

Reference code: GB165-0011

Title: George Antonius Collection

Name of creator: Antonius, George Habib (1891-1942)

Dates of creation of material: 1912-1939

Level of description: Fonds

Extent: 5 boxes

Biographical history: Antonius, George Habib (1891-1942)

George Habib Antonius was a Palestinian Christian, historian and publicist. He was born on 19 Oct 1891 in Dair al-Qamar in Lebanon. Educated at Victoria College, Alexandria 1902-1910. Studied mechanical engineering at King's College, Cambridge 1910-1913. In 1914 joined public works department of the Egyptian Government and at the start of the First World War he joined the political intelligence department in Cairo as a press censor. In 1919 served as translator for Feisal ibn Hussein's delegation to the Paris Peace Conference. In Jul 1921 he joined education department of the Palestine administration. He became a Palestinian citizen in 1925. In Sept 1925 he served as a translator with Clayton in a mission to settle border disputes in Arabia, and he served on two subsequent missions in 1926 and 1928. In Aug 1927 he was transferred from the Palestine education department to assistant secretary for Arab affairs. He returned to the education department in Oct 1929 as assistant director of education. He resigned from this in May 1930. He then worked as a writer, in particular as the Middle East representative for the Institute of Current World Affairs. He witnessed the Arab Revolt (1936-1939) and testified to the Palestine Royal Commission (Peel Commission) in 1936. He was part of the Palestinian delegation to the London, Palestine Round Table Conference in 1939 and served as the secretary. As an author his most famous work was *The Arab Awakening* published in 1938, which examined the birth of Arab nationalism. Married Katy Nimr in 1927; 1 daughter. George Antonius died on 21 May 1942.

Scope and content: Reports and letters when Senior Associate in the Middle East of the Institute of Current World Affairs, on Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt, Syria and Iraq 1930-1939, including notes on the case of Taha Hussein, 1932, and on Saiyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani and Shaikh Muhammad 'Abduh. Papers relating to the London Palestine Round Table Conference in 1939 including pre-conference meetings in Cairo and Beirut, a directory listing the conference participants, Arab delegation statements, minutes of Arab Delegation

meetings, papers relating to the Committee on Pledges examining the McMahon-Hussein correspondence and policy committee papers.

Access conditions: Open

Language of material: English, Arabic

Conditions governing reproduction: No restrictions on copying or quotation other than statutory regulations and preservation concerns

Custodial history: In the possession of George Antonius

Immediate source of acquisition: Institute of Current World Affairs material received prior to 1979. Palestine Round Table Conference papers received as a bequest from Soraya Antonius (the daughter of George Antonius) on the 11 May 2017.

Related Units of Description:

In other repositories

The UK National Archives also has minutes of the Palestine Round Table Conference see FO 371/23222/23 and FO 371/23223. Please note that these papers are in a tightly bound volume.

Finding aids: In Guide; Handlist; Adlib

Archivist's note: Fonds level description created by Clare Brown 10 Jun 1998. Fonds level description revised and series and item level descriptions created by Debbie Usher 1 July 2019 to incorporate the Palestine Round Table Conference papers. Catalogue last revised to include related units of description by Debbie Usher 17 Feb 2020. Biographical history based on information in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography entry for George Habib Antonius and information from the papers in the George Antonius Collection.

**SERIES AND FILE LEVEL DESCRIPTION OF THE GEORGE ANTONIUS
COLLECTION**

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|-------------------|---|-------------------------|---|
| <u>1</u> | <u>Institute of Current World Affairs</u> | <u>1930-1939</u> | <u>1 file</u>
(128 sheets) |
| | Reports and letters when Senior Associate in the Middle East of the Institute of Current World Affairs, on Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt, Syria and Iraq 1930-39, including notes on the case of Taha Hussein, 1932, and on Saiyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani and Shaikh Muhammad ‘Abduh. | | |
| <u>2</u> | <u>Palestine Round Table Conference</u> | <u>1939</u> | <u>5 boxes</u> |
| | Papers relating to the Palestine Round Table Conference including pre-conference meetings, a Directory of Delegations (listing Arab and Jewish conference delegates), Arab Delegation Statements (at the start and end of the conference), minutes of meetings and papers relating to the Committee on Pledges examining the McMahon-Hussein correspondence and transcripts of Policy Committee meetings. | | |
| | Language: Mainly in English, with 2 files in Arabic | | |
| | System of arrangement: | | |
| | 2/1 Pre-conference meetings | | |
| | 2/2 Directory of Delegations | | |
| | 2/3 Arab Delegation Statements | | |
| | 2/4 Arab Delegation Meetings | | |
| | 2/5 Draft minutes of meetings | | |
| | 2/6 Verbatim report of proceedings | | |
| | 2/7 Committee on Pledges | | |
| | 2/8 Policy Committee Meetings | | |
| <u>2/1</u> | <u>Pre-conference meetings</u> | 12-19 Jan 1939 | <u>2 files</u>
15 sheets
plus folder |
| | File entitled ‘Records of Meetings in Cairo and Bairut [Beirut]’ consisting of minutes of meetings with discussions | | |

about political development in Palestine, immigration and independence.

Language: In Arabic

Note: The original folder is stored separately

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|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| <u>2/2</u> | <u>Directory of Delegations</u> | <u>1939</u> | <u>1 file</u>
(35 sheets
plus file
cover) |
| File entitled 'Directory of Delegations' containing the names and addresses of the Arab and Jewish conference delegates during their stay in London, as well as a Colonial Office Directory. Also includes arrival times, driver details and security staff assigned to the Arab delegates. | | | |
| <u>2/3</u> | <u>Arab Delegation Statements</u> | <u>Feb - Mar 1939</u> | <u>2 files</u>
(95 sheets
plus
folder) |
| File entitled 'One copy of each of the statements by the Arab Delegations' for the Palestine Round Table Conference. The statements include those from Transjordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and the Palestine Arab Delegation and were mainly for the start of the conference. Also includes a 'Note by the Prime Minister of Iraq' 24 Feb 1939 suggesting that the Iraq model of appointing a Provisional National Government for Palestine should be followed. The file also contains two concluding statements entitled 'Observations of the Palestine Arab Delegation' and 'Statement on behalf of Arab Delegations' 17 Mar 1939 summarising their position and giving their assessment of the conference. | | | |
| Language: In Arabic and English. | | | |
| Note: The original folder is stored separately | | | |
| <u>2/4</u> | <u>Arab Delegation Meetings</u> | <u>29 Jan 1939 –
16 Mar 1939</u> | <u>2 files</u>
(23 sheets
plus
folder) |
| Minutes of the 1 st -10 th meetings, mainly held at the Royal Egyptian Embassy. Most of meetings were internal meetings for the Arab Delegation members discussing how to respond to the British Government and covering subjects such as immigration and a provisional government for Palestine. | | | |

Language: In Arabic

Note: The original folder is stored separately

<u>2/5</u>	<u>Draft minutes of meetings</u>	<u>9 Feb 1939 – 17 Mar 1939</u>	<u>2 files</u>
	Draft minutes for the 2 nd – 14 th meetings giving a detailed account of discussions.		
2/5/1	<u>Draft minutes of meetings</u>	9 Feb 1939- 16 Feb 1939	1 file (121 sheets plus file cover)
	File entitled ‘Meetings of Conference. Draft Secretary’s Record Vol I. (Second to Seventh Meetings)’ consisting of detailed minutes of each meeting recording the discussions.		
2/5/2	<u>Draft minutes of meetings</u>	8 Feb 1939 - 17 Mar 1939	1 file (197 sheets plus file cover)
	File entitled ‘Meetings of Conference. Draft Secretary’s Record. Vol II (Eighth to Fourteenth Meetings)’ consisting of detailed minutes of each meeting recording the discussions.		
<u>2/6</u>	<u>Verbatim Report of Proceedings</u>	<u>11 Feb – 17 Mar 1939</u>	<u>4 files</u>
	Detailed transcripts recording discussions at the Arab Delegation meetings.		
2/6/1	<u>Verbatim Reports: 3rd – 14th Meetings</u>	11 Feb 1939 - 17 Mar 1939	2 files (281 sheets plus folder)
	File entitled ‘Conferences on Palestine, 1939 Verbatim Report of Proceedings Third to Fourteenth Meetings’ consisting of a transcript of the shorthand notes of G.L. Bannerman recording the discussions at the Arab meetings with Malcolm MacDonald presiding.		
	Note: The original folder is stored separately		
2/6/2	<u>Verbatim Reports: 3rd – 14th Meetings</u>	11 - 17 Mar 1939	2 files (281 sheets plus folder)
	File entitled ‘Conferences on Palestine, 1939 Verbatim Report of Proceedings Third to Fourteenth Meetings’ consisting of a transcript of the shorthand notes of G.L. Bannerman recording the discussions		

at the Arab meetings with Malcolm MacDonald presiding.

Note: This is a duplicate copy of 2/6/1. The original folder is stored separately

2/7 Committee on Pledges 1912-1939 6 files

Papers relating to the Committee of Pledges examining the McMahon-Hussein correspondence in 1915 including the text of the correspondence (which includes proposed changes in the English translation from the Arabic), statements and memoranda, general correspondence, report drafts and the final report of the Pledges Committee.

Admin Hist: On the 13th February 1939 the discussion between the British and Arab conference delegates was chiefly about the correspondence between Sir Henry McMahon and the Sherif Hussein in 1915. Official copies of the correspondence were given to the Arab delegates on the 15th February 1939 and it was then agreed that an Anglo-Arab Committee should be set up to examine the 'questions raised in connection with the scope and purport of the promises made in 1915'. Bulletin of International News Vol 16 no 4 (Feb 25, 1939) see pages 149-150.

System of arrangement:

- 2/7/1 Records of Proceedings
- 2/7/2 McMahon correspondence text and debate
- 2/7/3 Statements and Memoranda
- 2/7/4 General Correspondence
- 2/7/5 Pledges Committee Report Drafts
- 2/7/6 Pledges Committee Report

2/7/1	<u>Records of Proceedings</u>	24 Feb 1939 –	1 file
	File entitled 'Committee on Pledges Records of Proceedings' containing notes on meetings discussing the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence.	16 Mar 1939	(106 sheets plus file cover)

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| 2/7/2 | <u>McMahon Correspondence Text and Debate</u> | 1915-1916,
1939 | 1 file
(77 sheets
plus file
cover) |
| <p>File entitled 'Committee on Pledges. Text of the McMahon Correspondence' containing the text of the McMahon-Hussein correspondence in English and Arabic 1915-1916, copies of Foreign Office letters with a list of proposed changes to the English translation of the Arabic text 27 Feb – 1 Mar 1939, printed text of a question and reply in the House of Commons 1 Mar 1939, a pamphlet entitled 'The Arab Case' and a British Government White Paper on the McMahon-Hussein correspondence 1939 (Cmd. 5957).</p> | | | |
| 2/7/3 | <u>Statements and Memoranda</u> | 1912-1939 | 1 file
(66 sheets
plus file
cover) |
| <p>File entitled 'Committee on Pledges. Statements and Memoranda' containing an 'Arab memorandum on British Pledges' 23 Feb 1939 and statements, memorandums and observations about the McMahon-Hussein correspondence by the Lord Chancellor, Sir Michael McDonnell and General Nuri Pasha, as well as a statement by M. Poincare in the French Senate 21 Dec 1912, copies of telegrams from 1914, and a copy of a letter to The Times by Sir Henry McMahon on 23 Jul 1937.</p> | | | |
| 2/7/4 | <u>General Correspondence</u> | 14 Feb 1939 –
18 Mar 1939 | 1 file
(18 sheets
plus file
cover) |
| <p>File entitled 'Committee on Pledges. General correspondence' consisting of correspondence mainly to George Antonius about the McMahon-Hussein correspondence. Also includes a copy of a letter on the 16 Mar 1939 from George Antonius and Lady Baggallay to H.F. Downie, Secretary to the</p> | | | |

Conference on Palestine sending a copy of the report examining the McMahon-Hussein correspondence.

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| 2/7/5 | <u>Pledges Committee Report Drafts</u> | 1939 | 1 file
(64 sheets
plus file
cover) |
| | File labelled 'Committee on Pledges Drafts of Report' which contains several revised drafts of the 'Report of the committee set up to consider certain correspondence which took place in the years 1915 and 1916 between Sir Henry McMahon, His Majesty's High Commissioner at Cairo, and the Sharif of Mecca' as well as a draft of the Lord Chancellor's statement at the 4 th meeting. | | |
| 2/7/6 | <u>Pledges Committee Report</u> | 16 Mar 1939 | 1 file
(86 sheets
plus file
cover) |
| | File labelled 'Committee on Pledges Report' containing the 'Report of the committee set up to consider certain correspondence which took place in the years 1915 and 1916 between Sir Henry McMahon, His Majesty's High Commissioner at Cairo, and the Sharif of Mecca' with a covering letter on the 16 Mar 1939 from H.F. Downie (Secretary to the Conferences) circulating the report for the 14 th Anglo-Arab meeting of the conference to be held on the 17 Mar 1939. | | |
| 2/8 | <u>Policy Committee Meetings</u> | <u>2 – 7 Mar 1939</u> | 1 file
(115
sheets plus
file cover) |
| | File entitled 'Meetings of Committee on Policy Draft Secretary's Record (First to Fourth Meetings)' Detailed transcripts of what was said at each meeting from the 2 -7 Mar 1939. | | |
| | Admin Hist: At the 12 th meeting of the Conference...it was decided to set up a Committee on Policy' Note by H.F. Downie, Secretary 1 Mar 1939 see 2/8 page 115. | | |