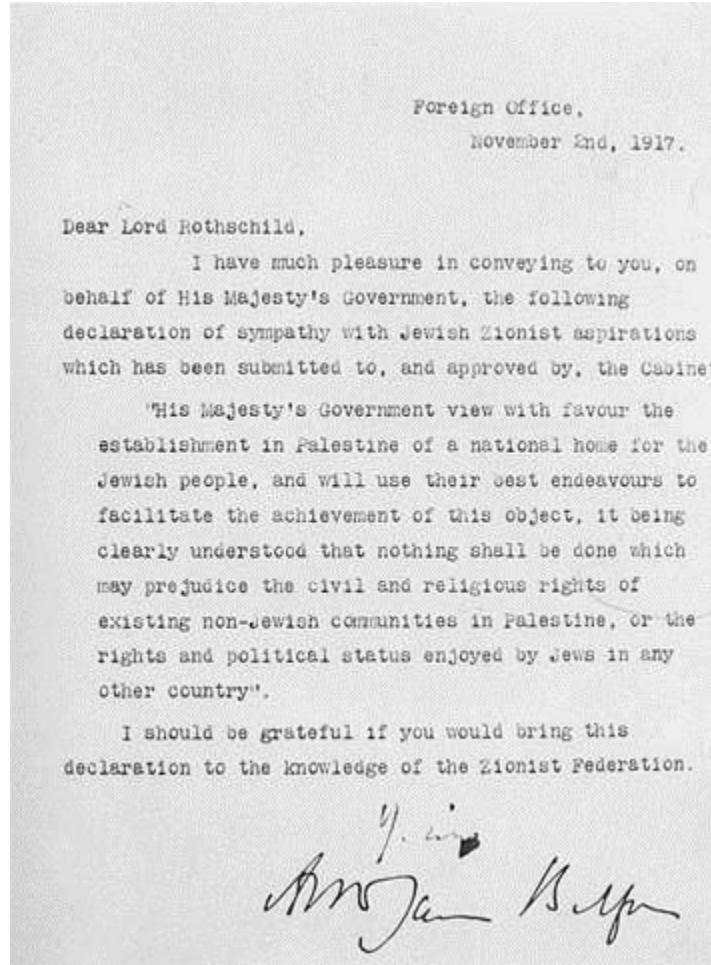


## THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 1917 Arthur James Balfour (the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), wrote the Balfour Declaration and addressed it to Lord Walter Rothschild. It brought devastation to the inhabitants of Palestine, although the Declaration assured otherwise ....

“it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may  
prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish  
communities in Palestine”

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“What is the Balfour Declaration?

**The British pledge that paved the way for Israel's creation. The declaration saw Britain, a major world power, make the first key declaration backing a Jewish “national home” in what was known as Palestine.**

It was contained in a letter dated 2 November 1917 by the then British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour to British Jewish community leader Lord Rothschild.

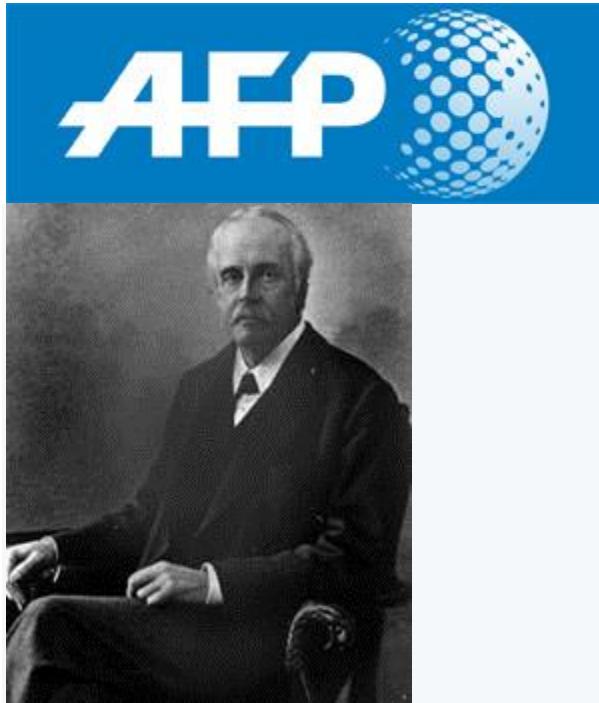
#### **What does it say?**

The letter, which states it is a “declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations”, promises British assistance to create a Jewish homeland.”

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## **The Balfour Declaration: the document that led to Israel's creation 100 years ago**

2017-10-31 09:01



Israeli Government Press Office handout photo showing a portrait of then-Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour taken in 1917 (GPO/AFP)

Paris – The Balfour Declaration a century ago opened the way for the creation of Israel, sowing the seeds of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that continues to tear apart the Middle East today.

The statement was made in an open letter from British Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour that was published on November 2, 1917, a year before the end of World War I.

In one sentence it announced the British government's backing for the establishment within Palestine, then a region of the Ottoman Empire, of "a national home for the Jewish people".

It was a shock to the Arab world, which had not been consulted and had received vague promises of independence of its own in the post-war break up of the defeated Ottoman Empire.



*A copy of the Balfour Declaration (GPO/AFP)*

The Palestinians have always condemned the Declaration, which they refer to as the "Balfour promise", saying Britain was giving away land it did not own.

### **Britain's interests**

With the Balfour Declaration, London was seeking Jewish support for its war efforts, and the Zionist push for a homeland for Jews was an emerging political force.

The first Zionist congress in the Swiss city of Basel in August 1897 had declared: "Zionism aims at establishing for the Jewish people a publicly and legally assured home in Palestine."

It was a time of anti-Semitism and pogroms in Russia and eastern Europe, and an influx of Jews in Palestine was already underway: they numbered 47 000 in 1895 against 24 000 in 1882.

The Arabs protested against the Zionist intent and the first political organisations to fight it were established in 1911.

## Arab world shared out

In 1916, Britain's Sir Mark Sykes and France's Francois Georges-Picot negotiated the post-war break-up of the Ottoman Empire and shared out the Arab world.

Their secret accords put modern-day Lebanon and Syria more or less under French influence and Iraq and Jordan under Britain.



*This handout file photo taken in 1925 and obtained from the Israeli Government Press Office (GPO) shows (L to R) British General Edmund Allenby, Arthur Balfour, Former British Prime Minister, and Herbert Samuel, 1st High Commissioner of Palestine, posing for a picture in Jerusalem. (GPO/AFP)*

Palestine was to be placed under international administration. But Britain did not see this as in its interests. It wanted to turn Zionist aspirations to its own ends, considering that a Jewish state could assure a foothold in the Middle East.

## One sentence, 67 words

Balfour sent his famous typewritten letter, which had been approved by the cabinet, to a high-ranking representative of the British Jewish community, Lord Walter Rothschild.

It read: "His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

This one line of 67 words was a major victory for the Zionist chief in Britain, Chaim Weizmann, who was to become Israel's first president and had campaigned hard to get the British government to approve the declaration.

It was a shock for Arabs in the Middle East, neither consulted nor informed. Jews in 1917 represented only 7% of Palestine's population.

The first Arab demonstrations took place in February 1920.

### **Birth of Israel**

The declaration was put into action in April 1920 at the San Remo conference of World War I allies which delivered a mandate on Palestine.

Approved in 1922 by the League of Nations, the mandate said Britain "shall be responsible for placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home".

London had to crush a 1936-1939 Arab revolt in Palestine that demanded independence and an end to Jewish immigration.

The rise of Nazism and the Holocaust during World War II gave an impetus for a new wave of Jewish arrivals. Tensions with the British authorities led to an insurgency by Zionist militias.

In November 1947, the United Nations adopted a plan to split Palestine into two states, one Jewish and one Arab, with the holy city of Jerusalem under international control.

And on May 14, 1948, immediately after the end of the British mandate in Palestine, Jewish leader David Ben Gurion proclaimed the creation of the state of Israel.

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Follow the following links for the history concerning Balfour Declaration.

- <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/10/100-years-balfour-declaration-explained-171028055805843.html>
- <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/palestine-activists-uk-apology-balfour-171031054747559.html>
- <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/balfour-100-years-britain-colonial-legacy-171026095954067.html>
- <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/inpictures/2017/10/century-balfour-declaration-171029123237217.html>

Because of the Balfour Declaration which was given during the First World War, the Second World War was used to establish the State of Israel. A Swede, Count Folke Bernadotte of the United Nations, had a Peace Plan for Palestine. The northern part, Galilee, would be given to the Jews, and the southern part to the Palestinians as the inhabitants of the land, with Jerusalem under international control.

During the summer of 1948, Count Folke Bernadotte was sent by the UN to Palestine to mediate a truce and try to negotiate a settlement. Bernadotte's plan called for the following:

1. That the State of Israel surrender the Negev to the Arab State;
2. That international Jerusalem with a large Jewish majority be turned over to the Arabs;
3. That the port of Haifa, belonging to Israel, become a "free" port;
4. That the airport of Lydda, belonging to Israel, also become "free";
5. That immigration to Israel be limited or suspended, depending on the desire of the Arabs in their neighboring state, after two years of free immigration.

The Arabs were expected to trade Western Galilee, occupied by Israeli troops, for the larger Negev. They were not asked to make any concessions from the rights allotted to them by the [partition plan](#). They

were asked merely to recognize the State of Israel, which, according to the plan of the mediator, would no longer be independent, since he envisaged economic union between the Arab and Jewish States of Palestine, a common defense or



military union, and dependence of Jewish immigration to Israel on Arab consent. The Israelis were expected to extend the same courtesy and recognize the Arab State in Palestine.

Bernadotte's plan was a threat to the Zionist outlook, and he was killed. See the following links...

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folke\\_Bernadotte](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folke_Bernadotte)
- <http://thepensivequill.am/2014/08/count-bernadotte-and-palestine-problem.html>

From the above link ...

*"Commander Yehoshua Zeitler of the Jerusalem branch of LEHI started to train four men to kill Bernadotte and solicited information from two sympathetic journalists about his schedule. LEHI decided to assassinate Bernadotte while he was on his way to meet the Israeli military governor of Jerusalem's New City on September 17. An Israeli jeep carrying the four assassins blocked the path of the UN convoy and one man (later discovered to be Yehoshua Cohen) fired an automatic pistol into the car, killing French Colonel Serot and Bernadotte. The other LEHI members shot the tires of the rest of the convoy and all the terrorists escaped into a Zionist ultra religious community of LEHI sympathizers for some days before fleeing to Tel Aviv.*

*A group calling itself, The Fatherland Front claimed credit for the assassinations; in fact it was a cover name LEHI used in hopes of avoiding being exposed and to stop action being taken against the group. But LEHI was suspected and under intense international pressure and condemnation the Israeli government arrested many of its members and disbanded LEHI. Two of the leaders of LEHI, Nathan Yellin-Mor and Mattityahu Shmuelevitz, were sentenced to prison terms of eight years and five years by a military court, but were released immediately in a 'general' amnesty.*

*Another top leader Yitzhak Shamir, was not only implicated, but actually instigated planning the murders, but he was never tried and went on **to become Prime Minister.**"*

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This is the interesting and sometimes unknown history that relates to the establishment of the State of Israel.

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AndriYaH  
Desember 2017