

Category 8 - Israel

Cat.8 # 1 The rift with Israel.

(This article deals not, though important for the church, with the rift between the early church and the Jewish believers. For that issue we recommend the books from TJCI)

How to defend which borders of Israel?

Rumours say that next fall (2011) the PLO will unilaterally declare a Palestinian state on the West Bank. What could be the basis for such an act, and what the consequences? The "two state solution" has been called the only real possibility. How real is it? How legitimate is it? What can politicians do about it? And intercessors?

Historical development

as far as we have understood it.

At the end of the World War I, the Allied Powers were confronted with the question of the disposal of the former German colonies in Africa and in the Pacific and of the several non-Turkish provinces of the Ottoman Empire. The Paris Peace Conference, 1919, that also decided to create the League of Nations, adopted the principle that these territories should be administered by different Governments, a system of national responsibility subject to international supervision. The territories were to be governed by Mandatory Powers, until the territories were deemed capable of self-government, and not without full agreement of the population at that time.

In the League of Nations conference in San Remo, Italy, April 1920, this was elaborated. As far as the non-Turkish provinces of the Ottoman Empire were concerned, was, in the Sykes-Picot accord, France appointed to be the mandatory power over Syria, and Great Britain over Mesopotamia and Palestine. (Till that date "Palestine" was just the name of a region, never an independent geo-political or an ethnic entity.) For the Mandate Palestine the British Balfour Declaration, 1917, designating the territory West of the Jordan River a Jewish homeland, was included; Great Britain then was responsible to allow for the return of the Jews and to establish this "homeland", using "their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object".

All this was indeed carried out, though not without tension. In Mesopotamia Iraq gained independence in 1932; Syria was partitioned, resulting in (Christian) Lebanon, independent 1943, and Syria, independent 1946; the Palestine Mandate was partitioned, resulting in (Jewish) Israel, independent 1948, and Transjordan, independent 1946, since 1950 called Jordan. Note 1

This San Remo Agreement of April 1920, confirmed by the Council of the League of Nations in 1922, is international law and part of the legal body that was taken over by the United Nations at its start in 1945, and forms the formal, legal basis for the establishment of the state of Israel, West of the Jordan river. The UN-resolution 181 of 1947 was not needed, was in fact confusing this basic fact.

The European Coalition for Israel (www.ec4i.org), is preparing a thorough documentation on the San Remo Agreement and its legal ramifications.

Recently (19 March 2011) a retired Saudi Arabian Commodore wondered: "What if the Arabs had recognized the State of Israel in 1948?" Note 2

The many obstacles

In 1921 the UK partitions Palestine into two separate sections, west and east of the Jordan River, and Arab nations criticize this loudly because it gives "Arab territory" to non-Arabs. *But the San Remo Agreement was signed by all 51 nations of the League of Nations.*

Soon the British started to allow Jews to "return", after 1800 years of exile.

In 1929, a nationalistic massacre against Jews takes place in Hebron. From 1936 till 1939 the Arabic-Palestinian revolt takes place, very bloody, as a protest against the immigration of Jews. Hundreds of Jews are killed, by Arabs, and thousands of Arabs, mainly by the British. Thousands of Arabs leave the region. Britain restricts the immigration of Jews and plans to establish a united Palestine within 10 years, thus dismissing the Balfour Declaration and the San Remo Agreement. Note 3

In 1946, Britain's stewardship of the Mandate for Trans-Jordan had been terminated by that country being granted independence. In 1947 Britain requested the UN to approve an end to British Mandate rule and submitted a "Partition plan", including a Jewish and an Arab state West of the Jordan River (contrary to the San Remo Agreement) and an international zone to include Jerusalem. This "partition-plan" (UN-resolution 181)

was a recommendation to consider partition, not an injunction that must be obeyed. The recommendation was accepted by the Jewish leadership but rejected by the Arabs, and had no legal validity once rejected. In 1948 the State of Israel was declared. This was recognised by the United Nations when it accepted Israel into membership in 1949. This at last terminated the (British) Mandate period and fulfilled the San Remo Agreement, at least in part.

Immediately after Israel's Declaration of Independence in 1948, five surrounding Arab nations invaded the new state. By the time the hostilities ceased, Israel had lost three quarters of its territory to the attackers - the Golan Heights to Syria, Judea and Samaria (including the eastern part of Jerusalem) to Trans-Jordan, and the Gaza Strip to Egypt. Roughly the five Arab states had fought the Partition-plan into reality.

Whereas Syria and Egypt only occupied their captured territories, Trans-Jordan annexed Judea and Samaria and called it the West Bank. *This annexation was only recognised by two countries in the world, Britain (!) and Pakistan, though it is universally accepted that it is inadmissible to acquire territory by attacking another country.*

Israel's Six Day War of June 1967 resulted in the recapture of those territories it had lost to the five attackers of 1948. In the peace agreement of March 1979 Israel returned the Sinai to Egypt. In 2005 Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip, but did not pass control to any other state. Thus, legally, the Gaza Strip remains part of Israel's territory, even though not occupied by it at this point.

In other words: Israel's territorial claims are based on the San Remo Agreement, but the (British) Mandate Power and the surrounding Arab states have violated this Agreement on many occasions. Even the policy "land for peace", (Golan Heights Note 4, the acceptance of the Partition Plan, the withdrawal from the Gaza strip) has not secured peace.

The "refugees"

A complicating problem is posed by the "Palestinian refugees".

At the end of World War II, there were 50 million refugees. Today, all the refugee problems dating from before the 1950s have been solved. Since 1948 more than 800.000 Jews fled and left Arab nations, most of them going to the State of Israel. They have all in some way assimilated and are no longer counted refugees.

However, the number of Arab-Palestinian refugees, estimated at over 700.000 around 1948, has not decreased but enormously increased. Many were "advised" to leave by Arab forces invading the young State of Israel, and were gathered in refugee camps in Lebanon, Gaza, and other places. These refugees did not assimilate; they multiplied in numbers but did not assimilate. Why did this problem not get solved? *Because the Arab countries did not allow it to get solved.* The "West Bank" was ethnically cleansed of all Jews, but Arab-Palestinian refugees are not allowed to enter.

And now comes a peculiar, unexpected fact. *Under international definitions the status of refugee or displaced person only applies to first generation refugees. However, the UN makes an exception for Palestinians.*

Descendants of Palestinian refugees are granted the same refugee status as their ancestors. Consequently, the number of "Palestinian refugees" registered with the UN increased from 711,000 in 1950 to over 4.7 million in 2010. Palestinian refugees in camps on the West Bank are not allowed to assimilate or even recreate with Jordanians, let alone those in camps in Lebanon and Syria. They live in deplorable circumstances, under very hot sun and very hot anti-Israeli propaganda. What is happening?

These refugees, in all their misery, are being used as a demographic weapon against Israel.

Until 1967, when Israel occupied the West Bank, no-one, not a single Islamic scholar or Western politician, ever demanded that there be an independent Palestinian state in the so-called West Bank.

Last December a Dutch MP stated: "In March 1971, The Palestine National Council, too, stated that "what links Jordan to Palestine is a national bond [...] formed, since time immemorial, by history and culture. The establishment of one political entity in Transjordan and another in Palestine is illegal." Until the late 1970s, Jordan's Hashemite rulers did not deny that their country was Palestine. They said so on numerous occasions. In 1965, King Hussein said: "Those organizations which seek to differentiate between Palestinians and Jordanians are traitors." As late as 1981, Hussein repeated "Jordan is Palestine and Palestine is Jordan." Note 5 It is interesting to note that the League of Nations referred to the territory East of the Jordan as "The Trans-Jordan Province of Palestine" right up until the last meeting of the League on 18th April 1946. Note 6 ""However, by the late 1970s, the Arab authorities began to differentiate between Jordanians and Palestinians. In March 1977, PLO executive committee member Zahir Muhsein admitted in a candid interview in the Dutch newspaper Trouw: "Only for political and tactical reasons do we speak today about the existence of a Palestinian people, since Arab national interests demand that we posit the existence of a distinct 'Palestinian people' to oppose Zionism. For tactical reasons, Jordan, which is a sovereign state with defined borders, cannot lay claim to Haifa and Jaffa, while as a Palestinian, I can undoubtedly demand Haifa, Jaffa, Beer-Sheva and

Jerusalem. However, the moment we reclaim our right to all of Palestine, we will not wait even a minute to unite Palestine and Jordan." In 1988 Jordan officially renounced any claim of sovereignty to the so-called West Bank. The Jordanian authorities even have stripped thousands of Palestinians of their Jordanian citizenship.""

Note 7

This change of perception by the Arab nations, this new differentiation between Jordanians and Palestinians means only one thing: Palestinians can no longer trust Jordan to be Palestine, therefore have no home, therefore must attack Israel if they want a place of their own. By arbitrarily reducing thousands of their citizens to statelessness, the Jordanian authorities want to force the Palestinians to turn their aspirations towards the establishment of another Palestinian state in Judea and Samaria. This isolation, this despair, this Arab manipulation of Arab "refugees", has caused the First Intifada (1987-1993), with more than 4000 acts of violence and 2000 dead, and the Second Intifada (2000-2005), with more than 4000 dead, many of whom were civilians and many through suicide bombers killing. The Palestinians are desperate, because they have been betrayed by their fellow Palestinians.

These "refugees" are being used as a demographic weapon against Israel, even in an aggressive and strategic way. The Saudi Commodore, quoted above, wrote the following: "If Israel was recognized in 1948, then the Palestinians would have been able to free themselves from the hollow promises of some Arab dictators who kept telling them that the refugees would be back in their homes and all Arab lands will be liberated and Israel will be sent to the bottom of the sea. Some Arab leaders used the Palestinians for their own agenda to suppress their own people and to stay in power... If Israel was recognized in 1948, then there would have been no need for a coup in Egypt,... in Libya,... in Iraq... Even years later, Saddam Hussein said that he will liberate Jerusalem via Kuwait. He used Palestinians' misery as an excuse to invade Kuwait... There were other military coups in the Arab world such as Syria, Yemen and the Sudan. And each one of them used Palestine as their reason for such acts... Even a non-Arab country (Iran) used Palestine to divert the minds of their people from internal unrest. Now, the Palestinians are on their own. Each Arab country is busy with its own crisis. From Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Sudan, Yemen, Syria, Jordan, Somalia, Algeria, Lebanon and the Gulf states. For now, the Arab countries have put the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on hold." Note 8

International law

This Saudi Commodore wondered: "What if Arabs had recognized the State of Israel in 1948?" And reading his assessment I wonder: "Why could the Arabs not recognise Israel?" The answer does not need to be complicated: Because this issue is not an Arab issue, but an Islamic issue. In Islam Jews were always accepted as "people of the Book", but never as equal citizens. The last decades in most Islamic nations this "soft discrimination" has hardened severely, to unashamed aggressiveness and violation of human rights. Why? According to Islam Jews cannot be equal and cannot therefore have their own state! Their becoming an independent state, even on "Arab" soil, is equal to a Muslim converting out of Islam. The only response is violence.

And Muslims sacrifice the Palestinian refugees for this cause, by denying that the Palestine Mandate was for "the Palestinians" East of the Jordan River. This requires in our time that the Palestinian "refugees" should be given the right to voluntarily settle in Jordan and, together with the Jordanians, freely elect their own government in Amman. If the present Hashemite King is still as popular as today, he can remain in power. That is for the people of Palestine/Jordan to decide in real democratic elections. The suffering of the Palestinians is not a matter of Israel's responsibility but an Arab responsibility. Only their faith is in the way. The original Mandate was a system of national responsibility subject to international supervision. In the 1930s we see Britain failing by restricting Jewish immigration and by proposing a united Palestine without Jews. After WWII we see Britain failing by granting independence to Transjordan without granting equal rights to the Jews, and then finalising the Mandate by submission of a Partition Plan for the territory originally designated to the Jews. Then we see the UN failing by not heeding the San Remo Agreement.

In other words: We see international law being trampled underfoot; we see international law being opposed by Islamic faith and Islamic intimidation. We see also Israel – and the Palestinian refugees – isolated.

"Home-land" and historic roots

The Balfour Declaration speaks of "a national home for the Jewish people", and many friends of Israel refer to the region as "their forefathers' homeland". As a Bible believing person that argument appeals to me. However, we must admit several things here. Non-believers perceive the history of Israel as acquiring the land through invasion under Joshua. And at the time of the Balfour declaration the Britain of Lord Balfour denied the Aborigines of Australia their claim to their homeland. And through the centuries the Native Americans have claimed their "Turtle Island" (i.e. North America) in vain of the European Americans. Since the Jews were gone

for 1800 years, the Palestinians may claim the territory on the same grounds. Moreover, Israel as a “Jewish homeland” and at the same time discriminating non-Jews (i.e. Palestinians and Christians) leads to situations that are internationally more and more difficult to explain. In other words, the concept of `historic claim` is a thorny one. It does not appeal to everyone and has not been applied consistently. Also, in this respect we see Israel - and the Palestinians - isolated.

God's promises to Israel

God's promises of course are more solid ground than the above “historic” ground. However, the sovereign promises of God were conditional: if you keep my covenant! If you don't, I will chase you out of the land I promised you! This is a severe condition. This condition is of another order than international law. If the present state of Israel would decide to turn to the Lord their God, as revival kings like Joash, Hezekiah, Josiah did, if the present state of Israel would turn to the Torah, certainly God would `remember the covenant` (Lev. 27:40-42 and many other scriptures) and overrule with ease and with haste any ruling of the UN or any threat of Muslims .

The present state of Israel has chosen (till now) to be a secular state. So, any appeal to God's promises is in vain. Rather, the present state of Israel, however tenaciously it tries to be Israeli, runs the risk of being kicked out of her land again... because God's promises are conditional!

There is another aspect here. Israel wants a homeland, even claims to have deserved a safe homeland because of the Holocaust (This claim never reaches heaven; no person or state can claim to deserve anything from God). Israel wanted to have a safe homeland, like the other nations. This sounds like Israel in the days of Samuel: they wanted a king “as the other nations”. At that time God gave them a king, but reluctantly, because this was premature. He had a David in mind, just 40 years later. The king misbehaved, and according to the set condition the king was dismissed. Now in our time we see a comparable dynamic. Israel wants a safe homeland, like the other nations, a secular state, and (in this end time?) God indeed does want to give her a state, with a David, rather: with the Son of David! As Israel wants the land, but without the king, soon God may take away the land to make them cry out for the Messiah! Just like Saul, this state of Israel had a blessed start, but will not automatically have a blessed continuation. If this `state` is like a Saul, then besides the international isolation they will experience divine rejection! Israel's insistence on being a secular state will be her downfall. And if this is indeed the end time, the restoration of Israel and the coming of the Son of David is at hand. The UN cannot bring it about, and even the most aggressive holocaust-shape (Islamic?) pressure cannot stop it.

In other words: God's promises are real and relevant, but as long as Israel does not surrender to God, it is isolated from God.

The role of the Church

We see the isolation of Israel increase. And exactly in that respect the word of Isaiah, 41:1-2, is appropriate: that we should comfort Israel, now that she has suffered one holocaust, and even more when she will suffer `double`, through another holocaust. This second holocaust may well coincide with `the great persecution`, in which all the `people of the book` will suffer together. In that situation we must not allow the thought that God is abandoning his people, when He only chastens his people and his church, to align them, to make them at last sing together the song of Revelation 15:3-4.

Comforting Israel includes both prayer, encouragement and defending the truth, the factual truth about Israel, against all the prejudice and intimidation. It does not include hating the Palestinians. It does not include denying the mistakes the state of Israel makes. It does include love and care for the most discriminated, the Messianic Jews and the Palestinians. It does include sacrificial identification in a world of disproportionate hatred.

The role of (Christian) politicians

God's promises are clearly conditional; nobody can annex them for any human goal. Historical rights are too subjective to take one's stand on. The only grounds for political argument in this world are provided by international law.

International law, as established in the San Remo Agreement, is solid ground for Israel, for the Arab world and for the UN. The “two state solution” has been called the only real possibility. Certainly, it is, in the form in which it was stated originally, in the San Remo Agreement!

The “three state solution”, Israel–Jordan–Palestinian Authority, is a legal monster. It would mean giving in to the use of the Palestinian refugees as demographic weapon against Israel, building a time bomb of anti-

Semitism at the Israeli border, where the border is at its weakest, and giving in to the Islamic pressure of hatred of the Jews.

The "three state solution" might well trigger another world war, a religious world war this time, which may trigger the divine intervention of bringing in the Son of David to rule Israel and the world "for a thousand years". But that is not the responsibility of politicians. The responsibility of (Christian) politicians is to apply international law

note 1 So far from Wikipedia > League of Nations and Wikipedia > Palestina

note 2 Abdulateef Al-Mulhim, Commodore (Retd.), Royal Saudi Navy. in Arab News of 19-03-2011

note 3 Wikipedia > Arabisch-Palestijnse opstand.

note 4 In 1923 already the British gave the Golan Heights to Syria. Since then sections of it changed hands several times. See Wikipadia > Golan Heights.

note 5 Address of Geert Wilders, Dutch MP, in Tel Aviv, Israel, December 5th, 2010

note 6 Roy Thurley,

www.ec4i.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=85&Itemid=63

note 7 Geert Wilders, op cit.

note 8 Abdulateef Al-Mulhim, op cit.