

The Balfour Project



By Vincent Fean

The main charitable aim of the Balfour Project is education – to raise awareness in British schools, universities, and civil society of what was done in our name. With that comes the aim of advocacy: to persuade Britain’s people, political leaders, and Parliamentarians to act now in support of the Palestinian right to self-determination, to genuinely sovereign Palestinian statehood alongside Israel on pre-June 1967 lines, to mutual security for both peoples – not one people’s security at the expense of the

conference, “Israel-Palestine: in search of the rule of law,” to highlight the absence of justice and seek change. I am proud of the concluding statement (www.balfourproject.org/israel-palestine-and-law) by the Balfour Project: a British charity which asks for change by us, the British – a change of British mindset, of approach, to be based on equal rights, not political expediency. We make no claim to educate or advise anyone – except ourselves. There is much to do in that regard. Our



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What’s in a name? The Balfour Project charity (www.balfourproject.org) owes Balfour nothing, and certainly does not defend the Declaration of 1917 with its contradictory and broken promises. Rather, it seeks to raise awareness in Britain of the decisive, divisive historic role our country played in Palestine in the first half of the last century; to acknowledge continuing responsibility for wrongs done then, still felt today, and to argue that those actions require Britain now to work to advance equal rights for Palestinians in the land of their birth. That British role

in the region, which began well over 100 years ago, is known to Palestinians even more than it is to Israelis. The people who know least about it are the British themselves, the British of 2021. But we cannot address the present inequality and injustice without a clear understanding of the past, and the responsibilities we British inherit.

other’s. Britain has influence today – not power – but far more influence than our Government cares to admit, still less to exert. We want to change that.

We press the British Government to recognize now the state of Palestine alongside Israel; to implement international law in deed, not just in word, and to uphold the independence and integrity of the International Criminal Court. To work determinedly to see a just and peaceful end to the occupation of 1967. In May, we held a major

charity does what it can, in schools, universities, Parliament, lobbying our Government. The British public realization of harm done, of discrimination, of entrenched injustice is growing. We need to do more. That is what the Balfour Project charity is about. Forget the name; look at what we do, and what we stand for: equal rights.

Sir Vincent Fean is the chair of the Balfour Project charity and former British Consul-General, Jerusalem (2010–2014).