

The Forgotten Truth About the Balfour Declaration

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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For a century now, the landmark British statement on Palestine has been cast as the isolated act of a single nation, but the real story is much different.

The centennial of the Balfour Declaration is the perfect opportunity to chip away at the distorted accretions of a century. The largest of these is the notion that the declaration arose outside any legitimate framework, as the initiative of a self-dealing imperial power. This is utterly false. The declaration was approved in advance by the Allied powers whose consensus then constituted the only source of international legitimacy. Before Balfour signed his declaration, leaders and statesmen of other democratic nations signed their names on similar letters and assurances. The document anticipated a world regulated by a consortium of principal powers -- the same world that, 30 years later, would pass a UN resolution legitimating the establishment of a Jewish state. This centennial is thus the time to remind governments of their shared responsibility for Britain's pledge to establish a Jewish "national home" in Palestine. In Washington, Paris, Rome, and Vatican City, it is important for Israel's ambassadors and friends to speak openly of the historic and essential role of each government in the gestation of the declaration...

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