

THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Revised second edition, November 1993

SOME KEY DATES IN THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

1881+ Economic and political instability and pogroms shake Eastern Europe. Some Jews go to Palestine but 2.5 million move west, 2.0 million to the US by World War I.

1894-1906 Dreyfus Affair in France exposes deep anti-Semitism. Trial is covered by Viennese journalist Theodor Herzl.

1896 Herzl writes *The Jewish State*. "The idea which I have developed in this pamphlet is a very old one: it is the restoration of the Jewish state." Herzl is considered the Father of Zionism, a political movement to create a Jewish state.

1897 First Zionist Congress (Basle, Switzerland) declared Palestine the Jewish Homeland. Participants developed a structure of government which could be transferred to Palestine at some future time, including the World Zionist Organization to link all Jews together, the Jewish National Fund to acquire land, a committee to manage finances, a political committee to govern the land.

1915-16 Hussein-McMahon correspondence. Britain promises to create an Arab kingdom in exchange for war support.

1916 Sykes-Picot Accords. Secret British-French agreement to divide the postwar Middle East between them.

1917 Balfour Declaration. In exchange for war support, Britain promises Jews a "national home" in Palestine (without prejudice to the "civil and religious rights" of the non-Jewish population).

1922-48 Britain ruled Palestine, Jordan, and Iraq under League of Nations Mandates. France controlled Syria and Lebanon.

1936-39 Palestinian nationalist uprising against Britain. Britain proposes partition of Palestine and expulsion of 250,000 Palestinians.

1939-45 World War II. Holocaust kills nearly six million Jews. Many survivors look to Palestine for refuge.

1944-47 Jewish-British War. Jewish groups in Palestine try to expel Britain. Mainstream Jewish fighters under David Ben Gurion are called Hagana. They later become the Israeli army. Two separate military groups (Irgun Zvai Leumi led by Menachem Begin and Lehi or the Stern Gang led by Yitzhak Shamir) resort to assassination and bombings. Many British soldiers and Arab civilians are killed.

1947 Britain decides it cannot bring peace to Palestine and turns the matter over to the UN. In Resolution 181 the UN votes to partition Palestine into Jewish and Palestinian states with an

international enclave around Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Arab leaders reject the plan and insist on a united Palestine with a secular government. Fighting begins between Jews and Palestinians. Many Palestinians become refugees.

1948 With Britain out, Jews proclaim a Jewish state. Local Palestinians and army units from Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon engage in an escalating war to prevent the partition of Palestine, the creation of a Jewish state, and Israeli expansion into the proposed Palestinian area. Israeli units defeat the combined Arab armies. What the UN had designated as the Arab state is split into three parts: some is taken by Israel and incorporated into their new state; the tiny Gaza Strip is held by Egypt and governed by them; the largest remaining component--generally called the West Bank of the Jordan River--is held by Jordan. The UN had proposed that Jerusalem and other holy places become an internationally-governed entity. In the fighting, Jerusalem was divided into Israeli west and Jordanian east. The 1948 defeat was a major humiliation for the Arab world. Within a few years, the governments of Egypt and Syria are swept away in military coups and the king of Jordan is assassinated.

1948-50 Of 1,200,000 Palestinians in the Mandate, 725,000 or more are driven out of their homeland or flee the fighting that accompanied the creation of a Jewish state. Only 160,000 remain in Israel itself. The Israeli government allows only a very few to return after the war is over. By 1950, over one million live in UN-supported refugee camps in Gaza, West Bank, Lebanon, Jordan. The camps become centers of political militancy.

1956 Suez War. Britain, France, and Israel attack Egypt. Israel seizes Egypt's Sinai peninsula. US and USSR demand Israeli, French, and British withdrawal. Egypt (and Sinai) are freed.

1964 Palestinians form Fatah under Yasser Arafat; the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) is formed in 1967 by George Habash. Jordan becomes the main base for guerrilla actions.

1964 The Palestine Liberation Organization is formed by the Arab League under Egyptian direction. The PLO Charter calls for a united Palestine under Arab control. Only Jews there before 1946 can remain.

1967 June War (Six-Day War). Israel crushes Egypt, Jordan, Syria; Israel captures the Sinai peninsula and Gaza Strip from Egypt, the Golan province from Syria, West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan. Approximately 250,000 more Palestinian refugees flee, or are forced, into Jordan. More Palestinians are now under Israeli rule.

1969 Yasser Arafat becomes head of the PLO. It becomes an umbrella organization aspiring to unite and speak for all Palestinians. It is controlled by Palestinians in exile.

1970 In September, militant Palestinians try to overthrow King Hussein with Syrian help. US and Israel mobilize to help Jordan if necessary. More than 3,000 Palestinians are killed. Palestinian guerrilla bases move to Lebanon.

1970-76 Palestinians form "Black September" to carry out revenge assassinations and hijackings. Israelis form "Wrath of God" to assassinate Palestinian leaders. Much bloodshed follows.

1973 October or Ramadan or Yom Kippur War. Egypt and Syria attempt to regain lost territories. They push Israel back in the Sinai peninsula and initially in the Golan province. A massive airlift of US arms to Israel tips the balance. Arab oil states proclaim a boycott against all countries helping Israel.

1974 Yasser Arafat speaks to UN. In a major shift in PLO policy, he calls for a united Palestine with a democratic secular government "where Christian, Jew, and Muslim live in justice, equality and fraternity" (including all Jews who live there). "I come to you with an olive branch and a freedom fighter's gun; do not let the olive branch fall from my hand."

1975 Lebanese civil war begins. By the end of the 1980s, 144,000 Lebanese have died, most in subsequent invasions.

1977 Menachem Begin becomes prime minister of Israel. His Likud party traditionally advocated a "Greater Israel" including the West Bank and Gaza and perhaps Jordan with unlimited settlement of Jews in Arab-populated areas under Israeli occupation. Anwar Sadat of Egypt goes to Jerusalem to open talks.

1978 Egypt and Israel sign the Camp David Accords. Israel invades Lebanon and seizes a 'security zone' up to the Litani River. It sets up the puppet government of the Southern Lebanese Army.

1982 Israel invades Lebanon and occupies much of the country up to Beirut, which is subjected to prolonged siege. The US brokers a withdrawal of PLO fighters and Arafat's staff to Tunis. After the massacre of unarmed Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps, US troops return as part of a peace-keeping force but soon begin to favor some Lebanese groups and attack others. Lebanese resistance groups in the Shiite community attack Israeli, US and Western forces and organizations.

1984 US troops leave Lebanon after a bomb kills 241 Marines.

1985 Hussein-Arafat Accords and UN speech by Israeli Foreign Minister Peres endorse an international conference to negotiate a settlement.

1987 The Palestinian Intifada (uprising) against Israeli control begins in the Occupied Territories .

1988 Jordan repudiates its claim to the West Bank; Abu Jihad (PLO's Number 2 leader) is assassinated by an Israeli hit team; the PLO recognizes Israel, proclaims a Palestinian state, renounces terrorism, and calls for negotiations; as a result of the Israeli election Yitzhak Shamir returns as prime minister.

1991 Gulf War. Abu Iyad (the new Number 2 man in PLO after Arafat) is assassinated, probably by Iraq. Negotiations open in Madrid under US and Russian auspices. Israelis, Palestinians, Jordanians, Syrians, and Lebanese participate. The talks have two parts: bilateral talks between Israel and Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and the Palestinians and multilateral talks on five functional issues: water, refugees, environment, economic development, and security.

1992 Yitzhak Rabin becomes prime minister of Israel.

1993 September. Israeli leader Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat meet in Washington, D.C. to sign documents that promise to end their conflict.

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