
The Two-state Solution:

The UN Partition Resolution of Mandatory Palestine – Analysis and Sources

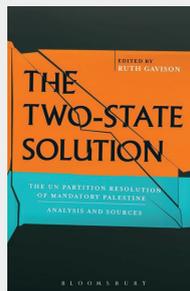
Edited by Ruth Gavison

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Reviewed by Radka Havlová, University of Economics

Ruth Gavison edited a book which was brought together as a result of the founding conference of the *Metzilah* Center. The reviewed book brilliantly analyses various aspects of the UN Partition Resolution of Mandatory Palestine. The book is divided in two parts and provides a valuable key to understanding the historical context of the UN partition resolution including the history of Zionism, struggle of Jews for their homeland and Palestinian position towards the partition. Both parts of the book are well connected; analyses in the first part directly refer to documents and speeches which compose the second part of the book, and thus facilitate understanding of the topics related to the partition of Mandate Palestine.

The first part of the book is composed of five short analyses which were presented at the founding conference of the *Metzilah* Center on November 25, 2007. These papers analyze different aspects related to adoption of the UN partition resolution. The book presents both Israeli and Palestinian perspectives of the partition and can be thus understood as an unbiased source of information about the debates which shaped, and still are shaping the current Israeli-Palestinian relations. The first two papers discuss the Zionist and Jewish perspective of the UN partition resolution whereas the third and fourth papers focus on the Palestinian perspective of the UN reso-



lution. The first analysis by Itzhak Galnoor presents a good summary of the internal Zionist debates over the partition of Palestine from 1919 till 1947. Galnoor points out the main problems discussed by the Zionists at the individual crossroads of the Zionist movement including the internal debate within the Zionist movement, alternative approaches, disputes within the Zionist movement and decisions taken by the Zionist movement at the individual crossroads (which are understood as the 1919 memorandum, 1937 reaction to the Peel Commission and the reaction to the 1947 partition proposal). The analysis is accompanied by a table summarizing the conditions of the individual partition proposals and their understanding by the Zionist movement and provides a good overview of the development of positions within the Zionist movement towards the partition of the Mandate Palestine. The analysis of the Jewish position is further discussed by Alexander Yakobson who focuses on the position in support of the partition plan. His analysis provides an in-depth overview of the Jewish approach towards the partition plan and sets the discussions about partition of Palestine in the context of the right of the Jewish people for self-determination and Jewish migration to Palestine in the Mandate period. Yakobson also refers to the speeches and documents included in the second part of the book which enable a deeper understanding of the debates

which were going on within the Jewish population of Palestine.

The Palestinian position towards the partition plan is analyzed in the articles of Mustafa Kahba and Nazier Magally. Mustafa Kahba's analysis focuses on the Palestinian position towards the partition plan and provides a good general overview of the reasons for Palestinian opposition towards the partition. Kahba also provides a detailed analysis of the major groups within the Palestinian society and their reasons for disapproval with the partition plan. In some parts of this analysis the text is rather brief and provides only general information about some Palestinian groups (one short paragraph), but the texts altogether help the reader to understand the major reasons of the Palestinian opposition towards the partition plan. The article of Nazier Magally further discusses the position of the Arab leadership towards the partition plan. Magally explains in great details the Palestinian position towards the partition, pointing out a significant fact that there was virtually no Palestinian leadership at the time of the Mandate Palestine when the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) report was adopted. This critical analysis of the Palestinian leadership situation helps to understand the reasons why Palestinians disapproved of the partition plan.

The last analysis in the first part of the book presented by Ruth Gavison summarizes the importance of the UN partition resolution today. Gavison discusses the development of the Zionist movement after 1947 and the major challenges facing the Zionist movement after the establishment of the State of Israel such as the relations between the Jewish and Palestinian population in the Jewish state, the role of identity and Zionism in Israel after 1948, in particular with respect to the still up-to-date

relationship between the Jewish character of the State of Israel and Israeli citizenship. According to Gavison the main problems the State of Israel is facing include among others finding harmony between Zionism, Judaism, liberalism and humanism which is among others the objective of the *Metzilah* Center whose activities are presented in the last part of Gavison's article.

The second part of the book provides a great opportunity for readers who are more deeply interested in the history of the Mandate Palestine. It contains original resources such as speeches, letters, reports, protocols, resolutions and other documents which are directly related to the history of the Mandate Palestine and focus in particular on the five crossroads that Gavison sees as crucial turning points in the history of Israeli-Palestinian relations during the Mandate Period. The first crossroad is seen in the Peel Commission of 1937 and its recommendations for the partition of Palestine. Documents relating to this turning point include not only the Peel report of July 1937 but also addresses by Jabotinsky and Weizmann as two major representatives of the Zionist community in Mandate Palestine. The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry of 1946 is understood as the second crossroad. Gavison chose not only addresses by Zionist representatives such as Buber but also addresses by representatives of the Palestinian Arabs, i.e. Ghoury or Hourani to provide a balanced view of reactions of Jews and Arabs to the propositions of the Committee.

The UNSCOP is viewed as a third, and probably the most fundamental, crossroad of Jewish-Arab relations during the Mandate period. The scope of documents presented in this section is really far-reaching, and the authors managed to present all the most important documents and addresses relating to this

turning point. The first group of documents focus on various addresses of Jewish and Arab representatives related to the UNSCOP such as memorandum of various Jewish organizations (including the Communist Union in Eretz Yisrael and Lohamei Herut Yisrael) and speeches by Jewish and Arab representatives (e.g. Ben-Gurion, Rabbi Yehuda Hachohen Leib Fischmann, Rabbi Yitzhak Meir Levin or Magnes) which demonstrate the range of opinion among the Jewish and Palestinian representatives towards the UNSCOP proposals. The UNSCOP report is naturally presented in its full extent as it represents probably one of the most significant documents related to the partition of the Mandate Palestine. The book further presents selected reactions of Jewish, Arab, British and other international representatives to the UNSCOP proposals, thus providing again a wide range of opinions to the UNSCOP proposal.

The last two crossroads, as Gavison understands them, are constituted by the UN Resolution 181 of November 29, 1947 including a detailed analysis of voting of the UN partition resolution, and the Zionist reactions to the UN resolution including the declaration of

the establishment of the State of Israel in May 1948. It would be nice if Arab reactions to the UN partition resolution were also included in the presented documents but altogether the author did a wonderful job in presenting the most fundamental documents related to the UN partition resolution of the Mandatory Palestine.

The book also contains an appendix of maps of various partition plans of the Mandatory Palestine, including the Zionist territorial proposal of 1919, Peel Commission of 1937, majority and minority plan of the UNSCOP of 1947 as well as the UN partition plan of 1947. In general *The Two-state Solution* edited by Ruth Gavison is a valuable source of information not only about the UN partition of the Mandatory Palestine but also for understanding some of the fundamental impacts that UN partition had and still has on the current relations between Jews and Palestinians in Israel/Palestine. This book can thus serve as a very good introduction for the general public, students as well as academicians interested in the history of Mandate Palestine, birth of the State of Israel and Israeli and Palestinian position towards the partition plan.