

The Balfour Declaration (1917)

The British Foreign Secretary, Arthur James Balfour, wrote to Jewish leader Lord Rothshild, to assure him that his government supported the ideal of providing a homeland for the Jews. The British hoped thereby to win more Jewish support for the Allies in the First World War. The "Balfour Declaration" became the basis for international support for the founding of the modern state of Israel. The letter was published a week later in The Times of London as reproduced here.

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 favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors 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.

Yours,
Arthur James Balfour

*Downloaded from the Washington State University website:
http://public.wsu.edu/~brians/world_civ/worldcivreader/world_civ_reader_2/balfour.html*