

Palestine a Highway or Battlefield for Centuries

By JAMES MARLOW

Washington, May 17 (AP)—Here's an ABC on Palestine and the Jewish-Arab war. Palestine, the size of Vermont, is a strip of land with the Mediterranean on one side, a great desert on the other. It's been bloody ground.

It was a land-bridge between Egypt on the south and the great ancient kingdoms, like Babylonia, which sprang up and died north and northeast of it.

Camel trains and armies, heading north or south, barged thru Palestine, using it as a highway or a battlefield.

For tens of thousands of years men have moved in, settled down, been crushed or ousted by others coming behind them.

About 1,200 B. C. the Jews, a semitic tribe, strode in from the desert. They overran another semitic tribe, the Canaanites, who were there before them.

(People, like Jews and Arabs, are called Semites only because they speak closely related languages called Semitic. They are not a special race.)

(Race experts call them "Mediterranean people," because of their dark hair and eyes, to distinguish them, say, from Europe's blond Nordics.)

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BY 1,030 B. C. the Jews were able to set up their first kingdom in Palestine under Saul. Came golden days, crushing defeats. The Romans wiped out their state in 37 B. C.

Then the Jews, once desert-wanderers, became world-wanderers, persecuted, discriminated against, homeless, but they remembered their home land.

(Once the Jews, like other desert peoples, had worshiped idols. When they moved into Palestine in 1,200 B. C. they had developed a belief

in one God, Yahweh. They still worship one god.

(The Arabs, made up of many desert tribes, did a lot of idol-worshipping as late as 600 A. D. about that time, or 1,800 years after the Jews had found one god, Mohammed, an Arab, converted his fellow-Arabs into a belief in one God also, Allah.

(The great gulf between Jews and Arabs is religious, not racial.)

In 1897, sick of being persecuted strangers in the world, Jews formed the Zionist organization to get back their homeland. Zion means Jerusalem. The Zionists have been campaigning ever since.

There have always been some Jews in Palestine, but the Arabs there, and in all the countries around it, far outnumber them.

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AT THE TIME of the first world war the Turks, Mohammendan believers in Allah, had Palestine. The British whipped the Turks in 1917.

In 1923 the League of Nations gave Palestine to Britain as a mandate. Which means: Britain was to run it until the people living there found some way of running it themselves.

The British let some Jews flow into Palestine. The Arabs protested bloodily. Since 1923 a dozen world commissions have been set up to study the problem of letting the Jews have a nation or government, side by side with the Arabs, in Palestine. No solution was found.

Then last year Britain told the United Nations she'd give up her

mandate and take her troops out of Palestine by May 15, 1948. Britain for a quarter of a century had troops there to keep peace.

On November 29, 1947—with the backing of the United States and Russia—U. N. voted to partition Palestine, split it in half between Arabs and Jews.

That started fierce fighting between Jews and Arabs. On March 19, 1948, the United States reversed its stand on partition and asked the U. N. to set up another mandate, called a trusteeship.

Warren Austin, chief American delegate to the U. N., said heavy fighting and chaos would result when Britain got out on May 15. Between March 19 and May 15 the fighting got worse.

On May 15 the British withdrew. The Jews immediately declared Palestine an independent Jewish state, called Israel (God rules). But the U. N. still hadn't agreed on a trusteeship.

And on May 15 President Truman announced this country recognizes the new Jewish state. The fighting grew worse. The Arab world closes in on Palestine. This is the Arab world and the Jewish set-up in Palestine:

Seven Arab states—Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iraq, Trans-Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen—formed an Arab league in March, 1945.

The total Arab population of those seven nations, including the Arabs in Palestine, is about 34,000,000.

The Jews in Palestine number about 400,000. The Jewish fight-

ing force—called Haganah (defense)—totals about 85,000.

Only five of the seven Arab states are now moving against the Jews in Palestine. They are Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Trans-Jordan, Iraq. Their total fighting force is only about 80,000.

(If Saudi Arabia and Yemen join the fight, they'll add only about 18,000 fighters.)

Right now Palestine is split into Jewish and Arab areas. The Jewish area 5,500 square miles; the Arab area, 4,500 square miles.

One thing in favor of the Jews: There's jealousy among the Arab states. The U. N. is talking of finding a way to stop the fighting.