

## **2017 is the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration**

The 1917 Balfour Declaration is widely regarded as one of the most formative and far-reaching documents in the modern history of the Middle East. It was the cornerstone of the Zionist project to transform Arab Palestine into a 'Jewish state'. The Declaration and subsequent events changed not only the demographic map of the region but also its political, social and military configuration as well.

British liberal public opinion at the time felt that the West had a responsibility to enable a Jewish homeland due to historical injustices suffered by the Jews for which they believed the West was to blame. In the aftermath of WWII and the Holocaust, the push for a Jewish homeland intensified amidst growing international support for the Zionist Movement and the creation of the State of Israel.

### **What was the Balfour Declaration?**

The Balfour Declaration was a brief letter dated 2 November 1917 by Lord Arthur Balfour, the British foreign secretary at the time, addressing Baron Lionel Walter Rothschild, a British Zionist peer, expressing the British government's support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The letter read as follows:

*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 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*



Arthur James Balfour (1848-1933)



The Balfour Declaration

To the Zionists, the Balfour Declaration of 1917 laid the foundation for the formation of the State of Israel. To the Palestinians, however, it was an act of dishonesty and betrayal by Britain. So who is Balfour? What was the declaration? And why does it remain contentious?

Come and find out more about the issues of peace and justice in Israel/Palestine with Dr Michael Marten

**Balfour Evening, Nov. 14<sup>th</sup> at 6.30pm.**

**British Legion Hall, Bridge of Weir, PA11 3NN.**

**All welcome but places limited. Find out more by emailing:  
mjbird55@gmail.com**

**Dr. Michael Marten will speak about the issues related to this pivotal document.**



Michael has lectured in Middle East politics at the University of London and in religion at Stirling University. He is actively committed to justice, peace and environmental issues and also campaigns on issues related to wider Middle East and Christian Jewish and Muslim relations.