

PAPER 1

OCCUPATION FROM SCRATCH

A CRASH COURSE ON THE TRUTH

Confused? Have no idea what this is all about? Find out here!



photo credit: Ahmad Mesleh/ www.eyeonpalestine.com

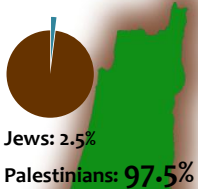
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OCCUPATION... WHAT?

The occupation of Palestine and the whole “Israel vs. Palestine” fiasco is talked about so much, and in such detail, that we tend to forget how it all started. While this is not a detailed history lesson, it aims to give a quick overview into what the fuss is all about, through a series of maps and facts.

LAND



1917 BALFOUR DECLARATION

This declaration, made by the British government, promised a ‘national home’ for Jews in Palestine. This was in response to increased pressure from the **Zionist** movement (which began in the 1800s), which sought to create a Jewish homeland.

→ At this time, Jews made up **less than 5% of the population**.

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Britain occupied Palestine until 1948, allowing, but limiting Jewish immigration. Note: Britain also made conflicting promises for the establishment of an independent Palestinian/Arab state. In 1922, the British Mandate for Palestine also promised to protect the rights of all its inhabitants.

Map 1: Historic Palestine, according to the Palestine Mandate

POPULATION



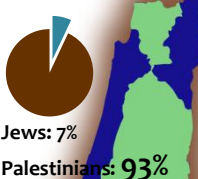
1947 UN PARTITION PLAN

After the horrors of the holocaust, the Zionist movement picked up momentum in an effort to establish a Jewish homeland, and Jews began immigrating to Palestine. The movement also gained sympathy in the UN as the world was apologetic for its failure to protect the Jewish people in WWII. The newly minted United Nations took on the responsibility of Palestine and proposed a plan to partition Palestine into two states. 55% of the land was to be for a Jewish state, and 45% of it for a Palestinian state, and Jerusalem would be left as an international zone.

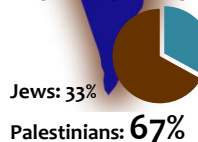
→ At this time, Jews made up **roughly 30% of the population** and **owned less than 7% of the land**.

Although in **retrospect**, this may have seemed like a good option for the Palestinians, it is important to keep in mind that it went against the principles of self-determination, and the fact that the people of the land should determine their fate- not an outside body or foreign government. The partition plan was rejected by leaders of the Palestinian and Arab communities.

LAND OWNERSHIP



POPULATION



Map 2: The UN Partition Plan of 1947

1948-1967: THE BEGINNING OF THE ETHNIC CLEANSING OF PALESTINE



LAND

Israel: 77%

Arabs: 23%
(of historic Palestine)

Map 3: 1949 UN
Armistice Lines

After the UN Partition Plan failed, leaders of the Zionist movement in Palestine declared independence of the state of Israel without any declared borders. To this day, Israel does not have any declared borders. Thus, the state of Israel was declared without the consent of its indigenous population. For this reason, May 14th 1948 is known as the “Day of Independence” amongst Israelis and “Al-Nakba” among Palestinians, meaning the catastrophe. The establishment of Israel resulted in Palestine’s ethnic cleansing, and the destruction of hundreds of Palestinian villages (estimated at over 500). The **Arab-Israeli War** followed as neighbouring Arab states stepped in, and lasted approximately one year. Israel ended up seizing a significantly larger state as compared to the initial UN proposal. Israel was now in control of **77% of historic Palestine**. **Almost one million Palestinians fled during the war and were not allowed to return home**. Note: It is against international law to acquire territory through war. The war ended in 1949, when the UN Armistice lines were drawn up, known as the “Green Line”. The West Bank went under Jordanian control, and the Gaza Strip under Egyptian control.

In 1967, Israel launched a surprise attack on its unsuspecting Arab neighbours, and seized control over the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Sinai Peninsula (Egypt) and Golan Heights. To this day, Israel is illegally occupying the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights. **UN Resolution 242** calls for the Israeli withdrawal of these territories, while **UN Resolution 194** states the right of return for Palestinian refugees. After 1967, Israel began to transfer its population illegally into the occupied territories in a process of colonization and has not complied fully with any of these resolutions.

"JEWISH VILLAGES WERE BUILT IN THE PLACE OF ARAB VILLAGES. YOU DO NOT EVEN KNOW THE NAMES OF THESE ARAB VILLAGES, AND I DO NOT BLAME YOU BECAUSE GEOGRAPHY BOOKS NO LONGER EXIST, NOT ONLY DO THE BOOKS NOT EXIST, THE ARAB VILLAGES ARE NOT THERE EITHER. NAHLAL AROSE IN THE PLACE OF MAHLUL; KIBBUTZ Gvat IN THE PLACE OF JIBTA; KIBBUTZ SARID IN THE PLACE OF HUNEIFIS; AND KEFAR YEHUSHU'A IN THE PLACE OF TAL AL-SHUMAN. THERE IS NOT ONE SINGLE PLACE BUILT IN THIS COUNTRY THAT DID NOT HAVE A FORMER ARAB POPULATION."

MOSHE DAYAN, *Military Commander in 1948 and Former Israeli Politician, Chief of Staff of the IDF, Minister of Defense, and Foreign Minister of Israel*

Source: Ha'aretz, April 4th 1969

1967-2011: ISRAELI COLONIZATION AND POLICY OF APARTHEID



LAND

Israel: 90%

Palestinians: 10%
(of historic Palestine)

With the transferral of its population into the occupied territories, Israel proceeded to create a complicated system in order to integrate these communities into Israeli life. Since their displacement and dispossession in 1948, Palestinians have continuously resisted Israel through whatever means at their disposal, resulting in a few uprisings, *intifadas*. However, their existence in itself is resistance against their ethnic cleansing. Today, all of historic Palestine remains under Israeli control. Although Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip, and parts of the West Bank are under limited Palestinian control (after the Oslo Accords), these are just pockets of insignificant power. The Palestinians do not have anything characteristic of a truly independent or sovereign state. They have no control over their borders, airspace, or territorial waters: It is all under Israeli control.

Map 4: Areas under limited Palestinian control, 2011

THINK ABOUT IT

It's easy for us to get caught up in the frenzy about the Middle East, and it's easy to do so without knowing the facts. After learning the history of the colonization of Palestine, **think about it**. How would you feel if you were a Palestinian refugee who lost your home and village to a newly established state- which neither you, nor any of your neighbours, had any say in?



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