

PALESTINE THROUGH HISTORY

*A SYNOPSIS OF THE HISTORY OF PALESTINE*

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**PROLOGUE:**

When the Zionists began to talk about creation of a state in Palestine, the number of Jews living in Palestine did not exceed 10,000. Accordingly, creation of a “Jewish State” in Palestine required Ethnic Cleansing and Land Theft. And this is exactly what started in 1948 and is still going on to this date.

**Indefinite:** Stone Age: earliest pre-historic unidentified settlements.

**10,000-5,000 BC:** Establishment of settled agricultural communities.

**3000 BC:** The Cana'anites settled the land, which was named after them, the “Land of Cana'an”.

**1850 BC:** Abraham left his home in Ur of the Chaldees (Mesopotamia) and journeyed to the Land of Cana'an.

**1700 BC:** Abraham's descendants immigrated to Egypt. Their position in Egypt deteriorated so much around 1250 BC that they were mere slaves. God told his prophet Moses to act and save his people.

**1200 BC:** Moses died before reaching the ‘Promised Land’. It was Joshua who led the Israelites into the Land of Cana'an and established the twelve tribes.

**1154 – 1000 BC:** Local rule: Cana'anites, Philistines and Jews.

**1000 BC:** King David conquered Jerusalem.

**1000 - 927 BC:** Israelites established a monarchy under David and then Solomon.

At about 927 BC, the northern tribes broke away from the southern kings in Jerusalem and formed their own kingdom, the Kingdom of Israel, which opposed the smaller Kingdom of Judea in the south.

**722 BC:** King Tiglath-Peleser III of Assyria conquered the Kingdom of Israel. The ten northern tribes of Israel were deported, forced to assimilate and disappeared from history forever.

**589 BC:** Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and most of the inhabitants of Judea were deported to Babylonia, leaving behind only a few peasants and poor people.

Exile to Babylon was traumatic, but the Jewish deportees did not disappear like the ten northern tribes.

Some of the exiles lived in Babylon itself and others lived in a settlement on the banks of the Cheder in an area, which they called 'Tel Aviv'.

**538 BC:** Following the Medes and the Persians conquest of the Babylonians, Cyrus, the King of Persia, gave the Jews permission to return to their homeland and rebuild the Temple. Some Jews left Babylon and 'Tel Aviv' and began the long journey home. However, most of the Jews remained behind in exile. They no longer saw physical possession of the Holy Land as essential to the Jewish identity.

**333 BC:** Conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great brought Palestine under Greek rule.

**323 BC:** Death of Alexander led to alternate rule by Ptolemies of Egypt and Seleucids of Syria.

**165 BC:** Maccabees revolted against the Seleucid ruler and went on to establish an independent Jewish State.

**63 BC:** Incorporation of Palestine into the Roman Empire.

**70 AD:** The Romans conquered Jerusalem and burned down the Temple. The Roman Empires (Western and Eastern) ruled Palestine until 614 AD.

**132-135 AD:** Bar Kokhba revolt suppressed. Jews were barred from Jerusalem and Emperor Hadrian built new pagan city of Aelia Capitolina on its ruins.

**638 AD:** Moslem Arabs under Caliph Umar captured Palestine from the Byzantines. The Arabs settled in the land and mixed, intermingled and intermarried with its natives who were arabized and their majority converted to Islam.

**Umar invited the Jews to return to the holy city** and built a simple wooden mosque where al-Aqsa Mosque now stands.

**661-750:** Omayyad Caliphs ruled Palestine from Damascus. Construction of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem was done by Caliph Abd al-Malik (685-705) and construction of the al-Aqsa mosque was done by Caliph al-Walid I (705-715).

**750-1258:** Abbasid caliphs ruled Palestine from Iraq.

**969:** Fatimid dynasty, claiming descent from the Prophet's daughter Fatima and her cousin Ali, ruled Palestine from Egypt. They proclaimed themselves caliphs in rivalry to the Abbasids.

**1071:** Saljuqs, originally from Isfahan, captured Jerusalem and parts of Palestine, which remained officially within the Abbasid Empire.

**1099:** European Crusaders conquered Jerusalem and founded several states on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean including the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

**1187:** Saladin (Salah al-Din) defeated the Crusaders and recaptured Jerusalem.

**1260:** Mameluks succeeded Ayyubids, defeated the Mongols and ruled Palestine from Cairo.

**1291:** Mameluks captured the last Crusader strongholds of Acre and Caesarea and re-established Islamic rule in the area.

**1492, January:** King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella defeated the Muslim Kingdom of Granada. The Jews of Spain were given the choice of converting to Christianity or leaving the country. About 100,000 Spanish Jews left, but many were so attached to Spain and chose baptism.

For 800 years, Jews, Christians and Muslims had, for the most part, been able to live in Christian as well as in Muslim Spain quite amicably side by side and built a rich and dynamic culture.

**1517:** Ottoman Sultan Selim defeated the Mameluks and incorporated Jerusalem and Palestine into the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire, which ruled Palestine until WWI.

**1831:** Mohammed Ali of Egypt occupied and ruled Palestine until 1840.

**1841:** Restoration of Ottoman Turkish rule in Palestine.

**1862:** Moses Hess called for the creation of a Jewish national state in Palestine.

**1870:** *Mikve Israel*, a Jewish agricultural school, was established north of Jaffa.

**1878:** Colony of Petach Tiqva, financed by Lord Rothschild, was established.

**1881:** Czarist pogroms in Russia sparked Jewish migration and settlement in Palestine.

**1882:** Leo Pinsker urged the Jews to settle in Palestine and founded the society of Hovevi Zion, which sponsored emigration of Jews to Palestine.

**1882 – 1903:** First wave of 35,000 Jewish émigrés arrived in Palestine.

**1880's:** The first signs of Palestinian resistance were a direct and spontaneous reaction to the efforts of the pioneer Zionist settlers to dispossess and displace the Arab *fellahin*.

**1891:** German Jewish millionaire Baron Maurice de Hirsch founded the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA), which began its operations in Palestine in 1896.

**1896:** Theodor Herzl, an Austro-Hungarian Jewish journalist and writer, published a pamphlet calling for the creation of a 'Jewish State'.

Ottoman Sultan Abd-al Hamid II rejected Theodor Herzl's proposal that Palestine be granted to the Jews.

**1897:** The first Zionist Congress (ZC) met in Basle, created the Zionist Organization (ZO) and adopted the Basle Program, which called for Jewish colonization in Palestine.

**1898:** Herzl paid a visit to Palestine to meet with the Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, who was visiting Jerusalem, to lobby for the Zionist project.

**1901:** The Jewish National Fund (JNF) was founded to buy lands in Palestine for the exclusive ownership and use of the 'Jewish people'.

**1901-1902:** Herzl tried in Constantinople to obtain a Charter for rights, duties and privileges of a Jewish-Ottoman Colonization Association for the Settlement of Palestine and Syria and grant the Jews with the right to deport the native population.

**1903:** The Anglo-Palestine Bank (later renamed as Bank Leumi) was established as the principal financial institution of the Jewish community in Palestine.

**1903, December:** The Anglo-Palestine Company, a subsidiary of the JCA, was established in Palestine to finance Zionist colonization.

**1904 – 1914:** A 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of 40,000 Jewish émigrés arrived in Palestine.

**1908:** The 'Young Turks' Revolution erupted in Constantinople and resulted in the freeing of party political activity and the growth of the press throughout the Ottoman Empire. Arabic-language papers began to reflect a mounting concern about the dangers posed by Zionist colonization. A Palestinian journal, *al-Karmil*, was founded in Haifa with the purpose of opposing Zionist colonization.

**1909:** - The Palestine Land Development Co. was founded to coordinate land purchases.

- Tel Aviv, an all Jewish city, was founded north of Jaffa.

- *Hashomer* was founded as a countrywide organization that would assume responsibility for the security of as many Jewish settlements as possible.

**1910:** A series of land purchases by the colonial Zionists from absentee landlords, which led to expulsions of fellahin, brought important elements of the Arab urban elite to a realization the full import of Zionism. Not only was land being purchased, but also its Arab cultivators were being dispossessed and replaced by colonial settlers aiming at domination of Palestine.

**1911:** Palestinian journalist Najib Nassar published first book in Arabic on Zionism entitled *Zionism: Its History, Objective and Importance*.

**1911, May:** In a memorandum to the Zionist Executive, Arthur Ruppin, the director of Zionist settlement in Palestine, proposed a limited population transfer by purchasing land near Aleppo and Homs in Syria to resettle the dispossessed Arabs.

**1911, June 11:** The Palestinian journalist, Najib Nassar, wrote in *al-Karmil* newspaper that what Palestine needed in opposing Zionism was “sincere leaders like Herzl who will forget their private interests in favor of the public good... We have many men like Herzl; all they lack is a realization of their own abilities, and the courage to take the first step. Let such men appear, and not hesitate, and circumstances will favor them, for men’s ideas have matured and we are ready.”

**1912, July 12:** Leo Motzkin suggested that the Arab-Jewish problem was soluble if the Arabs would be willing to resettle in the uncultivated lands around Palestine.

**1914:** Another security organization, called the Jaffa Group, came into being during WWI providing security services for Tel Aviv and the Jewish community in Jaffa.

**1914, 12 November:** Chaim Weizman wrote a letter to C. P. Scott, the editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, stating “Should Palestine fall within the British sphere of influence, and should Britain encourage a Jewish settlement there, as a British dependency, we could have in twenty to thirty years a million Jews out there, perhaps more. They would develop the country, bring back civilization to it and form a very effective guard for the Suez Canal...”

**1915:** A number of messages were exchanged between Sharif Hussein, ruler of Hijaz, and Sir Henry McMahon, the British High Commissioner in Egypt. In these messages, the Arabs were promised to have an independent state.

**1916, 16 May:** The Sykes-Picot agreement was concluded between Britain and France to share hegemony over the Middle East.

**1917, 2 November:** The Balfour Declaration, promising support for a ‘Jewish National Home in Palestine’, was issued by Balfour, the British Secretary of State. The declaration was endorsed by the U.S. Congress in 1922 and was incorporated into the British Mandate in Palestine.

**1917, 9 December:** Ottoman forces in Jerusalem surrendered to the allied forces led by General Allenby. A British military administration was established in Palestine.

**1918:** The Muslim-Christian Association appeared in Jaffa and Jerusalem in 1918 as a result of the anti-Zionist awakening following the Balfour Declaration.

**1919, January:** The Palestinian National Congress was held in Jerusalem and drew up demands for the Paris Peace Conference, which resolved that Palestine should be independent and part of Syria.

**1919, 30 January:** The Supreme Council of the Peace Conference decided that the conquered Arab provinces, including Palestine, were not to be restored to Turkish rule.

**1919, May:** The King-Crane Commission, which was wholly American in composition, set out to the Middle East to determine the wishes of its people. France and Britain refused to participate in the Commission. In its recommendations issued in August, the Commission called for “a serious modification of the extreme Zionist program for Palestine of unlimited immigration of Jews, looking finally to making Palestine distinctly a Jewish State... it can hardly be doubted that the extreme Zionist program must be greatly modified. For a national home for the Jewish people is not equivalent to making Palestine into a Jewish State; nor can the erection of such a Jewish State be accomplished without the gravest trespass upon the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine. The fact came out repeatedly in the Commission’s conferences with Jewish representatives that the Zionists looked forward to a practically complete dispossession of the present non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine, by various forms...”

**1919, 2 July:** The Palestinians sent delegates to the all-Syria General Congress that was held in Damascus in June - July 1919. The Resolutions of the Congress called for complete independence for all Syria including Palestine under American, or secondly, British tutelage; economic union with Iraq; and opposition to a Jewish commonwealth.

**1919:** The Zionists asked the Paris Peace Conference to provide them with the territory outlined within a line running east from Sidon in Lebanon to a point South-East of Damascus. The line then goes south along a line parallel to the Hijaz railway and ends in Aqaba in Jordan. From there, the line goes northwest to Al Arish in Egypt. This area included all of Mandate Palestine, the Golan Heights, both sides of the Jordan River, and southern Lebanon up to the Litani River.

**1919 – 1923:** A 3<sup>rd</sup> wave of 40,000 Jewish émigrés arrived in Palestine.

**1920, 8 March:** The Syrian National Congress voted for Syrian independence. Faisal was proclaimed king of an independent Syria “in its natural boundaries, Lebanon and Palestine included”. The resolutions were treated by the Syrian and Palestinian nationalists as the equivalent to an accomplished fact and precipitated enthusiasm in Palestine. A mass demonstration in Jerusalem, headed by Aref-el-Aref, called for unity between Syria and Palestine and a stop to Jewish immigration.

**1920, 4 April:** A demonstration in Jerusalem exploded into some sort of an uprising, which was considered as a turning point in the struggle for Palestinian independence. The British withdrew police and soldiers from the Old City and after two days of rioting there were five Jewish and four Arabs dead. Amin Husayni and Aref el-Aref had to flee to Transjordan after being accused by the British of having provoked the riots.

**1920, 25 April:** The Supreme Council of San Remo Peace Conference assigned the Mandate for Syria and Lebanon to France and for Palestine, Transjordan and Iraq to Great Britain. The Balfour Declaration was incorporated into the mandate. The League of Nations formally approved these mandates in 1922.

**1920, May:** The British Government relieved Allenby and appointed Sir Herbert Samuel, a British Zionist Jew, as the first civilian High Commissioner for Palestine.

**1920, 1 July:** A civil administration was established in Palestine, which included, in addition to the High Commissioner, a number of British Zionist Jews who were placed in key positions.

**1920, December:** The Arab Executive was elected at the 3rd National Congress in Haifa and led the Palestinian political movement until 1935.

**1920:** The following Zionist institutions were founded in Palestine: The *Histadrut* (a General Federation of Labour), *Keren Hayesod* (financial arm of the ZO), The *Haganah* (a clandestine Jewish military organization), *Asefat Hanivharim* (an Elected Assembly to conduct Jewish community affairs), *Va'ad Leumi* (a National Council which in turn elects an executive to deal with political affairs, education, health, social welfare and other daily life aspects of the Jewish community).

**1922, 24 July:** A draft Mandate for Palestine was submitted by Britain to the Council of the League of Nations. The Balfour Declaration was cited in the preamble of the Mandate. Article 2 of the Mandate provided responsibility “for placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home.” In Article 4, a provision was made for a ‘Jewish Agency’ to be recognized “as a public body for the purposes of advising and cooperating with the Administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish-national home.”

**1922:** By a Joint Resolution, the U.S. Congress proclaimed that “the United States of America favours the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people...”

**1923, 29 September:** The British Mandate in Palestine was confirmed by the Council of the League of Nations and came into force.

**1924 – 1929:** A 4<sup>th</sup> wave of 82,000 Jewish émigrés arrived in Palestine.

**1929, 11 August:** The Jewish Agency, as stipulated in the Mandate, was created and opened offices in Jerusalem.

**1929, 15 August:** The Revisionist movement organized a provocative demonstration at the Wailing Wall. It exacerbated Jewish-Arab tense relations and riots broke out in Palestine. Shaw Commission was sent to inquire into the immediate causes and to make recommendations for the future maintenance of peace between the Jews and the Arabs.

**1930:** The report of the Shaw Commission of Enquiry revealed the gravity of the problem of landlessness among Arab peasants. The Commission’s report also attributed causes of the riots

to fact that “the Arabs have come to see in Jewish immigration not only a menace to their livelihood but a possible overlord of the future.”

**1931:** A group of Haganah members seceded from the organization and established the Irgun Zvai Leumi (IZL) advocating a more militant policy against Palestinian Arabs.

**1935:** - Ben-Gurion was elected chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive (JAEExec).

**1929 – 1939:** A 5<sup>th</sup> wave of 250,000 Jewish émigrés arrived in Palestine.

**1936:** An Arab Higher Committee (AHC) was founded to lead Palestinian struggle for national independence.

**1937, August:** The 20<sup>th</sup> ZC decided to accept the British Peel Commission proposal for partition of Palestine as a basis for negotiation with the British government.

A ‘Population Transfer Committee’ was appointed by the Jewish Agency (JA) to come up with plans to rid the ‘Jewish State’ of its Palestinian Arabs.

**1938:** The report of the British Woodhead Commission concluded that a voluntary ‘transfer’ is not going to happen and compulsory transfer of population was ruled out.

The Zionist leadership believed that the Zionists had to exert pressure to force the British to act. But if necessary, David Ben Gurion wrote in his diary, “We must ourselves prepare to carry out the removal of the Palestinians”. In a report to the JAEExec on 12 June 1938, Ben-Gurion stated “I am for a compulsory transfer; I don’t see anything immoral in it...”

**1939 – 1948:** A 6<sup>th</sup> wave of 150,000 Jewish émigrés arrived in Palestine.

**1939, 17 May:** Following the Arab revolution, the British Government announced its new policy in a White Paper.

The White Paper stated, “The Royal Commission and previous Commissions of Enquiry have drawn attention to the ambiguity of certain expressions in the Mandate... and they have found in this ambiguity and the resulting uncertainty as to the objectives of policy a fundamental cause of unrest and hostility between Arabs and Jews... The proposal of partition recommended by the Royal Commission...of self-supporting independent Arab and Jewish States within Palestine has been found to be impracticable...”

Accordingly, the White Paper declared that “The objective of His Majesty’s Government is the establishment within ten years of an independent Palestine State...” The State will be preceded by a transitional period during which both Arabs and Jews will have an opportunity to participate in the machinery of government, and the process will be carried on whether or not they both avail themselves of it. Jewish immigration was to continue for another five years during which a total of 75,000 Jewish immigrants will be admitted to the country.



In response to the British White Paper, the JA issued a statement announcing that the Jews will never accept the closing against them of the gates of Palestine and would defend Jewish immigration, the Jewish home and Jewish freedom.”

**1940:** Yossef Weitz, head of the settlement department of the JNF, wrote the following: “Transfer does not serve only one aim – to reduce the Arab population – it also serves a second purpose by no means less important, which is to evict land now cultivated by Arabs and to free it for Jewish settlement”. Therefore, he concluded, “The solution is to transfer the Arabs from here to neighbouring countries. Not a single village or a single tribe must be let off”.

**1940, Dec. 20:** Yosef Weitz wrote in his diary: “It must be clear that there is no room in the country for both peoples...If the Arabs leave it, the country will become wide and spacious for us...The only solution is a Land of Israel, at least a western Land of Israel without Arabs. There is no room here for compromises...There is no way but to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighboring countries, to transfer all of them, save perhaps for [the Arabs of] Bethlehem, Nazareth and old Jerusalem. Not one village must be left, not one [bedouin] tribe. The transfer must be directed at Iraq, Syria and even Transjordan. For this goal funds will be found...And only after this transfer will the country be able to absorb millions of our brothers and the Jewish problem will cease to exist...”

**1942, 9-11 May:** The first national conference of American Zionists was held at the Biltmore Hotel in New York. The conference adopted the ‘Biltmore Program’, which called for the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine.

**1944, 16 October:** A report was submitted by Roberto Bachi, an expert in demography, to the Haganah and the JA proposing Arab ‘transfer’ to ensure ‘Jewish majority’.

**1947, 18 February:** The British Government realized that the Mandate in Palestine was unworkable and announced its intention of giving it up.

This prompted Ben Gurion to hold regular weekly meetings with a group of Zionist leaders, the ‘Consultant Committee’, to discuss plans to rid Palestine of its Arabs.

The ‘Consultant Committee’ included, among others, Yigael Yadin, Moshe Dayan, Yigal Allon, Yitzhak Sadeh, Israel Galili and Yossef Weitz.

**1947, 17 November:** Golda Meir secretly met with Jordan’s King Abdullah who stated that he would not take part in any Arab attack against the Jews. Meyerson signaled the king that the Jews would not interfere with his annexation of territory allotted to the Arab State of Palestine.

**1947, 29 November:** UN General Assembly Resolution # 181 (II), outlining a partition plan for Palestine, was adopted.

The Arabs rejected the resolution partitioning their country. In protest, the Arab Higher Committee (AHC) proclaimed a three-day strike.

The Irgun used the Arab rioting as a pretext to launch a murderous campaign against Arab civilians in numerous towns and villages. Irgun leader Menachem Begin later stated: “My greatest worry in those months was that the Arabs might accept the UN plan. Then we would have had the ultimate tragedy, a Jewish State so small that it could not absorb all the Jews of the world.”

**1947, 3 December:** In a speech in a meeting at the Mapai center after the UN Partition resolution, Ben-Gurion pointed out that the ‘Jewish State’ would have a population of about one million, 40% of which would be non-Jews. He made it clear that there can be no stable and strong Jewish State so long as it has a Jewish majority of only 60%, which requires ‘a new approach...new habits of mind’ to ‘suit our new future’.

**1947, 31 December:** Haganah stormed the village of Balad al-Shaikh. A massacre took place leading to the deaths of hundreds of women and children, most of whose corpses were found inside the houses of the village.

**1948, early March:** Haganah prepared Plan *Dalet* and declared general mobilization.

**1948, 23 March:** The British Cabinet decided to accelerate the pace of withdrawal from Palestine and do nothing to oppose either an attempt by the Jews to set up a Jewish state before May 15 or by the armed forces of Jordan to enter Palestine. All that the British did was to offer trucks and boats to the Palestinians fleeing in panic especially in Tiberias, Haifa and Jaffa during April and May.

**1948, 30 March:** Archbishop Hakim conveyed an Arab peace proposal to Mayor Shabtai Levy in Haifa. The Haganah commander in the city, Ya’akov Lubliani, opposed a truce that might halt the Arab exodus.

**1948, 30 March – 15 May:** Haganah Alexandroni brigade attacked and drove out almost all Palestinian communities in the coastal area between Haifa and Jaffa.

**1948, 31 March:** Weitz met with Israel Galili, Head of the Haganah National Staff, “to discuss the problem of new Jewish settlements and the question of the Arab villages”. He demanded that a policy be decided upon and proposed the appointment of a committee to act.

An unofficial ‘self-appointed’ committee, headed by Weitz, started its ethnic cleansing activities as of the end of March 1948. An official committee was appointed following the creation of Israel.

**1948, 4 April:** Operation *Nachshon* was launched by the Haganah. Villages along the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road were captured and their Arab residents were expelled.

Abdul Qadir al-Husayni, Palestinian commander in chief, was killed in the counter-attack at Qastel on April 8.

**1948, 9 April:** A brutal massacre was committed in Deir Yassin by the Zionist gangs. Over 250 men, women and children were killed.

**1948, 12 April:** The *élite* Jewish troops, the Palmach, struck at midnight against Kolonia, a small Arab village several miles from Jerusalem. Harry Levin, a pro-Zionist news correspondent joined the Palmach in its attack and gave the following story:

The attackers used “a medley of weapons, Sten-guns, rifles, machine guns and hand grenades”. The battle did not last very long. Levin noted that “Arab resistance, feeble from the start, soon crumbled. When our men got to them, many of the houses were empty. Others continued to spit fire but not for long”. According to the Jewish correspondent, “In half an hour it was over. Most of the Arabs had fled into the darkness”.

In Kolonia, as in hundreds of villages throughout Palestine, the Zionist forces would make sure that the population, which was expelled, could not return. Levin witnessed the spectacle. “When I left, sappers were blowing up the houses. One after the other the solid stone buildings, some built in elaborate city style, exploded and crashed. Within sight of Jerusalem, I still heard echoes rolling through the hills”. With no houses to return to, the people of Kolonia were condemned to become permanent refugees. But two miles away, the population of another village, Deir Yassin, had already suffered a far worse fate. The tragic story of this town would come to symbolize the agony of the Palestinian people.

**1948, 16 April:** The Old City of Tiberias was attacked. The Arabs appealed to the British to lift the Haganah siege on the Old City and to extend their protection to the Arab areas. The British said they intended to evacuate the city within a few days and hence could offer no protection to the Arabs beyond 22 April. The Arab notables then decided to evacuate the city with British help. A truce was instituted and the British brought up buses and trucks and took the Arabs to Nazareth and Transjordan.

**1948, 18 April:** An operation named *Bi'ur Hametz* (Cleaning the Leaven) was launched by the Haganah in Haifa. The Carmeli Brigade's full force was unleashed on a civilian population of about 75,000 crowded in an area no more than 1.5 square kilometers. When the Haganah Command learned that the Arab authorities were calling upon the civilians to gather for shelter in the old market place, three-inch mortars were ordered to shell the market place. A great panic ensued. The crowd broke into the port, stormed the boats and began to flee the city.

**1948, 25 April:** The assault on Jaffa started by an offensive launched by the IZL. When the news of the attack reached London, Bevin wanted to compensate for the wrong done in Haifa. Accordingly, the British went into action and tried to stem the Arab exodus, but to no avail. It was too little and too late. Part of the reason why the British were unsuccessful in persuading the Jaffa Arabs to stay put was Operation Hametz (*Mivtza Hametz*) launched by the Haganah during the same period against the Arab villages east of Jaffa, which cut Jaffa from all centers of Arab population and its rural hinterland.

Most of the inhabitants of Jaffa left the city under British protection.

On 13 May, with the final British evacuation, the Jaffa Arab Emergency Committee, representing the 4,000-5,000 remaining inhabitants, signed a formal surrender agreement with the Haganah.

**1948, 26-30 April:** Haganah Har'el and Etzioni brigades launched Operation Yevussi in and around Jerusalem. West Jerusalem residential areas were captured and its Palestinian residents were driven out.

**1948, 28 April:** Operation Yiftach was launched to cleanse Eastern Galilee of its Arabs. Safad and its surrounding villages were captured during the night of 11-12 May.

**1948, 1 May:** David Ben-Gurion paid a visit to newly occupied Haifa and spoke of his plan regarding the future of the Arabs in Haifa: Their number would not exceed 15,000; two-thirds would be Christians, one-third Moslems. Christians would be concentrated in Wadi Nisnas and the Moslems would be concentrated in the Wadi Salib neighborhood.

**1948, 4 May:** Operation Broom (*Mivtza Matate*), designed to clear out the Arab population from the Jordan Valley was launched. The order to the company commanders was: Arab villages of Zanghariya and Tabigha, and the area of Arab ash Sahamalina should be attacked, their inhabitants expelled, and their houses blown up.

Mortaring preceded the assault and the Arabs in the area fled eastwards, into Syria, with the approach of the Palmach columns. The following day Palmach sappers methodically blew up more than 50 houses in Zanghariya and other villages in the area.

**1948, 6 May:** - Aharon Cohen, Mapam party's Arab Department director, wrote a memorandum entitled 'Our Arab Policy in the Midst of the War'. In his notes for the memorandum, Cohen wrote, "a deliberate eviction [of the Arabs] is taking place... Others may rejoice – I, as a socialist, am ashamed and afraid... To win the war and lose the peace...the state [of Israel], when it arises, will live on its sword".

In a memorandum to the Political Committee of Mapam on 10 May, Aharon stated that: "There is reason to assume, that what is being done... [Is being done] out of certain political aims and not only out of military necessity.... In fact, what is called a 'transfer' of the Arabs out of the area of the Jewish state is what is being carried out..."

**1948, 8-9 May:** Haganah Har'el and Giv'ati brigades undertook Operation Maccabi and captured remaining villages between Ramla and Latrun.

**1948, 9 May:** Operation Lightning (*Mivtza Barak*) was launched in the south and created a wave of panic and flight. The attack on Beit Daras on 10 May prompted the flight of its inhabitants and affected neighboring villages. The village houses were blown up.

Abu Shusha, southeast of Ramle, was mortared on the night of 13-14 May; its population fled. Some of the houses were then blown up. The nearby village of Na'ana was surrounded and given an ultimatum to hand over its arms. Hostages were taken pending a hand-over of arms. Arms were handed over and the village was then occupied and the villagers were ordered.

During the second stage of Operation Lightning, Givati troops captured Al Mughar (15 May), Sawafir ash Sharqiya and Batani Gharbi (18 May) and Al Qubeiba (27 May). Most of the inhabitants of these villages had fled or expelled.

Givati troops also occupied the large, semi-abandoned village of Zarnuqa and its houses were demolished.

**1948, 10 May:** The final attack on Safad began at 21:30 hours on 10 May. The Davidka mortar bombs, which made a tremendous noise on impact, accounted for a great deal of the panic that followed. The Palmach “intentionally left open the exit routes for the population to ‘facilitate’ their exodus...” On 11 May, the Palmach troops moved into and secured emptying the Arab quarters of the city.

The Haganah finally captured Safad and surrounding villages during the night of 11-12 May.

**1948, 11 May:** Haganah launched Operation Gideon to occupy villages in the upper eastern part of the Galilee.

**1948, 12 May:** The Golani Brigade units mortared the town of Beisan and the mayor formally announced the town’s surrender. An order was given to evict the inhabitants from the city and most of them were expelled across the Jordan. About 250 – 300 inhabitants, mainly Christians, were left in place until 28 May, when they were given the choice of going to Transjordan or to Nazareth. The majority preferred Nazareth.

**1948, 13 May:** - The Haganah launched Operation *Mivtza Ben-Ami* against Western Galilee up to the Lebanese border. Acre and coastal area north of the city were captured during the night of 17-18 May.

- Iraqi general Sir Ismail Safwat, chairman of the Arab league's military committee, who had been appointed to lead the Arab armies in Palestine, resigned because there was no agreement on a precise plan for the war. This was another indicator that Israel was not in a state of self-defense as claimed. On the contrary, it was active in implementing a tacit agreement with Transjordan to frustrate the creation of the Palestinian State according to the UN partition plan.

- Count Folke Bernadotte was appointed by the UN as mediator to resolve the conflict in Palestine.

**1948, 14 May:** - This was officially the last day of the British mandate administration in Palestine. Proclamation of the state of Israel was declared in Tel Aviv at 4:00 P.M. At 6:11 P.M. (about mid-night in Tel Aviv), the White House announced: “This government has been informed that a Jewish State has been proclaimed in Palestine, and recognition has been requested by the provisional government thereof. The U.S. recognizes the provisional government as the *de facto* authority of the new State of Israel.”

- A massacre was committed in the village of Abu Shousha, not far from Deir Yassin and resulted in fifty victims, including men and women, elderly and very young. The soldiers of the

Zionist Jaf'ati brigade who carried out the massacre opened fire on everything that moved. Not even the livestock survived the massacre.

**1948, 15 May:** British Mandate was ended and the Declaration of the State of Israel came into effect.

Egyptian, Transjordanian, Lebanese and Syrian regular troops crossed the borders into Palestine. Total number of Arab forces operating in Palestine, was fewer than 25,000. Their entry did not make any difference. The Zionist forces, numbering 35,000 continued with their ethnic cleansing operations unabated.

The *Israel Defense Force* (IDF) was founded incorporating all the pre-state underground organizations. By mid-July, the IDF mobilized about 65,000 under arms, and by December the number reached a peak of 96,000.

**1948, 20 May:** Count Folke Bernadotte was appointed as UN mediator in Palestine.

**1948, 22 May:** UN Security Council called for a ceasefire and a truce was held between 11 June and 8 July.

**1948, 26 May:** At the meeting of the Mapam's Political Committee, Eliezer Prai, editor of the party's daily newspaper, *Al Hamishmar*, charged that there were elements in the Yishuv carrying out a 'transfer policy' by 'blood and fire', aimed at emptying the Jewish state of its Arab inhabitants. "It has already been said that Weitz gave an order to expel the Arabs from Western Galilee... This is the policy and thinking behind [the destruction of the Arab villages in the area]", he said.

**1948, 28 May:** Yosef Weitz met with Moshe Shertok (Sharrett), the newly appointed Foreign Minister, and proposed that the Cabinet appoint himself, Elias Sasson, head of the Foreign Ministry's Middle East Affairs Department, and Ezra Danin "to hammer out a plan of action designed [to achieve] the goal of transfer". According to Weitz, Shertok congratulated him on his initiative. Shertok's "view also is that this momentum [of Arab flight] must be exploited and turned into an accomplished fact," but the Foreign Minister wanted first to consult with Ben-Gurion and Finance Minister Eliezer Kaplan.

**1948, 30 May:** Weitz, Danin, and Sasson met to outline the 'Transfer' committee's prospective work in spite of the fact that there was no official Cabinet appointment.

**1948, 4 June:** "The [transfer] committee that had appointed itself", as Weitz referred to it in his diary, met in Tel Aviv to discuss 'the miracle' of the Arab exodus "and how to make it permanent". The committee concluded, "The return of the Arabs must be prevented". Weitz agreed to "allocate £ 5,000 to Ezra [Danin] in order to begin destruction and renovation activities in the Beit Shean Valley and in the Sharon [the Coastal Plain]". Destruction of Arab villages meant that the refugees would have nowhere to return to; renovation meant readying the sites for Jewish settlement.

**1948, 5 June:** Weitz met with Ben-Gurion and submitted to him a memorandum entitled “Retroactive Transfer, A Scheme for the Solution of the Arab Question in the State of Israel”. The memorandum outlined proposals for action aiming at preventing the Arabs from returning to their towns and homes.

According to Weitz, “Ben-Gurion agreed to the whole line”, but thought there was an order of priority. According to Weitz, Ben-Gurion wanted destruction of villages, settlement on abandoned sites, and prevention of Arab cultivation. Weitz told the Prime Minister that he had already given orders to begin destroying villages.

Ben-Gurion proposed that a committee of three – composed of representatives of the JNF, the JA settlement department, and the Agency’s treasury department – be set up to oversee “the cleaning up of the [Arab] settlements, cultivation of their [fields] and their settlement [by Jews], and the creation of a labour battalion to carry out this work”. Ben-Gurion, like Weitz, stressed that it would not be the government carrying out these activities, but they would be carried out by the ‘National Institutions’.

**1948, 6 June:** Weitz sent Ben-Gurion a detailed list of the abandoned villages and towns, with the appropriate population figures. In a covering note, he confirmed the meeting held in the previous day as well as Ben-Gurion’s approval that the destruction of Arab villages and prevention of cultivation of Arab fields will begin immediately. Weitz continued: “In line with this, I have given an order to begin [these operations] in different parts of the Galilee, in the Beit Shean Valley, in the Hills of Ephraim and in Samaria [meaning the Hefer Valley].”

**1948, 7 June:** Weitz spent the day talking with Danin about how to go about destroying the abandoned villages – where would the money come from, the tractors, the dynamite, the manpower?...

**1948, 17 June:** Bernadotte met with the Israeli Foreign Minister to discuss the situation of the refugees. Sharett was evasive with regard to the return of the refugees.

**1948, 7-18 July:** The IDF captured the towns of Lydda and Ramle and committed a massacre in the Dahmash Mosque in Lydda. Once the slaughter had come to an end, the unarmed civilians were led to the city’s sports stadium, where the young men were detained and the families were given a mere half-hour to leave the city for the area where the Jordanian Army was located.

Most of the inhabitants of Lydda and Ramle marched under the sun and hundreds lost their lives on the way through dehydration and sunstroke.

**1948, 16 July:** The town of Nazareth fell into Israeli hands. A delegation of Christian clerics came out to meet the conquerors. Their request that the civilian population should not be forced to evacuate was granted. When Abraham Yaffe, an Israeli officer, entered Nazareth, he met a man whom he had driven out of another town in the Galilee. “Have you come to turn us away again?” the Arab inquired. “No, not in Nazareth,” Yaffe answered, “Nazareth is a holy place, a holy town. The world is watching us. You are not going to be a victim here.”

Israeli behavior in Nazareth was different from their behavior in the other Palestinian towns and villages. They realized that expulsion of Christian Arabs in one of the holiest Christian locations would produce unfavorable headlines all over the Western world. And so the 14,000 people of the town were allowed to remain.

There were clear orders to the Israeli forces to restraint in the hometown of Jesus. Chaim Laskov, the Israeli commander, recalled, “We had specific instructions not to harm anything, which meant that we had to take Nazareth by stratagem”.

Indeed, Ben-Gurion ordered that when the town was taken unauthorized soldiers should not be allowed into Nazareth and that the army should avoid 'any possibility of looting and desecration of churches and monasteries.'

“Nazareth was the exception that proved the rule”.

**1948, 20 July:** Stolen Palestinian lands were distributed among Jewish settlements. Arabs who did not leave the country were placed under Military Government, and their freedom to move freely outside their villages was severely curtailed. The Military Government and local IDF units found it simplest to forbid *in toto* Arab cultivation of fields. At the same time, Jewish settlements began to cultivate fields of Arabs who had remained in the State.

**1948, 24 July:** Ignoring the cease-fire ordered by UN Security Council Resolution # 54, Operation Policeman (*mitza shoter*) was launched against the ‘little triangle’ of the three villages of Jaba, Ijzim and Ein Ghazal about 20 kilometers south of Haifa. Small units of the Golani, Carmeli and Alexandroni brigades captured the three villages on 26 July, with almost all the inhabitants being forced to leave.

**1948, 16 August – early October:** Negev and Yiftach brigades attacked and expelled Bedouins and inhabitants of villages in the Negev.

**1948, 24-28 August:** Giv’ati brigade launched Operation Nikayon (cleansing) and occupied coastal area west of Yibna and North of Isdud.

**1948, 15 September:** Bernadotte submitted his report to the UN Security Council.

**1948, 17 September:** Bernadotte was assassinated by the Stern Gang. The triumvirate that ordered the assassination of the UN mediator included Yitzhak Shamir, the future Prime Minister of Israel. Bernadotte was replaced by his deputy Ralph Bunche.

**1948, 20 September:** Bernadotte’s proposals to end the conflict were published. He made it clear that “no settlement can be just and complete if recognition is not accorded to the Arab refugee to return to his home”.

**1948, September:** The AHC announced the establishment of an all-Palestine government in Gaza, which was later moved to Cairo and proved to be a complete failure.



**1948, 15 October:** Israel broke the cease-fire and launched an attack on the Egyptian forces in the south, which ended with Israel in control of the entire Negev.

**1948, 29 October:** Operation Hiram was launched to occupy the remaining parts of upper Galilee and drive out its inhabitants. A massacre was committed in the Palestinian village of Safsaf where 70 civilians were killed in cold blood one after the other. The Israeli forces conducted looting, rape, and forcible expulsion of women, children and the elderly.

**1948, 30 October:** The Israeli forces entered Eilaboun. Its 750 people, all of whom were Christian, took refuge in the two local churches where yellow and white flags of submission were flown. Marcos Daoud, the Greek Catholic priest, approached the Israelis saying “I put my village under the protection of the State of Israel”. The Israeli answer was as follows: Thirteen young men were murdered, the surviving young men were taken as prisoners, the women and children were marched off to the Lebanese border under severe conditions that resulted in many casualties, and looting and desecration of the churches followed the evacuation of the village.

**1948, 16 November:** The Security Council resolution # 62 called upon the parties directly involved in the conflict in Palestine to seek agreement for an armistice. Accordingly, armistice agreements were concluded between Israel and Egypt on 24 February, Israel and Lebanon on 25 March, Israel and Jordan on 3 April, and Israel and Syria on 20 July 1949.

**1948, 11 December:** UN General Assembly resolution # 194 was adopted, which resolved that “the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return”. Moreover, the resolution established a Palestine Conciliation Commission (PCC) to assume the functions given to Bernadotte.

On 1 April 1949, the PCC set up a Technical Committee on Refugees to work out measures for implementation of the provisions of UN resolution # 194 and called for an international conference at Lausanne where, under the PCC chairmanship, the parties could discuss the whole range of issues – refugees, Jerusalem, borders, recognition – and hammer out a comprehensive peace settlement.

**1948, 22 December:** Operation Horev was launched to drive the Egyptian forces out of Palestine and to compel the Egyptian government to negotiate an armistice. The Israeli troops surged forward, expelled the Egyptians from the southeastern flank of the Negev, brought strong pressure to bear on the Gaza Strip, but failed to liquidate the Egyptian enclave in Faluja. Mass murder and flight of the civilians was repeated in this operation. A massacre was committed in Dawayma where 100 - 150 people, including women and children, were slaughtered without mercy in the mosque of the village.

**1949, 4 January:** Egypt announced her readiness to begin armistice negotiations. The UN-decreed cease-fire went into effect on 7 January, marking the formal end of the war. Armistice negotiations between Israel and the neighboring Arab states got under way with the help of the UN acting mediator, Dr Ralph Bunche, at the Roses Hotel in Rhodes.

Armistice Agreements were signed with Egypt on 24 February, with Lebanon on 25 March, with Transjordan on 3 April, and with Syria on 20 July 1949.

As a result of the war, 530 villages were bulldozed, 11 urban neighbourhoods were destroyed, about 10,000 Palestinian Arabs were killed, about 30,000 were wounded, and over 750,000 were ethnically cleansed and became refugees.

**1949, 5 March:** One day after the start of the official armistice negotiations with Jordan, Israel launched Operation Uvda (Fait Accompli) to extend its control of the southern Negev down to Eilat.

**1949, 26 April:** The PCC conference was opened in Lausanne, Switzerland, and under the threat of preventing Israel's admission to the UN, Israel agreed to attend the conference.

**1949, 11 May:** Israel was admitted to UN membership.

**1949, 12 May:** The Arab states and Israel signed a protocol stating that the UN Partition Resolution and the partition map included in it constituted the basis for negotiations.

**1949, 29 May:** Ben-Gurion explained to his cabinet members that time had worked to Israel's advantage with respect to borders, refugees and Jerusalem. He stated that, with the passage of time, the world would get used to Israel's existing borders and to Israel's position with respect to the Palestinian refugees. He added that the same was true for Jerusalem and people are beginning to see the absurdity of establishing an international regime over the city.

**1949, 6 July:** Israeli Consul General in New York, Arthur Lourie, transmitted a copy of a letter from American journalist Drew Pearson, whom Lourie said, "expressed anxieties characteristic of a large section of American opinion on whose support we have hitherto been able to count."

Pearson had written that "in preventing Arab refugees from returning to their native land, the Jews may be subject to the same kind of criticism for which I and others have criticized intolerant Gentiles... Now we have a situation in which the Jews have done to others what Hitler, in a sense, did to them!"

**1949, 14 July:** Ben-Gurion recorded in his war diary that Abba Eban, Israel's ambassador to the UN, "sees no need to run after peace. The armistice is sufficient for us; if we run after peace, the Arabs will demand a price of us – borders or refugees or both. Let us wait a few years."

**1949, 18 July:** In an interview with Kenneth Bilby, the correspondent of the *New York Herald Tribune*, Ben Gurion stated, "I am prepared to get up in the middle of the night in order to sign a peace agreement-but I am not in a hurry and I can wait ten years. We are under no pressure whatsoever."

**1949, 12 September:** The PCC Lausanne conference ended without any results. It called for a return of the refugees to their homes. Israel simply rejected that. Palestinian homes and lands were needed to settle Jewish immigrants coming from all corners of the world. It also called for the assumption of the functions of mediation started with Count Bernadotte to arrive at a "final

settlement of questions outstanding between the Governments and authorities concerned”. This meant final boundaries for Israel and peace with its neighbors, which would have limited its desire for expansion.

**1949, December:** UN General Assembly adopted a resolution that called for treating Jerusalem as a separate entity and placing it under UN rule. In response, Ben-Gurion decided to move the Knesset and the government offices from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

**1950:** Israeli Knesset passed the ‘Law of Return’ according to which every Jew “has the right to immigrate to the country”. It also passed the Absentees Property Law, according to which any Palestinian Arab who was not present directly before, during or after the war - regardless of the reason - was defined as absentee and his land as surrendered.

About 20 percent of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel were internally displaced in the 1948 war – in other words, while remaining in Israel, have been prevented from returning to their homes and villages. These displaced persons were considered ‘absentees’ and became refugees in their own country.

The ‘Land Requisition Law’ was passed in 1953, which ‘legitimized’ theft of Arab lands.

**1953, 12 October:** Unit 101 of the IDF under the command of Ariel Sharon converged on Qibya and stormed the village demolishing about forty-five houses. After withdrawal of the unit, seventy corpses were found in the rubble.

**1953:** The Israeli Knesset passed the ‘Land Requisition Law’, which legalized the expropriation of Arab lands.

**1956, 21 October:** Following Nationalization of the Suez Canal by Egyptian President Nasser, Ben-Gurion participated in a secret conference with the British and French at Sévres, France and agreed to a combined military operation.

In a round table meeting with the French at the Sévres Conference, Ben-Gurion proposed a plan for settling all the issues in the Middle East:

1. Eliminating Nasser in Egypt.
2. Partition of Jordan, with the West Bank going to Israel and the East Bank to Iraq. In exchange, Iraq would sign a peace treaty with Israel and undertake to absorb the Palestinian refugees.
3. Israel would annex southern Lebanon up to the Litani River, with a Christian state established in the rest of the country.
4. Being placed under a pro-Western ruler would stabilize the Syrian regime.
5. The Suez Canal would enjoy international status and the Straits of Tiran would be under Israeli control.

**1956, 29 October:** Israeli forces over-ran Gaza on their way across Sinai to the Suez Canal. The canal was not taken, but the greater part of Sinai Peninsula as well as the islands of Tiran and Snapir was captured by Israel.

A massacre was committed in Kafr Qasem on the eve of Israel's attack in which 49 Palestinians lost their lives. The innocent victims, including women and children, were farmers coming back from the field not aware that a curfew had been imposed on their village and neighboring Arab communities. The curfew was declared at 4:30 P.M. to take force at 5:00 P.M. Explicit orders were given to the soldiers "to shoot to kill all who broke the curfew...there shall be no arrests".

**1956, 7 November:** In his address to the Knesset, a victorious Ben-Gurion stated, "The revelation of Sinai has been renewed in our time by our army's thrust of heroism... Our army did not infringe on Egyptian territory... Our operations were restricted to the Sinai Peninsula alone... The Armistice Agreement with Egypt is dead and buried...the armistice lines between us and Egypt have also given up the ghost...we are prepared for negotiations for a firm peace... We are prepared for similar negotiations with each of the other Arab states..." On the other hand, Ben-Gurion sent a message to the victory parade held at Sharm el-Sheik: "Yotvat [the island of Tiran] will once more become a part of the Third Kingdom of Israel!"

The following day, Ben-Gurion addressed the nation on the radio after midnight. He read out letters received from Bulganin and Eisenhower and his replies. From his note to Eisenhower, his listeners grasped the decision: the army was going to withdraw from Sinai.

**1956, 16 November:** Moshe Sharett wrote in his diary: "I have learned that the state of Israel cannot be ruled in our generation without deceit and adventurism..."

**1963, June 16:** Ben-Gurion resigned Israeli premiership and was succeeded by Levi Eshkol. Later in the month, he was joined by Shimon Peres and Moshe Dayan to set up an independent slate. The outcome of the election showed a victory for the Labor Alignment and Ben-Gurion's battle ended in a shameful defeat and heralded his final decline.

**1964, January:** The Arab League created the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

**1967:** The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) was founded.

**1967, Late May and early June:** UN Secretary General, U Thant, visited Cairo to mediate the escalating crisis in the Straits of Tiran in an effort to solve the crisis. Egypt agreed and Israel rejected U Thant proposals.

The U.S. also tried to mediate. Nasser indicated he was open to World Court arbitration of the dispute over the Straits of Tiran and agreed to send his vice-president to Washington to explore a diplomatic settlement. The meeting, however, did not happen because Israel struck before it could take place.

U.S. Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, stated, "We were shocked...and angry as hell when the Israelis launched the surprise offensive. They attacked on a Monday, knowing that on Wednesday the Egyptian vice president would arrive in Washington to talk about re-opening the Strait of Tiran..."

**1967, 5-10 June:** Israel attacked and occupied the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Sinai, and the Golan Heights.

**1967, 27 June:** Israel annexed East Jerusalem.

**1967, 26 July:** Israeli Deputy Prime Minister, Yigal Allon, proposed a plan calling for annexation of about one third of the Palestinian areas occupied in the June 1967 war and for an Israeli security belt of 10 - 15 kilometers wide running the length of the Jordan Rift. Israel would keep the lush citrus-growing area of Gaza, which would be settled by Jews. Only the urban center of Gaza City and its port might be made available for Arab use. Palestinian refugees living in the Gaza Strip areas to be annexed by Israel 'should be settled in the West Bank or al-Arish district'.

Allon was supportive of the religious settlers in the occupied territories. When they complained about his plan, Allon told them: "Jews have to be smart. No Arab will ever accept this plan". With Allon's help the settlement of religious Jews at Kiryat Arba near Hebron and other settlements were established.

**1967, 26 September:** In an editorial of *Ma'ariv*, Shmuel Schnitzer, who was in favor of annexing the newly acquired territories to Israel, stated that "a high [Palestinian Arab] birth rate is not a decree from Heaven. It is a danger against which society must defend itself [by all means]". Schnitzer suggested that Israel should fight against the Palestinian "population explosion" both in Israel and the West Bank and Gaza Strip by all the "legislative, information and preventive means" at its disposal. In addition to the encouragement of high birth rate among Israeli Jews, Schnitzer stated that "we must make it clear to the Arab minority that it is not free to maintain in this small and poor country the highest birth rate in the world. [We should] also persuade the superpowers that one of the solutions to the problem of refugees [residing in the OPT] is in the departure of Arabs for the classical countries of immigration, with international financing..."

**1967, 22 November:** Security Council resolution # 242, which was adopted. It emphasized "the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war" and called for withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict and for achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem.

The resolution also called for a UN special representative to proceed to the Middle East to achieve a peaceful and accepted settlement. Gunnar Jarring was appointed as the UN special representative. His efforts led to nowhere. Israel wanted peace, but Israel wanted to keep all the conquered territories and rejects return of the refugees to their homes and lands.

**1967, 24 December:** Ahmad Shukairy resigned as chairman of the PLO and Fatah took over. Yasser Arafat became the chairman.

**1968, March:** Israel attacked the village of Karama on the East Bank of the Jordan and faced a heroic stand, which gave the PLO a boost and increased its influence.

**1968, 17 April:** Speaking at a Kibbutz meeting, Allon, announced: "We must settle wherever possible in accordance with Israel's defence and security needs and the future of its borders..."

The Jordan valley and the range of mountains are needed for our security. We cannot yield on this point even if there is no peace”.

**1968, July:** The Palestinian National Charter was adopted by the Palestine National Council (PNC) held during the period 1-17 July 1968. Article 1 of the Charter stated, “Palestine is the homeland of the Arab Palestinian people; it is an indivisible part of the Arab homeland, and the Palestinian people are an integral part of the Arab nation”. Article 2 stated, “Palestine, with the boundaries it had during the British Mandate, is an indivisible territorial unit”. Article 9 of the Charter stated, “Armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine. This is the overall strategy, not merely a tactical phase...”

**1969:** The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) was founded.

**1969, 9 December:** U.S. Secretary of State, William Rogers, announced a peace plan based on the exchange of land for peace, which was rejected by Israel and by the Arabs.

**1970, 19 June:** The U.S. government proposed a cease-fire in the war of attrition along the Suez Canal. Egypt and Israel agreed to a ninety-day cease-fire.

**1970, September:** The Jordanian army led a bloody operation against the Palestinian factions that were expelled from Jordan and moved to Lebanon.

**1970:** Gush Emunim built Kiryat Arba near Hebron and pressured every Israeli Prime Minister to finance many new settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). Ever since, more settlements and bypass roads connecting these settlements with Israel proper continued to be built on stolen Arab lands.

**1972, 14 July:** In an article in *Yedi'ot Aharonot*, a leading Israeli journalist and publicist, Yesha'ayahu Ben-Porat, wrote that “it is the duty of the [Israeli] leadership to explain to the public a number of truths. One truth is that there is no Zionism, no settlement, and no Jewish State without evacuating Arabs and without expropriating lands and their fencing off”.

**1973, April:** Israeli commandos led by Ehud Barak disguising as a blond woman, raided PLO headquarters in Beirut killing several PLO leaders in their homes.

**1973, August:** A Palestinian National Front (PNF) was formed by numerous West Bank Palestinian groups. On 13 August they announced that the Front was formed “in response to a call from the PNC” and that the PNF was “an integral part of the Palestine national movement as represented by the PLO”.

**1973, 6 October:** Egypt and Syria launched an offensive against Israel in order to regain the Sinai desert and the Golan Heights, which were lost in the 1967 war. Many indicators led to a widespread theory that the 1973 war was designed and concocted between Egyptian President, Anwar Sadat, and U.S. Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, to produce a specific result and lead to a ‘peace process’.

Following the war, a peace conference was arranged in Geneva, which was attended by Egypt, Jordan, Israel, the U.S. and the USSR. The conference adjourned after a few meetings with the understanding that Egypt and Israel would engage in negotiations for the disengagement of their forces in Sinai.

**1973, 22 October:** Security Council resolution # 338 was adopted, which called upon all parties to the fighting to cease-fire and start implementation of Resolution # 242 of 1967.

**1973, 11 November:** Israel and Egypt formally signed a truce ending the hostilities.

**1973, 10 December:** By midnight on the day of the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Israeli soldiers dashed into the homes of 8 Palestinian leaders in the West Bank. The Palestinian leaders were humiliated and dragged into an armored car which dumped them in a stretch of the desert between Palestine and Jordan.

**1973, 21 December:** The “Geneva Conference” was held pursuant to resolution # 338. The conference did not produce any results and ‘temporarily’ adjourned after a few meetings.

**1974, 10 April:** Golda Meir resigned and was succeeded by Yitzhak Rabin.

**1974, 31 May:** The Israeli-Syrian disengagement agreement was signed.

**1974, 8 June:** The 12th PNC adopted a ten-point programme advocating the establishment of a Palestinian national and independent authority on every part of Palestinian land that is liberated. This marked the beginning of amendments to the Palestinian National Charter that was approved by the Palestine National Council in July 1968.

**1974, 14 October:** The PLO was recognized by the U.N. General Assembly and gained the status of observership.

**1974, 23 October:** The Arab Summit meeting declared the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

**1974, 13 November:** Arafat addressed the UN General Assembly offering Israel a ‘branch of an olive tree’ in one hand and a ‘gun’ in the other and expressed his hope that the olive branch will not be dropped.

In response, Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, announced: “The government has worked to increase the population of settlements in the Golan Heights and the Jordan Valley and, should war break out, this is the line which will determine the results”.

Gush Emunim, advocating Jewish settlements in the OPT became active and pressured every Israeli Prime Minister to finance many new settlements.

**1975, 1 September:** Kissinger supervised the signing of an agreement between Israel and Egypt according to which both sides agreed that “the conflict between them... shall not be resolved by military force but by peaceful means.”

In addition to the strict observance of the cease-fire, Israel agreed to withdraw from the oil fields it had occupied in the Sinai and to pull back from two strategic passes. In return, Israeli nonmilitary cargoes were to be permitted through the Suez Canal.

**1976, 30 March:** Palestinian Arabs under occupation since 1948 and holding Israeli citizenship held a general strike and demonstrated peacefully against a wave of land confiscations. Six young Palestinians were shot dead by the Israeli army and the Israeli government refused to set up a commission to investigate the killings. Ever since, March 30 is commemorated by the Palestinians as the Land Day.

**1977, 12-22 March:** The 13th PNC Congress decided to open dialogue and co-operation with liberal non-Zionist Jewish groups.

**1977, 17 May:** The Likud won the elections for the 9<sup>th</sup> Knesset in Israel and Menachem Begin became Prime Minister. In a press conference, Begin announced that he would invite Sadat, Assad and King Hussein to come and start negotiations to sign peace treaties with Israel. When asked about the OPT, he snapped at a journalist: “What occupied territories? If you mean Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip, they are liberated territories. They are part, an integral part, of the Land of Israel”.

**1977, September:** Israeli Agriculture Minister, Ariel Sharon, outlined a proposal calling for the settlement of a million Jews in the West Bank within 20 years.

**1977, 1 October:** In his efforts to reconvene the Geneva peace conference, Carter met with the Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko, who indicated that the Soviets wished to be brought into the Geneva negotiations.

Reference to the Palestinian people in the communiqué and an implied role for the USSR provoked opposition from the U.S.-Israel lobby.

Israel’s foreign minister, Moshe Dayan, who was conducting negotiations in the U.S., threatened Carter with a public Israeli disavowal of the superpower communiqué that would have created a firestorm of protest in the American Jewish community. Carter was forced to issue a statement indicating that the communiqué was “not a prerequisite for the reconvening and conduct of the Geneva Conference”. This brought about the virtual nullification of the communiqué and was a fatal blow to the Geneva Conference. Sadat’s visit to Israel in November gave it the death certificate.

**1977, 19 November:** Egyptian President, Anwar Sadat, made a surprise visit to Israel, marking the beginning of a new era with respect to the Zionist-Arab conflict.

**1977, 16 December:** Begin unveiled a Palestinian autonomy plan in Washington, which was integrated into the Camp David Accords.

**1978, 14 March:** Israel launched Operation Litani and occupied southern Lebanon up to the Litani River.



**1978, 5-17 September:** A Camp David summit was held between Carter, Sadat, and Begin, which produced the ‘Camp David Accords’.

**1979, 26 March:** A Peace Treaty was signed between Egypt and Israel.

**1980:** The Israeli government formally called for the re-establishment of a Jewish quarter in Hebron. Within a few years, Jewish settlers with active official backing occupied several more locations.

**1980, 26 May:** *Ha'aretz* carried a warning by the former chief of military intelligence, General Ahron Yariv, that there was a widely held opinion in the IDF that any future war should be exploited to expel up to eight hundred thousand Palestinians from the territories. General Yariv noted that the plans for the ‘forced transfer’ already existed and the means of implementation had been prepared. Ariel Sharon warned Palestinians that they “should not forget the lessons of 1948”.

**1980, 30 July:** A Basic Law was passed in the Israeli *Knesset* unilaterally declaring Jerusalem, ‘complete and united’, as the ‘eternal and undivided capital’ of Israel.

**1981, August:** Ariel Sharon was appointed as Defence Minister and Menachem Milson was appointed as head of a new ‘civilian administration’ in the military government.

Milson assumed office on 1 November 1981 and believed that a class of collaborators in the ‘territories’ could be developed who would participate in the autonomy talks planned at Camp David. He approached Mustafa Dudin of Hebron to organize the rural population in ‘Village Leagues’ who would accept de facto annexation of the West Bank under the cover of civil administration and autonomy.

The traditional village notables and the rural intelligentsia refused to join the ‘Village Leagues’, which led to its failure. Sharon decided to use other measures to force the Palestinians to accept autonomy. None of the measures helped to weaken support for the PLO in the occupied territories or to gain support for the Village League puppets.

Sharon concluded that the only way to destroy the will of the Palestinians in the West Bank was to strike at the heart of the PLO in Beirut. This was one of the major objectives of the military operation ‘Peace for Galilee’ against Lebanon in early June 1982.

The Village Leagues began to disintegrate in 1983. The Hebron League lingered on until its head disbanded it in February 1988 after the outbreak of the Intifada.

**1981, 14 December:** Israel annexed the Golan Heights.

**1982, February:** Oded Yinon, a journalist and analyst of Middle Eastern affairs and former senior Foreign Ministry official, wrote an article, which appeared in the WZO’s periodical *Kivunim*, which called for the dissolution and fragmentation of the Arab states.

**1982, 26 April:** Israeli withdrawal from Sinai was completed.

**1982, 3 June:** Israeli ambassador Argov was critically wounded in London and Israel used the incident as an excuse to invade Lebanon.

The PLO and all the Palestinian factions were forced out of Lebanon as a result of the Israeli invasion.

Special U.S. envoy Philip Habib concluded an agreement for safe departure of PLO fighters from Beirut. The first group of Palestinian fighters sailed for Cyprus on 21 August and Yassir Arafat left Beirut on 28 August and the PLO moved to Tunis.

Fathi Shakaki split from Sheikh Ahmad Yassin's Muslim Brethren to form Islamic Jihad.

**1982, 1 September:** - In a speech from the oval office in the White House, President Reagan called, among other things, for peace negotiations using the Camp David accords as a convenient framework and for a Palestinian self-government in Gaza and the West Bank in association with Jordan. Reagan also proposed a transitional period of 5 years after which a final solution based on UN Security Council resolution # 242 may be negotiated.

Arab response to Reagan's initiative was positive. Israel rejected the proposals.

**1982, 14 September:** Bashir Gemayel, who was expected to be sworn as the new Lebanese President, was assassinated in Lebanon following his refusal to sign a Peace Treaty with Israel. In the following day, Israeli forces entered Beirut where the Christian militiamen committed a major massacre in the Palestinian camp of Sabra/Shatila, under IDF sponsorship.

A plan had been laid to storm the Sabra and Shatila camps for Palestinian refugees in the Beirut area since the first day of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. Its purpose was to weaken the Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut and force them to emigrate outside Lebanon.

Before sundown on Thursday, September 16, 1982, the storming of the camps began. The massacre continued for approximately 36 hours. During the operation, the Israeli army surrounded the camps, preventing anyone from entering or leaving.

The massacre was carried out by the Lebanese kata'ib (Falangist) militia under the leadership of Ariel Sharon.

Later on, Israel began withdrawing from Lebanon, leaving a residual force in the border area to support the South Lebanese Army (SLA).

**1982, 10 October:** At the opening of a new settlement, the Minister of Energy, Mordechai Sippori, indicated why the Israeli government supported colonization of the OPT. He said, "The continuation of settlement is the backbone of the Zionist movement in the West Bank and it is the only means to defeat any peace initiative which is intended to bring foreign rule to Judea and Samaria".

**1983, February:** The PNC made a decision to start official contacts with the Israelis.

**1985, 11 February:** An accord was signed between Jordan and the PLO to accommodate Reagan's peace initiative. Arafat agreed with Hussein to "March together toward a just, peaceful settlement of the Middle East issue... It was envisaged that the PLO would be represented within a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation and that if the negotiations were successful, a Palestinian-Jordanian confederation would emerge". This intensified the schisms within the PLO, leading to the distancing of the PFLP, DFLP, and other factions from Arafat's leadership.

**1986, 6 November:** A meeting was held in Romania between PLO representatives and the Israeli Peace Now Movement. Other meetings were held later in Hungary in Spain.

**1987:** Members of the Muslim Brotherhood led by Sheikh Ahmad Yassin founded Hamas. Hamas did not join the PLO.

**1987, 8 December:** An Israeli truck ploughed a car in Gaza killing four Palestinians inside. It was widely believed that the incident was deliberately committed. The following day, Gaza exploded in angry anti-Israeli demonstrations and riots, which marked the beginning of what came to be known as the '*Intifada*'.

**1987, 21 December:** In solidarity with the *Intifada*, a 'Peace Day' protest took place by the Palestinian Arabs living in the territories occupied in 1948. Over one hundred Palestinians were arrested. In Nazareth and Umm al Fahm, tear gas was used to disperse the demonstrators in. Arab Bedouins in the Negev and Palestinians living in mixed cities participated in the protests. There were violent scenes between demonstrators and police in Jaffa and Lydda.

**1988, 30 March:** A strike and demonstration were organized by the Arabs in Israel for the "Land Day" to commemorate the demonstration of 1976 against Israel's seizure of Arab lands during which six Arab were killed.

**1988, 22 August:** The first, of three secret meetings, was held between Israeli and Palestinian representatives in Paris. The other two meetings were held in September. The meetings aimed at arriving at "an agreement between the PLO and the Labor Party leadership regarding an end to the *Intifada* before the general elections in Israel in November".

**1988, 15 November:** The 19th PNC formally ratified a two-state settlement of the conflict and adopted a resolution specifically recognizing UN Security Council resolution # 242, and all other UN resolutions on Palestine. Arafat read out the Declaration of Independence and announced the creation of the state of Palestine.

**1988, December:** The PLO announced in Geneva its recognition of Israel's right to exist and its renunciation of 'terrorism'. Arafat implied that he would accept a Palestinian state limited to the [1967] occupied territories and that "many compromises were conceivable". This was the start for a path that led to Oslo.

**1989:** Mass emigration of Jews from the former Soviet Union began and were channeled to Israel though most of them preferred to go to the USA.

**1989, 16 November:** Benjamin Netanyahu told Bar-Ilan University students that the government had failed to exploit internationally favorable situations, such as the Tianamen Square massacre in June 1989 when world attention and the media were focused on China, to carry out ‘large-scale’ expulsions at a time when “the damage [to Israel’s public relations] would have been relatively small... I still believe that there are opportunities to expel many people”. Netanyahu later denied making the remarks but the *Jerusalem Post* presented a tape recording of his speech.

**1991, 30 October:** The “Middle East Peace Conference” was convened in Madrid to resolve the Israeli-Arab conflict. Israeli PM Shamir later declared that he wanted the negotiations in Washington (following the Madrid conference) to continue for 10 years, if need be, so that he had enough time to keep on going with planned Israeli settlement in the OPT and leave nothing for the negotiations to talk about.

**1992, 14 May:** Shamir told *The Jerusalem Post* that the “term ‘right of return’ is an empty phrase that is utterly meaningless... It will never happen, in any way, shape or form. There is only a Jewish ‘right of return’ to the land of Israel.

**1993, 20 January:** While the negotiations in Washington were going on between the Israelis and a Palestinian team lead by Faisal Husseini and Hanan Ashrawi, another round of secret negotiations with the Israelis were taking place in Oslo. The negotiations in Oslo were conducted by Ahmad Kure’i and Hassan Asfour under the supervision of Mahmoud Abbas. These negotiations in Oslo came as a surprise to everyone.

**1993, 9 September:** Arafat addressed a letter to Rabin recognizing the right of Israel to exist in peace and security accepting UN Security Council resolutions 242 & 338, and renouncing acts of violence. In response, Rabin signed a letter to Arafat recognizing the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people. These letters followed the Oslo agreement, which was secretly negotiated between Israel and a group from the Fatah leadership, lead by Mahmoud Abbas and Ahmad Curei.

Ever since, both sides were engaged in meaningless negotiations leading to nowhere.

**1993, 13 September:** A Declaration of Principles (DOP) was signed between Israel and the PLO at the White House in Washington.

**1994, 25 February:** Baruch Goldstein opened fire on Muslim worshippers at Haram al-Ibrahimi mosque in Hebron, killing 29 and wounded 125.

**1994, 4 May:** Arafat and Rabin signed the Gaza-Jericho self-rule accord.

**1994, 12 July:** Arafat returned to Gaza crossing the Rafah border by car.

**1994, 25 July:** Jordan and Israel signed a Declaration of Principles ending state of war, which was followed by a Peace Treaty that was signed on 26 October 1994.

**1994, 1 September:** Morocco and Tunisia opened liaison offices in Tel Aviv.

**1994, 30 September:** Gulf Co-operation Council - Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Bahrain - officially ended economic boycott of Israel.

**1995, 28 September:** Interim Agreement (Oslo II) on the 2nd stage of Palestinian autonomy was concluded by Israel and the PLO in Washington.

**1996, January:** A Palestinian Legislative Council was elected for the West Bank and Gaza.

**1996, 18 April:** Israeli artillery and helicopters shelled a shelter inside the Fijian battalion working within the UN forces in south Lebanon. The operation led to the death of 160 civilians, most of them women, children and the elderly who were unable to flee toward Beirut and were thus obliged to seek refuge in the shelter at the Fijian Battalion headquarters in the Lebanese village of Qana.

**1996, 24 April:** The PNC voted to amend the Palestinian National Charter of 1968 according to the commitment made by Arafat in his letter of 9 September 1993 to Rabin.

**1996, 5 May:** Opening sessions for final status talks were held between the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Israel. The press reported that the leading Palestinian representative at the meeting, Mahmud Abbas, refrained from mentioning the refugees in his speech, as requested by Israel.

**1996, 17 June:** Binyamin Netanyahu's office released a statement outlining his government's guidelines with regard to the peace process, which stated: no to withdrawal from the OPT, no to a Palestinian State, no to an official Palestinian presence in Jerusalem, and no to the refugees' right of return...

**1996, 8 July:** Richard Perle, a former head of the Defense Policy Board in the Pentagon, delivered a document to the Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu. Perle, and a team of American neo-cons, had been tasked by Netanyahu to draft a new Israeli strategy that would abrogate the Oslo Accords and overturn the entire concept of 'comprehensive land for peace' in favor of a policy of military conquest and occupation. This document, 'A Clean Break', became the guiding strategic doctrine of the U.S. and Israel.

**1996, 25 September:** Netanyahu made an order to open a second entrance to an archaeological tunnel close to the al-Aksa Mosque in Jerusalem. The action set off a massive outburst of Palestinian anger and led to a violent and bloody confrontation during which 70 Palestinians were shot to death.

**1997, 27 October:** Netanyahu told the Knesset that he would not allow the creation of a Palestinian state and he would build more Jewish settlements.

**1997:** A Washington-based neo-conservative think-tank, The Project for the New American Century (PNAC), was founded to 'rally support for American global leadership'. The events of September 11, 2001 provided a window of opportunity for furthering PNAC's agenda. The 'Cold

War' was replaced with a new war against 'Islamic Terror', which is used as a pretext to justify Imperialist and Zionist wars.

**1998, 31 October:** A Memorandum of Agreement was signed by American President Bill Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu according to which the U.S. would enhance Israel's defensive and deterrent capabilities, and upgrading the framework of the U.S.-Israeli strategic and military relationships, as well as the technological cooperation between them.

**1998, 14 December:** Leading Palestinians, meeting in the presence of President Clinton, reaffirmed the nullification of clauses in the PLO charter calling for Israel's destruction.

Aviv Bushinsky, a spokesman for Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu, told Reuters that Netanyahu, who has frozen the further handover of West Bank land, would continue to insist Palestinians meet other Israeli demands. Before the session, however, Netanyahu put the Palestinians on notice that the Wye River would not move ahead until other Israeli conditions, including a pledge not to declare a Palestinian state next year, were met.

**1999, 15 March:** Netanyahu toured the Jordan Valley, territory occupied in 1967, and vowed Israel would stay there forever. "Without the Jordan Valley, without this protective wall, we cannot protect the state of Israel and therefore we will remain here forever," he added.

**1999, 16 March:** Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon appeared before foreign ambassadors and told them that, "Resolution 181, which speaks about Jerusalem not being part of Israel, is null and void... We have a very wide national consensus about this issue". He reaffirmed Israel's hold over all of Jerusalem, vowing that "Israel will never make any concessions on Jerusalem -- never."

**1999, 27 November:** A group of twenty Palestinians figures issued a manifesto under the title 'The Homeland Calls Us'. For the first time since the signing of the Oslo Accords, the Palestinian Authority (PA) and its president were publicly accused of corruption, humiliation, abuse and of selling the homeland.

**2000, January:** Yasser Arafat proposed a Palestinian final-status plan to U.S. President Bill Clinton along the following lines:

A Palestinian state will be established on the West Bank and Gaza Strip within the pre-1967 borders.

Jewish settlement blocs close to the Green Line will be annexed to Israel in a land trade, on the basis of a formula to be worked out in talks.

Israel will acknowledge its responsibility for refugee suffering, and will recognize in principle the right of return - though it will not necessarily condone its implementation. An international apparatus will be established to handle compensation for refugees and their future welfare.

Jerusalem would remain united, though sovereignty and municipal administration will be divided in a fashion consonant with the demographics of each neighborhood.

Clinton responded favorably and promised Arafat that he would move to accelerate progress on the Palestinian track.

**2000, 24 May:** Israeli forces withdrew from areas in Southern Lebanon occupied since 1978.

**2000, 28 September:** Ariel Sharon and six other Likud leaders made a provocative visit into the Al-Aqsa Compound in Jerusalem, which led to clashes sparking a 2<sup>nd</sup> Intifada.

**2001, 7 February:** Ariel Sharon won the elections for a new Prime Minister in Israel.

**2001, 12 April:** In an interview published by Ari Shavit in Ha'aretz, Sharon made it clear that he has no plans for a peace agreement. In the interview, Sharon described the main points of his plan: Jerusalem, the Jordan Valley and the Golan Heights are ours. Not even one of the settlements will be evacuated.

**2001, May:** The Mitchell Committee (headed by former U.S. Senator George Mitchell) concluded that Jewish settlements are a barrier to peace. Israeli Prime Minister, Sharon, vowed to continue expanding the settlements.

**2001, 10 August:** Israeli forces raided the Orient House, the headquarters of the Palestinian team to the Peace talks. The Palestinian flag was pulled down and the Israeli flag was hoisted in its place. All files related to the negotiations, along with other classified documents were confiscated. The Arab Chamber of Commerce, Prisoners Society, and The Higher Council of Tourism were among the other Palestinian institutions sealed off by an order from the Israeli Minister of Internal Security Uzi Landau.

**2001, December:** The first of a series of annual conferences was held in the Institute of Policy and Strategy at the Interdisciplinary Center – Herzliya in a systemic effort to discuss and confront the ‘demographic threat’ that came back to haunt the Zionist leadership as a ‘strategic threat’ to the ‘Jewish State’.

**2002, 28 March:** The Arab League summit held in Beirut-Lebanon promised Israel peace, security and normal relations in return for a full withdrawal from Arab lands occupied since 1967, the establishment of a Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital and a fair solution for the Palestinian refugees.

The following day, Israel launched Operation Defensive Shield against the West Bank.

**2002, June:** Israel launched Operation Determined Path to reoccupy the West Bank areas that were handed to the PA following the Oslo accords.

**2002, 20 June:** The Moledet party held its ‘Transfer Now’ conference at the Jerusalem Theater. Israeli PM Sharon and President Katsav spoke at the conference.

**2003, January:** In his speech in Davos, U.S. Secretary of State Collin Powell stated that a democratic and viable Palestinian state was possible in 2005. “To achieve this vision, the Palestinians must build trust by establishing a new and different leadership ... and by putting an end to all terror and violence,” he said.

Powell later on made it clear that war on Iraq was seen as a prelude to achieving progress on the Middle East peace. He stated, “Success [in the war on Iraq] could fundamentally reshape that region in a powerful, positive way that will enhance U.S. interests, especially if in the aftermath of such a conflict, we are also able to achieve progress on the Middle East peace.”

**2003, 30 April:** A Road Map for ‘peace’ was proposed by the U.S., European Union, Russia and the UN. The principles of the plan were first outlined by U.S. President George W. Bush in a speech on 24 June 2002 that called for an independent Palestinian state living side by side with Israel in peace.

**2003, May:** The Mitchell Committee (headed by former U.S. Senator George Mitchell) concluded that Jewish settlements are a barrier to peace. Israeli PM Sharon vowed to continue expanding the settlements.

**2003, June:** Israel began building an apartheid wall aimed at caging Palestinian Arabs into densely populated Bantustan-like areas.

**2004, 22 March:** Hamas spiritual leader, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin was assassinated by Israel.

**2004, 17 April:** An Israeli missile strike killed Hamas leader Abdel Aziz Rantisi as he rode in his car. Rantisi’s son Mohammed and a bodyguard were also killed in the attack.

**2006, 14 March:** Israeli forces stormed a prison in Jericho and seized five Palestinians accused of assassinating former Israeli Tourism Minister Rehavam Zeevi. Israel used helicopters and tanks to fire at the prison before smashing through its walls with armed bulldozers. Two Palestinians were killed during the assault and a third has since died of his injuries.

**2006, 28 June – 8 July:** Israel launched Operation Summer Rains against the Gaza Strip demolishing homes, bulldozing land, blowing bridges, and conducting air strikes on Gaza’s only electricity plant.

**2006, 12 July:** Israel started an ‘open war’ against Lebanon using Hezbollah’s kidnapping of 2 Israeli soldiers as a pretext. After 33 days of destruction and killing of innocent civilians, they had to withdraw without achieving any of their goals.

During the war, a massacre was committed by Israel in Qana. About 54 innocent Lebanese civilians, including about 37 children, were killed through an air raid.

**2007:** Painful and shameful fighting broke out between Palestinian factions killing and wounding hundreds of Palestinians.



**2007, 16 August:** Israel and the U.S. signed a Memorandum of Understanding on a new American defense package for Israel.

**2007, 27 November:** The U.S. sponsored a one-day peace conference in Annapolis.

**2008, 23 January:** The besieged Palestinians in Gaza rushed into the borders with Egypt, broke the walls and crossed into Egyptian territory to get food.

### **EPILOGUE:**

Imperialist powers made it possible for the Zionists to create Israel in 1948. After six decades, Israelis began to wake up to reality. Palestinian Arabs did not vanish into thin air.

Number of Palestinian Arabs living within the borders of Mandate Palestine is over 4.5 Million. Within 10 years, Palestinian Arabs would exceed the number of Jews even if the refugees did not return.

It is about time for the Zionists to realize the absurdity of their project, open the doors for the Refugees who want to return, and live together as equal people with equal rights.

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