

Land of Israel 1882-1948: Sources, Narratives, Perspectives
History 489SWR (MESAS 370SWR & JS 490SWR)
Fall 2007

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Mondays 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Math-Science W507

Office Hours: Friday, 10:00-11:30 and by appointment

This Junior/Senior seminar will examine the history of the land which for Jews is ancestral Eretz Israel and the Arabs call Palestine, from the onset of Zionism to the 1948 divide. With the two main heroes pursuing conflicting courses under a foreign ruler that had its own changeable agenda, this was one of the most dramatic chapters in the country's history. We will review the divergent outlooks of Jews and Arabs regarding the land and each other, and the ways in which they handled fateful turns in their mutual history. The Zionist-Palestinian conflict will be a major theme in our inquiry, but we will also look into the backgrounds, characteristics, and practices of each community in itself, as well as the roles played by other key actors – the Ottoman and British governments and the Arab states. It is a course in history whose cutting line is 1948, yet subsequent and even present-day implications are likely to loom at the background of our discussions.

As we can hardly hope to visit every milestone along the checkered route of shifts during the period, our discussions will focus on some of the pivotal historic moments: the initial encounter between Zionism and the country's inhabitants before World War I; the 1936-1939 Arab Revolt; and the 1948 clash leading to Israel's independence and the Palestinian *Nakbah*. In between, we will probe the socioeconomic, political and cultural attributes that underlay the performance of the two protagonists, with an attempt to explain the outcome of their engagement.

Requirements

The course will consist of professor's lectures, student presentations, and discussions. Students will be expected to read the assigned background materials for each session as elaborated in the schedule below; this is an obvious prerequisite for serious exchanges. Presence in all the sessions is required, and active participation in the discussions is encouraged and expected.

The oral **presentations** are designed to start us up on our discussions. We will set up small teams (number & size depending on our total number), and each team will be responsible for 2 presentations during the course. A presentation should be based on the sources read by everybody plus additional reading, and will be ca. 12-15 min long. Presentation titles appear in the schedule below; you have a choice of one out of two in each case. The team preparing a presentation will circulate to the class a summary of no more than one page prior to the session in which they present.

Your other assignment in this course is writing a **paper** on a topic related to the seminar's subject, broadly defined. At the end of this syllabus there is a list of topics which, however, are mere suggestions meant to give you ideas. You are welcome to pick a title from it or choose something else; if you wish to work on a subject not included in the list please get my approval first. Papers are expected to be based on a minimum of fifteen secondary sources, as well as on primary sources, in translation or in Hebrew/Arabic when practical. As secondary sources, please use scholarly books and professional journal articles, not internet websites (unless the site reproduces a scholarly piece with an identified author). Papers should be about 5,000-word long (\pm 500), i.e., about 25 pages including notes, typed double-space and with generous margins. For format, please consult the *Chicago Manual of Style*. **Papers are due by our last session on Monday, December 10.**

Grading:

Participation in class discussion – 30%
Two oral presentations (15% each) – 30%
Paper – 40%

Schedule

The class is meeting every Monday throughout the term. There will be two changes: the November 26 class will be cancelled; and we will have two make-up sessions, to compensate for that and for the fact that we miss classes on both Labor Day and the Fall Break. These will be scheduled for a mutually convenient time on the weeks of October 8 and 22.

Texts:

Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims; a History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001*. Vintage, 2001.
Walter Laqueur, *The History of Zionism*, Random House, 2003.
Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*. Columbia, 1997.
Neville J. Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism Before World War I*. U. California, 1980.
Kenneth W. Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine, 1917-1939*. North Carolina, 2003.
Baruch Kimmerling & Joel S. Migdal, *The Palestinian People, a History*. Harvard, 2003.

Additional readings are elaborated below.

Course Schedule

I. Arab-Zionist Genesis, 1882-1914

September 3: No class, Labor Day

September 10: Introduction: definitions, historiographical and methodological dilemmas (lecture and discussion)

September 17: Ottoman Palestine: social, economic, and political dynamics (lecture)

Reading

Alexander Schölch, *Palestine in Transformation 1856-1882* (Institute for Palestine Studies, 1993), pp. 47-75.

Muhammad Y. Muslih, *The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism* (Columbia U. Press, 1988), pp. 11-45.

Issa Khalaf, *Politics in Palestine: Arab Factionalism and Social Disintegration 1939-1948* (SUNY Press, 1991), pp. 9-18.

September 24: The Zionists enter Palestine: Zionism's "Arab question" (lecture, presentation & discussion)

Presentation:

- Zionist newcomers: were they up to the shift? **or:**
- Myth and reality in Zionist images of the country's inhabitants

Reading

Laqueur, *History of Zionism*, pp. 3-46, 61-171, 209-234 (parts of chs. 2-4, ch. 5).

Shlomo Avineri, "Zionism as a National Liberation Movement," *Jerusalem Quarterly*, 10 (Winter 1979), pp. 133-144.

Yosef Gorny, *Zionism and the Arabs 1882-1948* (Oxford U. Press 1987), pp. 26-66.

Anita Shapira, *Land and Power: the Zionist Resort to Force, 1881-1948* (Oxford U. Press, 1992), pp. 53-82.

Abigail Jacobson, "Sephardim, Ashkenazim and the 'Arab Question' in pre-First World War Palestine: A Reading of Three Zionist Newspapers," *Middle Eastern Studies* 39, no. 2 (April 2003), pp. 105-130.

October 1: Early Arab reactions to Zionism (presentation & discussion)

Presentation:

- Zionist immigration: a real peril from the start? **or:**
- Nonpolitical and political Palestinian reactions to Zionism

Reading

Morris, *Righteous Victims*, pp. 37-66.

Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism*, pp. 32-57 (Ch. 2); 223-231 (Ch. 11).

Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, pp. 93-117.

Yehoshua Porath, "The Political Awakening of the Palestinian Arabs and Their Leadership toward the End of the Ottoman Period," in Moshe Maoz (ed.), *Studies on Palestine during the Ottoman Period* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1975), pp. 351-381.

II. Foreign Rule and Domestic Rift, to 1936

October 8: No class, Fall Break

[Week of October 8, makeup class]: The Balfour Declaration and new political order (lecture, presentation & discussion)

Presentation:

- The Balfour Declaration as a mirror of British interests; **or:**
- The Mandate document: a balanced recipe for ruling the country?

Reading

Morris, *Righteous Victims*, pp. 67-106.

Mayir Vereté, "The Balfour Declaration and its Makers," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1, January 1970, pp. 48-76.

Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, pp. 145-175.

Bernard Wasserstein, *The British in Palestine* (Blackwell, 1991), pp. 1-17, 73-108.

October 15: Divergent tracks: Arab/Zionist social and economic development (presentation & discussion)

Presentation:

- Palestinian society at the outset: solid or flimsy edifice? **or:**
- Arab and Zionist economies – an unfair contest? Why?

Reading

Khalaf, *Politics in Palestine*, pp. 18-44.

Kenneth W. Stein, "One Hundred Years of Social Change: the Creation of the Palestinian Refugee Problem," in Laurence J. Silberstein (ed.), *New Perspectives on Israeli History* (NYU Press, 1991), pp. 57-81.

Said K. Aburish, *Children of Bethany* (Indiana U. Press, 1988), pp. 18-55.

Jacob Metzer, *The Divided Economy of Mandatory Palestine* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 1-27, 200-212.

October 22: Divergent tracks: political practices (presentation & discussion)

Presentation:

- Arab politics: still a game of notables? **or:**
- Jewish politics: the roots of pluralism

Reading

Yehoshua Porath, *The Emergence of Palestinian-Arab National Movement 1918-1929* (Frank Cass, 1974), pp. 184-240.

Yehoshua Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement from Riots to Rebellion 1929-1939* (Frank Cass, 1977), pp. 49-79, 118-127.

Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage; the Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Beacon Press, 2006), pp. 65-104.

Philip Mattar, "The Mufti of Jerusalem and the Politics of Palestine," *Middle East Journal*, 42, 2 (Spring 1988), pp. 227-240.

[Week of October 22, makeup class]: Divergent tracks: cultural and educational strides (lecture & discussion)

Reading

Ami Ayalon, *Reading Palestine; Printing and Literacy 1900-1948* (U. of Texas Press, 2004), pp. 17-42, 117-130.

Ami Ayalon, "Education and Frustration in Mandatory Palestine: the Sad Story of *Ustadh Na'im Salman*" (unpublished).

Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, *The First Well: a Bethlehem Boyhood*, trans. by Issa J. Boullata (U. of Arkansas Press, 1995), chs. 12, 14, 18-19

October 29: Prelude to 1936 (presentation & discussion)

Presentation:

- Long-term causes of the 1936 outbreak; **or:**
- The 1936 revolt – why so late?

Reading

Morris, *Righteous Victims*, pp. 106-128.

Shapira, *Land and Power*, pp. 186-211.

Stein, *Land Question*, pp. 52-79.

Kenneth w. Stein, "Rural Change and Peasant Destitution: Contributing Causes to the Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936-1939," in Farhad Kazemi and John Waterbury (eds.), *Peasants and Politics in the Modern Middle East* (Florida International University Press, 1991), pp. 143-170 (read esp. pp. 153ff.)

W. F. Abboushi, "Road to Rebellion: Arab Palestine in the 1930s," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 6, 3 (Spring 1977), pp. 23-46.

III. Accelerated Tensions, Strife and Confrontation, 1936-1948

November 5: The 1936-1939 turning point (presentation & discussion)

Presentation:

- The Revolt – against the Jews, the British, or domestic foes? **or:**
- The Revolt's poor results – whose responsibility?

Reading

Morris, *Righteous Victims*, pp. 128-160.

Khalidi, *The Iron Cage*, pp. 105-124.

Yuval Arnon-Ohana, "The Bands in the Palestinian Arab Revolt, 1936-1939: Structure and Organization," *Asian and African Studies*, 15 (1981), pp. 229-247.

Stein, *Land Question*, pp. 202-211, 228-239.

November 12: Shifts in foreign involvement: the British and the Arab states
(presentation & discussion)

Presentation:

- Background and reasons for the British *volte face* on Palestine; **or:**
- Why did Egypt [or: Jordan/Syria/Iraq] enter the Palestine fray?

Reading

Laqueur, *History of Zionism*, pp. 505-533.

G. Sheffer, "Intentions and Results of British Policy in Palestine: Passfield's White Paper," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (1973), pp. 43-60.

Michael J. Cohen, "Appeasement in the Middle East: the British White Paper on Palestine, May 1939," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (September 1973), pp. 571-596.

Yehoshua Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity 1930-1945* (Frank Cass, 1986), pp. 149-175.

November 19: War, Holocaust, and the road to 1948 (presentation & discussion)

Presentation:

- Holocaust relevance to the Palestinian-Zionist equation; **or:**
- Who was Zionism's worst enemy between 1945-1948?

Reading

Morris, *Righteous Victims*, pp. 161-191.

Laqueur, *History of Zionism*, pp. 564-586.

Arieh J. Kochavi, "The Struggle against Jewish Immigration to Palestine," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (July 1998), pp. 147-167.

November 26: No class (class rescheduled)

December 3: Zionist and Palestinian perspectives on 1948

Presentation:

- Zionism/Israel in 1948: "few against many"? **or:**
- 1948 outcome – a foregone conclusion?

Reading

Morris, *Righteous Victims*, pp. 191-196, 215-218.

Benny Morris, "Revisiting the Palestinian Exodus of 1948," in Eugene Rogan and Avi Shlaim (eds.), *The War for Palestine; Rewriting the History of 1948* (Cambridge U. Press, 2001), pp. 37-59.

Shapira, *Land and Power*, pp. 353-370.

Musa Alami, "The Lesson of Palestine," *Middle East Journal*, 3, 4 (October 1949), pp. 373-405.

Rashid Khalidi, "The Palestinians and 1948: the Underlying Causes of Failure," in Rogan-Shlaim, *War for Palestine*, pp. 12-36.

Issa Khalaf, "The Reasons for the Disintegration of Palestinian Society with an Emphasis on the Persistence of Factionalism," in his *Politics in Palestine: Arab Factionalism and Social Disintegration, 1939-1948* (SUNY Press, 1991), pp. 231-248.

December 10: Concluding discussion: Was the Zionist-Arab conflict inevitable? Are the results of 1948 reversible?

Reading

Laqueur, pp. 589-599. [more – TBA]

Suggested Paper Topics

1. Zionism as one of several debated solutions to the “Jewish problem”
2. Zionism’s “Arab problem” before World War I, perceptions and conceived solutions
3. Early Palestinian-Arab responses to Zionism, 1882-1914
4. The Balfour Declaration as a milestone in the country’s history
5. The shift from Ottoman to British rule: implications for Arab-Jewish relations
6. Were the country’s British rulers equally obligated to the Jews and the Arabs?
7. Zionist solutions to “the Arab question” during the Mandate
8. Sir Herbert Samuel, profile of a British High Commissioner
9. Attempts at Arab-Zionist dialogue, 1920-1948
10. Arab land-sales to the Zionists during the Mandate: practice and results
11. Palestinian norms of politics: an obstacle to Palestinian nationalism?
12. Jewish and Arab education in Mandatory Palestine, a comparison
13. Jewish and Arab economies in Mandatory Palestine, a comparison
14. Background and results of the 1929 riots
15. Inner Palestinian tensions at the background to the 1936 Palestinian Revolt
16. The Mufti Hajj Amin al-Husayni as a national Palestinian leader, 1920-1948
17. David Ben-Gurion as a Zionist leader, 1920-1948
18. The 1936-1939 revolt: who gained, who lost, and why?
19. The 1937 and 1947 Partition Plans, a comparison
20. Was a Jewish state a *fait accompli* by 1939?
21. Analysis of Jewish and Arab responses to the 1947 Partition Plan
22. Attitudes of neighboring Arab states (pick one or two) to Zionism before 1948 and causes for their entering the Palestine conflict
23. The 1948 War: outcome analysis
24. The Palestinian *nakbah* – Britain’s share in the responsibility
25. Creation of the Palestinian refugee problem and the debate about it
26. US policy on the Palestine question, 1920-1948: considerations, practice, results