sented more amorphous groups, or spoke for them, but were often self-selected. They stood for wealth, but could mobilize neither it nor the wealthy in any orderly "democratic" fashion (see especially pp. 340–342).

Elam's book ends with a picture of disarray as the political crisis caused by the deteriorating relationship with the Mandatory authority led to bitter debates within the movement that resulted, at the end of the period under review (1929–1931), in the formation of separate Labor and Revisionist factions. This story, in short, is no tidier than any other complex historical subject. We await the continuation of Elam's study to cover the subsequent period, and we would hope as well, with the author, that a careful examination of the relations between the Yishuv (and later, the state of Israel) and the Western diaspora might be launched as a major effort by Israeli universities and scholars.

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This book, which belongs to the revisionist genre, presents a very interesting thesis on the falling-out that occurred between the United States and Great Britain over Suez in 1956. According to Steven Freiberger, Anglo-American differences during the Suez crisis did not represent a sudden and unexpected turn of events that pitted Washington against London. Rather, it was the culmination of a process that got underway as early as 1950, with the United States intent on replacing Great Britain as the dominant power in the Middle East.

It is Freiberger's basic contention that underlying the 1956 dispute between the United States and its European allies was Washington's conviction, growing since the early 1950s, that the colonial, imperialist policies of England, in particular, were undermining improved relations with the Arab world. In the global contest in which the West was engaged with the Soviet Union, there was no way of enlisting the Arab states as allies unless Britain modified its policies so as to make them partners in a common enterprise, rather than keeping them as colonies or protectorates. Failing a change of approach on Britain's part, U.S. leaders resolved that it would be essential to ease Britain out of its dominant role in the Middle East in an effort to incorporate the region into the network of alliances that the United States was creating across the globe. In other words, while the United Kingdom remained an asset in containing Soviet expansionism in Europe, it was fast becoming a liability in the Middle East. This was the essence of the dispute between London and Washington over Suez.

Apart from its introduction and opening chapter, the balance of Freiberger's book is devoted to substantiating his analysis of Anglo-American differences in their respective approaches to Middle Eastern affairs during the 1950s. In effect, the chapter headings tell the whole story: "The Eisenhower Initiative"; "British With-
Zionism, Israel and the Middle East

 withdrawal from Suez"; "The Baghdad Pact"; "The Alpha Project for Settling the Arab-Israeli Dispute"; "The Aswan Loan"; "Conspiracy at Suez"; and "American Ascendancy." Each of these issues or episodes revealed divergent attitudes toward the problems of the Middle East. Both London and Washington were committed to protecting the area from Soviet penetration and domination. The West had vital interests in the Middle East—namely, oil and strategy—with the Suez Canal serving as the fulcrum around which everything else rotated. However, Britain sought to revise the treaties it had with the Arab states into collective agreements which, while ostensibly restoring Arab sovereignty, would at the same time preserve the bases for Western use in the event of confrontation with the Soviet Union. For Egypt (and, in part, for Iraq), this was not sufficient: Arab sovereignty had to be absolute and only afterwards could a sovereign Arab state enter freely into a general security alliance for the area. And the United States, in accordance with its longstanding tradition of anticolonialism, accepted the Egyptian thesis.

The successive steps leading up to the Suez crisis of November 1956 reflected Anglo-American differences over the measure of colonial deadweight that continued to burden Western policy in the Middle East. Apparently, Prime Minister Anthony Eden and U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, while they differed on the best approach to securing the Middle East against Russian penetration, were in agreement on one thing—that for peace to be attained between Israel and the Arab states, the Jewish state would have to be prepared to make territorial sacrifices. If Israel understood this need, good; if it did not, then it would be made to understand it. The underlying premise of Freiberger's analysis is that President Dwight D. Eisenhower viewed Gamal Abdul Nasser as a nationalist intent on freeing his country and people from the yoke of colonial imperialism, while Eden saw him as a petty imperialist who, in his blind hatred of the West, was serving as a cat's-paw for Soviet penetration of the region. The divergent assessments of Nasser deepened the crisis between the two Western leaders, which as noted, essentially arose over the question whether Britain or the United States should be the dominant power in the Middle East.

Freiberger's thesis is an extremely attractive one. It seems to add meaning to the Suez dispute and enable us to see that crisis in the perspective of a clash of policies rather than that of personalities. What can be more impressive than an interpretation of Suez that denies its representing a sudden falling-out of friends and portrays it instead as the inevitable denouement of deeply divided policies? There is only one thing wrong with the thesis—it does not accord with the documentary record.

Freiberger's key evidence is a memorandum dated December 27, 1950 by the assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, George McGhee, to Secretary of State Dean Acheson. Freiberger cites the memorandum as follows:

He recommended a "combined US-UK responsibility and active US-UK cooperation in the development and implementation of plans [to] replace Great Britain as the primary responsible power" (p. 22).

Taken in isolation, this sentence clearly implies that henceforth the United States would replace the United Kingdom as the "primary" power in the Middle East. This interpretation of Freiberger's words is also borne out by the rhetorical question
Freiberger poses in the preface—the question to which his book ostensibly supplies the answer: "Did the United States actively develop a strategy to replace the British as the dominant power in the area?" (my italics)

But an examination of the McGhee memorandum shows us something entirely different. It reads:

The direction of such a re-evaluation should be, in our judgment, away from the concept of primary British responsibility toward the concept of combined US-UK responsibility and active US-UK cooperation in the development and implementation of plans.¹

There was no intention of the United States "replacing" the United Kingdom; on the contrary, the whole point of the memorandum was to argue for an augmentation of British power in the face of the challenge posed by developments in the area. This is summed up by McGhee in his third point: "In conjunction with the UK, to embark upon a policy of strengthening the indigenous defense forces in the other countries of the Middle East."² Freiberger’s reading of the McGhee document is not accurate and leads to the faulty conclusion that there was a deliberate policy dating back to 1950 to displace Britain in the area. Unfortunately, by re juxtaposing the first and second parts of McGhee’s conclusion, Freiberger reaches an incorrect reading of the document.

Despite our best efforts to supply an ideological explanation for the Suez episode, in the final analysis it would seem that personality, even more than policy, determined the U.S. stand. If Harry Truman had remained president and Dean Acheson the secretary of state when Suez erupted, the outcome, without doubt, would have been very different.

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Notes
2. Ibid., 5.


It was apparent when it happened during the late 1930s—and well known ever since—that when the Zionist movement was abandoned by Britain, its protective great power, it began to look instead toward the United States. Zionist diplomacy gave up its British orientation, which had reached from Chaim Weizmann back to Theodor Herzl, and in some sense to Benjamin Disraeli. David Ben-Gurion lost his