

Separation and Loss

In 1917 Balfour, the British Minister, declared that Palestine was to be a homeland for the Jews of the world. At this time 95% of Palestine was Palestinian (Muslim & Christian) and 5% Jewish. Britain stayed in control of Palestine until after the second world war. Large scale Jewish immigration took place in the inter war years.

Britain crushed a Palestinian revolt in 1936 that left the Palestinians leaderless and disorganised. Jewish militants began to attack British institutions. Britain decided to leave and in 1947 handed over the issue to the UN. In Palestine by 1947 there were 602,000 Jews and 1,325,000 Palestinians. The Jewish population owned about 6% of the land. The UN General Assembly, in November 1947 recommended a plan to partition Palestine with a Jewish state on 55% of the land

Ben-Gurion the Zionist leader said in December 1947 that 'there are 40% non-jews in the areas allocated to the Jewish state. This composition is not a solid base for a Jewish state. Only a state with at least 80% Jews is a viable and stable state'. Writing to his son in 1937 he had said 'The Arabs will have to go'.

In May 1948 Britain left and Israel declared independence. By then 300,000 Palestinians had fled the new state. Arab armies from Egypt, Lebanon and Syria then attacked Israeli forces till an armistice was signed in 1949. Israel was by now in control of 78% of Palestine. Benny Morris, an Israeli historian, established 24 instances of Israeli soldiers massacres of Palestinian villagers. which triggered panic and flight. During 1948 and 1949 more than 700,000+ Palestinians fled from the new state. Israel destroyed most of their villages, homes & properties, confiscated their lands and refused to let them back home after the fighting was finished or ever since. This is in contradiction to the very basic human right set out in the Geneva Convention. The UN resolution 194 passed in 1948 called for the refugees to be returned at the earliest opportunity.

Populations in area to become Israel

1947
1948/49
1949

Jews
600,000
600,000

Palestinians
820,000
Refugees: 700,000+
120,000

More on Why Palestinians fled — the issue at the heart of the conflict.

Israel occupied Gaza & the West Bank in 1967. It created colonies of settlers all over the West Bank in defiance of UN resolutions and the Geneva convention. It has continuously robbed the Palestinians of even more homeland, land and resources to add to that lost in 1948.

Israel operates an apartheid system in the West Bank. Israeli settlers have all civil & human rights under Israel's civil & criminal law. Palestinians are governed by Israeli martial law and pass laws enforced all over the West Bank by hostile military checkpoints and barriers. There are separate roads for Jewish settlers and they have a separate, superior infrastructure. eg unlimited water supply from Palestinian springs. Israel severely rations Palestinian water to the Palestinians.

More on Occupation & Colonisation

Demography

The number of Palestinians living between the Mediterranean and the Jordan is beginning to match that of Jews so Israeli leaders now see the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza as a demographic threat to a Jewish state.

In 2006 Sharon/Olmert set out plans to end the occupation, annex what Israel could of the remaining Palestinian land and replace its ground forces with external controls (land, sea and air).

On the left is Sharon/Olmert's plan for annexation of 40% plus of the West Bank and a prison 'state' broken into pieces for the Palestinians. It makes no mention of the refugees.

The wall on the east of the West Bank annexes 9.5% of remaining Palestinian land. Israeli settlements still in the West Bank takes 8.0%. Israel has been rapidly creating new settlements in the Jordan Valley and excluding Palestinians there. It plans to 'stay in control' of this whole area with its precious water springs and important land. This is another 28.5%.

This plan fulfills the Likud vision of Israel. The proposed Palestinian 'state' is completely enclosed by Israel who will totally control all access, trade, and economic development. It will control the skies and the water underground (An extremely necessary and scarce resource).

Map of Israel's annexation plan by BBC analyst May 2006 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4856762.stm

Palestinian Losses Accumulate

- UN Partition Plan 1947
- 1967 Occupation of West Bank & Gaza
- 2006 Proposed 'state'. The West Bank is completely surrounded and Gaza isolated & imprisoned.

Separation

1.3 million Palestinians now live in Gaza and 2.3 in what remains of the West Bank. 1.2 million live in Israel.

2.7 million Palestinians are refugees & their families in neighbouring countries awaiting their 'right of return' to Palestine.* Palestinians in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan cannot enter Israel where their villages were. Neither will Israel allow them to visit or live in the West Bank or Gaza.

Gaza is a prison. Israel military is in charge and controls the entry and exit of goods. Israel separates Gaza from the West Bank - the connecting road is rarely open. Even permits to study in the West Bank are mostly refused to Gazans.

Israel in the West Bank operates internal closures (with armed checkpoints) that separate villages and regions from one another. Israel issues IDs to all Palestinians which states their village/town of residence. They have to get permission(permits) to journey outside their own area. Some Palestinians have blue IDs which allows them to travel through Israel (such as East Jerusalem residents inside the wall). The rest of the Palestinians in the West Bank have green IDs allowing them very little movement even in the West Bank.

The wall in the West Bank separates Palestinians, those within from those without. The wall also separates Palestinian farmers from their land. It separates East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank. It also cuts off the south from the north. Along with the Israeli colonies and settler road system it breaks up the occupied territory between different parts and creates isolated enclaves of many towns.

Israel controls all access to the West Bank and Gaza and regularly blocks goods and people from reaching the Palestinians.

* This is an UN official estimate but the number is very much higher.