

EMERGENCE AND EVOLUTION OF THE TWO-STATE SOLUTION

With the end of World War I and the Ottoman Empire, Jewish and Palestinian nationalisms and their aspirations for statehood in historical Palestine began to compete and clash, fueled by British promises to both groups, including the **1917 Balfour Declaration** in support of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, which was included in the **1922 British Mandate** document.

British commissions of inquiry into recurrent outbreaks of violence – Haycraft Commission (1921), Shaw Commission (1930), Hope-Simpson Commission (1930), all recommended limitations on Jewish immigration and land purchases as causes for the unrests; the Peel Commission (1937) was the first to propose partitioning Palestine.

1937

1937 Peel Commission: proposed partitioning Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state, concluding that the two sides cannot live in peace together.



1938

1938 Woodhead Commission: found partition impracticable, but issued three plans (A, B, and C), which were all rejected by the Zionists.



1939

1939 British MacDonald White Paper: envisaged an independent state in Palestine with a two-thirds Arab majority within 10 years. In response, Zionists started a bloody anti-British and Palestinian campaign, and mobilized US Jewry who called for a 'Jewish Commonwealth' in Palestine at the **1942 Biltmore Conference** (endorsed by US Congress and House of Representatives in 1944 and 1945).

1945

1945 Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry: proposed a UN trusteeship, which was rejected.

1949

1949: Armistice agreements between Israel, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria demarcated the "Green Line", leaving the new State of Israel in control over 78% of historic Palestine, and the remaining 22% administered by Jordan (West Bank) and Egypt (Gaza Strip) respectively (=still the internationally recognized borders on which the two-state solution is based).

1948

May **1948:** Israel's **Declaration of Independence** escalated into a regional war, in the course of which some 700,000 Palestinians were expelled mostly from the areas allocated to the Jewish state.

Jews welcomed the resolution as an achievement (i.e., international recognition for a Jewish state in Palestine), but did not intend to adhere to the proposed borders, which, as Ben-Gurion put it, "will be determined by force and not by the partition resolution" (Pappé, Ilan, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, Oxford: Oneworld Publications Ltd., 2006, p. 37). Palestinians and other Arabs rejected it as fundamentally unjust as the plan granted the Jews 56.47% of the territory at a time when they owned less than 7% of the privately owned land, with a population of 498,000 Jews and 325,000 Arabs, and the Palestinians only 43.53% of the land with 807,000 Arab inhabitants and 10,000 Jewish inhabitants.

1947

1947: Britain ceased its Mandate and handed the "problem" over to the UN, which appointed a **Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP)** to investigate the situation on the ground and propose solutions. The majority of UNSCOP's members recommended partition. The UN General Assembly adopted the "partition plan" in **Resolution 181 of 29 November 1947** (widely seen as the "original" two-state solution). It divided Palestine into Jewish and Arab states with Jerusalem and Bethlehem as a *corpus separatum* under an international regime.

UNGA Partition Plan, 1947



1988

1988: The Palestinian leadership, in its 15 November **Declaration of Independence**, proclaimed the State of Palestine on Palestinian territory, explicitly endorsing the notion of two states for two people, and accepting Resolutions 242 and 338 as the basis of peace talks.

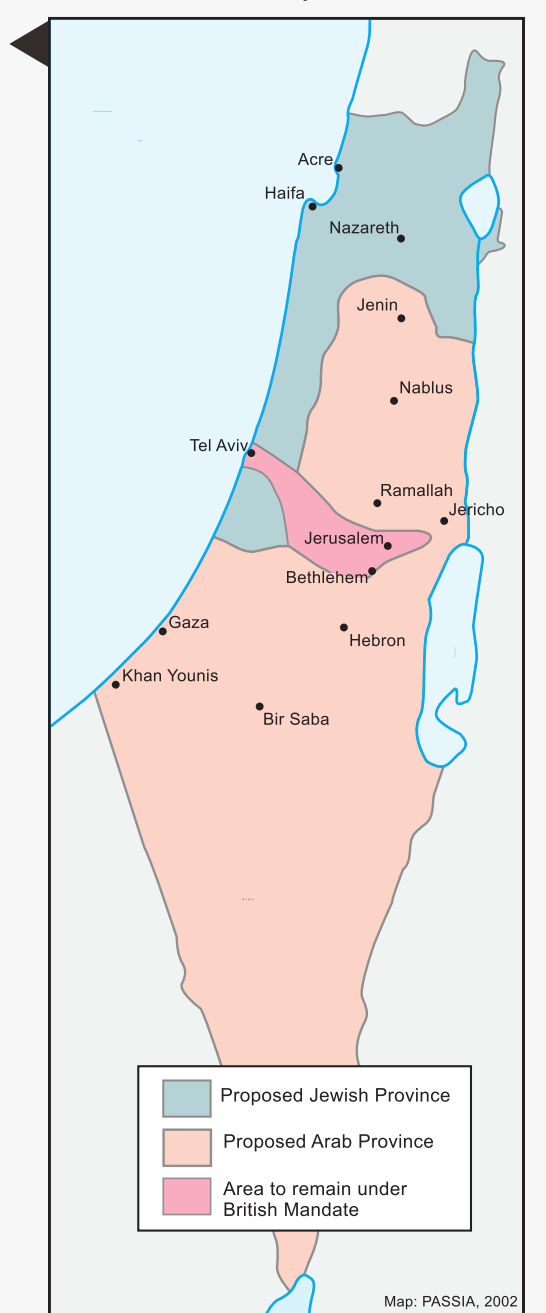
1993

1993: Secret talks in Oslo delivered the **Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (DoP)**, which provided the guidelines for a permanent settlement based on UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338 (following a stipulated five-year interim period).

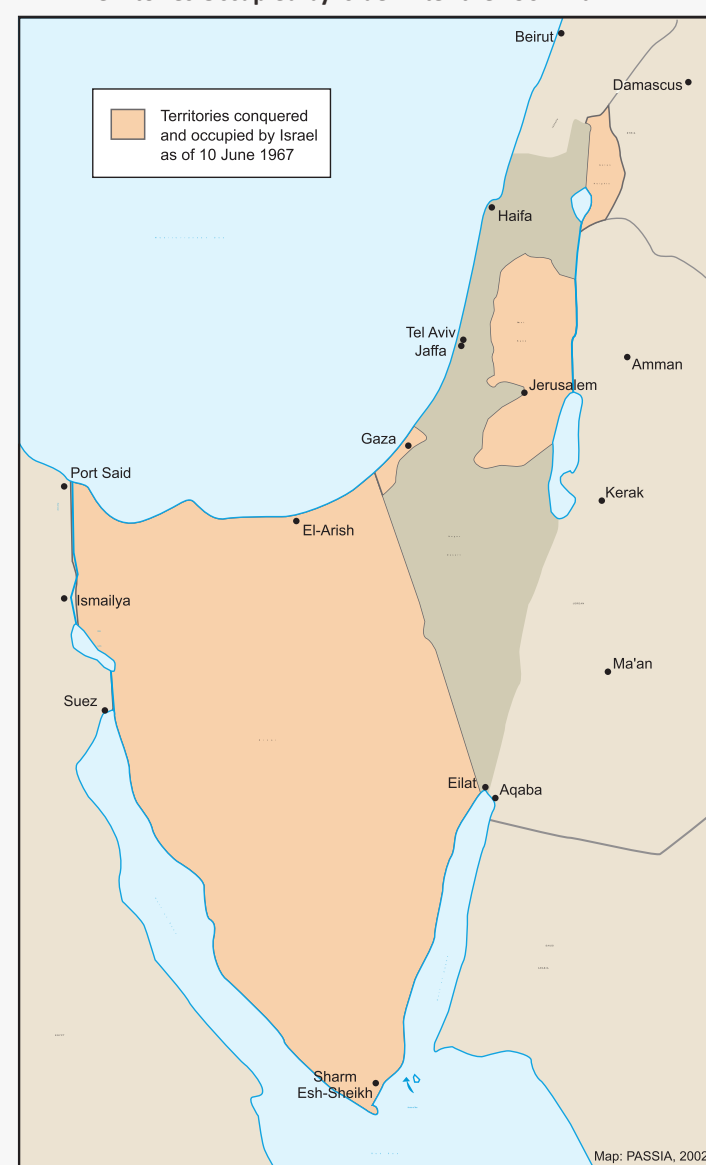
1946

1946 Morrison-Grady Plan: proposed a federal solution - turning the British Mandate into a trusteeship and dividing the country into Jewish and Arab provinces. Was rejected by the **1946 Palestine Roundtable Conference** in London.

Morrison-Grady Plan, 1946



Territories Occupied by Israel After the 1967 War



1967

1967: Arab-Israeli hostilities continued and culminated in the **Six-Day War** in June 1967, during which Israel occupied the remaining 22% of historic Palestine and carried out a second wave of expulsions, this time displacing about 300,000 Palestinians. **UNSC Resolution 242** (of 22 November 1967) called on Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories, which, however, has yet to happen (which was reiterated in UNSC Resolution 338 in 1973). While 242 did not call the two-state solution by name, it established the "land for peace" formula and its aiming for borders based on the pre-1967 lines ("Green Line") has been considered the basis for the two-state solution framework ever since.