact that, as Table 6 below illustrates, these men came from all walks of Irish life.

The recruitment of civilians in Ireland was facilitated by the poor economic climate. Although unemployment stood at 14 per cent in May 1945, prospects appeared reasonably fair in the war’s immediate aftermath. However, by the time

¹⁰⁵ Dáil Debates, 12 Feb. 1947, op. cit.; ‘Note for minister’s information’, 21 Jan. 1947, op. cit.

¹⁰⁶ Bryan to Boland, 18 Aug. 1947 (NAI, DFA 385/6). Unfortunately, the G2 file relating to BSPP recruitment during this period is listed as missing at the Military Archives in Dublin.

¹⁰⁷ Seventy-three per cent of enlistments were from Ireland and 27 per cent from Northern Ireland.

BSPP recruitment opened in Dublin in the summer of 1946, it was apparent that more difficult times lay ahead as a succession of setbacks such as strikes, fuel shortages, bad harvests, rising prices and a wage freeze began taking their toll. The testimonies of former BSPP personnel and/or their families provide examples of the concerns of

*Table 6: Occupational backgrounds of Irish civilian enlistments, June 1945-Nov. 1947*¹⁰⁸

	IRELAND	N.I.
FARMING	21%	10%
PROFESSIONS	5.5%	7%
CLERICAL	11.5%	10%
COMMERCE	3%	6.5%
SKILLED	18%	32%
UNSKILLED	12.5%	17%
DRIVER	5%	4.5%
STUDENT	14%	5%
OTHER	9.5%	8%

recruits in this regard. Some were without work and already in financial difficulties:

I went to work in London during the war but came home [to Limerick] because my father was dying. It took him about six months to die ... by that stage I had nothing, my education was zero – I hadn't been past national school. I saw a [BSPP] advertisement in the English papers and I got on to them and went up to Dublin and done a simple exam there and off I went.¹⁰⁹

Others, such as Patrick T., were in fulltime employment but were anxious about its security given the challenging economic times:

I worked in a hat factory in Galway for a few years ... but it got slack when the war finished about 1946 time and I seen this advertisement in the English papers for recruits for the Palestine Police. So I applied ... and I went out there.¹¹⁰

British-born bank clerk Anthony Wright, who joined the BSPP in spring 1946, was enticed by the superior remuneration on offer ('twenty pounds a month and all found would almost double my bank salary') and this proved a powerful draw for Irishmen

¹⁰⁸ Source: BSPP personnel records.

¹⁰⁹ John H., West Sussex, Interview with author, 26 Sept. 2011.

¹¹⁰ Patrick T., Author interview.

too:

When I saw the advert I thought it was a fortune. Twenty pounds a month. By Christ, I wouldn't see that in a year ... I thought "I'll be a millionaire by the time I get out of there".¹¹¹

Similarly with John P., a farmer from south Tipperary: 'five pounds a week we would be getting there; and I was only getting half a crown at home'.¹¹² Others enlisted as a means of embarking on or furthering a career in policing. For example, RKW from Kerry 'resigned a commission in the army ... in Ireland and ignored the offer of a good job to join the Palestine Police' in pursuit of a policing career while, for Michael Burke from Sligo, 'a policeman's job was secure and you could transfer from one country to another, usually on promotion'.¹¹³ Gerald Murphy sought rapid professional advancement. Despairing of the dearth of opportunities for promotion in the Garda Síochána where he had served for four years, he eventually:

yielded to the conclusion that my best hope might be the Colonial Police. For someone like me, that meant becoming a constable in Palestine [as] I could not claim to be considered for more senior appointments in other territories.¹¹⁴

Despite the relatively favourable economic conditions prevailing in Northern Ireland as a result of the wartime boom and the arrival of the welfare state, a significant number of civilians also joined the BSPP to improve their economic position.¹¹⁵ Thomas F. from Fermanagh had been already been compelled to leave the family farm to find work when the Mather & Crowther campaign caught his eye:

¹¹¹ Lang, *One man*, p. 6; Patrick T, Author interview.

¹¹² John P., Waterford, Interview with author, 7 Sept. 2003.

¹¹³ RKW to Gray, 20 June 1947 (CEM, PPAPR, RKW fo. 12a); Michael Burke, Interview with Imperial War Museum, 20 Feb. 1988 (IWM 10125).

¹¹⁴ Murphy, *Copper mandarin*, pp 21-2. As in the 1930s, the BSPP was the only colonial force actively recruiting a 'British' rank-and-file.

¹¹⁵ Per capita disposable income was an estimated 20 per cent higher than south of the border and the postwar period saw a propaganda war by the Northern Irish government which contrasted the 'prosperous North and poverty-stricken South'. Ferriter, *Transformation*, p. 451.

We were poor people. It was a very small farm. It wasn't supporting anybody so I had to go. I got a job in an aircraft factory in Belfast which was okay. But every time I went to the cinema there was a big advert up on the screen for the Palestine Police. Twenty pounds a month and all found in those days was good. And I said "I'll have some of that".¹¹⁶

William B. from Derry had also recently left the family farm in search of employment when he took the decision to enlist:

I left Ireland to look for work as [it] was extremely scarce at that particular time. I went to England but I had an inclination to go Palestine: it was either the Palestine Police or the army and [I] felt the Palestine Police was the better option. They were paying £20 a month.¹¹⁷

However, the quest for adventure also played a significant part, particularly among those from relatively comfortable backgrounds. For example Robert Hamilton, whose parents both worked in Belfast Corporation, cited the BSPP poster ('there was a bit of the old Kipling touch') as his impetus to enlist.¹¹⁸

Additional evidence of the influence of economic factors on civilian enlistments in the postwar period is provided by data on home allotments. These

*Table 7: Home allotments, 1946-48*¹¹⁹

	Total	£10	£7-£9	£5-£6	£1-£4
Ireland	70%	21%	22%	39%	18%
N.I.	48 %	27%	14.5%	44%	14.5%
Britain	46%	12.5%	13.5%	36.5%	37.5%

indicate that 70 per cent of those recruited from Ireland sent money back to their families, considerably higher than the figure for Britain which stood at 46 per cent. Moreover, as Figure 7 illustrates, the amounts remitted to Ireland far exceeded those remitted to Britain: 21 per cent of enlistments from Ireland remitted half their income

¹¹⁶ Thomas F., Essex, Interview with author, 12 June 2011.

¹¹⁷ William B., Correspondence with author, 2 May 2013. See also, George P., South Africa, Correspondence with author, 17 Jan. 2010.

¹¹⁸ Robert Hamilton, Transcript of interview with Sharif Ismail, 20 Apr. 2006 (MECA, GB165-0392), pp 1-2.

¹¹⁹ Data extracted from BSPP personnel files.

(as in the 1930s, the maximum proportion permissible) while a further 22 per cent remitted between £7 and £9 a month, this despite the high cost of living in Palestine.¹²⁰ The importance of this type of remittance had recently been recognised by the Department of Finance in Dublin, which noted that the sending of ‘substantial contributions to ... dependents at home’ by Irish emigrant workers helped ‘break for them the monotony of continuous poverty’.¹²¹

Insights into the straitened circumstances these allotments were intended to alleviate are found in correspondence in BSPP personnel files. While some contain letters to policemen from their families requesting financial assistance or gratefully acknowledging payments received, a large number contain correspondence between recently disbanded policemen and the BSPP’s U.K. depot, ‘The Node’, concerning monies still due (such as gratuities and disturbance grants) which detail the penury into which they were plunged on returning to Ireland post-Palestine.¹²² These letters provide indications as to their situations as recruits as their home circumstances were unlikely to have altered appreciably during the relatively short interludes between enlistment and discharge which prevailed in the postwar period. Within weeks of his return to Cork after eighteen months in Palestine, CTW (who had remitted £10 to his mother each month) described being:

in a very bad way. My mother is depending on me for financial assistance [and] due to the fact that there were some bills to meet on my return home and other miscellaneous expenses, for the last few weeks we have been

¹²⁰ British BSPP constable Desmond Morton experienced the financial difficulties endured by those remitting large amounts: ‘My wages just flit away before my eyes like a drop of water going through dry sand ... I don’t like to say this but it’s a fact. [£8] is too much. However, I can manage until the family gets on its feet’. Even Inspector-General John Rymer-Jones felt the pinch: ‘Palestine is a land of iniquitous prices and the financial side of life is not too easy to say the least of it’. Morton to parents, 29 July 1947 (MECA, Desmond Morton collection, GB165-0405); Rymer-Jones to Dowbiggan, 26 Dec. 1945 (TNA, CO 733/450/4/38).

¹²¹ Quoted in Connolly, ‘Irish workers’, p. 130.

¹²² ‘The Node’, a period house in Codicote, Hertfordshire, was acquired by the Palestine Police in 1947. Queries regarding BSPP grants, gratuities and pensions in the aftermath of the force’s disbandment were dealt with there until its functions were transferred to the Palestine Police office in London in December 1948.

living on her allowance which is very little. I have tried to get a situation of some sort here ... but so far I have failed.¹²³

In August 1948, MPJ from Belfast requested a further urgent financial subvention as his parents were not well and he 'would like to contribute to the upkeep of the house but have [so far] found it impossible'.¹²⁴ WAJ from Tramore was despondent about his inability to find employment on his return: 'I find life very hard as I am completely broke and see no prospects' while HGJ wrote from Dundalk in August 1948, stating that he was unemployed, his 'funds complete exhausted' and already in debt to his landlady. MTK from Tipperary found himself in a similar situation, writing of 'financial difficulties since leaving Palestine' and complaining that 'the people with whom I am boarding are getting impatient and won't understand my situation'.¹²⁵ DPL from Co. Down had been unemployed since his return and 'living on charity for the past three months' while IME from Belfast, apologising for what he characterised as 'almost a begging letter', asked for the balance of an allowance due in order to buy clothes as he believed that 'if I were a little less shabbily dressed, I would receive more consideration from prospective employers'.¹²⁶ So grim were the situations to which such men returned that many quickly emigrated.¹²⁷

However, not all of those who remitted large sums of money to Ireland fell into this category. Ten per cent of allotments of £7 or more were lodged to personal bank accounts in Ireland. Approximately two-thirds of those who did so were third

¹²³ CTW to The Node, 12 June 1948 (CEM, PPAPR, CTW).

¹²⁴ MPJ to The Node, 27 Aug. 1948 (CEM, PPAPR, JPM).

¹²⁵ WAJ to The Node, 14 Oct. 1948 (CEM, PPAPR, WAJ); HGJ to The Node, 3 July, 30 Aug., 22 Sept. 1948 (CEM, PPAPR, HGJ); MTK to The Node, 29 June 1948 (CEM, PPAPR, MTK).

¹²⁶ DPL to The Node, 11 Jan. 1949 (CEM, PPAPR, DPL); IME to The Node, 20 Sept. 1948 (CEM, PPAPR, IME). For other examples, see PPL, Wicklow, to The Node, 24 July., 9 Sept. 1948 (CEM, PPAPR, PPL); SMT, Kilkenny, to The Node, 25 Oct. 1948 (CEM, PPAPR, SMT); MPH, Galway, to The Node, 10 Oct. 1948 (CEM, PPAPR, MPH); KAR, Belfast, to The Node, 8 Oct. 1948 (CEM, PPAPR, KAR).

¹²⁷ See, for example, MLJ, Leitrim, to The Node, 15 June 1948 (CEM, PPAPR, MJJ); CPJ to The Node, undated, c. Aug. 1948 (CEM, PPAPR, CPJ); JAJ, Belfast, to The Node, 20 Oct. 1948 (CEM, PPAPR, JAJ); KWJ, Waterford, to The Node, 11 Aug. 1948 (CEM, PPAPR, KWJ).

level (mainly medical) students, suggesting that they were saving for fees and indeed documentation in their personnel files indicates that most resumed their studies on their return.¹²⁸ A small number of others, such as FDJ from Sligo, were simply saving for life after the force: he married a Jewish nurse in October 1947 and they ‘had most of [their] money transferred to Ireland’ (he remitted the maximum £10 to his personal account) in preparation for their life together post-Palestine.¹²⁹

4.4.4 ‘We were all getting bored’

According to George Bernard Shaw, the fact that ‘all an Irishman’s hopes and ambitions turn on opportunities of getting out of Ireland’ meant that the most effective way of enticing him to join the British army was to appeal to ‘his discontent, his deadly boredom, his thwarted curiosity and desire for change and adventure’.¹³⁰ The testimonies of former BSPP members and/or their families attest to the importance this played in the decisions of civilians from Ireland to enlist in the force. Dennis Quickfall described the force as ‘a wonderful opportunity to escape the drabness of early postwar Britain [and] seek adventure in far away lands’ and this was even more so the case in Ireland where the experience of the Emergency left many young Irishmen with a sense that they were living their lives in half-tones on the periphery of international events.¹³¹ In some, this gave rise to a restlessness which they believed service in the BSPP would assuage. For OAD, an insurance clerk from Cork, Palestine was ‘a truly

¹²⁸ See, for example, BWE to The Node, 20 Oct. 1948 (CEM, WJM, PPAPR); RJN to inspector-general, 6 Feb. 1948 and ‘Confidential report on discharge’, 8 Apr. 1948 (CEM, RJN, PPAPR, Fo. 7b); WJM to inspector-general, 17 July 1947 (CEM, WJM, PPAPR, fo. 24b). See also notes of telephone conversation with BGP, Galway, 10 Mar. 2010.

¹²⁹ FDJ to inspector-general, 4 Jan. 1948 (CEM, FDJ, PPAPR, fo. 19b).

¹³⁰ Quoted in Keith Jeffery, ‘The Irish military tradition and the British empire’ in Jeffery (ed.), *An Irish empire*, pp 94-122, at p. 94.

¹³¹ Quickfall, *Shadows*, p. 8.

beautiful country with a future and a hope. It is my lot and ambition to be part of it.¹³² For others, such as John F. from Clare, the limited availability of employment in the postwar period left them working at jobs that they did not particularly enjoy and the BSPP offered the prospect of escape and excitement. He had just finished a three-year apprenticeship in the grocery trade in Ennis when:

With a few friends I came across [the BSPP advertisement] in a magazine. We were all getting bored ... with the various jobs we were doing and we thought we might find more fun if we joined the police. There were four of us and we sent in the application but when the parents of the other three heard about it, what they were up to, they put their foot down ... but I continued.¹³³

Patrick Byrne from Dublin was also seeking to escape employment he found unfulfilling:

I was a somewhat disillusioned pharmaceutical apprentice in Ireland contemplating emigration ... but lack of money was the problem. One day in 1946 I saw an advertisement in a magazine ... [for] the Palestine Police. The opportunity to visit the Middle East at Her Majesty's expense, and to be paid more than I was already earning while doing so, was enough to convince me.¹³⁴

In some cases, feelings of stagnation and thwarted ambition were exacerbated by a sense of alienation from a society that seemed to them to be increasingly defined by a stifling social conservatism:

I hated the farm and the life there and always wanted to get away to England or somewhere, anywhere you could live your life. You can't think now what it was like back then, the repression. Everyone was looking after you and everything you done, parents, the neighbours, the priest ... When I saw they were looking for Palestine [police] I said "here's your chance to get out".¹³⁵

¹³² OAD, 'My journey to Palestine', undated, c. Jan. 1947 (CEM, PPAPR, QAD fo. 2). BSPP recruits were required to write a short composition on their journey to Palestine for the purpose of assessing their level of literacy. A small number of these essays survive in BSPP personnel files.

¹³³ John F., Longford, Interview with author, 18 June 2012.

¹³⁴ 'Patrick J. Byrne's service in the Palestine Police, 1947-8' (www.landofbrokenpromises.co.uk/palestine/byrneweb/enlisting.html).

¹³⁵ Patrick H., Canada, Correspondence with author, 4 Mar. 2010.

The quest for adventure was also a significant contributory factor in the enlistment of former members of the Irish Defence Forces (I.D.F.) who accounted for 12 per cent of postwar enlistments from Ireland. In August 1946, the *Irish Times* reported that they were joining the BSPP because they ‘apparently found civilian life too irksome and boring, and decided to go to a country where at least they could expect to find some excitement and variety’ and this is supported by personal testimonies.¹³⁶ Some, such as Timothy D. from Waterford, had joined the I.D.F. itself in search of adventure but it had proved a grave disappointment in this regard: ‘he felt he had missed the war and Palestine gave him another shot at soldiering’.¹³⁷ Similarly with Paul MacMahon from Clare: although he enlisted in the I.D.F. in 1941, his ultimate aim was to join the R.A.F.:

A lot of my young colleagues had already gone into the British armed forces and that spurred me on to get in before the war ended ... I wanted to get on an air crew [but] they’d stopped recruiting ... because it was coming to the end of the war ... I had a lot of regret because I was missing out on something ... and looking around for a piece of the action I ended up in the Palestine Police.¹³⁸

Others found the return to civilian life after the Emergency a dispiriting experience. For example, John K. from Waterford secured a permanent position with the post office after his demobilisation but resigned to join the BSPP: ‘I hate to say this but it bored me stiff. Then I saw the ad ... in one of the papers. So I wrote off’.¹³⁹ Similarly with Arthur S. from Limerick city who ‘got a good job with the railway’ after the army but left for Palestine in search of ‘a bit more excitement’.¹⁴⁰ Certainly, ex-I.D.F. personnel were less likely than civilians to have been influenced by economic

¹³⁶ *Irish Times*, 27 Aug. 1946.

¹³⁷ Brian D., Liverpool, Correspondence with author, 9 Aug. 2011.

¹³⁸ Paul MacMahon, Interview with the Imperial War Museum, 13 June 1996 (IWM 16689). See also Gerald Green, Transcript of interview with Eugene Rogan, 9 Oct. 2006 (MECA, GB 165-0404), p. 2.

¹³⁹ John K., West Sussex, Interview with author, 23 Aug. 2011.

¹⁴⁰ Nora S., Limerick, Interview with author, 15 Nov. 2010.

considerations as their re-employment after the Emergency had been made a national priority. Determined to reward those ‘who so gallantly responded to the national call’ by joining the I.D.F., the Irish government had announced a raft of measures designed to help them find work after demobilisation: to this end, they not only received priority at employment exchanges and preferential treatment when applying for state jobs, but those who had left employment to enlist were legally entitled to reclaim their old jobs.¹⁴¹ The fact that just 12 per cent of ex-I.D.F. personnel remitted money home from Palestine is probably significant in this regard.

Serving soldiers and ex-servicemen from the British armed forces accounted for 21 per cent of Irish BSPP enlistments in the postwar period, with those recruited from Ireland outnumbering those from Northern Ireland by almost two to one. The proportion of those from Northern Ireland drawn from urban working class backgrounds was down 30 percentage points on the wartime figure (51 as opposed to 81 per cent), suggesting a decline in the influence of economic factors, a probable consequence of the availability of employment north of the border at this time. Some of those recently demobilised were reluctant to return to the normality of civilian life while others, such as Norman P. from Derry, were apprehensive about the uncertainty this entailed:

I was a bit lost when I got out – that was 1946 – couldn’t find my feet. I had been in the [Royal] Artillery for near six years ... and it was hard having to organise everything yourself all of a sudden. I liked that about the [army] life, not having to worry about providing for myself and all that. So the Palestine Police caught my eye; everything laid on and good money too.¹⁴²

Most serving soldiers who enlisted in the BSPP in 1946-7 had not seen active service during the war, having joined the armed forces as the conflict was coming to an end,

¹⁴¹ Kelly, *Returning home*, pp 90-3.

¹⁴² Norman P., Australia, Telephone conversation with author, 12 Dec. 2011.

and some looked to the BSPP to provide the adventure that they felt they had missed:

I went into the Irish Guards as soon as I was the age but that was in April 1945. Well, the war was finished and I was looking for a bit of action. So one day I saw the [BSPP] notice in my billet looking for volunteers so I put my name down and I was accepted.¹⁴³

The socio-economic profile of 'southern' Irish ex-servicemen from the British armed forces who enlisted in the BSPP also altered in the postwar period. Two-thirds were from middle class backgrounds, an increase of thirty percentage points on the war years, their high socio-economic status underscored by the fact that 45 per cent had received an academic secondary education (a further 15 per cent had attended a vocational school). Also significant in this regard is the fact that just 6.5 per cent of total postwar BSPP enlistments from Ireland with British military service sent remittances home, suggesting that the majority, even among the one-third recruited from small farming and urban working class backgrounds, were in relatively comfortable circumstances. However, while their backgrounds may have shielded them from the full effects of the economic crisis, these men still required work and they were in a rather unenviable position regarding re-employment after the war. With the 'small Irish job market ... tilted in favour of demobbed men from the Irish forces ... Irish men and women returning from the British forces found it increasingly difficult to find employment' at home.¹⁴⁴ They were also unable to avail of British unemployment insurance, this situation compounded by the fact that many had but limited access to the Irish insurance fund, having not paid contributions in years.¹⁴⁵ By January 1947, the *Irish Times*' 'Irishman's diary', noting that the British Legion

¹⁴³ David B., Bangor, Interview with author, 9 Nov. 2011.

¹⁴⁴ Kelly, *Returning home*, p. 93.

¹⁴⁵ Britain refused to pay unemployment insurance to claimants who were resident outside its jurisdiction. Ex-servicemen living in Ireland were eventually exempted under a bilateral unemployment insurance agreement reached by the London and Dublin governments in late 1946.

had disbursed over £70,000 to relieve hardship in Ireland during its previous financial year, was describing the country as ‘a depressed area for [British] ex-Servicemen. Their chances of obtaining employment are understandably small [given] the competition of men released from the Defence Forces here’.¹⁴⁶ Indeed, sixty per cent of those recruited by the BSPP gave no occupation other than ‘soldier’ on their applications, indicating that they had not found work after demobilisation. Demobilised Irish ex-servicemen who chose to remain in Britain also found employment opportunities scarce and some, such as Patrick C. from Tipperary, joined the BSPP as a result:

While we were in the [British] forces, the topic of the day was “Don’t worry about work. Your jobs are quite safe. There’ll be plenty of work when you get out” ... But there were millions coming out, weren’t there? And, you know, to cut it short there were no jobs. And then the Crown Agents for the Colonies plastered the country with these big billboards and on it they had “£20 a month and all found” ... Of course this was manna so ... I applied.¹⁴⁷

A small subset of Irish ex-servicemen from the British armed forces - those who had deserted the I.D.F. to join the British forces - was in a particularly difficult position in this regard. Both the Garda Síochána and the military police had begun arresting these men as they arrived back in Ireland and, in August 1945, de Valera signed an emergency powers order (E.P.O. no. 362) which dismissed them from the I.D.F. *en masse*. Not only were they made to forfeit gratuities and certain pension entitlements as a consequence, but they were refused army discharge papers which were essential for securing employment and were disqualified from government-funded positions for a period of seven years. So draconian did the Fine Gael opposition deem E.P.O. no. 362 that it demanded its repeal, describing it as ‘a brutal, unchristian and inhuman

¹⁴⁶ *Irish Times*, 31 Jan. 1947.

¹⁴⁷ Patrick C., Lancashire, Interview with author, 10 Oct. 2011.

Order' which reduced those to whom it was applied to the status of 'pariah dogs ... outcasts, untouchables'.¹⁴⁸ A small number of these men subsequently joined the BSPP. That at least some did so as a direct consequence of their treatment by the Irish authorities is confirmed by their families: for example, Anthony L. from Dublin took the decision to enlist after being arrested and detained in the Curragh on his return to Ireland after the war while Kevin M. from Tipperary felt he had no future in Ireland on account of E.P.O. no. 362.¹⁴⁹ Indeed, even after leaving the BSPP in May 1948, Kevin M. told The Node that in Ireland his 'chances of employment [were] nil'.¹⁵⁰

Although far less significant than they had been in the 1930s, residual pro-British affinities remained a contributory factor to BSPP enlistments from Ireland in the postwar period, both Catholic and Protestant. For Paul MacMahon, a Catholic from Co. Clare, 'loyalty towards Britain' inherited from his father merely formed the backdrop to his decision to join the BSPP but for others it was the main contributory factor.¹⁵¹ For example, Martin M., a Catholic insurance clerk from Dublin, saw service in the BSPP as a form of compensation to the Crown for not having fought in the war:

I was always very much a Loyalist and I felt ashamed that I hadn't done anything during the war so I said to my mother and father that I wanted to join the Palestine Police. It was all a big thing at the time, the trouble out there. So I felt then I'd be doing something for the British Crown ... I'd have felt I couldn't spout my British politics with an easy conscience if I didn't do something.¹⁵²

For others such as John D., a Protestant from west Cork who had served in the Royal

¹⁴⁸ Kelly, *Returning home*, p. 173.

¹⁴⁹ 'List of personnel of the Defence Forces dismissed for desertion in time of National Emergency pursuant to the terms of Emergency Power (No. 362) Order 1945 (S.R. & O. 1945, No. 198) or of Section 13 of the Defence Forces (Temporary Provisions) Act, 1946 (No. 7/1946)', published by The Naval and Military Press Ltd., (East Sussex, 2011); Christopher L., London, Correspondence with author, 15 Jan. 2013; Francis M., Clare, Telephone conversation with author, 22 June 2012.

¹⁵⁰ MTK to The Node, 29 June 1948 (CEM, PPAPR, MTK).

¹⁵¹ Paul M., IWM interview. Others subsequently noted their pride in serving the Crown. See, for example, BSJ, Sligo, to The Node, 4 Apr. 1950 (CEM, PPAPR, BSJ).

¹⁵² Martin M., Dublin, Interview with author, 8 Sept. 2009.

Navy during the war, joining the BSPP helped further satisfy a sense of duty to Britain which had been left unfulfilled by their wartime service.¹⁵³ While such explicit acknowledgements of pro-British affinities by ‘southern’ Irish enlistments are, understandably, rare, there are other indications that they exerted an influence. As in the early 1930s, Protestants were over-represented, although not to the same extent: they accounted for 10 per cent of postwar enlistments at a time when, according to the 1946 census, they made up just 4.2 per cent of the population and many Catholic recruits came from families with a strong tradition of Crown service. The descendants of several Irish BSPP personnel who provided information to this author cited endo-recruitment as a contributory factor to their ancestors’ decision to enlist while others noted a tradition of Crown service in the areas in which they had lived.¹⁵⁴ For example Brian D. and Greg C., whose fathers were recruited from Waterford as BSPP constables at this time, noted that the county’s tradition of Crown service made their fathers’ decisions to join the BSPP ‘uncontroversial’ and ‘almost routine’ and indeed the local newspaper, the *Munster Express*, frequently reported both the appointment of local men to the force and their progress in Palestine.¹⁵⁵

Family reasons, such as escape from an unhappy marriage or overzealous parental control, were also cited as the signal motivation of Irish BSPP enlistments in the postwar period. So too was the religio-cultural lure of the ‘Holy Land’. Asked had he any knowledge Palestine prior to his enlistment, British BSPP constable Edward Wells said that all he knew came ‘from the oldest guide book in the world’ and BSPP

¹⁵³ Thomas D., Cork, Interview with author, 22 Apr. 2010.

¹⁵⁴ Complaining of open recruitment for the British army in Ireland in the autumn of 1947, one *Irish Press* correspondent referred to its attraction to those ‘brought up in that peculiarly Imperial atmosphere that still prevails in some of those towns that housed Britain’s garrisons’. *Irish Press*, 29 Sept. 1947.

¹⁵⁵ Brian D., Liverpool, Correspondence with author, op. cit.; Greg C., Waterford, Correspondence with author, op. cit.; *Munster Express*, 25 Oct., 15 Nov. 1946; 10 Jan., 14 Feb., 2, 9 May, 1 Aug., 19 Sept. 1947, 26 Mar., 9 Apr. 1948.

recruitment propaganda, particularly the film, deliberately played up the country's Biblical heritage.¹⁵⁶ While the number for whom, like the deeply devout William B., the otherwise unaffordable opportunity of 'seeing some of the things recorded in the Bible' was the primary consideration in their decision to join the BSPP was undoubtedly small, what British BSPP constable Geoffrey Owen called 'a feeling of affinity with the Holy Land' was a contributory factor in many cases.¹⁵⁷ For example, speaking of his father's decision to enlist, Greg C. said:

I think the fact that the action was taking place in the "Holy Land", as he would have referred to it, was also an influence. I don't mean to imply that there was any religious motivation but more a curiosity about the location and some sort of feeling of familiarity with it and curiosity about it because of his Catholic upbringing. Places like Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth were very real for him. I couldn't imagine him joining a force that would have been in, for example, Malaya or West or Southern Africa.¹⁵⁸

However, Greg C.'s testimony eloquently illustrates that individual decisions to enlist in the BSPP were informed by a confluence of contributory factors spanning the 'personal, emotional and rational'. The remainder is therefore is worth quoting at length:

I think the sense of adventure would have been the most important factor in [my father's] joining the Palestine Police. This is the one thing that he would have mentioned clearly to me. He wasn't though, an innately adventurous man, so I suspect there might also have been an element of "proving himself". He was regarded as the quietest in his family, a family led by a very strong-willed and domineering father who had been in the Royal Navy in World War I ...

Allied to the above would have been the prospect of escaping from Ireland. He worked as a tree feller during World War II with Waterford County Council ... [which] he regarded as one of the happiest periods of

¹⁵⁶ Edward Wells, Transcript of interview with Josie Delap, 27 Apr. 2006 (MECA, GB165-0393), p. 2; 'Palestine Police', recruitment film c. 1946, *passim*. I am grateful to Paul Ward at the Garda Museum in Dublin for providing me with a copy of this film. See also 'Palestine Police as a career', undated brochure, c. mid-1946 (copy in MECA, Morton collection).

¹⁵⁷ William B., Interview with author, 2 Sept. 2013; Owen, MECA interview, p. 2;

¹⁵⁸ Greg C., Correspondence with author, *op. cit.* See also CKW, 'My journey to Palestine' (CEM, PPAPR, CKW fo. 5a); Alexander M, Correspondence with author, 10 July 2010; Murphy, 'Irishmen in Palestine', p. 89.

his life. After the war, though, I think the tree felling was coming to an end and he would probably have begun to work as a general council labourer, possibly working with his father or one of his uncles who were gangers/foremen with the Council. I don't think he would have fancied that. In addition to the escape considerations there was also the possibility of doing a different and better job. I don't think that he ever intended coming back to Ireland.¹⁵⁹

4.5 Conclusion

The BSPP was flavoured with 'a strong seasoning of Irishmen' throughout the course of its twenty-two year career. Yet Irish enlistment levels could have been far greater had not factors operated to limit the numbers recruited. Vacancies were not publicly advertised during the 1920s; and while required increases in the establishment of BSPP constables gave rise to a minimal amount of advertising in the 1930s, the fact that the Crown Agents had little problem filling vacancies from Britain meant that it did not target Ireland at all. Given evidence of the increasing use of the British army as an employment option by Irish Free State citizens in the 1930s (Jeffery cites in this context regimental censuses by the Irish Fusiliers showing that the proportion of soldiers from south of the border increased from 20 per cent to 34 per cent between 1933 and 1938), it seems likely that more recourse would have been taken to the employment opportunity offered by the BSPP had public awareness been greater, particularly given that its pay, conditions and prospects were superior to those of the armed forces.¹⁶⁰ This was confirmed by the success of the postwar recruitment campaign which first brought the BSPP to general public attention. Indeed, on the evidence of 1946, BSPP recruitment could have been conducted far more openly south of the border than public opinion would, in the case of the British armed forces,

¹⁵⁹ Greg C., Correspondence with author, op. cit.

¹⁶⁰ Keith Jeffery, 'The British army and Ireland since 1922' in Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery (eds), *A military history of Ireland* (Cambridge, 1996), pp 431-458, at 433, 437.

allow.

In June 1947, James Dillon lambasted de Valera for what he described as his ‘lofty attitude’ towards the enlistment of Irishmen in the BSPP which he said amounted to “shame on anybody who belongs to it” and he warned that the Taoiseach’s disdain would, if it became general, mean that ‘it would be the greatest shame in twenty years’ time to be the son of a Palestine policeman just as it now is to be the son of an R.I.C. man’.¹⁶¹ But BSPP recruitment caused little public controversy in either parliament or the press. The publicity given the issue by Dillon and Briscoe did not lead to a wider debate: national newspapers carried BSPP advertisements and reported on recruitment without arousing complaint while some provincial titles even carried news of local enlistments and their experiences in Palestine.¹⁶²

In the event, the only objections to BSPP recruitment in Ireland emanated from Republican quarters. A handful of postwar recruits reported hostility from family members with I.R.A. affiliations over their decision to ‘take the King’s shilling’. Patrick T., for example, had ‘an uncle who was very much into the I.R.A. business. I thought he’d shoot me before I got out there when he heard I was going to work [for the Crown]. He didn’t like it at all’ while in the case of John P.:

The only hostility I got was from my parents because my uncle was ... in the I.R.A. at that time and we were definitely involved in political things. And to think that I had gone off and taken the King’s shilling and above all to be a policeman which was the lowest form of life as far as they were concerned. You were put on a par with the Black and Tans.¹⁶³

There was also anger at the involvement of Irishmen in what was portrayed as the suppression of Jewish independence, a view most trenchantly expressed by the *Irish Democrat*, the monthly magazine of the Republican and anti-imperialist Connolly

¹⁶¹ Dáil Debates, 20 June 1947, vol. 106, no. 9, c2335.

¹⁶² In addition to the above cited articles in the *Munster News* and *Connaught Tribune* see as examples, *Southern Star*, 22 June 1946, 8, 15 Mar. 1947; *Meath Chronicle*, 15 Feb. 1947, 23 Mar. 1948 and *Anglo-Celt*, 7 Dec. 1946.

¹⁶³ Patrick T., Author interview; John P., Author interview.

Club in Britain. In August 1947, it published a virulent attack on the extension of BSPP recruitment to Ireland, claiming that young Irish enlistments would find themselves performing 'precisely the kind of work "the Black and Tans" did in Ireland 25 years ago'.¹⁶⁴ It was, the magazine fulminated, 'one of the cruellest ironies of history' that Irishmen, who had:

Most cause to hate the memory of the "Black and Tans", those forerunners of Fascism, [were] now being used as the stormtroopers of British Imperialism to crush the Jewish independence movement in Palestine.¹⁶⁵

Allegations of official operational links between the I.R.A. and the Irgun have never been proved. But some Republicans undoubtedly sympathised with the latter's anti-British campaign. In fact, so concerned was British intelligence about I.R.A. cooperation with the Irgun that in September 1947 it advised Major John J. O'Sullivan, an Irish C.I.D. officer with the Palestine Police who had travelled to London to provide briefings on the threat of Zionist terrorism, to liaise with Irish intelligence on the issue. Believing that the British had 'good evidence of collusion', O'Sullivan flew to Dublin one week later to meet with Superintendent Patrick Carroll of Garda intelligence who assured him that the I.R.A. was essentially dissolved and 'incapable of any activity' of this kind.¹⁶⁶ Nonetheless, rather wild rumours of an active I.R.A.-Irgun relationship were still circulating in 1948: in September, the Belgian Catholic daily, *La Metropole*, reported that their alleged long-standing

¹⁶⁴ The prominent Irish Republican, William Brennan-Whitmore, had made a similar point during the Arab Revolt. Condemning the Irish Government's move to 'brand as criminal' Irishmen who fought for Franco in the Spanish Civil War, he noted that 'no hindrance was ever placed in the way of Irishmen who wanted to join the British forces and re-enact the Black and Tan regime in Palestine in the name of Éire'. *Irish Independent*, 3 Mar. 1939.

¹⁶⁵ *Irish Democrat*, Aug. 1947. According to Martin M.'s father, an I.R.A. veteran, the BSPP and the Black and Tans were literally one and the same: 'When I was going on about joining the Palestine Police he was dead against it on account of the Black and Tans forming the [British] Gendarmerie. And he said: look if you want to do something join the British army. The British army's honourable, not the Black and Tans'. Martin M., Author interview.

¹⁶⁶ O'Sullivan, Diary transcripts, 25 Sept., 3 Oct. 1947 (O'Sullivan papers, fo. 83).

collusion had resulted in Ireland becoming a centre for clandestine Jewish immigration into Palestine in the final years of the Mandate and the establishment by the Irgun of its headquarters in Ireland following its persecution by the government of the new state of Israel.¹⁶⁷

But Irish Republicanism's enthusiasm for Jewish statehood in Palestine was rather short-lived. One year after the establishment of Israel, Sinn Féin's newspaper, the *United Irishman*, was decrying the 'violent persecution' of the Catholic Church there by the country's 'Jewish Government' and blaming the lack of condemnation by Catholic nations on the facts that 'they have recognised the Israelite pro-Communist anti-Catholic Government'; that 'their newspapers dare not offend the Judaeo-Masonic news agencies on whom they depend for their foreign news'; that 'Jewish influence [was] rampant in some of those pseudo-Catholic parties'; and that 'Jewish finance [was] a power with which they fear[ed] to contend'. It returned to this theme six months later, denouncing what it described as the 'desecration' of the Christian Holy Places 'by a people who have ever been the bitter enemies of Christianity'.¹⁶⁸

The B.L.L.O.'s role in the recruitment of Irish citizens for employment in Britain was, in the final analysis, an accepted fact of Irish life and it continued 'working at top pressure' in the postwar period, when chronic labour shortages in Britain coincided with rising unemployment in Ireland.¹⁶⁹ The BSPP was actually just one of a range of British employers for which it helped co-ordinate recruitment in 1946-7: in fact, the numbers recruited for Palestine paled in comparison to those who emigrated to Britain under B.L.L.O. auspices to work as miners, nurses, agricultural labourers and factory workers at the same time. Nor was the BSPP the only British

¹⁶⁷ *La Metropole*, 8 Sept. 1948.

¹⁶⁸ *United Irishman*, July-Aug. 1949, Jan. 1950.

¹⁶⁹ *Irish Independent*, 9 Jan. 1947. The B.L.L.O. was eventually closed in October 1954.

police force actively looking for Irish recruits in the postwar period. A recruitment crisis at home led the London Metropolitan Police and other English constabularies to advertise widely in Ireland. Advertisements appeared several times a month in the classifieds' sections of the main Irish dailies and certain provincial papers in late 1946 and throughout 1947 although the response was reportedly poor.¹⁷⁰ The BSPP was, of course, set apart from other advertised occupations by the colonial dimension. Yet its recruitment of Irishmen did not raise public hackles and there is little evidence that Irish enlistments encountered hostility on their return. In fact, just one BSPP constable (formerly a schoolteacher from Westport) reported a problem, telling *The Node* one month after arriving back in Ireland that, despite having:

the highest qualifications to obtain employment in Ireland ... the fact that I served in the Palestine Police absolutely precludes me from obtaining employment with my former employers.¹⁷¹

However, this was probably mere supposition on his part, as ex-BSPP personnel were certainly not disbarred from state jobs. Indeed, some returnees evidently considered their BSPP service an advantage when seeking further employment, making explicit reference to it in advertisements they placed in the 'situations wanted' sections of the national press.¹⁷² The fact that most of these advertisements were placed in the *Irish Times*, the readership of which was perhaps the least likely demographic in Ireland to have objected to British colonial service, is doubtless significant. However, on the evidence of BSPP recruitment campaign, it was just as uncontroversial in wider society as well.

¹⁷⁰ *Irish Times*, 12 Feb. 1947. For examples of these advertisements see, *Irish Independent*, 20 Nov. 1946; *Irish Times*, 25 Feb. 1947; *Irish Press*, 29 Apr. 1947; *Kerryman*, 22 Nov. 1947.

¹⁷¹ BJJ to *The Node*, 18 June 1948 (CEM, PPAPR, BJJ fo. 17a).

¹⁷² See, for example, *Irish Times*, 23 June, 8 July, 15 Sept. 1948; 11 Jan., 4 Mar., 1 Apr., 29 July 1949; *Irish Independent*, 7 July 1948.

Chapter 5: ‘From the Aspect of Irishness’: The Irish Experience of the British Section of the Palestine Police, 1946-48

5.1 Introduction

Successful applicants for the BSPP were ordered to report by appointment to the Crown Agents for the Colonies at Millbank in central London for transfer onwards to Palestine. After being provided with the necessary papers and kit, they were taken to Victoria station where they were dispatched by train to Dover to catch a sailing to Calais. There followed a twenty-four hour train journey across France to Toulon from where they were transported by troop ship to Port Said in Egypt and by train into Palestine itself. Although frequently critical of the hardships imposed by this nine-day long journey, firsthand accounts found in BSPP personnel files and provided in interview impart a clear sense of the excitement and anticipation felt by Irish enlistments as they set out to become policemen in Palestine.¹ This chapter takes as its subject their experience of life in the BSPP and, mindful of Jeffery’s exhortation that ‘what needs persistently to be addressed’ with regard to the contribution of Irish men and women to the British empire is ‘the question of whether [their] *Irishness* ... both individually and as a group, made any specific difference to their experience and service’, examines the extent to which nationality shaped the personal perspectives and defined the professional experience of Irish BSPP personnel.² Focussing on those recruited in the postwar period who, as noted above, accounted for almost half of all BSPP Irish enlistments and for whom the data are most complete, it begins by

¹ See, for example, ‘My journey to Palestine’ in CEM, PPAPR, OAD fo. 2; CEM, PPAPR, PSJ; CEM, PPAPR, DCC fos. 2a-2b; CEM, PPAPR, CKW fo. 5a; CEM, PPAPR, HJJ fo. 4b; CEM, PPAPR, GKW fo. 2a-2c and Author interviews with Martin M., John P., Thomas F. and Patrick T.

² Emphasis Jeffery’s. Jeffery, ‘Introduction’ to *An Irish empire*, p. 17.

exploring whether Irishness informed both the attitudes of Irish BSPP personnel to the communities they policed and their view of the Arab-Jewish conflict and examines whether nationality was a factor in relationships within the BSPP itself. It then investigates the two areas which perhaps provide the best barometers of the impact of Irishness on professional experience; promotion and conduct/discipline. As the first study of these areas to be based largely on BSPP personnel records (which, despite the wealth of data they contain, have not been previously exploited), it also offers fresh perspectives on existing research on the BSPP.

5.2 Personal relations

The attitude of BSPP personnel serving in the final years of the Mandate to the communities they policed cannot be properly understood without reference to the general perceptions of Arabs and Jews which prevailed among the British in Palestine. Prejudice against the country's native populations was commonplace at all levels of British society throughout the 1917-48 period. In the early years, anti-Jewish feeling deriving from traditional British religious and social anti-Semitism was exacerbated by concerns about the emergence of revolutionary Bolshevism among Palestine's Jews which, as Wasserstein notes, became 'an obstinately recurrent theme in British thinking about Palestine throughout the Mandatory period' and fed into other sinister 'Jewish world conspiracy' theories current at the time.³ Furthermore,

³ Wasserstein, *British in Palestine*, pp 11-12; Segev, *One Palestine*, p. 93. These theories represented what Norman Cohen describes as 'a modern adaptation of [the] ancient demonological tradition' concerning the Jews and were also a dominant theme in Irish Catholic anti-Semitism during this period. Norman Cohen, *Warrant for genocide: the myth of the Jewish world conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (Chicago, 1981), p. 22. For examples of contemporary Irish writings on the Judaeo-Bolshevik bogey see Denis Fahey, *The kingship of Christ according to the principles of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Dublin, 1931); idem, *The rulers of Russia* (Dublin, 1938); Lord Ffrench, 'The Russian experiment' in *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, xl (1932), pp 482-91; *The Cross*, July 1933, p. 98, May 1934, pp 2-5, 32.

what Sherman describes as the ‘thrusting, self-confident’ manner of many Zionist functionaries intensely irritated British officials accustomed to greater deference from those they perceived as colonial subjects.⁴ This was noted by the American Unitarian social activist, John Haynes Holmes, in 1929;

In all their imperial experience [the British] have never had to deal with people of just this kind before ... These Jews do not act like natives. They are not submissive, and obedient, and grateful for benefits received ... and thus are regarded by the English with the active dislike of a superior class for an inferior class which does not know and keep its place.⁵

In ‘vying for the status as colonizer while still subject to British colonial rule’ and so ‘[disturbing] the binary oppositions on the validity of which colonialism rested’, the Jews appeared to officials such as James Pollock, the Irish assistant district governor in Ramallah, as ‘the most intolerant and arrogant people in the world’.⁶ So instinctively anti-Jewish was British society in Palestine that even Jewish Britons felt bigotry’s chill with Helen Bentwich complaining that ‘there are such a lot of English people one can’t meet on equal terms because of their anti-Semitism’.⁷

Attitudes towards Palestine’s Arabs, while also racist, were generally more benign. According to Wasserstein:

A basic element in the British view of the Arab majority in Palestine was the belief that they were not really Arabs at all. The “authentic” Arab was the desert Bedouin, the majority of Palestinians degenerate “Levantines” of mixed race and questionable character

and some British officials certainly expressed such views, particularly with respect to

⁴ Sherman, *Mandate days*, pp 26-8.

⁵ Holmes quoted in Ronen Shamir, *The colonies of law: colonialism, Zionism and law in early Mandate Palestine* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 20. See also remarks of David Ben Gurion in Moshe Pearlman, *Ben Gurion looks back in talks with Moshe Pearlman* (London, 1965), p. 66.

⁶ Shamir, *Colonies*, p. 20; Pollock to his father, 15 May 1920, quoted in Segev, *One Palestine*, p. 94. See also Holliday, *Letters*, p. 106 and Duff, *Sword*, pp 155-7.

⁷ Glynn, *Tidings*, pp 70, 42, 67-8. See also Bentwich, *Mandate memories*, pp 90, 133. For discussions of British anti-Semitism during this period see Evyatar Friesel, ‘Through a peculiar lens: Zionism and Palestine in British diaries, 1927-31’ in *Middle Eastern Studies*, xxix, no. 3 (1993), pp 419-44 and Rose, *Senseless, squalid war*, pp 30-3.

what they called ‘town Arabs’.⁸ For example in 1926 Stewart Perowne, an official with the Palestine government’s education department, complained to his father that ‘the people are not Arabs ... they are simply Arabic-speaking Levantines’ while writing of a trip to Transjordan in 1938 the wife of an army officer stationed in Palestine, Heather Teague, noted that she was ‘happy to see proper Arabs again. The Palestinian variety are not up to my standard’.⁹ Nonetheless, as a race the Arabs of Palestine were more frequently romanticised. Writing to her parents from Jerusalem in 1922, Eunice Holliday reported that:

I like the Arabs very much indeed, they seem so much more dignified, refined and well-bred than either Jews or Europeans: somehow they seem so grand, as if they come from a very great people, and yet they are so simple

and many other Britons were attracted by what they saw as their ‘pride in their traditions, and above all the exquisite courtesy and generous hospitality that enabled most British individually to enjoy social and official encounters with them’.¹⁰ Indeed, despite his expressed reservations, Perowne chose to live amongst them: according to Hector Bolitho, while other British officials ‘lived in clean-faced villas and popped in on each other for tea and cocktails’, Perowne set up home in ‘an old building, deep in the labyrinth of the “native quarter”’ near the bazaar where his neighbours were ‘Arabs in their smelly little houses’.¹¹ Even difficulties such as the Arab Revolt and Haj Amin al-Husseini’s subsequent flirtation with Nazi Germany ‘could not materially alter the cherished British fantasy that the Palestine Arabs and their

⁸ Wasserstein, *British in Palestine*, pp 12-14. See also Assaf Likhovski, *Law and identity in Mandate Palestine* (North Carolina, 2006), pp .

⁹ Sherman, *Mandate days*, p. 26; Teague quoted in Michael Bennett, ‘Mr and Mrs Orientalist: at home with the Pollocks of Palestine’, Paper presented to English and History Postgraduate Forum, Edge Hill University, 17 Oct. 2012, p. 13.

¹⁰ Holliday, *Letters*, p. 14; Sherman, *Mandate days*, p. 25. See also Bentwich, *Mandate memories*, pp 57, 73 and Koestler, *Promise*, p. 14.

¹¹ Bolitho, *Angry neighbours*, p 46. Perowne later married the renowned British Arabist, Freya Stark.

colonial masters shared both profound understanding and uncomplicated mutual affection'.¹²

Certainly British relations with the Arabs were far better than they were with the Jews. 'Less malleable altogether, certainly less amenable to British charm or moral leadership than the Arabs', the Jews were considered 'more threatening and altogether less appealing' on a social and political level.¹³ In August 1928 Lord Plumer told the incoming high commissioner, Sir John Chancellor, that Jewish complaints of a 'lack of cordiality towards them socially from British officials was ... probably true' and two years later the British-Jewish jurist, Horace Samuel, was himself complaining that 'whether they whined, or threatened, or cajoled or protested' the Arabs were always 'picturesque, ingratiating, sympathetic' while the Zionists were seen as 'clumsy, fussy and aggressive' even when right was on their side: in short, the Balfour Declaration was regarded as 'damned nonsense, the Jews as a damned nuisance ... and the Arabs as damned good fellows'.¹⁴ The same was still true seventeen years later: in his account of his time as a member of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry into the issue of Jewish immigration, the British M.P. Richard Crossman stated that 'somehow we like the Arabs even though they fight us, and we dislike the Jews even if our interests run together' and quoted a British official as stating that 'there are two societies in Jerusalem, not three. One is Anglo-Arab and the other is Jewish. The two just can't mix'.¹⁵

5.2.1 BSPP relations with Arabs and Jews

¹² Sherman, *Mandate days*, p. 25.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 26. See also Bentwich, *Mandate memories*, p. 68 and Duff, *Sword*, pp 155-7.

¹⁴ Ofer, Pinhas, 'The role of the high commissioner in British policy in Palestine: Sir John Chancellor, 1928-1931' (Ph.D., University of London, 1971), p. 49; Samuel, *Unholy memories*, pp 35-7.

¹⁵ Richard Crossman, *Palestine mission: a personal record* (New York, 1947), pp 3, 133.

This general preference for the Arabs was reflected among the British police. The targeting of the BSPP during the 1936-9 revolt had given rise to anti-Arab feeling among elements of the force at the time. Writing as it ended, Roger Courtney echoed Perowne and Teague in asserting that Palestine's Arabs were 'as different from the real Arabs of the desert and Transjordan as chalk from cheese ... a craven, cowardly lot, afraid of the dark and only game for such sneaky work as sniping the [Jewish] settlements or knifing people in the back'.¹⁶ And in his letters home Sydney Burr repeatedly referred to Arabs as 'wogs' and noted that 'most [traffic] accidents out here are caused by police, as running over an Arab is the same as a dog in England except we do not report it'.¹⁷ Nonetheless, the general perception of the Arabs as picturesque and appealing remained largely uncompromised by the insurgency which, given the Arabs' primitive weaponry and lack of strategic planning, appeared in retrospect to have been, in words of Palestine Police C.I.D. chief, Richard Catling, 'all good clean fun' when compared to 'the Jewish brand of terrorism' which the police faced in the postwar period.¹⁸ Although race-based condescension towards the Arabs was not entirely absent among BSPP personnel recruited in 1946-7 (see, for example, the diary of Constable Anthony Wright in which he repeatedly uses terms such as 'wogs' and 'wogland' when referring to Arabs), relations were generally good.¹⁹ Catling explained their relative warmth with reference to the Arabs' 'love of sport, love of hospitality, [and] the sort of Lawrence of Arabia connotation' which made them far more attractive than the Jews, and Arab hospitality does appear to have been

¹⁶ Courtney, *Palestine policeman*, p. 41.

¹⁷ Burr to parents, 29 Dec. 1937 (IWM, Burr collection).

¹⁸ Quoted in Norris, 'Repression', p. 32.

¹⁹ Indeed, writing fifty years later, Wright pleaded that in 99 per cent of cases, such terms were 'just the slang in current use, rather childish but said without malice aforethought' while Catling, who went on to hold senior policing posts in Malaya and Kenya, acknowledged that the British 'did see ourselves as superior to the local citizens' but insisted that it was not 'an offensive attitude [being] more paternal than anything else'. Lang, *One man*, pp 13-14, 18; French, *British way*, p. 61.

particularly important in creating a positive impression.²⁰ Writing of the early 1930s, Binsley recalled that the Arab *fellahin* ‘gave us better food than they themselves could afford to eat’ while British-born BSPP constable Frank Jones, who served in the final two years of the Mandate, described the village elders as:

So nice, it was unbelievable: they’d kill a goat or a sheep, so you’d have to stop and have a meal ... they were so kind.²¹

Relations between the police and Palestine’s Jews were, however, perennially fraught. Arthur Koestler attributed this to anti-Semitism which he claimed ‘reached scandalous proportions’ in the BSPP.²² The force undoubtedly did contain its share of anti-Semites. But the great majority were created during their BSPP service rather than recruited into the force fully-formed. In the early years, recruits were exposed to ‘Judaeo-Bolshevik’ conspiracy theories which, although first raised by British army officers, were most stridently expounded by Percy Bramley who, despite assurances from the Zionist Executive that Zionism and Bolshevism were ‘deadly enemies’, continued to lobby the Colonial Office on the issue even after his retirement from the Palestine Police in April 1923.²³ So central a preoccupation did the perceived Judaeo-Bolshevik threat subsequently become for police C.I.D. (this despite the fact that it was downplayed by the Palestine government and by Arthur Mavrogordato) that it was blamed by the Shaw Commission for the lapses in intelligence about the upsurge

²⁰ Quoted in Norris, ‘Repression’, p. 32. See also Quickfall, *Shadows*, p. 54.

²¹ Binsley, *Palestine Police*, p. 21; Frank Jones, Transcript of interview with Nick Kardahji, 16 Mar. 2006, p. 6 (MECA, GB165-0389).

²² Ya’acov Eliav went so far as to claim that one of the primary qualifications for a position in the Jewish affairs section of police C.I.D. was ‘hatred of Jews to the point of wishing to liquidate them’. Koestler, *Promise*, p. 15; Eliav, *Wanted*, pp 38-9.

²³ Wasserstein, *British in Palestine*, pp 66-7; Hammond, ‘Ideology’, pp 101-2; Memorandum of a discussion which took place at Government House on Friday, 8 December 1922’, p. 3 (TNA, CO 733/41/745); Kisch to Bramley, 10 Jan. 1923 (TNA, CO 733/41/749-50). For Bramley’s representations on the issue after leaving Palestine see RCMS, Bramley papers, Palestine 1923-1925 (RCMS 64).

in Arab anti-Jewish feeling which directly led to the 1929 riots. Anti-Semitic feeling in the BSPP was exacerbated by the fallout from the riots themselves, particularly the blistering criticism of the police response by Zionist Jews both in Palestine and beyond, particularly the vilification of Raymond Cafferata.²⁴ Indeed, writing to Cafferata afterwards his friend John Fox congratulated him ‘on killing a few folks, though I’d sooner they’d been Jews and I expect you agree’.²⁵

However, it was the savagery of ‘the Jewish brand of terrorism’ during the final years of the Mandate that frequently transformed simmering resentment into outright race-hatred. No single terrorist attack on the BSPP equalled in notoriety those perpetrated against the British army such as the April 1946 shooting of seven members of the army’s 6th Airborne Division in a Tel Aviv car park (which, according to its commanding officer, ‘for cold-blooded brutality could hardly have been surpassed’)²⁶ and the bombing of the King David Hotel three months later; the bomb attack on the Goldsmith officers’ club in Jerusalem in March 1947 which left seventeen people dead; and most notoriously of all, the kidnapping and hanging of two British army sergeants, Mervyn Paice and Clifford Martin, in July 1947. However, attacks on the police, whom the Irgun called the ‘mercenaries and instruments of [the] regime’ and the ‘Palestine Gestapo’, were unremitting throughout the 1946-8 period.²⁷ As Table 8 below illustrates, twenty-two BSPP personnel had been killed by the Irgun and Stern Gang between 1939 and 1945. But more than four times this number died as a result of Jewish terrorist attacks between January 1946

²⁴ See pp 172-3 above. Harry Luke, who was acting high commissioner during the riots, referred to his own subsequent revilement by Zionists worldwide as ‘Trial by Jewry’. However, his management of the crisis has continued to attract criticism. Luke, *Cities* vol. 3, p. 20; Ofer, ‘Chancellor’, pp 117-133.

²⁵ Fox to Cafferata, 1 Nov. 1929 (MECA, Cafferata collection, LA 2, no. 17).

²⁶ Wilson, *Cordon*, p. 45. Lowe describes the attack as ‘the most callous operation of all, an event that was to bring the troops to the point of mutiny’ while, for Newsinger, it ‘more than any other changed the nature of the conflict’. Lowe, *Forgotten conscripts*, p. 63; Newsinger, *British counter-insurgency*, p. 18.

²⁷ Zadka, *Blood*, p. 106.

Table 8: Numbers of BSPP personnel killed in Jewish terrorist attacks, 1939-48²⁸

	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948
Total	3	2	0	1	0	9	7	17	51	26

and the Mandate's end. Frank Jones cited both the murder of Paice and Martin and an attempt on his own life in Haifa as the turning points for him in terms of his attitudes towards the Jews:

I treated them all as Palestinians, they were always equal, until they hanged those army sergeants, and I thought "what sort of people are these"? They were killing off six British policemen a month; they murdered over 250 of us ... That's when I knew what an evil people the Jews were.²⁹

Similarly with Constable Bertie Braddick, who cited the attack on the 6th Airborne Division as his reason for enlisting in the BSPP and was himself almost killed by a Jewish gunman:

I think generally most constables regretted what the Jews did and thought it was a disgusting way of behaving, especially as we were there to protect them ... I regret what the Jews did and I think they should pay for it. And frankly I would like to see the Arabs wipe them right off the face of the earth. Every single one of them, man, women and child, not only there but everywhere. [Because] I don't think they deserve to have a piece of land, or to live or to eat or anything.³⁰

Even the generally mild-mannered and thoughtful Desmond Morton became incensed by the savagery of the Jewish terrorist campaign:

A very good friend of mine was shot the other day ... a grand young fellow of 20 so you can imagine how I feel about those b-ds who, without the slightest warning and having all the advantages, shoot you in the back [emphasis Morton's]

and after another incident five months later he referred to the saving by the British

²⁸ Figures extracted from the Palestine Police roll of honour (www.rollofhonour.org/forces/colonial/palestine/ppoca_roll.htm) and BSPP personnel records.

²⁹ Frank Jones, MECA interview, p. 8

³⁰ Bertie Braddick, Transcript of interview with William Ward, 7 May 2006, pp 2, 12, 15 (MECA, GB165-0394).

army of ‘the worthless lives of a number of filthy Jew-boys’.³¹ Such anti-Semitic feelings were fuelled by the British belief that the Jews were biting the hand that had very recently fed them: as Binsley put it, the Jewish insurgency represented ‘the most blatant ingratitude toward a benevolent country who had granted them access to Palestine and then protected them from the Arabs to allow them to create a home in the Holy Land’ while Quickfall accused the Jews of ‘extracting a vengeance against the very soldiers who had fought to end their suffering in Europe’.³²

The outrage that the police felt towards their attackers was also directed at the general Jewish population. David Cesarani makes the claim for a ‘persistent and resilient philo-Semitism’ among the British security forces during this period but there is no evidence of this in the BSPP. Some of its members evidently admired the Zionists’ undoubted achievements.³³ But the majority was clearly infuriated by what was seen as the wider Jewish community’s tacit support for the terrorists. Anthony Wright summed up this feeling in his diary in June 1946: ‘the terrorist is the “man-in-the-street” and the worker on the land; the scoutmaster, the teacher, the factory worker and shop-keeper’.³⁴ And this message was reinforced in Arab propaganda pamphlets which were widely circulated among the police:

The Yishuv [the organised Jewish community in Palestine prior to the establishment of Israel] manned the terrorist groups. The Yishuv protected, sheltered and covered the terrorists. The Yishuv never cooperated with you in any way to stop [their] cowardly and barbarous deeds ... The acts were hailed by all the Jews as acts of Jewish bravery’.³⁵

³¹ Morton to parents, 15 Nov. 1947, 23 Apr. 1948 (MECA, Morton collection)

³² Binsley, *Palestine Police*, pp 128-9; Quickfall, *Shadows*, p. 38. See also the remarks of British army officers cited in David Cesarani, ‘The British security forces and the Jews in Palestine, 1945-48’ in Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann (ed.), *Rethinking history, dictatorship and war: new approaches and interpretations* (London, 2009), pp 191-210, at pp 194, 196.

³³ Cesarani, ‘British security forces’, pp 203-10. See also James Hainge, Transcript of interview with Eugene Rogan, 5 June 2006, p. 15 (MECA, GB165-0402) and French, *British way*, pp 69-70.

³⁴ Lang, *One man*, pp 16-17. See also John Tyrell, Transcript of interview with Seth Anziska, 8 June 2007, p. 5 (MECA, GB165-0413).

³⁵ A. M. O., ‘British soldiers! British policemen! British civilians’, undated c. 1948, p. 23 (copy in MECA, Morton collection). Such views were trenchantly expressed by British army officer, Lt.-Col. J. M. H. Hackett, who castigated Palestine’s Jews as ‘thoroughly non-cooperative, unscrupulous,

The violently anti-Semitic poem, 'A Policeman's Lament', proved particularly popular with BSPP personnel. Purported to be the dying words of a murdered British policeman, it urged the BSPP to take revenge by killing 'every damned son of Zion' and making 'Hell ... their National Home'.³⁶

5.2.1 'Like we were ourselves'

On the evidence of their personal testimonies, Irish BSPP personnel were even more favourably disposed towards Palestine's Arabs than were their British colleagues in the postwar period. This mainly derived from a tendency among the Irish to self-identify with the Arab character and culture. The hospitableness of Arab village society struck a particular chord with Irish policemen, particularly those from rural areas of Ireland, for whom it evoked memories of home:

If you had to go with them to their home for any reason it would be "come, come, coffee, sit, sit". They were very friendly, nice people in comparison to the Jewish people ... They reminded me sometimes of good-hearted Irish people, you know, that sort of thing.³⁷

Similarly with Patrick T. who noted that when he and his colleagues 'went into their houses we got very "maith go leor", like you did at home'.³⁸ Others discerned a temperament and outlook to life among the Arabs which they saw as similar to their

dishonest and utterly immoral' on account of the manner in which the civilian population 'systematically and continually hide and refuse to give up for justice the perpetrators of murderous outrages'. Quoted in French, *British way*, p. 67. See also comments of G.O.C. in Palestine, General Evelyn Barker, quoted in Menachem Begin, *The revolt: inside story of the Irgun* (New York, 1951), p. 296.

³⁶ A. M. O., 'A Policeman's Lament', 3 Mar. 1948 (copy in Irish Franciscan Archive, Killiney, Eugene Hoade papers [hereafter EHP], Box 1, Folder 8). See Appendix A for full text. British troops were also turned against the Jews by the terrorist campaign. According to Wilson, while many soldiers were initially rather sympathetic towards the Jews on account of what they had witnessed in Europe during the war, 'this attitude was put severely to the test during the following two and a half years, and in the majority of cases, failed to stand up to the strain'. Wilson, *Cordon*, p. 15. See also Rose, *Senseless squalid war*, p. 147; Zadka, *Blood*, pp 170-2 and Cesarani, 'British security forces', pp 194-8.

³⁷ Thomas F., Author interview.

³⁸ Patrick T., Author interview.

own. For Paul MacMahon, for example, ‘the [Arabs] were our friends there. They really were wonderful people, so warm and kind ... like the Irish’ while Patrick C. ‘personally found the Arabs very very like the Irish – very laid back ... very humble people to deal with ... very easy to get on with’.³⁹ Similarly with Michael Burke from Sligo who admired the ‘simplicity’ of Arab culture, particularly that of the Bedouin:

They were people who were living and existing and bearing in mind that I [came] from the west coast of Ireland ... I had to depend on the sea and on the land to live when I was a child [so] I fitted in quite well normally with the Bedouin Arabs.⁴⁰

Some, such as John P., felt a particular affinity with the Arab Christians whom he found ‘very compatible with the Irish’.⁴¹

The attitudes of Irish BSPP personnel towards Palestine’s Jews were broadly reflective of those of their British counterparts. The majority was certainly anti-Jewish in outlook on account of the terrorist campaign which claimed several Irish casualties, including nine dead, between December 1945 and May 1948. Yet Irish personal testimonies are devoid of the deep-seated race-hatred that those of the British occasionally display and some Irish policemen even complained to their superior officers about what they saw as anti-Semitism in the force: for example, in May 1946, Irish BSPP constable CDT accused BSPP officers of the ‘inculcation of Judaeophobia into new [recruits], unofficially of course’ while BSPP sergeant Pat Mc. had to dissuade one of his constables from resigning over the issue, explaining that ‘it’s not a question of being anti-Semitic. It’s just a question of who the ... hell’s firing at you’.⁴² Patrick C. took a similar view, stating that while ‘you wouldn’t be able to say

³⁹ Paul MacMahon, IWM interview and correspondence with author, 11 Apr. 2010; Patrick C., Author interview.

⁴⁰ Michael Burke, IWM interview.

⁴¹ John P., Author interview.

⁴² CDT to inspector-general, 22 May 1946 (CEM, PPAPR, CDT); Pat Mc., Gloucestershire, Interview with author, 29 Nov. 2009.

one side was worse than the other or one was better than the other, the only thing we could say is that it was the Jewish terrorists that were giving us the aggro'. As a former member of the British armed forces he, like Binsley and Quickfall, was angered by what he saw as Jewish ingratitude for Britain's role in Nazism's defeat:

My attitude was then, well why are [the Jews] attacking us? – We've just been involved in a war to sort of – not to save them – but they were saved from further humiliation, you know, by us taking part in it, so why were they behaving like this?

But, unlike his British colleagues, he still expressed sympathy for the plight of Holocaust survivors arriving on illegal immigrant ships.⁴³ Thomas F.'s attitude was also informed by the terrorist campaign. Although acknowledging that he 'never had any personal contact with [Jews]', he admitted that:

I did not like the Jewish people ... I'm not saying the Jewish people [were] all bad. But it [was] very difficult to like them, I'll put it like that. Mainly because of what was happening.⁴⁴

Martin M., who having grown up in the 'Little Jerusalem' area of Dublin's south city was well-disposed towards Jewish people and culture, was similarly affected. Although he acknowledged that his sympathies were 'more pro-Arab I would say, but without any real convictions or anything' before arriving in Palestine, his experiences as a BSPP constable turned him 'violently against the Jews'.⁴⁵ Similarly with Paul McMahon: 'I was sympathetic to the Arabs as Jews shot me on two occasions'.⁴⁶

The relative moderation of the attitudes expressed in the testimonies of some Irish BSPP personnel probably derived from the fact that they were stationed in mainly Arab areas such as Nazareth and Ramle and were, as a consequence, shielded

⁴³ Patrick C., Author interview.

⁴⁴ Thomas F. Author interview.

⁴⁵ On hearing that he had joined the BSPP, one Jewish friend 'wrote out a little note and said "carry that with you and if you happen to get captured by any of the Jewish terrorists show them that"'. It said something like I was a friend of his and I was alright. It was in Yiddish so I don't know what exactly it said but it would save me if I was kidnapped. Martin M., Author interview.

⁴⁶ Paul McMahon, Correspondence with author, op. cit.

from the full force of the Jewish insurgency. As John D. wrote to his mother from Ramle in March 1947, 'this is an entirely Arab town, no Jews at all. So there is no fear of terrorists here'.⁴⁷ But others felt a degree of sympathy and understanding for the Jewish cause. For some this was essentially religious. In June 1936 an official of the Anglican church in Palestine noted that:

For 'those who study their Bibles, believing that the prophecies with regard to the Jewish people mean something ... it seems to be in line with God's inscrutable plans that Palestine is to be the centre of Jewish national life in the future

and a small number of Irish non-Catholic policemen saw the Zionist struggle in eschatological terms.⁴⁸ For John F., a member of the Church of Ireland, it represented the prophesised 'ingathering of exiles' which was a necessary precondition for Christ's second coming ('as I saw it the Jews were coming home') and so too for William B. (a Presbyterian) who saw it as part of the 'divine providential plan' for God's 'chosen people'.⁴⁹

Others saw Zionism as an independence movement like Ireland's own. Although Vladimir Jabotinsky remained ambivalent as to the relevance of the Irish revolution as an historical model for Revisionist Zionism, 'understanding and learning from Irish Republicanism' became, in the wake of the 1929 riots, 'an integral part of devising a more militant stand'.⁵⁰ And while the Irish model was ultimately rejected

⁴⁷ John D. to mother, 10 Mar. 1947 (MS in possession of Thomas D., Cork); See also Martin M., Author interview.

⁴⁸ 'The situation in Palestine', unsigned typescript, 9 June 1936 (MECA, JEMP, Box 61, File 1). See also Aziz Dowet to Weston, 28 May 1936 (Ibid.).

⁴⁹ John F., Author interview; William B., Correspondence with author, op. cit. Such views contrasted with the prevailing Catholic position which regarded Jewish sovereignty over the Holy Land in the absence of the conversion of the Jews to Christianity *en masse* as what the *Catholic Herald* called 'a corruption of the spiritual order'. *Catholic Herald*, 4 June 1948. See also Eugene Fisher, 'The Holy See and the State of Israel: the evolution of attitudes and policies' in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, xxiv, no. 2 (1987), pp 192-7.

⁵⁰ Schindler, *Triumph*, p. 145. See also Spyer, 'Birth', p. 53. Their horror at the Irgun/Stern Gang campaign led some moderate Zionists to decry the Irish experience as 'a false analogy'. See Miller, 'Oriental Ireland', pp 172-3.

as a blueprint for action (asked by Saul Zadka whether the Irgun had been ‘influenced by guerrilla groups in other countries militarily and ideologically’, its former leader, Menachem Begin, simply replied: ‘We learned from the history of our own people and ourselves’),⁵¹ general parallels between the Jewish insurgency and the Irish revolution continued to be drawn in the postwar period, most passionately by the Irgun terrorist Avshalom Haviv at his trial in July 1947:

You will probably remember that in Ireland too you [Britain] seized a small country and captured people by force of arms and deceit in the name of religion and under the cover of “law and order”. When the sons of Ireland rose up against you, you tried to drown the rising against tyranny in rivers of blood, you set up gallows, you murdered in the streets, you exiled, you ran amok and believed, in your stupidity, that by dint of persecution, you would break the resistance of the free Irish’.⁵²

Militant pro-Zionist organisations such as the American League for a Free Palestine took a similar line (its sloganeering on the subject summed up by an apoplectic James Dillon as ‘Free Ireland – Free Palestine. Support the resistance against the British terror’) and William Ziff expended much energy drawing Ireland-Palestine parallels, claiming that the Irish had ‘fought the British in the same bitter, uphill way that characterise[d] contemporary Jewish action in Palestine’.⁵³ Meanwhile in Palestine, some Irish BSPP personnel recalled seeing slogans such as “Ireland 1921-Palestine 1945” and “Eire 1922” painted on the funnels of Jewish immigrant ships docked in Haifa harbour.⁵⁴

According to Murphy, ‘the pattern of nationalist politics familiar to the Irish

⁵¹ Zadka, *Blood*, p. 195.

⁵² Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁵³ According to Dillon the league’s linking of Ireland and Palestine was part of Communist-inspired plot to ‘use our people and our cause as an instrument with which to drive a wedge’ between the British and American people and he urged that the D.E.A. ‘vigilantly ... watch any attempt to use the young men of this country in connection with advertisements like “Free Ireland, Free Palestine”’. *Dáil Debates*, 20 June 1947, vol. 106, no. 9, c2335-7; *Irish Times*, 11 Jan. 1947; *New York Journal-American*, 28 Feb. 1947. The league was essentially a front organisation for the Irgun. Barr, *Line*, pp 326-35.

⁵⁴ Patrick C., Author interview; Pat Mc., Author interview.

was very little help' when judging between Arab and Jew in that both sides were:

Full of the folklore and martyrology of their respective national struggles in the past – the Palestinian equivalents of [17]98 and Easter Week, of Robert Emmett, Michael Dwyer and Kevin Barry.⁵⁵

But many Irish policemen judged nonetheless. Pat Mc. recalled that the immigrant ship slogans angered those Irishmen who saw no similarities between the Jewish struggle for statehood and the Irish revolution twenty-five years earlier but others drew clear parallels. As John H. explained:

From the aspect of Irishness it was obvious that the Jews deserved a homeland ... They had come from a situation where they had been victimised throughout the Western world, from Russia, all over Europe, the Holocaust, the whole damn thing. And they were determined to fight to get a Jewish state as a nation and I thought they were entitled to it, like we were ourselves.⁵⁶

Patrick T. and Paul MacMahon also cited similarities with 'the Irish situation' to argue that 'the Jews needed a national home' and they drew a distinction between the Irgun and Stern Gang on one side and the Haganah on the other, considering the latter a legitimate military force.⁵⁷

The Stern Gang were real b-ds, really nasty. They'd shoot you as soon as look at you. The Irgun Zvai Leumi, they were prepared to shoot you but [were] not as vicious. The Haganah, well they were very nice people ... we were friendly with a lot of them ... We knew where their loyalties lay but they didn't take it out on us and we didn't take it out on them.⁵⁸

Similarly with John P. who believed that the Haganah 'were fighting a very honest war. Irgun and Stern, they were bad boys'.⁵⁹ And while Patrick C. condemned the

⁵⁵ Murphy himself was clear as to where the parallels should be applied: 'The traditional picture of Cromwell's "Hell or Connaught" policy in Ireland gives a fair idea of what happened in Palestine during 1948 to the Arabs whose homes then were in what is now Jewish territory'. Murphy, 'Irishmen in Palestine', p. 81; idem, 'Britain and Palestine: the first five years' in *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, lxxiv, no. 2 (1950), pp 116-26, at p. 126.

⁵⁶ John H., Author interview.

⁵⁷ Patrick T., Author interview; Paul MacMahon, IWM interview.

⁵⁸ Ibid. See also Michael Burke, IWM interview.

⁵⁹ John P., Author interview. This view of the Haganah was not unique to the Irish. See Francis Russell, MECA interview, p. 14 and Cesarani, 'British security forces', p. 209.

terrorist organisations out of hand, he drew on the Irish historical experience to express some sympathy for men like Dov Gruner, the young Irgun operative executed by the British at Acre jail in April 1947:

He was only a young lad, like Kevin Barry ... only a teenager ... okay, he did atrocities and things like that but like a lot of other youngsters in the days of the old I.R.A. they all joined in thinking they were fighting for Ireland. These fellows thought they were fighting for Jewish Israel.⁶⁰

Irish attitudes towards the wider Jewish population of Palestine were also tempered by the experience of the Irish revolution during which there had been a tendency among the British security forces to regard ‘all civilians as “Shinners”’.⁶¹ Although John P. felt ‘absolute hostility’ from the Jewish population he policed, he tried to see things from their perspective and ‘not tar them all with the [terrorist] brush as the British had done to the Irish’. Paul MacMahon also tried to ‘bear in mind that not all Jews were terrorists. A lot of them were very friendly [although] of course a lot of them that were very friendly were still terrorists, friendly to your face’.⁶² And while Pat Mc. was unforgiving of what he saw as widespread tacit support for the terrorists, he differentiated between Zionist and non-Zionist Jews: ‘Mind you, what the Jews did! The Zionists I mean, the old Jewish people who weren’t Zionists, I had an affinity for them. I respected them’.⁶³ Meanwhile Michael Burke took the hostility he encountered from Jews and Arabs on the chin as he ‘understood ... being an Irishman ... what the occupation of another person’s country meant’.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Patrick C., Author interview. Gruner was in fact twenty-five years old. The *Irish Times* also noted ‘a fairly close analogy between the case of Kevin Barry and that of Dov Gruner’ in that, while their executions were ‘within [Britain’s] legal rights’, they were politically unwise. *Irish Times*, 17 Apr. 1947.

⁶¹ Bernard Montgomery to Percival, 14 Oct. 1923 quoted in Hart, *I.R.A.*, p. 139.

⁶² John P., Author interview; Paul MacMahon, IWM interview.

⁶³ Pat Mc., Author interview.

⁶⁴ Michael Burke, IWM interview.

5.2.2 *'The fighting padre'*

Yet there was great sympathy for the plight of Palestine's Arabs among Irishmen in the final months of the Mandate. Thomas F.'s statement that he was 'very very sad ... as any right-minded person would be' at the outcome of the first Arab-Israeli war is rather typical of the reaction among Irish (and indeed British-born) BSPP veterans and even those such as John H. who supported the establishment of Israel felt that 'the Jews went too far'.⁶⁵ But the sympathy that Irish policemen felt for the Arabs was personal rather than political and they rarely drew parallels between the Arab struggle against Zionism and their own national history.

Fr. Eugene Hoade who, as Roman Catholic chaplain to the Palestine Police held the honorary rank of deputy superintendent, was a notable exception. Searching for Anglican chaplains in July 1938, the Colonial Office was urged to select strong candidates on the basis that 'weak chaplains would be worse than none at all' and this advice was certainly heeded by those who appointed Hoade as Catholic chaplain two months later.⁶⁶ A formidable presence within the force, he was admired, respected and feared in equal measure among Catholics and non-Catholics alike. He not only took a proactive interest in the spiritual wellbeing of his Catholic charges, travelling around the police stations hearing confessions, taking tours to holy sites, and ordering the less observant to attend Sunday mass, but was genuinely solicitous of their personal welfare: for example, he spent two full days by the bedside of BSPP constable Gerald

⁶⁵ In respect of the current Middle East conflict, BSPP veterans are, generally-speaking, staunchly pro-Palestinian in outlook and, as notices and appeals published in the P.P.O.C.A. newsletter amply illustrate, many are members of Palestinian support groups and charities.

⁶⁶ Clayton to Creasy, 27 July 1938 (TNA, CO 733/385/9/21). Roman Catholics accounted for just 14 per cent of the force at the time of Hoade's appointment.

Green as he lay unconscious after being shot by a Jewish sniper in September 1947.⁶⁷

Hoade was also happy, when requested, to extend his remit to cover non-religious



Figure 11: Hoade taking policemen on a tour of Jerusalem, undated (M. Higgins collection)

matters as well. For example, he frequently instructed policemen to write home to their anxious parents:

He came up to Ajami and said to me: “you are to write home this week”. I hadn’t written home in a month or so. My mother must have been enquiring to see if I was all right and he got the message.⁶⁸

He also occasionally became involved in dissuading Catholic policemen from

⁶⁷ Gerald Green, Correspondence with author, 6 Nov. 2013. See also Norman Cresswell, *Through the year with the Catholic faith* (London, 2000), p. 78.

⁶⁸ Martin M., Author interview.

marrying Palestinians, particularly non-Catholics⁶⁹ and interceded with the authorities on behalf of policemen seeking compassionate leave or who faced severe reprimand or punishment.⁷⁰ However, Hoade was far from a typical cleric. According to Patrick T. 'he would drink and swear with the best of us' and he was not averse to using his fists if required, having trained as a boxer and wrestler in his youth: Horne recalled personally seeing him physically remove four Australians 'belligerent in drink' out of a St. Patrick's Day function in 1942.⁷¹ Incidents such as this (demonstrations of what, in the context of the First World War, Timothy Bowman terms 'muscular Christianity' on the part of Catholic chaplains), coupled with the fact that he carried firearms under his habit, earned Hoade the nickname 'the fighting padre' among BSPP personnel.⁷²

According to Harry Luke, the Franciscans in Palestine were 'of necessity less detached than [other religious orders] from local politics' on account of their historical role in actively defending Christian interests in the Holy Land and Hoade was himself staunchly pro-Arab in outlook.⁷³ Although he believed that the Holy Land was 'the inheritance of no particular race but belonged to the world' and appears, on the evidence of his personal papers, to have been immune to the theological Judaeophobia current in contemporary Catholic thinking he, like most Catholic prelates in Palestine, found Arab sovereignty a more palatable proposition than Jewish control, believing that the Franciscan custody over the Christian holy

⁶⁹ See, for example, Hoade to Cressy, undated c. Mar. 1947 (CEM, PPAPR, FFR fo. 6) and Pat Mc, Author interview. After talking FRR out of his planned marriage to an Arab girl in Jerusalem, Hoade recommended that he be transferred to the Galilee 'to keep him out of danger' which was duly done.

⁷⁰ See, for example, HFM to Hoade, 16 Dec. 1947 (CEM, PPAPR, HFM fo. 12); Hoade to Gray, 13 May 1948 (copy in CEM, PPPR, PWF).

⁷¹ Edward Horne, Author interview.

⁷² Timothy Bowman, *Irish regiments in the Great War: discipline and morale* (Manchester, 2003), p. 27. At their first meeting Hoade gave Gerald Green two pieces of advice: 'first "love God" and second – he opened his cloak and produced two pistols – "learn to use these"'. Green, Correspondence with author, op. cit.

⁷³ Luke, *Cities vol. 2*, p. 208.

places might be compromised by a newly-formed assertive Zionist regime.⁷⁴ He therefore threw his considerable weight behind the campaign to have Jerusalem designated a *corpus separatum* under international control, becoming so vocal on the subject that he was placed on a shortlist of candidates for the post of special commissioner for Jerusalem being proposed by the United Nations in the final days of the Mandate.⁷⁵ Hoade's general concerns for Palestine's Christian heritage were exacerbated by genuinely-held fears that the holy places were being systematically desecrated by Jewish forces during the 1947-9 war and he was probably the source of many of the reports on this subject which appeared in the Irish Catholic press at the time. These reports were denied by the Jewish/Israeli authorities and most do appear to have been inaccurate: however, Palestine's chief rabbi, Dr. Isaac Herzog, did concede that several of the incidents Hoade described to him did occur, 'the work of youths or irresponsible elements'.⁷⁶

But Hoade's anti-Zionism was also politico-national. Coming as he did from a staunchly Republican background (his mother 'gave every assistance to the I.R.A.' in 1919-21, 'her home [being] at all times a refuge for many famous officers ... from all parts of Ireland', and three of his brothers also 'took a prominent part in the struggle'), he saw the Palestinian Arabs as the victims of a colonialist enterprise and rumours of his activism on their behalf during the 1948 war have swirled since the

⁷⁴ *The Crusader*, 1 Feb. 1931 (copy in EHP, Box 1, no. 4). This reflected the view of the Vatican. According to the British representative at the Holy See, while it 'would have preferred ... that neither Jews nor Arabs, but a Third Power, should have control in the Holy Land', the Vatican ultimately 'preferred the Arabs to the Jews'. Perowne to Atlee, 8 Aug. 1949 cited in Silvio Ferrari, 'The Holy See and the postwar Palestine issue: the internationalisation of Jerusalem and the protection of the Holy Places' in *International Affairs*, lx, no. 2 (1984), pp 261-83, at p. 261.

⁷⁵ *Irish Independent*, 10 May 1948. For discussions of the campaign to internationalise Jerusalem see Ferrari, 'Holy See', passim, and H. Eugene Bovis, *The Jerusalem question, 1917-1968* (Stanford, 1971), pp 58-69.

⁷⁶ Office of Dr. Herzog to Hoade, 19 Mar. 1948 (EHP, Box 1, File 2). See also 'Holy Places in Israel Territory' enclosed with Good to MacBride, 21 July 1949 (NAI, DFA 305/62/1); 'Alleged desecration of Christian holy places' (MECA, JEMP, Box 71, File 4), *The Standard*, 28 Jan. 1949.

time.⁷⁷ As early as 1954, an *Associated Press* report concerning the refusal of the Israeli authorities to allow him entry from Jordanian East Jerusalem (where the Basilica of Gethsemane was then situated) into their side of the city, described him as a suspected ‘old enemy of Israel’ and noted stories about how he ‘took up arms against and fought against Israel in the Palestine War of 1948’.⁷⁸ According to Collins and Lapierre, he trained a group of Arab Legionnaires in the use of bazookas (a claim repeated by Mary Wilson) while Arab Legion officer Ahmad Tell refers to him as ‘manning the [city] walls during the battle of Jerusalem’.⁷⁹ According to Horne, some even suspected Hoade of involvement in the Farran affair by facilitating the burial of Alexander Rubowitz’s body in Gethsemane ‘where the Israelis properly couldn’t search’, although he gave the story no credence himself.⁸⁰ And although most Irish interviewees were unaware of claims regarding Hoade’s military activities, Pat Mc., who acted as his driver and therefore knew him well, reported hearing ‘various stories about what he got up to’ which, on the evidence of his own personal experience of Hoade’s influence with the Arab militias, he was inclined to believe.⁸¹

Concrete evidence of such activities remains elusive. But what is beyond question is that Hoade was involved in providing military assistance to the Palestinians in subsequent years. Joseph Campbell, who met Hoade in the mid 1950s, noted that he was ‘very strong in his feelings for what the Jews had done’ and identified himself with the Palestinian Arab side, declaring that ‘we are at war ... six

⁷⁷ *Connaught Tribune*, 9 Dec. 1939. Hoade himself was frequently described in press reports as a former Irish rebel although no evidence has yet emerged to support this.

⁷⁸ See undated press clippings in EHP, Box 1, Folder 7 and *Irish Independent*, 17 Apr. 1954. Hoade’s passport, which is among his personal papers, records that he was admitted to Israel in later life.

⁷⁹ Collins & Lapierre, *O Jerusalem*, p. 506; Mary C. Wilson, *King Abdullah, Britain and the making of Jordan* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 212; Ahmad Tell, ‘The battle for old Jerusalem’, part 5 (www.jerusalemmites.org/memoirs/men/5.htm);

⁸⁰ Horne, Author interview. This story probably derived from the fact that Farran, a devout Catholic, was known to have had a long confession with Hoade after Rubowitz’s disappearance.

⁸¹ According to Gerald Green, Hoade ‘had a different driver every six weeks [who] had to be a Catholic’ and he himself served in this capacity. Pat Mc., Author interview; Green, MECA interview, p. 8.

years of it'.⁸² Pat Mc. recalls asking a Franciscan priest he met on a retreat many years later whether he knew Hoade:

And he said "yes". And I asked what happened to him. And he said he got out [of Jerusalem] by the skin of his teeth, how he wasn't murdered or killed by the Jordanians. What happened was one day he was coming from Ramallah and because he was a priest they let him through. But a few minutes later he got stopped again and they searched the back of his car and they found all this guns and ammunition.⁸³

Support for this story is provided by the fact that Hoade was expelled by Amman in December 1956 for what the Jordanian newspaper, *Al-Jihad*, termed his 'suspected political behaviour'. Reporting from the Vatican where he was then Irish ambassador, Leo McCauley noted that while Franciscans at St. Isidore's knew nothing of the affair, 'they were surprised at [Hoade's] expulsion because he had the reputation for being pro-Arab'. However, the private secretary to the substitute for general affairs at the Vatican's secretariat of state, Monsignor Angelo Dell'Acqua, told McCauley that no one should be surprised as Hoade was 'something of a busy-body [who] got mixed up in all sorts of matters, including political'.⁸⁴ The likelihood is that if Hoade was assisting the Palestinian Arabs militarily in the mid-1950s, he was doing so in 1947-8 as well.

5.2.3 'These things didn't enter into it'

According to Hammond and Knight, relations between the British and 'native' sections of the Palestine Police were defined, in the early years, by what Hammond

⁸² Joseph Campbell, *Bakshesh and Brahman: Asian journals – India* (Novato, 1995), p. 2.

⁸³ Pat Mc., Author interview. Gerald Green also recounts a similar story although he dates it to 1953. Green, MECA interview, p. 8.

⁸⁴ McCauley to D.E.A., 13 Dec. 1956 (NAI, DFA 305/156); *Irish Independent*, 10 Dec. 1956. According to Wilson, 'the figure of Father [Hoade] figured largely in tales of British perfidy' surrounding the assassination of King Abdullah in Jerusalem in July 1951 which revolved around Hoade's purported involvement with the British intelligence services in the Middle East. However, the fact he remained unmolested in Jordan for a further four and a half years suggests that they were not taken seriously by Amman. Wilson, *King Abdullah*, p. 212. See also Green, MECA interview, p. 8.

describes as ‘the ordinary British policeman’s racial hostility towards Arabs and Jews’, a hostility which meant that there was little interaction between the two sections, either professionally or socially.⁸⁵ Although Sir Herbert Dowbiggan’s recommendation that the sections be better integrated through measures such as joint patrols was formally accepted by the Colonial Office, it was strongly resisted by some of those on the ground. A handful of British constables went so far as to resign rather than take orders from, be inspected by, salute, or simply address as ‘sir’ Palestinian non-commissioned officers, complaining of ‘the presence of a “Brown Brother movement” in the police force, with inflated notions of its own value and status’.⁸⁶ Suggestions that Britons and Palestinians socialise together by means of a shared canteen were also quickly shot down. Even the reforming Roy Spicer maintained an equivocal position on some of these issues and, despite paying lip-service to the idea of integration, soft-pedalled its implementation.⁸⁷

However, joint patrols were routine by the postwar period and, as Dowbiggan had foreseen, this did give rise to a greater degree of respect and camaraderie between Britons and Palestinians, particularly the Arabs with whom, given the country’s demographics and police distribution, the majority of patrolling was done. Nonetheless, the saluting of Palestinian officers remained controversial (according to BSPP constable Victor Cannings, ‘normally ... we did not salute them’ while Robin Martin refers to ‘an unwritten rule ... that, in a patrol pair, the British member would

⁸⁵ Hammond, ‘Ideology’, p. 274.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 275. Palestinian officers were, these constables complained, ‘frequently either from the lowest Arab peasant stock or [Jews] from one of the meanest ghettos of Central Europe’ and therefore alien to the British in ‘religion, tradition, outlook and mentality and of a far lower standard of education and civilisation’. ‘Diminution of British prestige in Palestine: deplorable working conditions of British Police’, undated, enclosed with Page-Croft to Cunliffe-Lister, 13 Nov. 1934 (TNA, CO 733/250/7/67-71).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 275-6; Spicer to Wauchope, 5 Dec. 1934 (TNA, CO 733/250/7/39-46). See also Knight, ‘Policing’, pp 187-91. See Owen, MECA interview, pp 12-13 for a more positive view of inter-sectional relations at this time.

be in charge, even if [he] was a constable and the Palestinian policeman a sergeant', something which he said could occasionally cause 'unpleasantness') and both sections retained separate living quarters; they very seldom socialised together and real friendships were rare.⁸⁸ Asked whether he had developed any friendships with Palestinian policemen, Frank Jones said 'no, nothing close; we were just working colleagues' and the other British-born BSPP personnel agreed.⁸⁹ While they did not elaborate on the reasons for this, a degree of social condescension towards Palestinians was evidently involved: for example, Francis Russell describes his Arab colleagues in 1946-8 as mostly 'lazy and idle and useless' (as, he added, are Arab policemen the world over today) while Cannings makes mocking reference to the saluting by BSPP constables of a Jewish inspector.⁹⁰

Irish BSPP personnel were not immune to such attitudes. Indeed, a small number was even disciplined for being abusive, sometimes physically, towards their Arab colleagues when off duty themselves.⁹¹ Genuine friendships between Irish policemen and their Palestinian colleagues were also unusual in the postwar period, even among the most long-serving of men. Of those interviewed only John P. 'palled around', as he termed it, with a Palestinian friend: more unusual was the fact that his friend was Jewish at a time when the terrorist campaign made many BSPP personnel inherently suspicious of the Jewish police.⁹² Although other Irish policemen maintained friendly relations with their (mainly Arab) colleagues while at work, they

⁸⁸ Victor Cannings, Transcript of interview with John Knight, 27 Feb. 2006, p. 14 (MECA, GB165-0386); Martin, *Palestine betrayed*, p. 107. See also Michael Burke, IWM interview.

⁸⁹ Jones, MECA interview, p. 9. See also Braddick, MECA interview, p. 6; Tyrell, MECA interview, p. 5.

⁹⁰ Russell, MECA interview, pp 18-19; Cannings, MECA interview, p. 14. See also Braddick, MECA interview, p. 7.

⁹¹ See, for example, Edwards to inspector-general, 11 Nov. 1946 (CEM, PPAPR, HOP fo. 3); VMS, Charge sheet, 1 Dec. 1947 (CEM, PPAPR, VMS fo. 28b); CIT, Charge sheet, 3 Dec. 1947 (CEM, PPAPR, CIT fo. 8); BDJ, Charge sheet, 15 July 1946 (CEM, PPAPR, BDJ fo. 3).

⁹² So close was this friendship that when his friend was shot dead at a roadblock near Jerusalem's Old City at the end of 1948, John P., who was by this time resettled in Canada, tried to raise funds from Jewish businesses there to assist his destitute family. John P., Author interview.

never socialised with them after hours. On the evidence of their testimonies, however, this had more to do with practicalities than prejudice. For example, some believed that the Muslim prohibition on alcohol inevitably excluded the Arab police from a recreational culture which revolved around drinking in cafés while Michael Burke noted that cultural conventions regarding Muslim women precluded visits to their homes. Burke also felt the need to maintain a professional distance from Arab colleagues who were by definition his subordinates. Others, such as Patrick C. and David B., cited ‘the [security] situation we were living in’ as the reason the sections didn’t socialise: the absence of shared canteen facilities meant that any socialising would have to take place in public venues and ‘eventually it got so bad we weren’t allowed roam around the town at all’.⁹³

Whatever the reasons, the vast majority of British and Irish policemen did not look beyond the BSPP for company and friendship in the postwar period. In fact the camaraderie between BSPP personnel was extraordinary and many of the close personal friendships forged in Palestine endured for decades afterwards. Although the liberal use of nicknames such as ‘Paddy’, ‘Taffy’ and ‘Jock’ meant that individuals were somewhat defined by their country of origin, nationality was never an issue in this regard and relations between Irish policemen and their British-born colleagues were entirely unaffected by their countries’ entwined and turbulent history. According to Horne, ‘Palestine was like a bond’: and indeed interviewees were without exception adamant that there was no ‘national’ antagonism between Irish and British force members.⁹⁴ As Patrick C. put it, ‘the Palestine Police was very comrade-orientated I would say, irrespective of your origins’ while John K. noted that ‘the camaraderie was wonderful and everybody looked after all the others’ regardless of

⁹³ Michael Burke, IWM interview; Patrick C., Author interview; David B., Author interview.

⁹⁴ Horne, Author interview.

nationality. John F. agreed:

We all got on very well. There were Welsh and Scottish and British ... We played football together, we went on patrol together sometimes and all that, and there was never any problem.⁹⁵

For Thomas F. the camaraderie between British and Irish policemen derived from the fact that 'we were all together doing the same job, wore the same uniform, and were there for the same reason' and Patrick T. agreed, adding 'well, we could both be killed together, couldn't we?'.⁹⁶

Both Horne and Quickfall noted that relations between Irish policemen from north and south of the border were unaffected by the political and religious fissures at home and Irish interviewees themselves agreed.⁹⁷ John K. 'never heard any bother with north and south. Everything was, you were part of the force and that was it, and, you know, that was the beauty of it' while William B. observed that 'Irishmen from the north and south of Ireland seemed to have a lot in common in Palestine ... I did have some very good friends from the south'.⁹⁸ Martin M., who also noted the extent to which relations between Northerners and 'Southerners' were unaffected by their political and religious background ('there was never anything like that. We were all Irish'), illustrated this point with an anecdote:

When I was in Ajami the mess sergeant was from Northern Ireland and on Patrick's Day all drinks were on the house and a big feed put up and all. ... Strutt was his name ... I'm sure he was an out-and-out Orangeman but there was never a question of any this getting in the way ... On Patrick's Day Sergeant Strutt brought out shamrock and the Unionists I suppose you'd call them, they were all wearing shamrock. No one passed any comment.⁹⁹

Nor, William B. noted, was there any antagonism between Northern Protestants and

⁹⁵ Patrick C., Author interview; John K., Author interview; John F., Author interview.

⁹⁶ Thomas F., Author interview; Patrick T., Author interview. See also Michael Burke, IWM interview.

⁹⁷ Horne, Author interview; Quickfall, *Shadows*, p. 19.

⁹⁸ John K., Author interview; William B., Correspondence with author, op. cit.

⁹⁹ Martin M., Author interview.

Northern Catholics: ‘religious backgrounds played no part in relationships. Some liked apples, some liked oranges, but there was mutual respect.’¹⁰⁰ Thomas F., a Catholic from Fermanagh, agreed. Although critical of Protestants at home, he maintained that in Palestine ‘these things made no difference at all. Not a word there. We were all friends, good friends’ while Pat Mc. recalled friendly banter about religion between both:

When I was at Jenin the Northern blokes, Protestants, used to joke; ‘Do you want to get the truck up to Nazareth for your black-hearted Mass’? It was all good-humoured. There was no animosity. Nobody bothered with it. They used to tell us about the fights around the Falls Road but it was all good-natured.¹⁰¹

John F. noted the absence of any rancour between Irish Catholics and Protestants in general (‘these things didn’t enter into it’) while John K. recalled the level of respect accorded to Irish Catholics by other members of the force, both British and Irish:

We all lived in [barracks], six in a room I think, and many of the Irish lads ... at night they would in their billet, if there were two or three Irishmen, would kneel down and say the rosary ... and nobody, but nobody ever interfered with that. Nobody ever joked or anything. Everybody respected that.¹⁰²

5.3 Professional relations

The question of whether Irishness ‘made any specific difference’ at professional level in the BSPP in the postwar period is less easy to answer. A handful of performance appraisals of Irish policemen conducted during the war years contain faintly disparaging remarks about the Irish in general, both northern and southern: the police authorities in Palestine did not distinguish between recruits from Northern Ireland and

¹⁰⁰ William B., Correspondence with author, op. cit.

¹⁰¹ Thomas F., Author interview; Pat Mc., Author interview.

¹⁰² John F., Author interview; John K., Author interview. Terence Denman notes that the rosary was ‘a real support to the Irish Catholic soldier’ during the Great War period, quoting one as describing it as ‘like having someone strong and brave and comforting by you’. See Terence Denman, ‘The Catholic Irish soldier in the First World War: the “racial environment”’ in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxvii, no. 108 (1991), pp 352-65, at p. 362.

Ireland, classing all simply as Irishmen and, indeed, the nickname ‘Paddy’ was widely applied to men from both sides of the border. But there is no evidence that these remarks were generally representative of official attitudes.

The absence of any inherent anti-Irish bias is borne out by data on BSPP promotions. The rate of promotion among British constables recruited in the force’s first decade was higher than that among the Irish. However, as Table 9 illustrates, the Irish enjoyed a higher rate among those recruited after 1936. In some cases this was

Table 9: Percentage of BSPP constables promoted by recruitment period, 1926-48

Recruitment period	1926-35	1936-39	1940-45	1946-47
Irish	38.6	34	23.7	6.5
British	45.6	26.5	18.3	5.4

probably a function of the fact that these recruits tended to do longer tours of duty which increased their promotional prospects: for example, Irish constables recruited during the 1936-9 period served an average of 6.4 years with the force, nearly one year longer than their British counterparts. However, given that the differential in average duration of service dropped to just four months among those recruited during the war years and that there was no difference between that of Irish and British personnel recruited in the postwar period, its significance should not be overstated.

Ultimate advancement from constable to sergeant, which accounted for more than three-quarters of all BSPP promotions between 1927 and 1948, was entirely responsible for the emerging differential in the rate of promotion among Irish and British constables recruited in the postwar period when the relatively short duration of their service meant that further advancement was unfeasible. Whether this differential was due to inequalities in the general calibre of Irish and British postwar recruits is difficult to gauge. Although the Crown Agents for the Colonies noted that ‘normally

the standard of applicants from Éire [was] generally much lower than in the United Kingdom', it determined that, despite the manpower crisis, only those who met the required standard would be recruited, telling the inspector-general, William Nicol Gray, that 'we should aim for "quality" ... rather than just send you "bodies"'.¹⁰³ A quantitative analysis of the service record cards of Irish postwar enlistments suggests that this was, generally-speaking, achieved. Indeed, in terms of experience and life-skills, Irish enlistments were in some ways better equipped than their British counterparts.

First, they were older. The offer of a two-year tour with the BSPP in lieu of three years of British national service meant that large numbers of British teenagers opted to enlist and, in his report on the BSPP published in December 1946, Sir Charles Wickham reported that almost three-quarters of enlistments that year were between eighteen and nineteen years of age.¹⁰⁴ This was actually an overestimate: just 44 per cent of enlistments in 1946 were nineteen or under and the average age of those recruited in the 1946-7 period as a whole was twenty-one. Nonetheless, the average age of British-born recruits was, at 20.7 years, still more than one year younger than the age of the average Irish recruit (22 years) and fully two years younger than the average age of enlistments from south of the border which stood at 22.7 years. Secondly, the relative success of Raymond Cafferata's campaign to recruit school-leavers meant that a significant number of British enlistments had no employment history while almost all Irish enlistments, regardless of age, had some experience of working life. Yet in terms of military experience (which, given the situation in postwar Palestine, was perhaps the most beneficial) the British contingent

¹⁰³ Crown Agents to Gray, 25 May 1946 (TNA, CO 537/1697/68); 'British Section Palestine Police: recruitment report for April 1946', undated, c. May 1946 (TNA, CO 537/1697/84).

¹⁰⁴ Cited in Smith, 'Communal conflict', p. 75.

held the advantage: almost 42 per cent had seen service in the British armed forces, twice the figure among Irish recruits (21 per cent). And although a further 12 per cent of Irish recruits had served with the Irish army, these men were, according to Pat Mc., ‘nowhere near the calibre’ of British ex-servicemen in terms of training and skills.¹⁰⁵ Thirdly, in terms of education, the general standard among Irish enlistments was better than among the British. Forty-three per cent of Irish recruits had received the secondary education or higher that had been prized by Roy Spicer as opposed to just 35 per cent of British-born recruits, this despite reports that preference was being given to ‘old-school-tie types’.¹⁰⁶ A further 10 per cent of Irish enlistments had attended post-primary technical schools (which, despite the provisions of the 1944 Education Act, were not a feature of the British educational system at the time) while 5 per cent had attended university, almost four times the British figure. However, although a higher education was certainly an advantage on paper, the extent of the practical benefit it conferred is, as discussed below, open to question.

5.3.1 *‘Have you got your Arabic?’*

A contributory factor to the higher rate of promotion to sergeant among Irish constables in the postwar period was an aptitude for language-learning which exceeded that of their British colleagues. Tuition in Palestine’s vernaculars had ostensibly formed part of BSPP training since 1926: non-commissioned officers and constables were encouraged to sit the language examinations set by Palestine’s department of education for civil servants and allowances were paid to those successful. Yet the BSPP made little provision for instruction in Arabic and Hebrew

¹⁰⁵ Pat Mc., Author interview.

¹⁰⁶ *Daily Mail*, 10 Dec. 1946.

in the early years of the force: as Geoffrey Morton, who enlisted in early 1930, observed ‘no facilities existed in the British Police Depot for teaching us Arabic, nor were we encouraged to seek such knowledge’.¹⁰⁷ This changed as a result of the Dowbiggan report which stressed the importance for police of being able to communicate in the local languages and, under Spicer’s stewardship, mandatory language classes were introduced as part of a new police training programme, with recruits receiving thirty-six hours of tuition with the emphasis always on Arabic.

Professional advancement in the BSPP was linked to increased linguistic proficiency. In October 1931, Spicer announced that from December ‘no officer or constable ... will be eligible for promotion or increment unless he had qualified in an examination in elementary Arabic’ and three examinations specifically tailored towards the requirements of the BSPP were introduced in 1932:

- ‘Qualifying’ which, in theory at least, required a good colloquial knowledge of the language
- ‘Regular’, requiring fair fluency in speech and a basic knowledge of the written word
- ‘Advanced’, which required a high standard of fluency and literacy as well as a knowledge of dialect

and detailed guidelines on language requirements for promotions between ranks were issued.¹⁰⁸ The linking of language-learning to promotion caused what Spicer described as a change in the ‘the entire attitude of the British Police, both officers and men, towards the study in [sic] the vernacular examinations’ and success in a ‘qualifying’ language examination remained one of the eligibility criteria for elevation to sergeant throughout the Mandate period.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Morton, *Just the job*, p. 20.

¹⁰⁸ *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 8 Oct. 1931; ‘Language examination: Palestine Police’, enclosed with Perowne to Crown Agents, 30 Aug 1932 (TNA, CO 733/213/5/30-2). See also Knight, ‘Policing’, p. 121-2.

¹⁰⁹ Spicer to Chief Secretary, Palestine Government, 6 May 1932 (TNA, CO 733/213/5/23).

Irish policemen displayed a better facility for language-learning than did their British-born counterparts in the postwar years: 42.5 per cent of Irish BSPP personnel recruited between June 1945 and December 1946 (and who therefore had more than sufficient time to acquire a qualification) passed a language examination as opposed to 33 per cent of British-born recruits. In fact, Irish policemen had always shown a markedly better aptitude for language-learning. Of those recruited during the Arab Revolt, 73.5 per cent eventually acquired a BSPP language qualification compared to 64 per cent of the British while the figures for those recruited during the war years stood at 48.5 per cent and 38 per cent respectively. Moreover, the Irish acquired a greater level of proficiency in the languages they studied: 16 per cent of Irish policemen who passed a 'qualifying' BSPP language examination between 1936 and 1946 went on to pass a 'regular' examination compared to just 9.5 per cent of their British counterparts.¹¹⁰

Why Irish policemen were better at language-learning than their British-born counterparts is unclear. Certainly, their higher standard of education does not appear to have conferred an advantage in this regard. Despite Spicer's citing of the requirement to pass difficult examinations in language as one of the reasons for his preference for recruits with post-primary education, there was no correlation between level of schooling and examination success in the BSPP's Irish contingent. In fact pass rates among Irish policemen with an elementary education were higher than among those with a secondary education or higher (54 per cent of those who achieved a BSPP qualification in Hebrew or Arabic had an elementary education alone) while the numbers who acquired a 'regular' language qualification were evenly split between those with elementary and higher-level educations. The same was true of

¹¹⁰ Data on language-learning is extracted from BSPP service record cards which list courses completed and qualifications received.

those who were awarded proficiency pay, a supplementary monetary allowance payable to BSPP constables introduced in 1932, the eligibility criteria for which were the possession of a language qualification and success in stiff examinations in police procedure and law: 49.5 per cent of Irish constables awarded this payment had an elementary education only.¹¹¹ The fact that enlistments from Ireland had, through their compulsory study of Irish, prior experience of language-learning may have given them an added advantage and some did draw comparisons between their study of Arabic and being taught Irish at school. However, the fact that enlistments from Northern Ireland were just as likely to acquire a language qualification suggests that this was not as significant a factor as might be assumed.

Discussing his own efforts to master Arabic, Pat Mc. noted the influence of Fr. Hoade. Himself a fluent Arabic speaker, Hoade regularly hounded his Catholic charges to pass the ‘qualifying’ examination so as to increase their promotional prospects:

He spoke Arabic and what’s more he made others speak it too. I hadn’t seen him for months ... and he said:

- “Mc., have you got your Arabic”?
- “No, Father”.
- “Why the hell not”?

All the Irish, they say he tried to promote all the Irish. All the Irish he sort of kept a tender eye on.

- “Pass your bl--dy Arabic”, he would say!¹¹²

Although Hoade’s general influence in this regard seems unlikely to have been extensive, the data do indicate that Irish Catholic policemen were more likely to acquire a language qualification than their Irish non-Catholic colleagues. Catholics accounted for 62 per cent of total Irish enlistments from 1938 onwards (when Hoade

¹¹¹ So stiff was the proficiency pay examination that, according to Binsley, just three of the 120 policemen who sat the inaugural examination with him in 1932 passed, one of whom cheated, and indeed, just 16 per cent of Irish and 15.5 per cent of British BSPP constables recruited between 1936 and 1948 qualified for proficiency pay. Binsley, *Palestine Police*, pp 49-50.

¹¹² Pat Mc., Author interview.

began his chaplaincy) but 65 per cent of those who acquired a language qualification. During the postwar period to which Pat Mc. referred, these figures were 68.5 per cent and 73 per cent respectively. And while British Catholic policemen were marginally more likely to acquire a language qualification between 1938 and 1947 (Catholics accounted for 10.5 per cent of total British enlistments and 11.6 per cent of those who passed a BSPP language examination), the figures for the postwar period alone stood at 12.6 per cent and 15.8 per cent respectively.

Consideration of such factors should not, however, obscure the fact that Irish BSPP constables recruited in the 1946-7 period proved very good at their jobs and this enhanced their promotional prospects. The professional performance of all BSPP rankers was rated by their superiors and the result recorded on their discharge papers which then acted as a reference for future employers. As Table 10 illustrates, almost three-quarters of Irish BSPP constables recruited in 1946-7 were deemed to have carried out their duties in a ‘very satisfactory manner’ (the best rating possible) while

*Table 10: Professional performance ratings received by Irish BSPP rankers recruited 1936-47*¹¹³

	1936-9	1940-5	1946-7
Very Satisfactory	25.5%	52%	73.5%
Satisfactory	38.5%	30%	22.5%
Fairly Satisfactory	12.5%	4%	1.5%
Unsatisfactory	23.5%	14%	2.5%
Recommended FCS	57%	80%	90.5%

a further 22.5 per cent received a ‘satisfactory’ rating. Moreover, just over 90 per cent was recommended for further colonial service (FCS). Those Irish constables promoted to sergeant were also successful in their new roles: 99 per cent of them received a ‘very satisfactory’ performance rating and were recommended for FCS,

¹¹³ Source: BSPP discharge papers.

indicating that their promotions were well-deserved. As the table shows, these figures were far better than those for Irish policemen recruited in the 1936-45 period but the more pertinent issue of how they compared to those for their British-born counterparts requires further research.¹¹⁴ Data on commendations received by BSPP personnel recruited in the 1946-7 period does, however, provide some insight into how the Irish and British contingents compared in this respect. Just over 10 per cent of Irish constables and sergeants were commended for displaying alertness, efficiency and initiative in the discharge of their duties, higher than the figure for their British-born counterparts which stood at 6.3 per cent.¹¹⁵

5.3.2 *'Preference whenever possible'?*

According to Pat Mc., Hoade's solicitude for the promotional prospects of Irish BSPP personnel derived from his general desire to further the interests of Roman Catholics in the force and the extent of his influence over promotions to and within the BSPP's gazetted ranks (i.e. assistant superintendents and upwards) was the subject of much speculation within the force. Several interviewees and correspondents reported having heard rumours of Hoade's interventions in this regard and Binsley made similar claims, maintaining that while 'the old school tie brigade' had traditionally dominated the officer class, the appointment of Michael McConnell as deputy inspector-general in 1943 saw Catholics 'given preference whenever possible' due to the 'great influence' exercised over him as a devout Roman Catholic by Hoade:

¹¹⁴ BSPP discharge papers are found in the BSPP personnel files only. These files became unavailable before data on the performance ratings of British-born BSPP personnel could be extracted. See p. 5, ft. 8 above.

¹¹⁵ Data on commendations are recorded on BSPP service record cards. They were awarded for actions such as the apprehending of criminals, the rendering of first aid or, most commonly, the seizure of contraband.

Between them they seemed to select men for promotion to all ranks being biased towards good Catholics. A friend of mine even converted to the faith hoping to get priority in promotion.¹¹⁶

The fact that McConnell, who served as deputy inspector-general until 1946 and regularly acted as inspector-general in Rymer-Jones' absence, made Hoade himself an honorary deputy superintendent in 1945 did little to dispel perceptions of his power in this respect.

Catholicism had actually been considered an impediment to advancement in the pre-1926 Palestine Police. Petitioning the Colonial Office for the appointment of an assistant inspector-general for the C.I.D. in July 1923, Arthur Mavrogordato had specified that he:

not be a Roman Catholic ... not because I have any prejudice against people of the persuasion, but because we have several of them in the force already, and it is as well not to have too many of one kind in a show like this, if it can be avoided

and Edward Keith-Roach agreed.¹¹⁷ The loss of all but a handful of BSPP service records for superior officers (which record religious profession and career path) precludes the drawing of definitive conclusions about claims of a pro-Catholic bias with regard to promotion to or within the gazetted ranks during McConnell's tenure as deputy inspector-general twenty years later.¹¹⁸ However, an analysis of data gathered on Irish officers does show a higher ratio of Catholics to non-Catholics during this period than that which existed in the Irish contingent in general: 72 per cent of Irishmen promoted to gazetted rank between 1943 and 1946 were Catholic, well in excess of the percentage of Catholics in the Irish contingent as a whole.

¹¹⁶ Binsley, *Palestine Police*, p. 148. Two interviewees also reported that named non-Catholic policemen were said to have converted to Catholicism under Hoade's tutelage in order to increase their promotional prospects.

¹¹⁷ Mavrogordato to Clauson, 25 July 1923 (TNA, CO 733/47/117); Keith-Roach to Vernon, 13 July 1923 (TNA, CO 733/47/109).

¹¹⁸ See p. 5, n. 8 above.

Whether Irishness itself affected promotional prospects to and within the BSPP's gazetted ranks is unclear. As noted above, Irish policemen recruited in 1946-7 were effectively ineligible for such promotion on account of insufficient length of service while the loss of the great majority of service records for BSPP officers means that data on the career paths of those recruited in the 1926-45 period is limited. An analysis of annual Government of Palestine civil service lists which recorded the names of superior police officers indicates that the numbers of Irishmen promoted to gazetted rank was proportionate to their overall presence in the force in that approximately 10 per cent of those promoted to officer level between 1926 and 1948 were Irish.¹¹⁹ However, the situation was not as clear-cut as this figure suggests. First, while the percentages of Irish and British constables ultimately promoted to the lowest such rank, that of assistant superintendent, was indeed similar (1.4 per cent of Irish constables completed their BSPP service at this rank as did 1.6 per cent of their British counterparts), the rate of promotion to this rank among the British was significantly higher for most of the Mandate period as fully half of Irish assistant superintendents were promoted during McConnell's time as deputy inspector-general, lending further support to claims that appointments made under his watch were not entirely merit-based. Secondly, Irishmen accounted for only 5 per cent of those ultimately promoted to the more senior rank of deputy superintendent between 1926 and 1948. But this was partly explained by the fact that they were more likely to be further promoted to the rank of police superintendent: over one-quarter (26 per cent) of those who attained this rank between 1926 and 1948 was Irish. Indeed, Irishmen gave the appearance of being so well-represented at superintendent level that Horne has referred to the existence of an Irish officer class within the Palestine Police, a

¹¹⁹ This analysis excludes those, mainly army officers, parachuted into the BSPP at officer level to assist in the attempted suppression of the Arab and Jewish insurgencies.

perception underscored by the fact that two other Irishmen, Gerald Foley and Michael McConnell, attained the rank of deputy inspector-general.¹²⁰

This over-representation may be partly attributed to seniority: 62 per cent of Irish superintendents were what were termed as 'old sweats', having begun their service in Palestine with one of the gendarmeries or the pre-1926 Palestine Police (as indeed had both McConnell and Foley) as opposed to 56 per cent of their British-born counterparts. The Irish 'old sweats' did, however, have the advantage of a better grounding in police work prior to their arrival in Palestine, all but one having seen service with the 'old R.I.C.' (two-thirds of them for eight years or more) and the single exception, Major William Wainwright, had served seventeen years with the Indian Colonial Police. Although, as discussed in Chapter III, questions were raised as to whether some of these men possessed the executive and administrative abilities required at superintendent level, they were better equipped in this respect than their British counterparts whose 'Black and Tan' backgrounds provided little in the way of comparable policing experience: 70 per cent of British 'old sweats' were former Black and Tans or Auxiliaries with just one of the remaining 30 per cent, Joseph Broadhurst, coming from a policing background, in his case the London Metropolitan Police.

The excellent promotional prospects enjoyed by Irish BSPP personnel stood in stark contrast to those of the Irish gendarmes. Just one Irish gendarme was promoted from the ranks to officer grade between 1922 and 1926 while only eight (or just over 15 per cent) of the fifty-two Irishmen recruited as constables in 1922 who served until disbandment were promoted, far lower the percentage figure for their British-born counterparts which stood at 27.5 per cent. Moreover, all eight Irishmen were

¹²⁰ Edward Horne, Author interview.

promoted to corporal, an intermediate rank between constable and sergeant created in summer 1923 for reasons of economy, meaning that none of the twenty-one British Gendarmerie constables promoted to sergeant between 1923 and 1926 was Irish. The fact that just one Irish British Gendarmerie ranker, Michael Kelly, made officer over the course of the force's four-year career may have been a function of the fact that former members of the ADRIC were, as ex-army officers, favoured for promotion to the British Gendarmerie's gazetted ranks and 90 per cent of these men were British.¹²¹ However, the situation regarding promotion within the force's non-commissioned ranks suggests that Irishness was undoubtedly a handicap.

Why this was the case is unclear. Certainly there is no evidence in Colonial Office archives to suggest that this was on account of general unsuitability for professional advancement and references to the performances of individual Irishmen in these files and other sources are in fact overwhelmingly positive.¹²² Nor, despite the reluctance to promote Roman Catholics during the early 1920s, does religious profession appear to have been a factor: Catholic gendarmes (the majority of whom were Irish) were marginally over-promoted, comprising 21 per cent of those who served for the duration of the force's four years and 22.5 per cent of those promoted.¹²³ There is some evidence that what Bowman refers to as the 'stereotypical image' of the Irishmen in twentieth century Britain as prone to over-indulgence in alcohol may have been a factor.¹²⁴ According to Horne, Irish gendarmes displayed a

¹²¹ Eight of the nine British Gendarmerie rankers who received commissions were former Auxiliaries.

¹²² See, for example, Parker to Forbes-Sharp, undated, June 1923 (TNA, CO 733/46/802); Duff, *Bailing*, pp 41-6.

¹²³ Although almost two-thirds of the British Gendarmerie's original draft of other ranks was by profession Protestant/Anglican, it contained a sizeable Catholic minority which accounted for 26.5 per cent of the force. This rose to 60 per cent among the Irish contingent: 152 of the 251 Irish rankers for whom religious profession has been established were Catholic. British-born rankers were overwhelmingly Anglican (82.5 per cent) with only 5.5 per cent listed as Catholic.

¹²⁴ Bowman cites studies of criminality among Irish expatriate groups in Britain in the Victorian and Edwardian eras which found that it was 'highly concentrated in the often inter-related categories of drunkenness, disorderly behaviour and assault'. Bowman, *Irish regiments*, pp 20, 202.

‘tendency towards drunkenness and rowdiness’ and this reputation, discussed in more detail below, may have adversely impacted on Irish promotional prospects.¹²⁵

5.3.3 Conduct and discipline

The survival of personnel records for the great majority of BSPP personnel recruited in 1946-7 means that data on force discipline during this period are essentially

*Table 11: Breakdown of disciplinary offences by postwar BSPP recruits as percentage of total offences committed*¹²⁶

Nature of Offence	Irish	British
Absent without leave	28%	27.5%
Idle or inalert on duty	9.5%	10%
Infringements of security orders regarding recreation	14.7%	17%
Disorderly conduct	9.5%	9.5%
Firearms offences	13.7%	13.3%
Damage to or inappropriate use of police property	3.5%	3.2%
Procedural offences	6.3%	6%
Insubordination	4%	3.5%
Assault	3%	3%
Untidiness	4.2%	4%
Theft	1%	1%
Miscellaneous	2.6%	2%

complete: BSPP service record cards provide detailed summaries of each instance of conduct deemed prejudicial to ‘good order and military discipline’ for which punishment was administered (known as ‘adverse entries’) while many BSPP personnel files contain copies of the actual charge sheets and, in cases of serious offences, transcripts of courts of inquiry. As Table 11 above illustrates, there was ‘no

¹²⁵ Horne, *Job*, pp 81, 91; Horne, Correspondence with author, 1 Nov. 2009. Similar attitudes were expressed towards Irish soldiers serving in the British army. See Denman, ‘Catholic Irish soldier’, p. 360.

¹²⁶ Source: BSPP service record cards and personnel files.

specific difference' between the types of disciplinary offences committed by Irish and British BSPP personnel except in one category, i.e. breaches of the regulations governing travel outside of barracks for recreational purposes. Due to the security threat posed by Jewish terrorists, BSPP personnel were prohibited from leaving their barracks unarmed and in groups of less than three and certain areas, such as Tel Aviv and parts of west Jerusalem, were deemed 'out of bounds' for long periods on account of the risk a visit was thought to entail. British recruits were somewhat more likely to breach these regulations, a function perhaps of their relative youth which may have made them more carefree and oblivious to danger. As one nineteen year British-born recruit put it, 'it's just that you don't care, you can't see the danger when you're that age'.¹²⁷

However, an analysis of the data on adverse entries indicates that indiscipline was somewhat less prevalent among Irish BSPP personnel than among their British colleagues in the postwar period: 36 per cent of Irish policemen had adverse entries recorded against them as opposed to 38 per cent of their British-born counterparts. British personnel were also more likely to incur multiple adverse entries: 48 per cent of Irish offenders had a single adverse entry recorded against them compared to 53 per cent of British offenders while 3.6 per cent of the Irish were repeat offenders (categorised here as having received five adverse entries or more), lower than the figure among British offenders which stood at 4.7 per cent. That the disciplinary record of Irish postwar recruits compared favourably with that of their British counterparts is confirmed by the conduct ratings the Irish contingent received. As Table 12 illustrates, Irish personnel were rated extremely well. Three-quarters were appraised as 'exemplary' (the highest rating possible) while the conduct of a further

¹²⁷ William Gibbons, Transcript of interview with Hilary Kalmbach, 14 Mar. 2006, p. 9 (MECA, GB165-0388). See also James Hainge, MECA interview, p. 6 and Reubin Kitson, IWM interview.

Table 12: Conduct appraisals for BSPP postwar recruits ¹²⁸

	Irish	British
Exemplary	75%	76%
Very Good	20%	17%
Good	4%	2.5%
Fair/Indifferent	0.8%	1.5%
Unsatisfactory	0.2%	1%

one-fifth was rated ‘very good’.

Whether the fact that Irish policemen were rather less likely to have adverse entries recorded against them was due to differences in the manner in which indiscipline among Irish and British policemen was dealt is difficult to assess. In his study of discipline in Irish regiments of the British army during the Great War, Bowman concludes that perceptions of Irishness among British army officers coloured their approach to dealing with minor disciplinary issues. Some British army officers tended to view Irish soldiers as ‘child-like and colonial’ and truculence on their part as resembling, as one officer put it, ‘the behaviour of a naughty child’. According to another officer quoted by Bowman, the best way to deal with minor infringements was to ‘treat everything as a joke and with a little bit of blarney and everything goes swimmingly’.¹²⁹ But there is little evidence of ‘colonial’ condescension towards the Irish in BSPP files. A small number of performance appraisals of Irish personnel do include vaguely patronising remarks (for example, ‘a nice-looking quiet-voiced Irishman’, ‘an attractive-mannered Irish countryman’, ‘a nice honest North of Ireland lad’ and ‘a very good type of Belfast man’) but many British recruits were similarly described. In any case, remarks such as these are found

¹²⁸ Conduct appraisals were recorded on BSPP service record cards. The low figures for ‘unsatisfactory’ derive from the fact that the conduct of men dismissed from the force was not rated.

¹²⁹ Bowman, *Irish regiments*, pp 18-19. See also Denman, ‘Catholic Irish soldier’, pp 358-9.

mainly in the files of Irishmen recruited in the 1940-5 period.¹³⁰

Certainly, Irishness did not influence the manner in which those who did have adverse entries recorded against them were dealt. There was no difference in the severity of the punishments served on Irish and British personnel for comparable offences, even in the small number of cases where Irishness itself was a contributory factor to an offence. For example, two Irish BSPP constables were fined three days' pay for making requisite entries in their station diaries in the Irish language as was a British constable who made a similar entry in another unspecified language while OAD from Cork was one of four BSPP constables (the other three being English) confined to barracks for three days for 'insolence in manner and speech to a superior officer', despite compounding his offence by telling the officer that he was 'an Irishman and objected to Englishmen telling him what to do'.¹³¹

Bowman noted a higher rate of courts martial in Irish regiments compared to English, Welsh or Scottish units and data on BSPP dismissals and Section 7 (3) discharges (many of which, as noted in Chapter III, constituted a dismissal in all but name) also show slight differences in the rates which prevailed among Irish and British personnel.¹³² Serious disciplinary offences such as insubordination, disorderly conduct and assault were relatively rare in the postwar period, accounting for 16.5 per cent of all adverse entries recorded against Irish BSPP personnel and (given that some

¹³⁰ Interestingly, most of these appraisals were conducted while John Rymer-Jones was inspector-general and, as the segments of his interview with the Imperial War Museum concerning his army service in Ireland illustrate, his view of the Irish character was, if fond, also extremely 'colonial'.

¹³¹ AKJ, Charge sheet, 24 June 1947 (CEM, PPAPR, AKJ fo. 3); OAD, Charge sheet, 3 Aug. 1947 and Bevan to chief security officer, 3 Aug. 1947 (CEM, PPAPR, OAD fos. 3-4).

¹³² Bowman, *Irish regiments*, pp 20, 202. The small number of Irish BSPP personnel discharged under Section 7 (3) for non-disciplinary reasons in the postwar period had either contracted unauthorised marriages with Palestinians or were deemed intellectually incapable of police work. For example, FSJ from Sligo was discharged 'by reason of a "local marriage" to a Jew in October 1947: HJT from Mayo was discharged on being found 'unable to grasp any idea' of what was being taught during his training at Jenin while CGT from Spiddal, Co. Galway was, 'while no doubt fluent in Gaelic', deemed to have been 'unable to read, write or understand the English language sufficiently to be able to absorb elementary instruction'. FSJ, PPSRC no. 9003; Wilmshurst to Commandant, Jenin depot, 30 Nov. 1946 (CEM, PPAPR, HJT fo. 1b); Stevenson to inspector-general, 7 July 1947 (CEM, PPAPR, CGT fo. 1a).

of these offences were committed by the same men) attributable to just over 6 per cent of the Irish contingent, near-identical to the British figures of 16 per cent and 6.3 per cent respectively. Yet the rate of dismissal/involuntary discharge among Irishmen recruited in 1946-7 was marginally higher than that among their British counterparts: 5 per cent of Irish enlistments were ultimately dismissed or discharged as opposed to 4 per cent of the British. In fact, as Table 13 illustrates, Irish policemen in general (i.e.

*Table 13: Schedule of BSPP dismissals/discharges, 1936-48*¹³³

	Dismissed	Sect. 7 (3)	Irish	British
1936	12		2	10
1937	11		2	9
1938	25		2	23
1939	163		11	152
1940	78		10	68
1941	144		14	130
1942	55		6	49
1943	40	13	9	44
1944	45	102	10	137
1945	17	144	16	145
1946	16	22	4	34
1947	30	75	19	86
1948	36	47	15	68
Total	672	403	122	957

regardless of when recruited) were similarly more likely to be dismissed than their British colleagues in the postwar period: Irishmen accounted for almost 17 per cent of those dismissed or discharged under Section 7 (3) in 1946-8 despite accounting for approximately 16 per cent of the force. Moreover, Irishmen were also more likely to be dismissed in earlier periods as well: they accounted for 12.5 per cent of those dismissed/discharged in the 1936-8 period despite constituting 10.7 per cent of the

¹³³ Source: 'British officers, inspectors and other ranks – discharges, 1 Jan. 1936 to 31 Oct. 1946' (CEM, Palestine: miscellaneous papers, Box 8) and BSPP personnel records for 1946-7.

force while the figures for 1940-5 stood at 10.2 per cent and 7.8 per cent respectively.

Bowman suggests that the higher rate of dismissal from Irish army regiments was attributable to the 'drunken Irish' stereotype which 'may have meant that officers were prepared to have men serving in Irish regiments tried by courts martial for crimes such as drunkenness, much more readily than their [British] counterparts'.¹³⁴ However there was no clear correlation between a reputation for drunkenness and rate of dismissal in the Palestine police services. In respect of the British Gendarmerie, for example, Horne contends that much of the blame for disciplinary problems among the 1922 draft may be laid at the door of its Irish contingent, identifying what he saw as their mercurial temperament as a contributory factor to the disturbances on the *City of Oxford* and attributing what he believed to be the improvement in force discipline after April 1923 to the recruitment of 'rather more Scotsmen and Englishmen which tended to level out the original Irish character of the unit'. He did not provide the basis for these claims in his book but cited in correspondence 'the Irish tendency towards drunkenness and rowdiness', a judgement evidently based on conversations with former gendarmes.¹³⁵

Although there is no evidence for Horne's claim about the extent of Irish indiscipline,¹³⁶ his contention that Irish gendarmes had a tendency towards drunkenness finds some support in the data on force dismissals: despite's Duff's insistence that gendarmes never drank on the job, drunkenness on or just prior to duty was cited as a major contributory factor in all cases of dismissal in the April 1922-April 1923 period when Irishmen accounted for 38 per cent of the force but in just

¹³⁴ Bowman, *Irish regiments*, pp 20-1.

¹³⁵ Horne, *Job*, pp 81, 91; Horne, Correspondence with author, op. cit..

¹³⁶ For example, his account of the *City of Oxford*, being directly lifted from Duff, is essentially a fiction. Nor were there Irishmen among the brawlers named by Kyles: R.I.C. records show that neither of two Andersons on the ship was Irish and nor was Constable D'Alroy (see p. 128 above). And while the British Gendarmerie's Irish contingent was indeed much reduced by the spring 1923 exodus this did not, as noted in Chapter III, impact on force discipline.

three of the thirteen dismissals effected in the twelve months following the spring 1923 exodus, suggesting a link between the culture of heavy drinking in the force's first year and an increased Irish presence. Indeed, two Irish gendarmes died of alcohol-related illness during this time.¹³⁷ Nonetheless, Irish gendarmes were no more likely to incur dismissal than their British-born counterparts: just one of the six gendarmes dismissed from Fort Tregantle was Irish as were three of the eight gendarmes expelled from Palestine in force's first year (proportionate to their overall numbers) while there were no Irish gendarmes among those dismissed in the following twelve months. The opposite was the case in the BSPP. There is no evidence in police files that Irish personnel were considered more prone to drunkenness and an examination of charge sheets and transcripts of courts of inquiry indicates that 'overindulgence in alcoholic stimulants' was a contributory factor in 5 per cent of disciplinary offences committed by both Irish and British postwar recruits. Yet Irish recruits incurred a higher rate of dismissal.

Both Bowman and McMahon have noted the manner in which events such as 1916 Easter Rising and Roger Casement's efforts to recruit an Irish Brigade in Germany raised fears of Sinn Féin infiltration of Irish army regiments and stirred general concerns about the loyalty of Irish soldiers and there are some indications that the stereotypical image of the Irishman as inherently anti-British, and sometimes subversively so, did play a part in the higher rate of Irish dismissals from the BSPP in 1946-8.¹³⁸ Although the majority of Irish dismissals during this period were certainly sound, a minority of cases were tried with a lack of transparency and decided on unstable evidential grounds. Chief among these were cases of suspected pro-Arab

¹³⁷ Duff, *Sword*, p. 111; Death certificate of Constable James Igoe, 3 Nov. 1922 (copy at TNA, CO 733/27/414); Post-mortem report on Constable Ernest Fenelon, 24 Sept. 1923 (copy at TNA, CO 733/48/631).

¹³⁸ Bowman, *Irish regiments*, pp 205-6; McMahon, 'Ireland and the Empire-Commonwealth', p. 142. See also Denman, 'Catholic Irish soldier', p. 364.

activism by BSPP personnel. Although increasing paranoia about its extent in the final months of the Mandate resulted in a number of summary discharges for what had been hitherto treated as relatively minor offences (for example, several policemen were dismissed for losing their weapons, the assumption being that they had sold them to the Arab militias) some of the Irishmen among them were removed on the flimsiest of pretexts. For example SJT, suspected of ‘contemplating desertion to the Arab forces and negotiating to that end’, was dismissed and repatriated as a ‘precaution’ while DJP was dismissed for nothing more than his close friendship with a British colleague who had been discovered making preparations to assist the Arabs.¹³⁹ So unjust was DJP’s dismissal that it was eventually reversed on appeal.¹⁴⁰ However, the overwhelming majority of Irishmen who claimed unfair dismissal had their protests ignored.¹⁴¹

5.3.4 *‘There is no conscription in my country’*

‘Irishness’ was certainly something of an issue in what was the most serious disciplinary crisis of the BSPP’s twenty-two year career, that precipitated by Britain’s declaration of war of Nazi Germany in September 1939. This resulted in a wave of requests for recall to the colours from ex-servicemen recently recruited as part of the BSPP’s response to the Arab Revolt (most of whom were officially on the regular

¹³⁹ ‘British deserters’, Jerusalem divisional police headquarters secret memo, 7 Apr. 1948 (CEM, PPAPR, SJT fo. 9); DJP to inspector-general, 4 May 1948 (CEM, PPAPR, DJP). At least one Irish policeman, Constable George White from Dublin recruited in August 1946, did actually desert to the Arab militias. He absconded in mid-February 1948 and was involved in the Ben Yehuda Street bombing which killed fifty-eight Jews on 22 February. However, White was himself killed two weeks later when an Irgun lorry-bomb detonated as he was trying to defuse it. *Palestine Post*, 11 Mar. 1948. See also documentation in the BSPP personnel file of William Harrison, another deserter killed alongside White.

¹⁴⁰ The Node to DJP, 22 Feb. 1949 (CEM, PPAPR, DJP).

¹⁴¹ See, for example, BJJ, Charge sheet, 7 Apr. 1948 & BJJ to Curry, 18 June 1948 (CEM, PPAPR, BJJ fos. 12, 17a-17e); Bourne to inspector-general, 16 Feb. 1948; SJC to The Node, 1 Apr. 1948, 20 Nov. 1949; Adolph to high commissioner, Southern Rhodesia, 9 June 1949 (CEM, PPAPR, SJC fos. 27a, 31a).

army reserve) and for transfer to the armed forces from policemen recruited from civilian sources. Most couched their requests to break their contracts with an appeal to patriotism, arguing that they would be better employed in the forces than the BSPP, particularly given that the Arab insurgency had been effectively crushed by this time. Northern Irish police were among them. For example, CFT, a BSPP constable from Belfast, argued that 'England needs every available man in the present crisis' and urged that he 'be favoured by an early release as I want to do my bit for the country I proudly call my homeland' while another, EAS who was also from Belfast, argued that 'as my own country [Northern Ireland] is in danger of being invaded, I consider that as an Irishman my premier duty is to my own country and not to Palestine'.¹⁴² However, unable to countenance the departure of an estimated half of the BSPP in this way, the Palestine government began legal manoeuvres designed, not only to preserve existing BSPP contracts, but to 'retain the continued employment of British policemen whose ... contract had otherwise expired'.¹⁴³ It passed, to this end, an amendment order ratifying the British Defence Act of 1940 which authorised it to place the Palestine Police under the 1881 Army Act if the need arose and to hold all serving policemen for the duration of the war. While 'civilian' BSPP enlistments appear to have accepted their fate, albeit with considerable ill-grace, the enormous resentment it engendered among ex-servicemen culminated in large-scale recourse to 'refusal to serve' as a route to dismissal to facilitate re-call to the colours and indeed as Table 13 above illustrates, almost two-thirds of all BSPP dismissals occurred during the first half of the Second World War. Efforts by the police authorities to prevent this by subjecting 'refusniks' to formal arrest and three weeks' detention prior

¹⁴² CFT to inspector-general, undated c. June 1940 (CEM, PPAPR, CFT fo. 4b); EAS to inspector-general, 18 Jan. 1941 (CEM, PPAPR, EAS fo. 13b).

¹⁴³ Horne, *Job*, p. 245.

to dismissal came to nothing while an increase in the term of imprisonment to three months minus privileges served only to escalate tensions.¹⁴⁴ The introduction of an eighteen-month term of imprisonment prior to dismissal helped break the resolve of prospective ‘refusniks’, although those more determined to acquire a discharge accepted this sentence. According to Michael Higgins, who was officer commanding the Mazra’a detention facility during this period, some of the detainees resorted to hunger strike to protest their incarceration and had to be force-fed by British officers.¹⁴⁵ Other BSPP personnel sought the termination of their contracts on bogus compassionate grounds and, as Table 14 below illustrates, there was a spike in compassionate releases during this time. In September 1941 a clearly disgusted BSPP officer told Raymond Cafferata that:

If you had to deal with as many cases of this kind as I have you would be horrified to find with what amount of indignity and persistence a certain class of man will lie in the hope’s of breaking one’s heart strings

and complained that a large number of those released to support supposedly stricken families had even attempted to join the South African Air Force (SAAF) when the ship transporting them back to Britain docked in Durban.¹⁴⁶ The official designation of the Palestine Police as ‘a military force, liable to be employed on military duties in the defence of Palestine’ in June 1942 helped bring the matter to a close as all its

¹⁴⁴ This episode also led to a breakdown in their relations with some of the force’s ‘old hands’. Many of these men had always felt that the ex-servicemen hastily recruited in the late 1930s had always ‘cared nothing for [the] traditions and standards of behaviour’ of the Palestine Police and their behaviour only served to confirm this. Simpson to Furze, 31 Mar. 1941 (TNA, CO 733/434/314-18).

¹⁴⁵ Michael Higgins, Diary entries for July – Nov. 1942 (MS in possession of HM, Gloucestershire).

¹⁴⁶ A. P. to Cafferata, 16 Sept. 1941 (copy in CEM, PPAPR, PGF). Irishmen were among them. For example, SCJ was granted compassionate leave in November 1940 to tend to his sick wife and child but joined the SAAF at Durban one month later. SCJ to inspector-general, 14 May 1941 & undated, c. Mar. 1942 (CEM, PPAPR, SCJ fos. 14a, 24).

Table 14: Schedule of BSPP compassionate discharges, 1936-48¹⁴⁷

	1936-40	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948
Irish	3	6	8	9	3	2	1	0	2
British	4	86	88	31	24	26	25	14	5

British personnel officially became members of His Majesty's armed forces.¹⁴⁸

However, this raised a difficulty with regard to enlistments from Ireland who, despite being citizens of a neutral state, were being effectively conscripted into the British army. According to Horne, this matter troubled the police authorities for the duration of the war and was in fact never satisfactorily resolved. He believes that had an Irish citizen 'made any serious objection ... he would have been quietly allowed to leave' although 'as far as is known not one of them did'.¹⁴⁹ In fact, a number of Irish policemen did object and the manner in which they were dealt with gives an indication as to what would have happened had Irish policemen refused to serve *en masse*. For example, in November 1942 TJJ from Dublin sought to be released from the BSPP on the basis that

I am a citizen of the Irish Free State and the holder of an Irish Free State passport ... As an Irish citizen I am not subject to compulsory military service and the war regulations in respect of the [BSPP] are not applicable to me

while COM from Limerick argued that he was 'a national of the Irish Free State' and could not therefore be 'forced to join any of the British forces'.¹⁵⁰ The BSPP disagreed, informing TJJ in interview that his contract clearly stated that he was subject to the provisions of whatever regulations and ordinances were applied to the

¹⁴⁷ Source: 'British officers, inspectors and other ranks – discharges, 1 Jan. 1936 to 31 Oct. 1946' (CEM, Palestine: miscellaneous papers, Box 8) and BSPP personnel records, 1946-8.

¹⁴⁸ Horne, *Job*, p. 250.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ TJJ to inspector-general, 9 Nov. 1942 (CEM, PPAPR, TJJ fo. 9); COM, statement to court of discipline, undated c. Sept. 1941 (CEM, PPAPR, COM).

force at any time and that his citizenship of the Irish Free State was ‘immaterial’ in this regard and that his release could not therefore be approved.¹⁵¹ Other Irishmen maintained that they had ceased to be British subjects by virtue of the 1937 Irish constitution which, by separating Ireland from the empire, had made them aliens under British law.¹⁵² However, the BSPP cited the judgement in the case of *Murray v. Parkes* heard in London the previous April in which this argument was essentially dismissed out of hand.¹⁵³ Some BSPP personnel from north of the border raised similar objections, arguing that the fact that conscription had not been introduced into Northern Ireland gave them immunity from any form of conscription. For example, EAS from Belfast argued that ‘as I am from Ireland and there is no conscription in my country, I consider that the [regulation] fails to apply in my case’ and he therefore ‘did not recognise any legal right to retain him [in Palestine] against his wish’.¹⁵⁴ Such appeals were also rejected. Nonetheless, the fact that a pretext was invariably found to facilitate the eventual release of these men (for example, TJJ was deemed to be suffering from an ‘abnormal nervous condition’ and was granted a medical discharge while EAS was released on relatively weak compassionate grounds) suggests that the BSPP was unwilling to press its position too far.

5.3.5 *‘They felt very betrayed’*

Racked by a particularly deep sense of grievance were Irishmen who left the BSPP as

¹⁵¹ Syer to attorney-general, 17 Nov. 1942 (CEM, PPAPR, TJJ fo. 9).

¹⁵² See, for example, PGF to inspector-general, 3, 16 Mar, 18 Apr. 1941 (CEM, PPAPR, PGF fos. 14a, 16b, 22b).

¹⁵³ *The Times*, 1 Apr. 1942.

¹⁵⁴ Kyles to inspector-general, 24 Jan. 1941; EAS to inspector-general, 18 Jan. 1941; Kyles to inspector-general, 9 Dec. 1940 (CEM, PPAPR, EAS fos. 13a, 11a, 13b).

a result of the Farran affair.¹⁵⁵ Irishmen accounted for one-third of those BSPP sergeants and constables identified by this author as having been recruited for the ‘Q squads’. This over-representation of Irishmen is difficult to explain. Members, who were personally selected from panels of volunteers by Roy Farran and Alistair McGregor who spent two weeks travelling around police stations for this purpose, were a disparate group, varying widely in terms of age, military service and policing experience.¹⁵⁶ Farran appears to have sought out former army comrades who had subsequently joined the BSPP: half of his squad was composed of such men, including at least two of its Irish members who, according to their BSPP personnel records, had served in the S.A.S. during the same period as had he. The fact that Farran made much of his own Irish descent, attributing to it his rebellious nature (his father, Stephen, was from Dublin and he himself evidently knew Ireland well), may also have played a small part.¹⁵⁷

Both Farran and his superior, Bernard Fergusson, noted the anger felt by squad members at their treatment by the police authorities as news of the scandal broke and this is borne out by John K. who was one of those appointed to act as ‘shepherds’ to the men at the Mount Scopus police depot, to where they had been escorted under arrest for questioning: ‘all were very disgruntled, they felt very betrayed’.¹⁵⁸ Although some senior police officers were privately delighted by the scandal (having resented the creation of the ‘Q squads’ from the first), the feeling that these men were ill-used was in fact general throughout the BSPP and, there was much sympathy for Farran

¹⁵⁵ See pp 24-6 above.

¹⁵⁶ Service in the special squads is recorded on BSPP service record cards as ‘S.N.S. no. 1’ (Farran’s) and S.N.S. no. 2’ (McGregor’s).

¹⁵⁷ Cesarani, *Major Farran’s hat*, pp 64-5; Farran, *Winged dagger*, pp 378-9. Bernard Fergusson also refers to Farran on one occasion as being ‘to all appearance his usual, smiling, frivolous, Hibernian self’. Fergusson, *Trumpet*, p. 235.

¹⁵⁸ John K., Correspondence with author, 3 Sept. 2011; Farran, *Winged dagger*, pp 354-5; Fergusson, *Trumpet*, p. 230. See also Cesarani, *Major Farran’s hat*, pp 105-6. John K. noted also that the group included ‘a number of Irish’. John K., Author interview.

personally who was believed to have been sacrificed by his superiors. As John F., who formed part of Farran's police escort put it, 'he was a scapegoat', and support for him among force members remained (and, indeed, still remains) strong.¹⁵⁹

The sense of betrayal felt by squad members was well-articulated by the individual to whom John K. was assigned: KDN, a BSPP constable from Derry.¹⁶⁰ He had been arrested and disarmed at Jenin without any reason being given and detained at Mount Scopus for twenty-eight days. He was questioned throughout his period in custody about 'the affairs of Major Farran' but:

Declined to make a statement on this subject as I had previously been instructed that my duties were of a secret nature and that they were not to be disclosed to any unauthorised persons [without] the permission of my superior officer'.¹⁶¹

He was eventually released in early July and 'told to keep his mouth shut'.¹⁶² To ensure his silence, he was immediately transferred to the remote six-man Sa' Sa' police post in the Safad district, described by another Irish constable, Patrick Byrne, as a 'God forsaken spot ... a fort like configuration on the top of a hill' from which one could 'see miles and miles of damn all'.¹⁶³ KDN was very aggrieved at his treatment:

I honestly believe that I have been treated very unfairly ... as I have not been as yet informed as to why I was arrested in the first place. Secondly, my arms were withdrawn and have not yet been reissued ... Lastly, I do not know whether or not I am still under arrest

¹⁵⁹ John F., Author interview. See also Martin M., Author interview ('we were all for him'); Horne, Author interview; Green, MECA interview, p. 18 and remarks in *Daily Telegraph*, 28 Mar. 2009: 'the whole thing was a put-up stunt ... Someone tried to pin something on him to provoke trouble out there'.

¹⁶⁰ KDN had worked as a poultry farmer before enlisting in the Royal Artillery in August 1940. He transferred to the S.A.S. in March 1944 (where he presumably met Farran), serving until his demobilisation from the army in July 1946. He joined the BSPP the following October, serving first with the P.M.F. and then with the Jaffa division of the regular police. MECA, PPSRC no. 8329 & 'Application for employment as police constable in Palestine' (CEM, PPAPR, KDN).

¹⁶¹ KDN to inspector-general, 21 Aug. 1947 (Ibid.).

¹⁶² Hynds to Police superintendent, Galilee, 22 Aug. 1947 (ibid.). See also Fergusson, *Trumpet*, p. 230.

¹⁶³ Byrne, 'Palestine police service', op. cit.

and he resigned in disgust shortly after Farran's acquittal in October 1947.¹⁶⁴ So too did two others, both of them Irish.

Although those who resigned were all Irishmen, there is scant evidence to suggest that they had been treated any more harshly than their British-born colleagues. All squad members were disarmed and detained in the aftermath of Alexander Rubowitz's disappearance and KDN was not alone in being transferred to an outlying district (for example, CAI and CAJ from Surrey and London respectively spent the remainder of their careers in the deserts of Gaza and Beersheba) and that some of these men were subsequently promoted indicates that this did not of necessity blight their careers.¹⁶⁵ This was true even of CSH, one of two squad members who had further compromised their positions by absconding to Syria with Farran when it became clear that his arrest was imminent.¹⁶⁶ The same would probably have been true of at least one of the Irishmen who resigned. Noting his resignation with regret, the police authorities described DBA from Belfast as a man of 'undoubted abilities' who 'would have done well as an orthodox policeman'.¹⁶⁷

5.4 Conclusion

Although the personal and professional experience of Irish BSPP personnel in the postwar period was not defined by their Irishness, there is evidence to suggest that it did make a 'specific difference' in certain areas. While there is unanimous agreement among interviewees that Irishness was an irrelevancy in the context of personal

¹⁶⁴ KDN to inspector-general, 21 Aug. 1947 (CEM, PPAPR, KDN)..

¹⁶⁵ MECA, PPSRC no. 8094; MECA, PPSRC no. 7199.

¹⁶⁶ The other absconder, FLW, a BSPP sergeant from Co. Louth, left Palestine on U.K. leave shortly after Farran's acquittal which brought him to the end of his contract. Farran praised both men for this display of loyalty, particularly FLW whom he noted had no personal involvement in Rubowitz's disappearance. MECA, PPSRC no. 8085; MECA, PPSRC no. 6645; Farran, *Winged dagger*, p. 355.

¹⁶⁷ MECA, PPSRC no. 9355.

relationships within the BSPP itself, their testimonies provide indications that it did contribute to the shaping of their attitudes towards the communities they policed and, in some cases, coloured their perspective on the Arab-Jewish conflict. Most notably, the fact that many Irish felt an affinity with the traditions of Arab rural/village culture meant their attitudes towards Palestine's Arabs were largely devoid of the element of social condescension found in British testimonies while the tendency of some Irish policemen to view the Jewish campaign against British rule through the prism of the Irish historical experience resulted in a more tempered attitude towards the Jewish community than that displayed by their British-born colleagues.

The extent to which Irishness made 'any specific difference' with respect to the professional experience of Irish policemen during this period is more difficult to assess, the data raising as many questions as they actually answer. For example, in respect of promotion, Irish BSPP constables recruited in 1946-7 were more likely to attain sergeant rank than their British counterparts but the reason for this is unclear. Certainly in terms of education and experience, the calibre of Irish recruits was on average higher than the British, almost half of whom were teenagers opting to do their compulsory national service with the BSPP. But Irish constables had also enjoyed a higher rate of promotion to sergeant in the 1936-45 period as well. And while the data indicate that a better aptitude for language-learning was certainly a factor, they provide no clear evidence as to why this was the case.

In respect of conduct and discipline, there was no discernable difference in the types of offences committed by Irish and British policemen in the postwar period, nor in the degree to which drunkenness was a contributory factor. In just one category of offence was there a difference in prevalence among Irish and British recruits; the latter were more likely to breach the regulations governing leaving the barracks for

recreational purposes, a function, perhaps, of their relative youth which may have made them more oblivious to danger. However, the data do show some variation in overall levels of indiscipline in the Irish and British contingents, Irish policemen being less likely to have adverse entries recorded against them. Whether Irishness was a factor in the manner in which indiscipline was dealt is less clear. Although data on adverse entries show no discernable differentials in the severity of punishments meted out to Irish and British-born offenders, Irish BSPP personnel were somewhat more likely to incur dismissal or involuntary discharge than their British counterparts, this despite the fact that the conduct of the Irish contingent was, on average, better rated than the British. This indicates that Irishness was a factor but there is little evidence of why so. An examination of charge sheets and transcripts of courts of inquiry relating to Irish BSPP dismissals indicate that they were by and large warranted: and although the markedly flawed conduct of cases involving Irish policemen suspected of pro-Arab subversion in 1947-8 suggests that their Irishness did influence the outcomes, such cases accounted for a very small number of total dismissals. Moreover, Irishmen were more likely to incur dismissal in the 1936-46 period as well.

They key to a more complete understanding of the causal factors for the conclusions which the data clearly convey most likely lies in a comparative analysis of the BSPP and other colonial police forces. The existence or absence of 'specific differences' between the personal and professional experience of Irish and British policemen in places like Kenya, Malaya and Cyprus should shed further light on the significance to be accorded those found in the BSPP (which were, in the final analysis, relatively small) and the extent to which Irishness informed or defined them. In the present absence of equivalent studies of the Irish experience of other colonial police services (or, indeed, the British armed forces) for the period in question, this

requires a great deal of further research.

Conclusion

Ireland's impact on the policing of the Palestine Mandate was significant and wide-ranging. While there was a small number of Irishmen among the officer corps recruited to administer the original Palestine Police force in July 1920, and similarities between its organisation and that of the R.I.C. were noted during the drafting of the Palestine Police Ordinance the following year, this to all intents and purposes began with the formation of the British Gendarmerie in the spring of 1922 and continued until the end of the Mandate through its successor, the BSPP.

Recruited overwhelmingly from amongst the remnants of the disbanded R.I.C. and the ADRIC, the British Gendarmerie represented what Sinclair describes as 'an example of the transplantation of the Irish model' of policing.¹ Not only was it, like the R.I.C., government-controlled but it was also organised, administered, distributed, armed and equipped in a manner which paralleled the ADRIC while its training programme, with its emphasis on arms training, crowd control and military drill, was closely modelled on the R.I.C. code. Moreover, and perhaps most importantly, the British Gendarmerie resembled the police in revolutionary Ireland in functioning primarily as a paramilitary force. After the force's disbandment in April 1926, aspects of this Irish policing model were transferred to the Palestine Police. The training provided to its 'native' section in the early years was heavily R.I.C.-influenced while the BSPP so preserved what Sinclair has termed an 'Irish ethos' with regard to its training, procedures and function that it constituted a gendarmerie in all but name. The extent to which this 'Irish ethos' survived the Dowgigan/Spicer reforms of the early 1930s has been hitherto overstated but elements certainly did. Although the new training programme instituted as a result of these reforms placed a far greater

¹ Sinclair, 'Irish policeman', p. 177.

emphasis on civil policing methods, first aid, languages and law, it did not dispense with arms training, riot control and drill. Nor, given the fact that the BSPP formed the frontline against the Arab and Jewish insurgencies, was 'Irish'-style paramilitarism entirely abandoned. Although the BSPP did assume responsibility for regular policing duties, it retained a paramilitary aspect which was developed or downplayed as the situation was deemed to dictate.

Whether police behaviour during the Palestine Mandate was informed by the experience of Ireland is, however, open to question. Despite recurrent claims to the contrary, 'the Irish way of things' with regard to indiscipline and brutality did not prevail in the British Gendarmerie. Despite some initial problems, its disciplinary record compared very favourably with those of its Irish parent forces while its enduring reputation for brutality originated, not in reports of its conduct, but in preconceptions about its Black and Tan composition and is even today largely based on assumption rather than evidence. Far from 'going berserk' in Palestine as has been claimed, the British Gendarmerie spent much of its time confined to barracks 'marking time between successive emergencies' which were few and far between. While its approach to policing these emergencies was occasionally robust, it was in no way comparable to that of the Black and Tans and the ADRIC despite the facts that certain British Gendarmerie officers and men bore responsibility for some of the most notorious incidents of the police brutality during the Irish revolution and that General Tudor, who had effectively given the Irish police free rein in dealing with the I.R.A. insurgency, had assumed overall command.

That a force freshly drawn from the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries did not behave with similar licence lends support to the thesis that historians have tended to overvalue character-based explanations at the expense of circumstance-based

assessments when analysing the actions of the Irish police. Had the British Gendarmerie found itself the focus of an I.R.A.-type insurgency in Palestine, the evidence suggests that its record would have been far less benign and, indeed, the Arab and Jewish revolts against the Mandate did see the emergence of what were described as ‘Black and Tan tendencies’ in the BSPP. But the view that these tendencies were attributable to the presence of former Black and Tans and Auxiliaries is unsupported by the evidence. The numbers of such men serving in the Palestine Police during the insurgencies was negligible and while some did hold senior positions in the force during this time, they had little influence on the shaping of police counterinsurgency. As in revolutionary Ireland, police brutality in Palestine was mainly the result of situational rather than dispositional factors and, with few exceptions, Palestine policemen with R.I.C. backgrounds had uncontroversial careers.

II

‘Ireland’s greatest boon to the United Kingdom empire’ has been described as ‘the massive numbers of everyday settlers that it provided and Ireland’s most significant contribution was indeed manpower.’² Unsurprisingly, given its roots in the R.I.C., the British Gendarmerie contained the largest Irish-born contingent: 38 per cent of its original draft of rank-and-file was Irish-born as was 16 per cent of its officer corps and, despite an exodus of ex-R.I.C. in 1923, Irishmen still accounted for 14 per cent of the force when it was disbanded four years later. The British Gendarmerie’s successor, the BSPP, also maintained a sizeable Irish contingent throughout its own twenty-two year career, with Irishmen accounting for 10 per cent of total recruits between 1926 and 1947. The postwar period saw significant increases in Irish

² Donald Harman Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora: a primer* (Ontario, 1993), p. 148.

enlistments with the result that Irishmen constituted 17.5 per cent of the BSPP in the final year of the Mandate.

The decisions of Irish gendarmes to transfer ‘from the “Island of Saints” to the Holy Land’ were informed more by the expediencies of personal circumstance than enthusiasm for the policing profession itself. Overwhelmingly ex-R.I.C., they faced an uncertain future in the new Irish state where the force remained the object of festering resentment on account of its wartime role. For those who felt their prospects compromised in consequence, this cast the British Gendarmerie as a convenient route to continued employment while others sought in Palestine a temporary respite from Republican threats to their safety, real or simply perceived. Yet for the majority of these men, Palestine proved, not the ‘holiday’ originally envisaged, but the first phase of long-term or permanent exile from Ireland, their stories shedding further light on what remains one of the more under-researched aspects of the Irish revolutionary experience. While the decision of each individual Irishman to enlist in the BSPP was probably informed by a confluence of contributory factors, there was generally a signal motivation, chief among them economic reasons and the search for adventure. But factors such as a desire for increased social status, residual pro-British loyalties and family reasons were also important in this respect. That these men chose the BSPP over other colonial police services was largely due to the fact that it was one of the few recruiting at constable level although there is evidence that the religio-cultural lure of the Holy Land also played a part. By recruiting at constable level the BSPP broadened the social base from which Irish colonial policemen were drawn. According to Alvin Jackson, the colonial service ‘served as a vehicle for the upward mobility of the Irish middle classes, both Catholic and Protestant’ and, as noted above, a sizeable proportion of BSPP enlistments was drawn from this demographic.

But by opening access to the wider Irish population and periodically targeting serving soldiers and ex-servicemen from the British armed forces, it provided ‘a path to social advancement’ for members of the Irish working-classes as well.³ Apart from a predictable outcry from Republican quarters, the decision of Irishmen from south of the border to join a British colonial police force provoked little complaint, indicating that colonial service remained uncontroversial in independent Ireland.

According to Jeffery, the manner in which students of Ireland and empire have hitherto focussed on the relatively small number of Irishmen (and, indeed, women) who served the British empire with great merit has at times constituted little more than a contribution to what he terms ‘the “just fancy that” school of history’ which did not always ‘materially advance our understanding’ of the Irish contribution to the imperial project.⁴ His point is well made. Nonetheless, the fact that Irishmen were so strongly represented and served with such distinction at all levels and across all departments of the Palestine police services means that any assessment of Irish involvement must take account of individual policemen who left a lasting impression on the forces in which they served.

The Irish contribution was particularly evident at gazetted rank where what Horne terms a ‘great umbrella of Irish officers’ did ‘a marvellous job’.⁵ Some, such as Gerald Foley, were noted for their leadership skills. As second-in-command of the British Gendarmerie, he proved from the outset far superior to Angus McNeill as a leader of men. Described by Gerard Clauson as someone who both ‘liked and [was] liked by his men’, it was he and not McNeill who was ‘well remembered ... [and]

³ Jackson, ‘Ireland and empire’, pp 140, 123.

⁴ Jeffery, ‘Introduction’ to *An Irish empire*, p. 17.

⁵ Edward Horne, Author interview, op. cit.

respected by [former gendarmes] as an able commander'.⁶ Foley transferred to the Palestine Police in 1926 with the rank of superintendent. After a brief stint as officer commanding the police training school in Jerusalem's Russian Compound, he held charge in Haifa and Jaffa districts in addition to working for short periods in the C.I.D before being promoted to deputy inspector-general of the Palestine Police in May 1938. He retired from the force one year later, lauded by Alan Saunders as 'an iron peg hammered into the hard ground [of Palestine] – invincible and imperturbable'.⁷

Michael Fitzgerald also proved a popular and capable commandant, first making his mark as a squadron commander with the Palestine Gendarmerie where he served with such distinction that he was one of two officers recommended for transfer to the Palestine Police in April 1926. He was duly appointed deputy district superintendent, serving first in Safad and then Haifa where he was made acting district superintendent in May 1929. He was transferred to Nablus in January 1930. Despite the exacting standards Fitzgerald imposed he was, according to Duff, 'deservedly the most popular senior officer in the whole of the Palestine Police' to the extent that, had he led the force, it 'would have increased a hundred per cent in efficiency for the men would have worked their fingers to the bone for sheer love of his personality'.⁸ One of the force's most noted linguists – he spoke Circassian in addition to Arabic and Hebrew - he was promoted to district superintendent in 1936, serving in Nablus, the C.I.D. (where he assumed temporary command between December 1936 and April 1937) and Jaffa before retiring from the force in 1939 after what MacMichael referred to as eighteen years of 'excellent work'.⁹

⁶ Even Duff believed that he would have been 'an excellent man for the command'. Clauson, Colonial Office minute, 30 July 1924 (TNA, CO 733/71/482); Horne, *Job*, pp 77, 82; Duff, *Sword*, p. 95.

⁷ *Palestine Police Magazine*, (July 1939) p. 7.

⁸ Duff, *Sword*, p. 281. See also Duff, *Diary*, 31 May 1931 (op. cit.).

⁹ MacMichael to MacDonald, 15 Nov. 1938 (TNA, CO 733/359/8/16). The fact that Fitzgerald was 'fluent in Hebrew and could make a fair hand at reading and writing it' was itself unusual. In 1937 the

Michael McConnell was another case in point. After four successful years as a British Gendarmerie company commander, he transferred to the Palestine Police as a deputy district superintendent in 1926, serving in Gaza, Jaffa and Nablus. Considered by Dowbiggan as ‘a real good policeman’ during this time, he was transferred to Jerusalem in November 1930, rising to the rank of district superintendent in December 1932.¹⁰ He subsequently held charge in Jaffa and Haifa where he enjoyed noted success in the field. McConnell was transferred to headquarters in Jerusalem in May 1937 to undertake administrative duties where he proved himself such a ‘conscientious and hardworking officer’ whose ‘very wide experience of police administration’ endowed him with ‘special aptitude and qualifications for the post’ that he was appointed assistant inspector-general of the force with responsibility for administration in September 1939.¹¹ He was further promoted to deputy inspector-general of the Palestine Police in 1943, earning the respect and trust of John Rymer-Jones who described him as ‘a tower of strength’.¹² McConnell’s contribution to Palestine’s policing was recognised with a C.B.E.

Irishmen also made singular contributions to the development of the police departments to which they were assigned. The enduring influence of men such as John Wilkinson and particularly Patrick Hackett on police training has already been noted. As the first C.I.D. chief of the Palestine Police, Eugene Quigley was instrumental in planning the creation of a British-style department, introducing an embryonic fingerprinting section which developed into a vital resource. Although his

Peel Commission reported that ‘out of the 270 British officers in the First Division of the Civil Service, 20 could speak both Arabic and Hebrew, 106 could speak Arabic, and 6 Hebrew’. Fitzgerald to Horne, 26 Mar. 1971, quoted in Horne, *Job*, p. 71; Peel Report, p. 120.

¹⁰ Dowbiggan to Rymer-Jones, 22 Jan. 1944 (TNA, CO 733/450/4/37).

¹¹ MacMichael to MacDonald, 7 Aug. 1939 (TNA, CO 733/389/18/11-13); Kingsley-Heath, ‘Secret memorandum’, 25 July 1939 (CEM, Palestine: miscellaneous papers, Box 8, William Howard-Beard papers, fo. 17a).

¹² Rymer-Jones to Dowbiggan, 26 Dec. 1943 (TNA, CO 733/450/4/38).

efforts to create an effective intelligence system were compromised by a lack of institutional experience of intelligence collection, evaluation and communication, this had less to do with Quigley's personal capabilities than with the relative unimportance attached to the department by Bramley and the lack of resources in which this resulted.¹³ Despite the C.I.D.'s shortcomings, exposed by the May 1921 riots which caught the department unawares, Quigley's qualities were recognised and he was promoted to district commandant in February 1922.¹⁴ His tenure at the C.I.D. was subsequently vindicated by Dowbiggan who, in his review of the by then thoroughly dysfunctional department, noted that 'everything that is now needed was being done' during Quigley's time at the helm.¹⁵ In fact, so impressed was he by Quigley's work that he had him reappointed as officer in charge in April 1930 with the rank of acting deputy commandant of the force.¹⁶ Irishmen were also prominent in intelligence gathering itself. Most notably, Major John O'Sullivan was recruited to a senior position in the C.I.D.'s political affairs section where he devised its interrogation techniques and procedures and was its liaison officer with MI5 during the final years of the Jewish Revolt; Arthur Patrick Daly played the pivotal role in obtaining the intelligence which led to the capture and killing of Avraham Stern while Joseph Kealey proved so successful in infiltrating and exposing Jewish terrorist cells as an undercover officer in the field that he was the target of two assassination attempts and was awarded the C.P.M. for meritorious service in 1945.¹⁷ The prominent role of

¹³ Horne, *Job*, p. 465.

¹⁴ This rank was re-titled 'district superintendent' in 1926. The general disinterest displayed towards the C.I.D. at this time was further evidenced by the fact that Quigley was not replaced by Joseph Broadhurst until July 1924.

¹⁵ Dowbiggan report, para. 206, enclosed with Chancellor to Passfield, 29 June 1930 (TNA, CO 733/180/1/23). Quigley was also more circumspect about the threat posed by Bolshevism than his successors. See, for example, Quigley to Young, 19 May 1922 (TNA, CO 733/39/359-63).

¹⁶ Quigley was also a highly efficient field police officer. Dowbiggan noted that he had 'found more "police" work being done' in his district than any other. Dowbiggan report, para. 206, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ O'Sullivan was also 'listed for elimination' by the Stern Gang in 1947, forcing him to live what he described as a 'pimpernel' life. O'Sullivan, Diary transcripts, 2 June 1947; Gray to O'Sullivan, 14 May

Irishmen in the undercover 'Q Squads' has been noted above.

Michael O'Rorke was, as superintendent of traffic in the mid 1930s, responsible for thoroughly modernising the section. He also launched a public relations campaign to encourage safer driving and explain what the section was seeking to achieve which was, according to Horne, a 'tremendous success' and probably the first of its kind in the colonies or the dominions.¹⁸ O'Rorke was also responsible for the official formation of the Jewish Settlement Police in 1937 as a counterweight to the intensifying Arab insurgency. Harold Darling from Dublin, who enlisted as a BSPP constable in 1933, rose steadily through the ranks to become chief signals officer for the Palestine Police during the Jewish Revolt with the rank of district superintendent: his second-in-command, assistant superintendent Hugh Nolan, was also from Dublin. Superintendent Patrick Meehan commanded the Haifa Volunteer Force which remained after the general British evacuation in 1948 to oversee the transfer of Palestine. Finally, mention must be made of John Deevy, known to all in the force through his role as medic on Mount Scopus. Indeed, so identified did he become with this role that the Mount Scopus sick bay was universally known as 'Deevy's Joint'. Although he had no formal medical training, he had a longstanding interest in medical matters, qualifying in first aid while an R.I.C. constable and updating his knowledge and skills throughout his service in Palestine. Treating everything from breakages and boils to scorpion stings and venereal disease, and instructing BSPP constables in first aid as part of their mandatory recruits' course, Deevy, who eventually rose to the rank of British sergeant first class, made such a 'magnificent contribution to [the force's] medical welfare' that according to Horne, he

1947 (O'Sullivan papers, fos. 76, 116). For threats against O'Sullivan, see O'Sullivan papers, fos. 13, 28 & 41.

¹⁸ Horne, *Job*, p. 447.

became 'a legend in his own lifetime' and deservedly so.¹⁹

Their professional successes notwithstanding, some of these Irish officers left Palestine under a cloud. Eugene Quigley fell victim to cronyism: just two years after his appointment as C.I.D. chief by Dowbiggan, Roy Spicer replaced him with his own friend and former colleague from the Kenya Police, Harry Rice, leaving Quigley to retire despondently to Dublin, ostensibly on medical grounds. The fates of others were suggestive of some of the limitations to which Irish officers were liable, particularly those with R.I.C. pedigrees. Gerald Foley, for example, was essentially promoted to what would today be termed 'the level of his own incompetence', lacking (as, noted in Chapter III, did several Palestine police officers originally draw from R.I.C. ranks) the administrative ability which high office (in his case, that of deputy inspector-general with responsibility for administration) required. He was, according to the G.O.C. in Palestine, Robert Haining, 'an essentially outdoor type of man' unsuited to 'the work of organisation and administration' and he was assigned 'more suitable employment' in late 1938. The indignity of being sidelined in this manner prompted his retirement the following year.²⁰ Meanwhile Michael Fitzgerald, whose retirement was also essentially involuntary, was, according to MacMichael, one of several ex-'Irish' officers who had simply been in service too long ('for some eighteen years in the generality of cases') and had 'worn himself out in the service of Palestine'. While acknowledging his 'good qualities as a police officer,' he judged him 'temperamentally unfitted for any further service' and recommended that he be 'removed from the atmosphere and strain of Palestine' to another colony.²¹ The stress of long service and 'continuous strain' also affected Patrick Hackett. He initially

¹⁹ *PPOCAN* no. 97 (1974), p. 56. See also Imray, *Policeman in Palestine*, p. 12; Quickfall, *Shadows*, p. 29 and Pat Mc., Author interview.

²⁰ Haining to MacMichael, 17 Jan. 1939 (TNA, CO 733/389/13/52).

²¹ MacMichael to MacDonald, 8 Feb. 1939, 15 Nov. 1938 (TNA, CO 733/389/13/37, CO 733/359/8/16).

buckled under the weight placed on his shoulders by the Arab Revolt to the point where, according to Spicer, 'his morale went' and he 'forfeited the respect' of his men, his failures subsequently attributed to 'ill-health and too long a period without leave'. However, unlike Fitzgerald, Hackett quickly recovered his position and by 1939 MacMichael was recommending him for promotion to deputy superintendent 'fully earned', noting that his recent work had been 'marked by conspicuous success'.²² He was further promoted to district superintendent in 1944 and appointed commissioner of prisons in 1946 where he served until the Mandate's end.

III

Research by Akenson, Bielenberg and Morgan has challenged the traditional image of Irishmen as 'anti-imperialist in general and anti-British Empire in particular' and criticised the reluctance of nationalist historiography 'to assimilate the historical reality of Irish participation and "collaboration"' in the British imperial project in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.²³ The readiness of Irishmen from south of the border to enlist in the Palestine police services suggests that this 'collaboration' continued, albeit to a far lesser degree, well into the twentieth century as well. Although the 1919-21 revolution ruptured Ireland's relationship with the empire irretrievably, Irish imperial activity, as Kevin Kenny has argued, 'far from dying out entered a new and vibrant phase'.²⁴ Kenny focuses on the role of religious missionaries in Africa and the Far East in this context but the colonial police were

²² Pratt, Colonial Office minute, 26 Mar. 1939 & MacMichael to MacDonald, 16 Mar. 1939 (TNA, CO 733/389/1/2, 22-3).

²³ Akenson, *Irish Diaspora*, p. 142; Andy Bielenberg, 'Irish emigration to the British empire, 1700-1914' in Andy Bielenberg (ed.), *The Irish Diaspora* (Harlow, 2000), pp 215-34, at p. 215; Hiram Morgan, 'An unwelcome heritage: Ireland's role in British empire-building' in *History of European Ideas*, xix (1994), pp 619-25.

²⁴ Kevin Kenny, 'The Irish in the empire' in Kenny (ed.), *Ireland and the British empire*, pp 90-122, at p. 112.

also important in maintaining Ireland's association with the empire in the post-independence period, particularly given their role as what Ronald Robinson has termed 'ideal prefabricated collaborators', i.e. white colonists who helped sustain imperial rule.²⁵ The fact that the R.I.C. had constituted what Sinclair terms the 'focal point' for colonial police training meant that Irishmen had enjoyed a long association with these forces prior to 1922 which included the transfer of approximately 350 R.I.C. officers and men to the colonies during the previous six decades.²⁶ This association would have essentially ceased with the establishment of the Irish Free State had the Palestine Mandate not opened a new chapter in the involvement of Irishmen, not merely through their service in Mandated Palestine, but by their resettlement throughout the empire afterwards.

The migration of Irish members of the British Gendarmerie across the empire is discussed in Chapter II: half of the force's Irish contingent, almost all of them from south of the border, moved to the colonies or the dominions post-Palestine where many remained in policing. The imperial migration of BSPP personnel began in earnest in the mid-1930s when Spicer's success in turning the Palestine Police into the *de facto* recruitment ground for colonial police officers saw the appointment of about 100 BSPP personnel to senior policing positions outside of Palestine between 1933 and 1939. This continued apace under Rymer-Jones who, anxious that the Palestine Police be 'regarded as a "nursery" from which vacancies in the commissioned ranks of other police forces in the Colonial empire could be filled', established the Potential Officers Training Unit in 1944 to provide 'a fast-track promotion scheme to suitable police sergeants, who could later be transferred to other colonies' and which found

²⁵ Akenson, *Irish Diaspora*, p. 142-5.

²⁶ Sinclair, 'Irish policeman', p. 179 and *End*, pp. 17-18. In 1922, the training of colonial police officers was transferred to Newtownards in Northern Ireland where it remained until January 1932.

positions for 500 BSPP personnel.²⁷ By 1948, Sinclair estimates that ‘approximately 2,731 former Palestine Policemen (of all ranks) found employment in other colonial territories, Commonwealth countries and a few other territories’, more than half of them (54 per cent) in the colonial police service.²⁸ This process of imperial migration peaked after disbandment in 1948 when well in excess of 1,000 former Palestine policemen secured other postings in the colonial police service. The largest group, comprising over 400 men, transferred to Malaya where a state of emergency in mid-June led to the active recruitment of disbanded BSPP personnel as part of a scheme to strengthen the Malaya Police.²⁹ Approximately 270 transferred to the police services of colonial Africa: 113 went to Kenya, 70 to Eritrea, 44 to Northern Rhodesia and at least 25 to the Nigerian Police while smaller numbers joined the police services of Tanganyika, Zanzibar, Uganda, the Gold Coast and Nyasaland. A further 100 joined the police forces of British-administered Libya. Significant numbers transferred to Hong Kong (45), Cyprus (80), Aden (40), the Suez Canal Zone (60) and the Caribbean and Pacific Islands (100) as well.³⁰ The police services of Commonwealth countries also proved popular destinations for disbanded BSPP personnel, particularly those of Canada, South Africa and Australia. Finally, at least 31 stayed on in the new State of Israel to work as security police at the British consulates in Jerusalem and Haifa.³¹

Approximately 150 Irish BSPP personnel who departed the force between 1935 and 1947 resettled in Commonwealth countries or colonies. One-third

²⁷ ‘Note of interview with Rymer-Jones’, 22 Dec. 1944 (TNA, CO 733/450/4/23); Sinclair, ‘Crack force’, p. 59.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ For listings of ex-BSPP personnel who transferred to the Malaya Police, see Foster Sutton to Griffiths, 1 Dec. 1950 (TNA, CO 850/268/2) and Adolph to Jeffries, 2 Dec. 1949 (CEM, ‘Palestine: miscellaneous papers’, Box 2).

³⁰ Figures cited by Sinclair, ‘Crack force’, p. 64, ft. 71; Sinclair & Williams ‘Home and away’, p. 227.

³¹ Adolph to Chief security officers, British consulates, Jerusalem and Haifa, 16 May 1949 (CEM, ‘Palestine: miscellaneous papers’, Box 2).

transferred to other colonial police forces such as those of Nigeria, Kenya, Malaya, Zanzibar, the Caribbean and Hong Kong or was appointed to administrative positions within colonial governments, including that of Palestine itself. Several others enlisted in 'foreign' military forces, such as those of Australia and South Africa. The remainder took up civilian employment in Commonwealth countries or with British companies overseas such as the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and the Iraq Petroleum Company. Data extracted from BSPP personnel files, pension records and P.P.O.C.A. newsletters indicate that well over 200 Irish BSPP personnel disbanded in 1948 also migrated to various parts of the empire. Approximately 130 transferred to other colonial police services, fifty to the Malaya Police.³² Approximately forty transferred to police services in Africa including Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, Rhodesia, Tanganyika and Eritrea. At least eighteen joined the Hong Kong Police with smaller numbers transferring to the Caribbean and Cyprus. Perhaps another twenty joined Commonwealth police forces, mainly in Australia, South Africa and Canada, while at least four joined the British consular security police in Israel. A further 100 or so took up civilian employment in various colonies or Commonwealth countries. Many of these men went on to serve in more than one colonial police force and, while some did eventually retire to Ireland, the overwhelming majority either remained overseas or resettled in Britain which had always been the single most popular destination for former Irish BSPP departing Palestine. Approximately 150 of those discharged between 1935 and 1947 made new lives there immediately after their departure from Palestine as did a similar number of those disbanded in 1948. At least sixty joined English constabularies following a February 1948 recruitment campaign conducted in Palestine, mainly the London Metropolitan Police, while approximately twenty joined

the prison service of England and Wales.

Many Irish policemen subsequently went on to have highly successful careers in other colonial forces when their service in Palestine expired. For example, Michael O'Rorke held very senior positions in the civil police services of Cyrenaica, the OETA East Africa and Middle East Command and Allied-occupied Germany and ended his career as commissioner of police in Kenya; Luke Hannon served in Nyasaland, Cyprus and the Bahamas and before being appointed commissioner of police in Gibraltar; John Matthew Sullivan served at senior superintendent in Uganda before transferring to Zanzibar where he too became commissioner of police as did Brian Slevin in Hong Kong; Thomas Foley pursued a policing career in the Caribbean, culminating in his appointment as assistant police commissioner of Jamaica while Eugene O Reilly made similar rank in Hong Kong as did Patrick John Kenny in Kenya; Harold Darling served in a number of key positions in the police services of Nigeria and the British Arabian Gulf; Alfred Erskine also served in Uganda before transferring to Papua New Guinea where he set up the police department's special branch; Thomas Stone from Waterford, who became the youngest gazetted officer in the colonial police service in 1948, became police commissioner in Sarawak; Hugh Nolan was appointed to a series of senior policing posts in Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland before retiring to South Africa where he began work with the state broadcasting corporation; Austin Burke used his experience of policing at senior level in Tanganyika, Cyprus and Fiji to become advisory expert on police telecommunications at the United Nations while Patrick O'Hanlon became chief prison officer of Southern Rhodesia. A more general assessment of the influence of Irish ex-Palestine policemen on the particular forces in which they subsequently served requires conducting on a case by case basis and therefore requires a great deal

of further research.

Indeed, so too does the thesis, increasingly expounded, that Ireland, through the R.I.C., exerted a defining influence on colonial police counterinsurgency even after 1948. Sinclair attributes this mainly to the movement of men ('many former members of the R.I.C. took their policing experiences not only to the [British] Gendarmerie but to the police forces of the Empire') but Anderson and Killingray are more circumspect, maintaining that, 'while it is not suggested that the same individual officers followed a chain of transfers from Ireland to [a given police force] ... it is clear that individuals and ideas passed along the line on a significant scale':

[This] movement of individual [R.I.C.] officers, even of junior rank, may have had more direct influence upon policing practise than any accumulated process of learning achieved by senior commanders and applied to colonial policing as a matter of policy.

Hughes agrees, positing a 'transfer of an institutional memory' from Ireland to Palestine and beyond.³³ This is a neat and attractive hypothesis but it demands grounds more relative than the evidence can presently provide: the extent to which approaches to police counterinsurgency in places such as Malaya, Kenya and Cyprus were informed by the experience of Ireland has yet to be properly assessed. What is clear, however, is that arguments for an Irish influence in these theatres essentially stand on the questionable premise that Palestine served as its conduit (indeed, Anderson and Killingray consider the Palestine Police the 'most notable' and 'perhaps the most notorious' example of an imported R.I.C. ethos), a view which, as discussed in Chapter III, derives more from assumption rather than evidence. In the final analysis, any 'Black and Tan methods' subsequently employed by former Palestine

³³ Sinclair, *End*, p. 16; David M. Anderson and David Killingray, 'An orderly retreat? policing the end of the empire' in Anderson & Killingray, *Policing and decolonisation*, pp 1-21, at p. 8; Hughes, 'British foreign legion', p. 706. See also Robert Jackson, *The Malayan Emergency: the Commonwealth wars, 1948-1966* (London, 1991), pp 23-4; Kendall D. Gott and Michael Brooks (eds), 'Security assistance - U.S. and international historical perspectives' in *Proceedings of the Combat Studies Institute 2006 military history symposium* (Kansas, 2006), p. 315.

Police personnel in other parts of the empire were more likely to have been learned, not in Ireland, but in Palestine itself.

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Name	Place & Year of Birth	Dates of BSPP Service	Place and Date of Interview
David B.	Down, 1927	03/1946 – 05/1948	Down, 9 Nov. 2011
John F.	Clare, 1927	12/1946 – 02/1948	Longford, 18 June 2012
John H.	Limerick, 1927	03/1947 – 05/1948	West Sussex, 26 Sept. 2011
John K.	Waterford, 1928	12/1946 – 04/1948	West Sussex, 23 Aug. 2011
John P.	Kilkenny, 1924	12/1946 – 05/1948	Waterford, 7 Sept. 2003
Martin M.	Dublin, 1925	10/1946 – 05/1948	Dublin, 8 Sept. 2009
Patrick C.	Tipperary, 1924	10/1946 – 05/1948	Lancashire, 10 Oct. 2011
Patrick Mc.	Tipperary, 1927	03/1946 – 05/1948	Gloucestershire, 29 Nov. 2009
Patrick T.	Galway, 1919	03/1947 – 05/1948	Hampshire, 27 Aug. 2012
Paul Mc.	Clare, 1925	01/1947 – 06/1948	Warwickshire, 13 Apr. 2010
Thomas F.	Fermanagh, 1924	10/1946 – 05/1948	Essex, 12 June 2011
William B.	Derry, 1924	10/1947 – 06/1948	Derry, 2 Sept. 2013

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Appendices

Appendix A: 'A Policeman's Lament'

A Palestine Policeman lay dying
And as on his deathbed he lay
To friends who around him were sighing
These last dying words he did say

'A Jewboy has got me at last, lads
I've not much longer to live
But before I hand all my chips in
To you this advice I would give:

'Put a bomb in the Agency Buildings
Wipe the synagogues all off the Earth
And make every damned son of Zion
Regret the day of his birth

'From the lampposts hang all the rabbis
But hang Herzog highest of all
And when you have hung all the Jewboys
Then blow up their damned Wailing Wall

'And when Gabriel's horn has been blown, lads
And the last check up has been made
You will find you are down as the heroes
Of the last and the greatest crusade

'And then you will all go to Heaven
And I will be there as well
And we'll all charge our glasses
And drink to Jews there in Hell

'For they will have attained their object
No more will they have to roam
For Zion will all be united
With Hell as their National Home.

Appendix B: Questionnaire

Author interviews with Irish BSPP veterans were based on the following questionnaire:

- 1) What part of Ireland are you from?
- 2) What was your profession before enlisting in the Palestine Police Force (PPF)?
- 3) Where were you recruited?
- 4) What did the recruitment process consist of?
- 5) Were other Irishmen recruited with you?
- 6) What was your family's reaction to your decision to enlist?
- 7) Was there a tradition of military or police service in your family?
- 8) How did you travel to Palestine?

- 9) Did you receive any training prior to your departure for Palestine?
- 10) Do you feel you received adequate police training in Palestine?
- 11) Outline your postings, duties and daily routines.
- 12) Were some postings considered preferable to others? Were there postings which were dreaded by PPF members?
- 13) Were you ever wounded in service?

- 14) Did you know much about the political and security situation in Palestine before you arrived there?
- 15) Based on what you did know, would you say your sympathies lay with the Arabs or the Jews prior to enlistment?
- 16) Did your experiences in Palestine alter your sympathies in any way?
- 17) Given the security situation which you found there, did you ever regret your decision to join the PPF?

- 18) Was there much 'national' antagonism between the Irish and British members of the force? Between Irishmen from Northern and Southern Ireland? Between Irishmen of different religious backgrounds?
- 19) What would you say about the relationship between the Irish and the Palestinian members of the PPF? Would you say the Irish got on better with the Arabs or the Jews?

- 20) Do you think Stern Gang terrorism coloured the attitudes of the British to their Jewish PPF colleagues?
- 21) Do you recall your reaction to any of the major events of the last years of the Mandate? e.g. The King David Hotel bombing, The Acre Prison breakout, the killing of Sergeants Paice and Martin, the UN Partition Plan of November 1947
- 22) Do you think that as a policeman you were treated differently by the wider Arab and Jewish communities in Palestine?
- 23) What did your leisure activities consist of in Palestine?
- 24) Did you travel much around the region when off duty?
- 25) Did you fraternize with Palestinian members of the PPF when off-duty?
- 26) Was there much romantic involvement between the Irish police and Palestinian women?
- 27) Did you maintain contacts with any of your Palestinian comrades after you returned home?
- 28) The *Irish Times* reported in 1948 that there were 1,400 Irishmen in the PPF at the time of disbandment. Do you think that this figure is accurate?
- 29) Could you give me a little biographical detail on any Irish with whom you served or whom you knew of in Palestine? Or anything more you remember of their personalities/exploits?
- 30) Do you have any memories of Fr. Eugene Hoade?
- 31) Where did you go after you left Palestine?
- 32) What were your feelings on leaving? Did you have a sense of accomplishment or failure?
- 33) Were you surprised by the outcome of the 1947-9 war?
- 34) What was your attitude to the establishment of Israel in May 1948?
- 35) How do you feel towards the state of Israel today?
- 36) Have you returned to the region?