

blessed. Precisely because we engage in so much self-critique throughout the year — some of it warranted — we need a moment to step back from it lest it overwhelm us and lead us to lose sight of the goodness that exists. On Shabbat, do we focus on how the world is broken, or do we try to recognize how many miracles surround us?

The other lesson I take, this one from the Passover seder, is that the rabbis have often been ambivalent about unmitigated celebration. Even as we're celebrating our exodus to freedom from Egypt, we remove drops of wine from our glasses to recall the suffering of the Egyptians in the ten plagues. Then we refill our glasses, feast, and sing the praise songs of Hallel. By including the wine ritual in the way that they do, are the rabbis encouraging us to acknowledge that our freedom came at a price to others, or are they establishing clear boundaries to contain the critical impulse lest it overwhelm us and prevent us from actually expressing joy at our liberation? If Passover is a model for Yom Ha'atzmaut, then those on the right would do well to remember the former, and those on the left should try to remember the latter.

Jarah Greenfield: My reading of the seder is that our liberation comes in stages; we're required to relive our struggle toward liberation

every year. By the time we sing Hallel, we are celebrating a greater measure of freedom than we had the year before. However, we offer that praise right upon the heels of Elijah's cup so that we recognize that complete redemption has yet to come. What we can celebrate without mitigation at Yom Ha'atzmaut is our active participation in bringing about a freedom that does not diminish the selfhood of another people.

Ariel Beery: If we were to understand Yom Ha'atzmaut as a day of empowerment, then it would open up many ways for our educators, artists, public figures, and community members to create their own ways of adding to the observance and celebration — where appropriate, to mix the pain with the pleasure, the liberation with the responsibility. When the Temples were destroyed and the Israelites were exiled a second time, questions about how to celebrate Shavuot — which, as Chag Ha'Bikkurim, was a time to bring first fruits to the Temple — were raised. New rituals and associations were created for the holiday, including *Matan Torah*, the giving of the Torah at Shavuot. I think it is incumbent upon us to come up with that ritual, that myth, that platform to be able to express what Rabbi Jonathan Sacks calls our shared fate and faith. 

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On Creating a 'Palestinian Pakistan'

LUCY P. CHESTER

Shortly after the June 1947 announcement that Britain would partition British India as it decolonized, Chaim Weizmann wrote to Lord Louis Mountbatten, Viceroy of India, to request his assistance in crafting a similar scheme for the Palestine Mandate. He argued:

There is great similarity, as you may have gathered, between the Indian problem and our problem here. In comparison with India the Palestine problem may seem as a storm in a tea-cup, but I venture to say that the repercussions of the Palestine problem are, and are likely to continue to be, very serious indeed. . . . I believe that a Palestinian Pakistan would be a rational way-out.¹

Mountbatten declined the offer, but Weizmann was not alone in connecting India and Palestine. British Prime Minister Clement Attlee also saw important similarities, telling his cabinet in September 1947 that there was “a close

parallel between the position in Palestine and the recent situation in India” and that “salutary results would be produced by” using the same methods to hasten Britain's withdrawal.²

Attlee, however, was speaking in September 1947, when hundreds of thousands of Indians and Pakistanis were still being slaughtered in the aftermath of Mountbatten's August partition; he should have known that it had involved the tragic loss of life. *The Baltimore Sun* had already used the violence of the South Asian division as grounds for criticizing the partition plan of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine: “We are being shown right now, in the partition of India, what happens in the way of violence and confusion when new political minorities are created.”³ Weizmann, Attlee, and other international onlookers all sensed that British India and the Palestine Mandate were linked in important ways. What were the real connections between them?

In many ways, India and the Palestine

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¹ Weizmann letter to Mountbatten, June 10, 1947, Weizmann Archives 2752. Weizmann's letter to Mountbatten was in keeping with his staggering correspondence with a range of international leaders.

² Cabinet 76 (47) Conclusions, Minutes of Cabinet meeting of September 20, 1947; The National Archives of the United Kingdom (TNA) CAB 128/10, p. 19.

³ *The Baltimore Sun* editorial, “Once Again, Partition,” September 2, 1947, f. 166. TNA FO 371/61878.

⁴ Shohet letter to Eliahu Epstein, March 24, 1939, Central Zionist Archives S25/3586.

⁵ Central Zionist Archives S25/9029, p. 62.

⁶ For Britain's effort to maintain a façade of rational objectivity while decolonizing South Asia as quickly as possible, see Lucy P. Chester, *Borders and Conflict in South Asia: The Radcliffe Boundary Commission and the Partition of Punjab* (Manchester University Press, 2009).

Mandate were very different. Although it might seem that they were bound by the fact that the British Empire controlled each of them, in fact different institutions within the imperial superstructure were responsible for their day-to-day administration; the India Office ruled India and the Colonial Office governed Palestine. Other differences included the fact that Britain's colonial presence in the subcontinent was longstanding, in contrast to its relatively short-lived control of Palestine. Not only was Palestine a more recent acquisition, it was also a mere mandate, not (technically) an actual colony.

And yet, both Palestine and India faced serious questions about the political position of minority groups. Zionist leaders sought a Jewish state to harbor Palestine's Jewish population, which had grown steadily since the beginning of the mandate period. In India, Muslim leaders fearful of their position in a Hindu-majority state were calling for Pakistan, a home for South Asia's Muslims.

But one of the most important connections between India and Palestine was Indian Muslim sympathy for Palestinian Arabs. British officials monitored Indian opinion and worried that their policies in the mandate would be regarded by the Indian Muslims as pro-Zionist. Muslim leaders such as Muhammad Ali Jinnah, head of India's Muslim League, celebrated "Palestine Day" and issued statements supporting their Arab brethren.

Another connection between the two territories was a consequence of Mahatma Gandhi's global influence. The Jewish Agency, the Zionist authority in Palestine, commissioned representatives (for example, A.E. Shohet, a Baghdadi

Jew and the former editor of *The Jewish Advocate*, a Bombay newspaper) to win Indian support and counter British fears. Despite their efforts to persuade Gandhi, who by the early 1930s had won international recognition for his successful use of nonviolent resistance against the British Raj, he consistently backed the Palestinian cause.⁴ Gandhi repeatedly expressed sympathy for the dilemma of persecuted Jews but never supported a Jewish state.

In the end, British leaders decided not to partition Palestine, but to hand it over to the United Nations. Due to this effort to maintain good relations with their increasingly important Arab allies, British rule in Palestine ended in a very different manner than it did in India. Although bloodshed followed Britain's withdrawal in both cases, different factors drove this violence. The more significant similarity lies in Britain's desire to escape from each entanglement with its interests as intact as possible. As Jacob Robinson, legal adviser to the Jewish Agency, wrote in a June 1947 report titled "Partition of India: Implications for Palestine," the South Asian partition "only demonstrates once more the tremendous ingenuity of Britain's political thinking, its elasticity in detail as compared with its rigidity in the main objectives."⁵ Robinson recognized that although the particulars of Britain's withdrawal would change from case to case, its focus on safeguarding British interests, whether they were preserving alliances with Arab states or swiftly shedding costly burdens in South Asia, remained the same.⁶ The suddenness of Britain's departure marks a final similarity between British India and the Palestine Mandate.



The Marshal's Myth and the Scout's Observations

GIDEON REMEZ

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About ten years ago, I was asked to make a short presentation at our Jerusalem congregation's Independence Day celebration. Together with my partner in both family and research, Isabella Ginor, I had become immersed in investigating the Soviet involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict. We had just arrived at some unconventional conclusions in respect to the Egyptian-Israeli War of Attrition (1968-1970), and the 30th anniversary of its end was approaching. So I spoke about it at about the same length as I'm writing here — that is, at risk of oversimplification.

Israeli literature, at that time, described the ceasefire of August 1970 as an Israeli victory not only over Egyptian forces but also over the military might of the USSR. Our research indicated that the ceasefire was imposed on Israel by an unsustainable loss rate of aircraft and pilots to Soviet-manned SAMs west of the Suez Canal — to such a degree that when the Soviets immediately violated the ceasefire terms by advancing the missile batteries up to the canal bank, Israel could do nothing about it and Moscow literally laughed off American objections. The resulting no-fly zone east of the canal