

FROM THE RIVER TO THE SEA...



Historic Palestine

During and after World War I, the British took control of historic Palestine, among other territory in the Middle East captured from the Ottoman Empire. Historic Palestine stretches from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River. This land was mainly populated by Palestinian Arabs, Muslim, Christian and Jewish, and became a new British colony. Britain made several promises--independence to the new national Arab movement and a "Jewish home" to the Zionist movement. Of course, Britain had no right to promise anything with the land of Palestine--it was nothing more than a colonial power.

The Zionist movement was a movement within the Jewish community that demanded the establishment of a "Jewish State." Developed by Theodor Herzl and other largely European Jews at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, Zionism called for the seizing of native land--first in Argentina, then in Palestine--and its replacement with a "Jewish state." The Zionist movement was established in opposition to other political movements within the European Jewish community, including socialism and communism. It was based on a largely secular, profoundly supremacist view of Jewish right to Palestinian land. "We must expropriate gently the private property on the state assigned to us. We shall try to spirit the penniless population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it employment in our country," said Theodor Herzl. This strategy was the one that would be implemented.



Jewish-owned land in 1947 (dark)



Partition Plan 1947: "Jewish State" in white, "Arab State" in black

In 1947, Jews owned no more than seven percent of the land of historic Palestine. Nevertheless, in a Partition Plan created by the United Nations after World War II, the British Mandate was to be carved into two states--an Arab state on 47% of historic Palestine, and a Jewish state on 53% of the land. While the vast crimes of the Nazi holocaust helped to justify the partition of Palestine, the Zionist movement was neither inspired nor created by those crimes; in addition, the partition of Palestine proved a convenient way of transferring the sins of Europe onto the backs of the Palestinians. Unsurprisingly, both Zionists--who sought a Greater Israel--and Palestinians--who saw no reason their land should be expropriated--objected to the partition plan. Palestine was being treated as nothing more than a colonial possession to be divided at will; the Palestinians alone were never consulted in the development of the partition.

In the war of 1948-49, Israel seized far more land than that allotted to it in the Partition--77% of historic Palestine. In the course of that war of conquest, over 700,000 Palestinians were forced to flee their land as refugees. Those refugees and their descendants number over four million today. Palestinian villages were depopulated en masse and Palestinians were killed and expelled in a mass ethnic cleansing.. The Palestinians who remained in the land that became Israel were ruled under special military rules for two decades thereafter; even today, more than twenty laws discriminate between Palestinians and Jews. Palestinian refugees' land was seized immediately following the war of 1948-49; they were denied their internationally-recognized right to return to their homes and homeland. Instead, they were deemed "absentees", their land confiscated and turned over to the Jewish National Agency. Those Palestinians' right to return to their homes and homeland was recognized in Resolution 194 at the United Nations; Israel's admission to the UN was prefaced upon its adherence to 194. Nevertheless, Palestinian refugees' right of return has never been respected. Rather, Israel declares that this population of non-Jews will create for it a "demographic problem."



Armistice lines 1949: Israel on 77% of historic Palestine



One of the "final status" proposals creating anything but a viable Palestinian state. What national movement could accept this?

In 1967, further Palestinian land was seized by Israel in the West Bank and Gaza Strip; contrary to widespread misinformation, Israel was the attacker in the 1967 war and used the war as an opportunity to further colonize Palestinian land. That land today is still under Israeli military rule, despite agreements creating the "Palestinian Authority," a civil administration with no military powers. The occupation continues as brutally as ever--Israel demolishes homes, bombs civilians and continues to steal Palestinian resources, including its precious water. Settlements--Israeli colonies in the 1967 Occupied Territories--continue to be built and to expand, and Israel has never offered Palestinians anything more than disconnected patches of land with no border or other military sovereignty, no right of refugee return, and no control over water and other resources. This occupation and oppression is funded and provided for by the United States government. Israel receives more foreign aid than any other country, without regard to its numerous human rights violations and the 102 UN resolutions it currently violates. \$10 million a day in U.S. tax money goes to Israel, and the Apache helicopters, F-16s and M-16s the Israeli military uses in its assault on Palestine were American-made and U.S.-bought. The situation is, indeed, deeply similar to South African apartheid--the rule over a majority population by a minority settler class.



From the river to the sea, Palestinians today are not free, in all of historic Palestine. The West Bank and Gaza live under brutal and obvious military occupation, while Palestinian refugees are denied their right of return and Palestinian citizens of Israel are denied equality under law. Until this situation ends, Palestinians can and will resist, demanding their total liberation--they are an oppressed people fighting for freedom. As a solidarity movement, we are confident they will achieve their liberation.



PALESTINE WILL BE FREE!

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