State of Israel

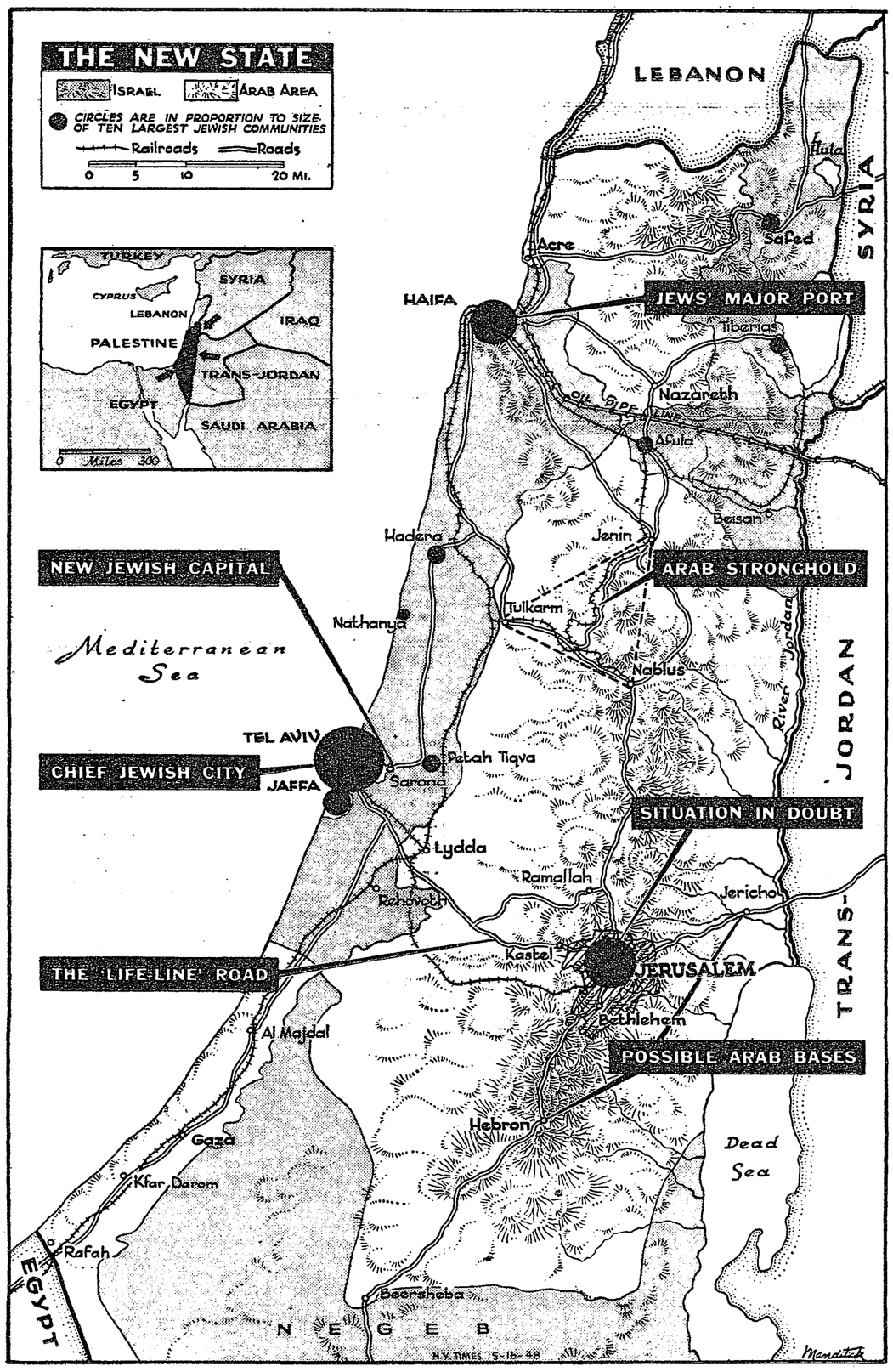
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THE STATE OF ISRAEL COMES INTO BEING AMID ARAB-JEWISH CONFLICT



Associated Press

ARABS—Members of an Egyptian light tank corps.



PALESTINE—Arrows in inset indicate direction of reported Arab invasions.



Associated Press

JEWS—Members of Haganah, Israel's military force.

State of Israel

Born and Bombed

In Tel Aviv, at 4:06 last Friday afternoon (Palestine time), in the Museum of Art on Rothschild Boulevard, the Jewish Provisional Government proclaimed the sovereign State of Israel.

From the Port of Haifa, at the stroke of midnight, the British Cruiser Eurvalus, with High Commissioner Sir Alan Gordon Cunningham aboard, steamed out to sea. Great Britain's rule in Palestine had ceased to exist.

In Washington, twenty-one minutes later (6:21 EDT), President Harry Truman announced that "the United States recognizes" the new State of Israel in Palestine.

Over Tel Aviv at dawn yesterday Egyptian planes appeared; they dropped bombs on the heart of the Jewish state. Zero hour for the much-publicized Arab invasion of Palestine was at hand.

These four events marked the birth of a new state and the culmination of the twenty-five tragic years of Britain's mandate over the Holy Land. During that quarter of a century the world many times had sought a solution for the ancient land on the Mediterranean. It had failed. Now the struggle was joined between Arab and Jew, and the world watched.

Yesterday, on the borders of Palestine—the north, the east, the great desert at the south—regular military units of the Arab states were on the move. Their watchword was "Be ready to die for Allah." Inside Palestine the Jewish Army was fully mobilized. The order of the day said: "We are ready on all fronts."

Whatever the outcome of the Palestine struggle it will decide not only the fate of Israel, but, to a great extent, the future of the Arab world. It will as well have deep effects upon the future of the United Nations.

The Jewish State

The story of modern Palestine—a story that came to such a dramatic climax last week—began during World War I. In the fall of 1917 British forces were driving the Turks out of the Holy Land. On Nov. 2 that year A. J. Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary, sent to Lord Rothschild, the Zionist leader, a letter containing a sentence that was to become one of the most disputed in history. The sentence was incorporated in the League of Nations mandate that came into effect in 1923. It said:

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine."

During the mandate years the aspirations of the Jews and Arabs—two different communities in Palestine, two different cultures, two different religions—proved mutually exclusive. A dozen successive major commissions of inquiry studied the Palestine problem. Their efforts came to nothing. Then, last year, after Great Britain decided to throw up the sponge in Palestine, there came the "final" solution.

Assembly Decision

On Nov. 29 the United Nations General Assembly recommended partition of the Holy Land. Its recommendation set off intense fighting between the Arabs, who fiercely opposed partition, and the Jews. The highly trained Haganah, the Jewish defense force, put to rout the Palestine Arab fighters and the "volunteers" sent from neighboring Arab states. Last month the United Nations General Assembly, at the request of the United States, met again to reconsider partition. But by last week, as the result of the Jewish military victories, partition was a fact.

The Israelite Declaration of Independence last Friday afternoon came in a solemn and simple ceremony. The scene in the Tel Aviv museum was this: On the walls of the gallery were paintings by Jewish artists—paintings that showed scenes of the Diaspora, the dispersal of the Jews. There were more than a hundred Jewish officials and guests in the gallery. Some bore the tattoos of the Nazi concentration camps. At 4 P. M. the men and women in the gallery rose and sang *Hatikvah*, the national anthem of Israel. Then Israel's Premier, David Ben-Gurion, 63 and white-haired, read the proclamation. He said:

"We, the members of the National Council, representing the Jewish people in Palestine and the Zionist movement of the world, met together in solemn assembly by virtue of the natural and historic right of the Jewish people and the resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations, hereby proclaim the establishment of the Jewish State in Palestine, to be called Israel."

The New Nation

The new State of Israel—this little land, wedged in a vast Arab world—takes up about one-half of Palestine. Its boundaries are approximately the same as those recommended by the United Nations General Assembly last November.

This is the land: It is a hot country (average temperature on the Mediterranean coast 69 degrees). It is semi-arid; almost no rain falls from May to October. There are highly fertile areas, particularly on the coastal plain, but much of the once good land reverted to desert during centuries of neglect; in the words of Job, there are "thistles instead of barley." Moving sand dunes cover a region, south of Jaffa, where pine forests grew a century ago. In the south there is the Negeb, a sparsely settled semi-desert.

These are the people: The Jewish community numbers about 600,000 Most are immigrants from central Europe, long the center of Zionism. There has been an increasing influx of Jews from Germany and Austria—after the rise of Hitler—and from the Balkans and from Iraq and Yemen. These Jews belong to political parties and "splinter groups" that run the political gamut. In their efforts to build a "national home" in Palestine they have had financial assistance—running to many millions of dollars—from Jews all over the world.

Changing Palestine

These are the resources of Israel: The Jews have brought modern methods and a modern culture to Palestine. Little by little they have pushed back the desert, drained malarial swamps, put in irrigation systems. On the Mediterranean coast they have built the most modern city in the Middle East: Tel Aviv, founded in 1909 with a population of 300 and now a metropolis of 170,000. The Jews have established more than 3,100 industrial enterprises. They have set up more than 265 agricultural settlements.

This is the Government of Israel: There is a provisional legislature—the council of thirty-seven Jewish leaders of various political leanings. The executive arm is a council of thirteen—the Cabinet Ministers. The Jewish Government has progressively taken over from the outgoing mandate government such functions as the administration of the railroads, police, courts and the postal system. The Jews have issued a new stamp showing the map of Palestine.

This is the main Army of Israel: The men and women of the Haganah (defense). The army has an over-all strength of 85,000, including guards and auxiliaries. About 25,000 are front-line troops. They are battle-tested veterans—many fought with the British in World War II—and have modern equipment, mostly small arms. The Jewish Army expects reinforcement, including some 12,000 young Jews who have been training in the immigrant camps at Cyprus. It expects arms—including armored vehicles and planes—that have been prepared for shipment from European ports.

The Arab League

The Arab world, lying athwart the crossroads of three continents, is a world of wind and burning sun, of deserts, green oases, wild rocky hills—and oil. There is an equation that expresses the importance of the Arab world in international affairs: oil plus strategic location equals power. Seven Arab states have been banded together for two years in a kind of loose confederation — the Arab League. They are Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iraq, Trans-Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen. They have a total area about half that of the United States.

The people of these states number 33,000,000. Most are poor and live a primitive and harsh life. The nomadic Bedouins and the peasant *fellaheen* have hardly changed their ways since the days of the prophet Mohammed. The rich upper class, the *effendi*, is small.

There are links among the Arab peoples. The Arabs have a common language. Most are followers of Islam. They generally have a hatred of Zionism, resent the intrusion of an alien way of life in the "crescent" of Arab lands on the Mediterranean shores. Yet the Arabs are not the kind of people to turn a Pan Arab movement into a tight nationalistic union. Lawrence of Arabia once wrote: "Any wide attempt after unity would make a patched and parcelled thing, ungrateful to a people whose instincts ever returned towards parochial home rule."

Rivalries in the League

The rulers of the Arab League states are deeply suspicious of each other. A basic rivalry exists between two Arab camps. In one camp there are Trans-Jordan and Iraq, ruled by branches of the Hashamite family. These two countries dream of extending Hashamite rule in the Middle East; their ambition includes Palestine. In the other camp there are Saudi Arabia and Syria—whose rulers have long-standing differences with the Hashamite kingdoms.

Despite these jealousies the rulers of the league states look to one man as their champion—as the man to carry out a popular Arab demand for action against the Jewish state in Palestine. He is Abdullah Ibn El-Hussein, 66, King of Trans-Jordan; the little rock and desert state set up by Great Britain out of the original Palestine mandate.

The chief reason for Abdullah's importance is his army, the Arab Legion. The legion is the only fully mechanized Arab force in the Middle East. It has been financed by the British at the rate of $8,000,000 a year. It is trained and led by British officers; its commander is a Briton—John Bagot Glubb Pasha, one-time associate of Lawrence of Arabia. The consensus is that, because of British influence and interest in Trans-Jordan, Abdullah is not likely to make a critical decision unless he has at least the tacit approval of London.

Other Armies

Besides Abdullah's legion there are some units, with fairly modern arms, in the other Arab League armies. But most of the Arab League forces—their strength totals around 121,000—are ill-equipped and poorly trained.

The Arab declaration of war last week gave rise to two great questions:

The first is this: Will Abdullah try an all-out attack on the Jews in Palestine—and risk his legion in full combat with the Haganah? If he does this there will be large-scale war; the Middle East may be in flames for years.

The second question is this: Will Abdullah try to occupy only the predominantly Arab areas of Palestine—and stop short of the borders of Israel? If he does this the majority of Zionists will be satisfied; the situation in Palestine will be relatively stabilized.

The U. N.'s Role

At Flushing Meadow at the moment of the termination of the Mandate—6 P. M. in New York time—the delegate of Iraq, Awni Khalidi, told the General Assembly, "The whole game is up."

Just one year ago yesterday, the U. N. took its first step in the Palestine problem. A special session of the General Assembly set up a committee to seek a solution of the problem. That move led to the Assembly decision on last Nov. 29 to partition the Holy Land—a decision strongly supported by the United States.

After Nov. 29—as Arab hostility to partition rose—the United States vacillated. The United States was concerned over oil and strategy vis-a-vis Russia in the Middle East. The Democratic Administration was also concerned over the Jewish vote in the United States.

On March 19, Warren R. Austin, American delegate to the Security Council, told the Council, "We believe that the Security Council should * * * suspend * * * efforts to implement partition." He asked for a special session of the General Assembly and proposed a "temporary" U. N. trusteeship over Palestine.

On April 16, the special Assembly convened.

For twenty-eight days the men at Lake Success debated. There was little support for the United States trusteeship plan. There were rumors that the Americans were about to reverse themselves again.

At 5 P. M. on Friday the Special Assembly gathered for what was to be its final meeting. There was an evident mood of futility.

At 6:40 P. M. the news report of United States recognition of Israel reached Flushing Meadow. It had been issued a few minutes earlier by the White House. The President had made the decision late in the afternoon. According to White House sources, the decision had been discussed only with Secretary of State Marshall and his Under-Secretary. Foreign delegations had not been informed; neither had the American delegation at the U.N.

A. Gonzales-Fernandez, the delegate from Colombia, addressed the Assembly. He said: "I simply wish to have information from the delegation of the United States concerning the truth of the information." An American delegate, Francis B. Sayre, walked slowly to the dais and said, "There is no official information that we have." Embarrassed American delegation officials telephoned Washington for confirmation. Half an hour later American delegate Philip C. Jessup told the Assembly that the reports were true.

Arab Anger

Arab representatives angrily denounced the United States, called the move a "shameless betrayal." The Zionist spokesmen at the U. N. were jubilant. The Assembly listlessly completed action on a few resolutions and adjourned at 8:32 P. M. — until the regular session next September.

The upshot of the special session is this:

(1) Legally the partition decision of last Nov. 29 stands. The Assembly voted to send a "mediator" to Palestine to do what he could to promote peace.

(2) The provisions of the partition resolution which established Jerusalem as an international enclave under the U. N. Trusteeship Council still stand.

(3) The responsibility for keeping the peace rests with the Security Council, the agency charged with that function under the U. N. Charter. Yesterday the Council met to consider the first complaint—that Egyptian armed forces were invading Palestine.

It seems clear that these U. N. agents can have little effect on the immediate course of events in the Holy Land. As the delegates quit the session their feeling was plainly that the U. N. had muffed a great chance. The reasoning was this: Palestine presented an opportunity to show an effective peace organization at work; but the U. N. had let the Palestine recommendation come into effect only by default.

Nevertheless there was one thing that took the edge off the defeatism. It was this: The United States recognition of Israel—and the probable recognition by Soviet Russia and others of the great powers—would be important stabilizing factors in the Middle East. There seemed a chance that Arab belligerency might cool. There seemed a chance that the arms of the Jewish State would be strengthened—for example in Washington yesterday there were reports that United States embargo on arms shipment to the Jewish State would be lifted.

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