

Reading Guide for *The Age of Walls* by Tim Marshall

Chapter 3, Israel & Palestine

*The Holy Land is perhaps the hottest of all political flashpoints on earth. No doubt you have heard about the Israelis and the Palestinians in the news, and the sporadic violent clashes between them. You have heard of places like the **Gaza Strip** and the **West Bank**, groups like the **Palestinian Liberation Organization** (PLO), **Fatah**, **Hamas**, and **Hezbollah**. It might be pretty confusing.*

This chapter explains and analyzes the current political situation between Israel and Palestine. It will explain how this situation came to be, how the nation of Israel was established in 1948, in the Holy Land, over the opposition of the Palestinian people who lived there. Both peoples' ancestors have lived in that region since Antiquity. The Israelis are Jews, whose claim to that land goes back 2,000 years to the Kingdom of Israel-Judah. The Palestinians (so called because the Romans had renamed Judea Syria-Palestina), an Arab people who are mainly Muslims, have occupied these same lands since the 7th century CE adding a sectarian (religious) dimension to the current political conflict.

There is a large wall, a “separation barrier,” that has been constructed by the Israeli government to protect Israelis from violent acts by armed Palestinian groups some of whom are seeking to recover lands they say the Israelis have taken from them, some seek the destruction of Israel. But there are more fault lines than the one between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Within each group there are differences. The chapter will explain this very complicated part of the world.

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Watch this 10-minute video for a brief history of Israel-Palestine Conflict

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRYZjOuUnlU>

Watch this 8-minute video for a brief history of Israeli settlements

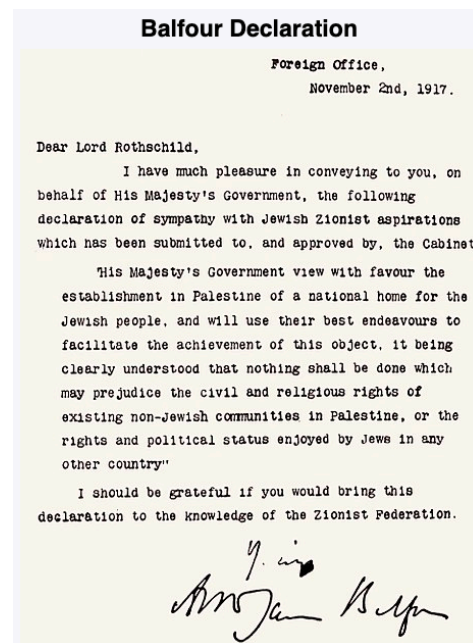
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0uLbeQlwjw>

p. 73 A “**separation barrier**” is a 440-mile long stretch of concrete and barbed-wire fencing built by Israel intended to protect Israelis from attacks by Palestinian armed groups who want to recover land that Israel currently occupies.

p. 74 How this situation came to exist since 1948 is generally explained on pages 75-78, but the **Balfour Declaration** of 1917 played a crucial role in its development.

The **Balfour Declaration** was a public statement issued by the British government in 1917 during World War I announcing support for the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine, a region with a minority Jewish population.

**Banksy** is an anonymous England-based street artist, vandal, political activist, and film director. His satirical street art and subversive epigrams combine dark humor with graffiti executed in a distinctive stenciling technique.



p. 78 The Palestinians see the wall as a way for the Israelis to steal their land; the Israelis see the wall as a way to prevent terrorists from killing Israelis.

p. 79 The **two-state solution** to the [Israeli–Palestinian conflict](#) envisages an independent [State of Palestine](#) alongside the [State of Israel](#), west of the [Jordan River](#). The boundary between the two states is still subject to dispute and negotiation, with Palestinian and Arab leadership insisting on the "1967 borders", which is not accepted by Israel. The territory of the former Mandate Palestine (including [Jerusalem](#)) which did not form part of the Palestinian State would continue to be part of Israel.

p. 80 **The Iron Wall** (*We and the Arabs*) is an essay written by [Ze'ev Jabotinsky](#) in 1923. It was originally published in [Russian](#). He wrote the essay after the British Colonial Secretary [Winston Churchill](#) prohibited Zionist settlement on the east bank of the [Jordan River](#), and formed the Zionist Revisionist party after writing it.

Jabotinsky argued that the Palestinian Arabs would not agree to a Jewish majority in [Palestine](#), and that "Zionist colonization must either stop, or else proceed regardless of the native population." The only solution to achieve peace and a Jewish state in the [Land of Israel](#), he argued, would be for Jews to first establish a strong Jewish state, which would eventually prompt the Arabs to "drop their extremist leaders, whose watchword is 'never!' and pass the leadership to the moderate groups, who will approach us with a proposal that we should both agree to mutual concessions."

p. 81-89 This section discusses the ["melting pot"](#) that is Israel.

**Ashkenazi Jews** are the Jews of France, Germany, and Eastern Europe and their descendants. Most American Jews today are Ashkenazim, descended from Jews who emigrated from Germany and Eastern Europe from the mid 1800s to the early 1900s. The pages in this site are written from the Ashkenazic Jewish perspective. **Sephardic Jews** are the Jews of Spain, Portugal, North Africa and the Middle East and their descendants.

**Haredim Judaism** consists of groups within [Orthodox Judaism](#) characterized by a strict adherence to their interpretation of Jewish law and values as opposed to modern values and practices. Its members are often referred to as **strictly Orthodox** or **ultra-Orthodox** in English, although the term "ultra-Orthodox" is considered pejorative by many of its adherents.<sup>[3]</sup> Haredi Jews regard themselves as the most religiously authentic group of Jews, although this claim is contested by other streams.



Elderly Haredi Jewish men during [cantillation](#) of the [Torah](#).

p. 86 The **one-state solution**, sometimes also called a **bi-national** state, is a proposed approach to resolving the [Israeli–Palestinian conflict](#). Proponents of a unified Israel advocate a single state in [Israel](#), the [West Bank](#) and the [Gaza Strip](#), with citizenship and equal rights in the combined entity for all inhabitants of all three territories, without regard to ethnicity or religion. Some Israelis advocate another version of the one-state solution in which Israel will annex the West Bank but not the Gaza Strip and remain a Jewish state with a larger Arab minority.

p. 87 Arab citizens of Israel,<sup>[3]</sup> or **Arab Israelis**, are [Israeli citizens](#) who are [Arab](#). Many Arab citizens of Israel self-identify as [Palestinian](#) and commonly self-designate themselves as Palestinian citizens of Israel or Israeli Palestinians.<sup>[4][5]</sup> According to a 2017 survey, 16% of the Arab population prefers the term "Israeli Arab", while the largest and fastest growing proportion prefers "Palestinian in Israel".

p. 89-96. The Divisions among the Palestinians:

**Fatah**, formerly the **Palestinian National Liberation Movement**, is a [Palestinian nationalist political party](#) & the largest faction of the multi-party [Palestine Liberation Organization](#) (PLO) and the second-largest party in the [Palestinian Legislative Council](#) (PLC). Politically, it controls the **West Bank**.

**Hamas** is a [Palestinian Sunni-Islamist](#) fundamentalist organization that has a social service wing and a military wing. It has been the *de facto* governing authority of the **Gaza Strip** since its [takeover of that area](#) in 2007. During this period it fought several [wars with Israel](#). It is regarded as a [terrorist organization](#) by [several countries and international organizations](#), most notably by [Israel](#), the [United States](#) and the [European Union](#). Russia, China, & Turkey do not regard it so.



p. 93. An **intifada** is a [rebellion or uprising](#), or a [resistance movement](#). It is a key concept in contemporary Arabic usage referring to a legitimate uprising against oppression. There have been two uprisings by Palestinians against Israel, in 1987-1993 and 2000-2005.