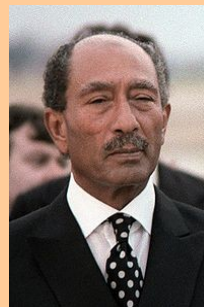
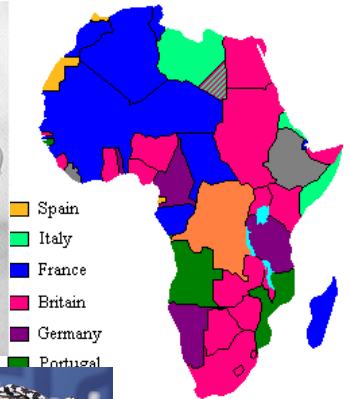
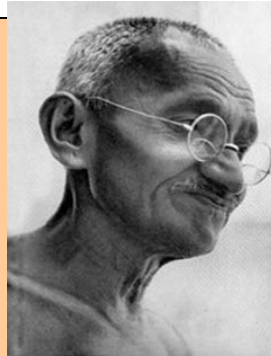


# UNIT 15 – Decolonization and Problems in the Middle East

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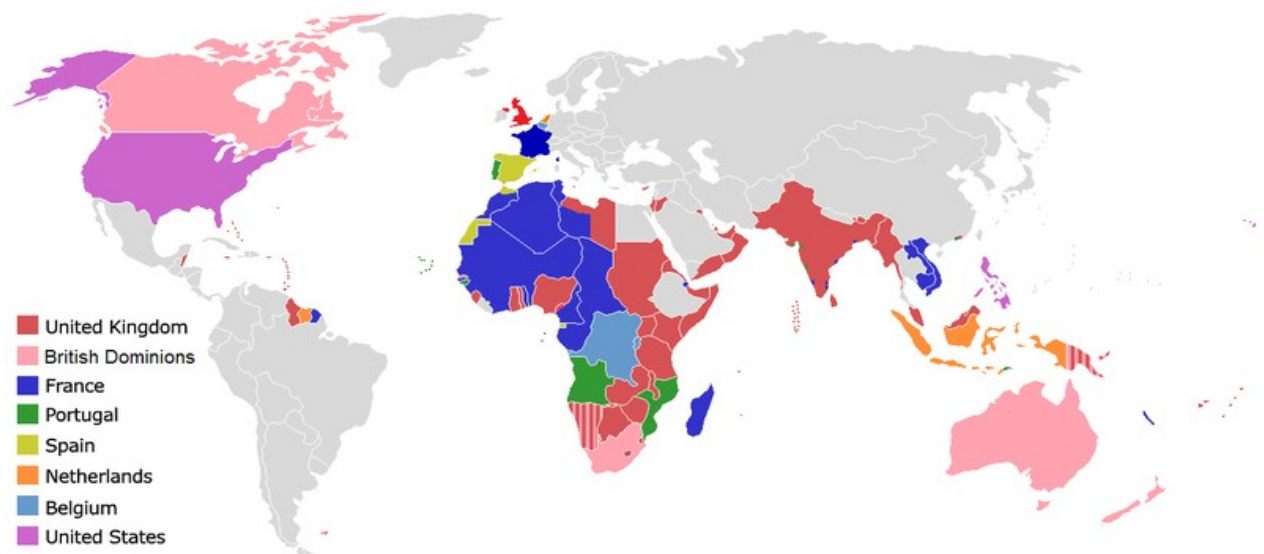


## Introduction

The European empires had begun to decline in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and it became evident in the twenty years after the Second World War.

The resistance and Nationalistic movements helped to overthrow the invaders.

A lot of countries then wanted to be independent from their former colonial masters.



## Decolonization in Asia

The independence of Asia can be divided into the violent and the non-violent.

### Violent

- **Indochina:** Ho Chi Minh was supported by communist China and France was supported by the USA, who did not want communism to spread throughout Asia. France lost at Dien Bien Phu (1954).

Indochina was divided in three states: **Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam**. Vietnam was divided into North Vietnam and South Vietnam, but not for long.

- **Indonesia:** The former Dutch colonies quickly defeated the Dutch who were in no position to defend their colony after five years of Nazi occupation.

During the war, Indonesia became part of the Japanese Empire.

After the war, Ahmed Sukarno led the country against the invaders and defeated the Japanese.

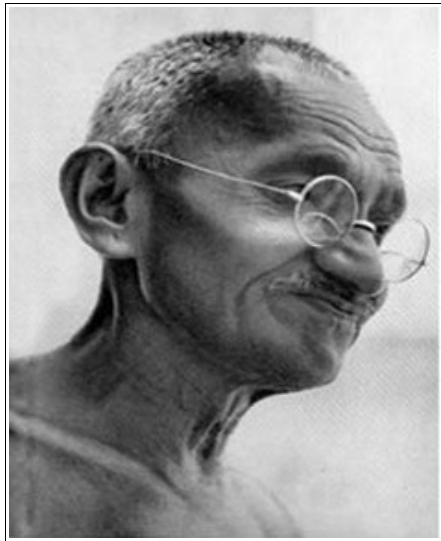
Indonesia became an independent republic in 1947.

In 1965, there was a military revolt led by general Suharto. He established a dictatorship which lasted until 1998.

- **Malaysia:** Britain supported Malayan nationalism in order to stop the spread of communism. First Malaya (1957) and then Singapore (1959) became independent and formed Malaysia (1963).

## Non-violent

- **The Philippines** became independent from USA in 1946.



- **India:** Britain gave India its independence in 1947. There were a lot of cultural, religion and ethnic problems. Two main political parties proposed different solutions: Gandhi and Nehru (Hindus) wanted a united India; others wanted a Muslim country.

Finally Muslim **Pakistan** became independent from Hindu India. Pakistan's Hindu eastern territory became **Bangladesh** (1971).

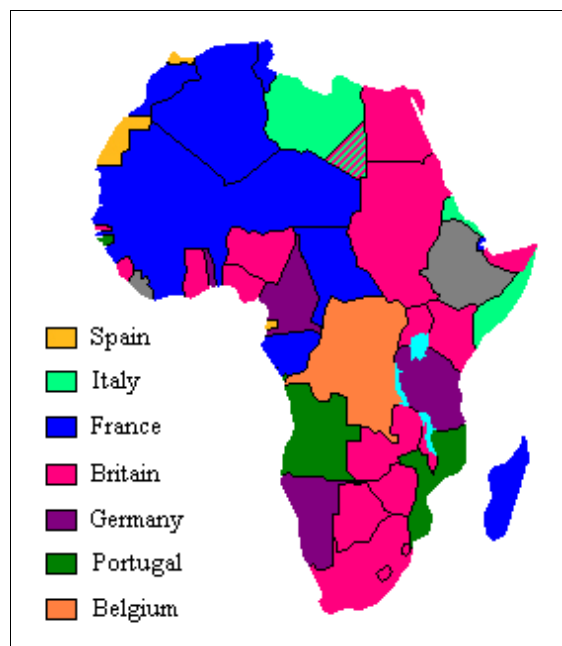
Violence accompanied independence in India, not directed at the British but between different

religious groups of Indians. Conflict still occurs over the Kashmir region.

- **Ceylon and Burma** gained independence from Great Britain. Ceylon became **Sri Lanka**.
- **Jordan** was granted independence in 1946.
- The French gave **Syria and Lebanon** independence in 1944.

## Decolonization in Africa

- **Egypt:** Egypt became independent in 1955, but Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal (1956) and this led to the Anglo – French invasion. International pressure forced them to withdraw after six weeks, and the Canal became



Egyptian property.

- **Algeria:** Algeria was a French colony with a million French settlers there. The French were humiliated after the defeat in Indochina.

Oil was discovered in the Sahara (1956) so the Algerian independent movement (FLN) fought against French forces between 1956 and 1962 where Algeria became independent.

- **Ghana:** Ghana became independent in 1957 under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah.
- **Kenya:** Kenya independence (1963) was achieved after a bloody conflict involving both tribal and independence problems.
- **Rhodesia:** Northern Rhodesia became the independent country of Zambia (1963), but the territory of Southern Rhodesia, dominated by a white minority, declared unilateral independence in 1965.

The following guerilla war was not concluded until the formation of Zimbabwe (1980) under the leadership of Robert Mugabe.

By 1960, all French colonies were independent but were closely linked to France commercially.

- **The Belgian Congo:** The Belgian Congo was also allowed independence in 1960. However the civil war that followed was not solved until the formation of Zaire in 1965.
- **Libya:** Libya became independent from Italy in 1951. At the beginning it was ruled by a monarchy but after a "*coup d'état*" Gaddafi established a dictatorship that lasted until recent times.
- **Tunisia:** Tunisia became independent, after some problems with terrorism, in 1956.
- **Morocco:** Morocco became independent the same year as Tunisia. Both were French colonies.
- The Portuguese were the last European colonists to lose control of their colonies: **Angola** and **Mozambique** declared their independence in 1975.
- In Subsaharian countries, the independence of the colonies was agreed on

most of the times, between the strongest local powers and the metropolis. The new countries faced a lot of cultural, ethnic and religious problems.

**TASKS:**

1. Complete a blank map of Asia and Africa “decolonization” (at the end of the unit)
2. How did the partition of India led to dispute and conflict in the year after independence?
3. Why were the French determined to retain control of Algeria?
4. What is meant by the term “*guerilla war*”?
5. Why do guerillas seem to be able to resist the pressure of major world powers?
6. How can you explain the growth of independence among former European colonies since the Second World War. (10 lines)
7. Define: *coup d'état*, dictatorship, monarchy, decolonization.

## Conflict in the Middle East: Palestine

### Palestine and the Origins (background)

The problems started after the Roman occupation in 63 BC of Palestine, now known as Israel. Many Jews organized revolts against the Roman Rule but they failed.

This resulted in many Jews leaving Palestine. This became known as the **Jewish diaspora**.

The descendants of most of these Jews ended up in Christian Europe. Throughout history their communities were frequently attacked and their properties were stolen.

Some tried to mix in with their non Jewish neighbours and began to abandon part of their religious practices. They hoped this would help to reduce the **anti – Semitism** against them.

Many of the Jewish people emigrated to the USA in the nineteenth century, but a small number of them believed that they should establish their own state. They became known as **Zionists**. They decided to return to Palestine. From 1881 to 1891 over 10.000 Zionists moved there.

During the First World War, Arthur Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary sent a letter to Lord Rothschild (the leading British Jew) on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 1917, promising

support for a “national home” for the Jewish people in Palestine. This letter became known as the **Balfour Declaration**.

**TEXT:**

“ His Majesty’s Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non – Jewish communities in Palestine ...”

\*An extract from the Balfour Declaration.

2 November 1917

**TASKS:**

8. Do you think this declaration could increase the problems with the Arab leaders? Why?
9. Who was the King of England at this time?
10. Can you name other religions that exist in Palestine?
11. What was Zionism?

## After the first world war

Britain and France controlled the Arab Provinces in the Middle East. Technically their authority was based in League of Nations **mandates** (licences).

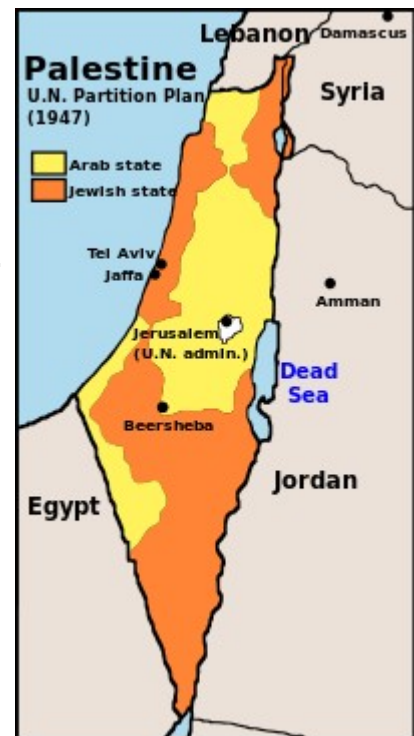
Large numbers of Jewish immigrated to Palestine. It was accepted at first by most of the Palestinian Arabs, but as more and more land was bought up by Zionist groups, opposition grew. The immigration to Palestine increased even further after 1933, as many tried to escape Nazi persecution after Hitler became Chancellor of Germany. The Jewish population in Palestine had almost doubled by 1936.

In the same year the **Arabs revolted** against British control but by 1939 the British defeated the Palestinians.

After the Second World War, the USA put pressure on Britain to let the Holocaust survivors go to Palestine.

The Jews in the area were now against British mandate starting terrorists acts that killed some people.

Britain decided to pass the problem to the **United Nations** that decided to divide Palestine into two separate states on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November 1947. 55% of the territory was then in hands of the Jewish (33% of population), meanwhile the Arabs (66% of population) got 45% of the land, and the Arab territory was divided into three parts, Jerusalem was under international control.



#### TASKS:

12. Explain why there was an Arab revolt in 1936.
13. How long did it last?
14. Why did the UN make the decision to divide Palestine into two separate states?
15. Give you opinion about the conflict in this area.

### The Arab – Israeli Wars:

The Zionists, led by David Ben–Guriun, accepted the UN plan and on **14<sup>th</sup> of May 1948** the state of Israel was born.

- a) **The first Arab – Israel war in 1942-49**, Problems started the next day: Israel was attacked by an Arab force made up of soldiers from Transjordan, Egypt, Irak, Syria and Lebanon.

Although they outnumbered the Israeli army they were defeated and the Israelis annexed almost the whole of Palestine.

- b) **The second Arab–Israeli war in 1956**: Tensions increased by July 1956 when Egypt led by Gamal Abdul Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal to help pay for



the building of the Aswan Dam. The Canal was still owned by Britain and France; that “invited” Israel secretly to invade Egypt.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of October 1956 Israel attacked Egypt and, by the 5<sup>th</sup> of November, Israel had captured the Sinai Peninsula.

The USA, the USSR and the UN condemned this aggression and Britain, France and Israel were forced to pull out.

### TASKS:

16. Where is the Suez Canal?

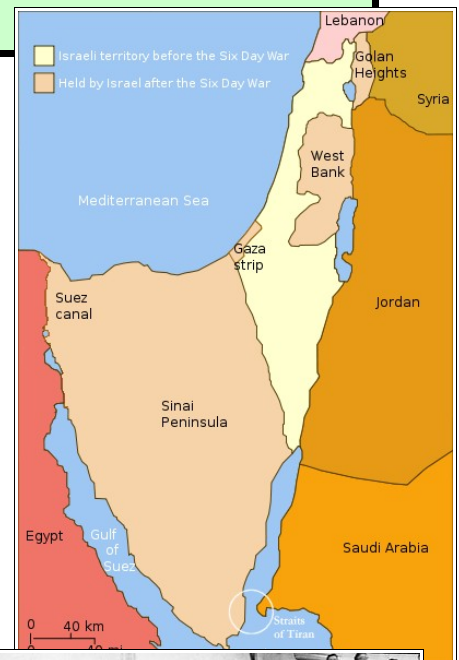
17. Why do you think its possession is so important?

#### c) The third Arab–Israeli war: The Six Day War, June 1967

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 1967 Nasser ordered the UNEF (United Nations Emergency Force) to leave the Sinai Peninsula and four days later he closed the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli ships.

Because of the development of the Cold War, Israel had American support, while the USSR backed several of the Arab states.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of June 1967, Israel destroyed most of Egypt’s air force by surprise, so they quickly defeated Egyptian and Jordanian land forces and were able to conquer the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza strip and the West Bank; then Israel forces successfully attacked the Golan Heights in Syria. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of June, Israel agreed to a cease-fire.



### TASKS:

25. Identify the occupied territories mentioned in the third Arab war in a map.



***“Under no circumstances will we allow the Israeli flag to pass through the Gulf of Aqaba ... The issue now at hand is not the Gulf of Aqaba, the Straits of Tiran, or the withdrawal of the United Nations forces, but the rights of the Palestinian people. It is the aggression which took place in Palestine in 1948 with the collaboration of Britain and the United States of America.”***

Extracts from speeches by President Nasser of Egypt in May 1967

**TASKS:**

18. What aggression in 1948 was Nasser referring to?
19. Who was Nasser?

After the war the USA persuaded the UN Security Council to pass **Resolution 242**. This said Israel should give back the newly occupied territory, provided that the Arab states agreed on a lasting peace with Israel which accepted its right to exist.

However, the Arab states rejected the idea of recognising the existence of Israel or of making a permanent peace. Thousands of Palestines became refugees.

Anwar Sadat, the new leader of Egypt, offered a peace accord with Israel; it was rejected, so Sadat turned to the USSR for military aid.



Then, Moshe Dayan, the Israeli Defence Minister, 1973, declared that Israel regarded the Suez Canal as part of its borders. **The fourth Arab-Israeli war started.**

On the Jewish religious holiday of **Yom Kippur, (the 6<sup>th</sup> of October)** Egyptian forces crossed the Suez Canal and recaptured much of the Sinai Peninsula. At the same time, Syrian forces retook the Golan Heights. Israel was recovering territory but the Arab states used a new weapon; oil. The organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) increased the price of oil by 70% and placed a complete ban on the export of oil to all countries which supported Israel.

As a result, Israel agreed a ceasefire and the war ended on **26<sup>th</sup> of October 1973**.

In 1978 after conversations between Egypt (Sadat), Israel (Begin) and the USA (Carter) the Camp David Agreement was signed: Egypt accepted the existence of Israel, in return Israel had to leave Sinai.

This agreement was not accepted by the Arab countries.

### TASKS:

20. Explain some consequences of the use of the “new weapon” in this war.
21. What role did the USA play in the Arab – Israeli relations, between 1967 and 1973? What influenced Americans decisions at each stage?
22. Why did neither the Six day War nor the Yom Kippur War succeed in bringing an end to the conflict?

## The Palestine and the PLO

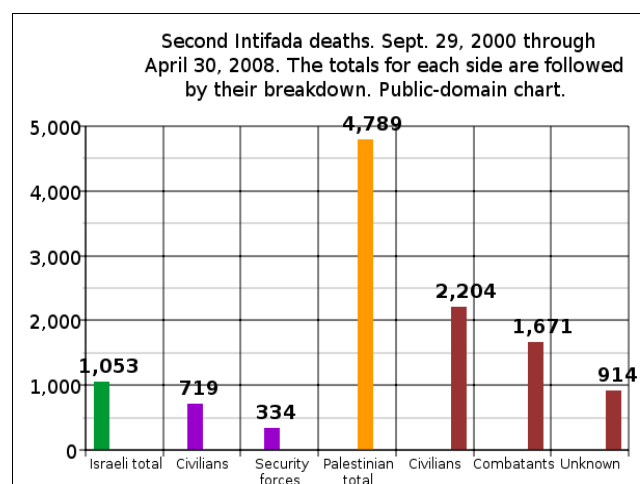
The situation in Palestine was complicated. Neighbouring Arab states did not want the Palestinian refugees to settle as permanent citizens; so there were placed in temporary refugee camps where conditions were poor. They began to form their own organisations:

**The Fatah** (1957), set up by Yasser Arafat.

In 1964, the Arab states set up the **Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)**. The aim of the PLO was to expel all Jews and to destroy the state of Israel.

The Fatah is the largest group in the PLO. Various groups of the PLO turned to terrorism against Israeli civilians.

At the end of the 1980s young Palestinians began something called **intifada**: thousands of young Palestinians marched in demonstrations



and threw stones at Israeli troops. The harshness of Israeli attempts to crush these demonstrations won much support for the Palestinians across the world.

There were a lot of discussions and conversations and some agreements were reached, but the problems are still unsolved.

**TASKS:**

23. What led some Palestinians to set up their own organisations in order to fight for their return to Palestine?
24. Find out the meaning of 'the Fatah' and 'Intifada'. Write an essay about one of them. (12 lines minimum).

**ASIA****AFRICA**

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  - ✓ <http://mister-moore.com/Media%20textbooks/Chapter%2034.pdf>
- these books from our school library:
  - ✓ BINGHAM, Jane et al.: *The Usborne Internet-Linked Encyclopedia of World History*. Usborne, 2000, pages 374-386.
  - ✓ DOHERTY, Gillian et al.: *The Internet-Linked Encyclopedia of World Geography*, Usborne.
  - ✓ Oxford Children's Encyclopedia, OUP, 1996 (just look up the name of the country you are interested in)
- and these films:
  - ✓ *Gandhi* (1982), Gandhi's life. It shows how India became independent.
  - ✓ *Invictus* (2009), set in South Africa
  - ✓ *Hotel Rwanda* (2004), set in Rwanda
  - ✓ *The Last King of Scotland* (2006), about the presidency of Uganda's president, Idi Amin.
  - ✓ Checkpoint Rock (2009), about Palestine.

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