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Section 4

PRIMARY SOURCE **The Balfour Declaration**

Sir Arthur James Balfour, the British foreign secretary, wrote the following letter to Lord Lionel Rothschild, a Zionist leader, on November 2, 1917. Lord Rothschild replied, "I can assure you that the gratitude of ten millions of people will be yours, for the British government has opened up, by their message, a prospect of safety and comfort to large masses of people who are in need of it." What do you think were the pros and cons of the Balfour Declaration?

Foreign Office,
November 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 favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country"

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Y. in
Arthur Balfour

The Granger Collection, New York.

Discussion Questions

Recognizing Facts and Details

1. How did the British government respond to the Zionist goal of establishing a Jewish homeland in Palestine?
2. What conditions did the British expect Zionists to meet?

3. **Recognizing Point of View** Zionists such as Lord Rothschild were pleased by the letter from Balfour. How do you think Muslim residents of Palestine might have responded to Balfour's letter?