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1917 – The Balfour Declaration: The Idea of a Homeland for the Jewish People

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1. Genesis 22:15–18

15. The angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven,

16. and said, "By Myself I swear, the Lord declares: Because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your favored one,

17. I will bestow My blessing upon you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sands on the seashore; and your descendants shall seize the gates of their foes.

18. All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants, because you have obeyed My command."

טו. ויקרא מלאך יהוה אל אברהם שנית מן השמים.

טז. ויאמר בי נשבעתי נאם יהוה כי יען אשר עשית את הדבר הזה ולא חשכת את בנך את יחידך.

יז. כי ברך אברכך והרבה ארבה את זרעך ככוכבי השמים וכחול אשר על שפת הים וירש זרעך את שער אֹיְבֵיו.

יח. והתברכו בזרעך כל גוֹי הארץ עקב אשר שמעת בקלי.

2. Exodus 19:1–6

1. On the third new moon after the Israelites had gone forth from the land of Egypt, on that very day, they entered the wilderness of Sinai.

2. Having journeyed from Rephidim, they entered the wilderness of Sinai and encamped in the wilderness. Israel encamped there in front of the mountain.

3. and Moses went up to God. The Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus shall you say to the house of Jacob and declare to the children of Israel:

4. 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Me.

5. Now then, if you will obey Me faithfully and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples. Indeed, all the earth is Mine,

6. but you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. "These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel."

א. בחדש השלישי לצאת בני ישראל מארץ מצרים ביום הזה באו מדבר סיני.

ב. ויסעו מרפידים ויבאו מדבר סיני ויחנו במדבר ויחן שם ישראל נגד ההר.

ג. ומשה עלה אל האלהים ויקרא אליו יהוה מן ההר יאמר כה תאמר לבית יעקב ותגיד לבני ישראל.

ד. אתם ראיתם אשר עשיתי למצרים ואשא אתכם על כנפי נשרים ואבא אתכם אלי.

ה. ועתה אם שמוע תשמעו בקלי ושמרתם את בריתי והייתם לי סגולה מכל העמים כי לי כל הארץ.

ו. ואתם תהיו לי ממלכת כהנים וגוי קדוש אלה הדברים אשר תדבר אל בני ישראל.

3. The Passover Haggadah, The Wise and Wicked Sons

The wise one, what does he say? "What are the testimonies, the statutes and the laws which the Lord, our God, has commanded you?" You, in turn, shall instruct him in the laws of Passover, [up to] "one is not to eat any dessert after the Passover-lamb."

The wicked one, what does he say? "What is this service to you?!" He says 'to you,' but not to him! By thus excluding himself from the community he is a heretic in the essence. You, therefore, blunt his teeth and say to him: "It is because of this that the Lord did for me when I left Egypt;" 'for me' – but not for him! If he had been there, he would not have been redeemed!"

חכם מה הוא אומר? מה העדות והחקים והמשפטים אשר צוה ה' אלהינו אתכם. ואף אתה אמור לו בהלכות הפסח: אין מפטירין אחר הפסח אפיקומן.

רשע מה הוא אומר? מה העבודה הזאת לכם. לכם - ולא לו. ולפי שהוציא את עצמו מן הכלל כפר בעקרה. ואף אתה הקהה את שניו ואמור לו: "בעבור זה עשה ה' לי בציאתי ממצרים". לי ולא-לו. אלו היה שם, לא היה נגאל.

4. Maimonides Laws of Repentance, Chapter 3:11

A person who separates himself from the community [may be placed in this category] even though he has not transgressed any sins. A person who separates himself from the congregation of Israel and does not fulfill mitzvot together with them, does not take part in their hardships, or join in their [communal] fasts, but rather goes on his own individual path as if he is from another nation and not [Israel], does not have a portion in the world to come.

הפורש מדרכי צבור ואף על פי שלא עבר עבירות אלא נבדל מעדת ישראל ואינו עושה מצות בכללן ולא נכנס בערתן ולא מתענה בתעניתן אלא הולך בדרכו כאחד מגויי הארץ וכאילו אינו מהן אין לו חלק לעולם הבא.

5. The First Zionist Congress, The Basel Program (1897)

The aim of Zionism is to create for the Jewish people a publicly and legally assured home in Palestine.

The Congress contemplates the following means to the attainment of this end:

1. The promotion, on suitable lines, of the colonization of Palestine by Jewish agricultural and industrial workers.
2. The organization and binding together of the whole Jewry by means of appropriate institutions, local and international in accordance with the laws of each country.
3. The strengthening and fostering of Jewish national sentiment and consciousness.
4. Preparatory steps towards obtaining government consent, where necessary, to the attainment of the aim of Zionism.

6. The Balfour Declaration (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 favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours 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 sincerely, Arthur James Balfour

7. British Cabinet Member Edwin Montagu, Response to the Balfour Declaration, excerpt (1917)

Zionism has always seemed to me to be a mischievous political creed, untenable by any patriotic citizen of the United Kingdom. If a Jewish Englishman sets his eyes on the Mount of Olives and longs for the day when he will shake British soil from his shoes and go back to agricultural pursuits in Palestine, he has always seemed to me to have acknowledged aims inconsistent with British citizenship and to have admitted that he is unfit for a share in public life in Great Britain, or to be treated as an Englishman.

8. Reform Movement, Pittsburgh Platform, excerpt (1885)

3. We recognize in the Mosaic legislation a system of training the Jewish people for its mission during its national life in Palestine, and today we accept as binding only its moral laws, and maintain only such ceremonies as elevate and sanctify our lives, but reject all such as are not adapted to the views and habits of modern civilization.

4. We hold that all such Mosaic and rabbinical laws as regulate diet, priestly purity, and dress originated in ages and under the influence of ideas entirely foreign to our present mental and spiritual state. They fail to impress the modern Jew with a spirit of priestly holiness; their observance in our days is apt rather to obstruct than to further modern spiritual elevation.

5. We recognize, in the modern era of universal culture of heart and intellect, the approaching of the realization of Israel's great Messianic hope for the establishment of the kingdom of truth, justice, and peace among all men. We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine, nor a sacrificial worship under the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state.

9. Reform Movement, Columbus Platform, excerpt (1937)

In view of the changes that have taken place in the modern world and the consequent need of stating anew the teachings of Reform Judaism, the Central Conference of American Rabbis makes the following declaration of principles. It presents them not as a fixed creed but as a guide for the progressive elements of Jewry.

A. JUDAISM AND ITS FOUNDATIONS

5. *Israel.* Judaism is the soul of which Israel is the body. Living in all parts of the world, Israel has been held together by the ties of a common history, and above all, by the heritage of faith. Though we recognize in the group loyalty of Jews who have become estranged from our religious tradition, a bond which still unites them with us, we maintain that it is by its religion and for its religion that the Jewish people has lived. The nonJew who accepts our faith is welcomed as a full member of the Jewish community. In all lands where our people live, they assume and seek to share loyally the full duties and responsibilities of citizenship and to create seats of Jewish knowledge and religion. In the rehabilitation of Palestine, the land hallowed by memories and hopes, we behold the promise of renewed life for many of our brethren. We affirm the obligation of all Jewry to aid in its upbuilding as a Jewish homeland by endeavoring to make it not only a haven of refuge for the oppressed but also a center of Jewish culture and spiritual life. Throughout the ages it has been Israel's mission to witness to the Divine in the face of every form of paganism and materialism. We regard it as our historic task to cooperate with all men in the establishment of the kingdom of God, of universal brotherhood, justice, truth and peace on earth. This is our Messianic goal.

Background Reading

Napoleon's Instruction to the Assembly of Jewish Notables, excerpt (1806)

His Majesty, the Emperor and King, having named us Commissioners to transact whatever relates to you, has this day sent us to this assembly to acquaint you with his intentions. Called together from the extremities of this vast empire, no one among those of your persuasion has excited complaints, which have found their way to the foot of the throne: these complaints were founded on the truth and nevertheless, His Majesty has been satisfied with stopping the progress of evil, and he has wished to hear you on the means of providing a remedy. You will, no doubt, prove worthy of so tender, so paternal a conduct, and you will feel all the importance of trust, thus reposed in you. Far from considering the government under which you live as a power against which you should be on your guard, you will assist it and with your experience and cooperate with it in all the good it intends; thus you will prove that following the example of all Frenchman, you do not seclude yourselves from the rest of mankind.

The laws which have been imposed on individuals of your religion have been different in several parts of the world: often they have been dictated by the interest of the day. But as an assembly like the present has no precedent in the annals of Christianity, so you will be judged, for the first time, with justice, and you will see your fate irrevocably fixed by you a Christian Prince. The wish of His Majesty is, that you should be Frenchmen; it remains with you to accept the proffered title, without forgetting that, to prove unworthy of it, would be renouncing it altogether.

You will hear the questions submitted to you; your duty is to answer the whole truth on every one of them. Attend, and never lose sight of that which we are going to tell you that, when a monarch equally and firm and just, who knows everything, and who punishes or recompenses every action, puts questions to his subjects, these would be equally guilty and blind to their truth interests, if they were to disguise the truth in the least.

The intention of His Majesty is, Gentlemen, that you should enjoy the greatest freedom in your deliberations. Your answers will be transmitted to us by your President, when they have been put in regular form.

As to us, our most ardent wish is to be able to report to the Emperor, that among individuals of the Jewish persuasion, he can reckon as many faithful subjects, determined to conform in everything to the laws and to the morality, which ought to regulate the conduct of all Frenchmen.

[One of the secretaries (proceeded to read the following) questions proposed to the Assembly of the Jews by the Commissioners named by His Majesty the Emperor and King.] ...

Is it lawful for Jews to marry more than one wife?

Is divorce allowed by the Jewish religion?

Is divorce valid, when not pronounced by courts of justice, and by virtue of laws in contradiction with the French code?

Can a Jewess marry a Christian, or a Jew a Christian woman?

Or has the law ordered that the Jews should only intermarry among themselves?

In the eyes of the Jews, are Frenchmen considered as brethren or as strangers?

In either case, what conduct does their law prescribe toward Frenchmen not of their religion?

Do the Jews born in France, and treated by the law as French citizens, consider France as their country? Are they bound to defend it? Are they bound to obey the laws, and to follow the directions of the civil code?

What kind of police jurisdiction have the Rabbis among the Jews? What judicial power do they exercise among them?

Are the forms of the elections of the Rabbis and their police jurisdiction regulated by the law, or are they only sanctioned by custom?

Are there professions from which the Jews are excluded by their law?

Does the law forbid the Jews from taking usury from their brethren?

Does it forbid or does it allow usury toward strangers?

2. The Assembly of Jewish Notables Answer to Napoleon, excerpt (1806)

Resolved, by the French deputies professing the religion of Moses, that the following Declaration shall precede the answers returned to the questions proposed by the Commissioners of His Imperial and Royal Majesty.

The assembly, impressed with a deep sense of gratitude, love, respect, and admiration for the sacred person of His Imperial and Royal Majesty, declares, in the name of all *Frenchmen professing the religion of Moses*, that they are fully determined to prove worthy of the favors His Majesty intends for them, by scrupulously conforming to his paternal relations; that their religion makes it their duty to consider the law of the prince as the supreme law in civil and political matters; that consequently, should their religious code, or its various interpretations, contain civil or political commands, at variance with those of the French code, those commands would, of course, cease to influence and govern them, since they must, above all acknowledge and obey the laws of the prince.

That, in consequence of this principle, the Jews have, at all times, considered it their duty to obey the laws of the State, and that, since the revolution, they, like all Frenchmen, have acknowledged no others.

SECOND QUESTION: Is divorce allowed by the Jewish Religion? Is divorce valid when not pronounced by courts of justice by virtue of laws in contradiction with those of the French Code?

ANSWER: Repudiation is allowed by the law of Moses, but it is not valid if not previously pronounced by the French code.

In the eyes of every Israelite, without exception, submission to the prince is the first

of duties. It is a principle generally acknowledged among them, that, in everything relating to civil or political interests, the law of the State is the supreme law. Before they were admitted in France to share the rights of all citizens, and when they lived under a particular legislation which set them at liberty to follow their religious customs, they had the ability to divorce their wives, but it was extremely rare to see it put into practice.

Since the revolution, they have acknowledged no other laws on this head but those of the empire. At the epoch when they were admitted to the rank of citizens, the Rabbis and the principal Jews appeared before the municipalities of their respective places of abode, and took an oath to conform, in everything to the laws, and to acknowledge no other rules in all civil matters...

THIRD QUESTION: Can a Jewess marry a Christian, and a Jew a Christian woman? Or does the law allow the Jews to marry only among themselves?

ANSWER: The law does not say that a Jewess cannot marry a Christian, nor a Jew a Christian woman; nor does it state that the Jews can only marry among themselves.

The only marriages expressly forbidden by the law, are those with the seven Canaanite nations, with Amon and Moab, and with the Egyptians. The prohibition is absolute concerning the seven Canaanite nations; with regard to Amon and Moab, it is limited, according to many Talmudists, to the men of those nations, and does not extend to the women; it is even thought that these last would have embraced the Jewish religion. As to Egyptians, the prohibition is limited to the third generation. The prohibition in general applies only to nations in idolatry. The Talmud declares formally that modern nations are not to be considered as such, since they worship, like us, the God of heaven and earth. And, accordingly, there have been, at several periods, intermarriages between Jews and Christians in France, in Spain, and in German; these marriages were sometimes tolerated, and sometimes forbidden by the laws of those sovereigns, who had received Jews into their dominions.

Unions of this kind are still found in France, but we cannot deny that the opinion of the Rabbis is against these marriages. According to their doctrine, although the religion of Moses has not forbidden the Jews from intermarrying with nations not of their religion, yet, as marriage, according to the Talmud, requires religious ceremonies called Kiddushin, with the benediction used in such cases, no marriage can be religiously valid unless these ceremonies have been performed. This could not be done toward persons who would not both of them consider these ceremonies as sacred; and in that case the married couple could separate without the religious divorce. They would then be considered as married civilly but not religiously.

Such is the opinion of the Rabbis, members of this assembly. In general, they would be no more inclined to bless the union of Jewess with a Christian, or of a Jew with a Christian woman, than Catholic priests themselves would be disposed to sanction unions of this kind. The Rabbis acknowledge, however, that a Jew, who marries a Christian woman, does not cease on that account, to be considered as a Jew by his brethren, any more than if he had married a Jewess civilly and not religiously.

FOURTH QUESTION: In the eyes of Jews, are Frenchmen considered as their brethren? Or are they considered as strangers?

ANSWER: In the eyes of Jews, Frenchmen are their brethren and are not strangers.

The true spirit of the law of Moses is consonant with this mode of considering Frenchmen.

When the Israelites formed a settled and independent nation, their law made it a rule for them to consider strangers as their brethren.

With the most tender care for their welfare, their lawgiver commands to love them; "Love ye therefore the strangers," says he to the Israelites, "for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." Respect and benevolence toward strangers are enforced by Moses, not as an exhortation to the practice of social morality only, but as an obligation imposed by God himself.

A religion whose fundamental maxims are such – a religion which makes a duty of loving the stranger – which enforces the practice of social virtues, must surely require that its followers should consider their fellow citizens as brethren.

And how could they consider them otherwise when they inhabit the same land, when they are ruled and protected by the same government, and by the same laws? When they enjoy the same rights, and have the same duties to fulfill? There exists, even between the Jew and Christian, a tie which abundantly compensates for religion – it is the tie of gratitude. This sentiment was at first excited in us by the mere grant of toleration. It has been increased, these eighteen years, by new favors from government, to such a degree of energy, that now our fate is irrevocably linked with the common fate of all Frenchmen. *Yes, France is our country; all Frenchmen are our brethren, and this glorious title, by raising us in our own esteem, becomes a sure pledge that we shall never cease to be worthy of it.*

FIFTH QUESTION: In either case, what line of conduct does their law prescribe toward Frenchmen not of their religion?

ANSWER: The line of conduct prescribed toward Frenchmen not of our religion, is the same as that prescribed between Jews themselves; we admit of no difference but that of worshipping the Supreme Being, everyone in his own way.

The answer to the preceding question has explained the line of conduct which the law of Moses and the Talmud prescribe toward Frenchmen not of our religion. At the present time, *when the Jews no longer form a separate people*, but enjoy the advantage of being incorporated with the Great Nation (which privilege they consider as a kind of political redemption), it is impossible that a Jew should treat a Frenchman, not of his religion, in any other manner than he would treat one of his Israelite brethren.

SIXTH QUESTION: Do Jews born in France, and treated by the laws as French citizens, consider France their country? Are they bound to defend it? Are they bound to obey the laws and to conform to the dispositions of the civil code?

ANSWER: Men who have adopted a country, who have resided in it these many generations – who, even under the restraint of particular laws which abridged their civil rights, were so attached to it that they preferred being debarred from the advantages

common to all other citizens, rather than leave it – cannot but consider themselves as equally sacred and honorable the bounden duty of defending their country.

Jeremiah (Chapter 29) exhorts the Jews to consider Babylon as their country, although they were to remain in it only for seventy years. He exhorts them to till the ground, to build houses, to sow, and to plant. His recommendation was so much attended to, that Ezra (Chapter 2) says, that when Cyrus allowed them to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple, 42,360 only left Babylon and that this number was mostly composed of the poor people, the wealthy having remained in that city.

The love of the country is in the heart of Jews a sentiment so natural, so powerful, and so consonant to their religious opinions, that a French Jew considers himself in England, as among strangers, although he may be among Jews; and the case is the same with English Jews in France.

To such a pitch is this sentiment carried among them, that during the last war, French Jews have been seen fighting desperately against other Jews, the subjects of countries then at war with France.

Many of them are covered with honorable wounds, and others have obtained, in the field of honor, the noble rewards of bravery.

3. Theodore Herzl, A Solution of the Jewish Question, excerpt (1896)

I have been asked to lay my scheme in a few words before the readers of the *Jewish Chronicle*. This I will endeavor to do, although in this brief and rapid account, I run the risk of being misunderstood. My first and incomplete exposition will probably be scoffed at by Jews. The bad and foolish way we ridicule one another is a survival of slavish habits contracted by us during centuries of oppression. A free man sees nothing to laugh at in himself, and allows no one to laugh at him.

I therefore address my first words to those Jews who are strong and free of spirit. They shall form my earliest audience, and they will one day, I hope, become my friends. I am introducing no new idea; on the contrary, it is a very old one. It is a universal idea – and therein lies its power – old as the people, which never, even in the time of bitterest calamity, ceased to cherish it. *This is the restoration of the Jewish State.*

It is remarkable that we Jews should have dreamt this kingly dream all through the long night of our history. Now day is dawning. We need only rub the sleep out of our eyes, stretch our limbs, and convert the dream into a reality. Though neither prophet nor visionary, I confess I cherish the hope and belief that the Jewish people will one day be fired by a splendid enthusiasm. For the present, however, I would appeal in calm words to the common sense of men of practical judgment and of modern culture. A subsequent task will be to seek out the less favored, to teach and to inspire them. This latter task I cannot undertake alone. I shall take my part in it, in the ranks of those friends and fellow workers whom I am endeavoring to arouse and unite for a common cause. I do not say “my adherents,” for that would be making the movement a personal one, and consequently absurd and contemptible from

the outset. No, it is a national movement, and it will be a glorious one, if kept unsullied by the taint of personal desires, though these desires took no other form than political ambition. We who are the first to inaugurate this movement, will scarcely live to see its glorious close, but the inauguration of it is enough to bring a noble kind of happiness into our lives. We shall plant for our children in the same way as our fathers preserved the tradition for us. Our lives represent but a moment in the permanent duration of our people. This moment has its duties.

4. Max Nordau, Speech to the First Zionist Congress, excerpt (1897)

The special reporters for individual countries will depict for you the condition of their brethren in the different states. Some of their reports have been submitted to me; others not. But even of the countries about which I learnt nothing from my collaborators, I have, partly from personal observation, partly from other sources, obtained some knowledge, so that I may, without presumption, undertake the task of reporting on the general situation of the Jews at the end of the 19th century.

This picture can, on the whole, be painted only in one color. Everywhere, where the Jews have settled in comparatively large numbers among the nations, Jewish misery prevails. It is not the ordinary misery which is probably the unalterable fate of mankind. It is a peculiar misery, which the Jews do not suffer as human beings, but as Jews, and from which they would be free, were they not Jews....

The Western Jew has bread, but man does not live on bread alone. The life of the Western Jew is no longer endangered through the enmity of the mob; but bodily wounds are not the only wounds that cause pain, and from which one may bleed to death. The Western Jew meant emancipation to be real liberation, and hastened to draw the final conclusions therefrom. But the nations made him fear that he erred in being so heedlessly logical. The magnanimous laws, magnanimously lay down the theory of equality of rights. But governments and Society exercise the practice of equality of rights in a manner which renders it the same mockery as did the appointment of Sancho Panza to the splendid position of Viceroy of the Island of Baratara. The Jew says naively: "I am a human being, and I regard nothing human as alien." The answer he meets is: "Softly, your rights as a man must be enjoyed cautiously; you lack the right notion of honor, feeling for duty, morality, patriotism, idealism. You must, therefore, hold aloof from all vocations which make possession of these qualifications as conditions...."

II

I must utter the painful word. The nations which emancipated the Jews have mistaken their own feelings. In order to produce its full effect, emancipation should first have been completed in sentiment before it was declared by law. But this was not the case. The history of Jewish emancipation is one of the most remarkable pages in the history of European thought. The emancipation of the Jews was not the consequence of the conviction that grave injury had been done to a race, that it had been treated

most terribly, and that it was time to atone for the injustice of a thousand years; it was solely the result of the geometrical mode of thought of French rationalism of the 18th century. This rationalism was constructed by the aid of pure logic, without taking into account living sentiments and the principles of the certainty of mathematical action, and it insisted upon trying to introduce these creations of pure intellect into the world of reality. The emancipation of the Jews was an automatic application of the rationalistic method. The philosophy of Rousseau and the encyclopedists had led to the declaration of human rights. Out of this declaration, the strict logic of the men of the Great Revolution deduced Jewish emancipation. They formulated a regular equation: Every man is born with certain rights; the Jews are human beings, consequently the Jews are born to own the rights of man. In this manner, the emancipation of the Jews was pronounced, not through a fraternal feeling for the Jews, but because logic demanded it. Popular sentiment rebelled, but the philosophy of the Revolution decreed that principles must be placed higher than sentiment. Allow me then an expression which implies no ingratitude. The men of 1792 emancipated us only for the sake of principle.

As the French Revolution gave to the world the metric and the decimal systems, so it also created a kind of normal spiritual system which other countries, either willingly or unwillingly, accepted as the normal measure for their State of culture. A country which claimed to be at the height of culture had to possess several institutions created or developed by the Great Revolution; as, for instance, representation of the people, freedom of the press, jury, division of powers, etc. Jewish emancipation was also one of these indispensable articles of a highly cultured state; just as a piano must not be absent from a drawing room even if not a single member of the family can play it. In this manner Jews were emancipated in Europe not from an inner necessity, but in imitation of a political fashion; not because the people had decided from their hearts to stretch out a brotherly hand to the Jews, but because leading spirits had accepted a certain cultured idea which required that Jewish emancipation should figure also in the Statute book...

Such is the existing liberation of the emancipated Jew in Western Europe. He has given up his specifically Jewish character, but the peoples let him feel that he has not acquired their special characteristics. He has lost the home of the Ghetto, but the land of his birth is denied to him as his home. His countrymen repel him when he wishes to associate with them. He has no ground under his feet and he has no community to which he belongs as a full member. With his Christian countrymen neither his character nor his intentions can reckon on justice, still less on kindly feeling. With his Jewish countrymen he has lost touch; necessarily he feels that the world hates him and he sees no place where he can find warmth when he seeks for it. This is the moral Jewish misery which is more bitter than the physical, because it befalls men who are differently situated, prouder and possess the finer feelings.

5. Ahad Ha'am, The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem, excerpt (1897)

... It is not only the Jews who have come out of the ghetto; Judaism has come out, too. For the Jews the exodus from the ghetto is confined to certain countries and is due to toleration, but Judaism has come out (or is coming out) of its own accord, wherever it has come into contact with modern culture. This contact with modern culture overturns the inner defenses of Judaism, so that it can no longer remain isolated and live a life apart. The spirit of our people desires further development; it wants to absorb the basic elements of general culture which are reaching it from the outside world, to digest them and to make them a part of itself, as it has done before at various periods of its history. But the conditions of its life in exile are not suitable for such a task. In our time culture expresses itself everywhere through the form of the national spirit, and the stranger who would become part of culture must sink his individuality and become absorbed in the dominant environment. In exile, Judaism cannot, therefore, develop its individuality in its own way. When it leaves the ghetto walls, it is in danger of losing its essential being or – at very least – its national unity; it is in danger of being split up into as *many* kinds of Judaism, each with a different character and life, as there are countries of the dispersion.

Judaism is, therefore, in a quandary: It can no longer tolerate the *Galut* form which it had to take on, in obedience to its will-to-live, when it was exiled from its own country, but without that form, its life is in danger. So it seeks to return to its historic center, where it will be able to live a life developing in a natural way, to bring its powers into play in every department of human culture, to broaden and perfect those national possessions which it has acquired up to now, and thus to contribute to the common stock of humanity, in the future as it has in the past, a great national culture, the fruit of the unhampered activity of a people living by the light of its own spirit. For this purpose Judaism can, for the present, content itself with little. It does not need an independent State, but only the creation in its native land of conditions favorable to its development: a good-sized settlement of Jews working without hindrance in every branch of civilization, from agriculture and handicrafts, to science and literature. This Jewish settlement, which will be a gradual growth, will become in course of time the center of the nation, wherein its spirit will find pure expression and develop in all its aspects to the highest degree of perfection of which it is capable. Then, from this center, the spirit of Judaism will radiate to the great circumference, to all the communities of the Diaspora, to inspire them with new life, and to preserve the overall unity of our people. When our national culture in Palestine has attained that level, we may be confident that it will produce men in the Land of Israel itself who will be able, at a favorable moment, to establish a State there – one which will be not merely a State of Jews but a really Jewish State.

This Hibbat Zion, which concerns itself with the preservation of Judaism at a time when Jewry is suffering so much, is something odd and unintelligible to the “political” Zionists of the West, just as the demand of R. Yohanan ben Zakkai for “Yavneh” was strange and unintelligible to the comparable party of his time. And so,

political Zionism cannot satisfy those Jews who care for Judaism; its growth seems to them to be fraught with danger to the object of their own aspiration.

The secret of our people's persistence is, as I have tried to show elsewhere, that at a very early period the Prophets taught it to respect only the power of the spirit and not to worship material power. Therefore, unlike the other nations of antiquity, the Jewish people never reached the point of losing its self-respect in the face of more powerful enemies. As long as we remain faithful to this principle, our existence has a secure basis, and we shall not lose our self-respect, for we are not spiritually inferior to any nation. But a political ideal which is not grounded in our national culture is apt to seduce us from loyalty to our own inner spirit and to beget in us a tendency to find the path of glory in the attainment of material power and political dominion, thus breaking the thread that unites us with the past and undermining our historical foundation. Needless to say, if the political ideal is not attained, it will have disastrous consequences, because we shall have lost the old basis without finding a new one. But even if it is attained under present conditions, when we are a scattered people not only in the physical but also in the spiritual sense – even then, Judaism will be in great danger. Almost all our great men – those, that is, whose education and social position have prepared them to be at the head of a Jewish State – are spiritually far removed from Judaism and have no true conception of its nature and its value. Such men, however loyal to their State and devoted to its interests, will necessarily envisage those interests by the standards of the foreign culture which they themselves have imbibed, and they will endeavor, by moral persuasion or even by force, to implant that culture in the Jewish State, so that in the end the Jewish State will be a State of Germans or Frenchmen of the Jewish race. We have even now a small example of this process in Palestine.

History teaches us that in the days of the Herodian house, Palestine was indeed a Jewish State, but the national culture was despised and persecuted. The ruling house did everything in its power to implant Roman culture in the country and frittered away the resources of the nation in the building of heathen temples, amphitheaters, and so forth. Such a Jewish State would spell death and utter degradation for our people. Such a State would never achieve sufficient political power to deserve respect, while it would be estranged from the living inner spiritual force of Judaism. The puny State, being “tossed about like a ball between its powerful neighbors, and maintaining its existence only by diplomatic shifts and continual truckling to the favored of fortune,” would not be able to give us a feeling of national glory; the national culture, in which we might have sought and found our glory, would not have been implanted in our State and would not be the principle of its life. So we should really be then – much more than we are now – “a small and insignificant nation,” enslaved in spirit to “the favored of fortune,” turning an envious and covetous eye on the armed force of our “powerful neighbors,” our existence in such terms, as a sovereign State, would not add a glorious chapter to our national history.

Would it not be better for “an ancient people which was once a beacon to the world” to disappear than to end by reaching such a goal as this? Mr. Lilienblum reminds me that there exist today small States, like Switzerland, which are

safeguarded against interference by the other nations and are not forced to “continual truckling.” But a comparison between Palestine and small countries like Switzerland overlooks the geographical position of Palestine and its religious importance for all the world. These two facts will make it quite impossible for its “powerful neighbors” (by which expression, of course, I did not mean, as Mr. Lilienblum interprets, “the Druses and the Persians”) to leave it alone. Even after it has become a Jewish State, they will all still keep an eye on it, and each power will try to influence its policy in a direction favorable to itself, after the pattern of events in other weak states (like Turkey) in which the great European nations have “interests.”

In sum: Hibbat Zion, no less than “Zionism,” wants a Jewish State and believes in the possibility of the establishment of a Jewish State in the future. But while “Zionism” looks to the Jewish State to furnish a remedy for poverty and to provide complete tranquility and national glory, Hibbat Zion knows that our State will not give us all these things until “universal Righteousness is enthroned and holds sway over nations and States” – it looks to a Jewish State to provide only a “secure refuge” for Judaism and a cultural bond to unite our nation. “Zionism,” therefore, begins its work with political propaganda; Hibbat Zion begins with national culture, because only *through* the national culture and *for its sake* can a Jewish State be established in such a way as to correspond with the will and the needs of the Jewish people.

6. League of Nations Mandate for Palestine, Preamble and Articles 1–6 (1922)

THE COUNCIL OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS:

Whereas the Principal Allied Powers have agreed, for the purpose of giving effect to the provisions of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, to entrust to a Mandatory selected by the said Powers the administration of the territory of Palestine, which formerly belonged to the Turkish Empire, within such boundaries as may be fixed by them; and

Whereas the Principal Allied Powers have also agreed that the Mandatory should be responsible for putting into effect the declaration originally made on November 2nd, 1917, by the Government of His Britannic Majesty, and adopted by the said Powers, in favor of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing should be done which might 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; and

Whereas recognition has thereby been given to the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and to the grounds for reconstituting their national home in that country; and

Whereas the Principal Allied Powers have selected His Britannic Majesty as the Mandatory for Palestine; and

Whereas the mandate in respect of Palestine has been formulated in the following terms and submitted to the Council of the League for approval; and

Whereas His Britannic Majesty has accepted the mandate in respect of Palestine and undertaken to exercise it on behalf of the League of Nations in conformity with the following provisions; and

Whereas by the afore mentioned Article 22 (paragraph 8), it is provided that the degree of authority, control or administration to be exercised by the Mandatory, not having been previously agreed upon by the Members of the League, shall be explicitly defined by the Council of the League of Nations;

Confirming the said Mandate, defines its terms as follows:

ARTICLE 1

The Mandatory shall have full powers of legislation and of administration, save as they may be limited by the terms of this mandate.

ARTICLE 2

The Mandatory shall be responsible for placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home, as laid down in the preamble, and the development of self-governing institutions, and also for safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race and religion.

ARTICLE 3

The Mandatory shall, so far as circumstances permit, encourage local autonomy.

ARTICLE 4

An appropriate Jewish agency shall be recognised as a public body for the purpose of advising and co-operating with the Administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish national home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine, and, subject always to the control of the Administration to assist and take part in the development of the country.

The Zionist organization, so long as its organization and constitution are in the opinion of the Mandatory appropriate, shall be recognised as such agency. It shall take steps in consultation with His Britannic Majesty's Government to secure the co-operation of all Jews who are willing to assist in the establishment of the Jewish national home.

ARTICLE 5

The Mandatory shall be responsible for seeing that no Palestine territory shall be

ceded or leased to, or in any way placed under the control of the Government of any foreign Power.

ARTICLE 6

The Administration of Palestine, while ensuring that the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced, shall facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions and shall encourage, in cooperation with the Jewish agency referred to in Article 4, close settlement by Jews on the land, including State lands and waste lands not required for public purposes.

7. Memorandum of Edwin Montagu on the Anti-Semitism of the Present (British) Government – Submitted to the British Cabinet, August 1917 in Response to the Balfour Declaration

I have chosen the above title for this memorandum, not in any hostile sense, not by any means as quarrelling with an anti-Semitic view which may be held by my colleagues, not with a desire to deny that anti-Semitism can be held by rational men, not even with a view to suggesting that the Government is deliberately anti-Semitic; but I wish to place on record my view that the policy of His Majesty's Government is anti-Semitic in result will prove a rallying ground for Anti-Semites in every country in the world.

This view is prompted by the receipt yesterday of a correspondence between Lord Rothschild and Mr. Balfour.

Lord Rothschild's letter is dated the 18th July and Mr. Balfour's answer is to be dated August 1917. I fear that my protest comes too late, and it may well be that the Government were practically committed when Lord Rothschild wrote and before I became a member of the Government, for there has obviously been some correspondence or conversation before this letter. But I do feel that as the one Jewish Minister in the Government I may be allowed by my colleagues an opportunity of expressing views which may be peculiar to myself, but which I hold very strongly and which I must ask permission to express when opportunity affords.

I believe most firmly that this war has been a death-blow to Internationalism, and that it has proved an opportunity for a renewal of the slackening sense of Nationality, for it has not only been tacitly agreed by most statesmen in most countries that the redistribution of territory resulting from the war should be more or less on national grounds, but we have learned to realize that our country stands for principles, for aims, for civilization which no other country stands for in the same degree, and that in the future, whatever may have been the case in the past, we must live and fight in peace and in war for those aims and aspirations, and so equip and regulate our lives and industries as to be ready whenever and if ever we are challenged. To take one instance, the science of Political Economy, which in its purity knows no Nationalism, will hereafter be tempered and viewed in the light of this national need of defense and security. The war has indeed justified patriotism as the prime motive of political thought.

It is in this atmosphere that the Government proposes to endorse the formation of a new nation with a new home in Palestine. This nation will presumably be formed of Jewish Russians, Jewish Englishmen, Jewish Romanians, Jewish Bulgarians, and Jewish citizens of all nations – survivors or relations of those who have fought or laid down their lives for the different countries which I have mentioned, at a time when the three years that they have lived through have united their outlook and thought more closely than ever with the countries of which they are citizens.

Zionism has always seemed to me to be a mischievous political creed, untenable by any patriotic citizen of the United Kingdom. If a Jewish Englishman sets his eyes on the Mount of Olives and longs for the day when he will shake British soil from his shoes and go back to agricultural pursuits in Palestine, he has always seemed to me to have acknowledged aims inconsistent with British citizenship and to have admitted that he is unfit for a share in public life in Great Britain, or to be treated as an Englishman. I have always understood that those who indulged in this creed were largely animated by the restrictions upon and refusal of liberty to Jews in Russia. But at the very time when these Jews have been acknowledged as Jewish Russians and given all liberties, it seems to be inconceivable that Zionism should be officially recognized by the British Government, and that Mr. Balfour should be authorized to say that Palestine was to be reconstituted as the “national home of the Jewish people.” I do not know what this involves, but I assume that it means that Mahommedans and Christians are to make way for the Jews and that the Jews should be put in all positions of preference and should be peculiarly associated with Palestine in the same way that England is with the English or France with the French, that Turks and other Mahommedans in Palestine will be regarded as foreigners, just in the same way as Jews will hereafter be treated as foreigners in every country but Palestine. Perhaps also citizenship must be granted only as a result of a religious test.

I lay down with emphasis four principles:

1. I assert that there is not a Jewish nation. The members of my family, for instance, who have been in this country for generations, have no sort or kind of community of view or of desire with any Jewish family in any other country beyond the fact that they profess to a greater or less degree the same religion. It is no more true to say that a Jewish Englishman and a Jewish Moor are of the same nation than it is to say that a Christian Englishman and a Christian Frenchman are of the same nation: of the same race, perhaps, traced back through the centuries – through centuries of the history of a peculiarly adaptable race. The Prime Minister and M. Briand are, I suppose, related through the ages, one as a Welshman and the other as a Breton, but they certainly do not belong to the same nation.
2. When the Jews are told that Palestine is their national home, every country will immediately desire to get rid of its Jewish citizens, and you will find a population in Palestine driving out its present inhabitants, taking all the best in the country, drawn from all quarters of the globe, speaking every language on the face of the earth, and incapable of communicating with one another except by means of an interpreter. I have always understood that this was the consequence of the building of the Tower

of Babel, if ever it was built, and I certainly do not dissent from the view, commonly held, as I have always understood, by the Jews before Zionism was invented, that to bring the Jews back to form a nation in the country from which they were dispersed would require Divine leadership. I have never heard it suggested, even by their most fervent admirers, that either Mr. Balfour or Lord Rothschild would prove to be the Messiah.

I claim that the lives that British Jews have led, that the aims that they have had before them, that the part that they have played in our public life and our public institutions, have entitled them to be regarded, not as British Jews, but as Jewish Britons. I would willingly disenfranchise every Zionist. I would be almost tempted to proscribe the Zionist organization as illegal and against the national interest. But I would ask of a British Government sufficient tolerance to refuse a conclusion which makes aliens and foreigners by implication, if not at once by law, of all their Jewish fellow-citizens.

I deny that Palestine is today associated with the Jews or properly to be regarded as a fit place for them to live in. The Ten Commandments were delivered to the Jews on Sinai. It is quite true that Palestine plays a large part in Jewish history, but so it does in modern Mahommedan history, and, after the time of the Jews, surely it plays a larger part than any other country in Christian history. The Temple may have been in Palestine, but so was the Sermon on the Mount and the Crucifixion. I would not deny to Jews in Palestine equal rights to colonization with those who profess other religions, but a religious test of citizenship seems to me to be the only admitted by those who take a bigoted and narrow view of one particular epoch of the history of Palestine, and claim for the Jews a position to which they are not entitled.

If my memory serves me right, there are three times as many Jews in the world as could possibly get into Palestine if you drove out all the population that remains there now. So that only one-third will get back at the most, and what will happen to the remainder?

I can easily understand the editors of the *Morning Post* and of the *New Witness* being Zionists, and I am not in the least surprised that the non-Jews of England may welcome this policy. I have always recognized the unpopularity, much greater than some people think, of my community. We have obtained a far greater share of this country's goods and opportunities than we are numerically entitled to. We reach on the whole maturity earlier, and therefore with people of our own age we compete unfairly. Many of us have been exclusive in our friendships and intolerant in our attitude, and I can easily understand that many a non-Jew in England wants to get rid of us. But just as there is no community of thought and mode of life among Christian Englishmen, so there is not among Jewish Englishmen. More and more we are educated in public schools and at the Universities, and take our part in the politics, in the Army, in the Civil Service, of our country. And I am glad to think that the prejudices against intermarriage are breaking down. But when the Jew has a national home, surely it follows that the impetus to deprive us of the rights of British citizenship must be enormously increased. Palestine will become the world's Ghetto. Why should the Russian give the Jew equal rights? His national home is

Palestine. Why does Lord Rothschild attach so much importance to the difference between British and foreign Jews? All Jews will be foreign Jews, inhabitants of the great country of Palestine.

I do not know how the fortunate third will be chosen, but the Jew will have the choice, whatever country he belongs to, whatever country he loves, whatever country he regards himself as an integral part of, between going to live with people who are foreigners to him, but to whom his Christian fellow-countrymen have told him he shall belong, and of remaining as an unwelcome guest in the country that he thought he belonged to.

I am not surprised that the Government should take this step after the formation of a Jewish Regiment, and I am waiting to learn that my brother, who has been wounded in the Naval Division, or my nephew, who is in the Grenadier Guards, will be forced by public opinion or by Army regulations to become an officer in a regiment which will mainly be composed of people who will not understand the only language which he speaks – English. I can well understand that when it was decided, and quite rightly, to force foreign Jews in this country to serve in the Army, it was difficult to put them in British regiments because of the language difficulty, but that was because they were foreigners, and not because they were Jews, and a Foreign Legion would seem to me to have been the right thing to establish. A Jewish Legion makes the position of Jews in other regiments more difficult and forces a nationality upon people who have nothing in common.

I feel that the Government are asked to be the instrument for carrying out the wishes of a Zionist organization largely run, as my information goes, at any rate in the past, by men of enemy descent or birth, and by this means have dealt a severe blow to the liberties, position and opportunities of service of their Jewish fellow-countrymen. I would say to Lord Rothschild that the Government will be prepared to do everything in their power to obtain for Jews in Palestine complete liberty of settlement and life on an equality with the inhabitants of that country who profess other religious beliefs. I would ask that the Government should go no further.

E.S.M.

23 August 1917