



Ben Gurion's Cabinet

Introductions from your Dais

Hello,

My name is Elisey Goland and I am currently a senior at Stuyvesant. I've done Model UN for four years now and I am super excited to be your chair. The intricacies of crisis committees are very fun to work with, especially when simulating important historical events such as the birth of Israel. This specific geopolitical situation is also very unique, and you as delegates will get a taste of what those men and women who made the Zionist dream come alive felt. The phrase "insurmountable odds" has been used frequently when describing the war of independence, and our passionate crisis staff will do their best to convey some of that to you. This committee will require you to think creatively, adapt to shifting paradigms, and work with or against (this is a crisis committee after all) others. That being said, you should not feel intimidated and feel free to reach out with any questions to my email, egoland@stuy.edu.

I look forward to meeting you all in April,
Elisey

Hi,

My name is Max Goldstein and I am a junior at Stuyvesant. I started Model UN in my freshman year and am thrilled to be directing this committee. Israel's 1948 War of Independence is one of the most fascinating events in modern history, as it saw the hard work of a few dedicated people lead to the creation of a new country against all odds. We're excited to see your creative solutions to the problems we throw at you, and this committee is shaping up to be a lot of fun. Don't hesitate to send me an email at mgoldstein00@stuy.edu, and I'm looking forward to meeting all of you.

Max

Committee Description

This committee will be held in typical crisis manner - the flow of committee will be a perpetual moderated caucus with crisis events occurring at random points throughout committee. Delegates are encouraged to utilize their powers granted by their positions in committee through the usage of personal crisis notes, directives, communiques and press releases.

This committee will begin on May 14, 1948, beginning with the vote on whether or not Israel will declare independence. For the sake of committee, all members will be granted a vote, even though this is not historically accurate.

A note on military engagements:

This being a struggle for independence, there are numerous military commanders in the committee. Each officer has near-total control over their forces, the only exception being a committee-wide directive that directly instructs certain units to carry out certain actions. After military directives are passed, or at their discretion, the crisis staff will update the committee on troop placement within the region as well as the results of combat.

Topic Background

Foundation of Modern Zionism

In February 1896, after witnessing the false conviction of French Jewish officer Alfred Dreyfus, Austro-Hungarian journalist Theodor Herzl published *Der Judenstaat* ('The Jewish State'), a pamphlet proposing the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine as the solution to growing anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe. In August 1897, the First Zionist Congress was held in Switzerland, in which Herzl led a committee of Zionist leaders who wrote the Basel Program, the first manifesto of the Zionist movement. This document outlines the goal of the movement as follows: "Zionism seeks to establish a home for the Jewish people in Palestine secured under public law."

Meanwhile, Jewish immigration to Ottoman-controlled Palestine was increasing in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. During the First Aliyah, ranging from 1882 and 1903, tens of thousands of Eastern European and Yemenite Jews emigrated to Palestine seeking refuge from persecution. The infamous Kishinev Pogrom of 1903, in which Russian rioters murdered 49 Jews and destroyed thousands of Jewish homes on Easter Sunday, led to an additional influx of Eastern European Jewry emigrating to Palestine. The increase in Jewish immigrants to Palestine led to the foundation of a framework for a modern state. Kibbutzim, or collective agricultural communities, were founded, as was Tel Aviv, the first modern Jewish city in Israel.

Palestine Under British Control

In the aftermath of World War I, victorious Britain and France were tasked with the partition of the defeated Ottoman Empire. As part of this partition, Palestine was placed under British control. In November 1917, the British government issued the Balfour Declaration, expressing Britain's support for "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people." Meanwhile, hostilities in Palestine between Jews and Arabs increased under British rule. After violent riots by Arabs in 1920 and 1921, which showed that Palestinian Jews could not rely on the British for protection, the Haganah, an independent defense force, was founded. The Haganah became more organized following additional violent Arab riots in 1929.

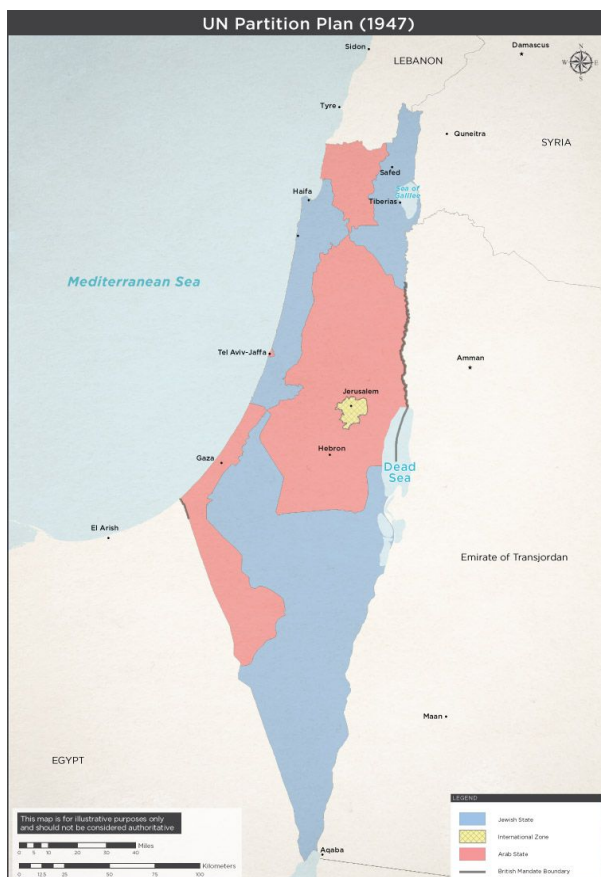
Within the Haganah, some members opposed the official policy of *Havlagah*, or restraint, that was imposed by Jewish political leaders. Under this policy, the Haganah would defend against attacks on Jewish communities but not launch their own preemptive offensive attacks. In 1931, the Irgun, a far more militant offshoot of the Haganah was formed and led by Ze'ev Jabotinsky.

From 1929 to 1939, hundreds of thousands of Jewish immigrants came to Palestine during the Fifth Aliyah, largely due to the rise of the Nazi Party in Germany

and the unwillingness of the United States and Western powers to take in large numbers of refugees. In 1936, a major Arab revolt began, in which Palestinian Arabs demanded independence and an end to Jewish immigration. A general strike was called, and Arab rioters killed Jews and British alike. The revolt lasted until 1939, when it was finally suppressed by the British. In response to the revolt, the British government issued the White Paper of 1939. This document greatly limited Jewish immigration to Palestine, during a time in which growing numbers of European Jews sought refuge from the expansion of the Nazi Party. The limited immigration was strictly enforced by the British; the *Struma*, a ship carrying nearly 800 Jewish Refugees out of Axis-allied Romania was denied access to Palestine, and later sunk by a Soviet torpedo while impounded in Istanbul, killing hundreds. Additionally, some other prospective Jewish immigrants to Palestine were denied access and held in detention camps in Cyprus.

Zionist leadership rejected the White Paper, and felt that it contradicted the Balfour Declaration, and radical Zionists began to see Britain as much of an enemy as the Arabs. In 1940, the Lehi (also known as the Stern Gang) split from the Irgun, becoming an even more radical sect of Zionism considered by some as a terrorist organization. Attacks on British officials and property by the Irgun and Stern Gang followed, most notably the bombing of the King David Hotel in 1946. In this terrorist

attack by the Irgun, 91 people of various nationalities in the hotel were killed, which was being used as an administrative headquarters by the British. This had large consequences for the Yishuv, as foreign support began to dwindle.



U.N. Partition, Civil War

In 1947, an exhausted Britain gave up its jurisdiction over Palestine to the United Nations. In late November of 1947, the United Nations voted on a Partition Plan for Palestine, the specifics of which are shown below (blue for Jewish state, Red for Arab state). Many international observers regarded this plan with great skepticism, claiming that both states are militarily indefensible.

The U.N. voted on the partition plan, which passed with 33 votes for, 13 votes against, and 10 abstentions. While Zionist leaders

unilaterally agreed to the Partition Plan, Arab leaders rejected it completely. Civil War in Palestine began, beginning with an Arab assault and siege on Jerusalem in December 1947. Although the British had not entirely withdrawn from the region, their role in keeping the peace became more and more impossible to carry out. The violence continued sporadically for months, becoming increasingly organized and violent as it continued. At first, the conflict largely consisted of smaller scale attacks by individual Palestinian Arabs or the Irgun and Stern Gang. In April, the Haganah launched an offensive, and the tide of war began to turn in their favor. On April 9, 1948, Irgun and Stern Gang fighters killed over 100 Palestinians, including women and children, in the Deir Yassin massacre. This massacre was condemned by the Haganah and the mainstream Zionist leadership. In the wake of this massacre, approximately 100,000 Palestinians fled their homes or were evicted by the Zionist forces, though the causes of this exodus are somewhat unclear and heavily debated. On May 13, 1948, 129 Jews were murdered by Arab forces, including some who had already surrendered, in the Kfar Etzion massacre. Committee will begin on the day after, May 14, 1948.

Questions to Consider

- 1) Should the Jewish population in Palestine declare themselves an independent state?**
- 2) How do we maintain the security of the Jews in Palestine?**
- 3) If a Jewish state is to exist, what kind of government will it adopt?**
- 4) How do we deal with the non-Jewish people in the region?**

Spot Descriptions

Moshe Sharett- Minister of Foreign Affairs

A principled believer in the Zionist dream, Sharett has worked to build the Jewish state through acquiring land and negotiations with the British Mandate. A capable and creative realist, he is close with Chaim Weizmann and has ties to the Jewish Agency. He is highly opposed to the terrorism found in the Irgun.

Yitzhak Rabin - Commander of Harel Brigade (Jerusalem Corridor)

Rabin is a skilled military leader with socialist leanings, he previously served in the Palmach. Although he maintains close ties to the Palmachniks, his primary command lies to the West of Jerusalem.

Chaim Weizmann - President of Israel

Weizmann has a long and illustrious history within the Zionist movement. His long life has provided him with a load of contacts within the World Zionist Congress. His activities and devotion to the Yishuv led to his promotion as President of Israel, where he currently manages various domestic issues.

Menachem Begin- Commander of the Irgun

Begin is one of the most colorful figures in the committee. A fighter and radical, he has always been critical of the Zionist leadership and fiercely opposed to both the British and Arab presence in Eretz Yisrael. His group, the Irgun, have been denounced multiple times by the establishment for their terrorist actions, yet have not scaled down in the face of criticisms.

David Remez - Minister of Transportation

Remez is an unlikely figure for this meeting of military and political leaders, yet his fleet of buses and role and the upkeep of their routes are crucial to the ability of the leadership to carry out their plans and keep the Jewish state running.

Moshe Dayan - Military Commander of Jerusalem

A member of the Haganah since age 14, Dayan is a capable and competent military leader. Although the UN Partition plan designates Jerusalem as an international city, it is Dayan's mission to ensure the survival of the Jewish community in Jerusalem.

Bechor-Shalom Sheetrit - Minister of Police, Minister of Minority Affairs

Palestine in 1947 is not an ethnostate in any sense of the word, and it is Sheetrit's duty to oversee the treatment and security (in and potentially from) various Arab communities residing in territory under the control of the Jewish state.

Mickey Marcus- Head of the Mahal (Foreign Volunteers)

Marcus himself was not born in Israel, and his volunteers make up a mishmash of Diaspora Jews and non-Jews who have sympathy for the cause. Because all of their backgrounds vary so much, they can carry out more specialized/unconventional tasks.

Aharon Zisling- Minister of Agriculture

Zisling's department oversees the various kibbutzim (farming communities) throughout Palestine, and provides a food supply to the Yishuv. Zisling is an outspoken critic of the proposals to remove Arabs from their land.

Isser Be'eri- Head of Shai (Intelligence Service)

Be'eri, the former director of the Haganah Intelligence Service, is in charge of reorganizing and expanding Israeli intelligence services.

Yisrael Amir- Head of the Israeli Air Force

Born in the Russian empire, Amir emigrated to Israel in 1923 and joined the Haganah. He is in charge of getting modern aircraft for Israel.

Gershon Zak- Head of the Israeli Navy

Zak was born in the Russian Empire, and later made Aliyah to Palestine where he joined the Haganah. He is tasked by Ben-Gurion to create an Israeli naval service, defending the security of Israel's long Mediterranean coastline, as well as vital access to the Red Sea.

Nahum Sarig- Commander of the Negev Brigade (Southern Region)

Sarig, born in Jerusalem, is in charge of military units in the Negev desert and southern parts of Israel.

Avraham Yoffe- Commander of the Oded Brigade (Haifa/Nazareth)

Yoffe, born in Turkish Palestine, is in charge of the Oded Brigade. For the purposes of committee, he will be in charge of Haifa, Nazareth, and Israeli relationships with the druze.

Michael Ben-Gal- Commander of the Kiryati Brigade (Tel Aviv)

Ben-Gal is the head of the Kiryati Brigade, which for the purposes of this committee, will be in charge of military units around Tel Aviv.

Moshe Mann- Commander of the Golani Brigade (Golan Heights/Galilee))

Mann, commander of the Golani Brigade, is in charge of military units in the North of Israel.

Shimon Avidan- Commander of the Givati Brigade (Central Region)

An extreme leftist, Avidan is a veteran of the Spanish Civil War and of the Palmach during World War II.

Yitzhak Sadeh- Commander of the 8th Armoured Brigade

For the purposes of committee, Sadeh has authority over all tanks fighting for the Jewish state.

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