

# 1948: WAR OF INDEPENDENCE/NAKBA

# The Diplomatic Battle (February-November 1947)

- ▣ End of Second World War
- ▣ UNSCOP is established
- ▣ November 29, 1947 UNGA adopts partition Resolution 181 by 2/3 vote
- ▣ Who is eligible to vote in UNGA?



# Was the Naqba planned or spontaneous?

- ▣ 1. Two competing explanations:
  - ▣ (a) Arab version: planned and systematic expulsion.
  - ▣ (b) Jewish version: voluntarily following Arab orders.
- ▣ 2. in 1987, Benny Morris's *The Birth o the Palestinian Refugee Problem* is published.
- ▣ 3. “Both single-cause explanations are fallacious,” & Naqba was “multi-staged, varied, complex.” (p.43)
- ▣ 4. Misplaced emphasis on intentionality.

# CIVIL WAR: FIRST STAGE (NOVEMBER 1947-MARCH 1948)

1. Relations of forces (ALA, Haganah, IZL)
2. Gradually expanding, continuous, small-scale, small unit terrorism, counterterrorism, mostly along roads. Haganah preference for defense and directed retaliation, but IZL initiates attacks.
3. Palestinian initiative and upper hand but absence of logistics and lack of trust in AHC.
4. Western Jerusalem, supplied by convoys, is on the verge of collapse.
4. Demoralization is expressed in flight of wealthy Palestinians, opposed by leadership.

# CIVIL WAR: SECOND STAGE (APRIL--MID-MAY 1948)

1. US seeks to revoke partition resolution.
2. Hagana goes on offensive (goal: to crush Palestinian forces, in anticipation of pan-Arab invasion).
3. Plan D (March 10, 1948). Goal: to secure areas earmarked by UN for the Jewish state. Method: conquer and destroy hostile Palestinian villages. Though not explicit eviction plan, in fact, gave individual commanders authority to do so.
4. IZL massacre of Dir Yassin villagers in early April. Retaliation against Hebrew University convoy. Flight of poor Palestinian villagers.



# CIVIL WAR: SECOND STAGE (APRIL--MID-MAY 1947)

5. Fall of mixed towns: Tiberias, Haifa, Jaffa, Safed.
6. Expulsion of Palestinian villagers; looting of Palestinian property by Jewish troops & neighbors.
7. Arab attempts to gain advantage on eve of invasion: conquest of Etzion Bloc by Arab Legion (who protect Jewish POWs).
8. US suggests trusteeship to replace partition.
9. In People's Administration: chances assessed 50/50; in vote of 6:4 decide to declare Jewish State.

# THE PAN-ARAB INVASION FIRST PHASE OF WAR: (MAY 15-JUNE 11, 1948)

1. General Sawfat's October 1947 Report ignored; instead Arab Liberation Army is raised.
2. Arab states' reservations about invasion.
3. Palestinian and ALA collapse; reluctant invasion.
4. Limited goals of Arab invasion but public bluster.
5. 'Collusion across the Jordan.'
6. Myth of 'few against many.'





"The Accomplished Fact": "The Jew" is trodden down under the boots of "the Egyptian army," "the Arab Legion," and the armies of "Iraq," "Syria," and "Lebanon" (*Rouse-al-Yusuf*, 20 October 1948)

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# THE PAN-ARAB INVASION

## FIRST PHASE OF WAR:

### (MAY 15-JUNE 11, 1948)

7. Jordanian Arab Legion takes West Bank & after Palestinian appeals East Jerusalem & Old City
8. Thereafter Arab Legion remains on defensive
9. Egyptian air attacks on Tel Aviv & take only two kibbutzim along invasion route & bog down 18 miles from Tel Aviv
10. Iraqi and Syrian invasion forces cross Jordan & establish bridgehead but are halted
11. Four-pronged assault contained with heavy Jewish losses, Arab initiative squandered.

# THE FIRST TRUCE (JUNE 11-JULY 8, 1948)

1. Both sides needed a respite.
2. Hagana absorbed & IDF's manpower doubles to 65,000.
3. Disbanding IZL in response to 'Altalena Affair.'
3. Israelis weapons import violate weapons embargo & dramatically change strategic balance.



# SECOND PHASE OF WAR: (JULY 8-18, 1948)

1. Second round of war lasts only 10 days.
2. Southern Front: indecisive attacks & counterattacks.
3. Northern Front: Israeli initiatives, Nazareth is conquered & ALA HQ removed to Lebanon.
4. Central Front: Major Israeli initiative, conquest of Ramla & Lydda (expulsion of its population).
5. Initiative on Israeli side

# The Naqba in Lydda

- ▣ A chapter by journalist Ari Shavit highlights a contradiction:
- ▣ A Jewish youth village for orphans in the Valley of Lydda, a practical humanist utopia & good relations with neighboring Arab villages.
- ▣ One of the most terrible massacres and expulsions took place in the 1948 war in the town of Lydda.
- ▣ Initially a zone of restricted warfare.
- ▣ In Phase Two of 1948 War Lydda is conquered (July 11/12), confusion, massacres, and expulsion of 70,000 Palestinian residents
- ▣ Comparison with Haifa (April 22) & Nazareth (July 16).



# THE SECOND TRUCE (JULY 18-OCTOBER 15, 1948)

1. Barring refugee return & near-systematic destruction of Palestinian villages after conquest & flight/expulsion.
2. Allocation of Arab lands to older & newly established Jewish settlements & at Transfer Committee's recommendation settling olim in abandoned Arab neighborhoods.
3. Expansion beyond partition borders.
4. Israel wishes to break deadlock: no war, no peace, and no truce & continued mobilization.

# THIRD PHASE OF WAR: (OCTOBER 15, 1948- MARCH 10, 1949)

1. Israeli cabinet nixes Jordanian option & decides on attack against Egypt.
2. Encircle Egyptian troops in Faluja Pocket; conquest of Beersheba, Majdal & defeat of Egyptian invasion.
3. In response to ALA provocation Israeli operation to conquer central Galilee (new expulsions but some local commanders leave residents in place).
4. Last military operation in March 1949: conquest of Negev Desert to the shores of the Red Sea.

# THE ARMISTICE AGREEMENTS (JANUARY-JULY 1949)

1. War of 1948 formally ends with armistice agreements signed in Rhodes between Israel and four Arab belligerents.
2. Israeli-Egyptian armistice talks open in Rhodes. Encircled Egyptian permitted to withdraw, Egypt retains Gaza Strip. .
4. Failure of 1949 Lausanne Conference: early hope of compromise but no return to partition borders, no acceptance of Israel's new boundaries, rejection of refugees' return, peace accords signed.





# CONCLUSIONS

1. As war progressed Israeli goals expanded from survival & independence to territorial expansion & Jewish demographic majority (expulsion continued into early 1950s.).
2. Roughly 710,000 out of around 900,000 Palestine Arabs fled or were expelled from the territories that became the State of Israel. They were not allowed to return & were not resettled.
3. No Palestinian State is established.
4. Both nationalist movements had 'expulsionist' ideologies. Palestinians committed two atrocities: Haifa Oil Refinery & defenders of Kfar Etzion. Jews committed more atrocities since victory gave them more opportunities.
5. A dozen Jewish settlements conquered & over 400 Palestinian were razed.
6. Anti-Jewish measures & flight of Jews from Arab countries.
7. Arab leaders overthrown ( King Abdullah assassinated).