

We would very much like to hear any suggestions or questions you have about this project.

Do contact us at:

[info@balfourproject.org](mailto:info@balfourproject.org)

## THE BALFOUR PROJECT

*Marking the Centenary  
of the Balfour Declaration in 2017 -  
as a contribution to justice, peace and reconciliation  
in the Middle East*

**I**N November 1917 the government of Britain issued the Balfour Declaration which promised a homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine whilst also promising to protect the rights of the existing indigenous Arab population.

Subsequent British governments upheld the promise to create a Jewish homeland but deliberately reneged on the promise to protect the rights of the Arab inhabitants.

Thus, a homeland for the Jewish people was achieved at the cost of freedom and self-determination for Palestinian Arabs. Almost a hundred years ago the stage was set for a struggle to control the land that has intensified from that day to this.

To mark the centenary of the Balfour Declaration in a manner that honours the deep feelings of all who have been impacted by it, the Balfour Project seeks:

- **acknowledgement** of our nation's actions at the time of the Balfour Declaration and throughout the Mandate, and particularly the deceit surrounding Britain's true intentions;
- **pardon** for our nation's wrongdoing- from Palestinians for having intentionally ignored their legitimate aspirations and from Jews for our part in the centuries of anti-Semitism.
- **integrity** in our nation's future dealings with Jews, Palestinians, and all peoples.

**[www.balfourproject.org](http://www.balfourproject.org)  
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# The Contradictory Promises

## *Promise No.1*

### **The McMahon-Hussein Correspondence, 1915**

- In 1915 Britain promised the Arabs that after the war they would be granted independence in their lands, in exchange for joining a wartime alliance against the Turks.
- Britain later insisted that Palestine was never included in this deal, although the Arabic version was a straight promise.
- After the war Britain and France kept control of most of the region in question.

## *Promise No. 2*

### **The Balfour Declaration, 1917**

- This promised British backing for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, whilst also undertaking to safeguard the rights of the Arab population.
- Britain followed through on the first undertaking, (to the Jews) but reneged on the second, (to the Arabs).

## *Promise No.3*

### **Anglo-French declaration on self-determination, 1918**

- At the end of the First World War, Britain and France assured the former subjects of the Ottoman Turks that they would now be free to determine their own futures.
- In fact, in the secret **Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916**, Britain and France had been planning how they would divide the Middle Eastern region between the western powers.

## *Promise No.4*

### **The British Mandate for Palestine, 1922**

- When the League of Nations granted Britain a Mandate to administer Palestine, it included the requirement that the Balfour Declaration should be implemented.
- In Arab eyes, Britain failed to fulfil the undertaking which the Declaration made to protect them.
- In Jewish eyes, Britain later weakened in her commitment to a homeland for them.

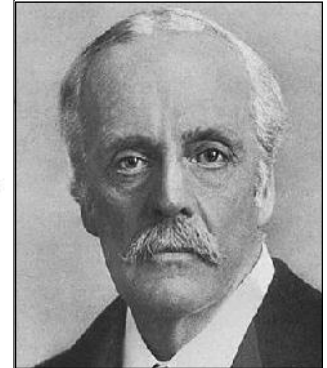
Foreign Office,  
November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet

"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."

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.



Arthur James Balfour

ON November 2nd 1917 the British government issued a letter whose consequences reverberate to this day – the **Balfour Declaration**. This came at the same time as Allenby's forces were pushing northwards towards Jerusalem. Sharif Hussein, who had been offered the Arab Lands by Sir Henry McMahon in 1915 in reward for his support against the Ottomans, became aware of the detail of the secret 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement. This was followed in 1918 by the Anglo French Declaration promising countries freed from Ottoman rule the right to choose their own governments.

*For much more background articles and information  
go to our website:*

**[www.balfourproject.org](http://www.balfourproject.org)**