



A Brief Timeline of the Israeli / Palestinian Conflict

These notes are not exhaustive but are a mere sketch of the origins of the conflict, some of the major events and outcomes.


The quote below is taken from a document titled

"The Origin of the Palestine-Israel Conflict", published by *"Jews for Justice In the Middle East"*


"The conventional wisdom is that, even if both sides are at fault the Palestinians are irrational terrorists... Our position, however, is that the Palestinians have a real grievance: their homeland for over a thousand years was taken, without their consent and mostly by force, during the creation of the state of Israel. And all subsequent crimes--on both sides--inevitably follow from this original injustice.... (we are) critical of Zionism but in no way anti-Semitic... the actions were propelled by real desperation. But so were the actions of the Arabs."

While recognising that the violence from both sides of the conflict has hurt and deeply affected the victims, their families and communities, we are in support of this view of the reality of Palestinians today.





From 1516
Palestine was under Turkish Ottoman control and within that Empire it was an identifiable geographic and cultural region even though at that time there were no nation states in that part of the Empire.



800CE
By the end of the seventh century CE. Palestine was predominantly Arab and Islamic

1840's CE
Britain encourages Jewish immigration into Ottoman controlled Palestine as a means of protecting imperial interests

Before the 1880s there was little tension between Arabs and Jews. Tensions arose when Zionist settlers arrived partly as a result of the Jewish National Fund which was set up to buy Palestinian land from the Arabs. Thus the peasants who had cultivated it were dispossessed.

1917

The Balfour Declaration made by the British Government supported the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people". The myth was promulgated of "a land without people for a people without land". It in fact was home to 700,000 Palestinians in 1919. Promises had already been made to the former Ottoman colonies that independence would be theirs in return for support for the Allies in World War 1.

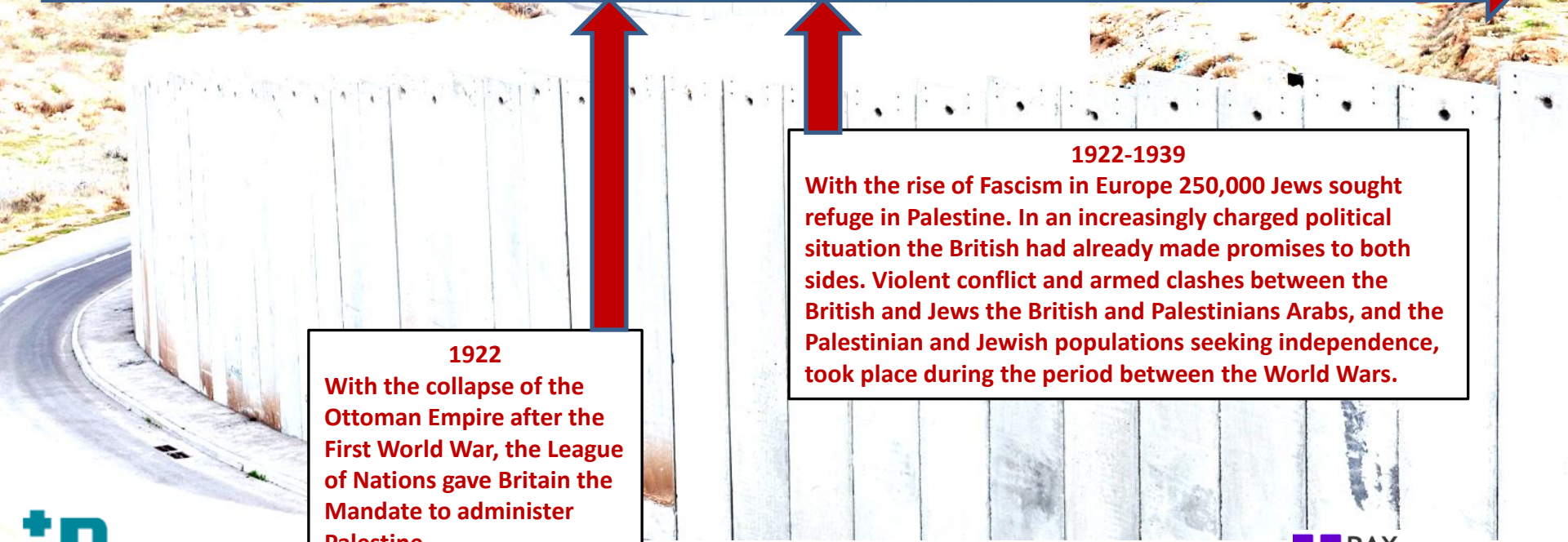


1922-1939

With the rise of Fascism in Europe 250,000 Jews sought refuge in Palestine. In an increasingly charged political situation the British had already made promises to both sides. Violent conflict and armed clashes between the British and Jews the British and Palestinians Arabs, and the Palestinian and Jewish populations seeking independence, took place during the period between the World Wars.

1922

With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War, the League of Nations gave Britain the Mandate to administer Palestine.



1947-49 The Nabka (Arabic for disaster/catastrophy). Between 700,000 and 900,000 Palestinians were forcibly expelled or fled in fear from their homes in the areas that became the State of Israel. In many incidents villages were attacked and inhabitants massacred e.g. Deir Yassim in 1948. Many indigenous Arabs took their keys with them as they had been given to understand that they would be able to return later when hostilities ceased. Under international law, and the UN Resolution 194, these refugees have a legal right to return to their homes. Obviously in the current situation exercising this choice is complicated and well nigh impossible and would entail lengthy discussion if it were to be implemented at all, let alone justly.

1941-45.
The persecution of Jews in Europe and the Holocaust, in which 6million Jews died, leads to an increase in immigration to Palestine.

1947
The UN General Assembly passes The Partition Plan dividing the British Mandate of Palestine into two states. 55% for a Jewish state, 45% for a Palestinian Arab state. This was accepted by the Jewish Leadership but rejected by the Palestinians because though they were still the majority in the Jewish state they were to be ruled by a Jewish ruling body.

May 1948
The Declaration of Israel as a Jewish state. The British withdrew and Egypt, Jordan and Syria invaded Israel causing an Arab-Israeli war to break out in which the Arabs were defeated subsequently from 1948-1966 the indigenous Palestinians have lived under military rule.

1949
The Geneva Convention was formulated and accepted by all international communities. It requires that any occupying power must leave the territory to the people who live there; and may not bring in their own people to populate the territory. Britain and the US in supporting the creation of the Jewish state, allowed the Jewish community to claim legal right to the territory. On the other hand, in the light of the Geneva convention the Palestinians have always recognised their right to remain there,. In their estimation, therefore, the continued evictions, home demolitions, detentions and collective punishment, meted out by the Israelis, have contravened the Geneva convention.

1974

The proposal of a Two State Solution. The framework of the solution is set out in UN resolutions on the "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine", going back to 1974. The resolution calls for "two States, Israel and Palestine ... side by side within secure and recognized borders" together with "a just resolution of the refugee question in conformity with UN resolution 194". The Palestinian leadership has embraced the concept since the 1982 Arab Summit in Fez.

1964

The Palestinian Liberation Organisation is founded in Cairo by the Arab League: it aims to destroy Israel through armed struggle and restore an independent Palestinian state.

1968-73

wars of attrition between Egypt and Israel, and Syria and Israel.

1974

Yasser Arafat makes his first appearance at the UN General Assembly.

1967

The Six Day war between Israel and Egypt, Syria and Jordan. A pre-emptive strike by Israel, and their vastly superior military capability ensured that the war was short-lived. It was as a result of this war that Israel occupied the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Since 1967, each Israeli government has invested significant resources in establishing and expanding the settlements in the occupied territories both in terms of the area of land they occupy and in terms of population. It is recognised that Israeli settlements not only diminished Palestinian life but are a drain on the natural resources particularly water.

1987.

As a result of two "uprisings" (intifadas) against the occupation (1987 -1993 and 2000 - 2005), the Israeli army has imposed constantly increasing restrictions on all Palestinians, causing much physical and psychological suffering, not least to the children. Harassment is now the daily experience of all those who have to cross checkpoints to get to their employment. It is not uncommon for them to experience deliberate delays and regular humiliation.



1991

After six years of the first Palestinian uprising (1st. intifada) there was a growing desire for a peaceful resolution. A conference was convened in Madrid sponsored by the Spanish, the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Negotiations concerning the agreement, (an outgrowth of the Madrid Conference of 1991) , were conducted secretly in Oslo, Norway.

1993-1995 OSLO PEACE ACCORD PROCESS

In August, the delegations had reached an agreement, which was signed in secrecy by Simon Peres while visiting Oslo. In the Letters of Mutual Recognition,

- the PLO acknowledged the State of Israel and pledged to reject violence, and
- Israel recognised the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people and as a partner in negotiations.
- Yasser Arafat was allowed to return to the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The accords

- called for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from parts of the Gaza Strip and West Bank,
- affirmed a Palestinian right of self-government within those areas
- through the creation of a Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority.

Palestinian rule was to last for a five-year interim period during which "permanent status negotiations" would commence in order to reach a final agreement. Major issues such as Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, Israeli settlements, and security and borders were to be decided at these 'permanent status negotiations'. Israel was to grant interim self-government to the Palestinians in phases.

1994

This attempt at a peaceful outcome was deemed so significant and hopeful that The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded jointly to Yasser Arafat, Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin "for their efforts to create peace in the Middle East".

Unfortunately the Accord did not result in a long term peaceful resolution.

On both sides, there were fears of the other side's intentions.

Israelis suspected that the Palestinians were entering into a tactical peace agreement, and that they were not sincere about wanting to reach peace and coexistence with Israel.

Many Palestinians feared that Israel was not serious about dismantling their settlements in the West Bank, especially around Jerusalem. They feared they might even accelerate their settlement program in the long run, by building more settlements and expanding existing ones.

2000.

A further attempt at solving the continuing conflict resulted in a summit meeting at Camp David between the United States president Bill Clinton, Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian Authority chairman Yasser Arafat took place between 11th. and 25th. of July. The summit ended without an agreement. The subsequent increased oppression and occupation by Israel led directly to the second uprising (intifada) and the continuing bombardment and destruction of Gaza which continues today.

GAZA

2006
Blockade by State
of Israel

2008-09
Operation Cast
Lead

2012
Operation Pillar
of Defence

2014
Operation
Protective Edge

Israeli forces have demolished more than 5000 homes there since the start of the second intifada, leaving many thousands of Gazans homeless, living in sports stadiums and damaged refugee camps, whole families in one room. Such destruction of infrastructure, water sources and agriculture damages the very fabric and the resolve of the community

2002.

In response to Palestinian suicide bombings and rocket attacks, the Israelis began the construction of the 25 feet high Separation Wall. The projected length of the wall is 450 miles almost the complete length of the Israeli/West Bank border. The border was originally created as a result of the armistice of 1949 and was known as the 'Green Line'. 85% of the Wall has illegally and significantly encroached upon Palestinian land, creating a flagrant annexation of Palestinian territory.

2012
UN approved
recognition of
Palestinian State –
138 votes in
favour and 41
abstentions

2015
Vatican recognises
Palestinian State