



Promises, promises: the birth of a nation

Born out of the Jews' 2,000 year-old spiritual desire to return to their 'Promised Land', the origins of the modern state of Israel are a mire of vague and broken promises, mostly made to enlist both Jewish and Arab support in World War One. The violence that has dogged the country ever since is a direct consequence of those exaggerated hopes and subsequent sense of betrayal

① McMahon-Huseyn 1915

In exchange for support in the war with the Ottoman Empire, Britain gives vague promises of an independent Arab state in the Middle East

② Sykes-Picot Agreement 1916

Preparing to advance, Britain and France plan to create semi-independent Arab nation in Ottoman Middle East; Palestine to remain under Allied control

③ Balfour Declaration 1917

Britain recognises Zionist aspirations favouring 'the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people' – but no commitment to independence

④ British Mandate 1922

Palestine falls to British Army 1918

FRENCH MANDATE AREA

TRANSJORDAN

Closed to Jewish settlement in 1922 as Arab hostility grows

Mandate granted by League of Nations to prepare for independence of Jewish homeland

EGYPT

HEJAZ

Area open to Jewish settlement

OTTOMAN TURKEY

Immigration from eastern Europe adding to small local Jewish population

OTTOMAN SYRIA

PALESTINE

EGYPT

British promise of 1915 excludes western Syria – where population 'cannot be said to be purely Arab' – unclear whether this included Palestine

HEJAZ (later Saudi Arabia)

⑧ Independence 1948-9

British withdraw: Israel declares independence. Arab armies of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon invade

LEBANON

Sea of Galilee

Haifa

Tel Aviv-Jaffa

West Bank annexed to Jordan 1949

Jerusalem

Gaza

Hebron

ISRAEL

JORDAN

Dead Sea

EGYPT

Palestinians
700,000 flee as Arab areas captured or destroyed by Israeli forces

Jews
Settlements in West Bank and Gaza destroyed. Long-standing communities forced from Jerusalem

Peel Report 1937

First partition plan

Tel-Aviv (Jewish)

Jaffa (Arab)

Jerusalem

Arab state

Jewish state

British / International

White Paper 1939

Arab Revolt (1936-39) Opposes partition

With WWII looming, Britain proposes single (Arab) state

UN Partition Plan 1947

Tel-Aviv (Jewish)

Jaffa (Arab)

New limits imposed on Jewish immigration and land purchases

Mass 'illegal' immigration of Jews during and after WWII

Jerusalem

Zionist Revolt (1939-48)
Jewish terrorist groups attack British targets. Britain refers problem to UN and surrenders mandate

UN General Assembly votes for partition. Civil war erupts