

THE MID- EAST

1900-1948

The period between 1900 and 1948 saw a huge influx of Jewish immigrants into the areas of Trans-Jordan and Palestine. Both areas were controlled by first the Ottoman Turks then the British Empire.

However two other groups also laid historical claims, and thus the right to settle, the desert states.

THE JEWISH CLAIM:

- According to Jewish history God had promised Abraham the area where the modern state of Israel now stands

THE PALESTINIAN CLAIM:

- The Palestinians can trace their roots back for several thousand years. They claim to be the true indigenous peoples of the area.

As neither claim can be substantiated to the others satisfaction there has been a long history of conflict in the area.

THE EUROPEAN LEGACY

1900: Zionism emerges out of Russian & Poland

Zionism = a political movement & ideology that supports a Jewish Homeland in Israel

The Aliyah (Ascent) of Jewish peoples toward the mid-east begins.

1914 WWI breaks out and the Arabs in the Mid-East help the allies to win control of the Mid –East from the Ottoman Empire, with the hope of gaining independence after the war.

1916: Sykes-Picot Agreement

- Britain and France split up the Ottoman Empire in a secret deal
- There are no provisions for either Arab or Jewish states

1917: The Balfour Declaration:

- British Foreign secretary ‘views, with favour, the establishment in Palestine of a national homeland for the Jewish people.’

1918: The McMahon Letters

- The British High Commissioner in Egypt states that Britain ‘promises to recognize and support the independence of Arabs in the mid-east region.

PARIS 1919

- The Paris peace talks creates the **Mandate system**
- The mid-east is split up according to Sykes-Picot
Britain = Palestine & Trans-Jordan
France = Syria & Lebanon

1919 Support for the Balfour Declaration

- Britain agrees to a Jewish homeland in return for Zionist support in the protection of British interests in the Suez Canal

This support is seen as a betrayal by the Arabs who fought for Britain in WWI

Zionist groups encourage immigration and 40,000 Jews land in Palestine 1919-23

1923 -39

- Britain imposes the first of a series of restricting quotas on Jewish immigration.

This is seen as a road block to the Zionists and several groups of 'Jewish terrorists' begin to harass the British including The Stern Gang, Haganah and Irgun (lead by Future Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin)

1945- 47

The end of WWII saw the creation of a huge amount of displaced European Jews.

Zionist groups lobbied Western countries (especially USA, Canada & U.K.) to limit their Jewish quotas.

Zionists also encouraged/coerced camp survivors and other displaced peoples to immigrate to Palestine.

Britain Again placed limitations on the Number of Jews allowed into Palestine, often by force.

HOWEVER:

- **The Zionist terrorist movement could sense Britain's inability to hold onto its mandates in the wake of WWII (think Turkey & Greece) and stepped up activity.**
- **Between 1900 & 1948 approx. 600,000 Jews entered Palestine**

Britain turned to the newly formed United Nations for aid, as it could no longer viably hold onto its Mid East possessions

1947 The United Nations creates a partition plan.

November 1947

- David Ben-Gurion, a leader in the Zionist movement accepts The League of Arab States rejects it.

May 14th 1948

The British Mandate is cancelled

May 14th 1948

- Ben-Gurion proclaims the State of Israel at the stroke of Midnight
- The Arab League of States protest to the UN
- **The Arab-Israel-war (War of independence) breaks-out**

May 11 1949 The United Nation admits The State of Israel as a sovereign nation

Palestine, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank of the Jordan River remain in Arab hands.

The holy City of Jerusalem is to be controlled by an international tribunal, giving access to both Arabs and Jews.

