

CONFLICT IN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

The Balfour Declaration

SHOULD THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT BE PRAISED OR BLAMED
FOR 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 Britain Empire took responsibility for Palestine

Source 1: Extract from the diary of Ihsan Hasan Turjman, a Palestinian conscript to the Ottoman army. 28 March 1915

'I know that the days of this [Ottoman] state are numbered. There is no doubt that it is heading for dissolution sooner or later. But what will be the fate of Palestine after the war? The question is easy to answer. Either independence or our annexation to Egypt'



The Britain Empire took responsibility for Palestine

ZIONIST REJOICINGS.

BRITISH MANDATE FOR PALESTINE WELCOMED.

News of the conferment of the mandate for Palestine on Great Britain has created a great impression on Zionist and Jewish circles. A prominent Zionist has given the following views to a representative of the London Jewish Correspondence Bureau :—

The news that Great Britain is to have the mandate for Palestine, and the decision to incorporate the Balfour Declaration in the Treaty of Peace with Turkey will be received with intense gratification by Jews in all countries. It means that at last, after 20 centuries, the Jews will begin the work of re-establishing their ancient Homeland, under a stable and civilized Government. The Wandering Jews will at last have a home.

The Jews have always desired to be under British trusteeship, realizing that the British colonizing methods are based upon the notion of giving free scope to the peoples under British protection. The Zionist leaders at San Remo who have been the spokesmen of the Jewish claims are Dr. Weizmann and Mr. Sokolow. They have been greatly assisted by the support of Mr. Herbert Samuel in this country and of Mr. Justice Brandeis in America.

Another factor which undoubtedly contributed to the granting of the Zionist demands is their great moderation.

The practical consequence of the decision at San Remo will be that Jewish energy and capital will begin to flow towards Palestine to be devoted to the development of the country and to the benefit of all its inhabitants.

The event will be celebrated in all Jewish centres with great joy, and the date—April 24, 1920—will perhaps become a Jewish national holiday. A Zionist Congress, and possibly a Pan-Jewish Congress, will have to be convoked at an early date to concentrate Jewish effort on the restoration of Palestine.—*Reuter.*

Source 2:

Article from
The Times
newspaper,
26 April 1920



It represents British imperial arrogance

Source 3: Lloyd George at the Paris Peace Conferences of 1919, over heard by British delegate Arnold Toynbee

'Lloyd George, to my delight, had forgotten my presence and began to think aloud. Mesopotamia...yes...oil...irrigation...we must have Mesopotamia; Palestine...yes...the Holy Land...Zionism...we must have Palestine; Syria...h'm...what is there in Syria? Let the French have that.'



It represents British imperial arrogance

Source 4: British troops marching past Barclays Bank, Jerusalem, 1938





A new solution for Jewish refugees was needed



Die Judenverfolgungen in Russland: Der Straßenterror in Kiew.
[Nach einer Original-Skizze von Oskar E. Wycinek, Seite 594.]

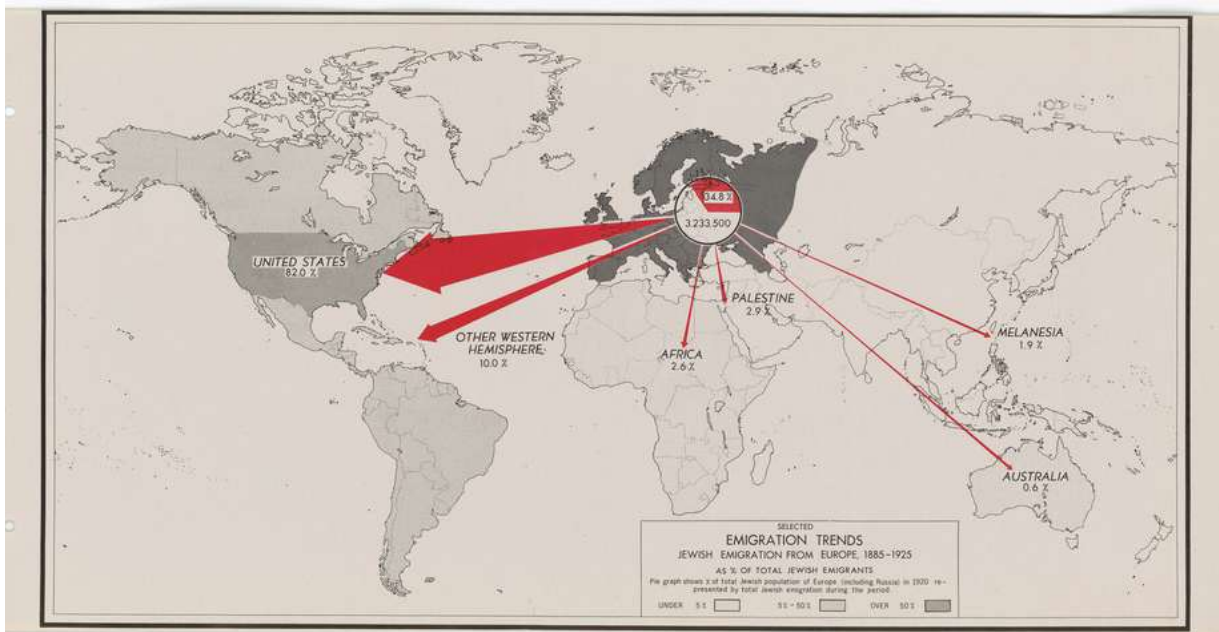
Source 5:

Persecution of the Jews in Russia: a drawing of street riots in Kiev by Oskar E. Wycinek published in German newspaper, Neue Illustrierte Zeitung, 1881



A new solution for Jewish refugees was needed

Source 6: Map showing Jewish emigration from Europe, 1885-1925





Many Jews did not agree with it on principle



Source 7: An election poster for the General Jewish Labour Bund, hung in Kiev, 1917. Written in the Hebrew alphabet, the title reads "Where we live, there is our country!" and the bottom lines "A democratic republic! Full national and political rights for Jews!"



Many Jews did not agree with it on principle

Source 8: Extracts from a Memorandum of Edwin Montagu, a British Jew and Secretary of State for India, to the British Cabinet, August 1917

I wish to place on record my view that the policy of His Majesty's Government is anti-Semitic and in result 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...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 of 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...
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...
3. I deny that Palestine is to-day 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 Mahommendan history, and, after the time of the Jews, surely it plays a larger part than any other country in Christian history...
4. ...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.



The Declaration was a humanitarian action

Source 9: Letter from the World Zionist Organisation to the British Foreign Secretary regarding the offer of land in East Africa, 4 September 1903

I am directed by Dr Herzl to convey to your Lordship on behalf of the Zionist Congress which closed last week, the deep and heartfelt thanks of the Congress to His Majesty's Government for the offer...in respect to the proposed Jewish settlement in British East Africa...



The Syrian army fired on Israeli farmers

Source 10: Cartoon of Theodore Roosevelt demanding that the the Emperor of Russia, Nicholas II, stop oppressing Jews. From Judge Magazine, September 1905, USA





It reflects anti-Semitic assumptions

Source 11: Former Prime Minister Lloyd George describes his attitude to the Jewish people in his witness statement to the Palestine Royal Commission 1936-7

'They are a dangerous people to quarrel with, but they are a very helpful people if you can get them on your side,...They are a very subtle race and they have means of communicating throughout the world which nobody seems to know about...

...We had every reason at that time to believe that in both countries the friendliness or hostility of the Jewish race might make a considerable difference,...Jewish propaganda in Russia had a great deal to do with the difficulties created for the Germans in Southern Russia,...The Jews in their subtle way managed to place every obstacle in the way of the Germans... The Zionist movement was exceptionally strong in Russia and America.'



It reflects anti-Semitic assumptions

Source 12:

Cartoon titled 'Stranger at our Gate' by Frank Beard in 1890 depicting a Jewish immigrant to the US. The caption reads:

Emigrant: 'Can I come in?' Uncle Sam: 'I 'spose you can, there's no law against it.'

The immigrant is wearing labels such as sabbath desecration, poverty, disease and superstition



THE STRANGER AT OUR GATE.

EMIGRANT. -Can I come in? UNCLE SAM. -I 'spose you can; there's no law to keep you out.



The British did fulfil their promise of an Arab state

Source 13: Memorandum by the British Secretary of State for the Colonies, 11 February 1923

'Whatever may be thought of our case as based on the exact wording of the McMahon letter, it will probably be agreed that, on a broad view of the position, we have an effective answer to Arab criticism. What we promised was to promote Arab independence throughout a wide area. That promise we have substantially fulfilled. Hussein reigns as an independent sovereign at Mecca; Feisal rules at Baghdad; Abdullah in Trans-Jordan. Ibn Saud through his vast territories is free from all fear of Turkish interference or aggression. Further south, the Imam in the Yemen and the Idrisi in Asir rule over independent States. The Arabs as a whole have acquired a freedom undreamed of before the war. Considering what they owe to us, they may surely let us have our way in one small area, which we do not admit to be covered by our pledges, and which in any case, for historical and other reasons, stands on a wholly different -footing from the rest of the Arab countries. '



The British did fulfil their promise of an Arab state



Source 14:

Meeting between Amir Abdullah ibn Hussein and British High Commissioner Herbert Samuel in Amman, Jordan, April 1921. During these meetings British High Commissioner Herbert Samuel proclaimed Amir Abdullah the ruler of Transjordan, under British protection



It was one of three dishonest, contradictory British agreements

Source 15: Letter from A.H. McMahon to Hussein bin Ali, Sharif of Mecca, 24 October 1915. Part of the McMahon-Hussein correspondence

October 24 1915

1. Subject to the above modifications, Great Britain is prepared to recognize and support the independence of the Arabs in all the regions within the limits demanded by the Sherif of Mecca.

2. Great Britain will guarantee the Holy Places against all external aggression and will recognise their inviolability.

3. When the situation admits, Great Britain will give to the Arabs her advice and will assist them to establish what may appear to be the most suitable forms of government in those various territories.

I am convinced that this declaration will assure you beyond all possible doubt of the sympathy of Great Britain towards the aspirations of her friends the Arabs and will result in a firm and lasting alliance, the immediate results of which will be the expulsion of the Turks from the Arab countries and the freeing of the Arab peoples from the Turkish yoke, which for so many years has pressed heavily upon them.

A.H. McMahon

A. McMahon



It was one of three dishonest, contradictory British agreements

Source 16: "Letter from Colonel Cyril Wilson, the main liaison with King Hussein to British authorities in Cairo, 24 May 1917

'As you know I have all along been a strong advocate of being as open as possible with the Sharif [Hussein]. My considered opinion is that we have not been as open and frank as we should been at this last meeting.

Special representatives of Great Britain and France came expressly to fix things up with the Sharif and when the latter agreed to France having the same status in Syria as we are to have in Iraq surely the main points of our agreement re Iraq should have been stated to prevent all chance of a misunderstanding which might have far reaching consequences if the Sharif puts one construction on McMahon's letter and we another, there is likely to be serious trouble.

...we have not played a straight forward game with a courteous old man who is, as Sykes agrees, one of Great Britain's most sincere and loyal admirers....If we are not going to see the Sharif through, and we let him down badly after all his trust in us, the very 'enviable' post of Pilgrimage Officer at Jeddah will be vacant because I certainly could not remain.'



The British tried to balance Jewish and Arab rights

Source 17: Extract from the 1939 White Paper, issued by the British in response to the 1936–1939 Arab revolt in Palestine

'Unauthorized statements have been made to the effect that the purpose in view is to create a wholly Jewish Palestine. Phrases have been used such as that Palestine is to become 'as Jewish as England is English.' His Majesty's Government regard any such expectation as impracticable, and have no such aim in view. Nor have they at any time contemplated, as appears to be feared by the Arab Delegation, the disappearance or the subordination of the Arabic population, language or culture in Palestine. They would draw attention to the fact that the terms of the Declaration referred to do not contemplate that Palestine as a whole should be converted into a Jewish National Home, but that such a Home should be founded in Palestine. ...For the fulfilment of this policy it is necessary that the Jewish community in Palestine should be able to increase its numbers by immigration. This immigration cannot be so great in volume as to exceed whatever may be the economic capacity of the country at the time to absorb new arrivals. It is essential to ensure that the immigrants should not be a burden upon the people of Palestine as a whole, and that they should not deprive any section of the present population of their employment.'



The British tried to balance Jewish and Arab rights

Source 18: Coins issued during the British Mandate, with writing in English, Arabic and Hebrew





It failed to protect the rights of Arab Muslims and Christians

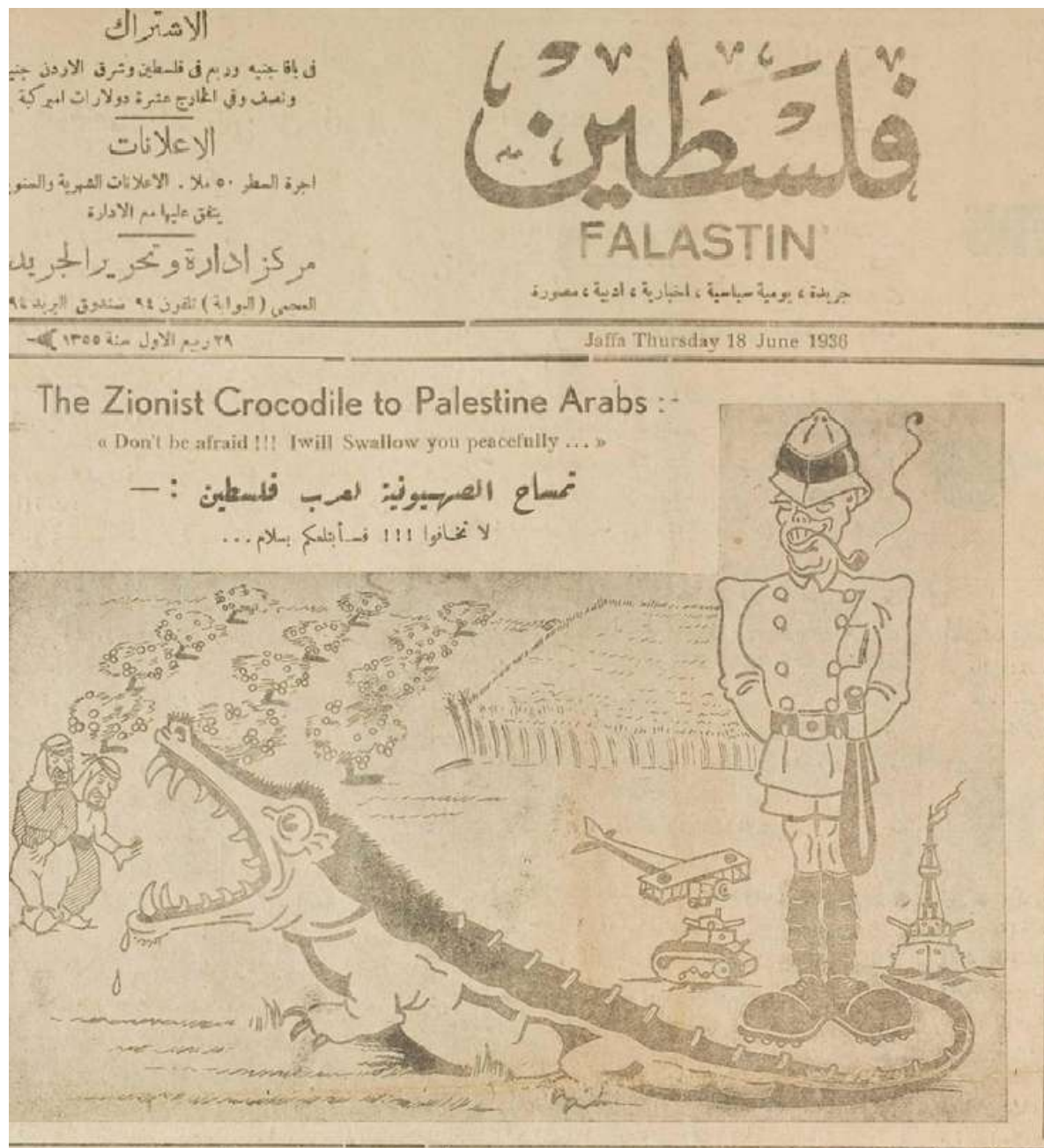
Source 19: Cabinet Memorandum 'The Future of Palestine' by Lord Curzon, October 1917

'There arises the further question, what is to become of the people of this country, assuming the Turk to be expelled, and the inhabitants not to have been exterminated by -the war ? There are over half a million of these, Syrian Arabs—a mixed community with Arab, Hebrew, Canaanite, Greek, Egyptian, and possibly Crusaders' blood. They and their forefathers have occupied the country for the best part of 1,500 years. They own the soil, which belongs either to individual landowners or to village communities. They profess the Mohammedan faith. They will not be content either to be expropriated for Jewish immigrants, or to act merely as hewers of wood and drawers of water to the latter. '



It failed to protect the rights of Arab Muslims and Christians

Source 20: A political cartoon published in the Palestinian newspaper 'Falastin', 1936





It recognised that Jews needed a homeland years before the Holocaust

Source 21: In 1913, Menahem Mendel Beilis, a Russian Jew was accused of the ritual murder of a 13-year old boy in Kyiv, then part of the Russian Empire. During the trial, these anti-Semitic fliers were distributed in Kyiv. They read "Orthodox Russian people, commemorate the name of the youth Andriy Yushchinskyi who was martyred by Zhids! Memory eternal to him! Christians, guard your children!!! On March 17, the passover of the Zhids [an ethnic slur for Jews] begins." Beilis was eventually acquitted

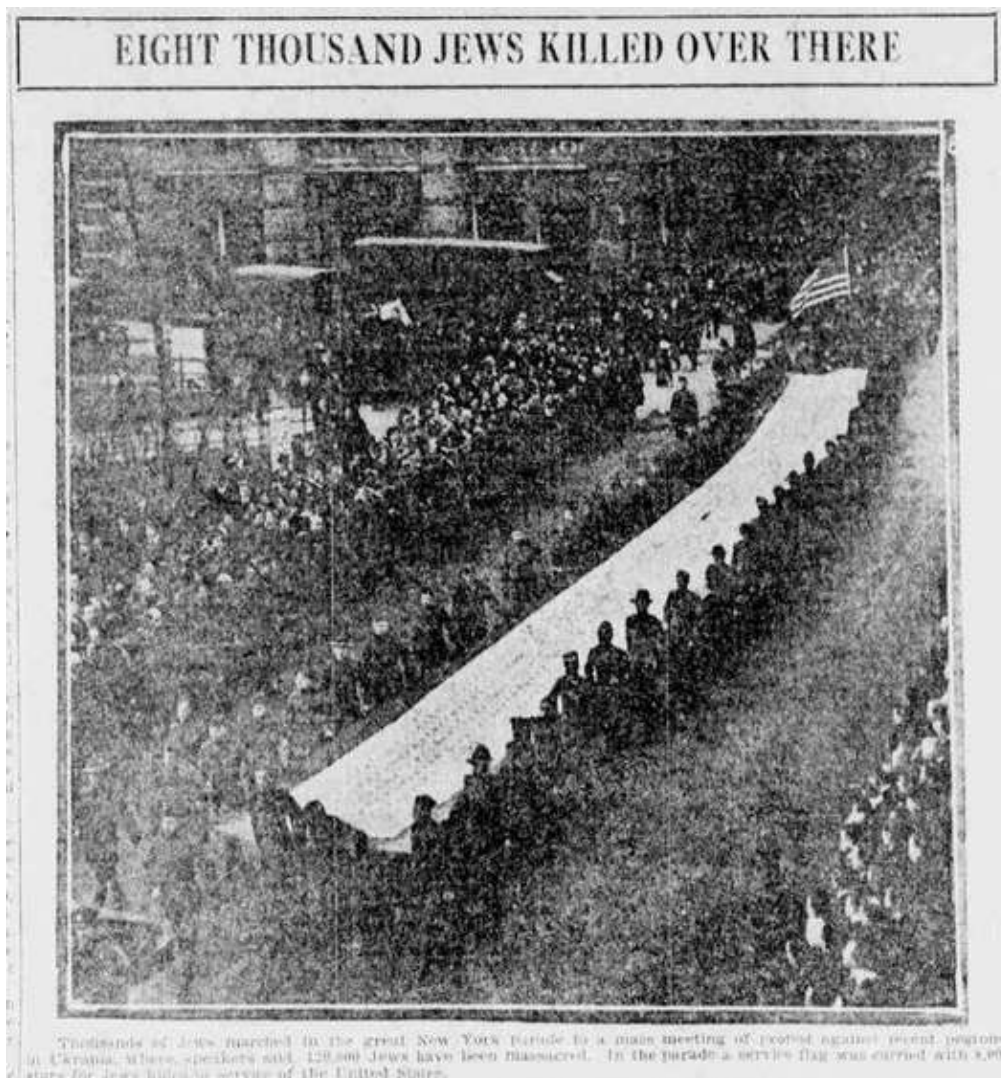




It recognised that Jews needed a homeland years before the Holocaust

Source 22: The caption to the photo reads:

‘Thousands of Jews marched in the great New York Parade to a mass meeting of protest against recent pogroms in Ukraine, where, speakers said, 120,000 Jews have been massacred. In the parade a service flag was carried with 8,000 stars for Jews killed in service of the United States.’ Article from the Oklahoma newspaper the Ardmoreite, 2 December 1919





It failed to protect the Jewish people

Source 23: Letter of resignation of James G. McDonald, the League of Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees (Jewish and other) coming from Germany, 27 December 1935

'In the period of over two years since the establishment of the office, conditions in Germany which created refugees have developed so catastrophically that a reconsideration by the League of Nations of the entire situation is essential....tens of thousands are to-day anxiously seeking ways to flee abroad....and the doors of most countries are closed against impoverished fugitives....Efforts must be made to remove or mitigate the causes which create German refugees....The moral authority of the League of Nations and of the States Members of the League must be directed towards a determined appeal to the German Government in the name of humanity and of the principles of the public law in Europe.'



It failed to protect the Jewish people

Source 24: Map of major deportations to Auschwitz from Europe by the end of 1942

