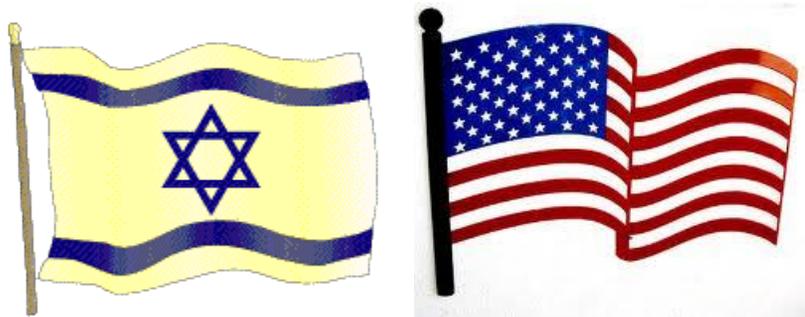


## The American War Congress (of 1918) and Zionism



"The Zionist movement is idealistic",  
the ideals... forgotten?

By Jerry Klinger

*The Balfour Declaration is one of the most momentous documents of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Zionist organization of America asked American Senators and Congressmen to respond, what were their feelings about the Balfour Declaration. During 1918, 61 Senators, 239 Congressmen and Representatives from three U.S. Territories wrote back reflecting on American popular feelings toward the Balfour Declaration, Jews and Zionism.*

We sit very still in a moving car and look at the world about us. Inside the car time is frozen. Outside the car, to the left and right, we see the world of the present blurring by. Looking in the rear view mirror, fleetingly, quickly, not wanting to take our eyes off of the road for too long, where we came from rapidly fades away to a distant forgetful memory. Looking ahead we strain, anxiously to see what we can of the future that not been arrived at yet. So it is with the Jewish memory of the Zionist story. So it goes. We act like we do not have to know from where we came from and who and how we got here now. Without knowing how can we be sure where we are going? Should Israel no longer be a Jewish State? Should we divide Jerusalem? Should we give up on the dream? Will it be better for Jews somewhere else, perhaps another country?

### Theodor Herzl – the Jewish State

*"Palestine is our unforgettable historic homeland. . . Let me repeat once more my opening words: The Jews who will it shall achieve their State. We shall live at last as free men on our own soil, and in our own homes peacefully die. The world will be liberated by our freedom, enriched by our wealth, magnified by our greatness. And whatever we attempt there for our own benefit will redound mightily and beneficially to the good of all mankind." Theodor Herzl – the Jewish State*

### U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis

*"The Zionist movement is idealistic....."*

*America's fundamental law seeks to make real the brotherhood of man. That brotherhood became the Jewish fundamental law more than twenty-five hundred years ago.*

*America is full of nationalities which, while accepting with enthusiasm their new American citizenship, nevertheless look to some center in the old world as the source and inspiration of their national culture and traditions.*

*There is no inconsistency between loyalty to America and loyalty to Jewry. The Jewish spirit, the product of our religion and experiences, is essentially modern and essentially American....*

*Shall we voluntarily yield to anti-Semitism, and instead of solving our "problem" end it by noble suicide? Surely this is no time for Jews to despair. Let us make clear to the world that we too are a nationality striving for equal rights to life and to self-expression.*

*They believe that only in Palestine can Jewish life be fully protected from the forces of disintegration; that there alone can the Jewish spirit reach its full and natural development; and that by securing for those Jews who wish to settle there the opportunity to do so, not only those Jews, but all Jews will be benefited, and that the long perplexing Jewish Problem will, at last, find solution.*

*The ghetto walls are now falling. Jewish life cannot be preserved and developed, assimilation cannot be averted, unless there be reestablished in the fatherland a center from which the Jewish spirit may radiate and give to the Jews scattered throughout the world that inspiration which springs from the memories of a great past and the hope of a great future. – A Call to the Educated Jew*

*And since death is not a solution of the problem of life, the solution of the Jewish Problem necessarily involves the continued existence of the Jews as Jews. – Brandeis- the Jewish Problem*

*We seek to protect as individuals those constituting a minority; but we fail to realize that protection cannot be complete unless group equality also is recognized". Brandeis – The Jewish Problem*

*"Tell the entire world that we will never surrender our Homeland!" Women in Green - 2007*

## **The Balfour Declaration**

Letter to Lord Rothschild from Mr. Arthur James Balfour, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs:

Foreign Office, Nov. 2nd, 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 favor the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious 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

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Only 121 words long, the Balfour Declaration spanned the hopes of thousands of years and affected the lives of tens of millions of people. The Declaration, by the British government, is a promise to facilitate the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people.

The Declaration was a promise to the Jewish people of the world. It promised to offer a "final solution" to the Jewish Problem. It was a solution that meant life to the Jewish National identity, to Jewish spiritual and cultural revival – to Judaism itself.

The boldness of the Declaration for the many horrifically oppressed Jewish minorities, especially in Eastern Europe and in the Arab world, was a hope of physical salvation. Western European Jewry living deep within the delusions of liberalism and emancipation, battled in a rapidly losing war suffered defeat after defeat against the double-edged sword of assimilation. Assimilation offered an end to anti-Semitism but it also meant the demise of Jewish life, even Judaism. Intermarriage reached almost 50% in Germany before World War II. Assimilated Jews were losing their identity and voluntarily committing cultural suicide for security. It was a false security as Hitler proved bitterly, Western Liberalism failed.

Inside of the United States, anti-Semitism never reached the level of European experience. America was different. America is different, not because it lacked anti-Semitism. America is different because it is an amalgamation of national, social and religious identities, tension mixing in a caldron of how to live together as one people. European and Muslim anti-Semitism did not find a nourishing environment. Anti-Semitism did travel to America and is present in America. It was unable to root deeply.

World War I, the Great War, the War to make the world safe for Democracy was viewed by Americans as a great struggle for progress of freedom over autocracy. It was a idealistic war to change the world for the better. The rights of minorities, trampled for so very long, were finally going to be liberated. President Wilson espoused the ideals of America – recognize and protect

the rights of small against the powerful. Wilsonian ideals and American ideals merged to seek freedom and grant national self expression to the many small peoples, the Belgians, the Greeks, the Armenians, the Arabs and the Jews.

The Balfour Declaration was a two thousand year old recognition of justice that Wilson supported and the American people supported but, not universally. The Balfour Declaration for Zionism was deeply rejected by the American Jewish Reform movement, the largest American Jewish community. It was bitterly rejected by the American orthodox community. Each viewed Zionism as a major threat to their future and safety. Reform Jews, looking over their shoulders at the European form of historical anti-Semitism, feared that the loss of American toleration and acceptance. They feared the accusation of dual loyalty. The religious feared the loss of social control over the people if Jews gave up waiting for God to send the Messiah and salvation. They feared if Jews took their salvation into their own hands they would no longer need God. The religious solution to the Jewish problem would mean that Jews no longer needed God.

The strongest support for the Balfour Declaration came not from the Jews but from Christians. Largely due to the efforts of one extraordinary Jew, Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, American political support for the Balfour Declaration and the Zionist ideal was solidified. It was solidified into a joint resolution of Congress Sept 12, 1922. Congress declared and the President of the United States, Warren G. Harding, signed a resolution virtually mirroring the Balfour Declaration.

*"Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that the United States of America favors the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of Christian and all other non-Jewish communities in Palestine, and that the Holy places and religious buildings and sites in Palestine shall be adequately protected."*

The resolution marked the high point of American political support for Zionism until after World War II. The American Foreign Service, much like the British Foreign Service, worked quietly and diligently against Zionism. The passage of the American Congressional Joint resolution, of support for the Jewish National Home was bitter sweet for Justice Brandeis. The Zionist Organization of America had reached its apogee of membership under his stewardship, at about 200,000 members. The American Zionist movement, bitterly fragmented against itself in an internecine struggle for control and direction between the European leadership of Chaim Weizman and the American leadership of Justice Brandeis. Brandeis was voted out of leadership never to return to his previous role. American Zionism disintegrated into an impotent shadow of its previous self as the dark death clouds of Nazism grew. The European (contemporaneously Israeli) mode of Zionism became dominant with a simple theme to the American Zionist. *We want your money and support but not your interference* – a theme that has carried to this day.

How did American political leadership understand what was Zionism? Justice Brandeis had done his homework. In 1918, the First World War still raged bloody and interminable. The Balfour Declaration was public. The Zionist Organization of America commissioned an extraordinary

written poll of the U.S. Congress asking them for their opinions on Zionism and the Balfour Declaration. Over the balance of 1918 three hundred Congressman and Senators responded. Overwhelmingly, the response was positive. The reasons were many but echoed a clear American understanding of Zionist principles. To American Jewish ears, the Congressional responses were then and they are today, astonishing. They were and are inspiring.

#### Congressional Reasons given for support of the Balfour Declaration:

It was the right thing to do. It is justice to the Jewish people after 2,000 years of oppression. To be a normal people, Jews are entitled to a home that will become a National focal point of spiritual, physical and cultural rebirth. The Jewish State will be positive for the world as Jewish energy is directed to improve the Middle East for Jew, Christian and Muslim. Zionism is not anti-American but reflects on the best of American ideals. Jews are good, welcome, patriotic citizens of America. A good American Jew is a strong Zionist. Zionism is morally correct. Divine guidance liberated the Holy Land from the Turk and the Muslim to return it to the rightful stewardship of the Jews. The land allowed to fester and decay under the Turks and Muslims, will be and is being rejuvenated under the Jews. Jerusalem is Jewish. The Jewish State will be a sanctuary for the oppressed Jews of the world and a home for those who choose to move there.

A Jewish flag will fly over a Jewish State with a Jewish Language and the Jewish religion. It will be a source of pride for all Jews.

#### Congressional reticence and negative support

Yet not all were positive. Some responses were negative. Many contained the caveat that the Jewish National Home do nothing that will impinge negatively on the rights of the new minorities. Most comments recognized that Jewish humanitarianism would not let that happen.

One responder, first term Congressman Fiorello La Guardia of New York, responded in the absolute negative to the Balfour inquiry. The Italian Catholic charismatic leader was the product of the union of a liberal, unaffiliated Jewish mother and a Catholic Italian father. La Guardia believed that the Jews were only a religion and nothing more. In later years, when he was the beloved Mayor of New York, he did much to advance Jews into the respected levels of New York government and society. Later President Franklin Roosevelt did much the same. American Jewry idolized him. Ironically La Guardia, like Roosevelt, wanted the doors to Palestine closed. La Guardia did not believe that Palestine should be a Jewish Centre of life and a refuge. Roosevelt, during WWII, agreed to a policy, advanced by Secretary of State Cordell Hull, barring Jewish refugees from seeking to escape Europe to Palestine because it would anger the Arabs. The policy never was put into place. In Tel Aviv today a major intersection is named for La Guardia.

Between 1920 and 1930, of the 3,000,000 Jews in America, less than 2,000 emigrated to Palestine. The American Zionist movement radically contracted before World War II.

At the 24<sup>th</sup> Zionist Congress held in Cleveland 1921, Judge Julian Mack, the President of the Zionist Organization of America, distressfully reported;

*"I regret that it is at this time and under these circumstances and with these conflicts raging in our own organization that their first visit is paid (Weizman). I regret that they could not have been here under happier circumstances and at a happier time. The forces of the Zionist Organization of America are divided and they have been divided for some time past, and because of that division, clear, plain speech on the part of everyone has to be expected. ....I have hoped and hoped and hoped for peace, peace in our own ranks. Peace in our own ranks, peace between us and the World Organization. I have hoped for it before Dr. Weizmann and his associates came."*

*American Jewish Zionists became their own worst enemies when unity was needed to face the Nazis."*

The dimmed American Zionist torch would be passed to younger more aggressive believers in Zionism, such as Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver. The stridency of American Zionism changed, as death loomed larger for the Jews of Europe. Herzl's vision of the need for a safe secure home for Jews did not happen. America had closed its doors to Jewish immigration fleeing the death that was coming. The British reneged on the Balfour Declaration. British warships barred the shores of Palestine; they did not want to anger the Arabs with Jews escaping to life in Palestine.

Death came to the Jews of Europe.

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## Quotes from the written responses of the War Congress of 1918 to the Zionist Organization of America

Senator William F. Kirby, of Arkansas.

[Palestine will free the Jews from oppression. It will be a good thing.](#)

*"If it is the purpose to re-establish a nation by bringing together the oppressed peoples of this race from other lands, its achievement would be a great blessing..... The people of this race are desirable citizens in our own country"*

Senator Charles S. Thomas, of Colorado

[Jewish condition worldwide will be improved.](#)

*"I believe, that the status of the Jewish people the world over would be improved and their rights more fully recognized, if, like people of other races, they enjoyed a fixed national territory, possessing the attributes of a modern: government, and recognized as a member of the family of nations."*

Senator Lawrence Y. Sherman, Of Illinois.

## Safe refuge for the Jew

*"The Jewish State founded upon the principles of toleration and civil justice would enable those of the Hebrew race who have been the victims of oppression in the Old World to form a country where the future peace league of nations could recognize and extend its protection. My hope would be that it would eventually become a place of refuge of the countries that persecute or discriminate against this race. I believe a dawning of a better day with more universal toleration and a keener sense of justice is at hand. A Jewish homeland would be a practical step in relief."*

Senator Albert B. Cummins, of Iowa.

## If the Jewish people wish a Jewish state they will have it.

*"If it be the desire of the Jewish people themselves, I am in favor of lending our national influence toward the establishment in Palestine of a government; that is to say, an independent state, sustained and controlled by men and women of that blood."*

Senator Bert M. Fernald, of Maine

## Jerusalem city of the Jews

*"Jerusalem is the logical city for the Jews."*

Senator France of Maryland

## Anti-Semitism will go away with normalization

*"I have no doubt myself that anti-Semitic feelings and sentiments must decline and ultimately disappear completely with the progress of civilization.... I believe that its most thoughtful advocates see in this movement not only the securing of the national home, the reclamation of Palestine, the awakening of an interest in the revival of Jewish agriculture, language, literature and art, but, more than all, the rededication of the Jewish people themselves to the great spiritual conceptions and ideals of the past, to that lofty spiritual altruism which is the very essence of their religion."*

Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, of Massachusetts

## Mr. Lodge

*"Jerusalem is the city of the Jews and they would be the natural guardians of the city and of the Holy Places, it being of course understood, as Mr. Balfour says, that nothing would be done which would prejudice the civil and religious rights of non-Jewish people in Palestine, which I am sure would be protected and conserved in every way by the Zionists."*

*"I feel that the effort of the Jewish people to establish a National Home in Palestine is not only natural but in all ways to be desired."*

Senator Frank B. Kellogg, of Minnesota

He does not believe many American Jews will leave for Palestine but will satisfy a spiritual need.

*"I do not, of course, expect that large numbers of Jews will leave this country, where they have all the advantages of our enlightened institutions, to live in Palestine, but I believe that it will satisfy a longing that has never ceased to exist through their struggle during all these centuries."*

Senator James A. Reed, of Missouri

Jews will benefit and improve the Middle East.

*"I believe it would make for the peace of the world and the welfare of humanity if a great nation composed of Jewish people would be established where the Jewish race so long maintained the highest type of civilization: then known to the world. The influence of such a nation might do much toward regenerating what may almost be" called a lost continent in Asia."*

Senator Albert B. Fall, of New Mexico.

Jew loyal but supports the ties with the Jewish State similarly as all American immigrant people to their respective cultural origins

*"I may say frankly that I regard the great majority of Jews in the United States as loyal American citizens. I expect to see a great majority remain American citizens. To such of the Jews as may desire to establish a residence in Palestine, I am willing to extend any assistance possible. With respect to the Jews who I believe will continue to reside in the United States, I, of course, recognize not only their right, but the propriety of their action in maintaining their religious beliefs and observances, the same right is recognized to all other people or members of all other denominations or sects. Such maintenance of religious beliefs or observances of same, never of course, conflict with the patriotic duty of American Citizens."*

Senator Le Baron B. Colt, of Rhode Island

National Home will unify Jewish national spirit and not detract from loyalty.

*"I believe that the establishment of such a Home will tend to unify and crystallize the Jewish national spirit and yet at the same time will not in any degree detract from that loyalty to America and American institutions so characteristic of the Jewish people."*

Senator Reed Smoot, of Utah.

Christian ideal to support the 2,000 year old dream

*"Let me say to you that I emphasize this not only as a good American, but also as a good Christian. There is every reason for the American Jews to give this movement their entire*

*support. It is their duty as well as the duty of every good American. Aside from the international, economic, social and religious aspect, I consider it very fascinating and inspiring. I should consider it pleasure to aid in my own way in the realization of dream of the Jewish people for the last two thousand years."*

Senator Miles Poindexter, of Washington

[Palestine will heal the Jewish physical and spiritual souls. It will become a place of world inspiration.](#)

*"The great opportunity thus offered will be a healing balm to the hearts of hundreds, of thousands, and perhaps millions, of scattered Hebrews in all parts of the world. Many of them have had this great ideal before their eyes in hope and imagination for many years, and its consummation will seem like compensation, in part, for the sufferings and tribulations and wanderings through long ages and generations of the race. While, perhaps, the return to Palestine may not appeal to all Jews, to many, and especially to those who have preserved in their full vigor the Jewish national traditions -it will be a happy and consecrated event... This re-establishment of their people, or a portion of them, in a self-governing community under the protection of a great free empire, will add a new source of strength and inspiration to the world."*

## Congress

Representative Henderson M. Jacoway, of Arkansas.

[Jerusalem holy city of the Jews](#)

*"Jerusalem is the city of the Jews, and why should they not be the guardians of the City?"*

Representative Denver S. Church, of California.

[Palestine home of the Jews they love it more.](#)

*"I would like to see Palestine become the homeland for the Jews, a little republic operated and controlled by them, and guarded and guaranteed against harm by the great powers of the earth. Palestine should be in the hands of the Jews, for they love it more than any other nation can, and consequently would protect it better, and make the sojourner feel more at home."*

Representative Eneris A. Hayes, of California.

[Palestine is the home of the Jews](#)

*"It is both natural and proper that the Jewish nation should desire a country or state predominantly the own. Palestine and Jerusalem are, by tradition the country of the Jewish nation, and I believe that efforts of the Jewish people to re-establish their home there is not only natural but in all ways desirable."*

Representative Henry Z. Osborne, of California.

Believes that the Balfour declaration is sentimental – he does not believe many would care to go there.

*"I have no hesitancy in stating that in a general way I approve the declaration made by Mr. Balfour of establishing in Palestine a National Home for the Jewish people.*

*"I think the establishment of such a home is almost purely sentimental, however, as I doubt if any considerable number of Jews in the United States, and perhaps in other countries, would care to avail themselves of such a home."*

Representative Richard P. Freeman of Connecticut

### **The Jewish State will be only be by the will of the Jews**

*"Whether or not a Jewish nation can be created or re-established in Palestine depends upon the Jews who are willing to make it their home and their country"*

Representative John E. Raker, of California

### **Jews have brought prosperity to Palestine where decay only existed**

*"The Jewish people have been hoping for this solution of the world problem for hundreds of years. It will revive the Hebrew language as spoken in the days of old. Furthermore, it is a most practical venture. This country under the rule of the Turk, had not been used to its highest extent agriculturally and otherwise. Within the last thirty-five years, as I understand it, the Jews have brought prosperity into part of that country. The establishment of a Jewish home, therefore, would increase the material value of the land many fold, if not indeed, effect its spiritual uplift in many ways."*

Representative Addison T. Smith, of Idaho

### **Divine interposition**

*"The student of history must be blind who cannot recognize Divine interposition in the returning of God's ancient people to the 'promised land. The Ruler of the universe is demonstrating to the world that His word is something more than a "Scrap of paper."*

Representative Thomas Gallagher, of Illinois

### **There should be Jewish in the land of their fathers**

*"I certainly feel that the oldest of oppressed races, a race which has kept its racial consciousness under such adverse conditions and during nearly two thousand years of exile, is entitled at last to be permitted to erect a new Jewish State in the old borne of their fathers."*

Representative Niels Juul, of Illinois

Not all Jews will return – supported Jewish aspirations much as he does the Belgian – dispossessed by force but managing to preserve their identity.

*"I cannot conceive of a thought more beautiful than the restoration of Palestine, the re-organization and reconstruction of the Jewish nation. ... I, of course, realize that the return to Palestine by all the Jews is impossible and impracticable, but I am sure that hundreds of thousands of the Hebrew race will avail themselves of the opportunity to live and die in the ancient home of their fathers, possessing as they do a history, a religion and a language which centuries of persecution have been unable to blot out."*

*I favor Zionism because I look upon the Jewish, situation as I look upon the Belgian situation. Jews were dispossessed of their home by force and, in spite of that force they have managed to preserve through the centuries a language, a literature, and a religion."*

Representative Medill McCormick, of Illinois

Wants an autonomous Jewish state – understood Brandeis's view – few American Jews would move but it is good Americanism to support a refuge for the oppressed Jews of other lands and makes good American idealism for Jews to support Zionism.

*"It goes without saying that I subscribe to Mr. Balfour's declaration for a homeland for the Jews. But I prefer to go further and to say that we ought to support the creation in Palestine of an autonomous state, to be settled by Jews, to whom its destinies should be confided with clear provision for the rights of others, whether living in the Holy Land or going into pilgrimages to holy places.*

*There is no statement for Zionism and the establishment of the Jewish State so able and so clear as that of my friend, Mr. Justice Brandeis. It should be widely distributed. Doubtless few American Jews would settle in Palestine, but even so, that in no sense answers Justice Brandeis's argument.*

*A Jewish state would afford present security and a sure future for the Jews of eastern Europe and their children, who would settle there; it would serve as a deterrent to the oppression of Jews everywhere; it would open to the world, and guard for generations to come places of incomparable religious and historic interest to mankind. Since this' in no sense militates against the citizenship and Americanism of the Jews in America, I am happy to join my views to that of the others who speak for the Jewish state through your volume."*

Representative Adolph J. Sabath, of Illinois

Is there a Jew whose soul is so dead it no longer bears the hope for a Homeland?

*"Breathes there a Jew with soul so dead that it no longer reverberates with the sound of hope for a reconstructed 'Homeland' whence once again Israel may send forth his ideals, his literature and his philosophy for the further enlightenment of the world?"*

Representative William E. Cox, of Indiana

### **Zionism will teach the world ideals about purpose and principles**

*"However, the formation of a Jewish State, probably a Republic in the Holy Land, must of necessity also be of great material assistance not only to the scattered Jews in various countries, but to all the inhabitants of the world.... I am sure that in the course of time Zionism will embrace not only all the members of the Jewish faith and nation, but also all other peoples who will have had an opportunity to learn about its purposes and principles."*

Representative Henry A. Barnhart, of Indiana

### **Jews need to speak up**

*"While I have heard no expression from the Jewish residents of the district I represent I should think they would all be in favor of the re-establishment, in Palestine of a national Jewish center. I can see no reason why such a favor should not be granted to the deserving Jewish people of the world."*

Louis W. Fairfield, Indiana

### **Assimilation means the loss of Jewish life and identity**

*"In the eternal fitness of things every race should have a country unless it is willing to lose its identity to that country which it may happen to be resident."*

Representative Albert H. Vestal, of Indiana

### **Jews have been loyal and fought in the war they are owed**

*"I am in favor of this proposition because of unqualified loyalty and bravery of the Jewish young who have donned the armor of the Allies and who are making the supreme sacrifice upon the blood-stained fields of France, Belgium, Italy, Turkey, and all of the other fronts."*

Horace M. Towner – Iowa

### **Rid the Muslim oppressive rule in the Holy Land – return it to the Jew**

*"To rid the Holy Land of the Moslem rule, and to restore the sacred soil to the people who made it sacred should appeal to every man who loves justice and hates oppression and persecution."*

Jesse D. Price – Maryland

Jews provided the solution to the Jewish problem – accepted by all including the Muslims. At the time the small creation of the tiny Jewish state was not viewed as the central concern to emergence of the vast Arab and Muslim states.

*"There have been many ways proposed to solve much perplexed Jewish question. However, very few leaders in Europe, outside perhaps of the Jews themselves struck upon the idea that the only original and real end to this problem, and its most satisfactory solution, are, not in charity or even freedom and equality among nations but in the re-establishment of the old Kingdom Judea where the Jews may be allowed to solve its own problems and take an interest in the welfare of Jews elsewhere...It is now practically universally: accepted not only among the Jews of the world but among, Christians and even Mohammedans."*

Gilbert A. Currie – Michigan

Few will return but for those who choose to remain behind it will be a cause of pride to know a Jewish flag waves over Jerusalem.

*"I am fully aware of the fact that only a very small percentage of the American Jews will return to their ancient national home in Palestine, nor is it necessary or desirable that American Jews should return. However, for those who will return from other countries it surely will be a blessing and the realization of a life-long dream, and to those who will remain in those countries where they have already become acclimatized, it will undoubtedly cause much pride and happiness to know that once for all the Jewish flag is to wave in the historic City of Jerusalem."*

Representative Halvor Steenerson, of Minnesota

Felt that the Balfour precludes the establishment of a Jewish State because it would prejudice the rights of Jews in other countries.

*"...it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country," I submit that the qualifying words I have underscored so limit its meaning that it affords no support to the contention that it favors the establishment of an independent Jewish nation in Palestine."*

Representative Isaac Bachrach, of New Jersey

The dream of a Jewish homeland is a legal reality

*"Thus re-pledging itself to the object of Zionism as was defined at the first Zionist Congress held at Basle, in; 1896, to wit: 'The establishment of a publicly recognized, legally secured homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine. 'Yes -No longer is the 'publicly recognized and' legally secured home for the Jewish people in Palestine a mere dream or fantasy. The declaration of Great Britain, as we all know, has been received with equal favor by Italy, France, and all Allied democratic Nations. A Jewish National home, no longer a dream, is a reality; no longer a fantasy, it is an international fact."*

Representative W.E. Clearey, of New York

## **WWI brought about the Jewish State**

*"This great war happened to be the vehicle on which the Jewish Land, the Jewish Government, will be ushered into the world."*

Representative S. Wallace Dempsey, of New York

### [A modern Crusader](#)

*"The regaining of the Holy Land is, however, one of the memorable historical events of all time."*

Jerome F. Donovan – New York -

[Anti- Zionist – abandon your old loves or leave it. Would he have said that to his Irish American constituency?](#)

*"I speak of this principle as bearing on the relation of the subject under discussion, to the duty of patriotism, the most pressing duty of the hour. The Jew, upon freely adopting America, must be true to America. As soon as he is endowed with all the rights of American citizenship, he must be true to himself as an American citizen. He owes America what every other American owes it; a single-hearted and all absorbing devotion. His spirit must be purely American. He must draw upon and contribute to the American genius--a genius which, however lavishly it may draw from the ancient genius of the Jewish people, is, nevertheless, no other genius but its own.*

*A Jew, who has not spontaneously adopted this or any other country, as his home-to whom Palestine alone is domicile and home- land, ought to be afforded ample opportunity to give expression to his highest self by be- coming a citizen of Palestine."*

Representative Anthony J. Griffin, of New York

### [Palestine as a refuge for the Jewish oppressed masses](#)

*"I feel that the civilized world will acknowledge with joy the proposal to rescue the Holy places of the Christian and Jewish religions from the domination of the unspeakable Turk. A similar declaration as to Armenia would be equally welcome.*

*I have many friends among the Jews, and I do not find among them any evidence of either wish or purpose to relinquish their allegiance to the United States of America in order to affiliate themselves with the New Jewish Commonwealth. The Jews who are in the United States are a part of this great nation irrevocably welded into its structure, but there are many members of the race in countries less tolerant and liberal than ours, who would grasp at the opportunity to find rest, peace and happiness in the home of their fathers.*

*With this thought in mind I cannot too highly commend the Zionist movement."*

Representative Fiorello H. LaGuardia, of New York

Strongly anti- Zionist. His mother was a liberal unaffiliated Jew. His father Catholic Italian. A street intersection in Tel Aviv is named for him. He advanced Jews in New York but saw Jews as nothing but a religion or a culture, not a people.

*"I do not approve of the official declarations of England, France and Italy on the Zionist question.*

*"My reasons for not favoring it, briefly stated, are:*

*"I do not believe that it is to the interest of the Jews or the world to isolate them or to separate them with an effort to form a distinct and separate nation. While, of course, they are racially one, still the Jews of America, England, France and Italy are no different than their fellow countrymen, of their respective countries, and to go back and establish a separate colony I believe would retard rather than expedite the opportunities of the Jews of the East.*

*"The only action by the United States Government which I favor is that which we have maintained in the past-the firm insistence upholding Jewish rights and liberties all over the world. We have been fairly successful in Turkey in the past and completely so now. The Russian problem is one of the past. I, therefore, do not approve of appropriate resolutions by Congress in favor of the establishment in Palestine of a Jewish National Centre.*

*"My views, in general, in regard to the effort of the Jewish people to establish a national home in Palestine are:*

*"( a) That it is a mistake to do so. I heartily approve of establishing Jewish centres for educational, religious and social betterment in every nation, but I feel strongly that it is a mistake to do so in anyone centre for the whole world.*

*"(b) The Jewish question is only one of religion.*

*I believe in absolute liberty of worship, therefore the Jew is entitled to the fullest protection all over the world in that respect. I believe that a great deal of good is still to be worked out in this country among the Jews. It often happens in a new country that the youngest generation are inclined to forget all the good in the teachings of the Jewish religion and acquire all that is bad in that of the customs of their adopted country, and even some*

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*"I would be delighted to meet you and have the benefit of your knowledge on this subject, for I am seeking all the information that I can get in the course of the further study of this matter. My mind is still"*

Representative Henry I. Emerson, of Ohio

[Jews welcome in the U.S. Jews are good, patriotic citizens](#)

*"I assure you that I am in favor of the British Declaration and shall assist all I can to establish the Jewish nation in Palestine.*

*I feel Congress should assist and this country should act in conjunction with the other countries of Europe in re-establishing all the smaller nations of the world.*

*However, we welcome to this country all the Jewish people who desire to come here and live, and make this country their home. The Jew makes a good citizen and a loyal and patriotic American."*

Representative J. Hampton Moore, of Pennsylvania

[Rejoice, the Jew is no longer a man without a country.](#)

*"There will be reason to rejoice when it can no longer be said of the Jew that he is a man without a country."*

John M. Morin – Pennsylvania

[Jews as better Zionists are better Americans](#)

*" ... I can not see how anybody, Jewish or non-Jewish, can be opposed to Zionist aspirations. It seems to me that any Jew who is a Zionist must be not alone a better Jew for that fact, but also a better American, because by supporting the Zionistic ideal he is supporting the liberty of his own great and distinguished race in the world, while at the same time not in the slightest impairing the loyalty which he owes first and above all to America."*

Commissioner Teodoro R. Yangco – of the Philippine Islands

**Jewish problem same as with the Filipino**

*"We Filipinos feel with the Jews in their aspirations, for many of our problems, to a certain degree, are also those of the Jewish problem. The end of the war will mark the independence of the Jewish Nation, which, I hope, would be followed by the independence of the Philippine Islands. I feel that our freedom will be greeted by the Jews of the world just as we Filipinos are*

*ready to greet your rejuvenation. May Zionism prove the solution to the many problems that confronted the Jews for thousands of years"*

Cordell Hull – Tennessee

Irony, as secretary of State argued against the Jews finding refuge in Palestine because it might anger the Arabs during WWII. As a Congressman he supported the ideal.

*"Jewish re-establishment in Palestine is a matter which should be governed by the wishes and the welfare of those affected or to be affected by the proposed plan. I should be in entire harmony with such a solution of the question."*

Representative Frank L. Greene, of Vermont

Zionism is not another colonial or racist project.

*"If I had the idea that this propaganda had for its purpose merely another experiment in long familiar colonization schemes, that it was merely a racially clannish movement for social, economic, and political achievement to take its place among the governments of the earth as another 'nation' or power, I would not write these lines.*

*But, I am given to understand that it has no such aim or intention. I understand that the object of this movement is to open an opportunity for some groups of the Jewish people outside of America, even in Palestine, itself, to restore their national identity in the land of their ancestors: to welcome back to those venerated scenes members of the family scattered over the face of the earth who may desire thus to repatriate themselves; and to hold out the promise of such an asylum to Jews who with their forbears, for many centuries, have been politically (and thus socially) oppressed and homeless in certain strange lands, but whose hearts' windows have ever been opened toward Jerusalem through it all.*

*And this, I take it, not so much with the idea that there shall arise from such a reconstitution of Palestine a nation of world politicians and traffickers, as that from the return of this ancient people to their ancient seat by the side of the Cradle of Civilization, the Mediterranean, the world shall hear once more the harp of Judah, the songs of Zion, and the voices of the Hebrew prophets; and sages, poets and writers of the might past shall ultimately sound again in the recreation of that intellectual sound and moral spirit that one time blessed the know world.*

*If this is some day to mean the enlargement of the world's social and spiritual life by reinforcement of much that was sublime in ancient Jewish culture, it is to be welcomed."*

David G. Classon – Wisconsin

A Jewish flag will fly over the Jewish State with Pride and Joy

*"know that few of the Jews of the liberal countries would go back to Palestine, but all of them in every land would realize with pride and joy that a Jewish flag floated over a state which was*

*Jewish in language and religion and where those of their faith and nationality who desired to go there, might live in happiness and in peace."*