# Josephus Norman Bentwich: A Pioneer in Jewish and International Affairs

Josephus Norman Bentwich (1883-1971) was a British-Jewish lawyer, scholar, and Zionist activist who made significant contributions to international affairs. As the first Attorney General of Mandatory Palestine, he helped to shape the legal framework of the new British Mandate. He was also a prominent figure in the League of Nations, where he championed the rights of minorities and the advancement of international law.

#### Early Life and Education

Bentwich was born in London, England, to a Jewish family. His father, Herbert Bentwich, was a lawyer and author, and his mother, Henrietta Schwabacher, was a social activist. Bentwich received his education at St Paul's School and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he studied law and history.



Josephus by No	rr	nan Bentwich
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Screen Reader	:	Supported
Enhanced typesetting	:	Enabled
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Print length	:	176 pages
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#### Zionist Activism

Bentwich became involved in Zionist activities while still a student at Cambridge. He joined the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland and served as its secretary from 1906 to 1914. In 1912, he was part of a delegation that sought to convince the British government to support the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

#### World War I

During World War I, Bentwich served in the British Army's Intelligence Corps. He was stationed in Palestine and Egypt, where he gained firsthand experience of the region that would become Mandatory Palestine. After the war, he returned to London and continued his Zionist activities.

#### **Attorney General of Palestine**

In 1919, Bentwich was appointed as the first Attorney General of Mandatory Palestine. In this role, he was responsible for drafting the legal framework of the new British Mandate. He also played a key role in the establishment of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

#### League of Nations

Bentwich's work in Palestine brought him into contact with international figures, including Lord Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary who had issued the Balfour Declaration in 1917. In 1920, Bentwich was appointed as a member of the League of Nations' Mandates Commission. He served on the Commission for over two decades and played a leading role in the development of international law on mandates.

#### Later Career

After leaving the League of Nations, Bentwich continued his work in international affairs. He served as a member of the International Court of Arbitration and the International Law Commission. He also wrote extensively on international law, Jewish history, and Zionism.

#### Personal Life

Bentwich married Helen Ascher in 1908. They had three children: Norman, Joseph, and Judith. Bentwich died in London in 1971.

#### Legacy

Josephus Norman Bentwich was a pioneer in Jewish and international affairs. His work as the first Attorney General of Mandatory Palestine helped to shape the legal framework of the new British Mandate. His contributions to the League of Nations and other international organizations were instrumental in the development of international law and the protection of minority rights. Bentwich's legacy continues to inspire those who work for peace and justice in the world today.



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