

Transcript

00:00:00 Speaker 1

But I would like to invite another dear friend, who I am delighted to have at the Middle East Centre. Dr Issam Nassar, would you please? Thank you.

00:00:06 Speaker 2

Thank you. Well, like my friends, I want to thank everyone who contributed without me to this event and invitation. And since the time is short as some of my colleagues complained that they could not cover 100. And what is it 1,000,000 1/2 years.

00:00:27 Speaker 2

I cannot cover 30 years of British.

00:00:29 Speaker 2

10 days, 15 minutes for sure, so I will not talk about give you a history of the British mandate. I'd rather highlight some of the issues that I think in my contribution to to this project that I made in my contribution to this project. And let me start by saying history doesn't really.

00:00:50 Speaker 2

Start at a certain point this periodization.

00:00:54 Speaker 2

Is not cut by knife, so we cannot we even though the first British presence in Palestine was in October 1917, after the occupation of beer, soda or beersheva and lasted until the last High Commissioner left Haifa on May 14th.

00:01:14 Speaker 2

1948 The history did not the British history did not start there or end here.

00:01:22 Speaker 2

In fact, we have argued that the fruits among mobilisation in Palestine and in the region continued to flourish and blossom in under in in the first decades of the British period, which means that modernization.

00:01:41 Speaker 2

Was not brought to us by the British, but was homegrown during the Ottoman Times, whether in Palestine or in other areas.

00:01:50

But.

00:01:51 Speaker 2

There are a few points I would like to highlight. Some of them were mentioned briefly and I'm not going to go into it, but clearly biblical archaeology in the 19th century helped construct a certain vision of Palestine that is based on the textual sources of primarily the.

00:02:12 Speaker 2

Old Testament, but to a lesser extent the New Testament.

00:02:16 Speaker 2

And the maps that were produced in the 19th century by the Palestine Exploration Fund, why am I mentioning this? Although I am talking about the British mandate, would become the maps official maps of Palestine. One the British and French and the Italians and others gathered.

00:02:36 Speaker 2

In San Remo in 1922, agree on the borders of the mandated regions that would be divided between the British and the French, separating Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan.

00:02:52

Just.

00:02:53 Speaker 2

For the map of Palestine which we now call the historic, Palestine was actually the biblical map produced based on the biblical imagination of the 19th century British particularly, but also the contribution of others which had nothing to do.

00:03:12 Speaker 2

With the actual map administrative maps that existed during the autumn period where the district of Jerusalem was a motor survey field that included its borders from Java.

00:03:24 Speaker 2

To Jerusalem and South even included Sinai were the northern part of Palestine from Nablus. Army was part of the motor Salafia, or the district of Beirut, so there wasn't any consideration. Not that I'm saying that the administrative maps are necessarily reflected.

00:03:46 Speaker 2

The social, cultural, economic structure of the land, but at the same time there was an A bitterness in drawing the map of Palestine, which the British basically ruled, and that map was not based on any indigenous.

00:04:04 Speaker 2

Cultural, historical, familial or or what have you conditions but otherwise constructed on the basis of certain imagination.

00:04:15 Speaker 2

What what else is connected with the British rule in Palestine and and the biblical imagination then then we will move to the Balfour Declaration or the Belfour document in which Palestine was promised as the Jewish homeland.

00:04:34 Speaker 2

For the juice and the use was the term was national home and national home means political rights, national rights, independence, blah blah blah. And with that guarantee that the religious and civil rights of the non Jews.

00:04:53 Speaker 2

Not even mentioned by name, they were reduced to non Jews, which is about 90 to 95% of the population at.

00:05:02 Speaker 2

We're not even worthy of being called wherever it is. Palestinians, Ottomans, Arabs, you name it. That's besides the point. The point is that the imagination, the biblical imagination LED. Of course, there are politics. I'm not talking about.

00:05:21 Speaker 2

I don't have time to go warrior, but you know, and all the British interests, but basically.

00:05:27 Speaker 2

Palestine was envisioned by the British as such, and in the first two years of the rule of the British in Palestine, Palestine was considered an enemy occupied territory and was placed under a military rule and one of its military governors was Roland stores, who.

00:05:47 Speaker 2

Also took another step in which he wanted to preserve, particularly Jerusalem, its historical nature.

00:05:58 Speaker 2

And by doing so, he created something called the Pro Jerusalem Society, brought and in the city planner from Egypt, British city planner from Egypt.

00:06:09 Speaker 2

Ashby is his name. Sorry, I forgot his first name. Charles Ashby. And what did they do? They studied Ashley produced a new map of the city of Jerusalem in which he erased the names of the neighbourhoods of Jerusalem. Replaced them. But by what we know today.

00:06:30 Speaker 2

As the Jewish quarter, the Muslim quarter, the Armenian quarter.

00:06:35 Speaker 2

What else?

00:06:39 Speaker 2

Those were a number.

00:06:40 Speaker 2

Of quarters in which Palestinian used Muslims, Christians lived everywhere.

00:06:46 Speaker 2

So basically, the vision is these are various communities. We divide the city, we envision it that way. It did not reflect, of course, the composition of the various neighbourhoods Muslims continue.

00:07:00 Speaker 2

To live in the Christian Quarter, Christians continued to live in the Muslim quarter.

00:07:04 Speaker 2

The huge quarter.

00:07:05 Speaker 2

Was largely Muslim rather than Jewish. It did not affect that, but basically the construction of Palestine along lines of biblical and religious imagination was pivotal in in the British.

00:07:21 Speaker 2

What else did the British mandate, after its establishment, give us? It gave us the first High Commissioner for Palestine, Herbert Samuel, who himself was the first to produce a plan for a Jewish state in Palestine in 1915.

00:07:40 Speaker 2

Way before the welfare declaration or the Sykes Picot Agreement, which was not adopted at the time by the British, but he was an active Zionist and he became the Governor of Palestine High Commissioner.

00:07:53 Speaker 2

This the third.

00:07:55 Speaker 2

And what did he do? He produced something else that we're still stuck with today. Which is he divided us into Arabs and Jews. To this day, we talk about Arabs and Jews. And what? What did he do with with this idea? Well, there are two communities. Each one should be ruled.

00:08:15 Speaker 2

Put differently, by its own people, based on its own tradition on its own educational system and on its own health system, et cetera. And so he produced, or the British produced for us, a new conception in which there are Jews, and then everyone else.

00:08:35 Speaker 2

Is considered our.

00:08:37 Speaker 2

And to remind you, at that point, Zionist immigration was significant, but it would the Zionist immigrants, Jewish immigrants, were still a small minority. There were Palestinian Arab Jews, Jews who considered themselves Arabs. There was the, so they were removed from the.

00:08:58 Speaker 2

Arab community or Arab identity and designated to be similar to those European immigrants who came from Eastern Europe and from a variety of other places at the time.

00:09:11 Speaker 2

What else did we was a result of this policy. The the main result is the Jewish community in Palestine or the Zionist community in Palestine got by the late 1920s to have its own government government, more or less under the leadership.

00:09:31 Speaker 2

Off what the British recognised as the Jewish Agency for Palestine, which was in charge of all the colonies that the Zionists started in.

00:09:42 Speaker 2

This line established in Palestine. Well, it had its own educational system, health system, Labour union, you name it, basically, and complete autonomy. We were hoping maybe the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in the 90s would lead to something similar.

00:10:02 Speaker 2

Failed project for a variety of reasons. Not the type to compare, but basically the Jewish agency was able to create institutions including military militias, basically military force which later on would become the.

00:10:22 Speaker 2

Israeli Defence Force. They even kept the word defence because the main organisation military organisation was the hagana. The difference? OK, so here we within the British mandate there was already not just the roots but a Jewish Zionist.

00:10:42 Speaker 2

Was being created with an army and then comes the world.

00:10:47 Speaker 2

Two and immediately a large number of Jews from Palestine, from the Jewish immigrants in Palestine, volunteered in the British Army to fight in Europe, and they had a condition that they must be in one Jewish Aronoff sportswriter platoon.

00:11:06

Brigade Brigade brigade.

00:11:07 Speaker 2

Or or.

00:11:10 Speaker 2

And that you that brigade trained, it did not actually fight, but it trained well and become when it came back to Palestine after the war, it becomes an important component of the military force of what would become Israel and would play a pivotal role in the destruction.

00:11:30 Speaker 2

Of Palestine and its erasure from the map and the expulsion of its people. So the Zionists they sorry, the British basically enabled Zionists. Of course, there was an Arab resistance.

00:11:46 Speaker 2

Was not highly organised. Variety of official you know from the Arab executive to the Arab.

00:11:56 Speaker 2

Higher Committee, etcetera to various parties were established, but they did not have the power, they were not enable to create their own institutions fully, partially because of the British, but also partially because of their failures. And let's talk about failures in 1936 and I think that's an important.

00:12:17 Speaker 2

Failure on the side of the Palestinian leader.

00:12:18 Speaker 2

On.

00:12:22 Speaker 2

A six month strike took place.

00:12:26 Speaker 2

To protest against Jewish immigration and British policy.

00:12:30 Speaker 2

And what did the strike result in? The strike took place in the main port of Palestine in.

00:12:38 Speaker 2

The port of Jaffa.

00:12:40 Speaker 2

What the designers do in six months, they built a New Port in Palestine in Tel Aviv.

00:12:46 Speaker 2

By the end of the Palestinian revolt, or what's known as the Arab Revolt 1939 and beginning of World War 2, the main port in Palestine was the port of Tel Aviv with Zionist employees, Jewish Zionist employees rather than Palestinian Arab, Jewish and British together.

00:13:06 Speaker 2

As it was the case of in Java and what did that mean? That meant that illegal immigration, Jewish immigration to Palestine, increased smuggling of weapons increased dramatically.

00:13:20 Speaker 2

Of course we have many other failures. I'm not saying we caused our, but we were also unable to work together to think ahead of course and and to present a concrete plan. And then we come to the post 1945 to 1948.

00:13:41 Speaker 2

In which basically due to British measures against the revolved Palestinian society, was basically.

00:13:52 Speaker 2

In ruins, the British, during the three years of the Palestinian revolt in the late 30s, bombed from Air Janine and many other cities and towns, Jaffa and parts of Haifa as well. And Palestinians who lost their land became were pushed into the cities.

00:14:13 Speaker 2

To become workers, labourers restricted primarily to work in other projects because the Zionist movement and its labour union has the route, had a policy of Jewish labour.

00:14:28 Speaker 2

So no more, OK.

00:14:29

2 minutes.

00:14:31 Speaker 2

Anyway, so we'll we'll, we'll, we'll skip this.

00:14:37 Speaker 2

So therefore we arrive at the point of director, the partition of Palestine adopted against the will of the Palestinians and the people of Palestine, against the will of their neighbours.

00:14:52 Speaker 2

They were not represented in in, in.

00:14:55 Speaker 2

The vote of.

00:14:55 Speaker 2

Course they were not consulted, even though there there was a Commission, partly some of them boycotted, others participated, but they did not succeed. But the Zionist movement, perhaps due to the.

00:15:11 Speaker 2

What?

00:15:13 Speaker 2

Succeeded in that, and then we had the establishment of the State of Israel.

00:15:19 Speaker 2

And the arrival of the Arab armies entrained without any coordination between each other. Their numbers were minuscule compared to the 90,000 or so Zionist fighters in Palestine.

00:15:39 Speaker 2

And with the Zionist movement with its own institutions, which with its own vision military plans, we found ourselves, people of nowhere, Palestine disappeared from the map.

00:15:53 Speaker 2

We became Arab refugees and other peoples countries and we continued despite all our struggles. At least we regained the name Palestine once again, but we continue to and we are threatened. War, as was mentioned before, to continue and to become more and more.

00:16:13 Speaker 2

People of the world without any passport of our own, any nationality or any state, so this is of course not the history of the British mandate, but I wanted to highlight some of the elements that our friends.

00:16:29 Speaker 2

The British contributed to our mission. Thank you.