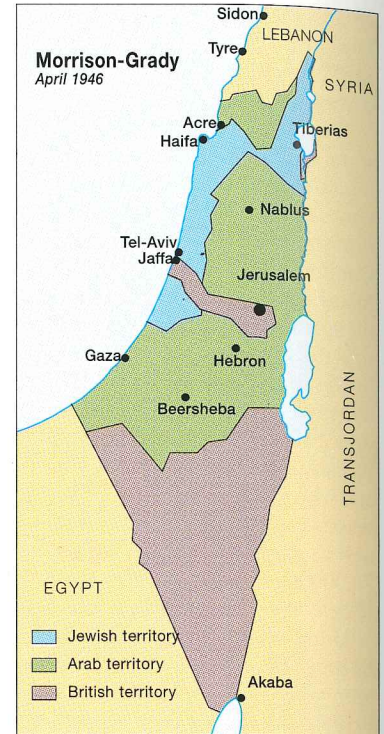


The Struggle for a Jewish State



1. Immigrants from the British internment camps in Cyprus arrive at Haifa port on the boat Atsmaut (Independence), January 1949.

The Mandate for Palestine was founded on a Zionist-British collaboration which endorsed the establishment of a Jewish national home. This cooperation ceased in 1939 when the British government decided to end the Mandate and to prepare the country for independence, according to the existing demographic distribution: two-thirds Arab, one-third Jewish. The White Paper of May 1939 stipulated that for a five-year transitional period Jewish immigration and land purchase would be limited in order to maintain existing proportions and that autonomous institutions would be developed within the Jewish and Arab populations. This document signalled the beginning of the struggle for a Jewish state in Palestine. The *yishuv* was willing to accept a solution guaranteeing its sovereignty even if it was to be allocated only a small part of the land, according to the partition plan of the 1937 Peel Commission, but would not comply with policies designed to create a Jewish minority within an Arab state. Divided between “moderates” led by Chaim Weizmann, and “activists” led by David Ben-Gurion, the Zionist leadership finally agreed on a prudent policy of defying the



rules of the White Paper and organizing mass “illegal” immigration, without openly clashing with the British authorities.

World War II deferred the struggle against the White Paper, as the *yishuv* concentrated entirely on the fight against Nazism. With the post-war order in mind, the leadership sought to create a Jewish Brigade within the British armed forces. Defined by Ben-Gurion, the “war objectives” of the Zionist movement were clearly stated in the Biltmore Program (New York, 1942): “That Palestine be established as a Jewish commonwealth integrated in the structure of the new democratic world.”

However, when the war ended, the newly elected Labor government in England chose to reinstate the restrictive policy of the 1930s. The *yishuv*, now also facing the urgent task of saving the Holocaust survivors, renewed the struggle with unprecedented vigor. The *Haganah* and the dissenting underground movements, the *Irgun Zeva'i Le'ummi* and *Lohamei Herut Israel (Lehi)*, agreed to form a united front – *Tenu'at ha-Merit ha-Ivri* (“the movement of Hebrew resistance”) – which began large-scale attacks on the British to compel them to change their policy. The unified

White Paper

May 1939

1939. May 17: The British colonial secretary, Malcolm MacDonald, publishes a new White Paper: immigration and sale of land to Jews to be severely restricted.

May–September: The *yishuv* leadership instructs the Jewish population to ignore the rules of the White Paper. Census of Jewish inhabitants aged 18 to 35. General strike and demonstrations throughout the country. Jewish Agency Executive decides to form special units in the *Haganah* for carrying out attacks on British and Arab targets. Other violent operations are carried out by the *Irgun*. The 21st Zionist Congress debates how to contest the White Paper.

1941. May: Close collaboration with the British enables the creation of the *Palмах*, the “strike units” of the *Haganah*. The commander of the *Irgun*, David Raziel, is killed in action in Iraq in an operation mounted by the British; in fact, the *Irgun* too decides to cooperate with the British against the Nazis, and this causes the secession of *Lehi* led by Avraham (Yair) Stern.



Creation of the Palмах

May 1941

1943: As the war front recedes, relations between the British and the *yishuv* deteriorate once again.

1944: The *Irgun*, now commanded by Menahem Begin, proclaims “the revolt” against British rule. In response to the assassination of Lord Moyne in Cairo by *Lehi*, the Jewish Agency starts trying to suppress the activities of the dissenting organizations, by, among other things, handing them over to the British (“la saison,” the “hunting season”).

1945. August: Renewal of illegal-immigration operations; by 1948 approximately 70,000 immigrants had been brought in 65 vessels; most of them were caught and taken to British internment camps, first in Palestine (Athlit) and then in Cyprus.

October: The attack on the internment camp in Athlit marks the beginning of the operations of the unified movement of

3. “The White Paper”: a poster condemning the Mandatory policy on immigration. May 1, 1944.

The Biltmore Program

May 1942

resistance: a series of attacks on transportation routes, railways, bridges, police stations, and radar stations, culminating in the “Night of the Bridges” (June 1946) in which *Palмах* units destroy the bridges connecting Palestine with its neighboring countries.

November: Ernest Bevin, the British foreign secretary, announces the establishment of an Anglo-American inquiry commission and an additional quota of 1,500 certificates per month for Jewish refugees.

1946. June 29: “Black Saturday” – members of the Jewish Agency Executive are arrested; British military forces are sent to settlements suspected of harboring *Palмах* units and arms caches.

July: After the unified movement of resistance has ceased all acts of sabotage, the King David Hotel in Jerusalem is blown up by members of the *Irgun* and *Lehi*. The *Haganah* focuses its attention on immigration and settlement operations.

October: In a single swift operation, 11 new

1939–1948



2. Ben Gurion speaks at a meeting in Haifa, 1949.

movement operated from October 1945 to June 1946, when insurmountable political and tactical differences within it led to its disintegration. During this period, the British attempted to establish a common policy with the Americans. After visiting Palestine and the displaced persons camps in Europe, an Anglo-American inquiry commission presented conclusions which displeased all parties concerned: the British, who were required to admit 100,000 Jewish immigrants; the Jews, who had to be satisfied now with a bi-national state; and the Arabs, of course, who were dissatisfied with any solution other than an Arab Palestine.

Meanwhile, the British government launched a massive operation to repress the unified movement of resistance and sought out "moderate" Jewish leaders to replace activists who had been interned during the round-up on the "Black Sabbath" (June 29, 1946). But two months later in Paris the Jewish Agency Executive adopted a resolution of momentous importance. Virtually rejecting the Biltmore Program, this highest authority of the Zionist movement declared that it would accept a solution based on partition of the land. It thus ensured the approval of the

Americans, completely frustrating British policy. Bound by the original conditions of the Mandate, Britain had no alternative but to present the question of Palestine to the United Nations for a decision.

At this stage the Zionist leadership ceased its armed struggle against the British forces (with the exception of attacks by the dissenting organizations). This was a time of large-scale illegal immigration operations – the most spectacular being "Exodus 1947" – which secured the support of world public opinion in favor of the Zionist cause, and placed Great Britain in an impossible situation. It was also a time of diplomatic maneuvers: an international inquiry commission set up by the United Nations (UNSCOP) proposed the partition of Palestine into two independent states, and the U.N. General Assembly adopted the proposal by the required two-thirds majority (November 29, 1947). The British government announced that it would not cooperate in the execution of the partition plan and would withdraw British civilian staff and military forces by May 15, 1948. The Mandate was over and the War of Independence had begun.

The attempt to blow up the King David Hotel

July 1946



The decision on partition

November 1947

settlements are established in the Negev to reinforce Jewish control in the region. President Truman announces his support for the partition plan.

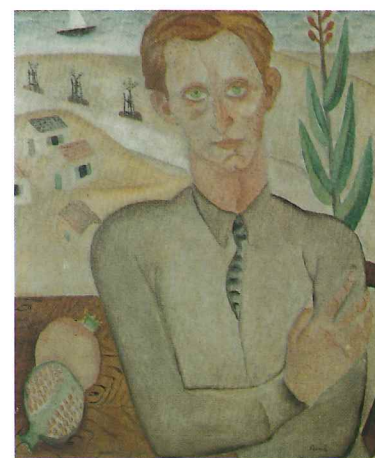
December: The 22nd Zionist Congress endorses the policy of the Jewish Agency Executive headed by David Ben-Gurion who takes on the defense portfolio; Weizmann is compelled to resign from the presidency.

1947. February–November: The political struggle is transferred to the U.N. arena. In May UNSCOP is set up and Gromyko, the Soviet representative, announces the support of his country for the partition plan. On November 29th the U.N. adopts the fateful resolution favoring the partition and the establishment of a Jewish State.

November 30: The first gunshots of the War of Independence: Arabs attack a Jewish bus on its way to Jerusalem.

The Proclamation of the State of Israel

May 1948



5. A portrait of the great right-wing poet, Uri Zevi Greenberg, painted by Reuven Rubin. Oil, 1923–1925.

4. Lord Cunningham, the last British High Commissioner, leaves Palestine.

The State of Israel: The Formative Years



1. "Growth versus Siege." A poster of Mapai, the ruling labor party.

Independence advanced a pressing need for the institutional organization of the sovereign state. David Ben-Gurion, head of the prominent workers' party, laid down principles which were, despite some ambiguity, adopted by the representative bodies with no major upheavals. Israel was to become a western-style parliamentary democracy based on universal suffrage and the separation of powers. It was also proclaimed a secular state, and the Declaration of Independence pledged to "guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture." However, since throughout history religion has always been inexorably linked to nationality in Jewish collective consciousness, and because Israel's religious parties had considerable

clout right from the start, certain theocratic elements were admitted, particularly in those aspects of legislation which sanctioned the exclusive jurisdiction of the religious courts in all matters matrimonial. Although no real *kulturkampf* ever evolved, the nonobservant majority resisted religious coercion, while the orthodox persisted in trying to enforce *halakhic* law on modern Israel. This was but one point of contention which agitated political life in Israel, polarizing public opinion and dividing the population into a multitude of parties. Indeed, the ideological fervor sustained from the time of the *yishuv*, coupled with an electoral system of proportional representation established for the Zionist Congresses, created a highly heterogeneous system of political trends, movements, and factions.

Nevertheless, despite the ideological struggles which took place in the political arena and in the domains of Israeli literature, theater, and the media (and, on occasion, in the law courts), the two decades between the War of Independence and the Six-Day War were a time of growth and consolidation for the young state of Israel. First, there was a tremendous influx of immigration which led to huge demographic growth. Thousands of long-suffering Jews flocked to the newborn state from the Displaced Persons' camps, from British detainee camps in Cyprus which held "illegal" immigrants, and, for the first time ever, from all the Islamic

countries. This huge wave of new arrivals doubled the Jewish population in Israel within three years.

The absorption of hundreds of thousands of immigrants was a staggering task for such a small state lacking in natural resources. The early years were indeed very difficult: new immigrants were initially set up in tents, then, during the early 1950s they were placed in transit camps (*ma'barot*) which in many cases became a permanent form of housing. The veteran population was burdened with the strain of unemployment, food rationing and other shortages, wage freezes, and compulsory loans. Moreover, the mass *aliyah* from Islamic countries, and the decline in the numbers of immigrants from Europe and the Americas altered the composition of the population. Although the "ingathering of the exiles" had always been part of Zionist ideology and the *raison d'être* of the Jewish state, the changing proportions among the communities (*edot*) resulted in major social and cultural tensions.

Obviously, immigrant absorption would have been impossible without outside support in the form of American aid, donations from the diaspora, and German reparations (\$820,000,000 over twelve years). Thanks to this import of capital, the encouragement of state policy and the availability of highly skilled labor, the early years of the state witnessed spectacular economic growth, with the gross national product increasing by an average of 10% per annum. New "development" townships were swiftly established; the new port of Ashdod, the El Al national airline, and a large merchant fleet facilitated Israel's integration into world economy. An ambitious water project (the National Carrier) conveyed water to arid areas in the center and the south of the country. Agriculture made great strides between 1948 and 1953, when 354 cooperative villages (*moshavim*) and collectives (*kibbutzim*) were established. After the Sinai Campaign, with immigration once more on the rise, the pace of industry development accelerated, doubling its production over ten years.

Only one insurmountable problem remained, namely, Israel's acceptance and recognition by her neighbors. Between 1951 and 1956 roughly 3,000 armed clashes and 6,000 acts of sabotage took place inside Israeli borders, resulting in the deaths of over 400 Israelis, and the injury of 900. The Sinai Campaign, Israel's response to the concentration of Egyptian troops along its borders, and to the closing of the Tiran Straits by Nasser's gunboats, was also an attempt to put a stop to the incessant harassment by regular and irregular Arab troops.

This "second round" in the Arab-Israeli war did not resolve the conflict. Israel was forced to withdraw from the Sinai in return for a precarious security arrangement. Moreover, by aligning herself with imperialist powers in decline Israel came to be regarded by her neighbors as a "tool of western imperialism." Nevertheless, the Sinai Campaign enabled Israel to enjoy ten years of relative tranquility.

First government

February 1949

Law of Return

July 1950

German reparations

January 1952

Suez Campaign

October 1956



1948. June: The *Altalena* affair: a boat from France, carrying weapons and volunteers to the *Irgun*, is shelled by the newly-established national army. The incident made it clear that no sectional armed force would be tolerated; Ben-Gurion insists on dissolving the *Palmah*, the assault companies of the *Haganah*.

1949. January 25: Elections to the Constituent Assembly.

February 16: The Assembly adopts the Transition Law as a provisional constitution, outlining the functions and procedures of the legislature, the powers of the president, the formation of the government and its relations with the Assembly which was to be called the Knesset. Chaim Weizmann, elected President of the State of Israel, calls upon David Ben-Gurion to form the first Israeli government.

May 11: Israel is admitted to the United Nations.

2. Men of Unit 101 patrolling the border with Egypt. April 1955.

1950. January: The Arab League initiates an economic boycott on Israel. A tripartite declaration by the U.S., Great Britain and France promises to take action to prevent the violation of borders in the Middle East.

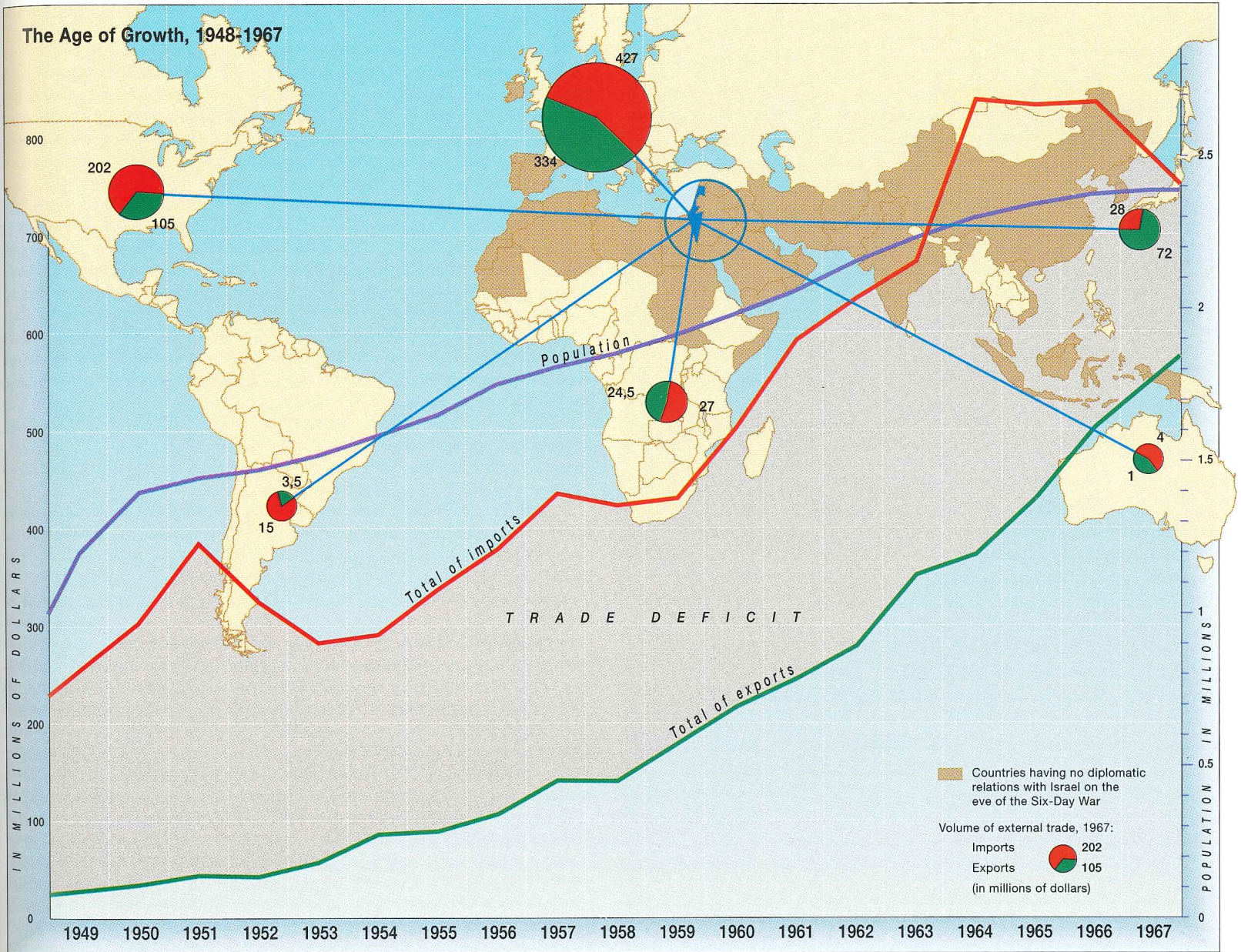
January 23: Jerusalem is proclaimed capital of the State of Israel.

July 5: The Law of Return is proclaimed; its first clause reads: "Every Jew has the right to come to this country as an *oleh* (immigrant)."

1952. January: The Knesset is convened to ratify direct negotiations with Germany for reparations; the resolution provokes stormy street demonstrations, staged by *Herut* opposition party. The Law of Nationality confers Israeli citizenship on non-Jewish inhabitants; the Arabs, however, remain under military administration by virtue of emergency regulations left over from the British Mandatory regime.

August 18: Ben-Gurion welcomes the Egyptian "free officers" revolution and declares that there is no reason for

1948-1967



Riots in Wadi Salib

July 1959

antagonism between the two countries. But when Mohammad Naguib is ousted by Gamal Abdul Nasser (April 1954), who emerges as the leader of the Pan-Arab movement and turns to the Communist bloc for support, prospects for reconciliation are lost.

October: In reprisal for the murder of a mother and her two children (October 13), the soldiers of Unit 101 massacre the inhabitants of the Qibya village in Jordan.

1954. December: Beginning of large arms purchases from France.

1955: The Baghdad Pact signed by Turkey, Iraq, and several other Arab countries renders Israel the only state in the region which does not belong to any military alliance.

April: The Bandung Conference of Afro-Asian states; the nonaligned countries refuse to accept Israel; nevertheless, Israel manages to promote technical and economic cooperation with Third World countries.

The Eichmann Trial

1961



Ben-Gurion's retirement

1963

August: Nasser signs an arms purchase agreement with Czechoslovakia for the sum of 320 million dollars, a serious threat to the balance of power in the region.

October 17: Egypt and Syria sign a military pact.

1956. January: Guy Mollet is Prime Minister of France; the French-Israeli accord is established.

July 26: Nasser nationalizes the Suez Canal; on October 29, while British and French troops disembark in the Canal zone, Israeli forces enter the Sinai Peninsula; at the end of November, under Soviet-American pressure, Israel begins to withdraw.

August 19: In the midst of violent demonstrations, the first ambassador of the German Federal Republic, Rolf Pauls, presents his credentials in Jerusalem.

1959. July: Riots in the Haifa slum quarter

3. "Destroy the black market or it will destroy you." A government information poster in the 1950s.

The Six-Day War

June 1967

of Wadi Salib: its 15,000 "oriental" Jews give vent to bitterness and social malaise that can no longer be held off by ideological promises.

1960. June: Ben-Gurion's visit to the Elysée; General de Gaulle speaks of "Israel our friend and ally."

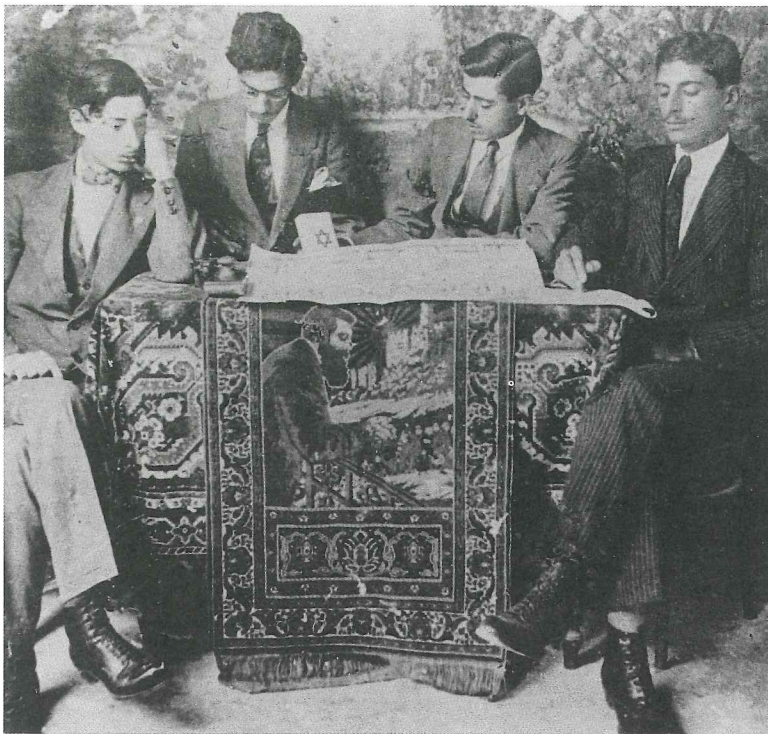
1961: Israel is refused associate membership in the European Economic Community, but three years later it obtains a preferential agreement with the Community. Captured in Argentina by the Israeli Secret Service, the Nazi criminal Adolf Eichmann is brought to trial in Jerusalem.

1962: Washington renounces the tacit embargo that was imposed on Israel by President Eisenhower.

1963: Ben-Gurion resigns and retires to a kibbutz in the Negev; Levi Eshkol is Prime Minister.

1965: The *Mittun* (recession) leads to a severe deflation policy, unemployment, social conflicts and emigration. It will end (temporarily) with the Six-Day War.

Mediterranean Zionism



1. The first committee of the Jewish National Fund in Libya. Tripoli, 1915.

Zionism made its debut in North Africa and the Middle East immediately after the First Congress in Basle in 1897, and was soon familiar, by means of the press or through occasional visitors, with the general outline of Herzl's program. For communities which were still deeply committed to religious tradition, and residing in countries which were not too distant from the Holy Land, the idea of a "return" to the Land of Israel, did not seem far-fetched. Therefore, young and old, modernists and orthodox, consented to join the earliest Zionist organizations which in fact reached all strata of the Jewish population. Their numbers increased even further following the Balfour Declaration. The Jews of Morocco were so excited that straight after World War I ended, they hurriedly dispatched to Palestine a convoy of immigrants. Unfortunately, as soon as these disembarked in Jaffa they were sent back by the newly-established British authorities. The Zionist leadership made not the slightest gesture to prevent their expulsion.

A similar experience subsequently shared by hundreds of other "illegal" immigrants from Asian and African countries, elucidated the gulf separating Zionism – a modern political ideology – from the traditional attachment to Zion which was always based on religious-messianic beliefs. Therefore, once the initial exhilaration had died down, the Zionist enterprise in all these countries was greatly diminished. First to abandon the Zionist cause were the pious Jews, who came to believe that Zionism was synonymous with atheism. Then there were those who feared that Zionism would antagonize both their Muslim compatriots and the colonial authorities. Finally, there were vast numbers of those whom militant Zionists derisively named "assimilationists" – Jews who were westernized in varying degrees, fearing that Jewish nationalism would destroy the possibility of complete integration in the country their ancestors had lived in for centuries or even millennia. This was the case of the younger generation of Jews in Iraq during the 1920s, as well as in communities under French rule or those influenced by the educational system of the *Alliance Israelite Universelle*. Rifts of this kind seriously impeded the Zionist movement which, until the end of World War II, remained essentially weak and remote from the ideological currents which characterized the movement elsewhere.

A radical turning point took place in the mid-1940s. Nazi genocide and anti-Jewish legislation, in North Africa under Petain and Mussolini and in Iraq under Rashid Ali, disillusioned those who had believed in assimilation, particularly the younger generation. Hundreds of Palestinian Jewish soldiers stationed in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Libya during the war, strengthened the ties with the *yishuv*. Zionist emissaries, working in almost all Mediterranean communities, helped to establish active Zionist youth movements, emphasizing the need for "personal fulfillment" (*hagshamah*) of the program, i.e. *aliyah* to the Land of Israel in the spirit of its pioneers. Finally, as the prospects for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine became increasingly brighter, relations between Jews and Muslims grew openly hostile and outbursts of violence against the Jewish communities multiplied.

Precarious prior to the creation of the State of Israel, Jewish presence in Islamic countries after 1948 was increasingly endangered by the unrest which accompanied decolonization, nationalist agitation, and militant Islamic movements. The vast majority left in the 1950s, mostly to Israel. Further waves of emigration, precipitated by each Israeli-Arab war or proclamation of independence by one of the Muslim states, gradually eradicated the communities which had existed in these lands from time immemorial. Of the one million Jews who inhabited the oriental diaspora in the mid-twentieth century, only a tiny minority still remains today, impoverished and dispersed in a few urban centers throughout North Africa and the Middle East.

First Zionist organization in Morocco

1900



1896. February: In Vienna, Theodor Herzl publishes his *Jewish State*.

1897. February: *Bar Kokhba*, the first Zionist association in Cairo.

August 29–31: A North African delegation participates in the First Zionist Congress in Basle.

1900: *Sha'arei Zion*, the first Zionist association in Morocco, is founded in Mogador.

1901. May: Herzl is received by Sultan Abd al-Hamid II in Istanbul.

September: A "Zionist school" is opened in Cairo.

1908: A Zionist Delegation opens in Istanbul.

1912: The first Zionist periodical in Egypt, *La Renaissance juive*, appears for the first time.

1913: A Zionist federation, uniting all the Zionist associations in the country, is formed in Egypt.

1916: The Sykes-Picot Treaty: France and

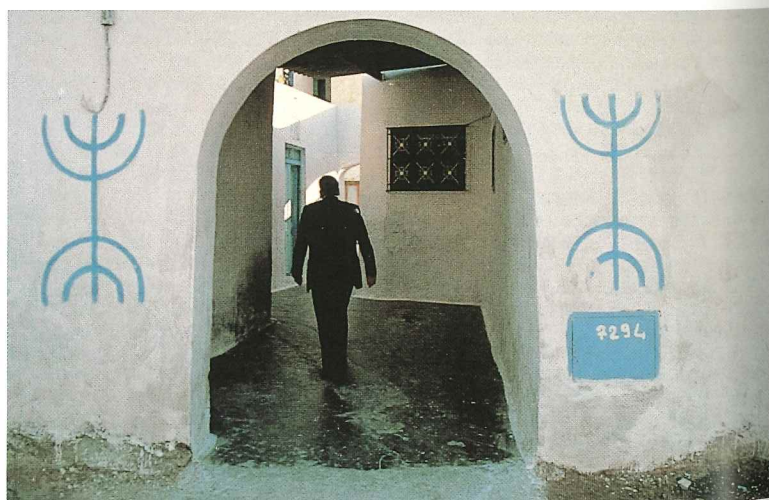
4. "Hatikva," a Hebrew primary school in Tripoli, in the 1930s.

The Zionist Union in Algeria

1920

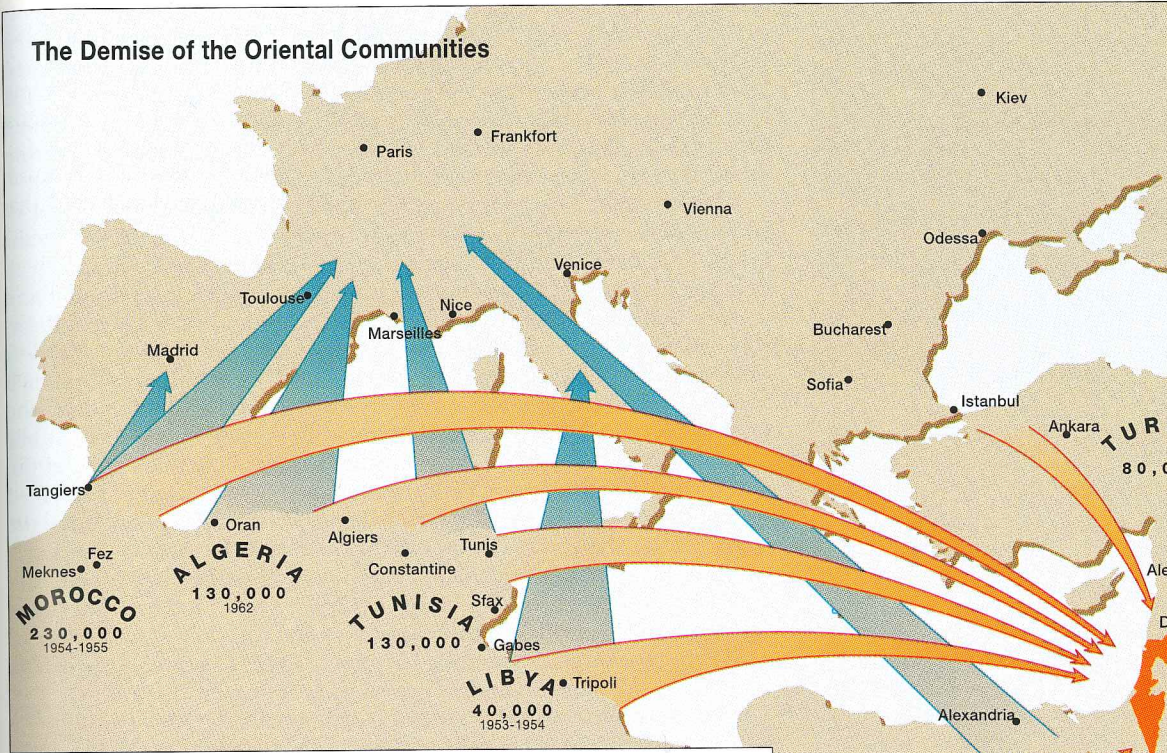
Zionist pioneer organizations in the Maghreb

1943



5. On the way to the synagogue in Hara Kebira ("the large quarter") of Djerba, 1981.

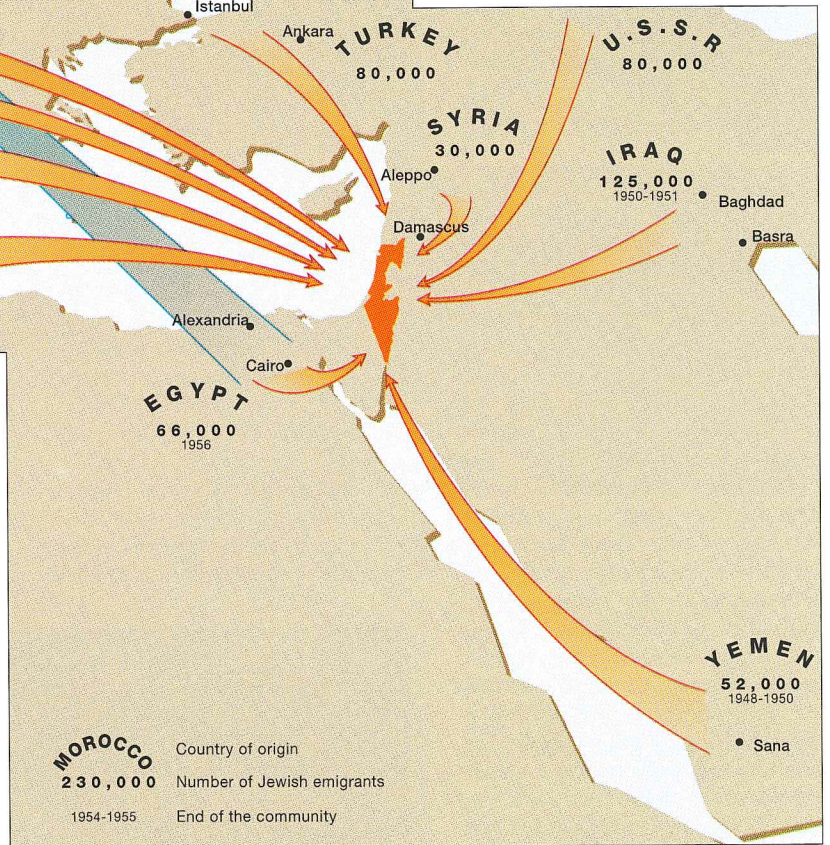
1897-1962



3. A Maccabi team from a Jewish high school in Baghdad, 1920s.



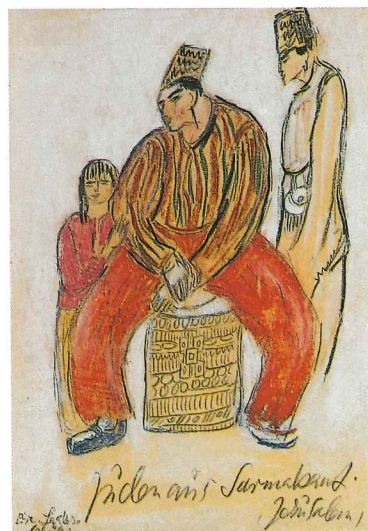
2. On their way to Israel, North African Jews embark on a boat going to Marseille, Algeria, 1949.



Operation "Magic Carpet"	Operation "Ezra and Nehemiah"	Emigration of Libyan Jews	Beginning of Emigration from the Maghreb	Emigration of Egyptian Jews	Emigration of Algerian Jews
1949-1950	1950-1951	1953-1954	1955-1956	1956	1962

Great Britain partition the Levant.
1917. November: The Balfour Declaration.
1918: The breaking up of the Ottoman Empire.
1919: In Teheran, the Central Committee of the Zionist organization of Persia is founded; in Baghdad, the first Zionist association in Iraq is established.
1920: The San Remo Conference confers the Palestinian Mandate on Great Britain; founding of the Algerian Zionist Union; a Tunisian Zionist Federation unites all the associations in that country.
1921: British authorities authorize the activities of the Zionist association in Baghdad which becomes the Zionist Committee of Mesopotamia.
1926: The Moroccan Zionist journal, *L'Avenir illustre* is founded.
1927: *Reveil juif*, an organ of the Revisionist (right-wing) faction, appears in Sfax, Tunisia.
1930: Attempt to establish a nucleus of *Ha-Shomer ha-Tsa'ir* ("The Young Guard," a left-wing Zionist group) in Tunis.

1932: Iraq's independence is accompanied by a prohibition on Zionist activities in that country.
1934. August: A pogrom perpetrated by Muslims in Constantine, Algeria, claims 25 victims.
1940: Abolition of the Cremieux Decree in Algeria (August 7) and the introduction of the Vichy anti-Jewish legislation in North Africa (October 10).
1941. June 1-2: Pogrom in Baghdad.
1942. April: Iranian authorities authorize the opening of a Jewish Agency office in Teheran.
November: Anglo-American landing in North Africa; Germans and Italians occupy Tunisia.
December: The English attack the Axis forces in Libya; end of Italian rule in that country.
1943. May: The Germans leave Tunisia; early steps of Zionist pioneer organizations in North Africa.
October: The Cremieux Decree is again put into force in Algeria.



1945. November: Anti-Jewish violence in Libya and Egypt.
1947: Massacre of Jews in Aden.
1948: Establishment of the state of Israel.
1949-1950: Operation "Magic Carpet": close to 50,000 Yemenite Jews are transferred to Israel.
1950-1951: Operation "Ezra and Nehemiah": the entire Iraqi community - about 120,000 people - is brought to Israel.
1953-1954: Mass immigration of Libyan Jews to Israel.
1955-1956: Independence of Morocco and Tunisia; mass emigration of Maghreb Jews to Israel and France begins.
1956: The Suez Campaign; the Jews leave Egypt.
1962: Independence of Algeria; mass exodus of Jews, most of whom go to France.

6. Samarkand Jews in Jerusalem, drawn by poetess Elsa Lasker-Schueler (1869-1945). Colored chalks on paper, 1939.

The Six-Day War



1. The battle in the Rockefeller Museum in East Jerusalem.

In the spring of 1957, the Israel Defense Forces withdrew from the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip occupied since the Suez Campaign of the previous year. The United Nations sent an international Emergency Force (UNEF) to the Egyptian-Israeli border and to Sharm el-Sheikh. The great powers gave Israel assurances concerning the freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Elath, and the government of Israel made it clear that any infringement of that freedom would be regarded as a *casus belli*.

All these arrangements, however, did not secure peace in the region. The terror-reprisal cycle continued on several fronts. The *Fatah* went on sending its men from Jordan to carry out terrorist operations within Israel's borders. Syrian artillery on the Golan Heights frequently shelled settlements in the Upper Galilee and the Jordan Valley, forcing the Israeli air force to retaliate in operations which often turned into mini-wars. Moreover, although the Egyptian border remained relatively quiet, as Egypt was involved since 1962 in a civil war in Yemen, Gamal Abdul Nasser made no secret of his intention to destroy the State of Israel at the first opportune moment.

In the spring of 1967 it seemed as though that moment had come. In three weeks and by five impressive initiatives, Nasser managed to embroil the entire Middle East in a major war. First, Egyptian forces in Sinai were considerably reinforced, under the pretext of coming to Syria's assistance. Then Nasser demanded the evacuation of U.N. forces from Sinai and the Gaza Strip, and U-Thant, the U.N. Secretary General, immediately acceded to his request. On May 20 Egyptian forces occupied Sharm el-Sheikh, closing the Straits of Tiran two days later. While Egyptian propaganda was proclaiming the imminent and inevitable destruction of Israel, the massive rein-

forcement of troops along the borders with Israel brought the numbers of Egyptian soldiers to 100,000 and tanks to 900. Once again, after ten years, Israel was directly confronted by Egyptian forces along the frontier. Finally, Nasser orchestrated a great Arab alliance: in addition to the Egyptian-Syrian military agreement of November 1966, he now signed pacts with Jordan (May 30) and Iraq (June 4). Contingents arrived from other Arab countries, such as Kuwait and Algeria.

As Nasser had foreseen, Israel was forced to respond: the threat of annihilation could not be ignored. Accepting the closure of the Straits would have been interpreted as a sign of weakness and capitulation to Egyptian aggression; the economic strain of prolonged mobilization and the psychological effect of suspense and fear would have been unbearable. After a "waiting period," requested by President Lyndon Johnson who wished to reach a peaceful resolution of the conflict, a "national unity" government was formed in Israel on June 1. Bolstered by the support of world Jewry and the sympathy voiced by western public opinion, Israel attacked on the morning of June 5. Six days later, at the cost of 676 lives and over 3000 wounded, the Arab coalition formed against Israel was routed. The Israeli army occupied Egyptian Sinai, the Syrian Golan, the Jordanian West Bank, and Arab Jerusalem. The Egyptian and the Syrian governments accepted a cease-fire agreement and U.N. observers were posted along the Suez Canal and on the Golan heights. Nasser announced his resignation, but withdrew it in the face of mass demonstrations demanding his return. In his resignation speech he made clear the part the Soviets played in bringing on the war.

In the brief history of the State of Israel, the Six-Day War constitutes a major turning-point. This swift and total victory saved the Zionist entity from destruction, ensured its physical existence, and disillusioned those of her enemies who had hoped that the Jewish State was just a passing phenomenon. On the other hand, these densely-populated territories, regarded as "liberated" by some Israelis and as "occupied" by others, created a whole series of insurmountable problems – political, social, economic, moral and religious – unresolved to this day. The future of the State of Israel, its character and its place among nations, now depends on their solution.






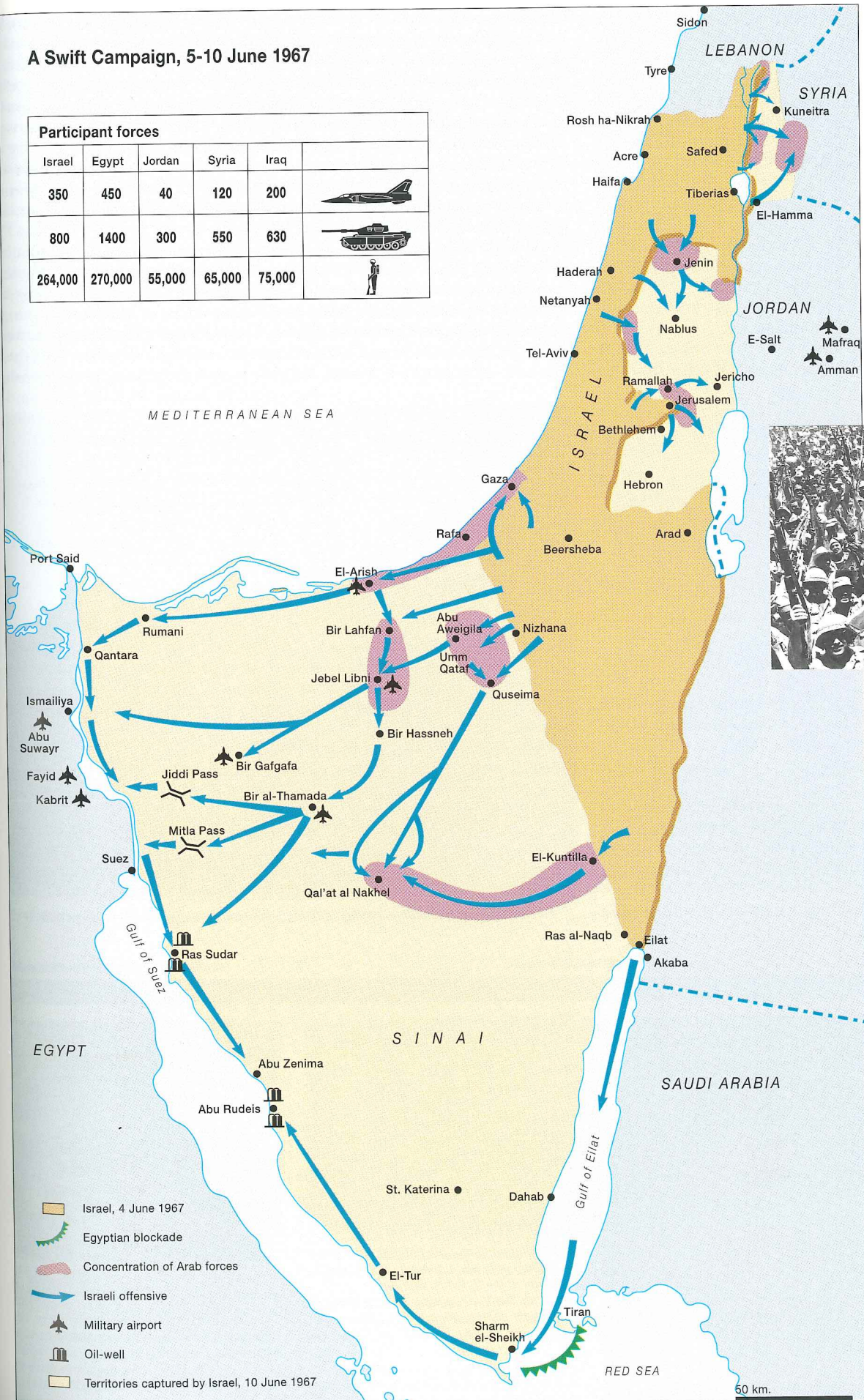
2. A New Year's greeting card celebrating victory, with two of its architects: Moshe Dayan and Yizhak Rabin; the Old-City walls in the background are formed in the shape of the Hebrew letters for I.D.F.

1967

A Swift Campaign, 5-10 June 1967

Participant forces

Israel	Egypt	Jordan	Syria	Iraq	
350	450	40	120	200	
800	1400	300	550	630	
264,000	270,000	55,000	65,000	75,000	



1966. November 4: Mutual defense treaty between Egypt and Syria.
November 13: In reprisal for a terrorist attack, Israeli paratroopers strike at the village of al-Samu'a in Jordan.
1967. April 7: Battle between Israeli and Syrian airplanes over the Golan Heights, six Syrian MIG planes are shot down.
May 14: Accusing Israel of concentrating its forces on the Syrian border, the Egyptian army enters the Sinai peninsula.
May 18: Egypt demands the removal of U.N. forces from Sinai; Secretary General U-Thant immediately complies.
May 19: General mobilization in Israel; beginning of the "waiting period" which will last till June 5; intense diplomatic activity.
May 20: Egyptian paratroops occupy Sharm el-Sheikh.
May 21: General mobilization in Egypt.
May 22: Egypt closes the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping and to shipping bound to and from Israel.
May 23-27: Abba Eban, Israel's Foreign



3. The joy of victory. Israeli soldiers in Sinai learn of the cease-fire.

Minister, on a diplomatic tour to Paris, London, and Washington; the U.N. Secretary General fails in his peace mission to Cairo.
May 30: King Hussein flies to Cairo to sign an Egyptian-Jordanian defense treaty.
June 1: A "National Unity" cabinet formed in Israel; Moshe Dayan is Defense Minister; for the first time, leaders of the right-wing opposition party, including Menahem Begin, join the government.
June 4: Egyptian-Iraqi defense treaty.
June 5: In the early morning, the Israeli air force attacks, destroying the Egyptian air force on the ground; Israeli tanks enter Sinai; the Jordanians shell Jerusalem; air combat between Israeli and Syrian planes.
June 6: Gaza in the south, Bethlehem and Ramallah in the west, are taken.
June 7: East Jerusalem captured; the navy attacks Sharm el-Sheikh; Syrian artillery bombards settlements in the Upper Galilee; after Israeli forces capture Jericho and most of the West Bank, Jordan accepts the cease-fire sponsored by the U.N. and by the Soviet Union; Egypt, Syria and Iraq refuse the cease-fire.
June 8: Conquest of Hebron; the I.D.F. advances towards the Suez Canal; that night, Egypt accepts the cease-fire; the Israeli air force attacks Syrian forces on the Golan Heights.
June 9-10: Conquest of the Golan; cease-fire with Syria in the evening; the Six-Day War is over. In a broadcast to the Egyptian people, Nasser announces his resignation.
August 29-September 3: Arab Summit Conference in Khartoum.
November 22: United Nations Resolution 242 calls for Israel's withdrawal from (the) occupied territories.

Israel between War and Armed Peace

In April 1968 President Nasser proclaimed a three-stage strategy designed to restore to Egypt its honor and lost territories. In practice this policy meant reconstituting the Egyptian army, adopting "preventive defense" measures, and finally, "liquidation of the aggression" – a major war intended to drive Israel out of the occupied territories. Its arsenals replenished with Soviet arms, Egypt declared in March 1969 that the cease-fire was no longer valid, and waged a futile and destructive war of attrition. Lasting many months, with an almost-daily toll of casualties, it drew to an end only after the Egyptian towns along the Canal had been reduced to rubble by the I.D.F. and Israeli planes had wrecked military installations deep inside Egyptian territory.



1. Sadat, Carter, Begin: a peace treaty is signed. Washington, March 1979.

The cease-fire agreement which concluded the war of attrition, although an admission of failure by Egypt, carried grave consequences for Israel. Frustrated in the battlefield, the Arab countries and the Palestinian organizations mounted resistance and terrorist activities in the occupied territories, in Israel itself, and abroad. In the long run, however, they abandoned the policy of attrition, concentrating mainly on preparations for an all-out war. Moreover, within Israel itself, a complacency bred by a history of Arab failure lulled the establishment into a false sense of security. An expression of this smugness was Moshe Dayan's assurance that Israel was awaiting a humble "telephone call" from the

King of Jordan. Arrogance rendered the Meir-Dayan government blind to the political advantages gained by Anwar Sadat, president of Egypt since September 1970. A number of advisers and intelligence reports warning of an impending war went unheeded, thus the attack in October 1973 came as a shocking surprise.

On October 6th, the Jewish Day of Atonement, Egyptian forces crossed the Suez Canal and attacked the reputedly-impregnable "Bar-Lev Line" (a series of fortifications constructed after the Six-Day War along the entire length of the canal). At the same time, the Syrians, in a well-coordinated operation, overran the Golan Heights.

Hard and devastating, conducted under disastrous conditions, the war of 1973 had very little in common with the the war of June 1967. Nevertheless, after bitter fighting and heavy losses, the I.D.F. managed to reverse the situation in a spectacular manner: on the southern front the Egyptian army advance was checked and Israeli troops crossed the Suez Canal; on the northern front the Syrian army was driven back from the Golan Heights to about 30 miles outside Damascus. Militarily, Israel won its most brilliant victory; politically, it was a hard blow.

A confidence crisis of unprecedented proportions overcame the Israelis, breaking out in spontaneous protest movements, demonstrations, and an outcry of public opinion which forced the government to set up an inquiry commission, and led to the resignation of the Prime Minister, Golda Meir. She was replaced by a "new" man – Labor leader, Yizhak Rabin, who had been chief of staff during the Six-Day War. In the long run, however, the Yom Kippur "earthquake," brought about the downfall of the Labor Party and the rise to power, for the first time in Israeli history, of a right-wing coalition headed by Menachem Begin.

Yet the Yom Kippur War dramatically changed the conditions of the Israeli-Arab conflict and provided the first real chance for peace. Final results notwithstanding, the initial blows inflicted on the Israeli army allowed the Arabs to overcome past humiliations and to deal with the Israelis as equals. The courage of their outstanding statesman, President Sadat, and the obstinacy of the President of the United States, Jimmy Carter, did the rest. The process initiated by the Egyptian president as early as 1971 (one which would cost him his life) was completed when the first peace treaty between Israel and an Arab state was signed in Washington on March 26, 1979.

The great expectations roused by the peace with the leading Arab state, however, failed to materialize fully. None of Israel's other neighbors followed Egypt's example, and the activities of the Palestinian organizations escalated, particularly after they established themselves in Lebanon, which was torn by civil war. Operation "Peace for the Galilee" mounted by Israel in June 1982 was the fifth in the series of major Israeli-Arab wars.

The Six-Day War

June 1967

1967. August 29-September 3: After the Six-Day War, the Arab Summit Conference at Khartoum adopts the "four nos" policy: no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with Israel, and no compromise at the expense of the rights of the Palestinian people.

November 22: Resolution 242 of the United Nations calls for Israel's withdrawal from territories (or *the* territories, according to the French version) conquered in the Six-Day War, termination of the state of belligerency, acknowledgement of the sovereignty of every state in the region and its right to live in peace within recognized and secure borders.

1969. February 26: Death of Prime Minister Levi Eshkol; Golda Meir is his successor.

March 8: Gamal Abdul Nasser declares a "war of attrition" against Israel.

December: The Arab summit in Rabat.

1970. August 5: In protest against Israel's acceptance of the American peace initiative, the right-wing parties leave the national-unity government.

The "war of attrition"

March 1969–August 1970

August 7: A cease-fire between Egypt and Israel achieved through the intervention of the U.S. secretary of state William Rogers.

September 28: Death of Nasser; Anwar Sadat is his successor.

1972. September 4: Eleven Israeli athletes are murdered by Palestinian terrorists at the Munich Olympics.

1973. October 6–24: The Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) War.

October 22: Resolution 338 of the U.N. Security Council calls upon the belligerents to cease fire and to implement resolution 242.

November 11: Egyptian-Israeli armistice.

1974: A wave of protest movements holds the government responsible for its lack of preparedness for the Yom Kippur War; the Agranat Commission investigates the causes for the initial failures.

April 10: Resignation of Golda Meir; Yizhak

2. Ma'alot on May 16, 1974. Young man evacuating his sister wounded in the terrorist attack.

Political reversal in Israel

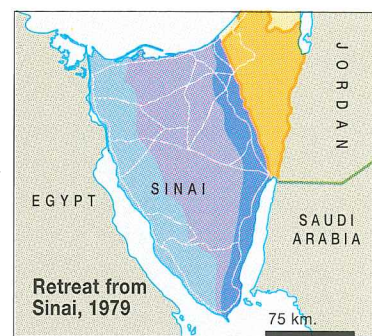
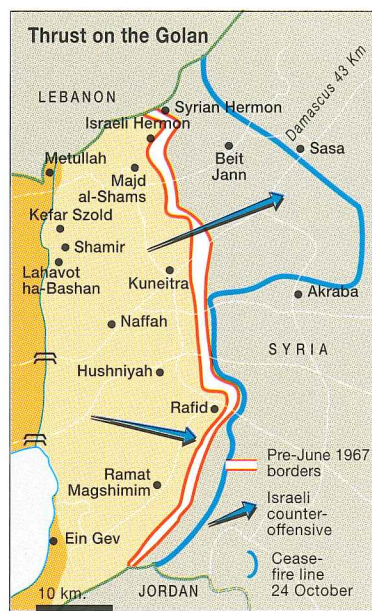
May 1977

Sadat in Jerusalem

November 1977



1967-1982



The Camp David Conference

September 1978

Rabin succeeds her as leader of the Labor Party and as Prime Minister.
April 11: A terrorist attack in Kiryat Shemonah, in the Upper Galilee; 18 killed, most of them children.
May 16: Ninety school children are taken hostage by terrorists in Ma'alot, in the Upper Galilee; Israeli units attack the terrorists; 16 children are killed.
May 31: Israeli-Syrian armistice.
1975. October 17: The U.N. General Assembly, by a majority of votes, equates Zionism with racism.
1977. May 17: The reversal – for the first time in the history of the *yishuv* and of the State of Israel, the Labor party loses its majority in the general elections.
November 19: President Sadat addresses the Knesset in Jerusalem; Israel and Egypt begin peace negotiations under the auspices of the United States.
1978. September: The Camp David Conference; President Carter reaches a compromise formula, vague enough on the

Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty

March 1979

Palestinian issue to enable the conclusion of an Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty.
1979. March 26: A peace treaty between Israel and Egypt is signed in Washington.
1980. February: The two countries exchange ambassadors.
1981. June 7: The Israeli air force destroys a nuclear reactor in Iraq.
July 17: Israeli bombardment of Beirut; the United States suspends the delivery of F-16 planes to Israel.
October 6: Assassination of President Sadat during celebrations of the anniversary of the 1973 war; his successor, President Mubarak, confirms his determination to pursue the peace policy.
1982. April: Israeli evacuation of the Sinai Peninsula is completed; strong resistance of extremist Jewish groups.
June: Israel invades Lebanon.

3. Israeli soldiers and Egyptian prisoners under Egyptian fire during the Yom Kippur War. Photo by Mikhael Bar-Am, October 1973.

Assassination of President Sadat

October 6, 1981

War in Lebanon

June 1982

