

The Green Line

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A Line of Ink and Practice

A pen with green ink was used in order to demarcate - on the two-dimensional space of a cartographic map - the ceasefire lines between several Arab states and the State of Israel following the first Arab-Israeli war of 1948/1949. Palestinians were notably absent from these negotiations, lacking a formal state structure - a persistent feature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict until today in spite of a widespread recognition, since the 2010s, of the State of Palestine by the UN and a large share of UN member states – a recognition for which the Green Line played an important legal-political role.¹ As I will elaborate in this paper – focusing on the Israeli-Palestinian arena and not on the armistice lines with Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria in their entirety - this two-dimensional line-drawing had tremendous, yet often quite ambivalent repercussions in practice: in the three-dimensional spatial reality on the ground both in everyday life and diplomatic affairs; in relation to the “semiological battle” (Peristianis and Mavris 2011: 191) over the terminologies used in order to refer to the Green Line; as well as from a temporal (four-dimensional) perspective, since such discursive and non-discursive practices related to the Green Line are far from static, until today.

What the Green Line means to whom and how it affects everyday life on the ground differs strongly, depending on which population is concerned. Thus, the Green Line affects lived realities on both sides of the line, e.g. for Palestinians in Gaza, East Jerusalem and the West Bank living under different legal regimes shaped by the Oslo accords and Israeli military-political regulations; for Israeli settlers living in this territory, and for Israelis on the Israeli side of the Green Line, amongst them Jewish and Arab/Palestinian. This underlines that the Green Line is not only a spatial parameter but an identity marker too, thereby highlighting that neither Israelis nor Palestinians are homogenous groups. However, one effect of the Green Line is that it equips these groups, both bilaterally and internally, with different social, political, economic and cultural capital and often leads to insecurities and power asymmetries. Moreover, over time the meaning given by key stakeholders (local, national, international) to the Green Line has changed, both in the respective Israeli and Palestinian national arenas as well as on the international, diplomatic scale which involves state actors, international organizations and non-governmental organizations. The Green Line was initially drawn, in 1949, as a temporary cease-fire line. But over time it developed an institutional life of its own and turned into a strong, yet dynamic marker of the intricacies of the evolving Israeli-Palestinian conflict, on the ground and internationally. Its “functional characteristics” (Khameisi 2008: 90) contain, generally speaking, elements of separation and contact between Israelis and Palestinians. Yet, overall the Green Line is usually figuring as a marker of a deeply internalized

¹ See the annex for the official map of the Israel-Jordan agreement, signed by representative of both sides on 3 April 1949.

separation-paradigm both spatially and in terms of amplifying the relevance of citizenship and nationality. Under this overarching umbrella of separation, niches of encounter or even cooperation do exist, but remain rare, in particular when it comes to truly de-securitized encounters. This hegemony of a highly securitized separation-paradigm (i.e. where the Green Line is evoked in political speech acts and actions to alleged or real threats emanating from the other side) stretches across the political spectrum. It covers, firstly, authoritarian, hyper-conservative and revisionist notions of religious-nationalist Greater Israel or Greater Palestine aspirations, where the political challenge is to deny the relevance of the Green Line in spite of its manifold concrete manifestations inherent to hyper-nationalist/religious aspirations. Secondly, it also encompasses benevolent versions of co-existence most famously epitomized by conservative and liberal peacebuilding concepts (see Richmond 2022) that undergird most concepts of a two-state solution: two-states for two people with a right to self-determination, but based largely on a separation paradigm, as this undergirds key United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) or the Oslo agreements. Thirdly, a separation paradigm also lies behind some emancipatory notions criticizing a “one-state reality”. This insofar as such a claim needs to downplay the relevance of the Green Line both in terms of a persistent and deepened feature of international law (see below) and a historical marker that, for better or worse, shaped the history of Israeli-Palestinian relations, e.g. its role in engendering a sense of different national identities and aspirations for nation- and state-building amongst the majority of Israelis (mainly Jews, but not only) and Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line. Against this background, the following analysis asks how the Green Line emerged, how it operates under a hegemonic separation paradigm (that shapes much of the mental map with which the conflict is approached by a wide range of actors, malevolent and benevolent) and how can it be re-conceptualized under a shared homeland perspective. I argue in specific that the Green Line can play a prominent role under an “emancipatory peacebuilding” paradigm (ibid.) by being a border between two internationally-recognized states, on the one hand, and a porous membrane in everyday nation- and state-building on a local, national and supranational level, on the other.

The Presence of the Green Line

The aforementioned Arab-Israeli armistice negotiations, that led to ceasefire agreements to which the Green Line(s) relate, were held in Greece, on the islands of Rhodes in 1949. The negotiations took place under the auspices of the United Nations (UN) and were mediated by its Middle East special representative, US-diplomat and civil-rights activist Ralph Bunche – who was later awarded the Nobel Peace Prize as the first person of color (Goetze 2023). Agreements were signed by Israel with Egypt in February, with Lebanon in March, with Jordan in April and with Syria in July. As noted, Palestinians were absent in these negotiations not only lacking the post-colonial

statehood of Arab states and Israel, but being internally and internationally shaken by the repercussions of the war that resulted in the internal and external displacement and expulsion of Palestinians from British Mandate Palestine that created the Palestinian refugee issue (the Nakba), on the one hand, and a vacuum in political leadership, on the other. The Rhodes negotiations thus took place between regional states, highlighting an early instance of power asymmetry both between Israel and the Palestinians as well as between Arab states and Palestinians. An asymmetry that affects the Israeli-Palestinian relationship and intra-Arab affairs until today, notwithstanding the gradual re-emergence of Palestinian political actorhood, most importantly in the context of the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964 or local assertions of actorhood often framed as *sumud* (steadfastness; see Busse 2022).

These armistice lines – described in the Israeli-Jordan agreement as temporary measures that are established with a view to “facilitating the transition from the current truce to a permanent peace” - have over time turned into a central parameter of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They have become institutionalized and mentally internalized in manifold ways. They have also taken on permanent features, given that in international practice and law, they demarcate the state of Israel in its pre-1967 borders, on the one hand, from the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip, on the other – the latter – West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza - being a territory that, from an international legal perspective and from much diplomatic practice, has over time increasingly been regarded as the territory of the state of Palestine, notwithstanding the fact that on the ground Israel exerts overall political (military and regulatory) lordship over the “Palestinian territory occupied since 1967”, as UNSCR 2334 of 2016 accordingly states. This includes control of over many aspects of Palestinian everyday life across the Green Line, both in the West Bank and East Jerusalem as well as in the Gaza Strip (even before the escalation since 2023 with 7 October and the Gaza War).

Far from being a line drawn on a two-dimensional map, that settles dust in an UN-archive, the Green Line is best seen as a dynamic reality that functions as a central marker of discursive and non-discursive practices that shape the wider Israeli-Palestinian relationship in terms of separation (e.g. different legal regimes for different populations within and across the Green Line), conflict and, occasionally, encounter and cooperation (as for example on the security-level or other fields of everyday or institutionalized cooperation, mainly under a separation paradigm). More precisely, the relevance of the Green Line is denied by some or (explicitly or implicitly) invoked by others, in order to give meaning to the Israeli-Palestinian relationship (discursive practices), while it also shapes concrete everyday and diplomatic actions on the ground (non-discursive practices). Whatever else it thus might be, the Green Line is far from “dead” or something that “never existed” (Rapoport 2022; Buttú 2021). Such claims

about the irrelevance of the Green Line are not only part and parcel of Greater Israel and Greater Palestine nationalisms, but are often heard in progressive circles too, nurtured by the (understandable) frustration about the power asymmetries in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This is also often based on a normative aspiration for a post-national and post-religious framework according to which the Green Line appears much like a relic of the age of nationalism. As a mirror-image, deeply based in national-religious claims to the territory on both sides of the Green Line, an alleged irrelevance of the Green Line is then also aired by “spoilers” (Rumelili and Strömbom 2022) subscribing to the righteousness of (actual or aspired) power asymmetries (back-up by a usually high violence-tolerance as far as one own’s violence is concerned) and “Wholy Land” narratives (Stetter 2025), i.e. a claim to the whole land, while underlining its spiritual (holy) or at least unique character. Both narratives in that sense invoke some sort of “realism” that can be brought up in order to challenge the significance of the Green Line, as does the observation that even if the Green Line is significant, the most important dynamics on the ground are shaped by nationality and citizenship rather than the line itself.

In contrast, I argue that both in the past and in the future the Green Line was and remains a central point of reference. It shapes the lived everyday reality of Israelis and Palestinians, it is an expression of political struggles (including the denial of its relevance or even existence), it is part of the on-going and evolving Israeli and Palestinian national identity formation, and it is part and parcel of international politics, both first and second-track types. To be sure, though, this factual significance of the Green Line plays out under the umbrella of a separation paradigm (in authoritarian, conservative, liberal or emancipatory graduations). Nevertheless, it could serve as a tool in the context of a shared homeland paradigm too, a paradigm that could provide a bridge reconciling the lived realities and historical experiences, evolved national and religious identities and international practices related to and shaped by the Green Line. As Sorek (2014) explains in a somewhat similar manner, the Green Line is much like “an object in a hologram: we can see it from certain angles, but it disappears if we look at it from other directions” – the Green Line as a “present absentee” that is invisible and visible, relevant and irrelevant at the same time.

The History of the Green Line

The gradual evolution of the Green Line from a temporary armistice line between hostile nations (taking note of the diversity of Arab-Israeli relations also at that time) into a line that marks a permanent border set in early. And, in a way, even before the line was drawn with green ink. As already highlighted above, UNSCR 62 of December 1948, issued in the midst of a fragile truce in the on-going first Arab-Israel war, called for a “transition from the present truce to permanent peace in Palestine”, through “permanent armistice demarcations”. This is an odd term highlighting the simultaneity

of the temporary and permanent that arguably shapes the lived reality of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict ever since. As Khameisi (2008: 90) highlights, during the ensuing period (1949-1967) the Green Line became a line of full separation between Egypt that controlled the Gaza Strip and Jordan that ruled over the West Bank including East Jerusalem, on the one hand, and Israel, on the other. It was not viewed by many as a classical inter-state border, for Arab states and Israel based their relationship on “mutual rejection and disconnection” (ibid.), but very much functioned like one under a conflictive separation paradigm shaped by military-geopolitical realities.

This changed following the war of 1967, after which Israel took control of all territory on both sides of the Green Line that once belonged to Mandate Palestine. Prior to the Oslo agreements the situation on the ground was shaped by two key dynamics. On the one hand, the Green Line disappeared in official Israeli discourse (e.g. in official maps, school books, etc.). On the other hand, Israel began to build settlements and infrastructure in the occupied Palestinian territory – Gaza, East Jerusalem and the West Bank - under the premise of an ethno-national separation paradigm in the context of which the newly conquered territories in the West Bank were increasingly referred to as Judea and Samaria (prior to that referring to territories, *shtachim*, was in frequent but almost disappeared as a terminology in the Israeli political landscape). Prior to the first Intifada that started in 1987, and under overall Israeli military and regulatory rule that existed since 1967, mobility, mainly for economic purposes for Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line was a central marker of the Green Line. This changed after the onset of the first Intifada, when closures led to a “re-emergence of the Green Line”, not as a state border but a “boundary between Israelis and Palestinians” (Khameisi 2008: 90), including Palestinians in the occupied territories and Palestinian Israelis, in everyday practice – a dynamic that became even more prominent in the context of the second Intifada and the building of the separation barrier/wall that cuts across the Green Line and West Bank territory and entrenches a physical separation between East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

Interestingly, though, on an international scale the war of 1967 triggered somewhat opposite dynamics that gradually consolidated the status of the Green Line as a border marker. This happened on a multilateral, diplomatic level - as in UNSCR 242 of 1967 (and 338 of 1973). But it also became visible in declarations and actions by international players. Not so much the great powers (US or USSR), but interestingly, amongst others, by the EU (then the European Community), which during the 1970s became a forerunner in the international borderization of the Green Line, anticipating decisions by the UN or even the US that (cautiously) accepted the legal-political significance of the Green Line over time too (Bicchi and Voltolini 2017: 7; the Green Line is implicitly also mentioned in the letter agreement on self-determination for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty).

Moreover, and notwithstanding its rapid faltering, the Oslo agreements triggered an international (and partly local) practice that was premised on a legal-political significance of the Green Line as well, and enabled a bulk of activities by international and local peace initiatives on the ground (Khameisi 2008: 90), and also, quite successfully, undergirded the strife of the Palestinian Authority to become recognized within the UN as a non-member observer state – a status the State of Palestine in the borders demarcated by the Green Line has since 2012. In conjunction with UNSCR 242 many state-actors approached the Green Line under a similar paradigm, first and foremost the government of Israel and the PLO when they subscribed to the Oslo agreements. – predated by the cautious and implicit references to the Green Line by the PLO in 1988 in the context of the political communiqué of the Palestine National Council and the Palestinian declaration of independence. But it also shaped policies on a regional level, such as in the context of the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002 (that was renewed in 2008 and 2017). However, reference to UNSCR 242 – and therefore the Green Line as a border marker – was notably absent in the Abraham Accords between several Arab states and Israel since 2017, while being only very indirectly referred to in UNSCR 2803 of 2025 in the context of the 2023-2025 war between Hamas and Israel. For example, the Israel-UAE agreement does mention “the legitimate needs and aspirations of both people” but does not refer to legal-political precedent, while UNSCR 2803 vaguely invokes “*noting* prior relevant Security Council resolutions relating to [...] the Palestinian question”. Nevertheless, overall, the Green Line is today anchored in international law, in particular driven by the two, legally binding, advisory opinions of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the status of the Green Line and the occupied Palestinian territory, dating from 2004 and 2024 respectively. Thus, in 2004 the ICJ – adjudicating on the legality of the separation barrier/wall built by Israel – viewed the Green Line demarcations as a *de facto* border, which in turn was the legal basis for referring to the “unlawful presence of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory”. The Green Line, thus, separates territories, on the basis of which the court established the legal doctrine of a “duty of distinguishing dealings with Israel between its own territory and the Occupied Palestinian Territory”.

This underlines how the 1949 armistice line (also referred to in many international documents as the “4 June 1967 borders”) not only underwent a process of borderization, both in practices on the ground and international diplomacy, but became a central pillar of international law. This culminated, for the time being, in UNSCR 2334 of 2016 which speaks of a “two-state solution based on the 1967-lines”, refers to Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territory as “flagrant violation of international law”, while allowing changes to the Green Line as long as these are mutually accepted by the Israeli and Palestinian sides. Such mutually agreed land swaps, that follow the Green Line but foresee an exchange of territory have been central

to several peace initiatives such as the Geneva Initiative and have also figured in the Abbas/Olmert talks of 2008.

In a somewhat paradoxical way, the blurring of the Green Line through everyday practice (which contains quite diverse practices such as different legal regimes; the separation barrier/wall; cross-green line economic and social contact; Israeli settlements; greater Israel/Palestine ideologies, etc.) and its reinforcement in international law and politics developed simultaneously. On the one hand, the situation on the ground is characterized by an increasing fragmentation of the occupied Palestinian territory in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem as the Oslo process continued to erode. It is worth recalling here, that Oslo was a temporary agreement (a lot like the Green Line initially) that was meant to cover five years of trust-building and negotiations, concretely from May 1994 to May 1999. However, as is well known, the temporary Oslo-formula of dividing the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem which Israel had unilaterally annexed after 1967; on the Green Line that cuts through Jerusalem see Shlay and Rosen 2010; Auga, Hasson, Nasrallah and Stetter 2005) into Areas A, B and C became a permanent feature. On the other hand, a consolidation, although not uncontested (e.g. in Trump's so-called Deal of the Century), of the legal significance of the Green Line in international law and practice occurred at the same time. Arguably, as in the two aforementioned ICJ advisory opinions precisely because of and not in spite of the *de facto* annexation by Israel of parts of the West Bank and the highly ambivalent status of the Gaza Strip after Israel's unilateral disengagement in 2005 in which Israeli settlements were eradicated but where Egypt and Israel maintained tight external security control on Gaza and its population, while internally Hamas became the leading political and military actor – giving rise to several military confrontations between Hamas and Israel since 2007, culminating in 2023 in the attacks and atrocities of 7 October and the Gaza War.

The imprint of the Green Line does, however, not only figure in borderization but also, counterfactually, in its contestation. Central here is not only how the Green Line is actively opposed by maximalist territorial ambitions to which parts of the political spectrum on both sides subscribe. The power of such “spoilers” to derail peace processes, be it in Israel and Palestine or elsewhere such as in Cyprus (Rumelili and Strömbom 2022), is well documented. In relation to the Green Line the significance lies not so much in the popularity of maximalist-revisionist territorial ambitions or an unapologetic approach to politically-motivated violence. It rather rests on the ability of such views to trickle down both into popular, mainstream nationalism and into ensuing practices – from semiological concepts (such as one-sided narratives of victimhood and atrocities) to patterns of insecurity, violence, control and surveillance unfolding in relation to the Green Line.

How revisionist discourses - and the physical violence needed to maintain it - trickle down into (an evolving) “national consensus” has been documented by Schwake in his studies on Israeli suburban city planning on both sides of the Green Line. Rather than only empowering revisionist settlers or violent hilltop youths, a place-stratification model (Allegra 2013) underpins this “normalisation of the settlements along the Green Line”. This normalization draws from the social status of inhabitants as liberal, middle class and moderate (Schwake 2020: 4). To be sure, this “bourgeoisification of the Green Line” (ibid.) is underpinned by a civilian and military infrastructure that maintains such dynamics, but indirectly highlights the significance of the Green Line as well, e.g. in relation to the military infrastructure needed to maintain settlements or the sources of state budget funding for Israeli municipalities on both sides of the Green Line, those beyond the Green Line profiting to a much greater extent from direct government subsidies (Macro 2015). The spread of Israeli suburban, middle class locales on both sides of the Green Line has thus fostered an unwritten “national consensus” – often visible in school books, where a 2013 study (cf. Sherwood 2013) has found 60 per cent of Palestinian school books and 76 per cent of Israeli schoolbooks omitting any references to the Green Line while tending to refraining from naming the territory on the other side as Israeli or Palestinian respectively. This also shapes denying the relevance of the Green Line, notwithstanding the latter’s administrative, budgetary, military and legal reinforcement through precisely such practices. Such “national consensus” narratives are usually based on some sort of separation paradigm. UN speeches – and visual politics - by the two long-time leaders Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and Palestinian President Abbas attest to this. In the UN main assembly hall, the Israeli leader showed a map of the Middle East in which Israel is depicted without showing the Green Line and with the entire territory of British mandate Palestine being represented as Israel, a story of counterfactually denying the Green Line – while the Palestinian leader presented a map of an ever shrinking Palestine in which the Green Line is represented as a line of loss and dispossession (which itself is a relic of the past), highlighting the painful national concession of having accepted to live in 22 per cent of historic Palestine which endures in that way as a mental matrix of state- and nation-building.

All these dynamics combined – both the active reinforcement of the Green Line in international diplomacy and law as well as its often indirect re-emergence through local and national practice – has given the Green Line a life of its own. As Falah (2021) has observed “it will never be a relict boundary unless the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is resolved peacefully” (ibid.: 176). As Newman (1997: 2) accordingly notes, “the imprint of the green line on our mental image of the map of the region remains strong.” This is an observation well known to students of both border-making and border-contestation - and is well captured in Agnew’s (2008: 182) claim that “the perpetual instability of the border is precisely what gives it such symbolic power [of those] who

favor/challenge it.” It is on that basis that Falah (2021: 164) asserts that the “Green Line will continue to function as a key focus in the mindset and consciousness of Israelis and Palestinians – no matter what Israel does or does not” (and what the Palestinians do or not).

A final observation in relation to the evolution of the legal and political significance of the Green Line is important here. Its relevance lies not only in its border-marking function between territories, but also in relation to everyday practices. This highlights the importance of two other spheres in which the Green Line can be considered significant. The one is that for example the ICJ does not only refer to territorial issues when defining self-determination in relation to the 4 June 1967 borders. What is invoked is a much wider spectrum of legal provisions stretching from international humanitarian law, including the law of occupation (e.g. the Fourth Geneva convention), to the much broader human rights codex of international law that relates to issues such as freedom of movement or rights related to health, agriculture or education but also political self-determination. In short, the factual significance of the Green Line is shaped by how it is both hindering and enabling individual activities and socio-economic as well as political-cultural rights – and how this in turn attracts a wide array of international presence on the ground by states, international organizations and NGOs for whom the Green Line is akin to a *working assumption* – a “focal point” (Bicchi and Voltolini 2017: 3) of discursive and non-discursive practices, covering political identity formation, legal regimes, the maintenance of and objection to political hierarchies, military-security infrastructures as well as urban planning, the management of economic relations to cultural exchanges that are enabled or constrained by the Green Line (on this “ethnography of the Green Line” discussing how it impacts the relations between Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line see Bornstein 2002; Al-Haj 2006).

The Future of the Green Line

While having exhibited, most of the time, conflictive rather than cooperative features, one thing seems fair to say. The Green Line has almost continuously and notwithstanding its changing features worked under an exclusionary separation paradigm that contains legal-political, administrative-regulatory, security-military, economic, and psychological dimensions on both sides of the line as well as, often indirectly, within Israel and Palestine, e.g. by affecting the relationship between Palestinian Israelis, on the one hand, and Palestinians in East Jerusalem, Gaza and the West Bank, on the other. The Green Line is neither only about geopolitics nor about politics of the everyday but is about how these various dimensions regulate and structure inclusion and exclusion, as Peristianis and Mavris (2011) discuss this with a view to the Cypriot Green Line.

Under a shared homeland paradigm – and a two-state solution “that can work” (Dajani and Yehuda 2024) - the Green Line will not necessarily fade away, but its boundary function will shift from (exclusionary) separation and separation-based collaboration to shared cooperation and from antagonistic to agonistic forms of addressing and mediating conflicts. Also, rather than presenting everyday needs and geopolitics as irreconcilable patterns, a shared homeland perspective should aim to integrate both approaches rather than denigrate them. I suggest here that the concepts of emancipatory peacebuilding, peace education and supranational integrators could provide an umbrella for such a comprehensive approach to a truly shared homeland. The Green Line can play a prominent role here by allowing to reimagine and draw a border between two internationally-recognized states, on the one hand, and to design and maintain a porous membrane in everyday nation- and state-building on a local, national and supranational level, on the other. How would a future of the Green Line under a shared homeland paradigm look like in relation to these three parameters?

Firstly, emancipatory peacebuilding reconciles the logics of state-building and the security of both national projects (i.e. a secure Israel and a secure Palestine) with security, both physical and socio-economic, of individuals. The concept of ontological security - both of Israel and Palestine as state-entities and of individuals in their everyday lives – is central here. Under this scenario, the Green Line would not only serve the function of being the central legal-political point of reference for future border demarcation. More importantly, it would allow enriching the focus of national objectives (ontological state and collective security) with a focus on individual everyday needs and the ontological security of individuals on both sides of the Green Line – the latter being the ultimate aspiration and underpinning of a shared homeland paradigm. A key component here is the transformation of so-called “spoilers”, given that both Israeli and Palestinian nationalism as well as Christian, Jewish and Muslim religious belief are likely to remain deeply embedded identity markers in significant sections of both societies. A key aspect of emancipatory peacebuilding lies in providing practical and narrative anchors for potential “spoilers” coming to peace with a shared homeland paradigm. Enjoying sovereignty on one side of the Green Line while building identity-related and practical connections to the wider homeland in a meaningful and livable way under an emancipatory peacebuilding framework - one that includes (and transforms) rather than excludes or securitizes nationalism and religious belief - is a central element here.

For rendering emancipatory peacebuilding durable, peace education with a view to promoting broader cultural and identity-related shifts (Stetter 2021), is a second parameter central to how the Green Line can be reimaged under a shared homeland paradigm. Not only with a view to fostering concrete projects central to peace education in for example Europe, such as reforming school-books and embedding peace education

in life-long learning or by fostering personal encounters between municipalities, educational and professional institutions across the Green Line. It can also draw inspiration from transitional justice processes elsewhere and, for example, be applied to educational schemes that educate about the Green Line, addressing its (multi-dimensional) history as well as the injustices and concerns related to it as they are experienced by different groups. This would be part of a much broader educational and political transformation under a shared homeland paradigm that renders visible the aspirations and claims as well as insecurities and injustices of both Israelis and Palestinians (as non-homogenous entities), generally speaking and in relation to the Green Line, more specific – without resorting to whataboutism.

Thirdly, then, supranational integrators are an important functional feature of a shared homeland. This does not necessarily need to take the form of wholesale supranational integration either between the states of Israel and Palestine or on a broader regional scale, although this is also a worthy political objective. In addition to or before embarking on such encompassing political moves, the Green Line invites to think about concrete integrators that allow for and underpin a process of reconnecting in a shared homeland. A critical perspective is important here as well, in order to avoid both the fallacies of the Oslo-period when such integrators existed but exhibited considerable power asymmetries and the years following the Second Intifada when security-integrators in the form of Israeli-Palestinian security cooperation where more or less the only functional integrator of relevance. Supranational integrators would, firstly, resort to non-security related vectors (although they might have security implications), such as mobility, environmental protection, economic development, infrastructure but also education. And, secondly, they would balance power asymmetries through the establishment of supranational institutions and legal protection that, over time, would generate not only novel reconnections across the Green Line but also allow to reimagine the Green Line in a process of (gradual) supranational identity transformation, in which a shared homeland identity supplements and balances national and religious belongings.

The case of Cyprus is a reminder of the intricacies of turning a Green Line into a properly functioning shared space. Thus, even under favorable circumstances, such as EU accession (for the Republic of Cyprus), and a subsequent Green Line Regulation by the European Commission, this legal-administrative success did not sufficiently translate into economic success. Ersözer (2019) mentions two main reasons for this gap between regulatory goodwill and actual performance of the EU Green Line Regulation in Cyprus, which is premised to some extent on a shared homeland rationale too. Thus, legal regulations were cumbersome and overcomplex, while on a political level both sides remain constrained by domestic political interests that hamper cross-border cooperation. Finally, on an everyday level the psychological barrier of engaging

with the other remain huge and cover the spectrum from benign disinterest to outright hatred and violence. As Peristianis and Mavris (2011: 23) thus explain, hopes to turn the Cyprus Green Line into a shared space “have thus far not materialized, since the ‘Green Line’ [in its conservative form] has proven to be more than just a transient social phenomenon... the process of division in Cyprus started long ago, and has continued unabated ever since. From early on, processes of closure followed ethnic lines, leading to the erection of boundaries, have hampered goodwill on the ground, by parts of the political spectrum or external pressure (in this case even the integration of Cyprus into a larger political entity, the EU). Turning a Green Line into a “resilient interface” is difficult - as the Oslo experience has shown and will also remain a challenge under any truly shared homeland paradigm. Other examples are insightful too, as the case of the Beirut Green Line as a “locus of collective imaginaries” (Chehab 2020: 6). As Chehab (ibid.) explains the Beirut Green Line, that emerged after the Lebanese civil war, was meant to include an element of “context-sensitive urban design” (ibid.) that is largely lacking in Jerusalem where infrastructure along the Green Line, such as the Jerusalem Light Rail (Nolte and Yacobi 2015), to some extent reinforce a separation paradigm even though such infrastructure projects are presented – and perceived by many – as neutral, technocratic and modernist.

Strengthening the integrators and not the segregators at the Green Line is, as these experiences show much more than a technical process. As well intended as they are, peace initiatives suffer from such a focus on technical dimensions, e.g. when proposing ‘static’ proposals in the form of treaties or framework agreements, while not sufficiently accounting for the ‘dynamic’ dimension of how well-intended regulatory frameworks (one could think here, for example, about the Geneva Initiative) can endure over time. Literature in peace and conflict studies has some insights to offer of how to turn lines – including the Green Line – into such “integrators”. Firstly, the ability of spoilers to derail the process – usually through the strategic use of violence – has to be addressed, which renders (mutual) security and robust forms of ensuring them on and for both sides a central parameter; secondly, existing identities – nationalist, ethnic and religious – have to be taken serious and their positive contribution to a shared homeland paradigm identified, a shared homeland will most likely, for a long time to come, materialize in a world in which national identity and religious belonging play a fundamental role; thirdly, in terms of political structure alternative pathways have to be pursued and while there are no ‘perfect’ examples of how peace along dividing lines can be built, the experiences with supranational integration in the EU offers a powerful model, but one that needs to be enriched through a strong educational dimension in order to achieve long-term positive effects (see here the concept of peace education, Stetter 2021).

In terms of political and societal layers, the Green Line – as any form of cross-border cooperation in conflict zones – should be studied from a multi-scalar perspective that addresses how a transformation from segregator to integrator depends on the interlocking of dynamics at the local level (everyday practice, perceptions of and contact with the other), the national level (security, safeguards against derailing, education, political parties, administrative regulations) – and extends to the regional level (regional security architectures, trade, tourism, municipal contacts) as well as the broader international one (not only states and international organizations, but also the huge amount of non-governmental organizations working on Israel and Palestine). The global interest in Israel and Palestine would need to be transformed from segregation to integration as well. Central though – and lacking in many peace endeavors – is the inclusion of a supranational dimension that anchors cross-border cooperation in shared political, legal, economic and potentially identity-related patterns. Imagining the Green Line under a shared homeland paradigm will most likely not succeed without such a supranational layer. And in addition to these different spatial layers, different functional layers of how a shared homeland relates to peacebuilding (and two-hundred years of experience in global peacebuilding) need to be taken into consideration as well. One can draw here from Richmond's (2022) graduation of peace and ask for the core functions an Israeli-Palestinian Green Line as a "resilient interface" will address: basic security for both states and nations following a conservative logic of peacebuilding; solid political framework agreements and legal provisions as in traditional logics of peacebuilding; a focus on the political processes unfolding after an agreement has been reached, from political competition between parties to the socio-economic dimension central to liberal peacebuilding; and, finally, emancipatory peacebuilding that involves justice, education and other forms of widening the spaces of inclusion and security of all Israelis and Palestinians along and across the Green Line. A reimagination of the Green Line would, in other words, have to address the intersections between these spatial and functional layers in order to ensure the durability of any agreement and avoid what is often happening in peace processes, namely that they falter a couple of years after an agreement has been reached. The notion of a shared homeland based, as highlighted above, on (durable) emancipatory peacebuilding, peace education and supranational integrators can serve as both a compass to and a visionary horizon for such a lived reality – one that transcends but reflects on the various impacts, better or worse, created by the Green Line over the course of the last 80 years and deeply inscribed into the Israeli-Palestinian relationship.

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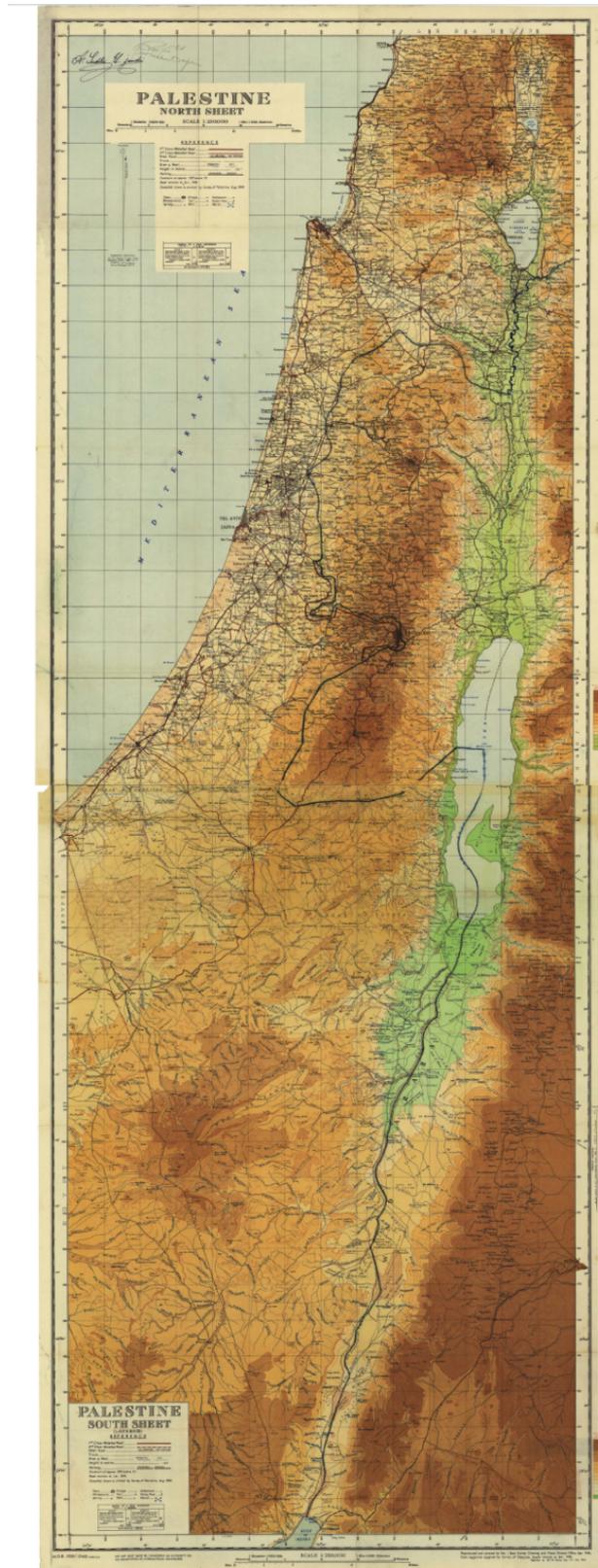
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Annex: The Green Line (Israeli-Jordanian; West Bank and East Jerusalem)



Source: Israel-Jordan General Armistice Agreement – Cablegram from Acting UN Mediator, Map (Green Line). <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-181069/>