

Your potted guide

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The story begins . . .

God's Promise of the land to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob:
"Unto your seed I shall give this land. Every place where you foot will step shall be yours."

As Abba Eban writes: "Normally a people lives by its geography; the most enduring element in any national history is the ground which nature provides as a home.

"Not so for the Jews. Jews took with them into Diaspora a priceless cultural and religious heritage which ensured a community of spirit and a unity of purpose which were to sustain them throughout their dispersions.

"At the centre of it was the longing for a return to the homeland.

"Jews always felt, and were made to feel, transient, always on the way to the ultimate destination, the messianic dream. Destination — Jerusalem."

Jews never lost sight of Israel, and Jerusalem has always been the heart of the people and the centre of its national aspirations.

Israel became a nation in 1312 BCE, 2,000 years before the rise of Islam.

One thousand years before Mohammed was born, Jews sang: *"By the rivers of Babylon there we wept when we remembered Zion."*

'If I forget thee o Jerusalem'

In 1086 Yehudah Halevi wrote: *"My heart is in the East and I am at the uttermost West."*

The Romans called the land Palestina and Jerusalem Aelia Capitolina, but to the Jews its name remained Israel, Zion and Yerushalayim.

Throughout the period since the Roman conquest, there has always been a substantial Jewish settlement in the land.

The well known academic and historian, Rev James Parkes once wrote:

"It is perhaps inevitable that Zionists should look back to the heroic period of the Maccabees and Bar Kochba, but their real 'title deeds' were written by the less dramatic but equally heroic endurance of those who had maintained the Jewish presence in the land through all the centuries."

Little is known of the land of Israel (or Palestine as it came to be known) during the intervening years.

During the Ottoman rule, the country languished and with the exception of a short cultural rebirth in the 16th century, a long



DISRAELI: Proposed plan

The answers to arguments against the



THE first Zionist Congress in Basle in 1897 – the first worldwide gathering of Jews since the dispersion

period of economic and political decay set in, accentuated by a series of earthquakes, famines and crop plagues.

With the opening of the shipping trade routes to India around the Cape of Good Hope, Palestine had lost her vital position as a transit country and had become a stagnant corner of the Mediterranean basin.

The land was barren and its tiny population was made up of nomads and revolving populations.

In the 1931 census, the Muslim population of Jerusalem — itself a substantial minority — recorded the use of 21 different origins and languages.

A new movement of Jews between 1730 and 1830 brought to its shores scholars and rabbis, businessmen and artisans.

By 1887 there were 18 new Jewish settlements in Palestine. Geder, Rishon L'zion, Petach Tikvah, Mikveh Yisrael, Rehovot and Rosh Pina to name but a few, founded by the Biluim and other early settlers.

Time and again the idea of restoring Palestine to the Jews came to the fore.

In Russia, Potemkin had begun training a cavalry unit for the capture of the Holy Land.

In France, Napoleon had issued a proclamation to the Jews of the world as the rightful heirs to Palestine.

Many Christians saw the restoration of the Jews to their own land as a fulfilment of divine prophecy or as an ethical duty.

Lord Palmeston, the British Foreign Secretary and later its Prime Minister, wrote, in 1840: "It would be of manifest importance to encourage the Jews to return to, and settle in, Palestine."

Sir Moses Montefiore and Sir Laurence Oliphant advocated the establishment of a Jewish centre in Palestine under the protectorate of Great Britain.

Prime Minister Disraeli proposed the plan at the Berlin congress of 1878.

He stated: "Is it not probable that within, say, half a century there would be developed in that land a compact Jewish people, one million strong, speaking one language, and animated by one spirit . . . the desire to achieve autonomy and independence."

The end of the 19th century

Nationalist movements had played a large role in shaping the map of Europe in the 19th century. Germany became an empire, Italy transformed from principalities into a country, there were stirrings for independence in the Balkans, Poland tried to break from Russia and Ireland was demanding Home rule.

Nationalism fostered a concern for national identity and heritage of every people.

Nationalism also deeply affected Jews. Some embraced the culture of the national majority but many remained faithfully attached to a powerful tradition and emotion.

Out of all this a new Jewish nationalism was born — Zionism, derived its values from nationalistic mood on the one hand and from the antagonism of antisemites on the other.

Basle 1897, the first Zionist Congress

Theodore Herzl declares: *"At Basle I created the Jewish State. In five years, perhaps, and certainly in fifty, everyone will see it."*

"Therefore I believe that a wondrous generation of Jews will spring into existence. The Maccabees will rise again."

"If you will it, it is no dream."

Herzl galvanised the Jewish people.

Herzl, more than any other, harnessed the yearning.

The Zionist Congress was the



MONTEFIORE: Jewish centre plan

first worldwide gathering of Jews since their dispersion.

There, for the first time, flew the flag with blue stripes and the Star of David and the *Hatikvah* was adopted as the national anthem of the Jewish State.

Herzl tapped the latent springs of Jewish aspiration. In Basle, the wheels were set in motion.

World War I

Zionist hopes for the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish homeland became a political reality as Turkey entered the Great War on the side of Germany.

With the prospect of the demise of the Ottoman Empire, many laid claim to Palestine.

France claimed it on the basis that the majority of the Crusaders hailed from France.

Britain, anxious to keep France as far from the vital Suez Canal as possible, had to ensure French influence was limited to Syria.

Britain, offering protection to a Jewish Palestine, would help justify a British presence. Britain signalled its support for the project.

On November 2, 1917 after receiving the approval of US President Woodrow Wilson, Lord Balfour wrote to Lord Rothschild:

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use its best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this objective."

On the first day of Chanukah 1917 General Allenby entered Jerusalem.

Among his troops were three battalions of the Jewish brigade led by Vladimir Jabotinsky and Joseph Trumpeldor.

At the San Remo conference of 1920, the Palestine question was finally settled.

Prime Minister Lloyd George told Chaim Weizmann: *"Now you have your state. It is up to you to win the race."*

The mandate, to create a Jewish National Home in the whole of Palestine, was formally conferred on Britain by the League of Nations in 1922.

The idea of Jewish National independence had passed from fantasy into the real world of politics.

Waves of immigrants arrived. A Jewish idealism suppressed for so many centuries now found an out-

let. The early 1930s saw tens of thousands of German Jews arrive.

By 1939 the Yishuv — the Jewish settlements — developed into an independent community, running their own schools, medical services, labour organisations and defence system.

During those years, Keren Kayemet, known to many as JNF, the Palestine Colonisation Association, known as PICA, and other bodies were purchasing lands in Palestine.

There was always a system of laws in the country, Turkish and British. Jews did not steal land. The reverse is more often true.

The Arab Story

The Arab claim of an 'historic right' to sovereignty in the land of Palestine has little merit. Arab demands for an independent state in Palestine has no memory of prior Arab independence on that soil.

From Biblical times until Rome subdued Bar Kochba, the land was Jewish and was universally recognised as such.

In the year 136 AD:

- Rome defeated Bar Kochba
- 615 Persia conquered the land
- 637 Arabs conquered the land
- 874 Turkish conquest
- 904 Abbasids of Baghdad invade
- 934 Egyptian conquest
- 970 Byzantine invasion
- 1070 Turks
- 1099 The Crusaders
- 1187 Kurds of Damascus
- 1244 Kharezemians (Genghis Khan)
- 1260 Sultan of Egypt
- 1260 Mongol invasion
- 1291 End of Crusaders
- 1516 Ottoman conquest
- 1799 Napoleon
- 1831 Egypt
- 1840 Ottoman Empire
- 1917 Britain

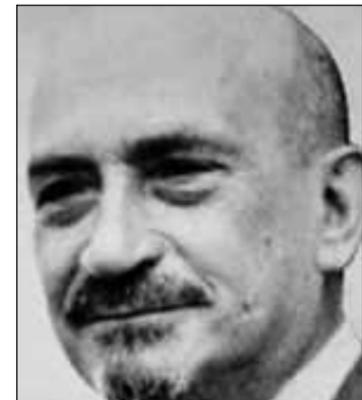
To be sure, there were times of conquest by Arabs, but the Arabs never created a name for the land, nor was there ever an independent Arab state of Palestine, or in Palestine. There was no such entity as 'Palestinian Arabs'.

Each conqueror wanted the land for its strategic importance, as a vital crossroads, not for its political entity.

In the words of Herzl's colleague, Israel Zangwill: *"Indeed, even in modern times, prior to the war of 1967, prior to the so called 'occupied territories'."*

When the West Bank and Jerusalem were ruled by Jordan and the Gaza Strip, by Egypt, there was never even a mention of a Palestinian state.

No one ever spoke of Jerusalem as a capital. Arab leaders rarely visited Jerusalem whilst there are 669 references to Yerushalayim or Yerushalem as it was then called, in the Tenach (the Old Testa-



WEIZMANN: Met Emir Faisal

to Israel advocacy

legitimacy of a secure Jewish state

ment). Jerusalem is never mentioned in the Koran — not even once, though there are unlimited references to Mecca and Medina.

Palestine was not like any other Middle Eastern territory in relation to Arab history. The Arabs themselves thus hesitated to advance their claims on Palestine at the peace conferences after World War One.

The Arabs of Syria demanded independence, but on Palestine they were willing to compromise.

At the Paris Peace Conference, Palestine for the Arabs was of secondary importance.

Their main objective was to secure independence in territories whose Arab character was unreserved.

The Emir Faisal, who represented his father, the Sheriff of Mecca, made uncompromising demands for independence, but on Palestine he showed an intuition for the historic forces which had shaped that land.

In 1918 Chaim Weizmann met the Emir Faisal at Aquaba and reached an agreement with him.

Faisal became King of Syria and on a visit to London, he issued a statement which read:

"The two main branches of the Semitic family understand one another . . . each nation will make definite progress towards the realisation of its aspirations."

"Arabs are not jealous of Zionist Jews and intend to give them fair play; and the Zionists have assured the nationalist Arabs that they too will have fair play in their respective areas."

The concept of Arabia for the Arabs, and Judea for the Jews emerges with even greater clarity from letters written by Faisal concerning his understandings with Weizmann.

In 1936, a British Royal Commission was to express this historic record succinctly:

"If King Hussein and Emir Faisal secured their big Arab states, they would concede 'little Palestine' to the Jews."

In the event, the Arabs did not secure their big Arab states. They therefore declined to concede 'little Palestine'. Britain dominated Iraq and France expelled Faisal from Damascus.

Savage disappointment gripped the Arab national movement. More extreme Arab nationalism now prevailed demanding everything and a total resistance to a Jewish national home.

The Arab case now was, that sovereignty belonged to the Arabs wherever they were and to Jews nowhere at all.

Faisal's vision was allowed to perish. Zionism and Arab nationalism were henceforth locked in mortal combat.

Arab propaganda, now put out the message of how Jews were intruding on a land 'crowded' with hundreds of thousands of Arabs, and were 'displacing' Arab cultivators — the indigenous population from 'time immemorial'.

This propaganda has been swallowed whole for decades now by a surprisingly large part of the world, despite clear evidence to the contrary.

We have already described how throughout the generations the land was barren and sparsely populated and any habitation was largely composed of revolving nomadic immigrant population of diverse ethnic origins.

In 1867 Mark Twain (in his book *The Innocents Abroad*) bemoaned how one travelled in Palestine for great lengths without seeing a single human being. He wrote: *"Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes . . . desolate and unlovely . . ."*

Arthur Penryn Stanley (author



PALESTINIAN Jews pictured during the Second World War

of many of the ancient maps of the area) wrote in 1880, how standing on the hills of Judea, one could look north and look south and see absolutely no living being.

Rev Samuel Manning (in his book *Those Holy Fields*, in 1874) mourned the atrophy of the coastal plain — the Sharon plain, asking: *"But where is the population?"*

The noted French writer Pierre Loti wrote in 1895: *"I travelled through sad Galilee in spring and I found it silent . . . This melancholy of abandonment weighs on all the holy land."*

Report after report during the second half of the 19th century described the land as "desolate", "wretched and neglected", "abandoned", "unoccupied" and "uninhabited".

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1911 edition finds the population of Palestine composed of "so widely differing a group of inhabitants . . . composed of 50 different languages . . . that it is no easy task to define the ethnology of Palestine".

Jews were the majority in Safed and Tiberius and at least 50 per cent of the population in Jerusalem.

In Jerusalem, in 1859, the British Consul in describing a "thinly scattered population" of the area, records:

"The Mohammedans of Jerusalem are less fanatical than in other places owing to the circumstance of their numbers which scarcely exceeds one quarter of the whole population."



CHURCHILL: No persecution



LORD PEEL: No persecution



PIERRE LOTI: Sad Galilee

What actually happened is this: As Jews began developing the land Arab migration into the land followed as Arabs from surrounding countries sought employment with the Jewish settlements.

Winston Churchill stated in 1939: *"So far from being persecuted, the Arabs have 'crowded' into the country."*

In the years leading up to the creation of the State of Israel, as the Jewish settlements — the Yishuv — grew, so Arabs from the area flooded into Jewish settled areas in search of jobs and opportunities.

Were it not for Jewish colonisation of Palestine and the rapidly improving economic conditions created thereby, there would have been very few Arabs in (Western) Palestine — the area which later became Israel.

Malcolm Macdonald, British Secretary of State in 1938 put it thus:

"The Arabs cannot say that the Jews are driving them out of their country . . . If not a single Jew had come to Palestine after 1918 . . . I believe the Arab population would still have been around the figure at which it had been stable under Turkish rule."

Arab opposition to the creation of the State of Israel

In Palestine itself Arab nationalism was organised in an oligarchic pattern. Its leaders were large landowners, Moslem holy

men and the prosperous who were called the Effendi.

The Al-Khalidi, the Al-Husseini, the Al-Nashashibi and other families, who had been the tax collectors during the Ottoman empire, dominated the land.

This unbalanced class structure of the Arab nationalist organisations expressed itself in sympathies and orientations which were later to align the movement with Mussolini and Hitler.

Haj Amin Al-Husseini, Grand Mufti of Jerusalem became their leader.

For years, the Effendi families had taken advantage of the Arab serfs.

Their hold over low wages paid to migrant Arabs, made them rich.

Now the migrants found jobs with the Jewish settlers who paid far more and treated them with far greater respect.

And Jews? For years subjugated and rejected, by Muslims in Arab lands, were now asserting their independence.

The Effendi families risked losing control. So, they deliberately set out to inflame the historically entrenched hatred of Jews and incited the masses to riots and violence against the Jewish population.

It is ironic that in their propaganda they ranted against sale of lands to Jews, whilst at the same time their leaders, the Effendi families, were selling large tracts of land to Jews — at exorbitant prices in response to Arab riots,

and in an effort to appease them, the British Mandatory Authorities tightened yet further restrictions on Jewish immigration and Jewish land purchases.

In 1922 Britain gave the largest part of Palestine — eastern Palestine — to the Emir Abdullah (the brother of Faisal) and set up the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan, today known as Jordan.

This left only a small portion of Palestine, 'Little Palestine', in which to establish a Jewish national home.

In 1929, Arab riots continued. Many Jews were killed.

The British response was to limit Jewish immigration and sometimes, even repudiate the mandate and the Balfour Declaration.

Despite everything, economic development of the country progressed rapidly and Jewish immigration, in 1935, reached an unprecedented figure of 62,000.

The year 1936 saw a full scale Arab revolt and the Arabs proclaimed a general strike.

Britain called in reinforcements and even began arming Jewish settlers for their self-defence.

Colonel Orde Wingate helped organise Jewish night fighting squads to deal with Arab terrorism.

These units later formed the backbone of the Palmach, Israel's elite fighting units.

In 1937, a Royal Commission headed by Lord Peel recommended the partition of 'Little Palestine' with the Arab parts forming an Arab state and, the Jewish parts, a Jewish state.

Peel's idea was to create separate sovereignty for the two peoples (a two-state solution).

The Jews accepted the plan

The Arabs were uncompromising in their objections. This was the beginning of the 'maximalist' Arab approach.

They would have 'all or nothing'. Arab violence continued.

In 1939, Britain issued a White Paper, which limited immigration to a total of 75,000 spread over the next five years and thereafter Britain would hand over the governance of the land to a Palestinian government with an Arab majority.

The League of Nations declared this to be contrary to the Mandate.

By 1939, the Yishuv numbered some 450,000. Its technological and economic achievements were spectacular by Middle Eastern standards.

It was a source of pride for Jews and a source of fascination to the world.

Nevertheless, Palestine Jewry entered the Second World War with its ambitions, and even survival, in suspense.

Worst still, the doors to Palestine were slammed shut just at a time when Jews needed it most.

World War II

The Jews of Palestine supported the British war effort wholeheartedly.

In the words of Ben Gurion: *"We will fight the war as though there is no White paper and we shall fight the White Paper as though there is no war."*

Despite some opposition from the Foreign Office, Jews from Palestine enlisted to fight in the British army and their units made an honourable contribution to victory in the Middle East.

Under continuing pressure from the Jewish Agency, the Jewish Brigade was finally formed in 1944 and it flew a flag with blue stripes and the shield of David.

The Brigade fought gallantly in Italy and in the European theatre.

Continued on next page

FEATURES

Israel's modern history

Continued from previous page

These soldiers would later form the Hagana, the Israel Defence Forces.

Arab attitude to Britain, on the other hand, ranged from hostility to grudging neutrality, at least until the tide began turning against the Germans.

Nevertheless Britain continued to favour the Arabs and the White Paper and the limited quota on immigration was enforced rigorously throughout the war years.

In the hour of its greatest peril, European Jewry could not escape to Palestine nor could the yishuv rescue even those who had escaped the Nazis.

Further regulations severely limited Jewish land purchases

There were Jewish demonstrations against the Mandatory Government.

The government was criticised in Parliament as these restrictions were inconsistent with the Mandate to create a Jewish homeland. The yishuv felt betrayed.

When the war ended Jews came out orphaned. Six million dead. One and a half million children murdered. A third of its people had perished.

Whole communities had been obliterated. Poland had become perhaps the largest cemetery on earth.

Equally painful was the fate of some 300,000 survivors who had nowhere to go

A new Labour government came to power in Britain with a pro-Zionist programme as formulated by Hugh Dalton who said:

"There is surely neither hope nor meaning in a Jewish national home unless we are prepared to let Jews enter this tiny land . . . There is a strong case before the war. There is an irresistible case now after the unspeakable atrocities of the Germans."

However, Ernest Bevin, the new Foreign Secretary, was hostile.

The suggestion by US President Truman that 100,000 survivors be allowed into Palestine irritated

Foreign Secretary was hostile

Bevin, who reaffirmed that there would be no relaxation on the tight restrictions on Jewish immigration into Palestine

In desperation, the Hagana turned to armed resistance against the British army. Britain responded with arrests, curfews and other harsh measures.

Jewish resistance continued and immigration continued illegally

World pressure and particularly American pressure grew on Britain and in 1947, Britain handed the Palestine question back to the United Nations.

Arab spokesmen tried strenuously to destroy the legal foundation for a Jewish State.

November 29th 1947: The United Nations voted for the partition of Palestine. There were just over one million Arabs and some 650,000 Jews in western Palestine at the time. The parts which were predominantly Jewish were to become a Jewish state and those dominated by Arabs would become a Palestinian state (a two-state solution).

In the words of Barbara Amiel: *"By that world vote it became arguably the most legitimate nation-state in modern times, created by ballot rather than bayonet."*

Yet again, Arabs rejected the resolution outright. They would not take the opportunity of creating a Palestinian state for the first time in history.

They would rather have nothing than allow the Jews anything.

They did not want a state along-



JERUSALEM REUNITED: Brigadier Uzi Narkiss, Defence Minister Moshe Dayan and Yitzhak Rabin, Israeli Chief of Staff Major General enter the old city of Jerusalem through the Lion Gate following Israel's Six Day War victory

side Israel but a state in place of Israel.

May 14th 1948: The British High Commissioner, Sir Alan Cunningham with his staff left Palestine. This was the end of the Mandate.

In a short ceremony at the Museum of Tel Aviv, 240 people witnessed the creation of the State of Israel.

David Ben Gurion read the declaration:

"The land of Israel is the birthplace of the Jewish people.

"Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped.

"Here they first attained statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal book of books

"After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom.

"By virtue of our natural and historic right we hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish state in the land of Israel, to be known as the State of Israel.

"We extend our hand to all neighbouring states and their people in an offer of peace and good neighbourliness.

"The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East."

In Washington, President Truman was the first to recognise the new state. The Russians were next

A wave of joy swept the yishuv. There was dancing in the streets. But dawn brought the first shots and victims.

As Abba Eban described it: *The joy of birth and the pain of death all in one moment.*

On the very next day five Arab armies invaded: Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon, together with hordes of Palestinian militias commanded by the Mufti and other chieftains.

In 24 hours, a Mandate had ended, a state created and a massive invasion launched. It was perhaps the most crowded day in history

Jerusalem was besieged, Degania and the Jordan valley, Haifa, Lod, Safed the Negev were all under threat. The Iraqis were only ten miles from the Mediterranean and the Egyptians on the approaches to Tel Aviv. Many settlements were cut off.

Convoys trying to reach Jerusalem were decimated. The skeletons of their vehicles line the road to this very day.

The Hagana and the Palmach had few weapons and were hopelessly outnumbered. But they were made up of young men and women imbued with brave spirit and youthful courage.

Things looked hopeless. The Security Council met.

The Americans demanded a ceasefire and sanctions against the Arabs. Britain opposed.

The Arabs promised peace, but only if Israel's independence were

rescinded. Israel's response was brief and succinct: *"If the Arabs want peace they can have it. If they want war they can have that too. But whether they want peace or war, they can have it only with the State of Israel."*

Israel counter-attacked with unbelievable courage and determination and scored important victories and, despite all the odds, emerged victorious.

Twenty months after the first Arab attacks began the war of independence ended.

Israel's victory stunned the world. But the price of survival was high. Israel buried 6,000 of its sons and daughters: The cream of its youth.

Arab governments continued to regard Israel's emergence as a temporary disaster which would, sooner or later, be eliminated.

There is no precedent in modern history for such comprehensive hostility.

Jewish communities in Arab countries were persecuted and expelled.

Jewish holy sites, and places of worship in the old city of Jerusalem and elsewhere were destroyed and Jews were barred from admission to their holy places.

Israel would have preferred to have flourished in peace, but she was capable of flourishing without it.

In 1956 a new technique was devised for expressing Arab hostility.

Terrorists (Fedayeen) were trained and organised for infiltration against Israel where they carried out murders and acts of sabotage against the civilian population. In 1956 the raids became intensive.

Later that year, Egypt massed her vast army and blockaded Israel's southern sea port of Eilat.

Israel moved across the Sinai to break the blockade and the military threat.

Britain and France also joined the campaign against Egypt, in order to protect their vital interests in the Canal.

Israel was fighting for its life.

After that war, known as the Sinai Campaign, the United States and the United Nations



SADAT: Peace with Israel

guaranteed Israel's southern shipping routes and the UN stationed troops in Sinai

Israel returned the whole of Sinai to Egypt.

Israel's development between 1956 and 1967 was extraordinary. Her population grew as did her economy, technical power and international standing.

In May 1967 all was transformed.

Egypt again massed a huge army in Sinai, and expelled the United Nations Forces and on May 22 announced a sea blockade of Israel's port of Eilat.

On May 30, Jordan joined the alliance of Egypt and Syria. Troops from Algeria, Iraq, Morocco, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia converged on Israel.

Egyptian aircraft began overflying Israel airspace. The international community was paralysed.

Britain's Prime Minister Harold Wilson and US President Lyndon Johnson offered sympathy, but nothing else

Vast crowds in Arab capitals gave vent to an intense lust for blood.

Those days were dramatic. An air of doom hung over the country. A crushing siege bore down upon it.

Israel had to make a fateful choice. To live or perish.

On the morning of June 5 Israel struck. A desperate Israel tore the strangling fingers from her throat. In six days her armies captured the Sinai desert, the West Bank of the Jordan, the Golan Heights and east Jerusalem.

Israel celebrated one of the sharpest transitions. At one moment everything had seemed desperate, fragile and bleak.

A week later the air resounded with a note of salvation.

Victory did not end Israel's danger. The Arabs, aided and encouraged by the Soviet Union mounted a virulent political campaign to cancel Israel's gains.

Israel stood firm. Within a week of capturing the territories, Israel announced that it would relinquish the territories — but only in exchange for peace.

In November 1967, the United Nations adopted Israel's position, in an Anglo-American resolution which linked withdrawal from the territories to the establishment of peace and the total abolition of belligerency.

This is the oft misquoted UN Resolution 242.

Israel's successes placed Arab policy in a dilemma. The situation created by war could only be reversed by peace.

But peace would mean a negation of the ideology, hostility and vicious propaganda which the Arab leadership had espoused all the years.

There was an inherent immobility which could be unfrozen only by a change in Arab attitudes.

The answer came at the Arab summit in Khartoum in 1968 when the Arabs announced that they

would seek a political settlement but only if it accorded with three principles: ● No negotiation ● No recognition ● No peace with the State of Israel.

Egypt's President Nasser announced that in any event as soon as the Arabs were re-armed by the Soviet Union they would again go to war to destroy the Jewish State. And so they did, in 1973.

In a surprise attack on the most sacred day in the Jewish calendar — Yom Kippur, Egypt and Syria with Iraqi and Jordanian units in support, launched a simultaneous massive attack on two fronts.

Israel, caught completely off guard, faced the prospect of defeat and annihilation.

In the first days of that war, Israeli frontline troops were outnumbered by hundreds to one.

Yet, once again, despite the surprise and the terrible odds, its army fought with unbelievable courage and bravery and in the grim knowledge that if Israel lost, just once, there would never be another.

Yet again, Israel buried 2,500 of its sons — sons who gave their lives to defend their tiny piece of Jewish earth.

After the initial few days, the tide of battle turned and the initial shock turned to a spectacular recovery and an Israeli triumph.

By the end of the war Israel's army was threatening Cairo and Damascus and the Arabs appealed desperately for a ceasefire.

In 1977, there was a dramatic transformation when Egypt's President Anwar Sadat took the audacious step of coming to Jerusalem, where he addressed the Knesset.

In 1979, Egypt and Israel, signed a peace treaty

As promised, Israel returned the whole of Sinai, including the oil fields and settlements.

This was a momentous event in Israel's history. For the first time there was recognition, by an Arab state, of Israel's place in the Middle East and especially as the Arab

Peace has always been the dream

state concerned was the largest of them all

Peace with its neighbours had always been Israel's dream. And this took another step forward when, some years later, Jordan too made its peace with Israel

Sadly, however, that dream has not yet been fully realised. Israel remains surrounded by powerful enemies, now led by Iran, Syria and their satellites, Hezbollah and Hamas, who openly and unashamedly call for the eradication of the State of Israel.

The Palestinians, with whom Israel is so keen to reach a peaceful settlement are themselves divided into two camps — the extremists and Islamists, on the one hand, whose charter demands the annihilation of the Jewish state, and the pragmatists, on the other, who are tired of war and who would like to improve the lot of their people.

Whether peace will ever be achieved will depend on which way Palestinian power politics will go.

Israel for its part has demonstrated, time and again, that it will make great territorial compromises in exchange for a genuine and lasting peace but not, in return, for waves of suicide bombers or rocket attacks.

Source material: Israel, by Martin Gilbert; My People and Heritage, both by Abba Eban; Arab & Jew by Shipler; From Time Immemorial, by Joan David Peters; Siege, by CC O'Brien; History of Israel, by H Sachar; 1948, by Benny Morris; Memoirs of Chaim Weizman, Golda Meir, Moshe Dayan and Yitzhak Rabin