



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) & its Recommendations

Background:

In May 1947, at the request of the United Kingdom, the UN formed its Special Committee on Palestine to prepare a report and recommendation that would be presented at the next session of the General Assembly. The majority proposal was to partition Palestine into Arab and Jewish states where Jerusalem would be under international protection (see map provided). The minority proposal recommended the creation of a federal unitary State, with Jerusalem as its capital.

General Guiding Questions:

- What type of document is this?
- Who created this document?
- When was this document created?
- What was happening during the time the text was created?
- Who is the intended audience?
- What ideas are expressed? What does the text suggest?
- What or whose perspective does this text represent?
- What feelings does this text raise? What emotions does it stir up?
- What questions does this text raise?
- How does this text impact your understanding or perspective on the historical context or event? How does this text fit into or alter your existing interpretation of the past?

Specific Guiding Questions:

- What do you immediately notice about the map?
- How do you think it was determined how the land of Palestine would be partitioned?
- Jerusalem has a special distinction as an international city? What do you think was intended by that plan? What do you think about it? How might it work/not work?
- What were some responses for this plan? Who was in favor or against it?

- Why do you think the United Nations proposed such a plan? What were they trying to accomplish?
- Which cities are located within each boundary? Why do you think the partition was drawn this way?
- The UN voted in favor of the Partition Plan but it was never enacted. What happened and why?

Possible Activities:

1. Divide into groups and give each group a Plan of Partition Map with a subsequent map of Israel and Palestine (i.e. after the War of Independence, after the '67 war, etc.) Groups will compare/contrast the maps then share their findings with the whole group.
2. Compare/contrast the Plan of Partition Map to a map of the plan for a two-state solution.
3. Divide into two groups; Jews and Arabs. Each group creates a presentation they will be given to the UN in support or opposition of the Partition plan.
4. Choose cities on the map and assign one to each person (or pair). Research information about each city to determine why it was included in either the Jewish or Arab territory.