

Ghana, which won independence in 1957, attracted a generation of prominent expatriates—among them W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963), Maya Angelou (1928–2014), Julian Mayfield (1928–1984), Vicki Garvin (1915–2007), Alphaeus Hunton (1903–1970), St. Clair Drake (1911–1990), and David Levering Lewis (b. 1936)—drawn to the euphoric project of building an independent African state and an indigenous Pan-Africanism. More recently, the Ghanaian government’s successful efforts to promote “heritage” or “roots” tourism has highlighted the enduring appeal of West Africa in the imaginations and aspirations of African Americans. Calls across the centuries for Westernized blacks to claim their manhood and statehood in Africa have been replaced by more modern and more culturally collaborative projects. But the back-to-Africa spirit lives on.

SEE ALSO *Africa; American Colonization Society; An Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World (David Walker, 1829); Caribbean; Colonization Movement; Liberia*

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Campbell, James T. *Middle Passages: African American Journeys to Africa, 1787–2005*. New York: Penguin, 2006.
- Ewing, Adam. *The Age of Garvey: How a Jamaican Activist Created a Mass Movement and Changed Global Black Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014.
- Redkey, Edwin S. *Black Exodus: Black Nationalist and Back-to-Africa Movements, 1890–1910*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1969.

Adam Ewing

*Assistant Professor
Virginia Commonwealth University*

BALDWIN, JAMES

SEE *Lost Generation*.

BALFOUR DECLARATION (1917)

On November 2, 1917, Lord Arthur James Balfour (1848–1930), the British foreign secretary, drafted a single-page letter to Lord Rothschild proclaiming his “sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations.” The official declaration supported “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.” The language of “a national home” rather than “the national home” for Jews reflected a diplomatic strategy on the part of Balfour and the British government, a deliberate alteration of the language submitted by Chaim Weizmann (1874–1952)

and Nahum Sokolow (1859–1936) on behalf of the World Zionist Organization. Balfour added, “nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine,” nor should the creation of this new Jewish national home affect “the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.” The short document at once acknowledged Jewish territorial peoplehood and aspirations on the international stage and left to interpretation the exact form of their future territorial rights and how these would be balanced with those of other peoples and nations.

BACKGROUND

The Balfour Declaration emerged partially as a result of cooperation between Britain and France, along with the United States; this cooperation was formalized in the Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916). The United States had not yet entered World War I (1914–1918), and British politicians perceived Zionist Americans as allies who could help convince the United States to join the war. In May 1917, prior to the publication of the Balfour Declaration, Balfour traveled to the United States and met with Louis Brandeis (1856–1941), the leader of the Zionist Organization of America. Brandeis and other Zionists gained an ongoing audience with President Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924) and influenced his foreign policy regarding Palestine.

THE AMERICAN RESPONSE

After the release of the Balfour Declaration and Britain’s capture of Jerusalem, many Jewish Americans expressed enthusiasm about the future of Palestine. As public expression of their excitement over the statement, fifteen thousand Jews congregated at Carnegie Hall in New York City on December 23, 1917, and twenty-five thousand paraded in Newark, New Jersey. Some—such as some Reform rabbis, Bundists, and others who continued to perceive Zionism as excessively utopian—continued to express reservations. For example, the well-known anti-Zionist Reform rabbi Samuel Schulman (1864–1955) wrote in the *New York Times* that he opposed language describing Palestine as a homeland for Jews “because such a phrase implies the idea of present homelessness of the Jewish people” (Schulman 1917, XX3). Jewish American “anti-Zionists,” such as Schulman, did not object to protecting Jewish rights in Palestine. They saw Jewish rights in Palestine as parallel to Jewish rights in the United States, rights to be extended to all citizens of a liberal democracy, rather than to privileged members of an ethnic democracy. The Jewish anti-Zionist movement considered the Balfour Declaration and the ensuing diplomacy based on it in tension with their commitment to Jewish life in the United States.

Balfour Declaration (1917)

The Balfour Declaration marked a turning point in the political struggle for territorial claims in Palestine. It also marked a shift in alliances within the US political climate among non-Jewish American politicians who had previously opposed Zionism because of their perception that it represented a minority of Jews. Wilson was concerned with a delicate balance of creating a coalition among Britain, America, and Jews, as well as not appearing to take a belligerent position toward Turkey. By 1919, once the Ottoman Empire's power had dissolved, Wilson was able to wholeheartedly support the British Mandate and its commitment to Jewish sovereignty in Palestine. The Balfour Declaration, its incorporation into the mandate, and the political approval of the United States solidified both British political claims in the region and recognition of "the Jewish people" as an official entity in international law (Friedman 1973, 122). The Balfour Declaration marked an expansion of Zionist American campaigns and a more concrete national American political project regarding Palestine, though the exact nature of the plans for Jewish sovereignty in Palestine remained in flux.

If the Balfour Declaration walked a tightrope between offering a Jewish homeland in Palestine and balancing that promise with Arab-Palestinian rights, the Paris Peace Conference in 1918 to 1919 interpreted the phrasing of "Jewish national home" explicitly to mean that the entire territory would become a Jewish state. However, the King-Crane Commission—which was made public in 1922, having been undertaken in 1919 to inform America of Arab understanding of the Balfour Declaration and the future of Palestine—presented the Arab opposition to a Jewish state. At times, Zionist Americans, citing the Balfour Declaration, would press for Jewish rights to a self-determined state. But Jews remained the numerical minority throughout the first half of the twentieth century, so Zionists frequently refrained from calling openly for a state, strategically waiting for a larger Jewish population to take root. Arab or Palestinian American responses rarely gained a national platform or voice in the United States. A general commitment to a Jewish homeland in Palestine characterized American policy until the late 1930s; however, the potential political and territorial contours of this commitment varied. After the 1937 Peel Commission and 1939 White Paper, a greater number of Jewish Americans began explicitly and consistently to support the formation of a state.

PALESTINE AS A REFLECTION OF AMERICAN IDEALS

Zionist Americans not only imagined Palestine as a place of refuge for Jewish refugees from Europe, but they also projected their ideals of democracy and progressivism onto the romanticized space. Arthur Balfour and the

Balfour Declaration gained mythic status for Zionist culture in the United States. A Zionist visual culture—as appeared, for example, in the pages of the Zionist Organization of America's journals the *Maccabaeon* and the *New Palestine*—with Western figures such as Balfour sought to connect Zionism with images that emphasized democratic values and civility. Furthermore, Jewish and Christian Americans perceived Palestine through the lens of "the Holy Land," so dreams of social justice and self-determination were colored by their expectations rooted in religious backgrounds. Some scholars have argued that this led to the firm commitment of the Christian American public and the government to favor Jews because of their identity with ancient Israelites, while others have suggested that the seeming antiquity of Arab ways of life led to the perception that they most closely represented biblical life. Either way, conceptions of religious heritage, as well as contemporary political questions, weighed heavily on how Americans responded to the Balfour Declaration and its ensuing political era.

Zionist Americans were so convinced of the transformative, civilizing force that Jewish presence would bring to Palestine, many could not imagine Arabs rejecting Jewish benevolence and rights to the land. After the League of Nations officially ceded Palestine to Britain in the spring of 1920, despite the Balfour Declaration's rhetoric ensuring Jewish and Arab rights, a trajectory toward some measure of Jewish autonomy seemed more certain. Some Palestinian Arabs began to revolt. However, the *New York Times* and the Zionist journal the *Maccabaeon* explained that the violence was not evidence of Arab dissatisfaction with growing Jewish settlement but the result of criminals or nomads not representative of majority Arab sentiment. As a result of the British Mandate and the Balfour Declaration, Jews and Zionists became entangled with the image of imperialism. Though most Americans understood Jews as seeking to liberate themselves from imperial persecution, the situation on the ground in Palestine was much more complicated and perceived quite differently by the diverse local population. Zionist alliances to the United States and Britain ultimately shaped Jewish territory and statehood, but also left the imprint of imperialism on the Zionist project.

SEE ALSO *Holocaust; Judaism; League of Nations; Paris Peace Conference (1919); Treaty of Versailles; United Nations; World War I; World War II; Zionism*

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ahmed, Hisham. "From the Balfour Declaration to World War II: The U.S. Stand on Palestinian Self-Determination." *Arab Studies Quarterly* 12, 1–2 (Winter/Spring 1990): 9–41.
- Balfour, Arthur James. "The Balfour Declaration." November 2, 1917. <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/balfour.html>

- Berkowitz, Michael. *Western Jewry and the Zionist Project, 1914–1933*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Cohen, Naomi. *The Americanization of Zionism, 1897–1948*. Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2003.
- Davidson, Lawrence. *America's Palestine: Popular and Official Perceptions from Balfour to Israeli Statehood*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001.
- Diner, Hasia. *The Jews of the United States, 1654 to 2000*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
- Fischer, Louis. "In Upper Galilee." *Maccabean* 33 (April 1920): 135.
- Friedman, Isaiah. "Response to the Balfour Declaration." *Jewish Social Studies* 35, 2 (1973): 105–124.
- F.O. 371/3054/84173, Sykes to Picot, 12 December 1917, tel. no. 1181; minutes by Graham, Hardinge, and Balfour, p. 233438.
- Kalmar, Ivan Davidson, and Derek J. Penslar, eds. *Orientalism and the Jews*. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2005.
- Medoff, Rafael. *Zionism and the Arabs: An American Jewish Dilemma, 1898–1948*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997.
- Mendes-Flohr, Paul, and Jehuda Reinharz, eds. *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*. 3rd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Sarna, Jonathan. "A Projection of America as It Ought to Be: Zion in the Mind's Eye of American Jews." In *Envisioning Israel: The Changing Ideals and Images of North American Jews*, edited by Allon Gal, 41–59. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1996.
- Schulman, Samuel. "Jewish Nation Not Wanted in Palestine: The Views of Those Who are Opposed to Zionism Expressed by a Leading American Rabbi." *New York Times*, November 25, 1917, XX3.
- Stein, Leonard. *The Balfour Declaration*. London: Simon and Schuster, 1961.
- "10 Killed in Jerusalem." *New York Times*, April 8, 1920, 5.

Jessica Carr

*Assistant Professor in Religious Studies
Lafayette College*

BALKAN WARS

SEE *Yugoslav Wars*.

BANANA REPUBLICS

Early in the twentieth century, the term *banana republic* came to articulate a range of clichés and caricatures that framed US diplomatic relations with Central America and the Caribbean. Coined by American author O. Henry (1862–1910) in *Cabbages and Kings* (1904), *banana republic* referred to countries ruled by dictators, oligarchs, and "strongmen" who oversaw economies

based on agricultural exports—usually coffee, bananas, or sugar—and dependent on the labor of Indians, mixed-race peasants, or members of the African diaspora, who were often engaged in imperial struggles against Spanish colonialism. Early on, banana republics were linked to racial and cultural legacies left by Spanish colonialism in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and Panama.

Large-scale Caribbean and Central American banana exports to the United States began in the 1870s, first to Boston and later to New Orleans and other southern coastal ports. Honduras began cultivating commercial bananas after the 1870s. US citizens, diplomats, and military men who ventured into these regions brought a vision of their country's place in the world grounded in the history and myths associated with westward expansion. This vision included Americans' sense of a white "manifest destiny" to bring order and "progress" to the remnants of Spanish colonialism in the United States, its mixed-race populations, and remaining Indians. This view of the United States' destiny led to the Monroe Doctrine (1823), which declared much of the Western Hemisphere an exclusive US sphere of influence, as well as war with Mexico in 1848, and later efforts to purchase Cuba from Spain.

US investments in the Caribbean and Central America were minor between the declaration of the Monroe Doctrine and the 1890s. Economic relations mostly consisted of imports of fruits and loans for infrastructure projects, particularly railroads and a canal through Nicaragua or Panama. Such initiatives produced individual colonialist projects, such as the alliance between Cornelius Vanderbilt (1794–1877) and the filibuster William Walker (1824–1860) in Nicaragua in the 1850s.

In the 1830s, US citizens who settled in Mexican territory declared independence and withstood Mexican efforts to recover Texas, inspiring others in the practice of filibustering, including Walker. Walker sailed to Nicaragua in 1855 and embroiled himself in a civil war among elites who were facing Vanderbilt's efforts to control transit across Nicaragua and transportation via ocean freight to California during the gold rush. Walker declared himself president of Nicaragua, reestablished slavery, and ruled from 1856 to 1857, until Central American armies defeated him and Hondurans executed him in 1860.

By 1929, Honduras had become the main exporter of bananas in the world as enterprises owned by two US corporations—the United Fruit Company and the Standard Fruit Company—financed wars among Honduran elites to secure concessions. By the 1930s, United Fruit, headed by Sam "the Banana Man" Zemurray (1877–1961), dominated the banana republics with operations in many Central American and Caribbean