

## UN Votes for Palestinian State(s)

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Today, November 29th, is the 64th anniversary of the United Nations General Assembly's decision to partition the British Mandate of Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state, laying the groundwork for the declaration of the State of Israel the following year.

Six and a half decades later, with the American Jewish community still of multiple minds about the ifs, whys, hows, wheres and whens of a Palestinian state, it is worth looking back at the concerns of the same community before and after the historic vote for partition that took place on this day in 1947.

**In this special installment of the J-Vault: the Practicalities of Statehood.**

Both of the publications below were printed in the **Jewish Social Service Quarterly**, a predecessor to the **Journal of Jewish Communal Service**.

**Partition of Palestine and Its Consequences.** In March 1938, nearly a decade before partition became reality, **Maurice J. Karpf** spoke before a Jewish communal gathering in Minneapolis. Karpf was President of the Faculty at the Graduate School for Jewish Social Work in New York, and a Non-Zionist Member of the Executive of the **Jewish Agency for Palestine** (as it was then called).

"It is the customary and gracious thing," he began, "to say, when a speaker begins his address, that he is very glad to be here. I trust I shall not be considered ungracious when I tell you... that I am not very glad to be here now." He explained:

...the subject of Palestine is in the emotional realm. People are unwilling to reason about it. They feel about it, and you~can't reason with them. They approach every subject relating to Palestine with a bias-either in favor, or against. If the speaker agrees with them, or happens to express what is in their own minds and hearts, he has done well-they agree with him. If he does not, if he happens to speak on the other side of the fence, regardless of what he may say, and how well reasoned and how well substantiated his argument may be, there is neither logic, nor force, nor truth in what he says...

...It will be my aim to present to you the situation facing Palestine, and facing the Jews of the world, as a result of the proposed partition, as I know it. I shall not argue either for, or against partition. I shall try, in the time allotted me, to give you the arguments for and against both sides.

Karpf went on to describe in fascinating detail the positions and machinations of Arabs,

pro-partition Zionists, anti-partition Zionists, and non-Zionist Jews. [Click here for more.](#)

**Overseas Relief Needs in Light of United Nations Decision on Palestine.** "[W]hat could one expect from the UN?" asked **Nathan Reich**, an economics professor, in September 1948. "Spelled backwards, it reads NU. Well, NU, NU, what of the decision?"

The decision was perhaps not of the kind anticipated by some of the nations of the world; it was not anticipated by some Jews. It is reported in the unofficial chronicles of the UN Assembly that a wise, pious Jew, after observing the futile debates and procedures of the UN in its dealing with the Palestine problem, remarked rather sadly: The Jews will get Palestine in one of the two ways possible; through a miracle--if Great Britain should hand over Palestine to the Jews, or through the natural way--Meshiach vet kumen. Well, the decision took neither form.

Reich summarized the state of Jewish relief needs, especially in Europe, concluding:

The establishment of Israel will not for some time to come reduce the scope of relief needs. It will, however, introduce clarity, direction and purposiveness in the operation of relief programs. Like a flash of lightning, the act of May 15 illuminated the Jewish scene and opened new vistas and new horizons. This is Israel's significance to the problems of Jewish overseas relief needs.

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