

The British Mandate

After World War I, the League of Nations was charged with transferring control of territories previously controlled by the German and Ottoman Empires, giving administrative “mandates” to countries who were part of the victorious allied forces (Britain, France, Belgium and Australia). Under the Treaty of Sevres (1920) which divided the Ottoman Empire, the British were granted control over Transjordan (modern day Jordan) and Palestine (modern-day Israel, with the West Bank and Gaza Strip).

The British Mandate of Palestine lasted from 1923-1948, during which time the authorities were challenged by the demand by Zionists for Jewish self-government, and a growing Arab nationalist movement rejecting this Jewish presence and nationalist aspirations.

Throughout this period the Mandate sought to severely limit Jewish immigration into Palestine, even during the World War II period when Jews were being persecuted and exterminated across Europe.

Growing Jewish-Arab violence and attacks on British personnel by some Jewish extremists led Britain to announce that it sought to end its mandate of the area. In the spring of 1947, the question of sovereignty over Palestine was referred to the United Nations.