Kenneth W. Stein, "Zionist Land Acquisition: a core element in establishing Israel," in Michael J. Cohen, (ed.) **The British Mandate in Palestine A Centenary Volume, 1920-2020**, Routledge, 2020, pp. 189-204.

Linking People to the Land[1]: An Overview

To make a modern Jewish state unfold, two physical requirements were necessary: a population and a territory. Immigration and land acquisition made Zionism a reality. Both were oxygen to nation building. Establishing settlements, creating institutions, laying water lines and roads, expanding warehouses, erecting and staffing schools, creating medical facilities, growing urban areas, developing self-governing political, social, cultural and economic institutions, and, reviving Hebrew as a spoken language reflected proactive dynamism. For Jews living abroad, successful transformations or setbacks in Palestine sparked interest and attention. Changes in the Palestine landscape persuaded many to consider or abandon a commitment to support Zionism. With each person absorbed and each land parcel acquired or redeemed, Zionism's purpose moved towards fulfillment. When another Jew settled in Palestine or an Arab seller sold a parcel of land to a Jewish buyer, Zionism continued to breathe. A symbiotic linkage existed between Jewish land purchase and Jewish immigration, Chaim Weizmann wrote to British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain in 1939, 'Land was the basis of the [Jewish] National Home; we were not coming to Palestine to remain town-dwellers, but were striving to return to the soil. Land was fundamental to our work. More than this, agricultural settlement was the main basis of our work and had a direct bearing on immigration.' [2]

By the results tallied in 1949, with Israel signing its fourth armistice agreement with an Arab neighbor (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria), and with Israel's admission into the United Nations, the process of linking a population to the territory had proven sufficient. From 1882 when the modern Zionist

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1 Kenneth W. Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine, 1917-1939*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1984 is the original monographic basis upon which this research was conducted 50 years ago. Since then, some 130 monthly reports and protocols of the Minutes of the Jewish National Fund on Zionist land policy, 1922-1948 were extensively used in researching and writing this article. Other sources used, included Palestinian Arab newspapers, British Colonial Office and Foreign Office files, Land Registry and Land Department files of the Palestine Administration, and political department files of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. Colonial Office material is particularly extensive in its coverage of the 1940 LTR their attempted application and circumventions.

2 Remarks by Chaim Weizmann to British Prime Minister Chamberlain, 2 February 1939, Central Zionist Archives (CZA) Jewish Agency for Palestine, Political Series S25/file 7642.

chronological clock started ticking to May 15, 1948 when the state of Israel was declared, the Jewish population in Palestine grew from 25,000 to 650,000; in the same period Jewish land acquisition grew from several hundred thousand dunams (a dunam equals a quarter of an acre) to 2 million dunams. In the period from 1882 to January 1948, 315 Jewish rural settlements were established in Palestine. [3] By 1939, before one-third of world Jewry was destroyed in the Holocaust, a geographic and demographic nucleus for a Jewish state was present in Palestine. By that date, 450,000 Jews and 67% of all the land Jews would purchase were already in Jewish hands. By the same year, Arabs in Palestine and elsewhere in the Middle East were fully cognizant of the reality that the Zionists were on the verge of creating a state. Arabs saw, knew, and wrote about Zionism on the doorstep of entering the national home. By then and in the decade that followed, Zionists built rural settlements, created urban centers, suburbs of neighborhoods, social, cultural and political institutions, and elements of an infrastructure to support a nascent economy, banking system, and fledgling self-defense forces. Jewish geographic development concentrated primarily on the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv road, along the coastal plain from Gaza to Haifa, from Haifa south through the Jezreel Valley to the Sea of Galilee and then, vectoring north past Huleh Lake to the Lebanese-Syrian border. The geographic and demographic footprint for a Jewish state did not concentrate on settling or buying land except in a few places in the Judean and Samarian foothills, in the upper central Galilee, or south of Beersheba. [4]

Physical growth of the modern Jewish national home began in the years prior to the First Zionist Congress held in 1897 under Theodor Herzl's choreography in Basle, Switzerland. Tens of thousands of Jewish immigrants primarily from eastern European and Middle Eastern origins, some supported by Jewish philanthropists established small settlements as they trickled into Palestine from the 1880s forward. Affirming a commitment to build a Jewish State, [5] the World Zionist Organization established financial and land purchasing institutions to aid in

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[3] Kenneth W. Stein, *Forming a Nucleus for the Jewish State 1882-1947*, August 2019, Center for Israel Education, **https://israeled.org/forming-a-nucleus-for-the-jewish-state-1882-1947/** By carefully placing 315 Jewish settlements on a series of successive maps of Palestine, covering the period from 70CE to 1947, coded maps and verbal histories provide clarity on where and over what period of time to Jewish nation building took place.

[4] Ibid. A comparison of the 1947 suggested areas for the Jewish state in the UN Partition Plan for Palestine of November 29, 1947 with the map of Jewish settlements substantially mirrors previous Jewish land purchase concentrations, pp. 32-33.

[5] Kenneth W. Stein, 'Theodor Herzl's Jewish State; Explanation and Analysis,' Center for Israel Education, June 2010, **https://israeled.org/herzl-the-jewish-question/**

the immigration and land purchasing processes. Between 1882 and 1918, 58 small settlements, *kibbutzim*, *moshavim*, and urban areas were established. Before the 1917 Balfour Declaration, modern Jewish land purchase totaled some 450,000 dunams, one-quarter of the entire total acquired by May 1948. By the time Palestine under the Ottoman Empire fell to the conquering British army, the Palestine Colonization Association (1891), the Jewish National Fund (1901), the Jewish Colonial Trust (1899) and its subsidiary the Anglo-Palestine Bank (1902), a Palestine Office of the World Zionist Organization (1907) and Jewish land purchasing agents such as Yehoshua Hankin, Arthur Ruppin, and Jacob Thon were actively engaged in land purchase and land settlement before political sanction to build the national home was secured at the end of the First World War. During and after the war, critically important lobbying achievements were achieved by a host of Zionist leaders, among them Nahum Syrkin, Menachem Ussischkin and Chaim Weizmann. Weizmann garnered particular successes in representing Zionist interests at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference where he made persuasive arguments. His lobbying resulted in the inclusion of portions of the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee inside Britain's Palestine geographic jurisdiction, and in procuring British government sanction of a Jewish Agency recognized as the official Zionist liaison with the budding Jewish community. [6] Enormously valuable for future Zionist operations in Palestine was inclusion of Article VI of the Palestine Mandate. It stated that the British Administration while ensuring 'the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced [HMG] shall facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions and shall encourage, in co-operation with the Jewish Agency referred to in Article 4, close settlement by Jews on the land, including State lands and waste lands not required for public purposes'.[7] Explicitly stated prerogatives for the Jewish community in Palestine served as an uninterrupted standard base line for land purchase and unimpeded immigration. Throughout the next quarter century of governing the Mandate, Britain would waver or dither from time to time from the intentions of Article 6. What did not vary from the earliest days of Zionist immigration and land purchase in Palestine, was an unequivocal recognition by Jewish immigrants, Zionist leaders and those engaged in land acquisition that the Arab population in Palestine and eventually elsewhere in the Middle East disliked vigorously and opposed violently

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[6] Meyer W. Weisgal (ed.), *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann*, July 1920-December 1921, Volume X, Series A, Transaction Books, Rutgers, New Jersey, and Israel Universities Press, Jerusalem, 1977.

[7] Great Britain. *Mandate for Palestine*, July 24,1922, **https://israeled.org/resources/documents/mandate-palestine/**

Jewish presence and Zionism's objective. [8] Likewise, Zionist leaders and land purchasers remained constantly aware that there were endless sources of Arab sellers willing to part with dunam, after plot, after parcel. Quickly, the Jewish community in Palestine realized that public Arab opposition to Jewish state building was thoroughly inconsistent with an unending readiness to sell lands in Palestine.

Entwined Objectives: Immigration and Land Purchase

The politics of Jewish immigration and land purchase in Palestine differed. Both were dependent upon British policy and the availability of funds. With immigration, Zionist politicians had to calculate the availability of potential Jewish immigrants. With land acquisition, there never was a question of Arab land availability or willingness of Arabs to sell their land, or proximity of a particular land area to link to a specific geopolitical or economic objective. In the immigration sphere, the Zionist movement had to cope with levels of apathy and downright opposition to Zionism from potential immigrants. Zionism as a concept was often challenged by many Jews throughout the world. Many wanted no part of political Zionism or cared little about shouldering what might be a harsh life in Palestine. From 1920 to 1948, Jewish immigration ebbed and flowed according to any number of other variables: Palestine's economy, changing political opinion of any number of British officials and politicians who fluctuated between pro and anti-Zionist extremes. There were swings in communal tranquility and civil revolt. These unfolded in the days, months or years of short, sporadic or prolonged communal violence—in 1920, 1921, 1928, 1929, 1933, 1936-1939, and especially from 1945 to the end of the Mandate in 1948. The British inevitably placed blame for communal unrest on the shoulders of the developing national home; they repeatedly considered to either threaten or throttle both Zionist essentials. Eventually, the British wanted and needed to protect Arabs who were facilitating the provision of lands to Jews. When confronted with stoppage of either immigration or land purchases, Zionists countered repeatedly with innovative circumventions.

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[8] See Alan Dowty, 'A Question that Outweighs All Others': Yitzhak Epstein and Zionist Recognition of the Arab Issue,' *Israel Studies*, Vol 6, No.1 (Spring 2001), pp.34-54; Anita Shapira, *Land and Power: The Zionist Resort to Force 1881-1948,* New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp.40-52; *Yosef Gorny, Zionism and the Arabs, 1882-1948* (Oxford, UK, 1987), pp 29-39; Arthur Ruppin, 'The Relationship of the Jews to the Arabs,' *Der Jude*, Vol 3, (1918-1919), pp. 453-457; and, Hans Kohn,'Concerning the Arab Question,' *Der Jude* Vol. 4, (1919-1920), pp. 567-569.

In 1921, one year after the British civilian administration commenced in Palestine, Jewish immigration was suspended. Nonetheless, Jews continued to trickle into Palestine. In the 1922 Palestine Mandate, the British government provided a broad definition of 'close settlement of Jews on the land'. In the same year, Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill in the 1922 British White Paper defined Jewish immigration for Palestine according to the highly ambiguous definition of the 'economic capacity of the country to absorb new immigrants', whereupon the administration proceeded to set up categories according to whether potential immigrants brought their own funds, could be part of a labor schedule, and other limitations. After seven relatively calm years, violence erupted in 1929 with hundreds of Jews and Arabs killed. From then through 1934, Britain established or sent to Palestine half a dozen commissions of inquiry that issued reports (Shaw, Hope-Simpson, Johnson-Crosbie, French Reports, and Landless Arab Inquiry) ascertaining that Jewish immigration and land purchase, the growth of the Jewish national home, and Arab anger at Jewish presence and growth were causes for communal violence. These reports notwithstanding, no real policy changes were made in the 1930s. Threatened but not throttled, Jewish immigration and land purchase continued. After the outbreak of the 1936-39 communal disturbances, Great Britain in Palestine dramatically changed policy course. In those three years, Zionists sensed the growth of the Zionist enterprise would be truncated, so Jewish leaders planned accordingly. Land purchase and illegal immigration or 'Aliyah Bet' accelerated where possible. When in the 1939 British (White Paper) policy statement, London decided to restrict Jewish immigration to 75,000 for at least the next five years and limit Palestinian Arab land sales and Jewish land purchase, Zionist decision-makers remained undeterred from hurdling forward. While growth limits to the national home remained in force until the state was declared on May 15, 1948, neither Zionist leadership nor the Zionist rank-in-file observed the restrictions, nor as the record shows, were British administrators capable of stopping Jewish physical or demographic growth.

Great Britain intended to govern Palestine with an obligation to both Jewish and Arab communities: the promise made was to facilitate both the Jewish national home while protecting the civil and religious rights of the Arab community. In Policy White Papers offered in 1922, 1930, and 1939, and in the dozens of reports it wrote in the period and afterwards, it kept on defining the application or the applicability of duality as a policy. Duality failed because the obligation 'to establish a Jewish national home was not equivalent to protecting the civil and

religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities.' The first statement was a granted right; the second, a statement of bestowed sufferance. Not only were the obligations made and undertaken in unequal portions, the two communities differed in so many dramatic ways. Among others, they diverged in socio-economic composition, political outlooks, educational levels, access to capital, organizations that served respective communal aspirations, leadership cadre, and capacities to change short-term tactics to fit unalterable long-term strategic objectives. The Arabs lacked a diaspora population that took an interest in Palestine; Zionists over time built a small but committed number of Jews passionately dedicated to Zionism's growth.

Jewish nation building: Arab sources and motivations for land sales

Britain had greater success in curbing immigration than in stopping Arab land sales. London turned off immigration briefly in 1921, threatened to do so in the 1929-1931 period and then actually limited Jewish immigration to a trickle in 1940. It closed Palestine's maritime borders and used the Royal Navy to prevent illegal immigrant ships from landing on the Mediterranean coast. Britain had much less success in the land sphere. It could not stop Arab willingness or readiness to sell land. Unlike immigrants, land transactions were not visible; they could easily go unnoticed, particularly when it was in the mutual interest of Arab sellers and Jewish buyer to keep transactions private. In the land sphere, Britain either did not have the numbers or trained personnel to thwart subterfuge or interactive cunning. The 1940 Land Transfer Regulations (LTR) were rigorously circumvented by legal ruses of many types. Only in the land sphere could the Arabs themselves personally say 'no' to Zionism and refuse to participate in a process that ultimately alienated many from their own patrimony. Arab offers to sell emanated from landowners who resided inside and outside the boundaries of Palestine, from large and small landowners alike; from Arab political leaders, well-to-do members of upper-classes, whether of older or younger generations, from middle class independent owners farming or grazing on their own lands, and peasant classes. All understood the consequences of land sales. The Palestinian Arab press and Arab politicians recognized the implications of complicity in land sales, especially by Palestinian Arabs themselves.

For Zionism's first fifty years, the major source of Jewish land purchases were owners or families with large holdings. When most of the large Arab land areas

were sold to Jewish buyers, Arab peasants working the land were usually small in number. For example, in the purchase of the 200,000 dunams of the Sursock lands, there were less than 700 Arab tenants working there or perhaps no more than 5,000 people total. When the JNF purchased Shatta village lands in the Beisan area in 1929-1930 from the Ra'is and Abyad families in Haifa, there were 900 Arabs living on 14,000 dunams. In 1929-30, when the JNF purchased 30,000 dunams of land from the Beirut Tayan family at Wadi Hawarith and Wadi Qabbani, lands located south of Hedera, known also as Emek Hepher, there were 1200 Bedouin families living there. The Sursocks like other Arab real estate investors bought land for potential asset appreciation. They accumulated large quantities of land in Syria and Palestine primarily from the middle of the 19th century forward. When the Ottoman Empire sought to increase revenue for the central government's reply to European pressures to pay its debts, the Sultan's administration instituted the 1858 Ottoman Land Law and 1864 Ottoman Land Registration Laws. Both were meant to generate revenue by having peasants register their own lands. Instead, most peasants lived with anxiety of rapacious taxation demands and conscription if their names appeared on government rolls. In seeking anonymity, the unwillingness to vigorously pursue the registration of lands in their names made it easier for urban notables, merchants, moneylenders, local Ottoman officials and religious leaders to lay claim to their lands and to expand their holdings. [9] Constantly facing annual debts, these same peasants exchanged traditional rights to work lands for immediate essentials: a plow animal, seeds, or funds to make it through a year. Frequently, peasants would sell their crop yields in advance of a crop-planting season or in advance of a harvest, and if the harvest did not materialize, either additional peasant insolvency ensued or rights to land use or ownership in a village were exchanged for debt relief. Families with large areas under their control continued to hold sway in most of the urban areas of Palestine in the latter part of the 19th and 20th centuries, and many easily evolved into the elite urban families that dominated the Palestinian Arab national movement in the 1920s, and in some cases passed on to their offspring in the 1930s and 1940s.

According to the statistics of the *1931 Census for Palestine*, there were 1,035,821 persons, consisting of 759,712 Moslems, 91,338Christians, and 174, 610 Jews, and a small percentage of others. Among the Arab

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[9] Philip Khoury, *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism The Politics of Damascus*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 26-29; Beshara Douumani, Rediscovering Palestine, Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700-1900, Berkeley, 1995, p. 159. For a more detailed history of the evolution of land ownership, land registration and land use in Palestine, see Stein, *The Land Question*, pp. 9-34.

population, 85 percent resided or earned a living in the rural sector, which meant buying and selling land had the potential to affect the immediate well-being of the vast majority of Palestine's Arab population. Among the Arabs, there were 440,000 persons who were supported by ordinary cultivation, of whom 108,765 were earners and 331,319 were dependents. Of the earners, 5,311 derived their livelihood from the rents of agricultural land, or what otherwise might be termed the landowning/political elites, and 63,190 persons who either cultivated their own land, were agricultural laborers or worked on someone else's land as tenants. [10] Additionally corrosive factors contributed to the Palestinian peasants' persistent impoverishment. Rural devastation from World War I left the countryside in the hill and valley regions despoiled by marching armies. [11] Trees were uprooted, plough animals requisitioned and killed and crops either destroyed, not planted or harvested. In 1926, there was cattle plague that hurt peasant agriculture. Successively bad agricultural yields in the early 1930s made subsistence even more difficult than normal. Periodic rural violence, particularly in 1936-1939 period left peasant farmers at the mercy of bands that terrified the countryside, actually causing a small number of minor landowners to sell the lands, take their small financial gains, and leave Palestine. Impromptu terrorist bands requisitioned foodstuffs, seized animals, ruined crops and directly pushed local villagers deeper into the arms of avaricious moneylenders. [12] For centuries, two long-term rural practices enfeebled the economic well-being of Palestine's agricultural classes. Most crippling to peasant agricultural output, besides man made hardships was the self-imposed village and peasant practice of moving from land parcel to land parcel every two, three or five year. This *musha'* system of land tenure or land use was characterized by every Arab, Zionist, or British land expert as extraordinarily debilitating because the peasant avoided making long term improvements on his lands, and remained perennially dependent on credit

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[10] E. Mills, *Census of Palestine*, 1931, pp.18-19 and Class I. Production of Raw Materials, Vol 1, Palestine, 1932, p.289.

[11] Kenneth W. Stein, 'Palestine's Rural Economy, 1917-1939,' *Studies in Zionism*, Vol. 8, no. 1 (1987), pp. 25-49.

[12] Information Center of the Palmach, *The Hebrew Defender*, *Documents and Personalities in the 1936-39 Riots,* April 1944.Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem, Israel. For a detailed assessment of the impact of the 1936-1939 violence on the Palestinian rural economy, see Gershon Agronsky, 'Palestine Arab Economy Undermined by Disturbances,' 20 January 1939, CZA, S25/10.091 or, **https://israeled.org/resources/documents/gershon-agronsky-palestine-arab-economy-undermined-by-disturbances/**

sources often outside of a village that reverberated into 'monetary exploitations.'[13] In February 1930, Heinrich Margulies of the Anglo-Palestine Bank described one example of Arab landlord pressure tactics placed on peasants with *musha'* held lands. Margulies noted that the peasant had no way of knowing the size of his total holding. He was tempted by the effendi, or intermediaries price offering of 20 piasters per dunam. The effendi accumulated larger areas then sold land to Jewish buyers for about six pounds per dunam. 'Those who relinquish their land in this manner often fall victim to poverty, all the more so because the *effendis* chased them from the land in a ruthless and brutal manner.' [14]

Massive Arab peasant indebtedness to urban notables and merchants carried over from Ottoman times until the end of the Mandate. Urban notables, among them merchants, landowners, religious leaders, and others in Palestinian Arab society applied usurious rates of interests, causing peasants to accumulate and live almost perennially under massive debts, constantly beholden to a well-to-do non-resident Arab debt-note holder. Moneylenders often held promissory notes that showed that the borrower received a larger sum than actually paid to him. [15] Notables in Palestine styled themselves paternalistically as caretakers of the peasantry; they controlled the peasant as their sources of credit. [16] More than caretakers, Palestinian property owners who may have also held peasant debt, fashioned themselves as a privileged segment of the notable elite. In 1934, A.L. Tibawi requested permission from the Nablus British district officer of Samaria, H.M. Foot to move his tenants off his land without providing them with required monetary compensation to do so. Tibawi, in his petition to the government, which he won, argued that the three tenants' income was far less than that cultivated by the hired laborers. And that 'the tenants not only ceased to contribute their share to the income [from the land], but also failed to pay the government taxes. The tenants' presence threatened his future with serious material loss. Landlords must maintain

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[13] Yaacov Shimoni, *Areve Eretz Yisrael, [Arabs of Eretz-Yisrael*], Tel Aviv, Am Oved, Chapter 9; *Census for Palestine*, Vol 1, p. 284; Stein, 'Palestine's Rural Economy'. And Mills, *Census of Palestine,* p. 284.

[14] Mr. Heinrich Margulies of the Anglo-Palestine Bank to Mr. Felix Rosenblueth at the Jewish Agency, 5 February 1930, CZA, S25/7619.

[15] Government of Palestine, *Palestine Royal Commission Memorandum 12: Rural Indebtedness*, Palestine, 1937.

[16] Charles Anderson, *From Petition to Confrontation: The Palestinian National Movement and the Rise of Mass Politics, 1929-1939,* unpublished doctoral dissertation, New York University, 2013, pp. 356-358.

a high standard of living which would not be fair to compare to that of the tenants.' [17]

Detailed summaries of potential land areas available for purchase were unusally the first agenda items noted in the monthly JNF reports or protocols of the JNF Directorate meetings. A close reading of those 150 JNF reports/transcripts covering the 1922 to 1948 period reveal JNF land purchase considerations: quantities of land available, political climate, potential buyers, varieties of land to be purchased, water access, geographic location, security in an area, ability of land brokers and intermediaries to ply their trade in fear or safety, whether Arab peasants were working the lands, if compensation was paid or would be paid to them to vacate lands, and broader strategic issues such as existing or pending British policies. [18] On 26 November 1926, while consummating the final sales agreements from the previous year from the Sursock family from Beirut of more than 176,000 dunams in the Jezreel Valley, Yehoshua Hankin, the key land agent working for the JNF at the time, told the assembled that there were three million dunams. [19] Over the next five years, Hankin would be involved in purchasing large tracts of land, among them, 30,000 dunams in Emek Hefer- Wadi Hawarath/Wadi Qabbani south of Hedera, and in Shatta in the Beisan Valley. From 1929 to 1936, Jews acquired the largest amount of Arab land in any six-year period, 293,374 dunams, except from 1921-1925, when 368,526 dunams were purchased, which then included the 1925 Sursock purchases.[20] In the early 1930s, small Arab owner parcels grew as a significant source for Jewish land purchase. [21] Larger estates were no longer as plentiful, Jewish demand for land continued; Jewish immigration increased and with it came small capital sums. The Arab rural sector suffered a series of terrible crop yields, and land prices steadily inched upward. The more

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[17] Abdul Latif Tibawi vs. Tenants Kamil Amrur, Abdul Fattah Amrur, and Abdul Hafiz Amrur, File TR/ 114/33. Tibawi to Assistant District Commissioner, Nablus, November 16, 1934, Box 3922, Israel State Archives, Jerusalem, Israel.

[18] For a detailed review of JNF land purchase decision-making please see, Kenneth W. Stein, 'The Jewish National Fund: Land Purchase Methods and Priorities, 1924-1939', *Middle Eastern Studies*, (April 1984), vol. 20, no. 4, pp.190-205.

[19] Minutes of the JNF meeting, 22 November 1926, CZA, KKL 5, Jerusalem, Israel.

[20] Stein, *The Land Question,* Appendix 2, pp. 226-227.

[21] Ibid. Chapter 6, The Palestine Land and Land Registries Department statistics, Box 3784/file 7, Israel State Archives and the Minutes of the JNF monthly meetings confirm the increase of smaller Arab parcels sold to Jewish buyers, pp. 174-182.

small parcels that were acquired, or consolidated by land brokers, the larger the number of agricultural workers, grazers, day laborers or tenant-farmers were immediately effected by Jewish land purchase. The British recognized the problem of more and more rural Arabs being displaced by Jewish purchase when they instituted an inconclusive Landless Arab inquiry in 1933. In the early 1930s, when Jewish land purchase reached its peak, the British administration implemented laws to prevent Arab peasants from leaving lands without alternative land or monetary compensation to vacate lands either before or after a transfer was negotiated or consummated. The administration plugged loopholes in the Protection of Cultivator's Ordinances in 1931, 1932, 1933 and 1936,[22] and implemented The 1931 Law of Execution (Amendment) Ordinance designed to prevent the eviction of tenants through satisfaction of a mortgage debt as occurred a year earlier at Zerin village near Jenin. [23] On the eve of the 1936-39 disturbances, the Palestine Administration was about to implement legislation that would guarantee an Arab land owner a minimum 'lot viable,' but the outbreak of violence shelved 'small-owner' protection permanently.

Palestinian Arab political leaders participated in land sales to Jews throughout the Mandate period. Of the eighty-nine members elected to the Arab Executive between 1920 and June 1928, at least one-quarter were identified, personally or through immediate family members, as having directly participated in land sales to Jews. Of the forty-eight members of the Arab Executive in attendance at the Seventh Arab Congress in June 1928, at least fourteen had by that date been involved in land sales. [24] Members of the various Palestine Arab delegations to London in 1921, 1929, 1930, and 1939 appear to have been deeply involved in the land-sale process. For many of the individuals who sold land at one point in their lives, that reality did not preclude a previous or subsequent hostility to land sales. In the Palestinian Arab community, efforts in 1931-1932 to raise funds to buy lands from potential Arab sellers to Jews to deflect those sales to Jewish buyers proved a

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[22] Kenneth W. Stein, 'Legal Protection and Circumvention of Rights for Cultivators in Mandatory Palestine,' in Joel S. Migdal (ed.) *Palestinian Society and Politics*, Princeton University Press, 1980, pp. 233-260.

[23] See Zirin Village Land Sales documents assembled by British District Officer, Hilmi Husayni, JN Stubbs and AN Law, both of the Lands Department in the Palestine Administration, Box 3511/file 1, Israel State Archives, Jerusalem, Israel and **https://israeled.org/resources/documents/zirin-village-land-sales/**

[24] Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine*, Appendix 3, pp. 228-239. This list of Arab sellers engaged with Jewish buyers was collected in the early 1980s and has not been updated to include additional names who were mentioned in documents, sources, and other research on land in Palestine that has been completed since 1984, especially names and areas of sale as they appeared in JNF Directorate meeting minutes in the 1930s and 1940s.

non-starter. The Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al-Husayni, in an effort to stifle increased Arab land sales to Jews, issued a *fatwa* invoking religious threats against any Moslem who sold or engaged in selling land to Zionists. Those who did sell lands to Jews were labeled as infidels, not to be accorded the rights of burial in Muslim cemeteries. The threat proved ineffective. In the early 1930s when the British sought to see how widespread Arab land sales to Jews had become in an effort to find a number for Arabs made landless by Jewish purchase, the British High Commissioner and his staff were stone-walled by Arab notables in providing such a list. Zionists, for their part too, kept such information from the British, seeking to protect the anonymity of past sellers so that they might be participants in future sales. Noticeably, from the early 1930s forward, Palestinian Arab newspapers reported and editorialized about increased activity of Arab land brokers and land sale. Articles and editorials vigorously criticized Palestinian leaders for their failures to answer what were seen as impending threats to the Arabs future in Palestine. What follows is only a small sample of the anger, despair, and fear expressed in Palestinian Arab newspapers of the time. Particularly noteworthy is that these sentiments appeared almost daily in the five years prior to the April 1936 outbreak of violence. In *Rural Change and Peasant Destitution: Contributing Causes to the Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936-1939*, I made the case for how land sales, British dithering, Zionist relentlessness in the land and immigration spheres, and Arab political ineptitude contributed to the three years of violence. [25]

> *al-Ikdam*, 19 January 1931- 'We are selling our lands to Jews without any remorse. Land brokers are busy day and night with their odious trade without feeling any shame. In the meantime, the nation is busy sending protests. Where are we going to? One looks at the quantity of Arab lands transferred daily to Jewish hands, [one] realizes that we are bound to go away from this country. But where? Shall we move to Egypt, Hijaz, or Syria? How could we live there, since we would have sold the lands of our fathers and ancestors to our enemies? Nobody could show us mercy or pity, were we to go away from our country, because we would have lost her with our own hand.'.

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[25] Kenneth W. Stein, 'Rural Change and Peasant Destitution: Contributing Causes to the Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936-1939, in John Waterbury and Farhad Kazemi (ed.) *Peasants and Politics in the Modern Middle East*, Florida International University Press, 1991, 143-170.

al-Hayat, 23 January 1931- ‘The Tulkarm Arabs are busy selling their lands to Jews through the mediation of certain brokers’.

al-Jami'ah al-Islamiyyah, 21 August 1932. ‘...because the Jews are alert, and our leaders are asleep, the Jews are buying the lands’.

al-Jami'ah al-Islamiyyah, 2 September 1932. ‘The Arab will never regard these sales as legal although the Jews possess the titles to these lands; and when political conditions change, the Arabs will demand that their lands be given back to them because they were sold in very extraordinary [circumstances]’.

al-Jami'ah al-Arabiyyah, 16 September 1932. There is no doubt that the question of the sale of land is about one of the greatest dangers that threatens the future of the country.

Filastin, 5 August 1933. ‘If the government seriously cared for the interest of the masses, it would prohibit land transactions which prejudice the fellaheen and cause them more harm than any number of successive bad seasons’.

al-Jami'ah al-Arabiyyah, 24 May 1934. ‘The situation is unbearable and our lands are now falling on easy prey into the hands of the raiders. The brokers are increasing every day among various classes of rich and poor people who have been dazzled by the Zionist gold’.

al-Difa', 5 November 1934. The newspaper attacked land brokers and noted that ‘those who adopted this profession [land brokers] aim at becoming rich and at collecting money even if they take it from the lives of the country... Is it human that the covetous should store capital to evict the peasant from his land and make him homeless or even sometimes a criminal? The frightened Arab who fears for his future today melts from fear when he imagines his offspring as homeless and as criminals who cannot look at the lands of their fathers’.

al-Jami'ah al-Arabiyyah, 16 January 1935. The newspaper attacked illegal brokerage of land and those doctors and lawyers who looked for profit and disregarded every national cause.

al-Difa', 25 March 1935. An article reported, 'If you sellers of land and brokers try to give back their money to the Jews, will they give back our land? They will never do it because land lasts forever and God created it, while money does not last and Satan created it'.

Al-Jam'iah al-Islammiyah, 22 January 1936. 'It is on our leader's shoulders that our calamity of land sales lies. They themselves as well their relatives were guilty of selling lands to the Jews".

The mid-1930s to the end of the Mandate

In the summer of 1936, during the first months of the Arab disturbances, the three visiting US Senators (Copeland, Austin, and Hastings) found that 'while the Arab High Committee in charge of the [Arab civil] strike is officially demanding prohibition of the sale of land to Jews, some of the prominent Arab leaders active in that Committee are quietly trying to sell land to Jewish buyers'. [26] By the middle of 1937, British, Arab and Zionist officials made separate political assessments of how politics could turn, each independently concluding that a Jewish state was a distinct likelihood. None of the assessments linked events in Europe with what had unfolded in Palestine the previous two decades under British control. In July 1937, Great Britain issued the Peel Commission Report that suggested two states with an economic union between them and an independent enclave for Jerusalem. Jewish land purchase to that date influenced the British to choose creating only a very small Jewish state, but one whose borders clearly reflected previous Jewish

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[26] William Ziff, *The Rape of Palestine,* New York: Longmans Green, 1938, p.39 'Report of the Senators Mission,' *New York American*, 1 October 1, 1936.

land purchase. [27] On 30 September 1937, at a meeting of prominent Palestinian Arab leaders in Damascus, it was estimated that a Jewish state was at hand. Izzat Darwazzah, a co-founder of the Palestinian Arab *Istiqlal* Party, who was exiled to Damascus for his involvement in on-going disturbances in Palestine said, 'There is no boundary to the aspirations of the Zionists. If until September 1937, the Jews spoke about building a National Home in Palestine; today they are already talking about the establishment of a Jewish State in part of Palestine. The Jewish community in Palestine has proven in the last two years of the uprising that they could defend themselves. There is no denial that the Jews had held up quite well in their confrontations with the Arab gangs on the roads, in the orchards, and in the agricultural settlements. [28]

The next month, the JNF's Josef Weitz, in responding to questions of the JNF leadership made a full-throated assessment of the land issue, current violence and future purchase possibilities. Weitz was buoyed by the possibility of a Jewish state coming into being because if partition takes place and a Jewish state become fact, the JNF will be recognized by every Jew for its critical role. He noted that for perhaps one of the few times since the Mandate began, the JNF did not possess excess lands for broadening existing settlements or building new ones. It was capital shortages. There was 'absolute feasibility to acquire further land' in the Galilee, Huleh Valley, Judean and Samarian hills, in the vicinity of Nazereth, Jerusalem, Hulda, Tel Mond, Beisan, in the Jezreel Valley and along the seacoast from Zichron Yaakov to Haifa. There were drops in land prices as a result of the insecurity created from the disturbances. There was fear of terrorism and retribution against land brokers and sellers which in turn at the effect of causing some land owners 'to flee the country' but wishing to sell plots before leaving. Weitz summed up his overview of the land sphere with the assessment that the 'Arabs desire to sell is greater than our capacity to purchase. [29] At the end of December 1937, David Ben-Gurion, the head of the Jewish Agency, convened a small number of Zionist leaders who were engaged in land purchase. Ben-Gurion reflected Weitz's assessment to those assembled. They included Chaim Weizmann,

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[27]Stein, *Forming a Nucleus for the Jewish State 1882-1947.*

[28]Remarks by Izzat Darwazzah, Palestinian Arab political leader, in a meeting of Palestinian and Syrian notables in Damascus, 30 September1938, CZA, S25/105263; see also **https://israeled.org/resources/documents/arab-leaders-meeting-damascus/**

[29] Joseph Weitz, 'Current Problems of the Jewish National Fund in reply to JNF Delegates,' October 1937, CZA, S25/10250.

Abraham Granovsky, Weitz, Menachem Ussischkin, and Eliyahu Epstein (Elath). Ben-Gurion opened his assessment of the land sphere stating that land sale possibilities 'were on a scale unprecedented since the World War; if means were available, contracts could be closed for 200,000 dunams, …including in both areas in the projected Jewish and Arab State, and on their borders, with an undertaking on the part of the vendors to complete the transaction in a short time. Of these offers at least 150,000 dunams have been examined and found satisfactory in respect of lands in Upper Galilee, Districts of Beisan and Acre, Judean Hills (the 'British corridor') [the Jerusalem to Tel Aviv road] and in the south. Ben-Gurion stressed the political significance of land purchase at the present time. It was most probable that in the event of partition, the scheme of the Royal Commission would be modified positively and negatively. Certain areas in Galilee were endangered, and in consequence land purchase now by the JNF had an additional value, above its intrinsic merits. Ben-Gurion referred to it as not less than the 'rescue of the homeland.' [30] Ben-Gurion estimated that whether Britain's partition idea be carried out, modified positively or negatively, further restrictions on land purchase were to be expected, affecting Arab areas where Jews have no foothold. He noted that 'it was important to acquire land now on the borders of the projected Jewish state, in regions in which Jewish settlement has not yet taken place.' [31] As the transcript of this 1937 meeting reveals in great detail, and as the transcripts of another 35 JNF meetings held from then until July 1948 portray, Zionist leaders were being offered a variety of locations where purchases could take place, allowing them to choose acquisitions that were strategically important, mostly contiguous to existing Jewish settlements, near important road crossings, water sources, adjacent to industries, and existing or new agricultural lands.

After three years of civil unrest, which some have termed disturbances, riots, and rebellion, Great Britain decided to quell the three years of episodic unrest by throttling the growth of the national home. Deciding to slow or stop Zionism's growth had been in the making since 1929-1931, when British officials threatened seriously immigration and land transfer restrictions, but did not impose them. In issuing the 1939 White Paper, Britain bought time. It sought to quell the three years of violence. Fulfilling a dual obligation proved not feasible, at least not without periodic violence. Britain acknowledged that Jews and Arabs had to live

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[30] Eliyahu Epstein, 'The Political Significance of Land Purchase, 31 December 1937, CZA, S25/10250; **https://israeled.org/resources/documents/jewish-national-fund/**

[31] Ibid.

apart and that Arab land sales and Jewish immigration inflamed Arab passions. Hence, it issued restrictions to allay Arab anger in Palestine and further, avoid antagonizing Arab and Moslem populations in the Middle East and elsewhere where London had strategic presence and geo-strategic interests (Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, India, etc.).

The White Paper contained three parts: it was (1) to terminate the Mandate and establish, within ten years, an independent federal Palestinian state [32] that would be in treaty relations with Great Britain; (2) to severely limit Jewish immigration to 75,000 persons for the following five years and, (3) to empower the High Commissioner (then Sir Harold MacMichael) to regulate and to prohibit the transfer of land. Under the LTR, Palestine was divided into three zones: Zone A (63 percent of the land area) in which any 'transfer of land... save to a Palestinian Arab shall be prohibited'; Zone B (32 per cent) in which such transfer 'by a Palestinian Arab, save to a Palestinian Arab, shall be prohibited unless… [there is] approval in writing of the High Commissioner'; and the Free Zone (5 per cent) in which 'there will be no restrictions on transfers.' [33] According to the document and the accompanying explanatory statement, Zone A 'includes the hill country as a whole (i.e. the so-called highlands of Judea, Samaria and the Galilee) together with certain areas in the Gaza and Beersheba Sub-Districts where the land available is already insufficient to support the existing population,' the inhabitants of which were virtually all Arab. Zone B 'includes the Plains of Esdraelen and Jezreel (running eastward from the Haifa Industrial Zone to the Jordan), Eastern Galilee, the (two small) maritime plains (one South of Haifa and the other south of Jaffa)... and the southern partition of the Beersheba Sub-District (the Negev)' in which, except for the desert Negev region, the population was mixed Jewish and Arab. Finally, the Free Zone included 'all municipal areas (24 in number), the Haifa Industrial Zone... and roughly speaking the (central) maritime plain,' in which, except for most of the smaller municipalities and that of Jaffa, the majority of the population was Jewish. [34] Essentially, the LTR interfered with the free land market in Palestine. By forbidding certain sales, land prices were forced down and sellers

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[32] In March 1939, by a vote of 14-1 in favor, with the Mufti of Jerusalem the lone dissenter, the Arab Higher Committee **rejected** the British government's 1939 offer to create a majority Arab state in Palestine in ten years. See Mufti Hajj Amin al-Husayni Decision to Reject a Majority Palestinian Arab state, March 1939, **https://israeled.org/resources/documents/decision-to-reject-a-majority-palestinian-arab-state/**

[33] Great Britain. House of Commons, Command Papers. 6180. Palestine Land Transfers Regulations.

[34] Ibid.

therefore profited less from each transaction. Ultimately, this meant (as H.M.G. had intended) that selling land was less tempting to Arabs because a small land owner no longer profited enough from the sale to pay off his debts. London's Colonial Office officials noted that in the land sphere, it was its responsibility to 'prevent the Arab landowner from parting with his land. He has, in fact, to be protected against himself.' [35] High Commissioner MacMichael understood that by taking Jewish buyers out of the market, a lower price might only be available from another potential Arab buyer. But he said that 'the object of the regulations is to protect not the individual Arab landowner but Arab land as a whole.' [36] Unsurprisingly Zionist leaders were appalled, Arab leaders applauded.[37] Ben-Gurion in a very lengthy letter outlining the Zionist reasons for opposing the White Paper told the High Commissioner that it 'denied Jews equality before the law and introduced racial discrimination.' [38]

Space does not allow for enumerating how ingeniously Arabs and Zionists circumvented the land transfer restrictions. The British wrote a very detailed report about the LTR circumventions using volumes of letters and complaints from Arab politicians and lawyers in assembling the report. [39] The creativity and connivance of Jewish buyers and Arab sellers could not be thwarted; transactions were carried out despite legal restrictions to the contrary. Throughout the Mandate, economic motives compelled Arabs to sell land. While Jews continued to buy land according to strategic needs from 1940-1948, and land brokers continued to ply their trade as they had done earlier, the LTR unfolded new consequences. The LTR made land sales more difficult. But it did not reduce the number of Arab offers made to Jewish buyers. Because the land transfer process became more uncertain, private buyers gave way to the JNF whose fund raising coincidently

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[35] British Official Correspondence, 14 June 1940, CO 733/425/75872.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Arab reaction to the LTR as recorded by the Colonial Office, No. 21, 13 June 1940, CO 733/425/ 75872.

[38] David Ben-Gurion of the Jewish Agency to Palestine High Commissioner Sir Harold MacMichael, 27 February 1940, CO 733/418/75072.

[39] The Palestine Administration, *Land Transfer Inquiry Committee*, November 1945. The original draft reports are housed at the ISA (Israeli State Archives) Box SF/file 215/1/40 and Box LS 249/file 4. A copy of the report prepared by British, Jewish and Arab officials may also be found at **https://israeled.org/resources/documents/land-transfer-inquiry-committee-report/**

accelerated in the 1940s, particularly from 1945 forward. Thus, the JNF's role as a key Zionist institutional player in land acquisition and strategic planning increased. But JNF leadership left it to the Jewish Agency Political Department to engage the British in lobbying to remove the LTR as a frustrating obstacle. As it continued to do from Arab sellers, the JNF now bought increasing amounts of land from Jewish sellers who required cash for their own purposes. With completing a land transaction more difficult, the costs of lands per dunam across the country, but especially where there were Jewish settlments already, prices rose. With per dunam costs rising, some potential Arab sellers either held off in sales waiting for prices to rise, or participated in brokerage activity by assembling scattered parcels for the Jewish buyers. With fewer immigrants to settle while immigration restrictions were at their peak, the JNF directed expenditures toward land preparation already in Jewish ownership. In 1947-48, for example, only one-third of the JNF budget was spent on land purchase; two-thirds was dedicated to the preparation of existing land for newly arriving immigrants. From Arabs, Jews acquired land during the period of restrictions by circumventing not contravening the law. Legal means were used to purchase land, but perhaps not register it as legally required. Methods of engaging Arab sellers included ruses used in earlier years: debt forfeiture, irrevocable powers of attorney, and use of nominal Arab holders in which land was purchased by the JNF, but still held in Arab ownership with a financial lien held over the nominee by the Jewish buyer. Land transferred during this period of restrictions did not constitute a criminal offense, though transfers occurred, they were considered legally valid. Since there was no prohibition against Jews buying land from non-Palestinians, the JNF drew up an extensive list of Arab landowners residing outside of Palestine who remained potential buyers. Palestinian Arab and attempts by Arabs in neighboring states to keep Arab lands off the Palestine market failed. The establishment in Palestine of the *Sunduq al-Umma* [Arab Nation Fund] proved publically loud, short lived, and absent of funds. It proved to be an obstacle not by taking land off the Palestine market, but by physically threatening Arab broker intermediaries or lawyer who worked with the JNF. [40] In the JNF Minutes for 10 November 1946, Abraham Granovsky noted that the LTR had in the past three years witnessed an increase in Arab militancy against land purchase and the Jewish National home's growth, noting that

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[40] Issa Khalaf, *Politics in Palestine, Arab Factionalism and Social Disintegration, 1939-1948*. State of New York Press, 1991, pp. 97-101; Remarks by Josef Weitz, Meeting of the Jewish National Fund, July 10, 1945.

until 1946 thee resistance to selling lands to Jews was restricted to threats, oral and written, legal procedures and other actions aimed to disturb and distract potential sellers. In 1946 he asserted that 'the Arab resistance has taken on more serious tones and threats …with some of the JNF's loyal Arab assistants killed by Arab activists". [41]

At the end of 1945, the Palestine Administration, looking into the myriad of ways Arab sellers were circumventing a law meant to protect them, said '… the remedy lies in the hands of the Arabs themselves. Unless they enter into collusion with the Jews to defeat the spirit of the White Paper, Jews will not be able to enter improperly into possession of the land within a restricted area. If the parties whom the law is designed to defend conspire to evade the law, then it is indeed difficult for the authorities to enforce it and to defend them'. [42] Moreover, British officials estimated in 1945 that the Jewish National Fund was 'being inundated with offers from Arab sellers and made isolated contracts for completion of purchases after the war in full assurance that the LTR would be repealed with HMG have sufficient time to apply itself to the subject'. [43] The British officials were not wrong. On 10 November 1946, Josef Weitz, the JNF's Director of Land and Forestry who was one of the two or three top officials involved with Jewish land acquisition, noted that 'during the previous six years under the land transfer restrictions, the JNF acquired 390,000 dunams (152,000 from Jews and 238,000 from Arabs). Lands purchased from Jews and Arabs evolved because owners desired cash; the potential for land purchases has not decreased; it remains *each* year at 250-250 thousands of dunams'. [44] Weitz further noted that Arab resistance to selling lands to Jews was on the rise as were prices, and yet, he estimated that 'the source of land in the country has not dried out. Since we have purchased extensive tracts of land from the Arabs these past years and the possibility of more purchases still exists, it can be concluded that the will to sell in the Arab camp has not decreased. If there were

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[41] Minutes of a Meeting of those involved in Purchasing Lands for the Jewish National Fund, 10 November 1946, Central Zionist Archives, KKL5.

[42] The Palestine Administration, *Land Transfer Inquiry Committee Report,* 1945, **https://israeled.org/resources/documents/land-transfer-inquiry-committee-report/**

[43] Letter from Director of Land Registrations to Chief Secretary of the Palestine Administration, 24 April 1945, ISA (Israel State Archives), Box M397, SF 215/40 Vol.1

[44] Minutes of a Meeting of those involved in Purchasing Lands for the Jewish National Fund, 10 November 1946, Central Zionist Archives, KKL5.

no obstacles set up in our way we could purchase land without restraint.'

Conclusions

From the early 1880s to January 1948, Zionists purchased 2 million dunams of land in Palestine or 2023.45 square km. [45] Jewish land purchased was a relatively small sum of all available registered lands in Palestine, but without those lands, no viable nucleus for the state of Israel would have been created. The lands which became the critical core for Israel were provided by Arab sellers. The whereabouts of those sales as they turned into settlements are shown in the on-line publication; *Forming a Nucleus for the Jewish State 1882-1947.* [46] From 1908 forwards, Jewish buyers, for reasons of security, were interested in creating contiguous areas of Jewish settlement. Well into the 1920s, there was discussion among Jewish officials about seeking some formal plan for land purchase; it evolved as a semi-official focus, if not a policy, by the aftermath of the 1929 disturbances, and particularly the death of more than 60 Jews in the city of Hebron, situated a good distance from other settlements. The idea that far flung locations could not be easily protected evolved into a focus on creating contiguous zones, but that was not to the exclusion of strategic acquisitions as perhaps near Haifa port, on the border with Lebanon, or from 1943 on, looking to acquire land adjacent to the Gulf of Aqaba. For strategic and security reasons, in February 1931, the Jewish Agency sent a directive to Jewish organizations involved in Jewish land purchase. It stated that regardless of whether land was purchased near or distant from existing major Jewish land concentrations—the coastal plain, the valley regions from Haifa to Beisan, or in the lower or upper Galilee running along both sides of the Jordan River, north and south of the Sea of Galilee—Arab tenants, grazers, and agricultural laborers should be resettled on vacant lands when the opportunities presented themselves at distances far from existing Jewish areas.

The land area assigned to the Jewish state by the UN Partition Resolution was 14,900 square km. Thus, Jews had purchased 13.5 % of the area that was to be designated as the 'Jewish state.' Further, when the Arab and Moslem states refused to accept the 1947 UN Partition resolution, which might have established

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[45] For a highly detailed discussion of who owned what land at the end of the Palestine Mandate, please see Kenneth W. Stein, 'The Land Controversy: the 94%myth,' **https://israeled.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/themes-land-issue-2-22-13.pdf**

[46] Stein, *Forming a Nucleus for the Jewish State 1882-1947.*

both Arab and Jewish states, and instead went to war against Israel in May 1948, Zionists, now Israelis acquired more land by the end of the independence war in 1949, referred to by Palestinians and others as the *nakbah* (disaster). When the armistice agreements between Israel and its Arab neighbors ended the war, Israel controlled 20,500 square km, and with this as the arithmetic denominator, Jews had purchased 9.8% of the land that became the state of Israel. No Arab state was established as a result of the UN Partition resolution or the outcome of the 1947-1949 conflict. However, the area of the West Bank, 6 million dunams or 6,070 square km, was annexed by Jordan in 1950, and the area of the Gaza Strip, 360 square km, was administrated by Egypt, both until after the end of the June 1967 War when Israel controlled all of what was once the area of the Palestine Mandate. They used direct contacts, ruses, subterfuge, brokers, and intermediaries to achieve their purposes. Each was aware of the other's impulses and each understood the immediate implications and consequences of their respective actions. The political solutions to solve the Arab-Jewish conflict with Palestine partitioned into Arab and Jewish states as suggested by the British in 1937 and the United Nations in 1947, evolved as potentially workable outcomes because Arabs and Zionists created facts on the ground. Whether one refuses to acknowledge that Zionist land purchases created Arab landlessness and Arab displacement over time or refuses to acknowledge that Arabs sold their lands willingly to Jews, both remain irrefutable historical realities. Without Arab land sales, a Jewish state would not have been energized; it would not have evolved, nor would it have been established.