

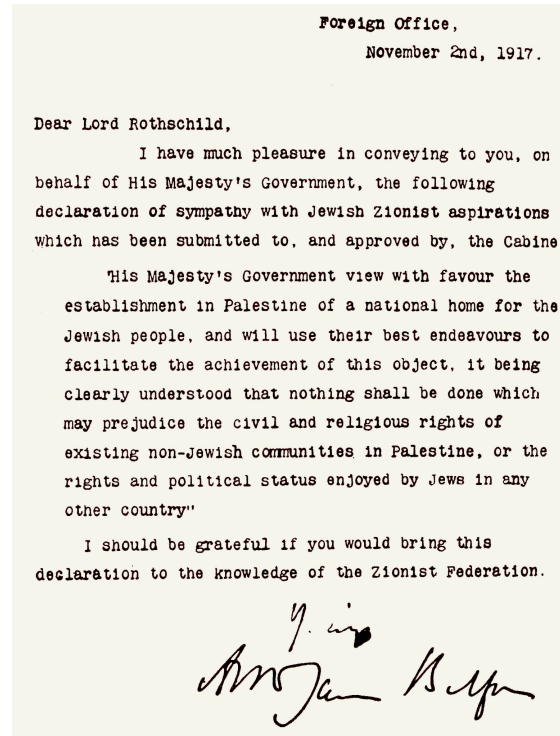
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The Irish Question

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Primary Source Document: The Balfour Declaration



- Who is it by? Discuss the author, and the motives behind the document.

The Balfour Declaration was written by Arthur James Balfour. Arthur James Balfour was born on July 25, 1848, in Whittingehame, East Lothian to James Maitland Balfour and Lady Blanche Gascoyne-Cecil. His father was a Scottish man and Arthur James Balfour later served as the Secretary of State for Scotland. Later in life, he found his way into becoming the Chief Secretary for Ireland, as well as the Leader of the House of Commons. After he held those two positions, he served as the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1902 to 1905. He was a

Conservative politician who later resigned from his position as the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. After he resigned from being the Prime Minister, he later wrote the Balfour Declaration in 1917. More specifically, Arthur James Balfour wrote the Balfour Declaration on November 2, 1917, which was towards the end of the First World War. Arthur James Balfour wrote the Balfour Declaration “on the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.” (National Records of Scotland, Paragraph 1). His motives behind writing this document were to support Zionism. Zionism is “a religious and political effort that brought thousands of Jews from around the world back to their ancient homeland in the Middle East and reestablished Israel as the central location for Jewish identity.” (History, Paragraph 1). The main idea was that the Jewish individuals wanted to reclaim their homeland in Palestine. The British government was said to have wanted support from the Jewish population on the Allies' side instead of the Central Powers' side of the First World War. The Prime Minister at the time, David Lloyd George, publicly supported Zionism, and in return, the United Kingdom’s government wanted their support in the First World War. The motives behind the Balfour Declaration were believed to do exactly that, and that was to receive the support of the Jewish population for giving them their specific land in Palestine.

- Where did it appear – e.g. which newspaper; who were the intended audience?

Arthur James Balfour later became the British Foreign Secretary. Arthur James Balfour wrote the Balfour Declaration as a letter to Baron Rothschild. Baron Rothschild was a leader in the British Jewish affairs. The Balfour Declaration letter was released by the press about a week after it was originally received by Baron Rothschild. Throughout the publishing of these newspapers, those in favor of the Balfour Declaration (mainly the United Kingdom’s government) were hoping to receive responses from Jewish individuals, especially in the United

States of America. Again, political leaders such as Arthur James Balfour and Baron Rothschild wanted Jewish support for the Allies during the First World War, and in return, they were going to give them land in Palestine.

- When was it written? For example, a letter written before the declaration of war in August 1914 will need a different approach than one written after.

The Balfour Agreement was written on November 2, 1917. The document was written during the First World War. The First World War began on July 28, 1914. This is because it was exactly a month after Archduke Francis Ferdinand was assassinated. Archduke Francis Ferdinand was the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary. Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia because a man named Gavrilo Princip (who was a member of a nationalist Serbian gang) shot Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife Sophie in Sarajevo. Serbia was under the control of the Austria-Hungary Empire and that led Gavrilo Princip to shoot the heir to the throne. It is said that “The assassination of its heir presumptive gave Austria-Hungary the opportunity to settle some old scores and declare war on Serbia, which, in turn, precipitated a political crisis between the major European powers, and this, in turn, triggered a chain of events which led directly to the outbreak of the First World War.” (Cambridge University Library, Paragraph 1). After the First World War began, other countries began to invade one another. In the following month of August alone, Germany invaded Luxembourg and Belgium, France invaded Alsace, and Austria-Hungary invaded Russia. In later months, Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary. This was because Italy was promised a piece of Austria-Hungary’s land once the Central Powers were defeated. The Central Powers were made up of Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and Bulgaria. Their opposing powers were the Allied Powers, which were led by France, Great Britain, and Russia. In later years, there were also other nations beneath the Allied Powers,

which were the United States of America, Japan, Australia, Italy, New Zealand, Rhodesia, Romania, South Africa, Greece, Canada, Belgium, Serbia, Portugal, India, Montenegro, and Poland. It is said that Italy, Japan, and the United States of America later became leaders in the Allied Powers alongside France, Great Britain, and Russia. The Balfour Declaration was said to have been written to be aimed towards Jewish people in the United States of America so they could appeal to them in order to gain the United States of America's word within the Allied Powers too. The invasions of various countries led up to this endeavor.

- If possible, compare the document against others, e.g. other letters that appear in the newspaper, or elsewhere, at the time.

Although there isn't a formal document, the United Kingdom's government promised Arabs independence by claiming that they would give them land owned by the Ottoman Turks, which would include Palestine. Some issues arose from this as the Balfour Declaration stated that the Jewish populations would receive land in Palestine. The British government wanted the Arabs to "enlist in the military and (give) political support." (Boston University, Paragraph 1). Although the United Kingdom received this support from the Arabs, their promise to them couldn't be kept as they had also promised the land to the Jewish people. In actuality, this is still a problem today. When anyone turns on the news, they can see that the Israeli military has been killing Palestinians in order to get the land that they deem as their holy land. Many nations, such as the United Kingdom, have been giving Israel military supplies and support. This all started when a Palestinian military group called "Hamas" attacked communities in Israel with guns. Regardless, the Balfour Declaration may have been written in 1917, but it is still referenced in media today regarding international warfare news.

- What is being said – fully analyse the content; this again, could include a compare and contrast element.

The general idea of the Balfour Declaration was that the British government was in support of establishing a Jewish land that Jewish people could call home in Palestine. Arthur James Balfour also said that the non-Jewish people in those areas would not be discriminated against. Although this declaration was supposedly going to help the United Kingdom gain Jewish support, the declaration caused a multitude of problems within the area of Palestine. Regardless, the document was stating that the “sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations” had been approved by the British cabinet. The Balfour Declaration was a written letter that was referenced to show that the “Royal Majesty’s Government” was in favor of the Jewish population. This declaration was to show that the British government had the backs of Jews, so the Jewish individuals should have their backs as well.

The Balfour Declaration was a political declaration by the United Kingdom’s government in hopes of gaining more allies during the First World War. In their minds, as long as they could get a large amount of supporters for their cause, they would be able to beat the Central Powers of Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and Bulgaria. The Balfour Declaration made a promise to the Jewish individuals that they were protected by the United Kingdom’s word, which would appeal to them and allow the Jews to side with the Allied Powers throughout the First World War. This later became helpful as the Allied Powers won the First World War. It was said that the strategies and economic factors helped the Allied Powers win, alongside the help of the United States, which was influenced by the Balfour Declaration.

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