

What was Zionism?

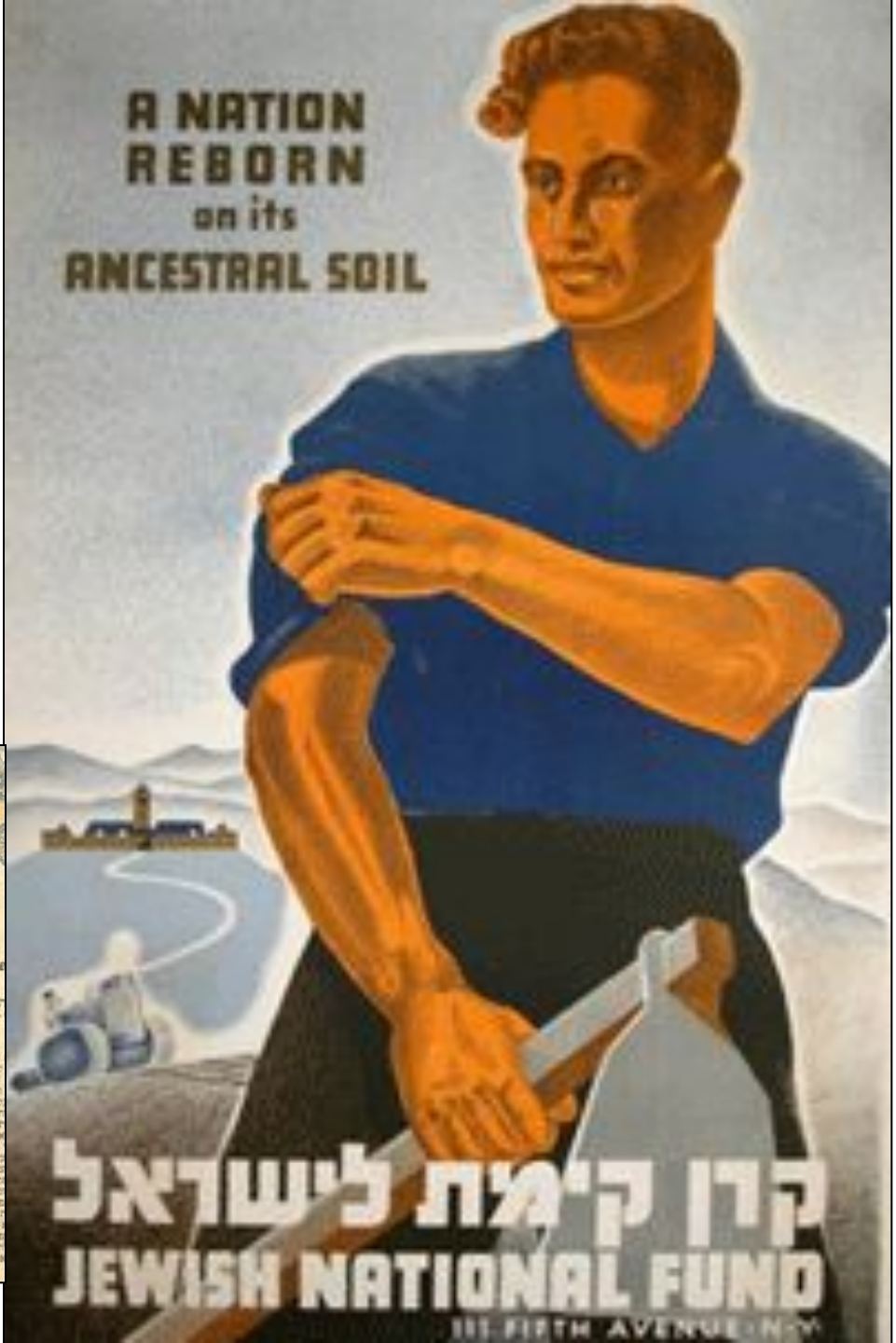
Shira Robinson

George Washington University

July 31, 2017

Zionism aka Jewish nationalism, 1880s

- 1. National liberation? ✓
- 2. Settler-Colonialism? ✓



Late Ottoman Palestine

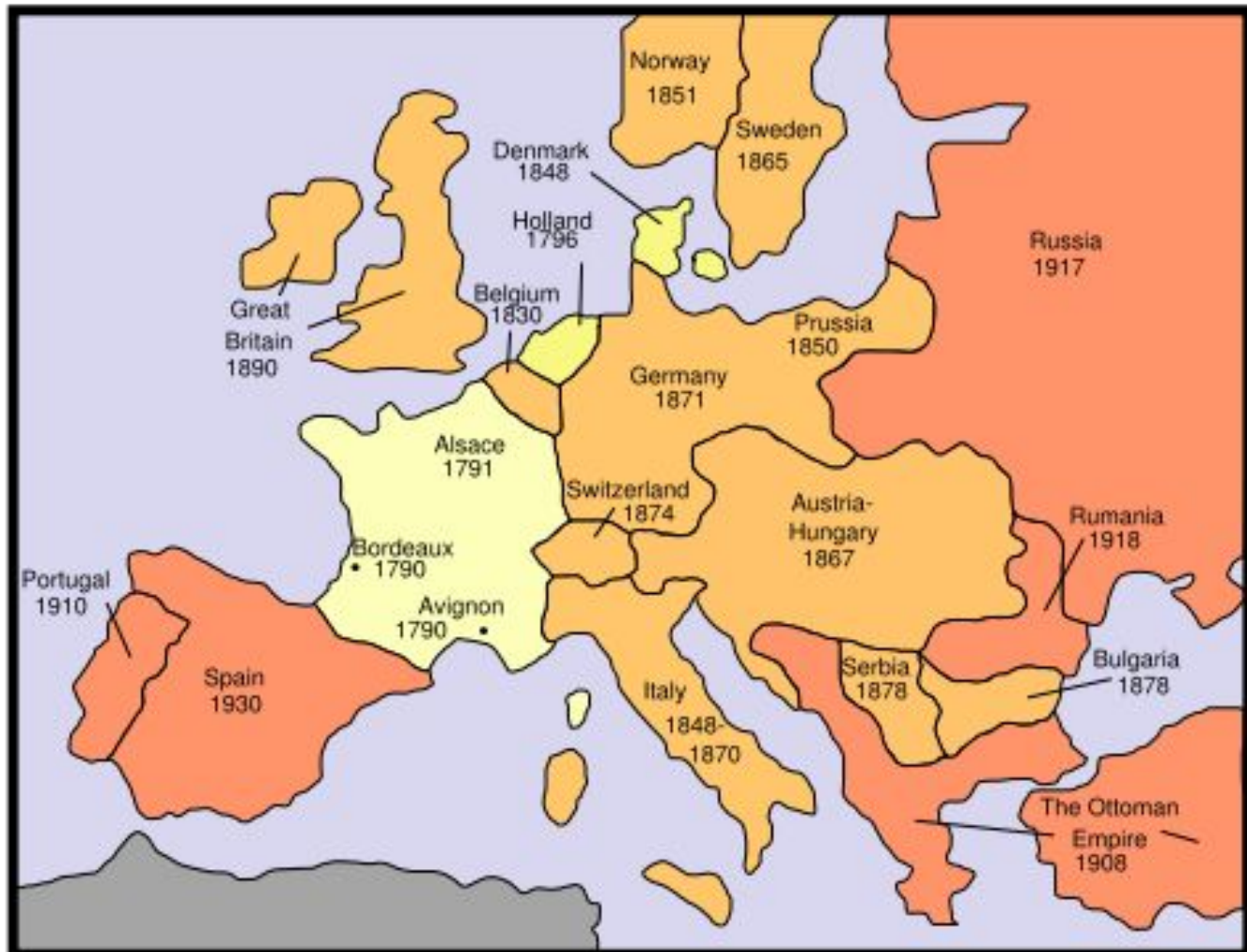
Tanzimat Reforms

95% Arab: Majority Sunni Muslims + Christians, Druze

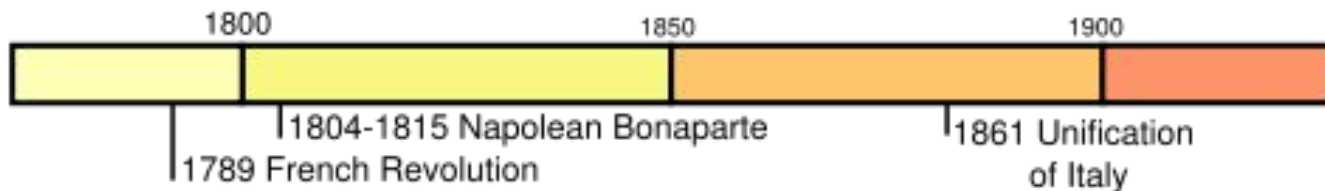
5% Jews: Majority Sephardi, + some Ashkenazi



Emancipation in Western/Central Europe



EMANCIPATION OF EUROPEAN JEWRY 1789-1930



Eastern Europe

- Pale of Settlement (1790/91)
- anti-Semitism more institutionalized
- Pogroms (1871, 1881, 1903-06)



Responses to anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe

1. Emigration (2.4m)
(1882-1914)
2. Socialism – Bund
(1897); Russian
Revolution (1905)
3. Jewish nationalism



Early Jewish Settlement: Proto-Zionism

- (1881) Lovers of Zion (*Hibbat Zion*); Odessa
- Leon Pinsker; *Auto-Emancipation* (1882).
→ sought cultural, economic autonomy
- 5000 settlers; 22 colonies by 1903.
- Economic failure – relied on philanthropy and ethnic division of labor



Political Zionism

Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State*
(1896).

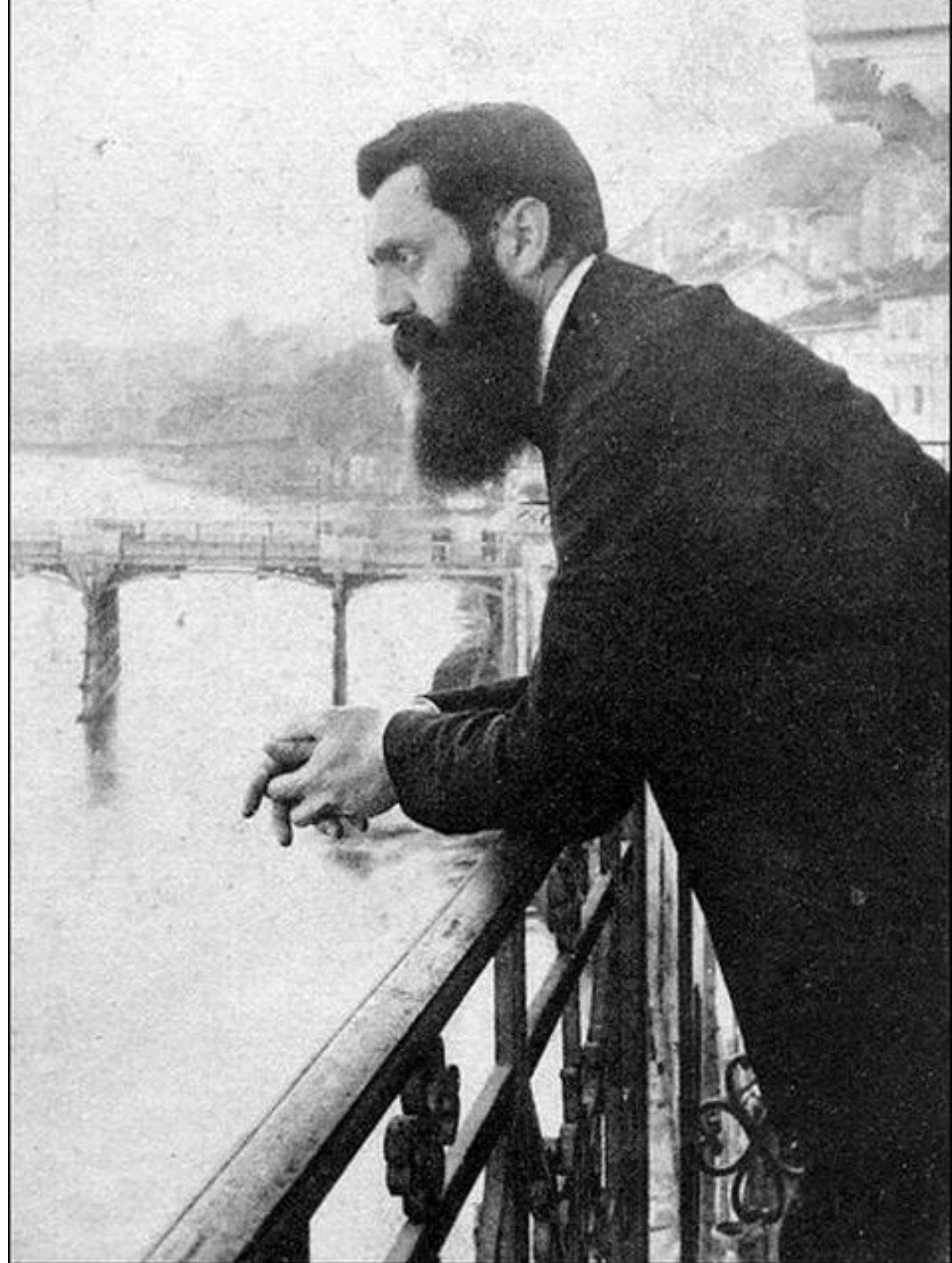
Jews = nation

Anti-Semitism = incurable

Solution: political sovereignty with
help of Europe

“We should [in Palestine] form a
portion of a rampart of Europe
against Asia, an outpost of
civilization against barbarism.”

World Zionist Organization (1897)



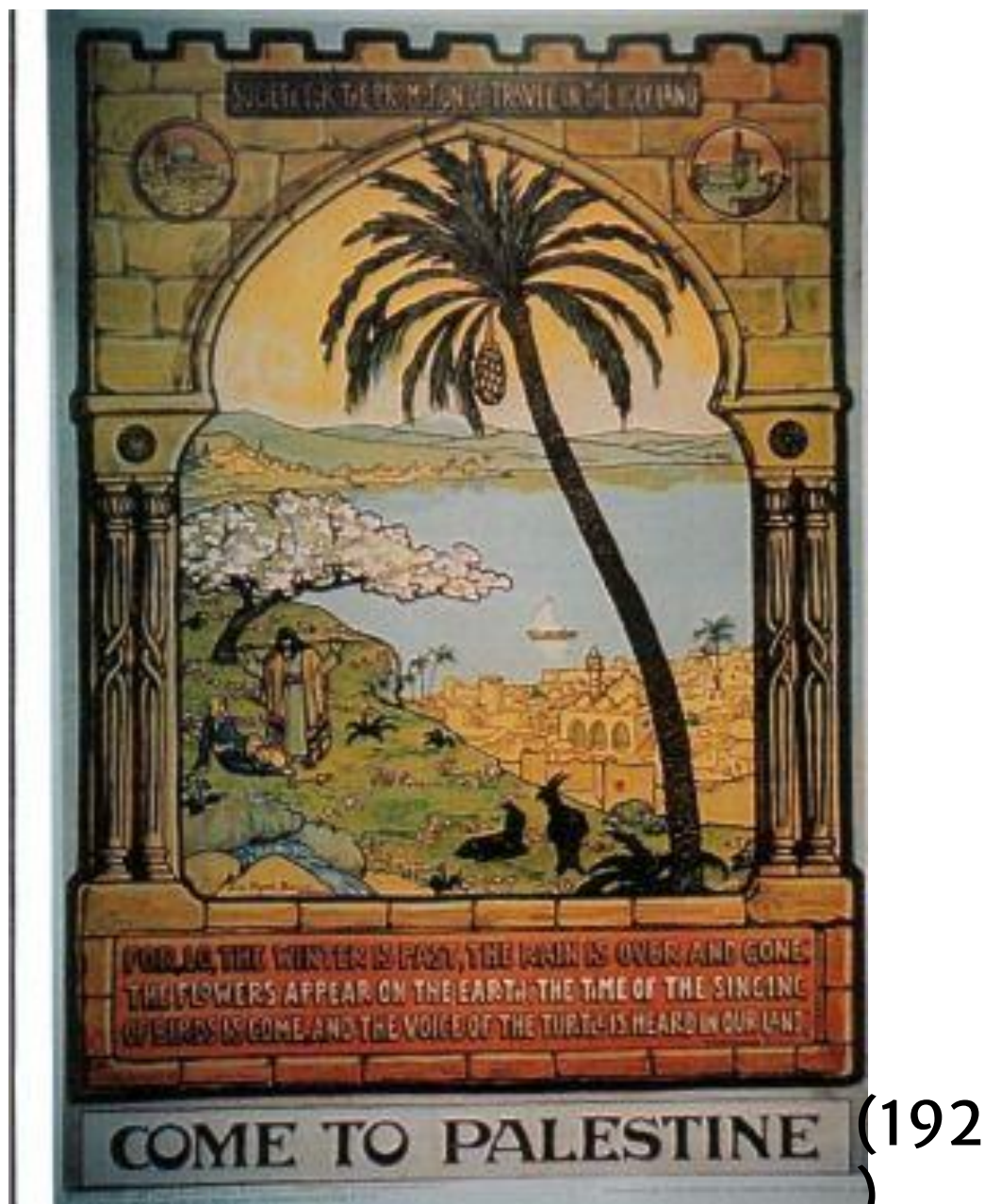
Early thinking about Palestine's Arab majority

1. Land as “empty” – *“Land without a people for a people without a land.”*

Internal critique: Ahad Ha'am (Asher Ginsburg) (1891).

2. Arabs will benefit (civilizing mission).

“The natives of Eretz Yisra'el have no independent economic or cultural character.... It is the Jewish immigrants who will undertake the development of the forces of production of the Land of Israel, and the local population...will soon assimilate economically and culturally to the Jews...” (Ber Borochov, 1906)



Rise of Labor Zionism in early 20th c. (dominant political trend until 1977)

(1880s-1903), **1st wave** of Jewish immigration and colonization:

-Reliance on philanthropic donations, diplomatic efforts (World Zionist Organization est. 1897)

-Focus on integration in existing rural and urban labor markets

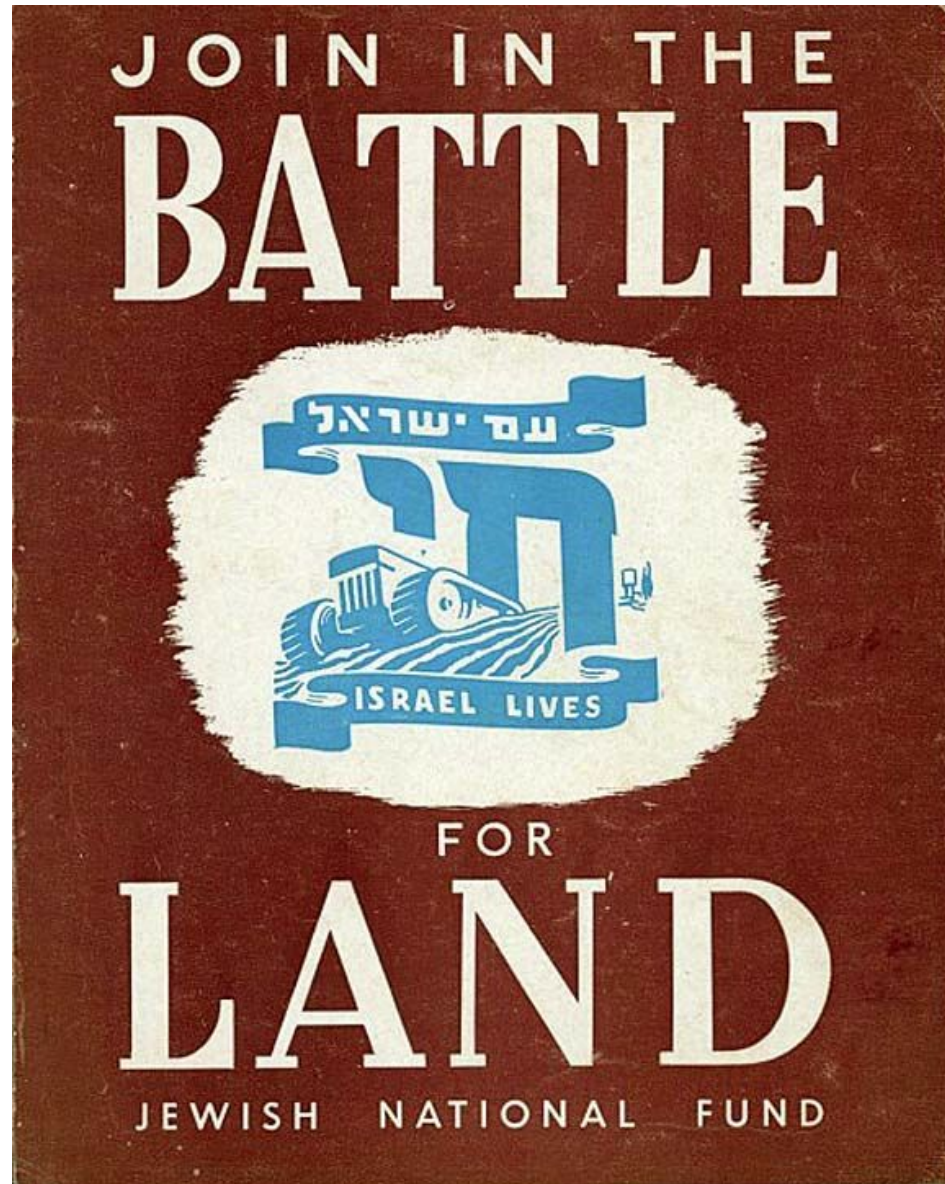
(1904-1914, **2nd wave**):

-Shift to economic separatism, “conquest of land and labor”

-30k new settlers

Jewish National Fund (est. 1901): Land to be “held in perpetuity for the Jewish people.”

•JNF land purchases → evictions of Arab peasants → political opposition to Zionism.



JNF poster, circa 1945

The Campaign for Land and Labor: Histadrut Political Posters



“Buy Jewish watermelons only”



“Let me work! Buy Jewish products!”

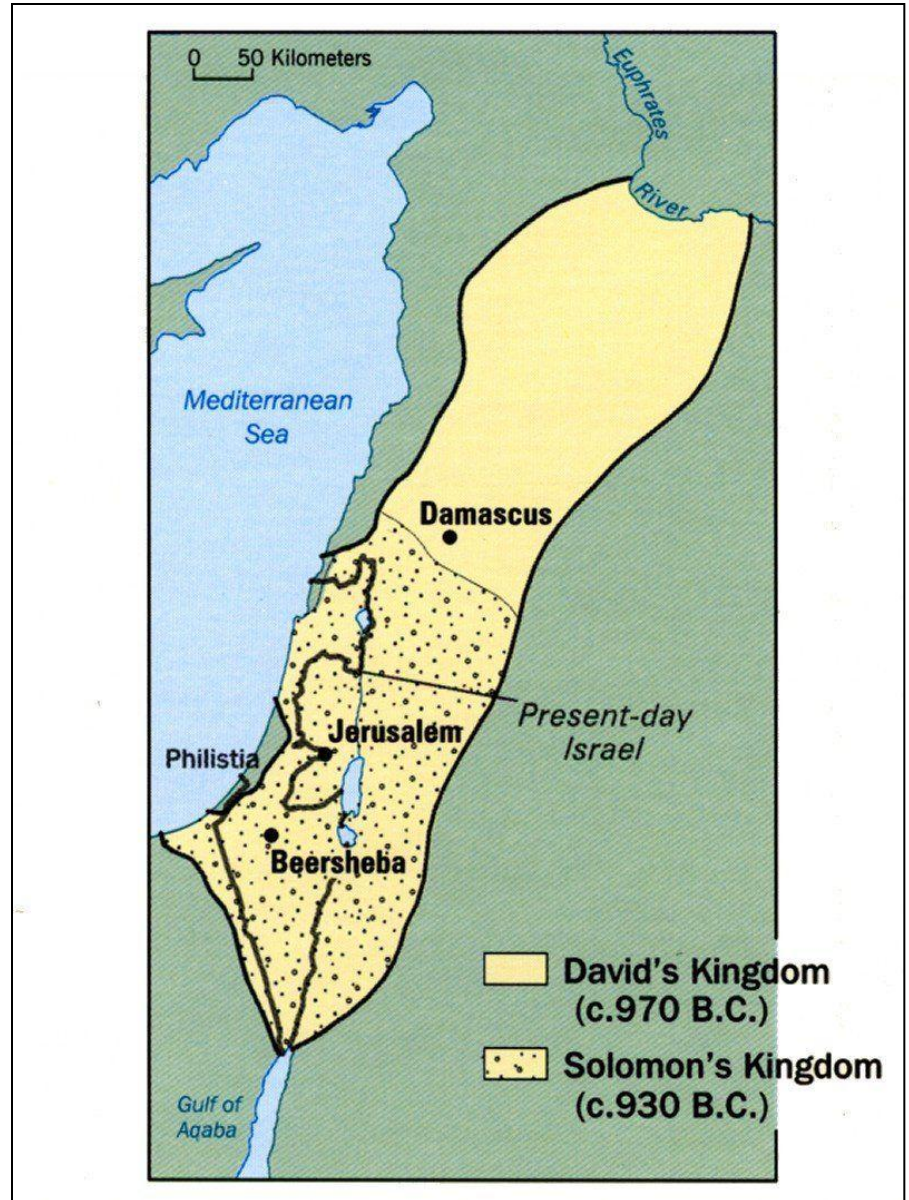
C. Balfour Declaration, 2 November 1917



“His Majesty’s Government will view with favor the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people...it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.”

Sources of British support for Zionism during WWI

1. Anti-Semitism: to make a “contract with Jewry”
2. Geo-political interests: safeguard the Suez
3. Christian Evangelism
4. Disregard for Arab wishes



Contradictions of the Palestine Mandate

Balfour Declaration

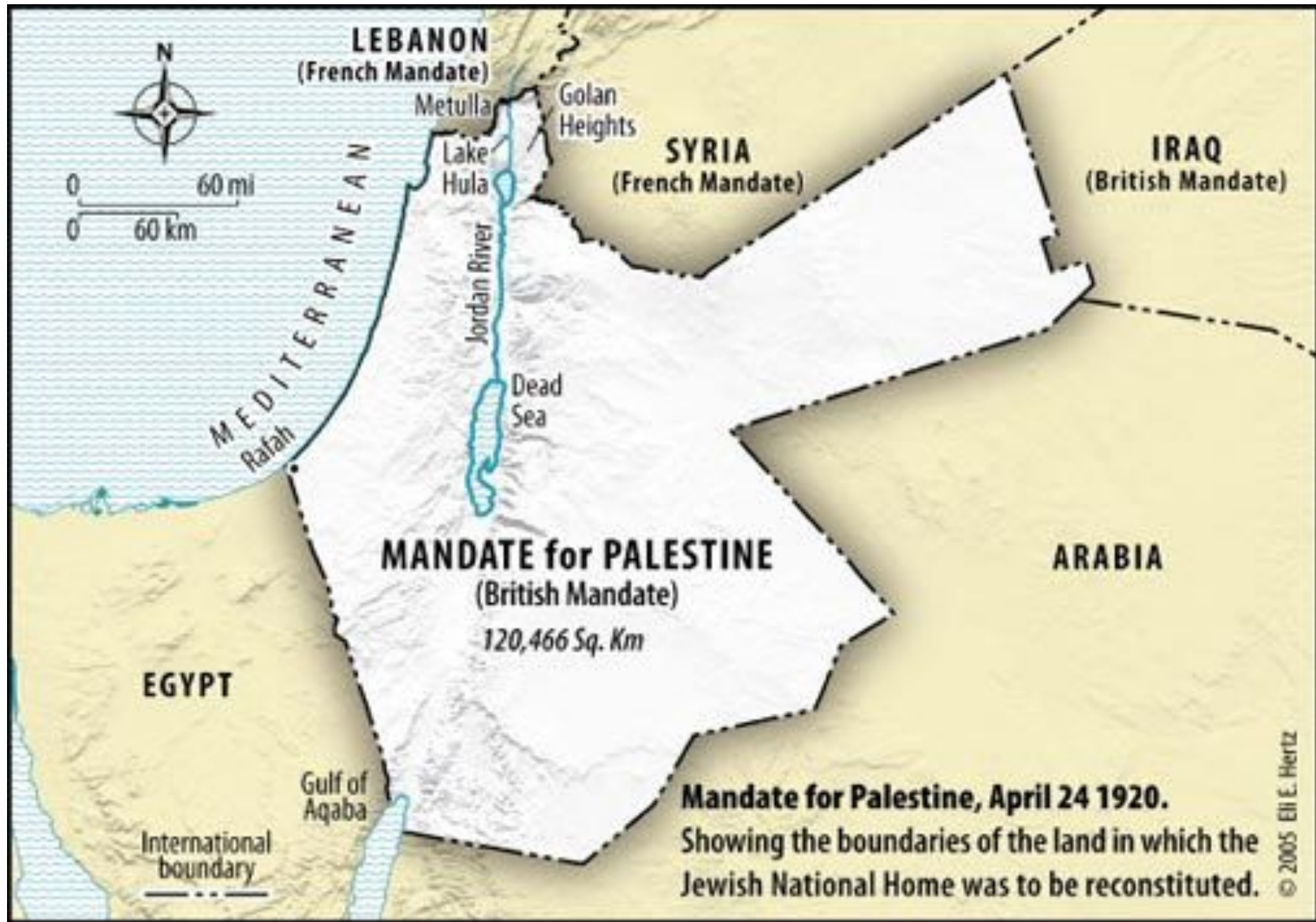
Preferential status for a demographic minority (10%):

5% Ottoman nationals

5% immigrant-settlers

Exceptional treatment at the Permanent Mandates Commission





Jewish national institutions flourish under Mandate

JNF purchases expand thanks to end of Ottoman-era restrictions

Histadrut (1920): General Union of Hebrew Workers in the Land of Israel

Haganah (“Defense” in Hebrew) militia

Jewish Agency (1929)—ZM’s leading representative body in Palestine



David Ben Gurion, Haganah (Jerusalem)



The Mandate's Contradictions Intensify, 1922-1935

White Papers (1922, 1930)

Economic crisis grows

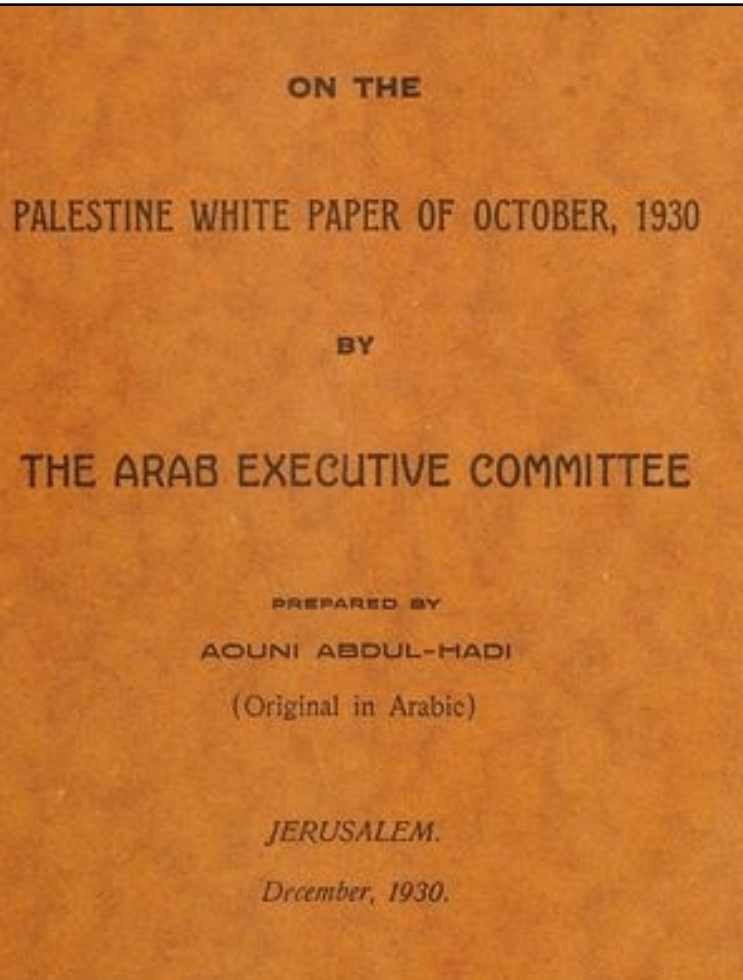


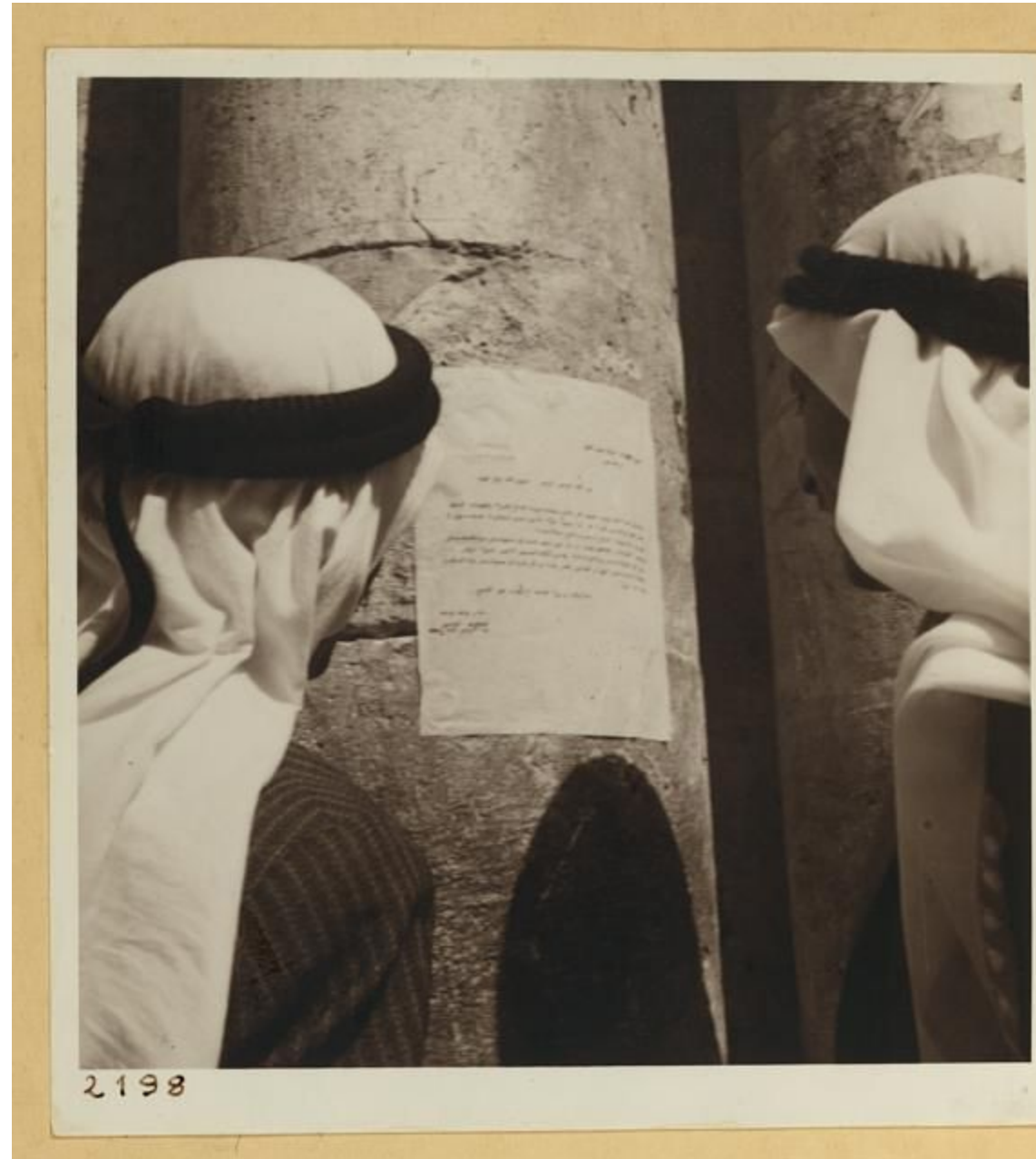
Figure 18. Zionist rally in protest against the Passfield White Paper, London, 1930. On the platform, left to right, are: Rebecca

Arab Revolt (1936-39)

Izz al-Din al-Qassam (Syrian
imam working in Galilee)

General strike

10,000 peasant rebels





1936, near Jerusalem: Taking the oath of allegiance to the Arab Revolt (*thawra*)



PO18

1936--British soldier oversees railroad repair



Checkpoint outside the Old City of Jerusalem

Consequences of the Arab Revolt (1936-1939):

Palestinian National Movt crushed

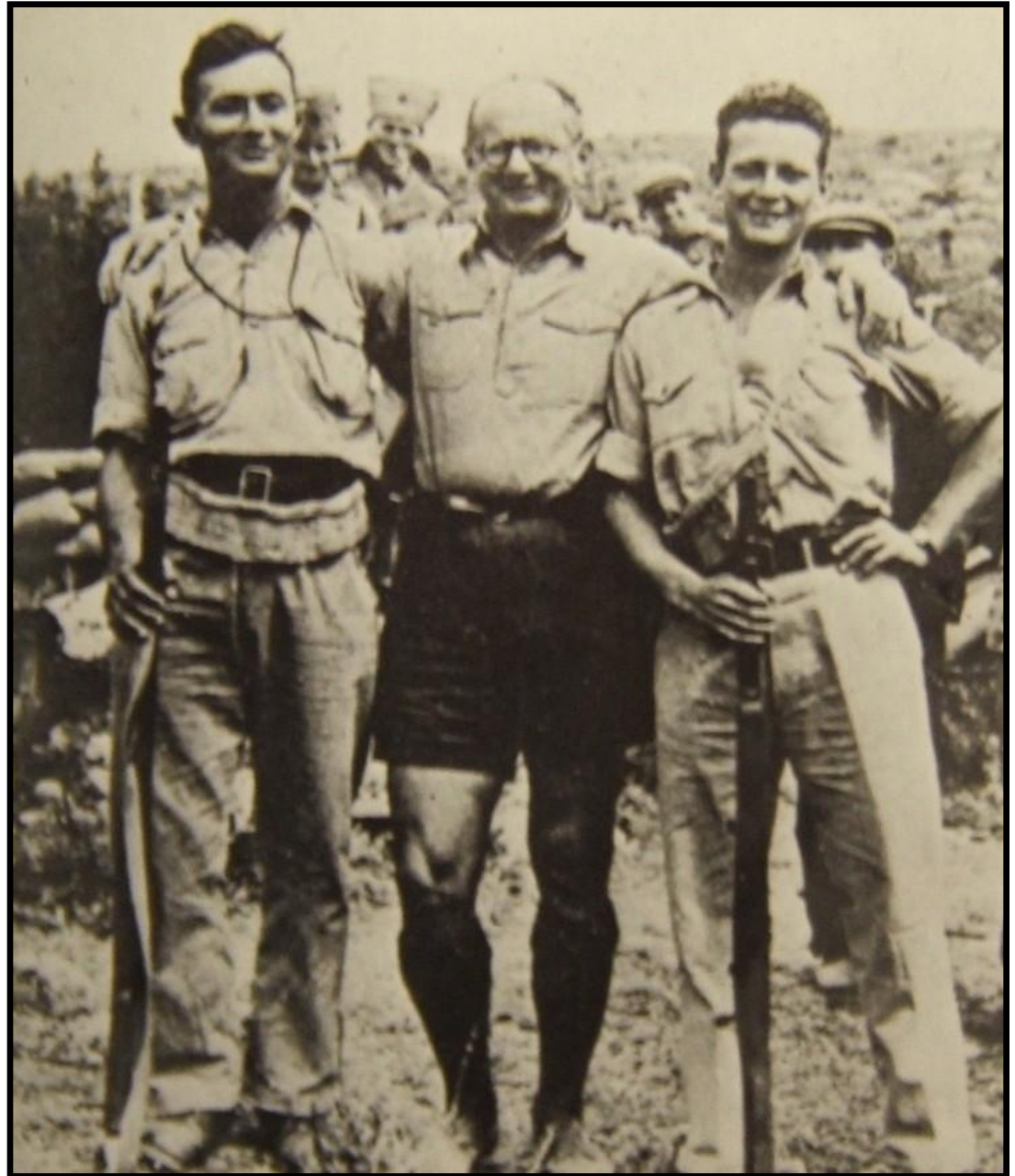
- 5000 killed, 10,000 wounded
- 1000s detained and exiled
- Home demolitions, curfews, collective punishment



Yishuv undergoes further militarization

Prominent Israeli leaders
get their start in the
Special Night Squads
(part of Britain's
counter-insurgency):
Allon, Sadeh, Dayan

Jewish Agency
Intelligence Department
creates "**Village Files,**"
recruits **Palestinian**
collaborators, and works
to exploit divisions within
Palestinian society



Revisionist Zionist stream grows

(1925) Ze`ev Jabotinsky and
the “Iron Wall”

(1931) *Irgun Tzvai Leumi*
(National Military Org.)

Attacks on Arab civilians and
British

Forerunner to Likud Party



Jewish settler economy benefits from Arab boycott



Construction of the

British scramble to clarify policy

(1937) Peel Commission → Partition!

(1939) White Paper → Majority rule
in 10 years! Restrict Jewish
immigration and land purchase



(1942-47) Zionist-British alliance shaken

Yishuv leadership: Statehood now!
(illegal immigration, colonies)



(1940) *LEHI* (“Fighters for the Freedom of Israel”) aka “The Stern Gang” splits from Irgun

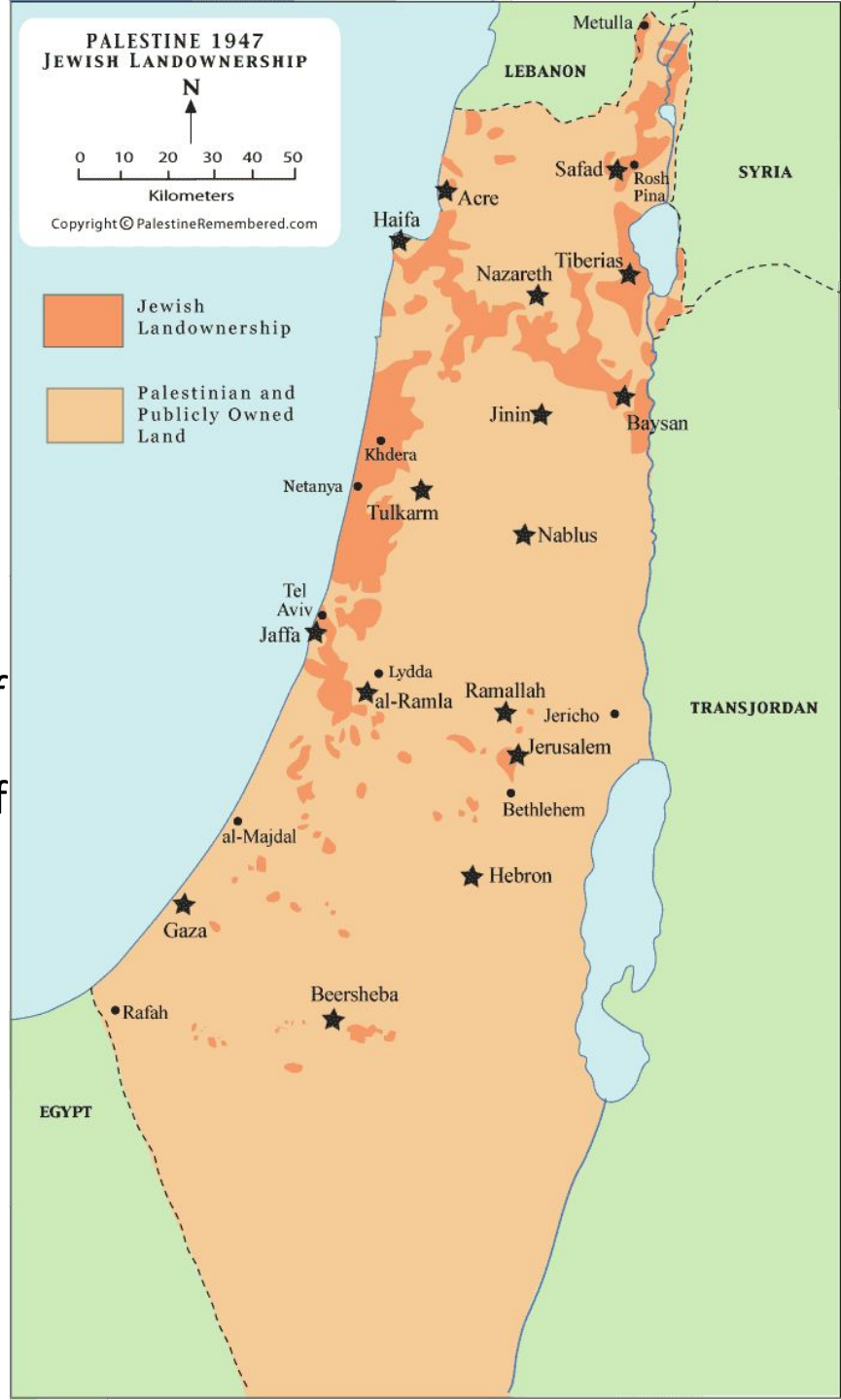
Likud PMs: Begin, Shamir

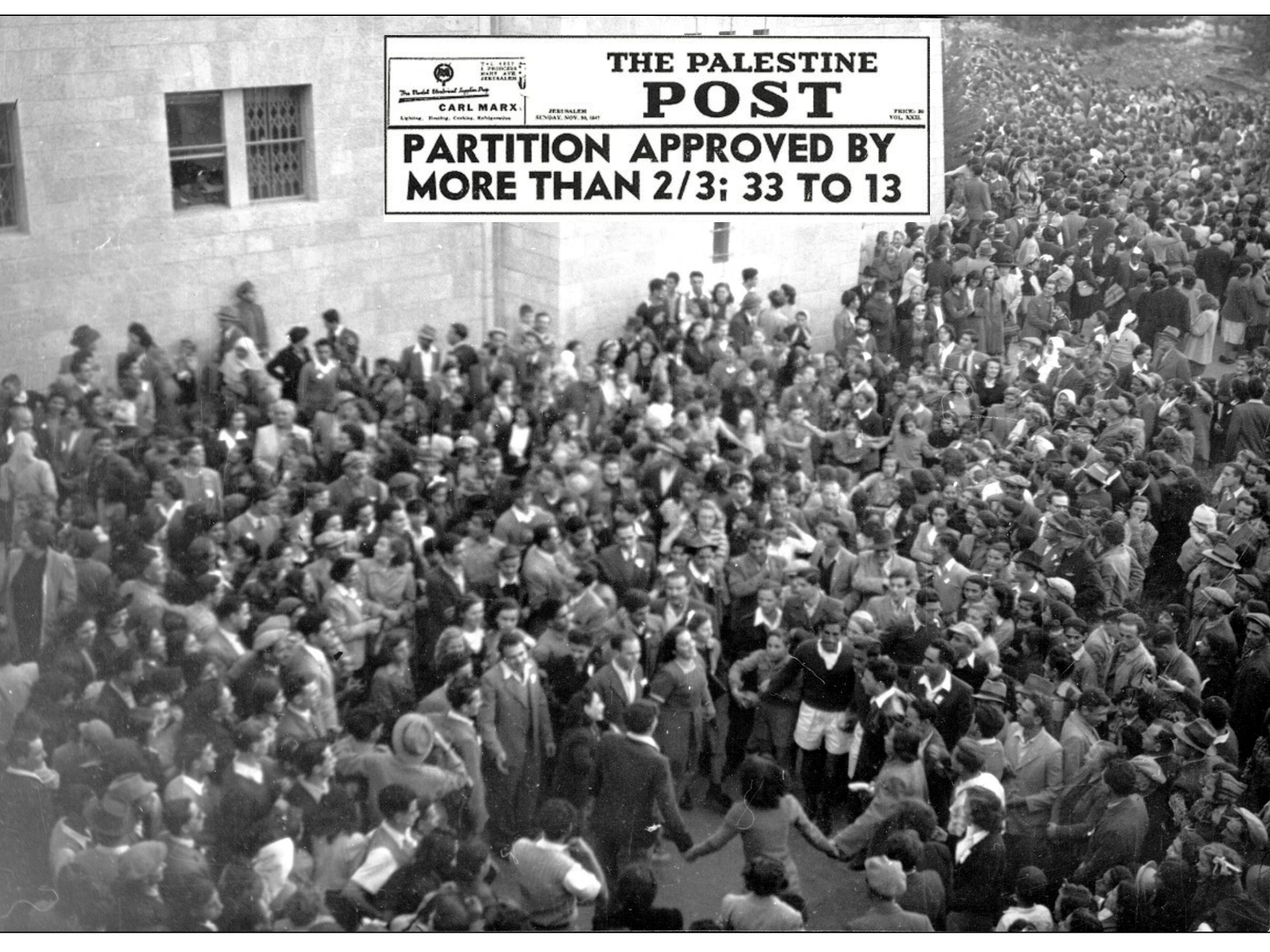


(Summer 1947):
UNSCOP
(UN Special Comm. on Palestine)

(11/29/47):
UN Res. 181:
Partition Plan
awards *half* of the land to a *third* of its inhabitants (who held under 7% of land)

British to withdraw
15 May 1948






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PARTITION APPROVED BY MORE THAN 2/3; 33 TO 13

1st stage: Civil War (November 29, 1947-May 14, 1948)

- Jewish troops (50k) v. Arab irregulars (10k)
- Haganah secures most of allotted Jewish state and parts of Arab state
- All major Arab cities + 200 villages (nearly ½ the total) depopulated
- ~ 250k Palestinian Arabs in exile

- Importance of Plan D (April 1948)

1947, Histadrut poster: "We will stand guard, day and night."



(Dec. 1947) Arab League's Volunteer Rescue Army (aka "Arab Liberation Army")



Fall of Haifa, April 1948

2nd stage: Regional War (May 1948-April 1949)

Shihrur (Liberation) and Nakba



By April 1949, State of Israel spans roughly 78—not 51—percent of Mandate Palestine.

Jews number 85—not 33, or 49—percent of the total population of Israel.

Remaining 15% is new Palestinian minority, forced to live under military rule

750k Palestinians (1/2 of total, but 80% of those who lived within the new state) become refugees in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, most in refugee camps

Why block Palestinian return?

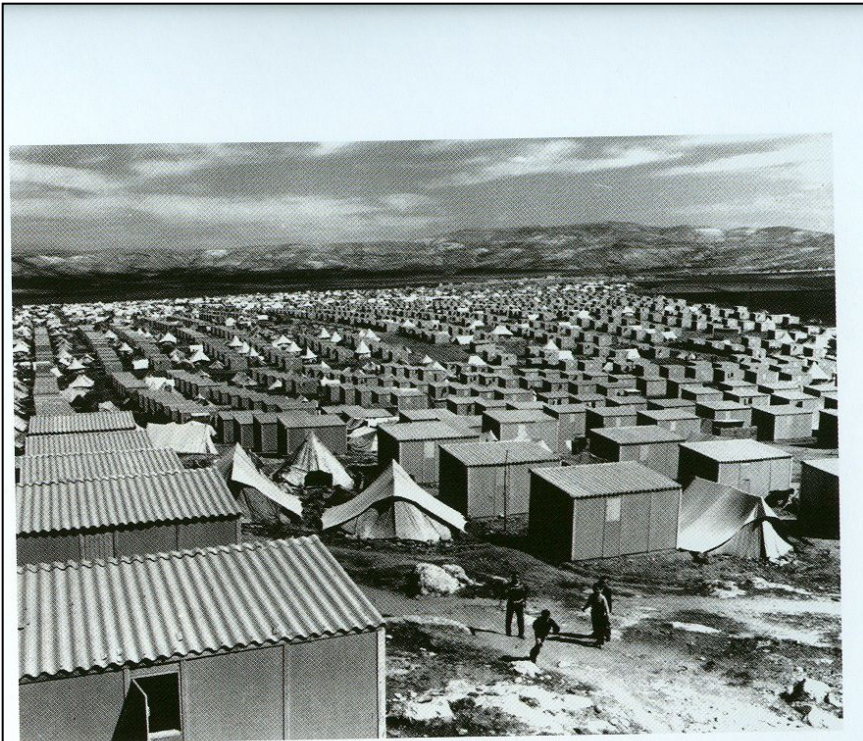
- Nearly 1/3 of the 684,000 new Jewish immigrants settled in homes belonging to Arab families, now living in internal or external exile
- By 1954, over 1/3 of Israel's Jewish citizens lived on property belonging to Palestinian Arabs (refugee or not)
- After the war, the amount of land available to Jewish farmers increased by 250 percent



(1950) "Land for the Freed." JNF poster promotes the settlement of new immigrants on Arab land.

Palestinian Refugees and the Question of Return

- UN Resolution 194
- Israel: no return



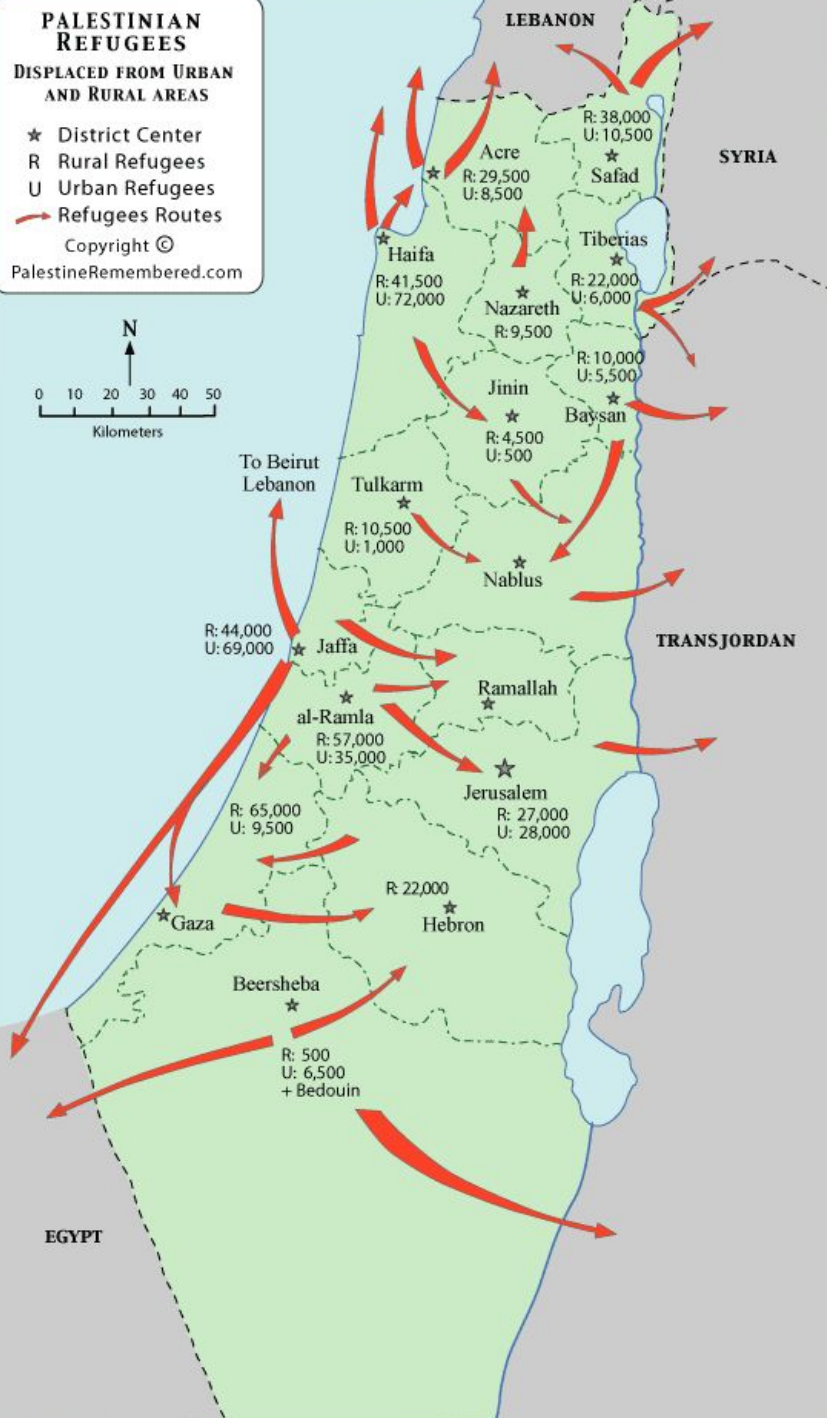
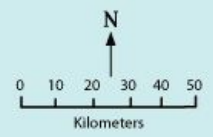
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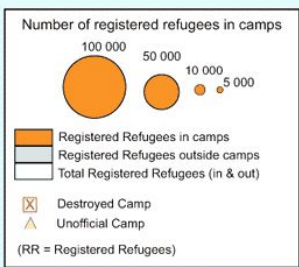
PALESTINIAN REFUGEES
DISPLACED FROM URBAN AND RURAL AREAS

★ District Center
 R Rural Refugees
 U Urban Refugees
 → Refugees Routes

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Palestinian Refugees - Area of UNRWA Operations



Total numbers of refugees are based on UNWRA data, as of 30 December 2003.

Camp populations are based on UNWRA data as of 30 June 2003.

Source: Public Information Office, UNWRA HQ, Gaza.

