



BRITAIN - PALESTINE - ISRAEL

70 YEARS ON



1948: THE ROLE BRITAIN PLAYED
2018: WHAT BRITAIN CAN DO NOW



REPORT ON A CONFERENCE

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MAY 1948 : WHAT HAPPENED. THE ROLE BRITAIN PLAYED



Dr Peter Shambrook, British historian specialising in the Middle East

The 500-year-old British Empire story fills me with a mixture of pride, pain and shame. Regarding the events of 1948, locating truth is extremely challenging, given the irreconcilable national narratives.

After the Second World War, Britain's strength was more apparent than real. An economic crisis, increasing difficulties in India, fragile treaties with Egypt and Iraq, the advent of the Cold War, perceived Russian designs on the Middle East – and a firm commitment to build a welfare state - were all formidable challenges to a Labour Government and a country exhausted by the war.

Palestine was seething with unrest. Thirty years previously, Britain had committed itself to the creation of a Jewish national entity, and the Jewish population had risen to 33%, owning 7% of the land. The indigenous Arab Palestinians were disarmed and effectively leaderless following the suppression of their revolt (1936-39). They had been calling, without success, for some modicum of democratic self-government since 1920. But the Jewish community, relatively well-armed, well-trained, ideologically bound to nationalism, claimed the whole of Palestine as theirs by divine right, by recent settlement, and - according to Chaim Weizmann - by memory.

How does one explain the contradictions of British policy in Palestine? In June 1919 British Foreign Minister Balfour said to US Zionist leader Justice Brandeis, *'Palestine presents a unique situation, which inevitably excludes numerical self-determination. We are definitely building for a Jewish numerical majority in the future.'* This quote reveals Britain's sustained policy of 'double-speak' between 1918 and 1948. Britain had accepted a mandate to prepare all the peoples of Palestine for self-government (a 'sacred trust of civilisation'), but was working to create a country that would be predominantly Jewish.

Throughout 1946, the number of British casualties, military and civilian, rose alarmingly, mainly due to a terror campaign waged by Zionist extremists. In February 1947, the Cabinet decided that as Britain was unable to find a solution acceptable to both parties, it would hand over the future of Palestine to the United Nations.

Following the UN partition resolution (November 1947), Britain decided that its chief priority was to safeguard its evacuation i.e., to keep British casualties to an absolute minimum, and to protect all British facilities, including the port of Haifa.

Since the mid-1930s, the Zionist leadership under David Ben Gurion had been actively planning to take over most of Palestine – and, in their minds, a large-scale eviction ('transfer' in Zionist parlance) of the Palestinian Arab population was essential in order to create a viable Jewish state.

From the middle of March 1948, Plan Dalet, the Zionist military offensive campaign, unfolded with devastating cumulative impact. The British military forces, some 75,000 strong, largely stood aside. By the time the British left eight weeks later, on 14 May, at least 200,000 Palestinians had been evicted from villages and the major towns.

The Palestinian irregulars and a few thousand Arab volunteers were out-gunned before the British departed, and the Arab armies similarly so. By July 1949 a further half million Palestinians had been expelled, mostly into neighbouring countries. The Jewish Agency neutralised the only serious military opponent by making an agreement with King Abdullah that he would take the West Bank and the Zionists would take the rest of Palestine. This is what happened, except that Gaza remained under Egyptian military control.

Having handed the future of Palestine to the UN in February 1947, the British abstained in the partition vote in November 1947, insisted on maintaining de jure administrative control until May 1948, refused to allow the UN committee authorised to implement partition to enter Palestine at the beginning of 1948, and then allowed law and order to break down.

On the 24th February 1949, David Rees-Williams, the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, declared in the House of Commons, *'On 14th May 1948, the withdrawal of the British administration took place without handing over to a responsible authority any of the assets, property or liabilities of the Mandatory government. The manner in which the withdrawal took place is unprecedented in the history of our Empire.'*

The manner in which the British withdrawal took place was not only unprecedented, it was politically and morally shameful.



“ We are
building for
a Jewish
majority
– Balfour

ACKNOWLEDGE THE NAKBA TO PROMOTE PEACE

Professor Menachem Klein, Department of Political Studies,
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Prior to the 1948 war Jews were also Palestinians, and most lived together with Arabs in mixed cities.

In my book *Lives in Common*, I describe the Katamon area of South Jerusalem, where there was a German colony, a Greek colony, 22,000 Arabs and a few hundred Jews. The best friend of Jamil Tobe, the son of the Muhktar of Katamon, was David, a blond blue eyed Jewish young boy from a family that had arrived from Germany in the thirties. Both attended Terra Sancta College, a Christian school, and spoke Arabic together. Jamil writes, 'David was as much a Palestinian as I and I never thought of him or his family as otherwise.'

The Zionist movement and its British supporters came from outside. They brought people and money and established colonies in Palestine. They came with an exclusive claim. The Palestinians then also developed an exclusive claim. This resulted in the total separation of communities.

In 1947 Jamil Tobe was 17 years old, about to graduate from Terra Sancta College. One day he went through Jaffa Gate wearing khaki shorts – the informal uniform of the Jewish pioneers. Arab passers-by suspected him of being a Zionist and were about to lynch him when he was saved by a friend of his father. From then on Jamil wore the kaffiya when he entered an Arab area and a beret when he went into a Jewish one. He writes that 'moving back and forth between sectors became a game of Russian roulette.'

Then came the 1948 war, and Katamon, Jaffa, Haifa and elsewhere were occupied by the Jewish militia. The cost in human life was paid by average citizens, but the tragedy continued beyond the war with the separation between communities that had been integrated, some of them for hundreds of years back.

There was another way, and it was rejected. The British could have invited Feisal to rule Palestine instead of Iraq. Or they could have offered Palestine to the Emirate of Transjordan under Abdullah.

The long arm of British imperialism

The British did not take these options because they cooperated with the leadership of the Zionist movement, which was pro-Western and highly educated. It was the long arm of British imperialism and colonialism. They cooperated in order to settle Palestine exclusively for the Jews.

How do we promote an acknowledgement of the Nakba among Israelis? Denial never works. The Nakba law was the Israeli Government's attempt to cover up the story. But it was counter productive. They tried to cover up the story and it comes up more powerfully than before the law was enacted. The young generation, both Israeli Jews and Palestinians, are more open minded towards different narratives.

The young Palestinian generation is not a defeated generation. The 1948 generation of Palestinians had been defeated. This is not the case with young Palestinians today. They stand up and say 'We are Palestinians, the equal of Israeli citizens.' So society is more open to deal with the story. The story will stay even after a peace agreement. But no peace agreement can happen without bringing it to the forum.

Collective memory is dynamic. If we work on the present needs, our collective memories will change, including the Israeli collective memory of victimhood.

Yes, Israel is a citadel. Let me give one example. There are no connecting flights from Ben Gurion Airport. Flights to Israel are a dead end. This is abnormal. We have to change it.



THE NAKBA IS ONGOING, BUT PALESTINIANS ARE STILL THERE

Dr Ghada Karmi Palestinian medical doctor, writer and Research Fellow, Exeter University



In the 1922 Covenant of the League of Nations, Western colonial powers were given mandates over the recently conquered territories of the Ottoman Empire: This promised that for 'peoples not yet able to stand by themselves there should be applied the principle that the wellbeing and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilization.'

That promise was never fulfilled in the case of the British mandate over Palestine. The heir to the League, the UN, is not absolved from responsibility.

If I look at Israel today, I see a state which practises abhorrent oppression against the Palestinian people. In Gaza, unarmed civilians are being shot dead by the Israeli Army with total impunity, and the Western press reports these deaths without comment.

We are used to hearing about the conflict in terms of politics, statistics, UN resolutions. Missing are often the personal stories of the people who lost out. People like me.

When we left our homes in Jerusalem in 1948, we did so because it was impossibly dangerous to stay. There had been sniping in our street, our schools had closed, life was impossible. So my parents thought it best to evacuate and wait until everything had died down. Nobody believed that an obscenity like not allowing

people to return to their homes could occur. My parents would say, no the British would not allow it, the UN would not allow it. And it was allowed. So the cost to us was tremendous.

It wasn't made easier by seeing Israel's success. Today Israel is strong way beyond its actual size and resources, thanks to Western support and complicity. We watched this while we saw our own disempowerment, disrespect, humiliation.

Was the price worth paying for the state you see now? To displace a whole population, to cause misery to millions of people, and to perpetuate these thefts, assaults and the continued colonisation of the rest of Palestine's land and the Golan heights, plus the occupation of Palestinian territories, plus the belligerence towards Iran and towards any kind of development in the region. Nothing is worth that. People are welcome to define themselves in whatever way they want. You can consider yourselves to be a people or a nation, but you cannot express your desire for self-determination in another people's country.

I feel strongly about this because the Nakba is ongoing. Israel has never stopped destroying all resistance in its path. My plea therefore is for honesty. I fully understand the personal sentiments of someone born in this land, as regards themselves and their children. My question is about balancing the costs and the benefits of creating this state. In my view the costs were far too high. This is not an individual thing.

I witnessed the cataclysm

The story of Jewish suffering in Europe is tragic and appalling. But this does not justify taking it out at the expense of another people. This crime was committed in Europe by Europeans. It was up to them to find a solution, not to do it at the expense of people who have nothing to do with it. That is the objection Palestinians have. It is not that we don't care about Jewish suffering.

I hear well-meaning people talk about Palestinian children, Israeli children all getting on as if to say the two sides are equivalent but for an unfortunate political situation. But there is no equivalence between the situation of Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs. On the one hand you have a settler colonialist movement, on the other you have the indigenous population.

The same goes on the question of narrative. It is not that the Palestinians have their narrative and the Israelis have their narrative. There are historical events, they happened, I am one of the witnesses to that cataclysmic event in 1948.

In conclusion, may I invite you to think with me how remarkable it is that after 70 years of the degradations that we've been describing, that the Palestinians are still there. They are there, they are everywhere, and everybody knows about them. They are alive and active and hopefully on the way to making a decent future for themselves and for the people that have come to live in my homeland, Jewish Israelis.



PALESTINIAN SOVEREIGNTY MINUS IS UNACCEPTABLE. BRITAIN SHOULD RECOGNISE THE STATE OF PALESTINE

Sir Vincent Fean, British Consul-General, Jerusalem 2010-14

It is now 70 years since Britain abdicated responsibility for Palestine. The conflict that we handed over to the United Nations is still with us. Its negative effect is very real, because of our partial responsibility for it and because it affects our values and our interests. I believe this issue is one contributory factor in why misguided young people from Cardiff head for Syria.

We had power in 1947-8. Today we have influence. I contend that we should act for the good of Israelis and Palestinians and for our own good.

I still believe that two states based on 1967 lines is more likely to deliver equal rights than one state. I believe that Israel is here to stay beyond my lifetime. When I went to Jerusalem I thought life could get better for the Palestinian people. When I left, it was worse. Four years on it is worse again.

I want to see a sovereign Palestinian state in my lifetime and I believe that the UK can help bring it about. There is urgency; the two states solution, which has been the international consensus for 25 years or more, is disappearing fast. To advance that solution, a policy is needed. Britain has only got a position – waiting for Trump. Which is not actually a policy.

Heighten British involvement

Under international law all Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank are illegal in the absence of a negotiated Israeli/Palestinian agreement. So is indiscriminate rocket fire. So is disproportionate use of force. The good thing about the law is that it tends not to change unless by consensus.

I argue for a twin-track approach whereby Israelis and Palestinians have equal rights in two sovereign states. We need to sustain this prospect by recognising Palestine. That also means working, in line with the law, to change the cost-benefit calculation of those who oppose this outcome. Labour, the SNP, the Lib Dems, Plaid Cymru and the Greens are all in favour of the immediate recognition of Palestine.

The second track – applying the law – needs advocacy, persuasion, lobbying. We are not as strong as we were but we are strong enough. We need to work with others, in the UK and internationally, to get to a real policy change. Sweden did it in 2014. Others are considering recognition – Ireland, Belgium, Portugal, maybe Spain.

The idea of recognition is not new; 130 countries have done it. If the House of Commons were to vote on this there would be a majority in favour because enough Tories would support it. Palestinian rights is the number one issue in the post bag of the Foreign Office – between 25% and 30% of the mail it receives is about this. Parliamentarians care about that because people may vote the way they think on this issue. So recognition is a possibility. But it needs to be accompanied with genuine implementation of international law.

The Palestinians cannot and should not accept 'sovereignty minus', which is Prime Minister Netanyahu's offer. Sovereignty minus means keeping the Israeli Defence Force in the Jordan valley, on the Palestinian hilltops and around the settlements, keeping Jerusalem and denying Palestinians the right of return. It means continued Israeli occupation of Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.



It is impossible to disentangle the Palestinian economy from the Israeli economy. They are mutually supportive, one hugely bigger than the other. In the early years of a Palestinian state it would need financial support. I hope that this would fund genuine investment to make the West Bank and Gaza more self-sustaining than they now are.

There has not been a debate in Parliament on Gaza for two or three years. It is important. The deteriorating humanitarian situation, and the tragic death of many Palestinians in Gaza, call out for a British response. Israel is suffering environmentally from the situation in Gaza in terms of raw sewage, and in other ways.

Our Government may be persuaded to increase the funding for the UN Relief Works Agency, which President Trump, for perverse reasons, is reducing. UNRWA is the only thing that works in Gaza other than Hamas' social network. If the interest of the international community is in having well educated, healthy people in Gaza, UNRWA is essential.

I believe Britain should heighten its involvement, both through political and civil society initiatives, with the aim of achieving peaceful coexistence between two states within secure boundaries. We should start by recognising the second state in the two-state solution – Palestine.

IF BRITAIN RECOGNISES PALESTINE, THERE WILL BE A PALESTINIAN STATE

Alon Liel, former Director-General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry

For Israel the event of 1948 is independence and nothing else. But six million Palestinians between the Jordan and the Mediterranean, and millions of Palestinians abroad, see it as their Nakba. Israel does not accept this narrative. Israeli legislation even limits what you can tell kids in school about the Nakba. So how can we solve the conflict?

We Israelis are in a castle, surrounded by walls and fences with the iron dome above us. I have seven grandchildren, the oldest is seven and he explains to me why he hates Arabs. I hesitate on what to do. If he tells his teacher that my grandpa says you are wrong, he is an outcast. I want normal kids and you cannot have normal kids in a castle. They are being brainwashed at school.

Both sides are teaching each other to hate. If this was the intention, we were all wrong. It is not a pleasure to live in such a castle, and I don't know if it can go on. We have to change the situation and build a home for both people. As long as some live in a castle and some have nothing, the Nakba will haunt us – Jews, Israelis, all of us. It cannot go on.

Was it worth establishing the state of Israel? For every Israeli, every Jew, that question is shiveringly emotional, especially for someone like me who was born in Israel, fought in several wars, lost a fifth of my close friends in the wars. And I don't have another country.

Israelis and Palestinians cry together

Three weeks ago an organisation of bereaved families, Jewish Israelis and Palestinians, arranged a ceremony for people from both sides who lost relatives in the conflict. Eight thousand people came to cry together. The Minister of Defence tried to prevent the Palestinians from entering the ceremony, but the Supreme Court allowed it.

I feel terrible about what is happening in Gaza. A power like Israel that destroyed the nuclear abilities of Iraq and Syria should be able to handle a demonstration differently. They have the necessary equipment. Yet they shoot live fire. I am on the advisory council of B'tSalem, which called on the soldiers to disobey the order to shoot live fire. But we didn't see them disobeying.

The world is a very different place to 1986, when the EU sanctioned South Africa, and this toppled apartheid. Today the EU does nothing. I don't think Europe is weaker, but it is reluctant to exert pressure.

Yet the conflict cannot be left to Israelis and Palestinians to resolve.

Sometimes, in order to move forward in an unbalanced conflict you put aside the balance of power and try to create a parity of esteem. This worked in Ireland. But in our situation there is no parity of esteem, no parity of anything. Israel is stable, strong, determined, fighting. Palestinians are unorganised, split, ineffective. So we see the international response. 2017/18 were the best years Israel has had in the international arena since the occupation started.



It doesn't mean that anyone likes us. The public doesn't like an arrogant, aggressive country. Inside the Jewish world there is a change, especially among American Jews. Maybe a quarter of the Jews on the globe cannot stand what Israel is doing. They talk, and they criticize.

Unbelievable earthquake

What will happen if Britain recognises Palestine? If the British Government recognises Palestine as a state, and sticks to it, resisting chickening out a week after the backlash, there will be a Palestinian state. This will be an unbelievable earthquake. It will come as a shock to Israel and a huge encouragement to the Palestinians. It will be followed by other countries and it can turn things around.

I don't think it will happen because Britain knows the implications on the ground and on its relations with Israel and with the Jewish community. Governments are reluctant to clash with Israel, not because Israel is such a big power but because Israel is so determined. I want a Palestinian state and I pray for Britain to recognise Palestine but I have to be realistic.

You can help most by supporting the Israeli civil society organisations like Breaking the Silence and B'tSelam, which are fighting the occupation. Circumstances may change, and another strategy may become effective. But for the present, the best tactic is to support the Israeli and Jewish activists who oppose the occupation.

WE NEED TWO NATIONAL PROJECTS FOR TWO PEOPLES

Leila Sansour, Chief Executive, Open Bethlehem

I started making my film , 'Open Bethlehem', just after Israel announced the route of the separation wall inside the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Bethlehem. It was clear it was going to destroy Bethlehem as a city and as a community.

I am a British Palestinian with dual citizenship, so I applied for funding to the British Film Institute. They asked if the subject matter was related to Britain. I smiled at them across the table and said, 'What do you think?' We both understood what I meant but the acknowledgment was not forthcoming. If only they knew how this made me feel about Britain at that moment.

The subject was deemed not British and I didn't get the grant. I made the film anyway, to document the building of the wall and its effect on the lives of people in Bethlehem. It has taken all our agricultural land and reduced the city to almost 13% of original territory. It has endangered a city that is home to vibrant Christian and Muslim communities living harmoniously.

Ten years after I made that film my fear has become real. Bethlehem today is a ghetto: educated people leave, dynamic people leave and take money and investment with them. The city is being stifled out of existence. There remains a disheartened generation, distrusting all leaders, with no desire to participate in the political process.

Small group of passionate people

The Middle East is such a hotspot that losing this example surely should worry everybody including Israel. If you destroy a model of our diversity, which points towards a better future for everyone, you leave the situation to the extremists and those who don't want to negotiate or change anything.

In spite of this, I remain full of hope. Hope emerges from the simple fact that we Palestinians are still there, despite our lack of powerful sponsors or friends.

The powers would help us greatly were they to demand of Israel a re-engineering of realities to enable Palestinians and Israelis to be sovereign in two nations. If Britain were to recognise Palestine as a state, this would put a line in the sand for many





Palestinians, reminding us that we can achieve change, that we can work with the international community, as opposed to the belief that it is up to us and Israelis now, so violence is the only currency we can deal in.

A nation is a vehicle for people to come together, to elect representatives and control our environment. Nations are fragile because our differences can create strife. A state can only be successful if its citizens are willing to accept the umbrella of that state, the identity over them.

That is why I reject the one-state solution. We are already in 'one state'. To formalise this would mean the continuation of the settlement project, the Israeli expansion. We need two national projects, two homes for two peoples. 'One state' would mean both peoples married to each other in open-ended conflict.

So we need to persuade the British political establishment to recognise the state of Palestine.

History is often created by small numbers of very active people. The Balfour Declaration is a reminder of that; it came about through the action of a few passionate people. I think the same is true of the struggle for recognition of Palestine. It needs a small group of passionate people to keep going at it, to convince the British Government to act.

I am shocked by how strangely coy Britain is in the world and how reluctant it is to seize the power available to it. Look at Russia. Its GDP is 1/15th of that of the United States, you look at Russia's prominent role in the Middle East. I think Britain could take leadership in the international political arena and will thereby gain stature.

The UK must act to counter Trump's destructive Jerusalem decision

Alon Liel

Britain's recognition of the Palestinian state would bolster hopes of peace in the Middle East and preserve Israeli democracy



Not many of us in Israel imagined, in recent years, that the fate of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would be determined by outsiders. We always believed that our future should be discussed and negotiated between Israelis and Palestinians. Furthermore, the common view was that only the two sides should decide their fate and that we would not let anyone else impose a solution.

What is happening this week – the US moving its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in recognition of Israel's claim to Jerusalem as its capital – proves that we were wrong (or maybe bluffing). With this dramatic move, which runs counter to all previous international resolutions on Jerusalem, Donald Trump is determining the fate of the conflict on his own.

It turns out that when President Trump one-sidedly intervenes on behalf of the Israeli government, the previously declared Israeli approach is quietly sidelined; most Israelis (me excluded) welcome this decisive US intervention. Palestinians, on the other hand, are devastated and feel cheated. They have no ability to block the move but have already declared that this US administration has disqualified itself from serving as an honest broker.

The US administration is doing what the sides always objected to – it is one-sidedly determining the outcome of the conflict, destroying the hopes of creating two separate states and in the process reshaping the fate of the Middle East as a whole.

Since outside intervention in shaping our fate is already happening, why only the US? Why only Donald Trump? Where is the additional balancing move, Chinese, Russian, British or French? If the US can intervene on one side, why not each of the other four permanent UN Security Council members? Each following its principles and its best judgment. Or why not all four together?

Britain should be the first in line. It is true that the British mandate in Palestine ended 70 years ago this week, but Britain still knows better than any other country what is at stake: the peaceful coexistence of Jews, Muslims and Christians in the Holy Land and the upholding of international law. Britain has long espoused both of these principles.

Whatever may have been the British intention in 1917 with the Balfour declaration, or in 1948 when Britain left Palestine, is it the wish now that the “national home” for the Jewish people will become a Middle Eastern fortress while the indigenous Palestinians turn into its unwilling subjects? This outcome should not be accepted.

The British government in which Balfour was foreign secretary clearly favoured a Jewish “national home” but also added: “Nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights” of non-Jews in Palestine. Do the British people now feel comfortable with a one-state outcome as their record and legacy in Palestine?

People of goodwill on both sides of this conflict need Britain to speak up. Trump can act as president on behalf of the US, but not on behalf of the whole world. The UK parliament has already called upon its government to recognise the state of Palestine alongside the state of Israel – the aim being two states whose peoples enjoy equal rights. It happened in the Commons in October 2014 when MPs voted by an overwhelming majority to recognise Palestine (274 for; 14 against). Now is the time for implementation of that wish. This is the policy move that could counterbalance Trump’s one-sided and dangerous move of his embassy. Such a British act of recognition would reaffirm Palestinian basic rights, restore hope, and it would help create the much-needed parity of esteem without which no peace agreement can be just or sustainable.

I would even go so far as to say that if Britain (ideally co-ordinating its policy with France) recognised Palestine, it could save the equitable two-state solution and the possibility of a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. As an Israeli patriot who loves his country, I also see such a British move as vital to the preservation of Israeli democracy. Only the two-state solution that Trump has just fractured badly can guarantee a democratic Israel. A single bi-national state with a similar number of Jews and Arabs will not remain democratic. A British recognition would be historic and could bring about lasting benefits for both Israelis and Palestinians.

I know that such a move demands political courage, but we are speaking about principles that Britain claims to uphold and was always ready to fight for: freedom, justice and democracy.

Dr Alon Liel is the former director general of the Foreign Ministry of Israel and was also Israel's ambassador to South Africa. He is one of the instigators of an Israeli campaign to advance recognition of a Palestinian state by European parliaments and governments

This article is reprinted here, courtesy of The Guardian. The original can be found by going to The Guardian website and searching for ‘Alon Liel’.

BALFOUR CENTENARY DECLARATION

ISRAEL/PALESTINE EQUAL RIGHTS

Members of Parliament from the Conservative, Labour, Lib Dem and SNP parties launched this Declaration on the centenary of the 1917 Balfour Declaration.

The centenary of the Balfour Declaration is the time to reconcile peace with justice for both Israelis and Palestinians, consistent with the principle Britain claims as her own: equal rights for all under the law.

Through the Declaration of 2 November 1917 the British Government decided to facilitate 'the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people', on the explicit understanding that 'nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine'.

In 1917, and until Britain gave up her Mandate for Palestine in 1948, the Palestinian people were in the majority, as they had been for centuries. The Mandate conferred on Britain a 'sacred trust of civilisation' to help the people of Palestine towards self-determination and nationhood. In 1948 the Government handed the problem to the United Nations, and withdrew – but the legacy of that period is still with us. There was joy and sanctuary in Israel for the Jewish people surviving the horrific Holocaust – but pain and despair for the Palestinians: many expelled in 1948, and more occupied in 1967.

Inequality does not bring security; equal rights for both peoples

Israel, created in 1948 as the permanent national home of the Jewish people, is recognised as a state by Britain, the EU, the US and – crucially – the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Israel's prosperity and military strength have grown. But Israel's 50-year military occupation of Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem prevents the Palestinian people from exercising their own equal and inalienable right to self-determination, a right endorsed by the UN, the EU and our Government.

This occupation dehumanises both the occupier and the occupied. One people is repressing their neighbouring people by closing Gaza militarily and transferring 600,000 Israeli settlers illegally into occupied Palestinian territory. Change is urgently needed, delivering equal rights for both peoples.

We condemn violence from any quarter. But conducting and resisting occupation inevitably mean chronic and sustained violence, stemming from the repression of a people. Inequality does not bring lasting security and prosperity.

Recognise the State of Palestine alongside the State of Israel

In the best interests of both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, and in our own national interest, we urge our Government to

- recognise immediately the State of Palestine alongside the State of Israel on the basis of the pre-June 1967 borders, as two thirds of UN members have done;
- uphold rigorously the Geneva Conventions which Britain co-wrote and ratified after World War II;
- give practical effect to the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet Roadmap which Britain has endorsed;
- require genuine freedom of worship without hindrance for all believers – Jewish, Muslim and Christian – at their holy sites in Jerusalem;
- encourage West Bank/Gaza reunification on the basis of PLO agreements;
- work with like-minded partners, including France, Germany, Sweden, Belgium and Ireland, to respect and safeguard the rights of both Palestinians and Israelis, with due and proportionate consequences for breaches of those rights, alongside incentives for those seeking to uphold them.

End the occupation; peace with justice for the good of all

Ending the 1967 occupation through negotiation will realise the acknowledged right of the Palestinian people to self-determination; a right gained by Israel 70 years ago. The political and economic cost/benefit calculations of those who oppose this outcome must be challenged.

Establishing the Palestinian state, with sustainable international security guarantees both for it and for Israel, will help to stabilise the Middle East region and enhance our own security. The opposite is also true. This inequality supplies oxygen to the propagandists of Islamic State, and contributes to radicalisation both abroad and at home.

We commit ourselves to work for a secure future of equal rights and peaceful coexistence between the citizens of Israel and Palestine in two states along pre-June 1967 lines. We support the majorities on both sides of that border who see this outcome as just.

Britain should uphold her core values by taking the lead to address this bitter, harmful conflict. The Government of the day took a decision in 1917. We now need to acknowledge what is right, and exert political influence to achieve it – for our own good, and the good of the two peoples who will share the Holy Land forever.

SIGNATORIES OF THE BALFOUR CENTENARY DECLARATION

Rt Hon Jack Straw - Crispin Blunt MP - Tracy Brabin MP - Rt Hon Ben Bradshaw MP - Rt Hon Tom Brake MP - Alan Brown MP - Richard Burden MP - Rt Hon Sir Vince Cable MP - Ruth Cadbury MP - Rt Hon Alistair Carmichael MP - Sarah Champion MP - Joanna Cherry QC, MP - Rt Hon Sir Ed Davey MP - Julie Elliott MP - Chris Elmore MP - Ruth George MP - Rt Hon Dominic Grieve MP - Wera Hobhouse MP - Christine Jardine MP - Rt Hon David Jones MP - Graham Jones MP - Ben Lake MP - Pauline Latham MP - Chris Law MP - Sir Edward Leigh MP - Stephen Lloyd MP - Tony Lloyd MP - Caroline Lucas MP - Seema Malhotra MP - Layla Moran MP - Grahame Morris MP - Ian Murray MP - Lisa Nandy MP - Chi Onwurah MP - Rt Hon Sir Mike Penning MP - Tommy Sheppard MP - Paula Sherriff MP - Andy Slaughter MP - Rt Hon Sir Nicholas Soames MP - Bob Stewart MP - Rt Hon Sir Desmond Swayne MP - Jo Swinson MP - Rt Hon Sir Hugo Swire MP - David Warburton MP - Dr Philippa Whitford MP

Rt Rev Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark - Rt Rev Declan Lang, Bishop of Clifton - Rt Rev William Nolan, Bishop of Galloway - Lord Alderdice - Baroness Blackstone - Rt Hon Lord Bruce of Bennachie - Rt Hon Lord Cope of Berkeley - Lord Greaves of Pendle - Lord Green of Deddington - Lord Griffiths of Burry Port - Rt Hon Lord Grocott of Telford - Rt Hon Lord Hain - Lord Hannay of Chiswick - Rt Hon Baroness Hilton of Eggardon - Lord Hollick - Baroness Hollins - Lord Hussain - Rt Hon Baroness Hussein-Ece - Lord Hylton - Baroness Jay of Paddington - Rt Hon Baroness Jolly - Lord Judd - Baroness Kennedy of The Shaws - Rt Hon Lord Lee of Trafford - Rt Hon Marquess of Lothian - Baroness Meacher - Duke of Montrose - Baroness Morris of Bolton - Rt Hon Baroness Northover - Lord Ouseley of Peckham Rye - Lord Purvis of Tweed - General Lord Richards of Herstmonceux, former Chief of Defence Staff - Baroness Sheehan - Rt Hon Lord Steel of Aikwood - Rt Hon Lord Warner - Rt Hon Baroness Warsi - Lord Wood of Anfield - Lord Wright of Richmond

Claudia Beamish, Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) - Ivan McKee MSP - Pauline McNeill MSP - Sandra White MSP - Llyr Gruffydd, Member of the Welsh Assembly (AM) - Bethan Jenkins AM - Simon Thomas AM

Prof. James Allan, Emeritus Professor of Eastern Art, University of Oxford - Merrick Baker-Bates, Consul-General, Los Angeles (ret'd) - Sir Roger Bannister FRCP, former Master, Pembroke College, Oxford - John Beavis FRCS, Trauma and orthopaedic surgeon (ret'd) - Sir Tony Brenton, Ambassador to Russia (ret'd) - John Black FRCS, former President, Royal College of Surgeons - Robert Brinkley, Ambassador to Ukraine and High Commissioner to Pakistan (ret'd) - Sir Henry Brooke, Emeritus President, the Slynn Foundation - Anthony Cary - Ambassador to Sweden and High Commissioner to Canada (ret'd) - Sir Iain Chalmers M.D. DSc, Coordinator, James Lind Foundation - Alan Charlton, Ambassador to Brazil (ret'd) - Kenneth Citron MD, FRCP, Consultant physician (ret'd) - Sir Edward Clay, High Commissioner to Kenya, Cyprus and Uganda (ret'd) - Rev. Iain Cunningham, Convenor, World Mission Council, Church of Scotland - Lady Ellen Dahrendorf - Sir Richard Dalton, Ambassador to Iran and Consul-General, Jerusalem (ret'd) - Rt Rev Michael Doe, Assistant Bishop of Southwark - Lady English, former Principal, St Hilda's College, Oxford - Sir Terence English, Surgeon and former Master, St Catherine's College, Cambridge - Sir Vincent Fean, Consul-General, Jerusalem and Ambassador to Libya (ret'd) - Alistair Fitt, Vice-Chancellor, Oxford Brookes University - Rev. Richard Frazer, Convenor, Church and Society Council, Church of Scotland - Pat Gaffney, General Secretary, Pax Christi - Prof. Fawaz A Gerges, International Relations, LSE - Sir Jeremy Greenstock, Ambassador to the United Nations (ret'd) - Henry Hogger, Ambassador to Syria (ret'd) - Michael Hone, Ambassador to Iceland (ret'd) - June Jacobs, former President, International Council of Jewish Women - Dr Imad Karam, Executive Director, Initiatives of Change International - Robin Kealy, Ambassador to Tunisia and Consul-General, Jerusalem (ret'd) - Stuart Laing, Master, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge - Robin Lamb, Ambassador to Bahrain and Consul-General, Basra (ret'd) - Rt Hon Sir David Latham, former Lord Justice of Appeal - Anthony Layden, Ambassador to Morocco, Mauritania and Libya (ret'd) - Norman Ling, Ambassador to Ethiopia and the African Union (ret'd) - Richard Lyne, High Commissioner to the Solomon Islands (ret'd) - Richard Makepeace, Consul-General, Jerusalem and Ambassador to UAE and to Sudan (ret'd) - Sir Christopher Mallaby, Ambassador to France and Germany (ret'd) - Peter Millett - Ambassador to Jordan and Libya (ret'd) - Sir Alan Munro, former Deputy Under-Secretary of State for Middle East, FCO - Patrick Nixon, Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates and HC to Zambia (ret'd) - Peter Osborne, author and journalist - Sir William Patey, Ambassador to Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia (ret'd) - Lesley Riddoch, journalist, writer and broadcaster - Rev Chris Rose, Director, Amos Trust - Frank Savage, Governor of Montserrat, then of the British Virgin Islands (ret'd) - Rt Hon Sir Stephen Sedley, Visiting Professor, Faculty of Law, Oxford - Prof. Raymond Tallis FRCP, Physician and writer - Sir Roger Tomkys, High Commissioner, Nairobi and Ambassador to Syria and Bahrain (ret'd) - Sir Harold Walker, Ambassador to Iraq (ret'd) - Sir Peter Westmacott, Ambassador to the USA (ret'd)

The **Balfour Project** was created by British citizens to inform the people of this country about Britain's record in Palestine before and during its Mandate.

It has held seminars in British universities, in the British and Scottish Parliaments and elsewhere.

Its website, www.balfourproject.org, carries a wide range of authoritative information on the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, focusing especially on Britain's role.

The Project invites the Government and people of the United Kingdom

- to acknowledge that whilst a homeland for the Jewish people has been achieved, the promise to protect the rights of the Palestinian people has not yet been fulfilled.
- to take action to promote justice, security and peace for both peoples.

For our part, we in the Balfour Project commit ourselves to

- continue informing the people of Britain about our historical responsibilities in the Middle East
- support Palestinians and Israelis in building a peaceful future based on equal rights, justice and security for all
- work for the recognition by the British Government of Palestine as a state.

If you wish to join us in the work of the Project, please contact us at info@balfourproject.org



1,200 people attended the Balfour Project commemoration of the 2017 centenary of the Balfour Declaration at Central Hall Westminster



Sandra White MSP (left) at a Balfour Project display, Scottish Parliament



Rt Hon Tom Brake MP introduces the Balfour Project film 'Britain in Palestine 1917-1948', UK Parliament

The creation of Israel in 1948 brought joy to Jews but catastrophe to the Arabs of Palestine.

On 1st May 2018, the Balfour Project and King's College London hosted a one-day seminar on these topics in the Auditorium at Bush House in the Strand, London. Over two hundred people attended, and heard British, Israeli and Palestinian speakers reflect on the roots and consequences of these events, with a focus on Britain's responsibility, and explore possible ways ahead.

The first session was chaired by Dr Adam Sutcliffe, Reader in European History at King's College London, who specialises in Jewish history. The second session was chaired by Rosemary Hollis, Professor of Middle East Policy Studies at City University London.



Dr Adam Sutcliffe



Professor Rosemary Hollis

**Balfour
Project**

*Contributing to
justice, peace and
reconciliation
in the Middle East*

Patrons: Rt Hon Tom Brake MP, Richard Burden MP, Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark, Rt Revd Graham James, Bishop of Norwich, Rt Revd Declan Lang, Bishop of Clifton, The Very Revd Dr Andrew McLellan CBE, Baroness Morris of Bolton, Dr Philippa Whitford MP