

EDWIN MONTAGU

and

***THE BALFOUR
DECLARATION***

Michael
Hanson
1970

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and

THE BALFOUR DECLARATION



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BIOGRAPHY

of

The Rt. Hon. Edwin Samuel Montagu

EDWIN Samuel Montagu, born in 1879, was the son of the First Lord Swaythling, a strictly observant Orthodox Jew. Educated at Clifton, City of London, Trinity and Cambridge, he became Parliamentary Secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1906-8), and then to the Prime Minister (1908-10).

During the First World War, he was the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1915), the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (1914-16), and Minister of Munitions and Member of the War Cabinet under Lord Asquith.

In July of 1917, Montagu became Secretary of State for India (1917-22), and was the only Jew in the Lloyd George Cabinet. It was during 1917 that the Balfour Declaration was discussed and finally issued by the British Cabinet. Montagu's vehement opposition to the declaration, expressed in memorandums and letters to members of the Cabinet, may have been responsible for the partial amendment of the drafted resolution and the adoption of its final form.

In the next four years, he devoted himself to the problems in India, drafted the "Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms" (1918), and enacted the Government of India Act (1919). He resigned in 1922 and died within two years of his resignation.

INTRODUCTION

WHEN the Balfour Declaration, dated November 2, 1917, was made public, very little was known about its motivations and the interplay of forces that had motivated the British Government to promise the establishment of a "*national home for the Jews that does not prejudice the civil and religious rights of the non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by the Jews in any other country*".¹

This declaration included vague terminology like the *national home* which was susceptible to many contradictory interpretations. This ambiguity added to the tense and secretive atmosphere surrounding the declaration from its very inception until the United Nations partition plan of 1947.

Today, 52 years after that declaration was issued, we are gaining more insight into the circumstances that brought about that declaration through the availability of historical evidence that was unattainable before.

Significant among the documents made public in the spring of 1966 are three major memorandums presented by the honorable Edward Samuel Montagu, then British Minister of State for India, concerning his opposition to the proposed declaration.² These documents shed a new light on the Balfour Declaration and the role played by the Zionist movement in influencing British policy.

Edwin Montagu was not only a member of the British Cabinet but also the only member of this cabinet that was of the Jewish faith. A leading personality in British Jewry, Montagu's basic opposition to the proposed declaration did not stem from any pro-Arab sentiment. In fact, he knew very little about the Arabs when he started his opposition. He based his opposition to political Zionism on the following principles:

1. Judaism is a universal religion and not a nationality. People of different nationalities believe and practice Judaism.

2. There is no Jewish nation. There is only a Jewish religion and tradition. Palestine is no national home for the Jews, for the national home of every Jew depends on the country he belongs to and of which he is a citizen.

¹ *The Balfour Declaration.*

² *The British Public Record Office has made public, this spring, British Cabinet papers covering the period 1915-1920. Each document will have its classification number as it appears in the British Public Record Office, Chancery Lane, London.*

3. Zionism is an untenable creed that tends to shed doubt on the loyalty and patriotism of the Jewish citizens of the United Kingdom. He said, "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". He stated that he would willingly disfranchise every Zionist and added that he would almost be tempted to proscribe the Zionist Organisation as illegal and against British national interests.

4. He acknowledged the fact that Palestine played a large part in Jewish history, but stated that it played equally important roles in the history of Christianity and Islam.

He believed the future of Palestine, as well as every other part of the former Ottoman territories, should depend on the will of its inhabitants and the free exercise of the principle of self-determination. He even reacted in the same way to a French proposal to establish a Zionist home in el-Hasa in Arabia. His solution for the problems of the Middle East, as well as any other area, was the application of self-determination.

5. He questioned the authority of the Zionist Organization to represent the Jewish people, and affirmed that in his estimation, the Jews of British birth were in the main anti-Zionists and, that the majority of Zionists were foreign born Jews living in Britain.

6. Finally, he considered the Balfour Declaration as an anti-Semitic act and stated that it does injustice to the promises made to the Arabs and to the universal principle of self-determination.

TAHSEEN BASHEER

SECRET

THE ANTI-SEMITISM OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT

(Circulated by the Secretary of State for India)

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 and 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 realise that our country stands for principles, for aims, for civilisation 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 defence and security.

The war has indeed justified patriotism as the prime motive of political thought.

* *British Public Record Office, Cab. No. 24/24.*

It is in this atmosphere that the Government proposes to endorse the formation of a new national with a new home in Palestine. This nation will presumably be formed of Jewish Russians, Jewish Englishmen, Jewish Roumanians, 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 recognised by the British Government, and that Mr. Balfour should be authorised 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 Mohammedans 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 Mohammedans 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 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 disfranchise every Zionist. I would be almost tempted to proscribe the Zionist organisation as illegal and against the national interest. But I would ask of a British Government sufficient tolerance to refuse to endorse a conclusion which makes aliens and foreigners by implication, if not at once by law, of all their Jewish fellow-citizens.

3. 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 Mohammedan 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 colonisation with those who profess other religions, but a religious test of citizenship seems to me to be 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

get back at the most, and what will happen to the remainder?

4. 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 recognised 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 inter-marriage 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 organisation 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.

23rd August, 1917.

E.S.M.

SECRET¹

India Office,
14th September, 1917.

My dear Cecil,²

In the discussion which took place in the Cabinet between us on the subject of Zionism, both you and Lord Milner suggested with such force that the views which I held were the views of a minority that I came to believe, and I think the Cabinet must have done so, that the views which I would remind you I only expressed on my own behalf, were almost peculiar to myself and a few other eccentric individuals. I have, therefore, taken steps to find out the exact situation so far as possible, and I give you the facts as I have ascertained them below.

I set myself to discover whether Zionists are in a majority, and, if so, in a large majority, as regards the Jews of the United Kingdom. I am not aware that any plebiscite among a religious community has ever been taken in this or any other country on any subject. I can therefore only take the indirect evidence which is available, that afforded by the voting on a resolution passed by a body which I understand fairly represents the community as a whole.

The Jewish Board of Deputies may claim, I understand, something approximating to a representative character. It consists of representatives of a considerable number of the synagogues of the United Kingdom. It is not completely representative, because some synagogues do not send members, some Jews do not become members of the synagogues which they attend and some do not attend them. Nevertheless, I am told that Zionists and non-Zionists alike would regard the Jewish Board of Deputies as the one body whose resolutions may be quoted as representing with some degree of correctness the opinion of the community as a whole.

On the 17th June a discussion took place at a meeting of this Board, followed by a division, and it is on this division that the best claim to a statement that the majority of British Jews are Zionists can be based. But I would remind you that the discussion and the division were not on Zionism itself, but on a side issue. There is in existence a conjoint Committee of the Board of Deputies and the Anglo-Jewish Association. This conjoint Committee published in *The Times*, of the 24th May, a letter which argued in favour of

¹ *British Record Office Cab. No. 24/27.*

² *Lord Robert Cecil, born on September 14, 1864, was the Acting Secretary for Foreign Affairs.*

the granting to Jews in Palestine of civil and religious liberty, of facilities for emigration, colonisation, etc., but opposed what the writers understood to be the two points of the Zionist claim, namely, that the Jewish settlers in Palestine should be (1) recognised as possessing a national character in a political sense; and (2) invested with certain special rights in excess of those enjoyed by the rest of the population. (I may say that these views are more or less my own.)

The letter was criticised on two grounds, namely, that it opposed the national idea which is the foundation of Zionism, and that the Joint Committee in issuing it on its own responsibility exceeded its rights as a mere executive committee of two parent organisations which should have been consulted before a large declaration of policy was given to the world.

This vote of censure obviously enlisted the support not only of Zionists, but also of those who felt the force of this latter criticism, and in the discussion the second point played a very large part. The vote was described in a Zionist newspaper, *The Jewish Chronicle*, as "a revolt against the system which has been in vogue far too long in our community, the system of oligarchal repression".

This vote of censure, which is the only numerical test of the alleged majority of Zionists among British Jews, was passed by 56 votes to 51. It is to be remembered for the purpose which I have in discussing this matter that the issue of Zionism against non-Zionism was mingled with the questions arising out of an injudicious use of delegated power, but even if this is dismissed (and it ought not to be dismissed), all that can be said is that the views that I hold and expressed in the Cabinet were held by practically half the only representative body which has expressed an opinion.

I cannot, however, leave the subject, as I am about to leave England for some months without reminding you that Zionism had a foreign origin, that it was founded by Theodor Herzl, an Austrian, that his successor as leader of the Zionist movement was David Wolffsohn of Koln, who was succeeded in turn by Otto Warburg of Berlin. In conformity with the foreign origin of Zionism as a whole, Jews of foreign birth have played a very large part in the Zionist movement in England. Among its best known leaders in England are Dr. Gaster, a native of Roumania, Dr. Hertz, a native of Austria, and Dr. Chaim Weizmann, who is, I believe, a native of Russia. Of course, there are English born leaders of the Zionist organisations in England, and I cannot speak with certainty as to the proportion in which the rank and file of the movement in England consists of persons of English and foreign birth respectively, but it is the common belief among the Jewish community that persons of foreign birth form a very large proportion of the Zionists in England.

If a detailed enquiry were made as to the views on the Zionist question of those who are responsible for such great institutions as the Board of Guardians for the Relief of the Jewish Poor, the Anglo-Jewish Association (which deals mainly with questions relating to Jews in the East), the Russo-Jewish Committee (which dealt with the great problem of Jewish emigration from Russia), the Jews' Free School, etc., I think it would be found that the philanthropic work which represents the chief communal activity of Jews in England is to a preponderating extent done by Jews who have either expressed no sympathy with Zionism or who are actively opposed to it.

Now will you forgive me for saying that if I am right in thinking that Jews of British birth are in the main anti-Zionist, if I am right in thinking that Anti-Zionism is a belief held by at least half of the Jews of this country, what can be the motive for our Government, in the midst of its great pre-occupations and perplexities, doing anything in this matter? To help the Allied cause in America was one of the reasons given in the Cabinet discussion. I did not see the terms of the telegram which you sent to America, but it is obvious that President Wilson does not wish for a definite statement conveying any real commitment at present. This motive then goes by the board, and therefore I am impelled to urge once more that no form of words should be used by any spokesman of the British Government which implies that there is a Jewish people in the political sense and that any Jew who happens now to live in England, France, Italy or America is an exile in belonging to the English, French, Italian or American people among whom he dwells at present. Such a declaration would be felt as a cruel blow by the many English Jews who love England, the birthplace of themselves and their ancestors for many generations, who wish to spend their lives in working for her, and whose highest aspiration is to continue to serve her.

But I am particularly anxious to avoid a refusal to respond to Lord Milner's generous intention. There has been brought to my notice a body formed some years ago called "The Jewish Territorial Organisation", which adopted the following words to explain its object: "To obtain a territory" . . . for those Jews who cannot or will not remain in the lands in "which they live at present". If it is desired to say anything, would this be any use? :—

"His Majesty's Government accepts the principle that every opportunity should be afforded for the establishment in Palestine for those Jews who cannot or will not remain in the lands in which they live at present, will use its best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, and will be ready to consider any suggestions on the subject which any Jewish or Zionist organisations may desire to lay before it."

N.B. I do not wish to limit the suggestions which are invited to the Zionist organisations.

I should of course prefer that the Government as a Government should say nothing, but I do hope they will not go further than this.

Yours sincerely,

EDWIN S. MONTAGU

The Right Hon. Lord Robert Cecil, K.C., M.P.

SECRET

ZIONISM*

(Circulated by the Secretary of State for India)

1. I am sorry to bother the Cabinet with another Paper on this subject, but I have obtained some more information which I would like to lay before them.

2. We have received at the India Office a series of valuable papers on Turkey in Asia from the pen of Miss Gertrude Lowthian Bell, the remarkable woman who, after years of knowledge gained by unique travel in these regions, is acting as Assistant Political Officer in Baghdad. She writes:—

“Not least among the denationalising forces is the fact that a part of Syria, though like the rest mainly inhabited by Arabs, is regarded by a non-Arab people as its prescriptive inheritance. At a liberal estimate the Jews of Palestine may form a quarter of the population of the province, the Christians a fifth, while the remainder are Mohammedan Arabs. Jewish immigration has been artificially fostered by doles and subventions from millionaire co-religionists in Europe: the new colonies have now taken root and are more or less self-supporting. The pious hope that an independent Jewish state may some day be established in Palestine no doubt exists, though it may be questioned whether among local Jews there is any acute desire to see it realised, except as a means of escape from Turkish oppression: it is perhaps more lively in the breasts of those who live far from the rocky Palestinian hills and have no intention of changing their domicile. Lord Cromer took pleasure in relating a conversation which he had held on the subject with one of the best known English Jews, who observed: ‘If a Jewish Kingdom were to be established at Jerusalem I should lose no time in applying for the post of Ambassador in London’. Apart from the prevalence of such sentiments two considerations rule out the conception of an independent Jewish Palestine from practical politics. The first is that the province as we know it is not Jewish, and that neither Mohammedan nor Arab would accept Jewish authority; the second that the capital, Jerusalem, is equally sacred to three faiths, Jewish, Christian and Moslem, and should never, if it can be avoided, be put under the exclusive control of any one local faction, no matter how carefully the rights of the other two may be safeguarded.”

This extract shows fully the extent today of the Jewish population

* *British Record Office, Cab. No. 24/28.*

of Palestine. Again I ask, is it conceivable by anyone who knows the country that there is room in Palestine for a large extension of the population? If this does not occur, what part of the existing population is it proposed to dispossess? Having regard to the geographical, geological and climatic conditions of Palestine, is it worth while jeopardising the position of all Jews who remain in other countries for the insignificant fraction of the Jewish population that can conceivably find a home in Palestine? I would beg the Cabinet to consider this matter as a practical proposition. I yield to no one in my admiration of the distinguished Russian, Professor Weizmann, who looms so large in our discussions. His services to the Allied cause have been great. He is a scientist of repute. But on this matter he is near to being a religious fanatic. His enthusiasm for this cause has been the guiding principle of at any rate a large part of his life. It is his overwhelming enthusiasm. How often do such enthusiasms lead to complete disregard of practical potentialities! How little likely is such an enthusiasm to take into account the susceptibilities of those who differ from him among those of his own religion, or of those of other religions whom his activities, if successful, would dispossess!

3. The Cabinet has been informed that the French Government are in sympathy with Zionist aspirations. It has recently come to my knowledge officially that the French Ambassador has approached our Foreign Office with a proposal to establish a Jewish nation in El Hasa in Arabia, oblivious of the fact that although this is technically Turkish territory, we have concluded so recently as 1915 a treaty which roughly promises to support Bin Saud and his followers in the occupation of the country. I quote this to prove that the French are anxious to establish Jews anywhere if only to have an excuse for getting rid of them, or large numbers of them.

4. I have obtained a list of a few prominent anti-Zionists. It will be noticed that it includes every Jew who is prominent in public life, with the exception of the present Lord Rothschild, Mr. Herbert Samuel, and a few others.

■ Dr. Israel Abrahams, M.A.

University of Cambridge

■ Sir Lionel Abrahams, K.C.B.

■ Professor S. Alexander, M.A.

University of Manchester

■ D. L. Alexander, Esq., K.C., J.P.

■ Captain O. E. d'Avigdor-Goldsmid

■ Leonard L. Cohen, Esq.

■ Robert Waley Cohen, Esq.

■ Dr. A. Eichholz

■ S. H. Emmanuel, Esq., B.A.

Recorder of Winchester

- Ernest L. Franklin, Esq.
- Professor I. Gollancz, M.A.
Secretary of the British Academy
- Michael A. Green, Esq.
- P. J. Hartog, Esq., M.A.
Registrar, University of London
- H. S. Q. Henriques, Esq., M.A.
- Sir Charles S. Henry, Bart., M.P.
- J. D. Israel, Esq.
- Benjamin Kisch, Esq.
- Rev. Ephraim Levine, M.A.
- Joshua M. Levy, Esq.
Chairman of the Council of Jews' College
- Major Laurie Magnus
- Sir Philip Magnus, Bart., M.P.
- Sir Alfred Mond, M.P.
- C. G. Montefiore, Esq., M.A.
- A. R. Moro, Esq.
- Sir Matthew Nathan, G.C.M.G.
- J. Prag, Esq., J.P.
- The Right Hon. Viscount Reading, G.C.B., K.C.V.O.
- Captain Anthony de Rothschild
New Court, St. Swithin's Lane, E.C.
- Captain Evelyn de Rothschild
New Court, E.C.
- Major Lionel de Rothschild
New Court, E.C.
- Captain I. Salmon, L.C.C.
- Sir Harry S. Samuel, M.P.
- Sir Marcus Samuel, Bart.
- Edmund Sebag-Montefiore, Esq.
- Oswald J. Simon, Esq.
- Dr. Charles Singer, M.A.
33 Upper Brook Street, W.
- Sir Isidore Spielman, C.M.G.
- Marion H. Spielmann, Esq.
- Meyer A. Spielman, Esq.
- Sir Edward D. Stern
- Lord Swaythling
- Sir Adolph Tuck, Bart
- Philip S. Waley, Esq.
- Professor A. Wolf, M.A.
University College, London
- Lucien Wolf, Esq.
- Albert M. Woolf, Esq.

These are all men who lead an English life as well as acknowledging and rendering their services to their fellow-religionists in this country and abroad. They contain among them ultra-orthodox as well as certain heterodox Jews.

I submit again that the Cabinet's first duty is to Englishmen, to citizens of the British Empire of British traditions. I would submit with great respect that it is not their business to espouse the cause of Americans, Russians, Austrians, and Germans, naturalised though they may be, in the teeth of the ardent wishes of those who have lived for generations in this country, and who feel themselves to be Englishmen. At this moment Jews are constantly being attacked for being outside the great national feelings which the war has engendered, and of being cosmopolitan in their sympathy and international in their aspirations. This is a gross libel on the Jewish Briton. It is true of the Zionist. I hope that the British Government of which I am a member, will pause before ignoring the British feeling which I represent in this matter in favour of that section of the community which is international in its views.

5. The opinion of the present Chief Rabbi is quoted. I would quote the opinion of the late Chief Rabbi who held that office amid great respect for many years, and only died a few years ago.

"When we dwelt in the Holy Land we had a political organisation of our own; we had judges and kings to rule over us. But ever since the conquest of Palestine by the Romans, we have ceased to be a body politic; we are citizens of the country in which we dwell. We are simply Englishmen, or Frenchmen, or Germans, as the case may be, certainly holding particular theological tenets and practising special religious ordinances; but we stand in the same relation to our countrymen as any other religious sect, having the same stake in the national welfare and the same claim on the privileges and duties of citizens. To Mr. Goldwin Smith's question 'what is the political bearing of Judaism?' I would reply that Judaism has no political bearing whatever.

"The great bond which unites Israel is not one of race, but the bond of a common religion. We regard all mankind as Brethren. We consider ourselves citizens of the country in which we dwell, in the highest and fullest sense of the term, and esteem it our dearest privilege and duty to labour for its welfare. Is there aught incompatible with our devotion to humanity and with our patriotism, if, at the same time, we feel sympathy for those who profess the same religious faith and practise the same religious ordinances, whether they inhabit this country or other lands? If the bond which unites Jews were, in truth, tribal, it would be a matter of perfect indifference to us what might be the religious belief or practise of our brethren

in race. But the bare fact that we regard as apostates those of our fellow Jews who abandon their faith, is proof sufficient that religion is the main bond."

6. In an interview with Mr. Norman Bentwich in 1909 the following passage occurs:—

"Interviewer: But do they (the Zionist students) feel they can completely identify themselves with the English nation?

"Mr. Bentwich: They feel that, as Jews this is not possible. They cannot be as entirely English in thought as the man who is born of English parents and descended from ancestors who have mingled their blood with other Englishmen for generations. . . . There is no use disguising this fact. To me it seems impossible to separate religion from nationality in Judaism."

This is precisely the spirit against which we who are not Zionists protest, which I feel would go far to justify the exclusion of Zionists from British citizenship, and it was not to be wondered at that the Graduates and members of the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and London deplored this statement.

7. It is asserted that the American Jews are in favour of Zionism. The President of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, held in Buffalo, New York, on 28th June of this year, said:—

"I am not here to quarrel with Zionists. Mine is only the intention to declare that we as rabbis, who are consecrated to the service of the Lord, whose lips are to guard knowledge, and from whose mouth the people are to seek the Law, because we are messengers of the Lord of Hosts, have no place in a movement in which Jews band together on racial or national grounds, and for a political state, or even a legally assured home. . . . The religious Israel, having the sanctions of history, must not be sacrificed to the purely racial Israel of modern planning. . . . The time has come for this Conference to publish the statement that it stands for an Israel whose mission is religious, and that, in the light of this mission, it looks with disfavour upon any movement the purpose of which is other than religious."

Mr. Jacob Schiff, the leading Jew of America, writes on 11th May, 1917, as follows:—

"The breaking down of the Ghetto walls in Russia and the dispersing of, and the radical change in, the social status of one-half of our entire race, cannot but have a far reaching effect upon the Jewish problem everywhere. One thing appears certain, that the feeding, from the late Russian Pale, of Jewry outside of Russia, and especially of Jewry in our own country,

both in numbers and in the product of the great Jewish mind, is sure to become greatly reduced, if it is not going to cease entirely.

"The danger is great that this may, in coming generations, lead to disintegration, and I have asked myself what can be done to counteract this. Now, we cannot, and must not, close our eyes to the fact that Palestine has a peculiar attraction for the Jews; more so now even than in bygone ages. This, I feel, in the face of what has taken place in Russia, should be taken advantage of to establish in Palestine, not a Jewish nation, but the seed for a large, if not almost exclusive Jewish population, among which Jewish religious life, Jewish thought and Jewish learning would develop in all its primitive purity and become a reservoir, out of which would flow the stream to stimulate Jewry wherever it may exist among the nations of the world. The Mississippi and other great rivers would run dry, and the countries dependent on these rivers would go to waste, if the fountain-heads of these streams became closed up and so, notwithstanding what may be said to the contrary, Jewry will disappear and its mission will cease, if somewhere there is not a centre or central reservoir from which it can be ever and ever fed anew.

"Feeling in this respect as I do, and having come to the conclusion that a remedy for existing conditions may possibly be found in the repopulation of Palestine by the Jewish people, I continue at the same time of the opinion that no effort should be made to re-establish a Jewish nation, because I believe, were this done, the very purpose which is in my mind would become destroyed. I believe I am not far wrong if I say that from 50 per cent, to 75 per cent, of the so-called Jewish Nationalists are either atheists or agnostics, and that the great majority of the Jewish Nationalist leaders have absolutely no interest in the Jewish religion. Conditions in this respect are already now—before a Jewish nation has actually been established, as is the desire of these Jewish Nationalists—the same as those which existed when the Jewish state was an actuality and when the priest and prophet were ever in disagreement and feud with kingdom and state, and which led in the end to the state's destruction. This would surely happen again were a Jewish state again established."

8. I have obtained two other extracts which may interest the cabinet:—

(1) Italy

Signor Luigi Luzzatti, the eminent Italian Statesman who was

Prime Minister in 1910, writes "Jewish Exponent". 18th May, 1917:—

"Jews must acquire everywhere full religious liberty as existing in the United States and in Italy. In Palestine, delivered from Turks, Jews will live, not as sovereigns but as free citizens, to fertilise their father's land. Judaism is not a Nationality but a Religion."

(2) France

M. Joseph Reinach, the well-known French Deputy and "Polybe" of the Figaro, writes under date of 12th April, 1917:—

"Patriotism is the first of our duties. It is the duty of every country to accord the same rights to all citizens without regard to their beliefs. In this respect Rumania will certainly follow the example of Russia.

"I am a resolute adversary of Zionism. Jerusalem belongs to all the religions. We know its history for 3,000 years. The Jewish Kingdom endured scarcely five centuries.

"Judaism is a religion.

"The absolute duty of the Jews, as of the Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox, is to serve their country as good citizens and loyal soldiers. Zionism has been a dream. Tomorrow it will be nothing more than an archaeological snare."

9th October, 1917.

E. S. MONTAGU

APPENDIX

Successive Drafts and Final Text of the Balfour Declaration

Zionist Draft, July, 1917:

1. His Majesty's Government accepts the principle that Palestine should be reconstituted as the national home of the Jewish people.

2. His Majesty's Government will use its best endeavours to secure the achievement of this object and will discuss the necessary methods and means with the Zionist Organisation.

Balfour Draft, August, 1917:

His Majesty's Government accepts the principle that Palestine should be reconstituted as the national home of the Jewish people and will use their best endeavours to secure the achievement of this object and will be ready to consider any suggestions on the subject which the Zionist Organisation may desire to lay before them.

Milner Draft, August, 1917:

His Majesty's Government accepts the principle that every opportunity should be afforded for the establishment of a home for the Jewish people in Palestine and will use its best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object and will be ready to consider any suggestions on the subject which the Zionist organizations may desire to lay before them.

Milner-Amery Draft, October 4, 1917:

His Majesty's Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish race and will use its best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed in any other country by such Jews who are fully contended with their existing nationality.

Final Text, October 31, 1917:

His Majesty's Government views 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.



