



Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

Featuring collections from the Western Reserve Historical Society and
The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives

MS-4787: Abba Hillel Silver Papers, 1902-1989.

Series I: General Correspondence, 1914-1969, undated.

Sub-series A: Alphabetical, 1914-1965, undated.

Reel

11

Box

4

Folder

246

American Zionist Emergency Council, "Statements by British and American Statesmen on the Balfour Declaration at the time of its publication and in the years following (1917-1920)", undated.

Some Statements Made by British and American Statesmen
Indicating That the Balfour Declaration at the Time of Its Publication
and in the Years Following Was Understood to Mean the
Ultimate Establishment of a Jewish State, Republic or Commonwealth

BRITISH STATEMENTS

Mr. A. J. (afterwards Lord) Balfour (Secretary for Foreign Affairs)

"As to the meaning of the words 'National Home', to which the Zionists attach so much importance, he understood it to mean some form of British, American, or other protectorate, under which full facilities would be given to the Jews to work out their own salvation and to build up, by means of education, agriculture and industry, a real centre of national culture and focus of national life. It did not necessarily involve the early establishment of an independent Jewish State, which was a matter for gradual development in accordance with the ordinary laws of political evolution."

(As recorded by Mr. David Lloyd George from a meeting of the War Cabinet at the end of October 1917 when Balfour submitted the proposed Declaration to the Cabinet for approval. David Lloyd George, The Truth About the Peace Treaties, Vol. II, p. 1137)

Mr. David Lloyd George (Prime Minister, 1916-1922)

"There has been a good deal of discussion as to the meaning of the words 'Jewish National Home' and whether it involved the setting up of a Jewish National State in Palestine. I have already quoted the words actually used by Mr. Balfour when he submitted the Declaration to the Cabinet for its approval. They were not challenged at the time by any member present, and there could be no doubt as to what the Cabinet then had in their minds. It was not their idea that a Jewish State should be set up immediately by the Peace Treaty without reference to the wishes of the majority of the inhabitants. On the other hand, it was contemplated that when the time arrived for according representative institutions to Palestine, if the Jews had meanwhile responded to the opportunity afforded them by the idea of a National Home and had become a definite majority of the inhabitants, then Palestine would thus become a Jewish Commonwealth. The notion that Jewish immigration would have to be artificially restricted in order to ensure that the Jews should be a permanent minority never entered into the heads of anyone engaged in framing the policy. That would have been regarded as unjust and as a fraud on the people to whom we were appealing."

(David Lloyd George, op. cit., p. 1138-39)

Cyril P. Scott (Editor, Manchester Guardian)

"What it means is that, assuming our military successes to be continued and the whole of Palestine brought securely under our control, then at the conclusion of peace our deliberate policy will be to encourage in every way in our power Jewish immigration, to give full security, and no doubt a large measure of local autonomy, to the Jewish immigrants, with a view to the ultimate establishment of a Jewish State."

(From The Manchester Guardian, November 10, 1917, the day of publication of the Balfour Declaration, one week after it was issued.)

BRITISH STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

Lord Robert Cecil

"...Our wish is that Arabian countries shall be for the Arabs, Armenia for the Armenians, and Judaea for the Jews."

(Speech at London Opera House, December 2, 1917, Great Britain, Palestine and the Jews, Zionist Organization, London, 1918)

Mr. Neville Chamberlain

"If the new Jewish State which is to be established there is to be... associated with some great progressive people, such as those of the American Commonwealth or of the British Empire, then in such a case it seems to me that those fears which I have mentioned would be groundless, and that the existence of this new Jewish State would only add to the dignity and influence of Jews in other countries."

(From a speech at the Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, October 13, 1918. Jewish Chronicle, October 18, 1918)

General Smuts (A member of the War Cabinet)

"From those parts of the world where the Jews are oppressed and unhappy, where they are not welcomed by the rest of the Christian population, from those parts of the world you will yet see an ever-increasing stream of emigration towards Palestine; and in generations to come you will see a great Jewish State rising there once more."

(At a meeting in Johannesburg, November 3, 1919, Zionist Bulletin, December 10, 1919)

Mr. Herbert (now Lord) Samuel

"The policy propounded before the Peace Conference, to which the Zionist leaders unshakably adhere, is the promotion to the fullest degree that the land conditions of the country allow, of Jewish immigration and of Jewish settlement, the concession to Jewish authorities of many of the great public works of which the country stands so greatly in need, the active promotion of Jewish cultural development and the fullest measure of local self-government, in order that with the minimum of delay the country may become a purely self-governing Commonwealth under the auspices of an established Jewish majority."

(From a speech at the London Opera House on November 2, 1919. Zionist Bulletin, November 5, 1919)

Mr. Winston Churchill (Secretary of State for War)

"If, as may well happen, there should be created in our own lifetime by the banks of the Jordan a Jewish State under the protection of the British Crown which might comprise three or four millions of Jews, an event will have occurred in the history of the world which would from every point of view be beneficial, and would be especially in harmony with the truest interests of the British Empire."

(Illustrated Sunday Herald, February 8, 1920)

AMERICAN STATEMENTS

President Wilson

"I am persuaded that the Allied nations, with the fullest concurrence of our Government and our people, are agreed that in Palestine shall be laid the foundations of a Jewish Commonwealth."

(The Times, London, March 4, 1919; David Lloyd George, op. cit. Vol. II, p. 1140; Jacob de Haas, Louis D. Brandeis (New York, 1929) p. 109; The Maccabean, March 1919)

Recommendations of the Intelligence Section for the American Plenipotentiaries at the Peace Conference

"That the Jews be invited to return to Palestine and settle there, being assured by the Conference of all proper assistance in so doing that may be consistent with the protection of the personal (especially the religious) and the property rights of the non-Jewish population, and being further assured that it will be the policy of the League of Nations to recognize Palestine as a Jewish state as soon as it is a Jewish state in fact."

(The Sections on Palestine in the "Outline of Tentative Report and Recommendations Prepared by the Intelligence Section in Accordance with Instructions for the President (Wilson) and the Plenipotentiaries, January 21, 1919.")

Senator Charles L. McNary, Senator of Oregon

"The official pronouncements of our Allies in favor of the Zionist program mark a new epoch in the history of the Jews. These declarations give formal public recognition that Israel as a nation is still alive and will persist. This was necessary for the reason that some few people were skeptical as to the national entity of the Jews. All doubt as to this phase being totally dispelled now, it remains for those of the Jewish people who will settle in their old - but new - home, to make Palestine a veritable Jewish State as is looked for by their brethren all over.

"Palestine is the connecting link between Europe and Asia. The Jews, originally hailing from Asia, but who have become Europeans in their diaspora, extending for two thousand years, may now also serve as a link between the people of these two great continents. It is, thus, a piece of good fortune that the Jews should become the governing people of Palestine. This, added to the fact that the Holy Land is their historic home, the land of their dreams and ambitions, makes the realization of Zionism at this time almost ideal. Europe may expect great results and much benefit from this promised State of Judea, and the Allied Governments will not be the losers in helping Israel in this accomplishment."

(Zionist Organization of America, The American War Congress and Zionism, New York, 1919, p. 60)