

TIMELINE: Shutting the Gates

1930 The Passfield White Paper, calling for the suspension of Jewish immigration and the restriction of land purchases, is issued by Britain in response to the 1929 Arab riots.

1931 On Feb. 13, British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, caught off guard by the public condemnation of the Passfield White Paper, sends a letter restoring in principle the right of Jews to immigrate to Palestine.

1932 The French Report, named after Lewis French, the Palestine Land Commissioner, recommends excluding Jews from purchasing any new land. It is but one example of how British policy does not substantively change after the MacDonald letter.

1932 Between 1932 and 1935, the Jewish community in the Land of Israel doubles to almost 400,000. For the first time, large numbers of German Jews make Aliyah.

1936 Seeking to stop further Jewish immigration, the Arabs turn to violence, the culmination of a campaign of incitement orchestrated by the Jerusalem Mufti Haj Amin El-Husseini.

1936 On November 11, the Peel Commission arrives in Palestine. Arabs and Zionists make their case at the commission's many hearings.

1937 In July, the commission issues its final report. It proposes as a solution to the Arab-Jewish conflict the partitioning of the land into 3 parts: a Jewish state, a much larger Arab state, and a British enclave which would include Jerusalem and a corridor to the sea.

1939 In February, the British call for a Round Table Conference at St. James Palace in London to decide the future of Palestine. The conference is merely meant to give a semblance of legitimacy to Britain's determination to abandon its obligations to the Jews.

1939 In May, the British publish a White Paper. It severely limits Jewish immigration, locking the Jews in Europe on the eve of the Nazi onslaught.