A Century with the Balfour Declaration

Between Realpolitik and Utopia

International Conference, University of Basel, 1-2 November 2017

Convened and organized by:

Alfred Bodenheimer & Erik Petry, Center for Jewish Studies, University of Basel

Maurus Reinkowski, Middle Eastern Studies, University of Basel

Hans-Lukas Kieser, The Centre for History of Violence, University of Newcastle, Australia

Conference support: Mustafa Nasar

Conference venue:

Panels 1-5: Kollegienhaus (Petersplatz 1), lecture hall 111

Roundtable discussion and keynote lecture: Kollegienhaus, lecture hall 118
Welcome and opening remarks by the conveners (8.30-8.45)

Panel 1: The Balfour Declaration and World War I (8.45-10.45)
Chair: Hans-Lukas Kieser

Thomas Schmutz (University of Newcastle, Australia, and University of Zurich): From the Eastern Question to the Balfour Declaration: Western Diplomacy and the Scramble for the Ottoman Empire (1908-1917)
Talha Çiçek (Istanbul Medeniyet University / British Academy Newton Fellow, SOAS, University of London): ‘The Zionist Problem is Growing up’: The Ottoman Response to the Balfour Declaration
Omri Eilat (Tel Aviv University): Russian Legs, German Minds, Ottoman Hearts? The Jewish Professional Elite in Greater Syria During World War One

Panel 2: Utopias and Dystopias (11.15-12.30)
Chair: Maurus Reinkowski

Hans-Lukas Kieser (University of Newcastle, Australia, and University of Zurich): Zion Versus Turan? Balfour and Brest-Litovsk as Utopian/Dystopian Escapes from Sykes-Picot Imperialism
Ahmad Diab (University of California, Berkeley): Utopia as Dystopia: Literary Affects and Colonial Effects

Panel 3: The Wider Context (14.00-17.30, with coffee break)
Chair: Erik Petry

Arie M. Dubnov (George Washington University): On Vertical Alliances and Informal Imperialism, or: Between the Balfour Declaration (1917) and the Balfour Formula (1926)
Martin Bunton (University of Victoria): From Utopia to Realpolitik: The Rise and Fall of the Balfour Declaration, 1917-1939
Maryanne A. Rhett (Monmouth University): How the Balfour Declaration Helped the World Define ‘Nation’
Peter Wien (University of Maryland): After Balfour: The Arab-Jewish-German Triangle. The State of the Art in Research about a Complicated Relationship

Roundtable Discussion
Israel & Palestine: Worlds Apart vs. Entangled History (18.15-19.45)
Chair: Alfred Bodenheimer (Jewish Studies, University of Basel)

Dan Diner (The Hebrew University, Jerusalem)
Sarah Khayati (Middle Eastern Studies, University of Basel)
Stefanie Mahrer (Jewish Studies, University of Basel)
Mustafa Nasar (Middle Eastern Studies, University of Basel)
Panel 4: Reactions Within Judaism and Zionism (9.00-12.30, with coffee break)
Chair: Maurus Reinkowski

Erik Petry (University of Basel): The Balfour Declaration und German Zionism
Ada Gebel (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and Sha’anan College): Agudat Yisrael and the Balfour Declaration: An Ideological Watershed
Sharon Gordon (Tel Aviv University): Ethics and Political Realism: Martin Buber’s Ambivalence Towards the Balfour Declaration
Andrea Kirchner (Goethe University, Frankfurt a.M.): ‘Two Banks Has the Jordan – This Is Ours and That Is As Well’: Revisionist Zionism and Its Interpretation of the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate
Christoph Jahr (University of Düsseldorf): From Paul Nathan to Arthur James Balfour: German Jewry, Philanthropy and Imperialism in Palestine, 1898 to 1918

Panel 5: The Impact on Palestine (14.30-16.30)
Chair: Erik Petry

Sebastian Schirrmeister (University of Hamburg): Balfour’s Heirs? Literary Depictions of the British Mandate in Hebrew and German Literature from Palestine/Israel
Ulrike Stehli-Werbeck (University of Basel): Palestinian (and Other Arabic) Literary Voices on the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate
Carl-Leo von Hohenthal (University of Freiburg i. Br.): Balfour Fulfilled? British Politics at the End of the British Mandate on Palestine (1945-1948)

Keynote Lecture (18.15-19.30)
Introduction: Alfred Bodenheimer

Dan Diner (The Hebrew University, Jerusalem): Von Balfour nach Biltmore: Über Telos und Kontingenz in der jüdischen Staatsgründung