

# **THE FABRICATION OF ISRAEL**

## **About the usurpation and destruction of Palestine through Zionist spatial planning**

### **A UNIQUE PLANNING ISSUE**

#### **Part II The Zionist Plan from Basle 1897 until 1948**

From last part:

Palestine was and is a country rich in history and nature; a bridge between the Middle East and Europe and part of the Mediterranean region, it saw many invaders, occupiers and rulers, but to this day it has kept its rural character, its beautiful and varied landscapes, and a socio-cultural community, influenced mainly by the Islamic period from the time of the Mamluks. The Bedouins of Palestine trace their roots back more than 3,000 years, before the time of Moses. Many monuments exist as testimonies of history from different empires, from all periods where mankind represented civilisation through architecture and cultivation of the land. Palestine is a unique place on earth, with the lowest point on the surface of the earth, the smallest desert, and a large variety of nature from seaside, hills and valleys. In addition, three important religions exist in this land. Becoming a state or nation after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, having lived without national borders for nearly 700 years and being an open space from Baghdad to Sofia, Palestine had no chance. Again foreign powers, those imperial forces who decided about a new world order after the first and second world wars, hindered such a process for other interests, eventually leading to the creation of a European outpost in the Middle East: Israel.

And the State of Israel played its role well in destroying the unit of a promised Palestinian state by means of planning, including military aggression. Thus it destroyed and is still destroying the unique character of this historic region, the once existing socio-cultural cohesion, the landscape, even nature.

The Palestinian Palestine today is reduced to some islands in a sea of an Israeli majority, without any noticeable sovereignty or space for possible political or economic action. The political leadership, despite an elected government, is entirely dependent on international funding and Israeli/American acceptance. How this could happen is the content of this publication.

## **The Fabrication of Israel with Tools of Spatial Planning since 1897**

### **1. The Zionist Plan from Basle 1897 until 1948**

This section intends to give an outline of the colonisation process from its beginning at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, programmed at the 1<sup>st</sup> Zionist World Congress at Basle in 1897 until the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. It will follow main actions and outlines to fabricate the Jewish State in Palestine until its first achievement: the partition plan of the United Nation in 1947. (UN General Assembly Resolution 181 (Partition Plan) November 29, 1947)

At first, the relation between Ottoman land and planning laws, as well as British Mandate planning after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and Zionist operating during this period will be revealed. The observation will follow land policies leading to expropriation and change of properties of the Palestinians in the context of master-plans and colony building, and investigating demographic and social changes. It will finally sum up the transformation process from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until today as a 'blueprint' for following steps, concentrating on the differently used planning instruments.

As to methodology, this paper is based on the evaluation and interpretation of maps and statistical information and related literature. The analysis follows a political-economic approach interpreting facts as basis of material and political interests. Basic theory is the character of planning and space as a political power, eventually misused oppressively against minorities or ethnics (Foucault 1977, 2000). Theories about settler colonialism (Lemkin 1944, Rodinson 1973, Metzger 2006) are seen as another background. In this context land property measures and spatial plans were seen as the most precarious planning tools used by the Zionist movement.

#### **1.1 Prior to British Mandate and after – Essentials for the Fabrication of the Jewish State**

Growing anti-Semitism in Europe made the Zionist project to establish a Jewish State reasonable for part of the European Jewry. Eventually Palestine was chosen as place for the 'national' solution to the 'Jewish Question', as Herzl described the Jewish problem. Before England was approved by the Council of League of Nations on 24.7.1922 to be the Mandate power in Palestine, Lord Balfour had already promised support for the creation of a 'national home for the Jewish people' to the Zionists in the name of the British Government ('Balfour Declaration' of 1917; UNISPAL 2007). Both decisions, the mandate approval and the Balfour Declaration, were totally against Arab intentions expressed to the King/Crane Commission in their interrogations of 1919 (King/Crane Report 1920). This commission was an official investigation by the United States government concerning the future of former Ottoman Empire areas and was conducted to inform American politicians about the region's people and their desired future. The commission visited areas of Palestine, Syria, Lebanon and Anatolia and surveyed local public opinion. The majority of the interrogated personalities demanded self determination and/or national independence within a Greater Syrian State under 'King Faisal of Iraq and Syria'.

However, the League of Nation (LoN 1931) decided according to French and British interests and gave Palestine to England (see map 1). Moreover, LoN integrated this intention in article 4 of the Balfour Declaration proclaiming that the “Jewish agency shall be recognized as a public body for the purpose of advising and co-operating with the Administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish national home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine” (see website [unispal.un.org](http://unispal.un.org)). This made the Zionist colonization of Palestine internationally accepted and facilitated the procedures between the Zionist Movement and the Mandate power, at the beginning represented by a Zionist, Sir Herbert Samuel.

**Map 1 Palestine within the British Mandate, 1922-1948**



Source: PASSIA 2009

A far-reaching change in the Ottoman land law and urban regulation system during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century set also vantage condition for Zionist colonization. This change, inspired by French and Italian model, began with so called ‘Tanzimat’ reforms in 1839 intending to modernize the empire, followed by a so called ‘Islahat’ (improvement or reform) Edict in 1856 and finally the ‘Civil Code’ in 1869, creating among others a secular jurisdiction and a common citizenship irrespective of religious or ethnic divisions (see later). (Deringil 1993, Shaw 1977)

### **1.1.1 The Zionist Colonisation Plan - Ethnocratic Aims of the Zionist Movement**

Zionism developed at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a nationalist-colonialist movement (Herzl: "We can be the vanguard of culture against barbarianism' Europe's bulwark against Asia", Segev 2000). The main goal of which was to establish a Jewish State. Theodor Herzl was the prominent protagonist of this project. He claimed autonomy and self-determination for the world 'Judentum' (Jewry). His suggestion was submitted as the only lasting solution for the 'social questions of the Jews in Europe', whose existence was endangered by the generally existing anti-Semitism in Europe, and especially pogroms in Eastern Europe. Areas in Africa or South America were options; however, Palestine as a relevant 'historic place' was preferred by Zionist Congress members. This decision was in good harmony with European interests in the area, which was recognised as a promising sphere of economic concern. Herzl, the 'designer' of the Zionist project, consequently tried to win the support of Germany and England as well as France; at length he succeeded with England.

#### ***Comprehensive tactical and strategic Zionist approach***

First Zionist colonies had already been built up since 1892, one of them Petah Tikvah in the coastal area. However, initiatory was the '*First Zionist World Congress*' in Basle in 1897. This congress passed the following decision (original in German): 'Der Zionismus erstrebt fuer das juedische Volk die Schaffung einer oeffentlich rechtlich gesicherten Heimstaette in Palaestina. Zur Erreichung dieses Ziels erwaegt der Kongress folgende Massnahmen:

- die Foerderung der Kolonisation Palaestinas durch juedische Einwanderer aus Landwirtschaft und Industrie nach sachgemaessen Richtlinien,
- die Organisation und den Zusammenschluss des Gesamtjudentums durch entsprechende lokale und internationale Einrichtungen, welche mit den Gesetzen der jeweiligen Laender in Einklang stehen,
- die Staerkung und Pflege des zionistischen Volksgedankens und – bewusstseins,
- erste Schritte mit dem Ziel, die Genehmigungen der Regierungen zu erlangen, sofern diese den Zielen des Zionismus notwendig erscheinen.' (First Zionist Congress: 144)

('Zionism intends to achieve the construction of a legally bound national home for the Jewish People in Palestine. To reach this goal the congress considers the following measures:

- promoting the colonisation of Palestine by Jewish immigrants with agricultural and industrial experience along proper guidelines;
- organising and uniting World Jewry, forming suitable local and international institutions in harmony with the laws of the concerned countries;
- stabilising and fostering the Zionist idea of a Jewish nation and Jewish national awareness;
- first steps towards obtaining the authorisation of governments, if necessary to reach Zionist aims),

([www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/FirstCong&BaselProgram.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/FirstCong&BaselProgram.html)  
24.07.07)

### ***Nebulous definition of borders***

About final borders no clear comments were made. Theodor Herzl offered many options, playing with pragmatic arguments as well as with religiousness:

- "Wir muessen wegen unseres zukuenftigen Welthandels am Meer liegen und muessen fuer unsere maschinenmaessige Landwirtschaft im Grossen weite Flaechen zur Verfuegung haben" (Herzl, 13.6.1895)  
("Because of our prospective role in world trade we need the coast and for our mechanised agriculture large scale areas at our disposal")
- "Als Ruf auszugeben: Palaestina wie zu Davids und Salomons Zeiten" (Herzl, 13.6.1895)  
("Our slogan will be: Palestine in the dimensions of David and Salomon's era").
- "Gebiet: vom Bach Aegyptens bis an den Euphrat" (Herzl, 9.10.1898)  
(From the river of Egypt to Euphrates')
- "Wir verlangen, was wir brauchen, - je mehr Einwanderer, desto mehr Land" (Herzl, 9.10.1898)  
("We claim, what we need - the more immigrants, the more land") (transl. VW)

### ***Erection of Zionist bodies and institutions under British protection***

According to pronounced goals, basics like financing, acquisition of appropriate land, immigration policy and political representation in Palestine were crucial assets to implement. Within short time after the establishment of the British Mandate suitable institutions and measures were arranged as follows:

- 1898, the '*Jewish Colonial Trust Society*'; the following '*Colonial Bank*' guaranteed the transactions of money from Europe to Palestine.
- 1902, the '*Anglo Palestine Bank*' (APB) to cover credits.
- 1905, the '*Jewish National Fund*' (JNF) was instituted as the main political instrument. JNF tasks were to purchase, govern and register land and to finance the colonisation of this land (JNF is still the central body to expropriate Palestinian land). The land acquired by the JNF became 'inalienable property' of 'Jewish People' and therefore not accessible to Non-Jews – still existing regulation (Granovski 1925: 116; Diner 1980).
- 1907, the '*Palestine Office*' opened in Jaffa to play the role of a national agency, later called the '*Jewish Agency*'. Under British Mandate this 'Jewish Agency' (JA) functioned as the legal body of the slowly growing Jewish settler society. Under British protection the JA speeded up the colonisation.
- 1907, the '*Palestinian Land Development Company*' (PLDC), designated to explore country and resources, figuring out the most strategic available localities and preparing plans to purchase land. (Elazari-Volkani 1932)

Bank, JNF, PLDC and JA were expediting the colonisation process as far as possible. PLDC regularly informed the Zionist congresses about the results and the status of the colonisation process. It also suggested new options where to intensify next purchasing activities. (Elazari-Volkani 1932)

### **1.1.2 Land policy and planning reforms under the Ottomans since the 19<sup>th</sup> century fostering Zionist settlement**

The Ottoman Empire was committed to Islamic Law (Shari' a). There was no special system of town planning, but some conceptions to social and ecological development, as we would call it today.

Three basic elements were influencing spatial development and changes as follows:

- Ottoman administration hierarchy,
- Ottoman juridical system,
- Land Code of 1856.

#### ***The Ottoman administrative structure***

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman administrative structure considered the *Belediye* (municipality) responsible for buildings and roads, improvement of the environment and the economic development within municipality borders. The governor of the province or *Wilayet* was responsible for government buildings (Saray), public parks, and clock towers and opening of wells. There was no local or regional body of town planning and comprehensive development. The absence of a central administration and appropriate spatial development concepts enabled the Zionist Movement to build new Jewish areas, quarters and villages and even a completely Jewish new city, Tel Aviv, approved as such in 1922 (Kedar 1999: 95).

#### ***The Ottoman juridical system in spatial context***

Reforms and the 'civil code' promoted modern built up environment in accordance with the former Islamic principles. These principles were summarised in the 'book of the partnership', where 'harmony' and a desirable 'partnership between light, air and land' were set as values. In addition, the principle demanded not to 'hurt' neither public nor private interests. These principles even allowed demolishing what was in opposition to this standard. Finally there was an important principle of 'property'. According to this, the owner of a piece of land had the right of unlimited use of what was found under and over the soil, as long as neighbours' rights, the principle of harmony and public building activities like roads were not offended. This principle intended to encourage building and investing in land thereby promoting productivity. However, as all principles were soft and did not set concrete limits, conflicts were pre-programmed, in particular when it came to water. Wells were public and shepherds or farmers since centuries had a right to use them. When land came under Zionist property they were suddenly restricted from using them (Mahrok 1995).

#### ***The Land Code of 1856 and opportunities for Jewish purchases***

Islamic Law generally regards land as divine donation (similar to the conception in the European Middle Ages). The Sultan as representative of God on earth was considered the governor of the land. He could give his subjects the right to use the land and he could take this right away again. Consequently, until the late Ottomans, a system of legal titles on private land did not exist and was not necessary. Most regulations were dealing only with the use of land.

The land code of 1856 influenced by Europe changed this situation giving property titles to land users and served in a way the Zionist colonisation later on, as will be shown later. The idea of this code was to achieve a more effective use of the land

and accelerate the development of the agricultural sector and increasing the income of the Ottoman Empire.

This code started to categorise land and land use. The aim was to gradually register property and to give legal titles with property documents like in Europe. According to the type of land, properties were divided into different categories (Mahrok, 1995; Stein 1984):

**Mulk** land: mostly in cultivated areas and at the edges of the pastureland. It is the central kind of land property in cities and villages and still the main title of existing Palestinian properties. This title allowed to inherit and could be seen as 'private' property.

**Miri** land: agriculturally used land outside the cultivated areas. This land title was assigned by the state and given to farmers as an extra land. The idea was to protect and enlarge the agricultural areas. Given the user neglects Miri land and make it 'abandoned land', it dropped back to the state and became again state or public land.

**Marwat** land: unsettled and unused part of Miri land. After payment it entitled the user to cultivate it and when he did so successfully, Marwat could change into Mulk land and used like 'private' property (see above). In many cities and villages this opportunity under the Ottomans led to an increasing development of urbanisation and agricultural production. Beneficiaries were the Palestinian farmers, landlords and investors as well as the Zionist institutions.

**Mahlul** land: land, which had fallen back automatically to the government after a period of three years in which the owner did not use, produce or build on it.

**Waqf** (donated) land: land donated by law to Islamic institutions for religious or charitable use (mosques, churches, synagogues, poorhouses, hospitals, pilgrims' hospices, public wells); in the Old city of Jerusalem Waqf was also given to families who had to keep the charitable use of the land or houses, especially for poor pilgrims. Waqf became over centuries the main property category in Jerusalem. It was important that selling and speculation on this land was prohibited. Until today, Christian institutions benefit from this Waqf system. Churches, hospitals and pilgrims guest houses do still stand on historically Waqf donated land from Islam institutions. Contracts were given for 99 years and should be given back meanwhile or contracts renewed – but until today with no sovereignty over the city the Auqaf, the custodian of waqf in Jerusalem, could not reclaim this once donated land.

**Matrok** land: land dedicated to public purposes e.g. roads, open spaces, holy places, joint pastureland and municipality forests. It belonged to the state and could not be sold.

**Mudawarah** or **Jiftlik** land: land, which belonged to the Sultan, a category that existed only in Bisan and in the Jericho district.

**Musha'a** land: land used by the village community or a group of villages. This category was planned to support co-operation and assigned periodically to different groups. However, villagers did not pay for long-term investments on that land and the idea failed.

Gradually private use of land and right to inherit were extended and private land ownership became normal. At the end of the Ottoman Empire under the 'Young Turks' further laws encouraged this way of 'secularisation' of the land (in 1908, 1913

and 1914). Furthermore, 'non-Islamic' members of society were assured 'equal treatment' regarding the purchase and resale of (governmental) Miri and Matrok land. It was possible only for Muslims before.

### ***Interim Statement***

The Ottoman land system in Palestine can be considered the first in the region that recognises public interest in road construction, open spaces and places for the well-being of the population (parks, wells). The institution of Waqf secured building and preservation of urban infrastructure for various public, cultural and religious purposes and provided social residential districts in old cities like Jerusalem (Al Quds), Nablus, Hebron (Al Khalil) or Bethlehem.

General effect of the late Ottoman land regulations and laws was a certain planned spatial development that explicitly encouraged the economic progress of the country:

- cultivated areas were clearly defined,
- local administrations became responsible for the municipalities' spatial, structural and economic development,
- registration of private properties generally increased, and
- residential areas expanded.

Although Miri land was restricted to agriculture, urban sprawl increased under the Ottomans. In addition the new land principles facilitated Zionist land grabbing.

Miri (and Marwat) became a central opportunity of land allocation to the Zionist Movement when the British Mandate took over such 'state land' and forwarded it to them. When Miri fell again under 'public' land, it automatically came under legal control of the mandate power. The definition of Miri land was used again after England left Palestine and Zionist militia and later the Israeli state forced Palestinians to leave their land. The 'absent' owners were titled as absentees and their land was considered to be abandoned, hence fell back to 'public' land.

Mahlul regulation could later be used for expropriation, when owners were simply hindered to work on their land for the so called 'safety reasons', especially at the time under Israel control. *Waqf* too became a ticket for changing it into Jewish property when after 1948 the Israeli government took the Christian and Muslim Waqf land and buildings in Acre, Haifa, Jaffa, Taberiya and Jerusalem while Muslim or Christian institutions had no authority any more. Also Matruk land easily changed into British Mandate property and was later simply transferred into Jewish 'national property', as well as Jiftlik land. Mush'a land was taken by Kibbutzim because per definition these villages were co-operatives.

The central changes in land use and land property gave foreign investors, Christians as well as Zionist land institutions, finally, the full right to purchase land for private use.

However, until 1922 only approximately 2.5% was purchased by Zionist institutions, mainly from the Jewish National Fund. Until 1947, the year of the UN division plan, Zionist institutions owned not more than 6-7% of Palestinian land (Palaestina, Geschichte in Bildern, 1973: Abb.13, PASSIA 2008). Furthermore, despite deep changes, the land registration developed slowly, covering only about 10% at the end of the Ottoman reign. This fact made it later difficult for Palestinians to defend their property having no 'legal' documents in hand.

At the end of the Ottoman Empire, around 700,000 Palestinians and about 88,000 Jewish 'colonists' lived in Palestine, concentrated in some locations. The Palestinian population was living in the hilly regions and cities like Nazareth, Nablus, Jerusalem,



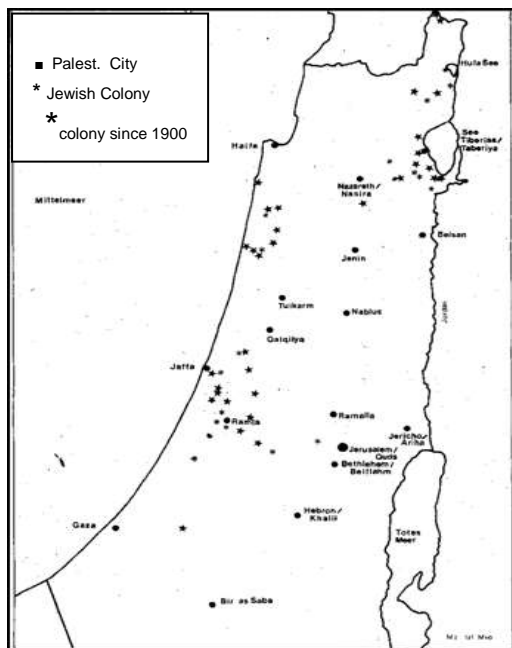
Bethlehem or Hebron. They were successfully earning their living from agriculture; pasturing in the coastal planes and selling products abroad from markets like Jaffa, Acre, Haifa and Gaza (Nakhleh 1991, Schoelch 1982, Granott 1952). The Jewish colonists had settled strategically in some fertile areas of the coastal region near the historical cities of Acre, Haifa, Jaffa and Gaza, around the Lake of Tiberias and mainly in areas, where Miri land was made available (see map 2/3).

**Map 2 Major Arab towns (red), major Jewish colonies (black), other Jewish colonies (o) 1881 - 1914**



Source: PASSIA 2008

**Map 3 Location of Zionist colonies in 1918**



Source: Richter 1969, fig. 7; Waltz/Zschiesche, 1986: 65

## **1.2 The Zionist Colonisation Process under British Mandate and Side Effects of Ottoman Land Laws on Palestinians**

Building activities speeded up under British Mandate when British planning laws, the definition of 'Town Planning Areas' and obligatory 'Town Planning Schemes' or 'Master Plans' were conditional to get building permissions. However, the Palestinian landowners were also negatively affected by the Ottoman land reforms, especially that secularisation led to disastrous commercialisation of land. New town planning orders were opening new areas for urbanisation and land use restrictions changed farming into green areas. Reducing rural development on the one hand and encouraging urbanisation on the other served especially the Jewish colonists who were mostly urban and settled particularly in the coastal area. Two Mandate plans of the forties are still used in a restricting manner: the S15, 'Samaria-Plan' of 1942 and the RJ5, 'Jerusalem Regional Plan' of 1942. They restricted building to certain areas: huge areas in the hilly regions (today big part of the West Bank) were designated 'green areas', not allowing building and settling without special permission (Mahrok 1995, Coon 1991, Goadby/Doukhan 1935, Nakhleh 1991, see chapter IV and V)

### ***1.2.1 Pushing Concentration of Ownership and Transformation of Palestinian Land Properties***

In addition, Ottoman legislation and British planning regulation speeded up the commercialisation of land. The following concentration of land ownership was detrimental to Palestinian farmers' interest. In 1909, 250 families possessed 4.123 dunam (10 dunam around 1 ha) of the agricultural land – the same amount that was held by the majority of thousands of small enterprise farmers (Granott, 1952:38 f). These 250 families were 'landlords', officially holding the property rights of a group of villages, functioning as their Mukhtar (traditional mayor), dealing in their name with the Ottoman and later British authorities for taxation, military service and other official affairs. In 1930, 30% of the small enterprise farmers had lost their properties to such landlords and changed into their 'tenants'. The 'landlords' mostly were not even living on the land. They spent and invested the income from agriculture in the larger commercial cities of the region namely Jerusalem, Beirut, Damascus. They were 'absentee lords'.

However, the Mandate policy was not without detriments for these landlords; the British Mandate government charged them highly. While income from agricultural land dropped and economic difficulties increased the 'landlords' lost interest in their administrated land. With less income perspectives and high costs these Makhateer felt constrained by the new circumstances to sell land, even to Zionists.

According to tradition this land had been in possession of the farmers' families for hundreds of years. Deals with the Zionists ignored these historic rights and treated the land as a package of land and people. Property rights of many farmers and villagers were ignored, when tenants or 'subjects' lost land and income in these deals. Some contracts included expressively to expel the farmers from their land.

The most famous deal concerned the land of more than 30 villages of a plane called 'Marj Ibn Amer' (today Yizreel Plane). Landlord 'Sursuk', a banker who lived in Beirut was dreaming of a railway between Haifa and Lake Taberiya, to sell wheat and crops of this fertile plane more profitably. However, the Mandate governor refused him a licence and he gave up. In this deal farmers of 22 villages were forced to leave their land and Zionists took it. Immigrants from Europe immediately started to build kibbutzim on the very same land (Granott, 1956:38 f; Richter, 1969:93).

Zionist property principle was to 'exteriorise' the purchased land. Jewish property was forbidden to purchase to Non-Jews. Hence this principle together with the principle of 'Jewish labour on Jewish land' reduced opportunities for work and land to Palestinians (Hope Simpson Report 1930). In the end landless farmers and poverty increased and the Mandate administration decided to help them. After 1931 the administration provided Palestinian farmers with new uncultivated land (LoN report 1931). However such measures were only supporting further usurpation of Palestinian land by the Zionist movement.

In 1936, the land situation of Palestinians was very critical. On the one hand, the mainly agriculturally used Palestinian land was split into thousands of too small plots difficult for farmer to earn a living from. Around 37% of the total land was split into 66,000 plots, of which 92% consisted of less than 100 dunam (10 ha). Bigger plots, from 100 to 1000 dunam (10 – 100 ha), nearly 36% of all land, were split into 5,700 plots. While huge properties, of more than 1,000 to 5,000 dunam (around 19% of them bigger than 5,000 dunam), forming about 27% belonged to only 150 owners. (see table 1)

**Table 1 Structure of Palestinian Land Properties in Mandate Palestine 1936**

Area	No. of plots	In %	In % of total area
1 – 100 dunam	65 933	91.8	36.7
101 – 1000 dunam	5 706	8.0	35.8
More than 1000 dun. (of them 5000 a. more)	150 (13)	0.2 (0.01)	27.5 (19.2)

Source: Granott, 1952: 34 (10 dunam = 1 ha)

Sales like Sursuk's deal obviously did not happen coincidentally, but were pushed by British Mandate policy. The majority of all sales were done by these absentee 'landlords'. However, when the economic situation became more critical, not only 'landlords' on their fields but also small farmers sold land to the Zionists (see table 2). Consequently farmers started protesting against the British/Zionist policy and 'landlords' sales. The first big uprising against the land and discrimination policy of England started between 1936 and 1939. Palestine had its first martyrs killed in these uprisings. (Passia 2006)

**Table 2 Origin of Zionist Properties according to Sells 1920 – 36**

Period	Outside Land lord	Landlord on his fields	farmers
1920-1922	75.4%	20.8%	3.8%
1923-1927	86.0%	12.4%	1.6%
1928-1932	45.4%	36.2%	18.3%
1933-1936	14.9%	62.6%	22.5%

Source: Granott, 1952: 277

The major part of purchased land, nearly 75%, was in the hand of Zionist institutions like JCA and JN; private Jewish purchases happened only occasionally and are still a small amount. In 1936 with 1.231.000 dunam purchased, mainly public fallen land, the Zionists had not more than 4.4% of the total Palestinian land. In 1947 with

1.735.000 dunam, it was not more than 6% of all or 8,6% of the later Israel territory. (see table 3)

**Table 3 Zionist Properties in Dunam acc. to Institution and Purchaser  
1882 – 1936**

Year	JCA	JNF	Individual colonies	total
1882			22,500	22,500
1900	145,000		73,000	218,000
1914	233,000	16,000	167,000	416,000
1927	323,000	147,000	345,000	815,000
1936	435,000	370,000	426,000	1,231,000
1947		935,000		1,735,000 (1.735 km <sup>2</sup> )

Source: Granott, 1952: 28; Orni, 1981:40

Finally, it is worth mentioning that all the deals were part of a usurpation plan to expropriate the Palestinians from their homeland and as such hostile and illegal actions and not at all simple purchases. The spatial strategy behind this will be revealed in the following section.

### **1.2.2 Strategic Distribution of Zionist Land Purchases**

The Zionist Movement had created the '*Palestinian Land Development Company*' (PLDC), to make sure that land acquisition followed strategic interests and in chosen regions:

- the economically important coast,
- the productive plane Marj Ibn Amer (later Yizreel plane),
- the Jordan valley,
- the Negev, known for minerals and a useful entrance to the desert and the Red Sea,
- the Hula region in the north of Galilee, famous for the water resources and serving area for the Jordan valley,
- the entrance to Jerusalem and Jerusalem itself.

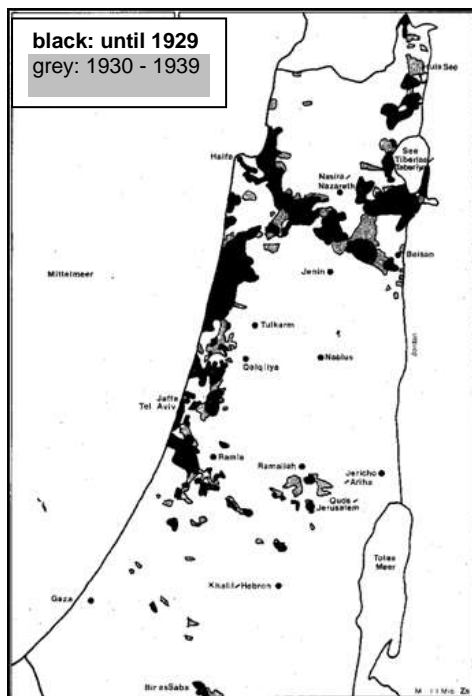
(Israel Pocket Library, 1973:96)

In 1945 the preferential regions of the Jewish National Fund were correspondingly:

- the coastal region, where JNF land property constituted 39%,
- the districts of Jaffa and Haifa and the Marj Ibn Amer plane with 27%,
- the district of Bisan in Galilee with about 36%,
- the districts of Taberiya, as well as Hula and Safad with each about 16% of the area.

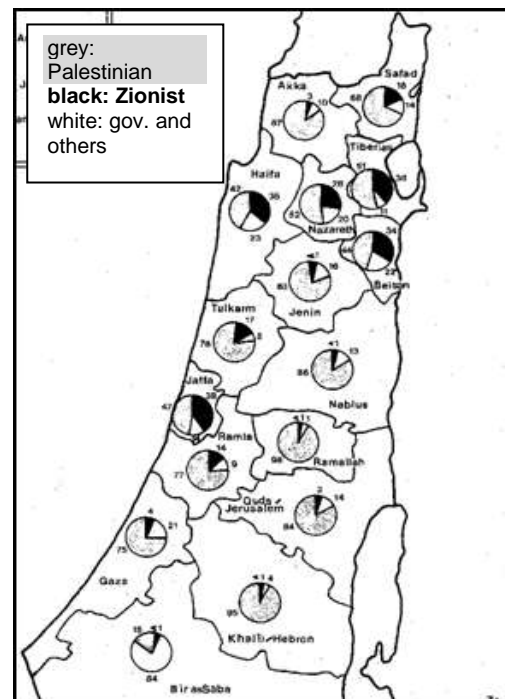
The acquired portion of cultivatable land within each of these districts was even higher, nearly 40% of the used agricultural land in these areas. (See Map 4, 5, 6)

**Map 4 Extension of Zionist land properties in % until 1947**



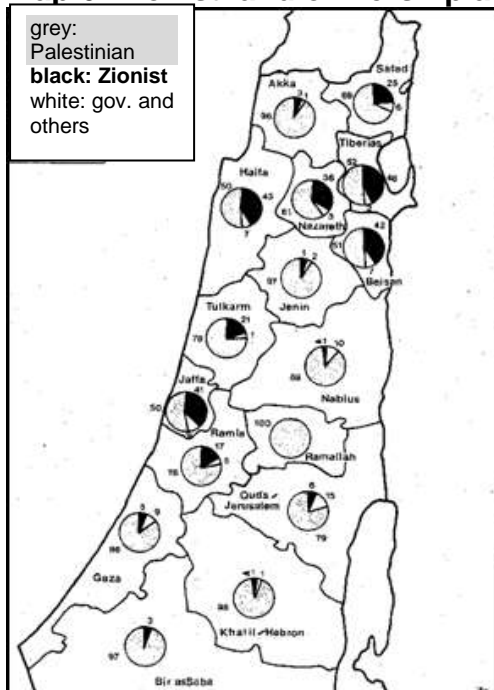
Source: Richter, 1969: 99, modif.  
Waltz/Zschiesche 1986: 93

**Map 5 Share of land ownership in in% in 1945**



Source: Richter, 1969, modified  
Waltz/Zschiesche 1986: 81

**Map 6 Zionist land ownership and agricultural land 1945**



Source: Waltz/Zschiesche 1986: 81

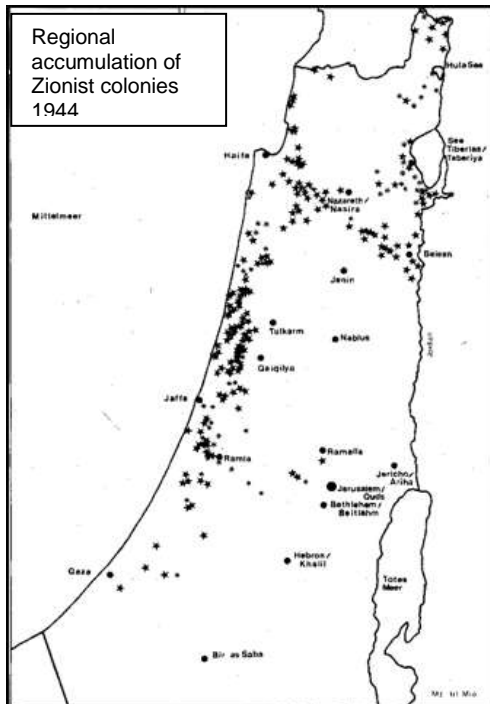
### **1.2.3 Strategic location of Zionist Colonies on the usurped land**

The Jewish colonies were established accordingly. Until 1939 colonies were concentrated in the coastal region between Haifa and Jaffa, the plane from Haifa to

the Lake Tiberias and in Bisan. As explained before, building activities speeded up under British Mandate. When different international division plans for Palestine were published (British Peel 1936 and White Paper 1939 and finally the UN decision 181), colonisation activities speeded up even more and additionally other regions were of interest like the Negev region, the Dead Sea area, the Gaza region and the so called 'passage' to Jerusalem (see map 7/8) to occupy new 'landmarks'.

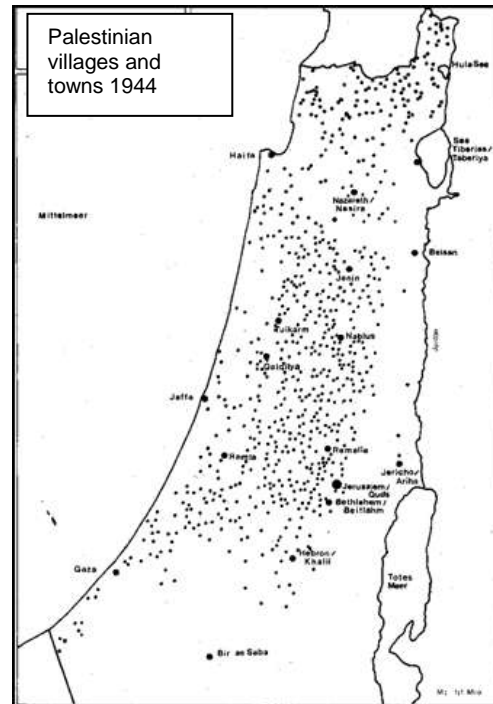
Thus creating 'faits accomplis' the Jewish Agency and the WZO determined future borders (Israel Pocket Library, 1973:96).

**Map 7 Distribution of Zionist colonies in 1944**



Source: Waltz/Zschiesche 1986: 90

**Map 8 Distribution of Palestinian villages and towns before destruction**



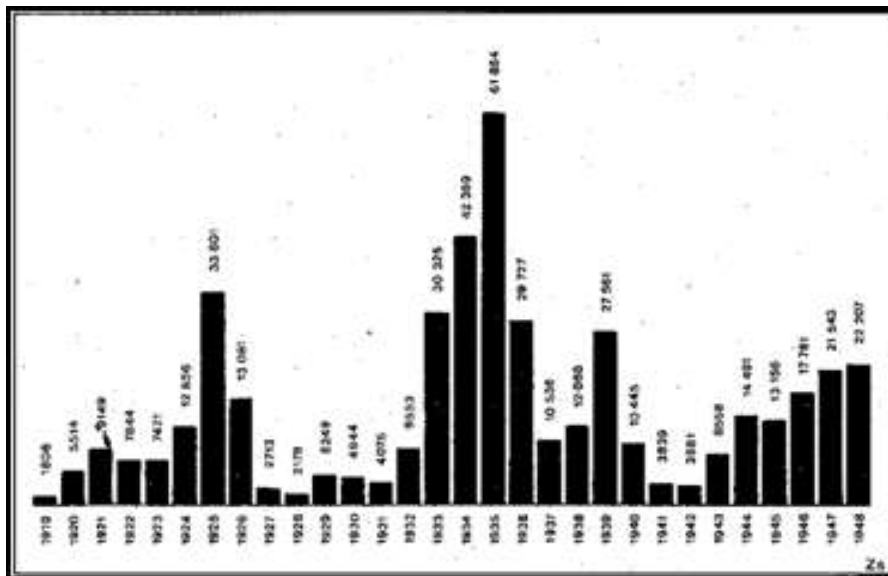
Source: Waltz/Zschiesche 1986: 91

In comparison to colonies, land acquisition usurped much more land than settled. However, according to proclaimed ambitions of the first WZO sessions land usurpation was done strategically:

- to divide, split and surround the Palestinian settlement areas on the one hand
- to fix 'cornerstones' for the creation of a coherent Jewish settlement area on the other hand
- to get influence in areas of special and spatial importance.

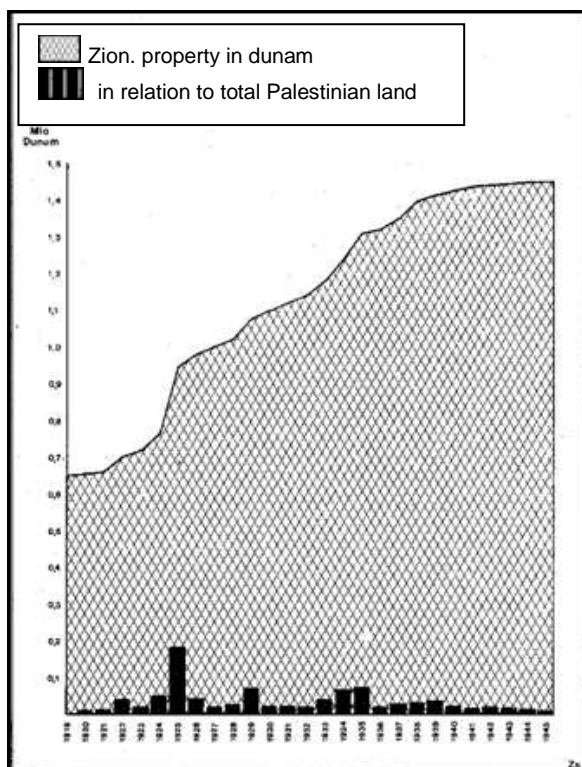
At the end of the British Mandate the Zionist movement owned land in the coast area 'for future trade', access to Negev and the Red Sea, hence Africa and most fertile areas like Marj Ibn Amer (today Yezreel plain) for 'agriculture' and influence in areas of water resources like Hula - as Herzl had demanded. Also, more land was demanded from the British Mandate administration and international bodies 'according to immigration' ("We claim, what we need - the more immigrants, the more land") (see the development in figure 1,2).

**Figure 1 Jewish immigration to Mandate Palestine from Europe, 1919 - 1948**



Source: Waltz/Zschiesche, 1986: 77

**Figure 2 Zionist Land Grab in Mandate Palestine 1919 / 1945**



Source: Waltz/Zschiesche, 1986: 78

At the end of British Mandate – and especially after 1933 - immigration speeded up dramatically and changed the social fabric enormously. Nonetheless, it is to point out that the Zionist and later Israeli confiscation of land, whether private, communal or governmental, was a hostile expropriation of Palestinian property from the beginning.

### **1.3 The Imposed Division of Palestine by UN Decision 181 and Zionist 'Ethnic Cleansing'**

Before Israel was declared, in May 25, 1946, part of the total Transjordan British Mandate became the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and formal independence from Britain alongside Palestine.

The British left Palestine on 14th May 1948, leaving the Zionists a 'helpful' tool: the 'Defence (Emergency) Regulations' of 1945. These regulations gave military forces permission to execute curfews, house demolitions, expropriations, imprisonment and so on in 'case of emergency'. This law is still in power. (see section III)

The scattered however strategic distribution of Zionist land ownership finally led to the absurd partition plan. In November 1947 the United Nation in resolution 181 proposed a division plan for Palestine, dividing the Mandate area into three parts. About 60% was designated for the Zionist Jewish State, Jerusalem in new borders including Bethlehem should become an internationally controlled area, and the rest was seen for a Palestinian State. This would have created a completely new map (see map 9). The plan mixed up the existing social fabric. While a Palestinian state with at that time around 1.38 million Palestinians on only 42.88% of the land, the Jewish state should be established on 56.7% of the land, with only 0.6 million inhabitants - majority of them refugees from Europe during the last period. (Granott, 1956:37; Voelkerrecht und Politik, 1978:25)

**Map 9 UN Division Plan for Palestine 30. Nov. 1947**  
**(map No 3067 Rev. 1 United Nations1983)**



Source: [wewewe.domino.un.org/unispal.nsf/](http://wewewe.domino.un.org/unispal.nsf/)



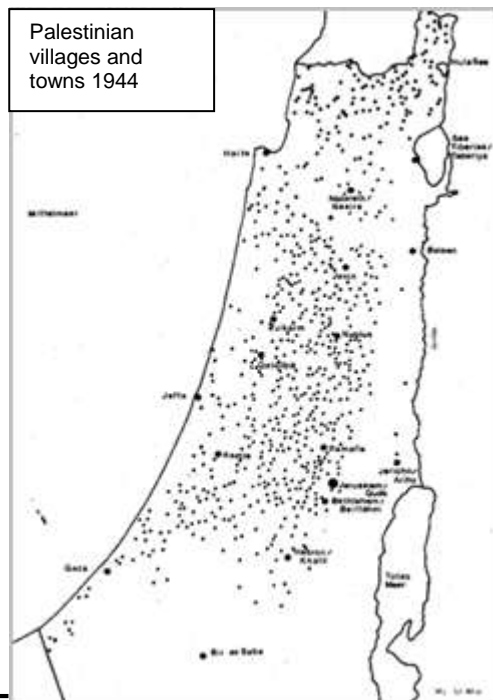
This unfair division plan was not accepted by the Arab members – Palestinians were not included in the decision. The Zionist movement saw it as a chance and a beginning - the UN decision became a trigger point for Zionist attacks against the Palestinians.

Meanwhile, it is well known that the militarily organised and well equipped leading 'falcons' in the Zionist Movement were prepared to change reality in their favour. Driving as many Palestinians out of the territory as possible and destroying as many villages and quarters as possible led to a brutal 'ethnic cleansing' (Pappe 2006). Since 1947 terror groups, Irgun, Stern and others systematically forced thousands of Palestinians to flee their homes and destroyed their villages and houses afterwards ('Plan Dalet', A,B,C). The Haganah, an official military arm and later the Israeli army threatened the inhabitants of cities like Ramleh, Acre and Safad to leave or to be killed. The less equipped Arab army, which entered the battlefield, after the state proclamation and defending the UN suggested regions for the Palestinians, was not able to do so. Ultimately Zionist troops occupied more land than the UN plan had prospected, nearly 70% of Palestine. After the proclamation of the Jewish State on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 1948, only 156,700 Palestinian inhabitants were registered as inhabitants of the area, which then became the State of Israel. Those who panic-stricken had run away from their properties to other villages or to the cities within Israel were registered 'absentees' in their own country (first census of Israel 1948, see Pappe 2006).

Finally, approximately 750,000 Palestinians, three quarters of all inhabitants, were expelled by force and became refugees in the West Bank, the Gaza region and in the neighbouring Arab countries. From 364 villages, which were counted in 1948 in the territory of Israel and in total more than 500 villages were destroyed and the inhabitants expelled. The remained Palestinians lived mainly in Galilee and the so called 'triangle' in the north-western area around Um-el Fahem (compare map 10/11/12/13).

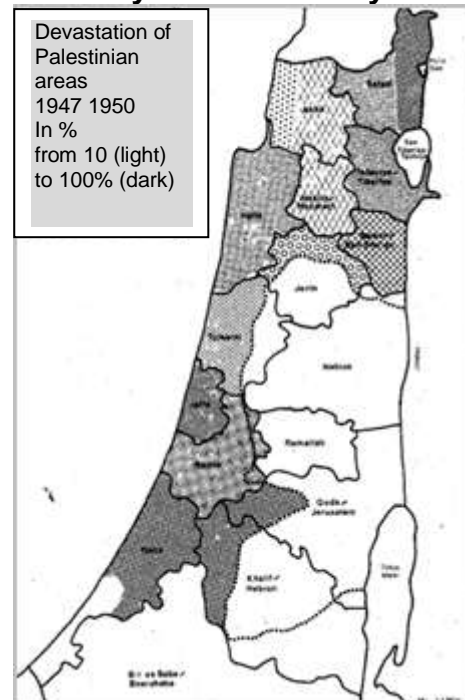
The majority of the Bedouins in the Negev were driven out and not more than 10% remained under Israeli control. In a very short time they were expropriated from their land to 80%, lost freedom of movement, hence the basic of their culture and identity. From the 10.5 million dunam of cultivatable land only 0.8 million were officially registered as still in Palestinian possession. 9.9 million dunam of Palestinian property were expropriated immediately by the State of Israel and transferred to governmental land according to the different aforementioned laws. At first the title of 'state' and 'abandoned land' was used and later so called 'land of absentees' was usurped according to the Ottoman laws explained before. (Perez, 1956:87; State of Israel, 1962:98, Richter, 1969:130; Granott, 1952: 28; Ansprenger 1978: 75; Abu-Sitta 2004, Pappe 2006)

**Map 10 Palestinian villages and towns before destruction**



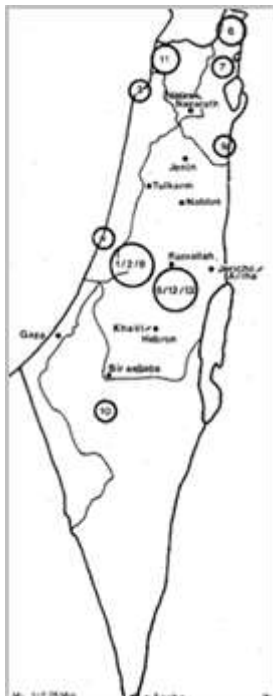
Source: Waltz/Zschiesche, 1986: 91

**Map11 Devastation of Palestinian areas by Zionist military 1947- 50**



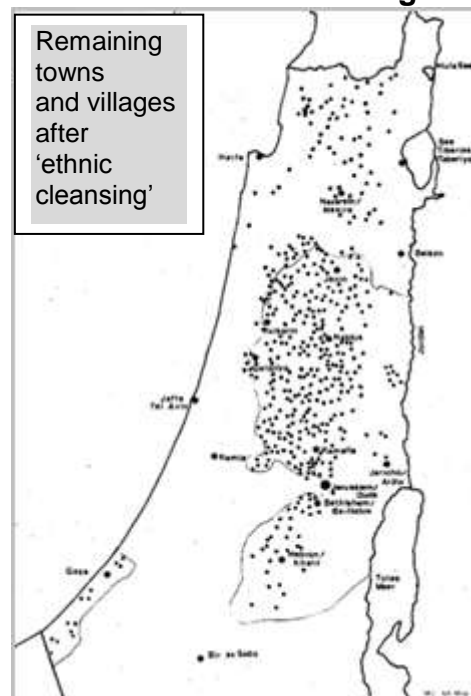
Waltz/Zschiesche 1986: 105

**Map 12 Plan 'Dalet' Areas of Attacks**



Source: Pappe 2006, Frangie 1982: 114

**Map 13 Remaining Palestinian towns and villages 1949**



Source: Waltz/Zschiesche, 1986: 104

The costs of this first phase of 'fabricating' the State of Israel were high especially on the Palestinian side: devastation of land and buildings, thousands of deaths, three quarters of a million refugees. Exact figures about this exodus are still in dispute (see table 4).

**Table 4 The Palestinian Refugees, 1948–1950 acc. diff. sources**

	<b>Off.Brit. estimate</b>	<b>Off.US estimate</b>	<b>UN estimate</b>	<b>Priv.Isr. estimate</b>	<b>Off.Isra. estimate</b>	<b>Palestin. estimate</b>
<b>Gaza</b>	210,000	208,000	280,000	200,000		201,173
<b>West Bank</b>	320,000		190,000	200,000		363,689
<b>Arab Count.</b>	280,000	667,000	256,000	250,000		284,324
<b>Total</b>	810,000 <b>a</b>	875,000 <b>b</b>	726,000 <b>c</b>	650,000	520,000 <b>f</b>	849,186 <b>h</b>
			957,000 <b>c</b>	600,000- 700,000 <b>d</b>	590,000 <b>g</b>	714,150- 744,150 <b>i</b>
				620,000 <b>e</b>		770,100- 780,000 <b>j</b>

Diff. sources: see annex

Results of the systematic land grabbing and ethnic cleansing by war, was a complete demographic and geographic reverse: From around 1.4 Million Palestinians living in Mandate Palestine before 1947, 750.000 people or half of the Palestinian people were chased away from their land and home. From the total land of around 27.000 sqkm, of which the Zionist Movement through unfair deals and tactics purchased not more than 6-7%, (about 1.700 sqkm) Israel usurped at the end of this war 70%, around 19.000 sqkm.

Palestinians began to share the fate of an exiled people, without recognition or a factual right to return although international laws and conventions are recognising these rights and demanding Israel to implement them. (Diff. UN resolutions from 1947 until today, see UNISPAL 2007)

What remained was a divided country, divided into three parts: Israel, the West Bank region under Jordan governance and the Gaza Region under Egypt governance. Jerusalem was cut into two pieces: West, the 'New City' under Israeli control and East, including the Old City under the Jordanian rule.

## Conclusion

It took the Zionist Movement 40 years and a war from the First Zionist Congress in Basle to reach the international 'ok' for establishing the Jewish State in big parts of Palestine. The disaster in Europe helped. Planning tools like town planning, master plans, development plans and property laws in addition to money and international policies helped the Zionists to extend the spatial vision of Herzl as far as possible until 1948. The process was planned; land purchases were done strategically and purposefully. Part of the Jewish world and the British Mandate supported it since the end of the Ottoman Empire. Sophisticated regional and local planning policy and strategic thinking made the fabrication of a Jewish state in Palestine possible. It was done first of all by grabbing Palestinian property through planning measures, but also using force. However, the fabrication of Israel was a colonial project from the beginning of the idea – and a settler state by reality, according to what Rodinson stated (Rodinson 1967).

The proclamation of the state on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1948 did not complete the original plan, it was not established on the whole Mandate area promised to them by Balfour. Only 6-

7% of Jewish land ownership existed on around 70% of the Palestinian land on that day. The Jewish population settled mainly at the coast. About 150.000 Palestinians living in about 100 villages and small cities were still existent within Israel's 'borders' – a challenge for a state, which declared itself to be (solely) 'Jewish'. Consequently Israel never defined its borders, the 'provisional state' existed in 'armistice lines' after agreements with Jordan and Egypt. Jerusalem, especially the Old City, was under Jordan governance. Stabilisation of Israel's Jewish society in the achieved borders was the issue of the next period before looking to new horizons.

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