



Political Discourse (1917–1922)

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## Abstract

The Irish struggle for independence (1917–1922) coincided with the beginnings of the mandate in Palestine, by which the British government sought to encourage the establishment of a Jewish National Home. Analogies between these two territories regularly surfaced in the papers of British officials and policy makers. Universally perceived as a paradigm of nationalism and insurrection, the Irish precedent colored the British understanding of Palestine. Essentialist representations of national groups such as the Irish or the Jews were also common as the British government lent support to various nationalist movements in order to further strategic objectives during the Great War. However, British attitudes toward Irish nationalism and Zionism varied widely. A careful examination of Arthur James Balfour's representations of the Irish and Jewish nations reveals that nationalist ideology, far from relying on a coherent and systematic understanding of national groups, shifted depending on Britain's geopolitical interests.

## Contributor Notes

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Although the title 'national songs' or 'national airs' was commonly given to a collection containing a Irish National Airs of 1818-28), when applied to English songs, the description 'national' tended to signify ethnic quality. The notion of there being an Englishness in the musical character of a song which could not be defined solely as the formal annexation of territory, there would be an argument that if imperialism were to be defined solely as the formal annexation of territory, there would be an argument that Ireland was a major one in British politics off and on for centuries. Britain's attempts to control and a



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