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**A GLOBAL AND HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN
CONFLICT AND THE OBSTACLES TO SOLVE IT**

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A Elena, por compartir tutora, dudas y estrés.

A Omar, por las interminables discusiones sobre Oriente Medio.

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INDEX OF ABBREVIATIONS

DOP: Declaration of Principles

IDF: Israel Defence Forces

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

OPT: Occupied Palestinian Territories

PLO: Palestinian Liberation Organization

PNC: Palestinian National Council

UK: United Kingdom

UN: United Nations

UNGA: United Nations General Assembly

UNRWA: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees

UNSC: United Nations Security Council

US: United States

USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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INTRODUCTION

This project looks forward to accomplishing a broad analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from many different angles: ideology, politics, history, geography, diplomacy and international law, for a better comprehension of the current struggle.

The purposes and objectives of this Final Dissertation Project are to demonstrate that the perception of the fight between Israel and Palestinians has changed throughout the decades due to the change of dynamics within the Middle East region, from when it “started” in the beginning of the 20th century to how is going nowadays.

Currently, the gravity of the situation in the Middle Eastern region of Israel and Palestine has worsened since the date October 7, 2023, when the Palestinian group Hamas attacked Israel. The attack left 1,300 deaths and 150 hostages taken by Hamas into Gaza during the assaults to Israel. That led to a war in Gaza that has been struggled for the last months. Netanyahu’s government has been bombing the Gaza Strip since then, indiscriminately between military and civilian targets, with the objective of ending with Hamas existence.

The Gaza War has awakened the Palestinian nationality against the Israeli regime as in times of the First and the Second Intifada. This conflict has been going on for 75 years, and even before that, tensions between Arabs and Jews already existed. However, it has appeared to be highly complicated, bordering on the impossible, to solve the differences between both peoples. That impossibility comes from several reasons which, just like a big snowball, have been increasing throughout history until nowadays.

This Final Dissertation Project of the conflict pretends to shed some light into the question on which could be the factors that may be remarkable obstacles for the solution of the conflict. Our hypothesis is that those factors are multiple, ranging from foreign interests, ethnic nationalism and internal divisions. The external intervention has affected the conflict in many ways, such as being the cause for several of the disagreements and discrepancies over which Israel and Palestine are fighting. The combination between the exacerbated nationalism of the Arab States and the will of expansion of the Zionist governments has caused most of the struggles throughout the years in the region. This project pretends to demonstrate the catastrophic and miscalculated character of the decisions that were taken during the history

that, even though at the time may have appeared as good choices, they ended up worsening the situation.

Furthermore, the internal division within the Palestinian politics is a considerable problem to take into account and, indeed it may be interpreted as a huge unconscious auto sabotage that Palestinian leaders are generating to their own cause. The change between the generations from the beginning of the conflict to the present time has affected the way in which these dynamics of fighting have been done. The new generations of Palestinians and Jews that were born already during the conflict have been moulding the evolution of the same.

Finally, this Final Dissertation Project intends to demonstrate that the world's perception of the conflict is not the same now as when it started. When the Israel State was created, the world's focus was put on the compensation to the Jews for the Holocaust, as well as in the creation of a new State in a region that was still a British Mandate. Now, 75 years later, the borders are different, young people is fighting and the world has awakened in favour of Palestinians. Nobody could have imagined that the situation would evolve this way, and this project intends to analyse which are the pieces that fell in order to end up in what nowadays is internationally known as the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

As to comprehend this Final Dissertation Project in an orderly manner, the chapters have been disposed following a chronological order in the history of the conflict, together with an analysis of the main ideologies and events at each time. Chapter 1 intends to shed some light over the early origins of the studied territory until the British colonization, as well as the civilizations that inhabited in there. Chapter 2 examines the conflictive creation of the State of Israel and how the Israeli nationality became a reality in the region. Chapter 3 observes the reaction of the Arab community towards the Jews during the following decades, and the ideologies and leaders that propelled the confrontations between both populations. Finally, Chapter 4 deepens in the complications of the conflict beyond the territorial domination, and focuses on the clashes between ideologies and how both nationalities have grown up in order to constantly confront each other.

CHAPTER 1. EARLY HISTORY

History is a powerful tool, which can be used to understand the present time and as a way to try to avoid the mistakes of the past. The commonly known as the Israel-Palestinian conflict has been standing for decades as the powder keg of the Middle East region (AFP, 2024). During the 20th century, the conflict created patterns of behaviour in the region, conditioning the actions of the States, and has evolved throughout the years from an internal war between Zionists and ethnic-Arabs, through a classic warfare until it has become an asymmetric conflict starred by non-state actors such as the Hamas and Hezbollah groups (Quarenghi, 2022).

There is a serious debate in the academic field about when did the conflict begin. As it is commonly known nowadays, the conflict started from the moment the Israel State was created in 1948, after all, a Jewish State was established there where Palestinians had been living for centuries (United Nations, n.d.). Nonetheless, some academics would say that it began long time before that breaking point. For example, the Balfour Declaration of 1917 is established by many as an important turning point in the history of that territory (Said, 1979, p. 15).

Nevertheless, what it can be said is that the tension between the Jews and the Arabs has somehow been always magnetically attracted to that territory, most probably because of the common history both religions share with that land. Religion is not the only controversial point in this complicated conflict. History, nationalism and a series of decisions taken by the leaders in both sides, have entangled the situation even more than it was at the very beginning. The two different communities involved have been in tension since the first times they cohabitated the territory, and the fight still goes on today.

1.1. Territorial Origins

The territorial legitimacy over the land is one of the main discrepancies in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is one of the endless discussions in which seems that both parts would never reach an agreement. It may be considered one of the most ancient obstacles to solve the conflict.

In the early history of humanity, the territory that nowadays is the scenario of the fight between Jews and Arabs, was known as Canaan. As explained by the scholar López de Mesa

Samudio (2023), it comprised the south coast in Oriental Mediterranean, the territory currently occupied by Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Israel, and Palestine. Before being divided by the modern states, Canaan existed for 2000 years until the era of the Roman emperor Hadrian in the 2nd century A.C. Furthermore, it is important to take into consideration that the biblical history of the prophet Abraham takes place as well in the land of Canaan. In the Old Testament, there is a division between the Jews and the Arabs when both sons of the Prophet –Isaac and Ismael– take separate ways (Genesis, 21:8-21).

One of the main revindications that the Jewish people claimed in order to create their own State was the biblical legend of the kingdoms of David and Solomon. They considered it as their sacred land in which base their aspirations, as it is mentioned by Ilene Beatty in *Arab and Jew in the Land of Canaan* (1957). Therefore, the Zionists used the religious argument to get that specific piece of land, which God gave them in the Old Testament (Exodus 23:31). It was something that had been carefully planned and conceived by the Zionist movement several years before the official creation of the State of Israel. More specifically, in the year 1897, the first Zionist Congress was celebrated and the return of the Jews back to their original land was discussed at that moment (Penslar, 2018, p. 522).

The land of Palestine was incorporated as part of the Damascus province in the Ottoman Empire on December 29, 1516, when the Yavuz Sultan Selim and his forces entered Jerusalem after defeating the last Mamluk Sultan. The Ottoman Empire ruled over the territory of Palestine during 401 years until the start of the First World War, when it positioned itself in the bloc that, later, would lose the war. The Ottoman forces fought against the British attacks, which were seeking the control of Jerusalem. The Europe Old Man ended up losing the territories before the British forces and withdrew from the city of Jerusalem on December 8, 1917. As explains Erhan Afyoncu (2018), it was then when the British colonialist mandate over Palestine started.

From the authors previously mentioned, it can be deduced the fact that, in quantitative terms, the modern land of Palestine was mostly populated by Arabs throughout ancient history. This has always been one of the main problems of the conflict in the territory of Palestine and Israel, the discussion about which population has its majority or the legitimacy based on that fact. There are multiple data compiled by several scholars such as J. Beinon and L. Hajjar (2014) or E. Said (1979), demonstrating the Arab majority. Or even other authors such as A. Susser (2009), who insists that Jews were not willing to be a minority in their own State. Analysing

this from the “prevalent ethnicity” point of view, Arab people would be the legitimate owners of the land, but history turns out to complicate in the 20th century.

1.2. The First World War and the British Domination

First World War changed the world as it was known at that time. The miscalculation of the great powers brought four years of massive destruction and death. The world map changed with the end of several great empires and the expansion of others. The British and the French Empire, the biggest colonizers at that time, saw the end of the Ottoman Empire as the perfect opportunity to get their own territory in the Middle East region.

1.2.1. The Hussein-McMahon Correspondence

After the unavoidable fall of the Ottoman Empire against the British Forces, the land of Palestine passed to British hands but, was this collapse totally unavoidable? First World War was a fight for European hegemony at that moment, a tough conflict among the European giants, totally underestimated and miscalculated from the very beginning. Some States knew how to turn the tragedy of the war into a profitable situation for themselves. British government knew well how to play its cards.

The first of the most important cards the British played during the conflict regarding the Middle East region, was known as the Hussein-McMahon correspondence. This was the name that historians would put to the series of letters that were exchanged between the Hashemite emir of Mecca, Hussein ibn Ali, and the British High Commissioner in Cairo, Sir. Henry McMahon. The correspondence between these two powerful men was active since 1915 to 1916 and its purpose was to carry out a secret brilliant strategy of the British government (The Editors of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2023).

The letters set the basis for a pact between the British government and the Arabs within the Ottoman Empire that were kind of unhappy with the Turkish government. In the middle of the Arab renaissance and the exaltation of the Arab nationalism, the British took profit of the situation. The plan was to trigger an Arab revolt within the Ottoman Empire and ensure the fall of the Califate. In exchange, the British government would support the creation of an independent Arab State under the leadership of the Hashemite family. As it may result obvious, Hussein ibn Ali was highly tempted by this offer and accepted (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014, p. 2).

On June 5, 1916, Hussein's sons began the Arab revolt and the situation ended up with Bagdad and Damascus falling under the British forces control. (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2014) Finally, on December 8, 1917, the Ottoman forces withdrew from the city of Jerusalem, which irretrievably would lead to the end of the Ottoman Empire (Afyoncu, 2018). The first piece of the British gameboard had been moved, and the external influence began to mould the dynamics of the region.

1.2.2. The Sykes-Picot Agreement

The British Empire was not the only one playing its cards at First World War time. While Germany fought for its hegemony in Europe, there was another actor interested in the attractive lands of the Middle East region: the French Empire (Fitzgerald, 1994, ps. 697-700).

While men were fighting in the battlefield, the French and British governmental elite carried out secret meetings with the purpose of building the post-war world as they pleased. More precisely, the secret meetings between November 1915 and March 1916 ended up with the well-known Sykes-Picot Agreement of May 16, 1916, which had as the main purpose, to divide the provinces of the decadent Ottoman Empire between Paris and London (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014, p. 2).

As it can be extracted from several academics, Beinin and Hajjar (2014) or Fitzgerald (1994), the Sykes-Picot Agreement was an accord made from a Western power to another, about colonizing an area of the world without considering the interests of common people living in there. Because neither the Arab State promised by Henry McMahon, nor the Jewish State that would be later mentioned in the Balfour Declaration, appeared in the agreement. That was how the game of war worked.

For Great Britain, it was a strategy to expand its influence in the Middle East and contribute to the commercial route towards Asia and India. The main characters of the negotiations were the conservative Sir. Mark Sykes and the ex-consul in Beirut Charles François Georges-Picot. Both men draw a line between the Palestine area and Iraq and divided the territory in five zones of influence: two British, two French and the fifth one under international control (Segura i Mas, 2016, ps. 41-42), which included the controversial city of Jerusalem.

1.2.3. *The Balfour Declaration*

The third and last promise made by the British Empire was the well-known Balfour Declaration, which is considered as a turning point in the origin of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. On November 2, 1917, the end of First World War approaching, Lord Arthur Balfour, at the time British Foreign Minister, issued a declaration expressing the British support to the “establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people” (The Balfour Declaration, 1917).

It was a communication addressed to the Zionist community in London about the creation of a *national land* for Jewish people. It is worth remarkable the fact that the word *State* was never used in the Declaration nor terms such as “territory cession”, only and ambiguously *the British support*. It was common for the British government to use those vague grey terms, in which something was insinuated and normally left to the interpretation of the reader. The same “support” expression was used to convince the Arabs to rebel against the Ottoman Empire. The Balfour Declaration was addressed to Lord Rothschild, a leader in the Jewish community in Great Britain (Máiquez, n.d.).

Indeed, the British Empire made a move again by vaguely promising the Jewish people a land which has already been promised to two other peoples –French and Arabs–, one of them being a great power at the time. Nevertheless, as Edward Said (1979) established in its famous book *The Question of Palestine*, the Balfour Declaration was quite *the* controversial document in this history, because it was made by a European power, which had nothing to do with the culture or population of the Palestinian land. That, inevitably, entailed ignoring the presence and the will of people living there.

Here, a question shall be posed. What is colonialism if not that precise concept? Negotiating over a territory without considering the human beings inhabiting in there. It could be interesting to mention the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Also known as UNGA Resolution 1514 (XV), was adopted on December 14, 1960, and declares that “the subjection of peoples to alien subjugation [...] constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights”. Unfortunately, the UN General Assembly has no enforcement methods to make fulfil their resolutions, and consequently, these are considered as recommendatory rather than an obligation.

At that point, that was what European powers had been doing for almost a century in Africa and many centuries before in other continents. It could be said that it was a behavioural pattern, a way of doing diplomacy. Negotiating over a land without having the control of it only because they could have it, because they had the military and economic power needed to control it. In this case, the British Empire was powerful enough at that time to allow itself to negotiate with lands it did not even possess at the time of negotiation. Speaking in those terms, inhabitants were just an insignificant factor to take into consideration (Said, 1979, ps. 56-89).

Therefore, the Balfour Declaration was done, the British Empire had already shown its cards, but it would not be until thirty years later that the “national home for the Jewish people” would be created (Quarenghi, 2022). However, when the First World War ended, France and Britain remained in the geographical area with quasi-colonial powers over the Palestinian territories: their regimes were known as mandates. France held the area of nowadays’ Syria and Lebanon, while Britain controlled what today is Israel, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Jordan. Later, in 1921, the British government divided the region in two areas following the geographical division of the Jordan river. At the East, there was the Emirate of Transjordan, while the West was known as the Palestine Mandate. This was the first time in modern history that Palestine became a unified political entity in history. Of course, the indignation of Arab people was present after the end of the war, caused by Britain’s failure to fulfil its promise of an independent Arab State, made through the Hussein-MacMahon Correspondence (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014, p. 2). In the end, after all the revolts, conflicts, and promises, nobody won but the British.

1.2.4. The Jewish Immigration and the Arab Revolt of 1936-39

Jewish migrants began to arrive to Palestine between the last decades of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, although the population continued being mostly Arab (Said, 1979, ps. 17, 70). When the League of Nations established the British mandate in Palestine, in the year 1922, some clauses were included in the documentation to facilitate Jewish immigration to the Middle Eastern region (Hughes, 2009, p. 313).

In the beginning of the 20th century, some of Palestine’s land pertained to absentee landlords who administered the lands from Cairo, Damascus, or Beirut while the geographical territory was inhabited and taken care of by the so-called *fellahin*, Palestinian peasants (Collins Dictionary, n.d.). Some sources affirm that the Jews began buying the land once the peasants

left the place, and, as the 1920 leader of the Labor Zionist Party, David Ben-Gurion established “under no circumstances must we touch land belonging to *fellahs* or worked by them”. It was only after the Jews had acquired all the “abandoned” land, that they started to purchase the cultivable land, paying high prices for them to the Arab landlords (Bard, n.d.). As mentioned before, it was just one more example of colonialism, with the difference that, this time, the colonizers actually *paid* for the land. Does that fact turn it more legitimate? Some would look at the present situation and would say “no”.

John Chancellor was at that time British High Commissioner for Palestine, and he realized that it existed the risk of creating a whole social class of Arab agricultures without land whenever those lands continued to be sold to the Jewish immigrants that arrived at the geographical Palestine. It may be perfectly plausible to consider that the truly objective of the Jewish National Fund was to “recover the land of Palestine as the inalienable possession of the Jewish people” (JNF, 2001). Nevertheless, the Colonial Office rejected the recommendations of John Chancellor and the Jewish continued buying the cultivable lands (Quigley, 1990, p. 19).

As it can be extracted from the opinions of scholars such as John Quigley (1990) or Edward Said (1979), that time could be considered as the starting of the animadversion of the Arabs towards the Jews. Watching another whole people coming to the land that was initially promised to them and slowly take possession of it. That was the Arab vision, of course, because from the Jewish point of view it may have been seen as the starting of a new life, the achievement of a national home after centuries of discrimination, being that national home their religious Sacred Land. Whatever may be the correct way to interpret it, the Jewish immigration was about to increase dramatically.

In the decade of the 30s, the number of Jews arriving at Palestine increased considerably due to the discrimination and persecution that Jewish people was suffering in Europe, more specifically in Germany. By the year 1931, there were 174,606 Jews in a total of 1,033,314 population in the land of Palestine (Said, 1979, p. 11). With the rise of Adolf Hitler to power, and the fascism spreading rapidly through the continent, the Jews sought for protection in the ancient land of their Prophets (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014, ps. 1,7). Several controversial factors were put together in the Palestinian mandate scenario. The increasing migration, together with the already Palestinian rejection to British control, caused a reaction on the Arab population. It all broke out with the Arab revolt between 1936 and 1939 (Hughes, 2009, ps. 313-314).

The revolt of the Arabs ended up being crushed by the British forces, helped by some Zionist militias. The most active paramilitary groups were Haganah, the Irgun, Stern Group and the Palmach, which massacred Arab civilians between the 30s until 1948, when they constituted the building blocks of the Israeli Army (Khouri, 2023).

Nevertheless, the revolt was useful enough to cause changes within the British government and in their administration of the land. A White Paper was issued as a statement of political policy, which included limitations to the Jewish immigration and land purchases. The White Paper of Palestine was issued in May 1939. It restricted the Jewish immigration to Palestine for a period of five years and left the control of the immigration up to Arab consent. The document was drawn by the British Government but consulted with the neighbouring Arab States. As a matter of fact, the British government made one more promise and assumed the compromise of setting up an independent Palestinian State within the following ten years if it proved feasible. The White Paper proved to be a contentious and preventive measure against the growing anti-British sentiment of the Arab population in Palestine (Cohen, 1973, ps. 571-573).

In the end, the White paper turned out to be essentially that: contentious, and something that is being contained, sooner or later will lead to a worst situation than the current one. After the Arab revolt was defeated, the Palestinian political elite was exiled to neighbouring Arab countries and that fact entailed the disorganization of the political forces of Palestine during the crucial decade in which the future of the territory was to be decided (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014, p. 4).

CHAPTER 2. THE CREATION OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

It can be extracted from Beinin and Hajjar's (2014, ps. 4-6) report, that the creation of the State of Israel was one of the points of no return in the history of the Palestinian territory. A lot of interests were involved in the process. Lots of powers played their games. It was a multidirectional crossroads in which several factors converged. The birth of a new era and a new world order; the tension between Arabs and Jews within a territory that was promised to both by an external power; the interests of the elites, which not always represented the common will of the people.

2.1. Zionism: the Jewish Side

Theodore Herzl was the founder of the World Zionist Organization in 1897, called by some authors the year of the Jewish social revolution (Penslar, 2018, ps. 521-523). The first Zionist congress was celebrated on August 29 of that same year and the environment was marked by the Jewish resentment towards the Russian pogroms highly spread during the 1870s, when the radical Zionism was born (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014, p. 3). The Russian pogroms entailed a significant outbreak of anti-Jewish violence in Russia and changed the relation between the Russian government and the Jewish citizens (Aronson, 1980, p. 18).

It was its core belief that all Jews constitute one nation and the only solution to antisemitism was the concentration of as many Jews as possible in the sacred land of Jews and the establishment of a Jewish state there (Penslar, 2018, p. 524). "National home for the Jewish people secured by public law" (Herzl, 1973), which obviously did not include the Arabs. It may make sense that Jews only want Jews in their territory since they have experienced what was the reaction of other populations to their minority cohabitation: expulsion and diaspora. The only way to avoid that would be to surpass their historical minority in a State they could call their own (Susser, 2009, ps. 105-107).

It could be extracted from the words of Derek J. Penslar (2018, ps. 524-525) that Theodore Herzl may have thought that an Israeli State would eliminate the antisemitism in the world, but it could be deduced from his reflexions that he was a truly believer of the right to compensation that the Jewish people had due to their diaspora experience with the world.

Jews have been historically discriminated throughout the history of humanity and can be demonstrated with facts such as the expulsion from Germany in 1438 and Spain in 1492

(Sheffi, 1999, p. 95), the Russian pogroms in the late 19th century and beginning of the 20th century (Aronson, 1980, p. 18) or the Jewish Holocaust in Germany during the Second World War (Wistrich, 1996, ps. 13, 16, 19). All of these have caused a historical resentment by part of the Jewish people, a guilty sentiment by part of the world and a feeling of duty towards the Jewish community. Thereafter, it is reasonable to think that the necessity of compensation arose in the new international world order.

Zionism has its basis on the Jewish religious attachment to the Land of Israel (Eretz Israel) as the land promised by God to them in the Old Testament (Quarenghi, 2022). Zionism was born in a historical era in which nationalism and colonialism were at their peak, and therefore, it was inevitably influenced by European colonialism and nationalist ideologies. Taking that fact into consideration, it may appear pretty reasonable that Zionists asked for a land for themselves in an era where self-determination and nationalism were the latest trend (Said, 1979, ps. 19, 52).

Within the orthodox Jews group, most of them found the Zionist ideology in contradiction with their religion by the idea that was God's plan to reunite Jews in the Promised Land, and therefore, Zionist initiatives entailed a violation of God's will. Nevertheless, this vision was quickly forgotten when in the 30's decade, Adolf Hitler reached power in Germany and started a political crusade against the Jews in the country and later in Europe. It was a truly turning point when the "Final Solution" started to be implemented in Germany and the territories where Nazis governed. When Jewish population started to be massacred, most Jews joined the Zionist movement and started to demand the creation of a Jewish State (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014, p. 3). The historical resentment and the sentiment of compensation were present in the environment. How could the world say "no" to the demands of a people that had been recently massacred and historically forced to suffer an endless diaspora?

It was like dominoes, falling one after the other, until the last consequences. That pattern is common to happen in history, explaining most of nowadays' conflicts, and Israel-Palestinian problem is not an exception. When the year 1945 arrived, Second World War ended. An entire new world was reborn, and the international community faced a lot of questions when reorganizing the new world order. At that moment was when the Zionists made their move and asked for their very much desired State.

2.2. The Arabs in the New World Order

The Arabs are and have always been proud stubborn people that had no problem with fighting for their land when it was necessary. After being 400 years submitted to the Turkish rule of the Ottoman Empire, 20 years to the British Mandate, they were ready to finally get their own State, and, understandably, did not care about the Jewish persecution in Europe, not after all the tension, immigration, and Zionist expansion (Susser, 2009, ps. 106-107; 111-115).

After the 1936-39 Arab revolt, the Palestinian elite was exiled from the Palestinian land, and during the 40s decade, while the Jews organized themselves under the rule of strong leaders such as David Ben-Gurion or Theodore Herzl, the Palestinian Arabs lacked a well-organized authority to fight for their interests (Hughes, 2009). There was an important figure, the pre-1948 Palestinian leader Haj Amin al-Hussaini (1896-1974), a charismatic anti-Zionist leader.

During the 1936-39 revolt, the Arab Higher Committee was created, more specifically on April 25, 1936, including the heads of the main Palestinian political parties and with Haj Amin al-Hussaini as the leader. He proved himself capable of triggering the Arab masses against the British and the Zionists. Nevertheless, this representation of the Palestinian authority lost its activity during World War II until the Arab League decided to reorganize it in November 1945 and May 1946 (Jerusalem Story Authors, n.d.). The Arabs tried to continue with the fight of their interests, but they were notably weakened and disorganized, in comparison with the strong united force of Zionist ideology.

In fact, Haj Amin al-Hussaini was involved in important decisions regarding the future fate of Palestine. He firmly rejected the “White Paper” of the British promising an Arab State, as well as the 1947-48 Partition Plan of the United Nations. Furthermore, he supported the Arab’s League invasion of Palestine after the Israel State was created. Haj Amin was a symbol of Arab nationalism, and he represented the dream of a future independent state in a world where that was everybody’s dream. The Arab States, more specifically Egypt, supported the Arab population in Palestine against the Zionist and Jewish community, and therefore they issued an agenda item to the General Assembly requesting the withdrawal of the British regime and the independence of the Palestinian Arab State (Pathak, 1951, p. 100).

As it can be extracted from the study of N. D. Pathak (1951, p. 100), the Jews-Arab problem in Palestine firstly belonged to the UK, having to take care of it within the borders of their Mandate. But on April 2, 1947, the British Government issued a telegram to the Secretary

General of the United Nations requesting a special session to treat the Palestine problem. From then on, the Palestine question became an international issue.

2.3. The Partition Plan: two States for two Peoples

As previously established, there are some key legal turning points in the history of the conflict. Written documents, issued by powerful persons with promises to both peoples: Jewish and Arabs. The Hussein-McMahon correspondence, the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Balfour Declaration had their relevance when forging the modern history of the region. However, all those promises were made before World War II broke out. After the global conflict, a lot of things had happened, and circumstances were different at the time. Palestine was under a British Mandate, but this situation could not last much longer. The other colonies were already asking for their independence, and the concept of self-determination gained more strength each day, in a world where the era of great old colonial empires was coming to an end (Imperial War Museums, n.d.).

Furthermore, the British Empire, after having fought the Second World War in less than 50 years, was tired enough to ask to the recently created United Nations Organization, to take care of the Palestine Question. The UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) was created to address the problem in the Middle East and propose solutions (Britannica, 2024).

The Partition Plan was an international initiative reflected on the Resolution 181 of the United Nations General Assembly. The Resolution set the partition of Palestine in two States, one for the Arab, the other one for the Jewish, in an attempt of trying to fulfil the promises made by the British Empire decades ago (Ben-Dror, 2007, p. 997). At the first sight it may have seemed like the perfect solution. However, seeing the current situation, it could be plausible to affirm that the supporters of the Partition Plan had too much faith on the conciliation between two peoples that had been fighting, to a greater or lesser extent, for centuries.

It was voted by the UNGA on November 29, 1947, and passed with 33 votes in favour, 13 against and 10 abstentions (Britannica, 2024). It specifically set the basis for the creation of “Independent Arab and Jewish States and the Special International Regime of the City of Jerusalem”. The Resolution 181 established as a date of creation “two months after the evacuation of the armed forces of the Mandatory Power [...] but in any case, not later than 1

October 1948”. Therefore, as it can be extracted from this, the Resolution 181 did not only settle the basis for the creation of two States, but also determined the end of the British Mandate in the territory. Furthermore, it tried to solve the controversial question of Jerusalem, which was a city desired by both peoples and religions (Kahairallah, 2011).

Following, the Resolution 181 divided the territory in an equal way, speaking in quantitative terms. The percentage of the surface given to the Arabs and the surface given to the Jews was, approximately, the same quantity, in an equal distribution of the territory. There are some divergences speaking of the concrete percentage of the land, but in the Partition Plan of the UN, the borders were drawn following the criteria of concentration of Arabs and Jewish Populations at the time. The Resolution 181 also considered the future requirements of the sustainability of each state; as an example, the Negev Desert was added to the proposed Jewish State for further development and settlement (Britain Israel Communications and Research Centre, 2017).

It may be important to pose the question, is equality the same as equity? The Arab representatives set a clear “no” as an answer. The main complain about the Partition Plan was the distribution of the same amount of land between two populations in which one of them was clearly more quantitative than the other (Quarenghi, 2022). At the end of the year 1946, the number of Arabs in the region was 1,269,000 million approximately, while Jews made 608,000. As previously mentioned, the Jews had been acquiring the property of the land when immigrating, and by the end of Second World War, the Jewish were owners of about 6-8% of the territory, which equalled to the 20% of the arable land (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014, p. 4). Furthermore, besides the quantitative terms of the division, the borders were defined in quite an untypical format (see Figure 1). Resolution 181 (1947) included a detailed description of which villages shall be added to which territory, and that resulted in Jewish and Arab proposed states divided and spread with intersections and irregularities in the geographical map (Moreno, 2021).

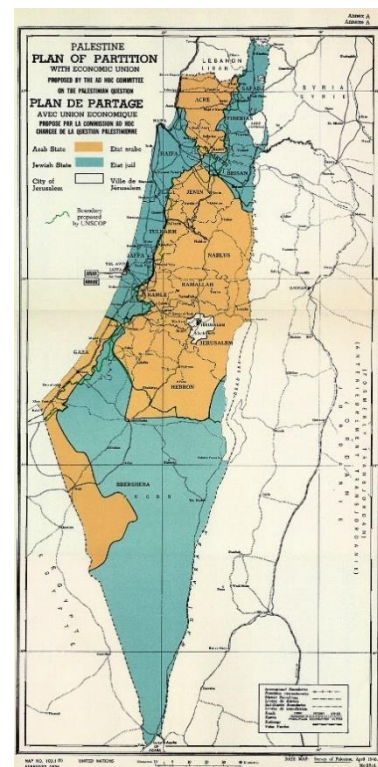


Figure 1. Map of UN Partition Plan (United Nations, 1947).

The Arabs, as previously said, expressed its disagreement with the terms of the partition and rejected the Partition Plan proposed by the General Assembly. This rejection not only came from the Palestinian Arabs themselves, but also from the surrounding Arab states that considered a Jewish State as a settler colony and argued that the UNGA's plan was an international betrayal. The Jews, on the contrary, happily accepted the project with a public declaration from the Zionist leadership (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014, ps. 4-5). There was no coming back from that turning point, and everything started to happen vertiginously fast.

2.4. The 1948-49 War and the Palestinian Nakba

As extracted from previous articles, the UN Resolution 181 was not the first time that Arabs had declared publicly its rejection towards the Jewish and Zionist population in the Palestinian land. In addition, in March 1934, two important figures met with the intention of finding points in common, since they were obliged to cohabitate within the British Mandate. David Ben-Gurion, leader of the General Federation of Labor and future Prime Minister of Israel, had an encounter with Musa al-Alami, Palestine leader. Ben-Gurion tried to convince Alami about the benefits that Zionism could have over the Arab communities, including more development and achieving the “material benefits of Western style modernity”. Ben-Gurion showed the Palestine leader the possibility of raising the life quality of the Arab indigenous tribes by means of Zionist enterprising spirit (Susser, 2009, ps. 106-107). Alami showed no less than indignation towards this view and settled clear to Ben-Gurion that “he would rather have the country remain poor and desolate for another hundred years, [...] than to have the Zionist take it over” (Teveth, 1985, p. 225).

The approach from which Ben-Gurion managed that conversation, can be understood as paternalistic and condescending, the most common argument in colonialism history. It has always been seen as a project *for the good of* the colonized. There is always this need of justifying an alien presence in a foreign territory, and it's commonly used the approach of “it is for your own good” (Narayan, 1995, ps. 133-136). Nobody would know ever which were the true intentions of Ben-Gurion: if he really was an idealist who dreamed of a better world for Arabs and Jews, or if he was simply another man with colonialist mentality (BBC News, 2023).

For the Arabs, the Partition Plan was simply unacceptable. It can be extracted from the studies, that they were not ready for the way the world was starting to work with diplomatic

negotiations and agreements between powers. For the Jews, the UN resolution was an achievement for their history. The end to all their penuries. However, for the Palestinian Arabs partition was no less than unacceptable. As it established the Arab Higher Committee, the Partition Plan would only lead to a new “Balkans” situation, introducing an alien body into the Arab world (Susser, 2009, p. 109).

Having both parties established their postures clearly, on May 15, 1948, the British withdrew from Palestine and Zionist leaders proclaimed the creation of the state of Israel. The immediate reaction of neighbouring Arab states –Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Iraq– was to invade Israel, starting the first Arab Israeli War that would last nine months, until 1949 (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014, p. 5). An armistice was signed by then, and Israel captured much more land than the Partition Plan conceded originally. The remaining territories, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, were put under Jordanian and Egyptian control, respectively (Al Jazeera, 2008). After the 1948 war, approximately 700,000 Palestinians were obliged to leave their homes in the captured territories, which was known as the Palestinian *Nakba* “catastrophe” (United Nations, n.d.).

It can be extracted from here, that the Arabs gave the Israelis the perfect pretext to expand their territories and get more than the UN gave them originally. It is fair to think that Arabs believed that they could get what they wanted by force, ignoring the new world order imposed by Western powers. Until that time of history, the rule had always been to get new lands conquering by force: war as a way of diplomacy. But not anymore. Palestinian Arabs and neighbouring countries committed a giant mistake: the underestimation of the new world order, and the miscalculation of the Western support to Israel. That mistake was another point of no return in the history of the conflict (Quarenghi, 2022).

CHAPTER 3. THE ARAB'S FIGHT

Several mistakes have been committed throughout the long history of this conflict. Several points of no return have been crossed, and the Arab rejection of the Partition Plan was one of those points. But it may be plausible to consider that the situation would not have worsened if the Arab states had not continued its fight after the creation of the Israel State. However, after being submitted to the decisions taken by Western powers, how else could they have reacted?

It is not surprising at all that Arabs were furious. Really furious about how history and world had turned against them in less than a decade. The Palestinian Nakba followed the Zionist plan of getting rid of all the non-Jewish population, although Jews affirmed that the refugees abandoned the territory on orders of the Arab political leaders (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014, ps. 5-6). Despite the Palestinian tragic status, reviewing all the historical occurrences, the whole situation seems kind of unavoidable. The years after the creation of the State of Israel were key to determinate what will happen. Arabs will not cease in their fight for the territory they considered theirs –*and which they had previously rejected to try to obtain it by other means*. Meanwhile, Israel would take profit of it and leveraged every warfare context to acquire more territory than the established in the Partition Plan.

3.1. The Tension during the 1950s

Israel was aware of the Arab resentment and started building a status quo of security and self-defence as main feature of their State. They could not be blamed, since immediately after its creation, the neighbouring Arab States attacked their territory.

3.1.1. *Early Border Incursions: guerrilla warfare*

In the years following the 1948 war, repeated incursions were carried out within Israel, coming from the borders of Jordan and Egypt. Palestinian activists and leaders participated in the infiltrations and carried out operations of sabotage and murder inside Israel, which caused a situation of constant tension in the borders (Tal, 1996, ps. 61-62). David Ben-Gurion punished harshly the Arab incursions against the territory of Israel (BBC News, 2023). Following a pattern, Israel quickly saw that the Arab incursions declined significantly after a revenge operation. That led the Israeli government to increase the reprisal actions despite the international community disapproval (Tal, 1996, ps. 65;75-76).

From the diplomatic point of view, the Arab delegates, and Israeli representatives from the armistice commissions met frequently, Jordan and Egypt taking military and legal actions to prevent infiltration, but that was insufficient to completely stop the raids and to satisfy Israel. A special Israeli unit was created to manage the border attacks called the Border Guard. Nevertheless, in the border with Egypt and in the framework of the armistice situation in the Gaza Strip, there was an aggravation of the situation between February and March of 1954, when Egyptian soldiers opened fire against Israel Defence Forces border controls. The IDF were created by David Ben-Gurion after the declaration of independence. They were composed by former Israeli armed groups (BBC News, 2023).

An important turning point in the tension happened on July 1954, when Great Britain and Egypt made an agreement for the British withdrawal in the Suez Canal. That rang an alarm within Israel government. They considered Egypt as one of the main threats in the region, and Britain the only thing that stood between them and the Egyptian wrath. The withdrawal of the British forces from the Canal, entailed the end of the British “buffer” between Israel and Egypt. Furthermore, with the Baghdad Pact presence –a defence agreement between Turkey, Iran and Great Britain– in the region, Israel feared that Egypt would join a regional Arab alliance against them (Tal, 1996, ps. 64-72).

At that time, Moshe Sharett held the position of Prime Minister in Israel and David Ben-Gurion came back as the Minister of Defence and he decided to adopt a preventive war against Egypt. The latter had received URSS weapons, and maybe it was that together with the British withdrawal and the Baghdad Pact, what made Ben-Gurion take the decision (BBC News, 2023). He proposed a plan to attack a military camp that Egypt held near Gaza City. The plan was approved by Sharett and on February 1955, the IDF attacked Gaza (Tal, 1996, p. 64).

3.1.2. The Suez Canal Crisis of 1956

This tension between Egypt and Israel had not broken out yet and had not escalated beyond these small clashes with little number of civilian victims. Until Gamal Abdel Nasser, president of Egypt, took the step of defying the Western powers and nationalized the Suez Canal on July 26, 1956, which infuriated both, France and the UK. Egypt had been a British colony, and the British government was concerned about the flow of oil coming from the Middle East, as well as its own investment in the Canal. France, on the other side, considered the Suez Canal as a French business since it was a Frenchman who started the project originally

(Wright, Shupe, Fraser, & Hipel, 1980, ps. 28-30). It can be extracted from this fact, the idea of colonialist paternalism. Even though Egypt was not a colony anymore, the feeling of “owning” was something difficult to get rid of. Therefore, the decision of Nasser, with was no more no less than a proof of Egyptian sovereignty really got into the nerves of British and French governments.

Guy Molle, French Prime Minister, and Anthony Eden, Britain’s Prime Minister, were the main characters of the crisis. They convened in forging an alliance with Israel and occupy the Suez Canal Zone as a punishment for Nasser’s actions. Ben-Gurion, as already mentioned, had its reasons to accept this alliance with Western powers against Egypt and joined the plan. France and Britain discussed the perfect pretext to get to the Suez Canal, and they used Israel to attack the Sinai and consequently sending an ultimatum to Nasser as “mediators” of a crisis between Egypt and Israel (Wright, Shupe, Fraser, & Hipel, 1980, ps. 29-31).

On October 29, 1956, Israel carried out a military operation in the Sinai Desert (Tal, 1996, p. 74) and the next day France and Britain sent their ultimatum to Nasser. Less than a week later, British, and French forces landed at Port Said and Port Fuad. Nasser knew to see the threat in this movement and in the framework of the Cold War, asked Khrushchev, USSR leader, for aid. Although Khrushchev renounced to intervene actively, he sent a message to the London government disapproving the operation in the Suez Canal (Wright, Shupe, Fraser, & Hipel, 1980, ps. 29-31).

This event made the alarms of Britain rang, perceiving a possible threat from the USSR, and turned to the US to ask for help on basis of the NATO alliance. It is curious how the Great British Empire had considerably lost its power, and now was relegated to choose a side in a cold conflict between two greater powers. Even so, the fact was that the US denied their support to them, the same as Khrushchev to Nasser, and affirmed that they would not support British forces in the Mediterranean. The world balance based on the bilateral hegemony of the world at that moment, caused that all the States depended upon one side or the other. According to scholars W. M. Wright, M. Shupe, N. M. Fraser and K. W. Hipel (1980) the UK depended on the US for financial and oil support, and Egypt needed the support of the USSR. Consequently, on November 6, 1956, a ceasefire was imposed by pressure from the United States and the Soviet Union.

Israel lost that clash with the Arab world, but the tension would not cease in the following years. It is remarkable here to highlight that the Arab fights against Israel at this point, had been declared by the neighbouring Arab States, which, under the guide of the Arab League, were not willing to accept the Israeli State in the region. Palestinians, as people, as a community like it is known nowadays, had not started its great fight yet.

3.1.3. The 1967 War: the Great Arab Defeat and the Israel Expansion

The 60s evolved without major clashes, beyond those coming from the Palestinian command in Syrian territory against Israel. That caused the tension between this two States to escalate. Furthermore, in a context of rising Cold War, confrontations between the US and the Soviet Union for global hegemony were also escalating in the Middle East region (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014, p. 6). In 1967 broke out once again another conflict between Israel and some Arab States, this time known as the Six-Day War (United Nations, n.d.).

In May 1967, the Soviet Union issued a warning about large scale Israeli troops concentration in the border with Syria, to which Egyptian president Nasser, did not hesitate to respond. In May 14, he mobilized the Egyptian forces to the Sinai Peninsula, the Egyptian territory that had been previously demilitarized after the 1956 Suez Crisis. The outcome was that Egyptian General Muhammad Fawzi, did not found any signs of Israeli forces mobilization, and this information was later confirmed by the Egyptian intelligence, as well as by a special UN inspection unity (Karsh, 2017).

That did not stop Nasser's actions, though. He took the opportunity by hand and ended with the presence of the UN Emergency Force which had served as a buffer between the two States since the 1956 clash. Nevertheless, in 1967 the UN observers were replaced by Egyptian forces. Furthermore, as historian E. Karsh (2017) explains, on May 22, Nasser announced the closing of the Strait of Tiran in the Gulf of Aqaba (see Figure 2) to Israel and any shipping related to the Jewish State. He declared that the Gulf pertained to the Egyptian territorial waters.

From there on, Nasser started a militant policy based on pan-Arabism with which he emboldened the Arab world and Arab nationalism. His speech about the “destruction of Israel” and supremacy of Egyptian army, made a mark on the perception of the other Arab leaders. Nasser got to mobilize the Arab forces in a military preparation, reuniting allies and enclosing Israel gathering forces in the Sinai Peninsula and the Jordanian territory. This caused that King Hussein of Jordan and Iraq signed a defence pact with Egypt and Arab expeditionary forces including Iraqi, Saudi Arabian and Syrian units initiated an anti-Zionist anti-Israeli crusade (Karsh, 2017). In the end, that had always been the Israeli disadvantage, being a strange Jewish State within a group of same-type Arab States. But, following the history, this decision may not have been the best one to take. It could be possible to affirm that Nasser was blinded by the brilliant ideology of nationalism, and that caused the consequent miscalculation of the reality and his inevitable defeat.

The war broke out on June 5, 1967, with a surprise attack by Israel, and it ended up six days later after the Egyptian air force, provided by the Soviet Union, and the Syrian, Jordanian and Iraqi forces were easily defeated by the very well-organized Israel army (Bowen, 2017).



Figure 2. Strait of Tiran and Gulf of Aqaba, Egypt (CIA, 2007).

Israel really took profit of its victory and captured the Gaza Strip from the Palestinian land, the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria. It achieved the territories of the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan as well (see Figure 3). The 1967 war brought a second expulsion of Palestinians, numbers around half a million (United Nations, n.d.).

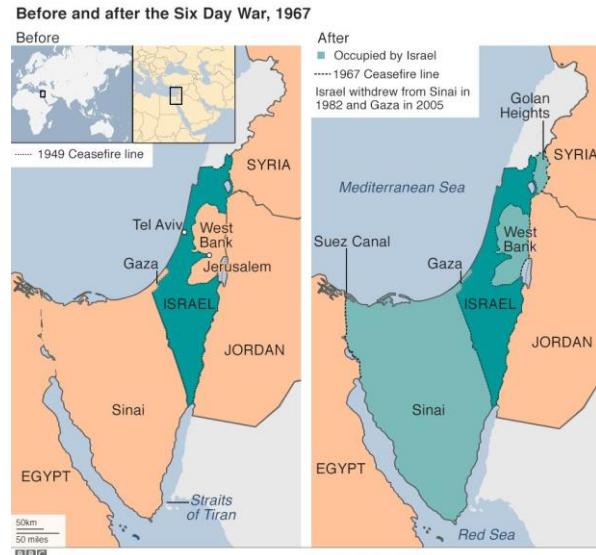


Figure 3. Before and after 1967 war (BBC, 2017).

It is worth noting that David Ben-Gurion, after 1967 war, was opposed to preserve the Arab territory beyond Jerusalem (BBC News, 2023). In any case, it seems from all the historical events, that were the Arab States the ones that led the fight against Israel, more than the Palestinian themselves. Although the latter were always the most harmed, as it may seem obvious (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014, ps. 5-8). Here, it is interesting to see the clash between Arabs and Jews. The proud and stubborn character of the Arab people may be considered the main initiative that incited the Arab States to repeatedly attack Israel. That did not combine well with the ambitious and colonialist character of the Zionist movement, and, in the end, every time the Arabs attacked Israel, the Jewish State took profit of the situation and gained more territory each time.

3.1.4. The UNSC Resolution 242, grammatically controversial

The Resolution 242 was issued by the UN Security Council on November 22, 1967, after the 1967 war. And it has been a motive of controversial discussions and debates about its meaning within the international community. The ambiguity and uncertainty of how it is written has given rise to several interpretations by both parties of the conflict—Arabs and Jews—each of them according to what benefits most to each one. The Resolution puts the frame on general principles and gives certain margin of interpretation to its legally binding nature:

“1. Affirms that the fulfilment of Charter principles requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East which should include the application of both the following principles: (i) Withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict; (ii) Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of every State in the

area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force;”

The most controversial issue within the Resolution 242 might be the withdrawal mention. According to the Resolution it demands the “withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict”. There is a slight difference between the French and English version of the same document: while in English is expressed as withdrawal “from territories”, in French is written as “*Retrait des forces armées israéliennes des territoires occupés*” which is translated as the withdrawal from *the* territories, meaning all. Consequently, the debate was put in the full Israeli forces’ removal or not (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014, ps. 6-7).

As a matter of fact, lord Caradon, the United Kingdom Permanent Representative was the one who encouraged the strict adherence of the Resolution to fundamental principles, instead of entering in rigorous details. He argued that details would only lead to interminable discussions and would’ve never allowed the Resolution to come out. Therefore, he convinced the representatives to abstain of writing the article “the”, arguing that the Resolution already mentioned the “inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war”. The provisions of the Resolution shall be interpreted as a whole, and UN representatives hoped to put some strength in article 2 of the UN Charter (McDowall, 2014, ps. 1369-1370).

It may seem a tiny grammatical detail, but this whole conflict was starting to be based on tiny little details, as happened with the Partition Plan and the slightly quantitative difference in the distribution between both territories. Furthermore, at this stage of the events, almost 20 years had already passed since the creation of the State of Israel, and 50 years since the tensions started to rise between Jews and Arabs in the British mandate. Both peoples already hated each other and were less and less willing to negotiate and to be reasonable. This lack of diplomatic comprehension was paid by the most disadvantaged population, in this case, the Palestinians. Here it may be demonstrated, once again, how the decisions of the leaders have been one of the main causes for the complication of this situation throughout history.

On the other side, even if that grammatical difference was not there, some of Jewish arguments maintain that their occupation was legitimate because it came from a legitimate use of the force, which was self-defence. According to Article 51 of the UN Charter, the self-defence is a legitimate motive for the use of force against another State. Speaking in terms of international law, Israel had acquired the occupied territories in an act of *self-defence* after the attack of the Arab States in 1967, and therefore Jews considered their expansion as an

“acquisition” of territories rather than an “occupation”. For them, it was a right based on customary international law (Lapidoth, 2011, ps. 10-12). Analysing Jewish arguments, it may seem obvious that the efforts of Lord Caradon and the other representatives on putting the focus on article 2 of the UN Charter did not have any effect. At this point of history, it is fair to think that Jews had already got what they wanted and were not willing to let it go so easily, not when the Arabs had provided them the perfect excuse for keeping it.

Another point of discussion of Resolution 242 was the clause about the “settlement of the refugee problem”. That way of redacting may have been an approach that underestimated the national dimension of the Palestinian problem. Palestinians were described as refugees, and not as nationals (Said, 1979). That raised several debates in the international arena, such as the definition of a Palestinian refugee or their right to return or not to Israel. According to UNGA Resolution 194 of year 1948, “the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so”, and so Arabs argue that UNSC Resolution 242 is in concordance with UNGA Resolution 194. On the other side, Jews affirm that neither said UNSC makes reference specifically to Resolution 194, nor UNGA decision is binding, but *recommendatory* (Lapidoth, 2011, p. 13).

Summarizing everything, although 1967 Resolution would remain as a reference for future peace conversations in the Middle East, the main difficulty was to find a wording that was acceptable to both parties: Arabs and Jews. And, in a predictable way, each of those parties interpreted the Resolution differently. Nevertheless, maybe the ambiguity of Lord Caradon was precisely a tool to get more clarity, meaning, the words say what they say: nothing more and nothing less. But that did not satisfy neither of the parties, and differences in interpretations would continue in the studies, analysis and legal documents done from there on (McDowall, 2014, ps. 1370-1376).

3.2. The 1973 War: the last Egyptian attempt

After 1967 confrontation between Israel and the Arab States, the situation was heated up in the Middle East. Israel was more aware than ever of its position surrounded by enemies, and Arab States had lost several territories that were anxious to recover. In 1971 Egypt had a new president, Anwar El-Sadat, who communicated to UN representative Gunnar Jarring his intention of signing a peace agreement with Israel in exchange of the Sinai Peninsula. This petition was ignored by Israel and after two years without getting any results, Egypt and Syria

as allies attacked once again its Jewish neighbour in order to get back their conquered territories (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014, p. 8).

It was a surprise attack carried out on October 6, 1973, the Yom Kippur Holy Day of Jews, so it took Israeli off-guard. Egypt and Syria attacked the IDF in two different fronts, the Sinai Peninsula, and the Golan Heights. The surprise effect gave them some advantage over Israeli forces, and they obtained early military victories. Notwithstanding, the United States was quick to intervene together with the USSR, transforming the 1973 conflict in another Cold War scenario (Givens, 2002, ps. 27-32).

To end this war was necessary the international pressure once again. The UN Security Council called for a ceasefire several times until the war finished on October 26. Israel signed a ceasefire with Egypt on November 11 and later with Syria on May 31, 1974 (The Editors of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2024).

After the war, Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State of the US, followed the strategy of carrying out partial Israeli withdrawals from the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights through bilateral agreements. However, he certainly did not dare to touch the West Bank or Gaza Strip (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014, p. 8).

In relation to UNSC Resolution 338 (1973), it was adopted by the UN Security Council, and it was another one of the UN calls to a peaceful settlement in the Middle East region. Resolution 338 together with Resolution 242, have set the fundamental principles for a negotiated peaceful settlement (The United Nations, n.d.). Resolution 338 promulgated the following words:

“The Security Council

calls upon all parties to the present fighting to cease all firing and terminate all military activity immediately [...] in the positions they now occupy; *calls upon* the parties concerned to start immediately after the cease-fire the implementation of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) in all of its parts; *decides* that, immediately and concurrently with the cease-fire, negotiations shall start between the parties concerned under appropriate auspices aimed at establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East.”

As it can be extracted from the Resolution, the United Nations continued to insist on the application of Resolution 242, although this had been a cause of even more discrepancies

between the parties. Jews had accepted the authority of the United Nations when it concerned to the creation of a State for them –Arabs never accepted it– but now that cards were on the table nor Israel nor the Arab States wanted to retreat from their respective decisions or postures.

3.3. The 1982 Lebanon War: Israel against the PLO

Although during the following decades after the creation of the State of Israel most of the conflicts rose from Arab States' initiative, one of the most remarkable Israel aggressions against an Arab State was the 1982 Lebanon war. By the late 1960s, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) had gained some popularity and operated from Jordan, but its activities there were suppressed by the Nixon administration and in the 1970-71, the PLO leadership was expelled out of the country in its fight against the Jordanian army. Five years later, the civil war in Lebanon started and the PLO participated as a part of the conflict (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014, p. 8).

The PLO did not lose the time and continued attacking Israel from within the Lebanese borders, as it was mentioned in a letter from Jacob Doron, Acting Permanent Representative of Israel, to the United Nations on 2 January 1975. On June 6, 1982, Israel armed forces crossed the Lebanon border with the purpose of eliminating the PLO locations in the territory: according to them, it was an anti-terrorist mission (United Nations, n.d.). Palestinian camps and Beirut surroundings were bombed by Israel. Together, Palestinian and Lebanese forces confronted the Israel forces, but that was insufficient. Israel seized the south of Lebanon in less than a week (Stork & Paul, 1982, p. 3).

The operation named Peace for Galilee was launched by the Israeli Minister of Defence, Ariel Sharon, supporting the Lebanese Kataeb Party, which fought against the Palestinian militias in Lebanon (Assaf, 2003). When the leader of this party was assassinated supposedly by a member of the PLO, the Lebanese forces turned against the PLO, entered in the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila in September of 1983 with the authorization of Ariel Sharon and the weapons provided by Israel. This ended up as the massacre of the Sabra and Shatila (Montes, 2022).

After the ceasefire, the PLO troops withdrew from Beirut and moved to neighbouring countries. The international community reacted by celebrating on September 1983 the International Conference on the Question of Palestine (ICQP), in which the following

principles were adopted. First, the need to oppose to Israel settlements and actions to change the Status of the city of Jerusalem. Second, the right of all states in region to “existence within security and internationally recognized boundaries.” As it may seem predictable, those words originated, once again, a source of dispute and debate regarding their significance, just as it happened with UNSC Resolution 242. Finally, the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people were recognized. It is impossible not to see the resemblance with the situation before the creation of the State of Israel. A people suffering, and the international community feeling of guilt guiding their actions and words (United Nations, n.d.).

Nevertheless, the Israeli attack of 1982 had its positive consequences for the Palestinian politics. After the invasion, it was achieved an unprecedented unity at military and political levels among the Palestinian society (Stork & Paul, 1982, ps. 5-6). From this, it can be extracted the idea that perhaps the Palestinian national sentiment –one which is vastly popular in the contemporary era– may have been created based on a fight against Israel. Almost as if the hatred against the Jewish State, was the indispensable pillar of Palestinian nationalism. In the end, as it is common to say, there is nothing that unifies more than the common hatred against one same thing. However, here is when it starts to be clear that historical resentment appears as one of the main driving forces of the conflict, and one of its main obstacles to solve it.

The PLO increased and perfected its diplomatic initiatives during the 80s decade after the 1982 war. The figure of Yasser Arafat gained popularity during this era, and he sought to include as many states as possible in the negotiations with Israel. He enlarged the contacts and negotiations with important figures in the world. He even got in touch with opposition figures in Israel with the intention of isolating the government of Menachem Begin (The Editors of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2024).

As the 20th century advanced, Palestinians started to be more organized, and that brought the fight that had been mainly struggled by the States, to the people. The conflict was slowly evolving towards a fight between the Israel State and Palestinians, instead of sovereign Arab powers against the Jewish State.

3.4. The First Intifada, 1987: the fight of the people

The year 1987 was an important date. Two decades had passed since the Israeli occupation of the territories during the 1967 Six-Days War and 40 years since the creation of

the Israeli State. As previously explained, Israel occupied the territories controlled by Egypt, Syria and Jordan, during the nationalist exaltation of Egyptian president Nasser, and within the Israeli political spheres, especially in the Labour Party, some people saw as a realistic solution that Jordan accepted again the responsibility over the Palestinian territories, instead of a Palestinian State, that was already being claimed by the PLO (Naser-Najjar & Kahatib, 2019, ps. 193-194).

However, tension was present in the displeased Palestinian population, due to the discriminatory and repressive Israeli policies addressed towards the Palestinian society (Zakout, 2016). Consequently, as it is common in the repressed societies, the only thing needed for the tension to explode was a spark. 1987 Intifada came as a spontaneous popular uprising in December 1987, after an Israeli driver killed four Palestinians in a traffic accident in the surroundings of the Jabaliya refugee camp, located in Gaza Strip. That was the spark needed for the tired Palestinian population and protests and demonstrations started and resulted in a popular uprising (Naser-Najjar & Kahatib, 2019, p. 194).

The Intifada was carried out in a Ghandi style, based on unarmed protests, boycotts, tax resistance and street strikes. And, as it had already happened with other historical peaceful movements, it was severed and harshly repressed. It lasted several years, from the beginning in 1987 to the year 1993 (UNRWA, n.d.).

Popular committees to organize collective resistance were created. They insisted on nonviolent actions, but this statement was not always followed by Palestinians, especially when the Israeli provocations were extremely abusive. The committees worked in a coordinated manner, but Israel also had its resources, and made prisoners during the Intifada, that were sent to detention centres, especially activists and leaders of the uprising. The prisoners received dehumanizing treatment and indignities by the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) agents (Farraj, 2017, ps. 89-95) and Israel ended up receiving the international disapproval for the cruel repression that killed more than 1,000 Palestinians (Abu-Tarbush & Barreñada, 2023).

The First Intifada would end with the Oslo Accords in 1993. However, it is worth noticing that this was the first time Israel faced a war and a confrontation coming mainly from the Palestinian population. Before this, the main actors fighting the State of Israel were the other Arab States. Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan..., but the consequences of those confrontations were always suffered by the Palestinian population. In the end, the land that

ended up in Israeli hands was the one of Palestinians, and even when Egypt or Syria lost their wars against the Jewish State, they preserved their own territories, at least essentially. The only ones who lost it all were the Palestinians.

CHAPTER 4. DIMENSIONS OF THE CONFLICT

The Israel and Palestine conflict has always been a multifactorial problem. Important points such as religion, nationalism, territory and all the different reasons to carry out warfare have been involved in this dispute, and it can be addressed from any of these points (Brown, 2019, ps. 58-65). Before the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, there was already a tension in the British Mandate between the native Arabs and the immigrant Jews. British authorities were incapable to establish a peaceful cohabitation between the two communities and therefore delegated the solution of the problem to the United Nations (Mitchell, 2007).

During the first decades, nationalism was the main character of the conflict, with several divergences between the two parts (Quarenghi, 2022). It might be plausible to establish the irreconcilable differences between the two ideologies as one of the gravest problems in the conflict. Zionism and Pan-Arabism could be seen as wood and fire: always feeding back each other in an endless fight.

4.1. Contrast of Ideologies: Pan-Arabism vs. Zionism

Nationalism in the Middle East was born as a copy of Western tendencies. As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, Zionist colonial aspirations were not as out of place as people may think, since they arose at a time where colonialism was at its peak in Europe and the world. The main ideal of nationalism –a common identity shall be used to create a State– influenced a lot in the dynamics of the Middle East (Rubin, 1991, p. 535). Nevertheless, this was the point where Arabs disagreed with Jews. They did not accept Judaism as a national identity, but only as a *religion*, and therefore they did not conceive a State based on it (Maoz, 2013, p. 31). They, themselves, had a division in this regard: Arab –the national identity– was not the same as Muslim –the religion–.

4.1.1. *Pan-Arabism: the impossible dream of a single Arab State*

Pan Arabism is the name given to the Arab nationalism that arose in the early 20th century (Maoz, 2013, p. 30). It is defined as an ideology that has as the main purpose to give a practical expression to the affinity of Arab people. Nevertheless, as tends to happen, there are disagreements about which kind of affinity is. For the time being, this has reflected in the creation of the Arab League, an attempt of governmental cooperation in military, political, cultural, and economic matters. Nevertheless, there are some scholars such as A. Shakib (1930)

or F. Ajami (1978) that intend the Pan Arabism to culminate in the creation of a single Arab State for a United Arab Nation. That is the dream of Pan-Arabist intellectuals, one that still has not been fulfilled because nationalism and sovereignty of each State had gotten into the way. When Arab States began to be created after the decolonization, the concept of sovereignty and self-determination was adopted in the Middle East and made the sense of community not enough to give up the sovereignty in order to create a single Arab State (Reiser, 1983, p. 218).

In the 1964 Arab League summit in Port Sa'ed in Egypt, the Palestinian National Council (PNC) was created, and established the Palestinian Liberation Organization. The PLO then, issued the Palestinian National Charter as the PLO's basic Law. It is composed by 29 clauses and would be later amended in 1968, after the Arab defeat in 1967. In the amendment, some clauses were abolished, and it remained composed by 23. (Palestine Ministry of Information, 1999) The sentiment of pertaining to the Arab World was reflected on the Palestinian National Charter: "Palestine is the homeland of the Arab Palestinian People; it is an indivisible part of the Arab homeland" (Palestinian Liberation Organization, 1962).

Here it comes once more, one of the many points of disagreement between Zionists and Pan-Arabists. While Palestinians claimed and still claim *historical legitimacy* over the land of Falastin, Zionists defended their *religious legitimacy* over Eretz Israel. When the new Jewish State was to be created, Arabs also used the argument of demographic majority, as has been discussed previously (Maoz, 2013, ps. 30-35). Nevertheless, that did not matter so much when the Partition Plan was launched, since the UN expected to foresee the immigration of the rest of Jews to Israel. This problem of legitimacy, however, is still maintained as one of the pillars of the conflict. The problem of who deserves what.

On the other hand, the Israel's Declaration of Independence, read by Ben Gurion in 1948, compared with the Palestinian National Charter makes clear some of the divergences between both parts. Israel's Declaration of Independence describes Israel as the "birthplace of Jewish people" and puts several historical points to support that, among them the 1897 Zionist Congress, the 1917 Balfour Declaration and the 1947 reaffirmation of the League of Nations with the Partition Plan. Those were the arguments given by the Jews, but their Declaration of Independence certainly ignores the existence of a majority Arab population in Palestine. The only reference to Arabs, is when they appeal to the Arab inhabitants of the new State of Israel to preserve peace in a State based on "full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions" (State of Israel, 1948).

4.1.2. Ideological clashes: Zionist ambition against the Arab pride

Nevertheless, among the crescent tension between Jews and Arabs, there were some moderate opinions, some Arab sympathies with the Zionist movement and vice versa, in its beginnings. As an example, there is the Hashemite Prince Faysal of Syria, who maintained correspondence with the head of the Zionist movement Chaim Weizman, and the American leader of Jews, Felix Frankfurter. In their letters, the emir of Syria highlighted common grounds such as “Arabs and Jews are cousins in having suffered similar oppressions at the hands of powers stronger than themselves” or “attainment of their national ideals *together*” (Emir Feisal, 1919). On the other hand, F. Frankfurter (1919) in his response letter, wrote that “The Zionist leaders [...] have watched with satisfaction the spiritual vigour of the Arab movement”.

Therefore, while some tried to find affinities between both national movements, some others such as the scholar Najib Azoury predicted an indefinite dispute between the emergent Arab nationalism and the strong-based Zionism. He predicted the continuous clash between Jews and Arabs in his book “The Awakening of the Arab Nation in Turkish Asia” (Rabinovich, 2010).

Sadly, and as it is common to happen in history, those moderated opinions had no strong impact in the final decisions. On the Jewish side, Ben Gurion as a Jewish leader, accepted the Partition Plan proposed by the UN in 1947 including the Palestinian State. Furthermore, socialist, and humanistic groups such as the Brit Shalom and Hashomer Hatzair movements, emphasized the idea of equality and peace between both nations. However, that was not enough for Arabs. The authorities representing Palestinian people rejected both plans for a State in 1937 and 1947, when both included sharing the territory with the Jews. They had rejected the 1939 British White Paper during the British Mandate as well (Maoz, 2013, ps. 34-36).

As it can be extracted from the orientalist M. Maoz (2013), this attitude has ended up being more harmful than beneficial for them. The Palestinian National charter approved by the PLO’s Palestine National Council, denied the Zionist rights in the Palestinian land. At this point, it may be considered a little bit late for the Arabs to still deny the legitimacy of Jews in the land. Legitimacy was an idea that did not have practical effect anymore, almost 20 years after the creation of the State. Here, it can be extracted the idea of the leaders’ inability to measure the reality, usually caused by exalted nationalism and that ends with a gap between ideology and reality.

Israel was seen as an alien element within the Middle East world, a Western intruder. The Arab nationalism was highly influenced by religion and Islamic scholars firmly considered that the Islamic religion was the only truthful one and, therefore, superior to the Western beliefs. That created a paradox where Arabs asked themselves “if Muslims are superior to Christians, why are Arab and Islamic societies poorer than the Western ones” (Arslan, 1930). This paradoxical nationalism could easily be the cause of reality distortion that led Arab leaders to really believe they were taking a good decision when rejecting the Western proposals of States (Rubin, 1991, ps. 536-538).

After Israel creation and the Arab rejection of the Partition Plan, both ideologies grew apart. While Zionism gained strength within the State that was created on its basis, the Palestinian-Arab movement weakened inevitable with the Palestinian Nakba and the immigration of thousands of Palestinians (Maoz, 2013, p. 35). With the wars against Israel in the following decades the Arabs looked as stubborn and violent people which would only take the path of force.

4.1.3. Palestinian Politics and the Internal Discrepancies

The problem with Palestinian politics has always been the disunity of the political parties and opinions, and the chaos among the political leaders. It was not until 1964, almost two decades after the creation of the Israeli State, that the Palestinian Liberation Organization was created. Even at the beginning, it could not be considered as a full Palestinian authority movement, but more as a puppet organization created by the League of Arab States, that served as an umbrella for grouping the different Palestinian political groups (Bullock, 2007). The Arab League, in its summit in 1964 in Port Sa’ed in Egypt, decided to create a body responsible for representing and to look after the Palestinian interests. The responsible for that action was Ahmed Shoqaire, who found the Palestinian communities in the Arab States and organised the first meeting of the Palestinian National Council between May and June of 1964. It was then when the PLO was born (Palestine Ministry of Information, 1999).

In the beginning, the most popular and most powerful political group turned out to be Fatah, created in 1959 by Yasser Arafat, who would become a key figure in the Palestinian politics. Fatah firstly conducted its strategy as a guerrilla warfare against Israel from the exile in Jordan. It started gaining popularity until, in 1968, it was already the major Palestinian force and main political group in the PLO created four years ago (Barría, 2023). Due to this reason,

Israel made Fatah as its main target and carried out an attack against Karameh, a village in Jordan, from where the PLO operated. The strong presence of Fatah during that offensive, boosted its popularity sociologically speaking and their power within the PLO grew considerably and they took effective control of the organization. During the decade of the 70s, The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) led by George Habash conducted several terrorist acts in Jordan. Eventually, Arafat turned the PLO militants against Jordan as well and, following the Black September in year 1971, the Jordanian army forced the PLO and Fatah outside Jordan and into Lebanon. The Black September was a conflict between the PLO and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Jordanian army (Tristram, 2019). That was later, the cause of the Israel operation to Lebanon and the 1982 war. There was a crisis of leadership during the 80s, until the 90s decade, when Arafat reclaimed his leadership of Fatah once again. Precisely, it was in that moment of crisis and weakness when Hamas was created in 1987 (Barría, 2023).

Hamas as it is known nowadays was born during a moment of great tension: the First Intifada. Nevertheless, it had already went through several phases of creation. It arose from a movement known as the Muslim Brotherhood, which was profoundly based in religious beliefs and ideologies. Although in the beginning it was focused in transmitting intellectual and spiritual formation rather than in the military struggle. But the Arab defeat after 1967 changed things for everyone. In 1987 when the First Intifada broke out, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt became what the world today knows as Hamas (Essam, 2024).

Whether Hamas is a political party, or a terrorist group may be one of the main questions the world is asking nowadays. From Hamas, came the Al Qassam Brigades, founded in 1991, which have been commonly considered by the Israeli government and the Western world as a terrorist group. Hamas follows the Sunni branch of Islam and is supported by some Arab states such as Iran (Barría, 2023). Entering the 21st century, Hamas gained popularity within the Palestinian Authority. The Palestinian Authority (PA) was created during the Oslo Accords in the 90s decade, and it was established as the representative body of the Palestinian territory. This was accepted by Israel, although they never recognised the PA as a State's government, but only as an organ of representation (Abu-Tarbush & Barreñada, 2023). Finally, in year 2006, Hamas defeated Fatah in the elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council and became the main political force of Palestine in the territories of Gaza and the West Bank (Bullock, 2007).

The discrepancies within the attempt of Palestinian politics turned out into the complicated current situation. Fatah did not accept the victory of Hamas in the elections and that led into a conflict between both political groups. Fatah forces were able to expel Hamas from the West Bank, but they remained on the Gaza Strip and secured their control over the territory (Robinson, 2024). This is an important point in the history of Palestine's fight for a State. As it can be extracted from this schism, the division in Palestinian politics is severe enough to mean a great obstacle when it comes to solving the conflict. It is fair to think that the final objective of creating a Palestinian State is highly obstructed by the internal division of Palestinian leaders. How can be created a State with two separated geographical territories, two confronted governments and one single people?

4.2. Peace Negotiations: the hope of the Oslo Accords

Since the creation of the Israel State until the Oslo Accords, in the framework of the Arab Israeli wars, Israel ended up occupying the West Bank and Gaza territories after the 1967 wars. The Jewish State controlled and administered the territories through a system known as the Palestinian "Village Leagues." This type of government was a way of leading the Palestinians with the purpose to exercise a tight control over the occupied territories. The Palestinian Village Leagues were backed up by the Israeli government and that allowed the Jews to let Palestinians live in the illusion of autonomy, instead of being led by anti-Israeli forces such as the PLO (Litani, 1982, ps. 174-175).

As it can be extracted from this, here it arises again the question of colonialism in the modern era. Israel was administrating the occupied territory in the same way the great French and English colonizers did one century ago. It may be one of the disruptive points in the conflict. The fact that Israel fought and conquered Palestinian territory in an era during which the world was changing and when the colonialism was being left behind. In the wars, Israel could have only defended its borders, but instead, Zionists opted for conquering and adding more lands under their control. This behaviour follows perfectly the paternalist and condescending tendency of Zionist until the date. Israel could not resist the temptation of keeping the territories under its control, and that same ambition could be established as one of the main obstacles to solve the conflict.

The Oslo Accords were an important step in the Palestinian diplomatic negotiations. They are a turning point in the history of the conflict and defined mostly how situation is currently going nowadays (Robinson, 2024).

At the end of the 1980s, PLO and Israel were both at complicated situations. Israel was still suffering the consequences of its confrontation with Lebanon and the PLO was in the middle of its leadership crisis. Yasser Arafat, leader of Fatah, had been exiled from Lebanon to Tunisia. When the First Intifada broke out in the occupied territories, Israel started to lose popularity in the international scene (Abu-Tarbush & Barreñada, 2023).

In that context, a series of secret negotiations in the Norwegian capital Oslo, between the PLO and the Israel government started and ended up with the Oslo Accords in the 1990s (Abu-Tarbush & Barreñada, 2023). Those were a combination of agreements between the PLO led by Yasser Arafat and the government of Yitzhak Rabin from the Labour Party. The USA then-president Bill Clinton intervened as well in the signing of the first agreement in 1993, in which the secret negotiations were formalized (Malik, 2001, ps. 135-136).

This first agreement was known as the Declaration of Principles (DOP), signed in September of 1993, in which was established the mutual recognition between the PLO and Israel. More specifically, what was recognized was a Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority which would be responsible over the West Bank and Gaza Strip territory. After the creation of this Palestinian Interim Self-Government, it was disposed that the Israeli military government will withdraw from the territories (Israel & PLO, 1993).

The signatories were Mahmoud Abbas, representing the PLO and Shimon Peres, Foreign Minister of Israel. It also included a transitional period of five years for transferral of authority and the potential establishment of an Israeli-Palestinian Economic Cooperation Committee. Certainly, there was so much hope and trust put in the Oslo Accords (Malik, 2001, ps. 136).

According to professors Isaiás Barreñada and José Abu-Tarbush's (2023) analysis, it may seem probable that the only reason why Israel acceded to negotiate with the PLO was that, after the First Intifada, its international image was highly deteriorated. Suddenly, the Jews were not the defenceless State among the Arab hostility anymore, but a colonizer and oppressor which abused from its power in the Occupied Territories. At that time, Arafat really chose a

good time to pass from violence to diplomatic actions. Nevertheless, as it is mentioned in the article, in the Oslo Accords, the PLO recognised the right to the existence of Israel and, on the other side, Israel only recognized the PLO as an authority towards the Palestinian people, not as a state government.

Another remarkable accord was the Gaza-Jericho Agreement, which divided the Palestinian territories control between Israel and the recently created Palestinian Authority (see Figure 4). The first, Area A, covered Gaza and 17% of the West Bank and was established under total PA control. Area B covered more or less a quarter of the West Bank, mainly composed of villages and rural areas, and authority was to be shared between PA and Israel. Finally, area C comprised the remaining land, under total Israeli control (Robinson, 2024).

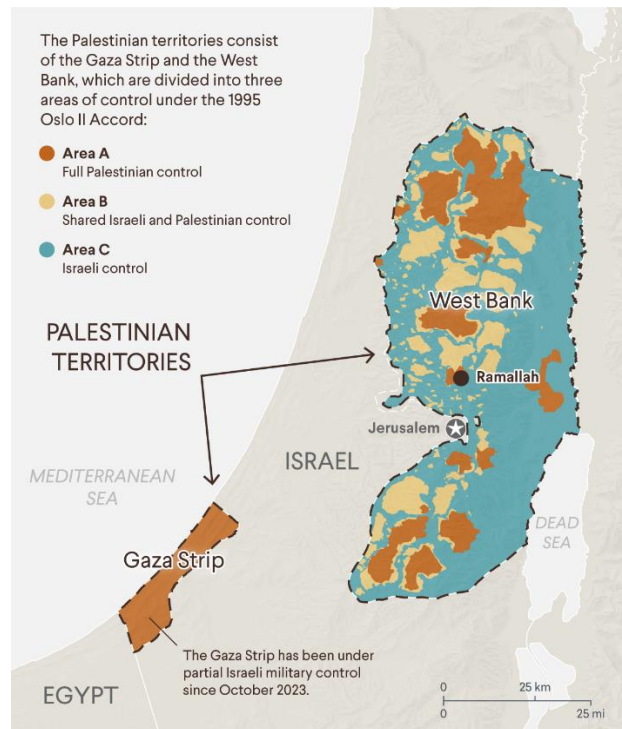


Figure 4. Division of the Gaza-Jericho Agreement (CFR, 2024)

The Oslo Accords had a notable significance at that era. It was seen as a final point to the conflict, as a real and definitive solution to the continuous clashes: first between Israel and the Arab States, and then between Israel and the PLO. Somehow, the Oslo Accords turned out to be a giant smoke screen for the Jewish State to continue colonizing the territory that was not given to them in the Partition Plan and that the Palestinian Arabs rejected (Abu-Tarbush & Barreñada, 2023).

4.3. External Influence

Getting to the 21st century, one thing is clear. Several authors such as J. Beinín and L. Hajjar in 2014 or W. M. Wright, M. Shupe, N. M. Fraser and K. W. Hipel in 1980, make evident that things would be currently much simpler if only the great powers of the time had not intervened. France, Britain, during the first steps of the Palestinian Mandate. Then Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan were constantly involved in the repetitive Arab wars against Israel. During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union also used the region to release their fight for hegemony and influence. All these powers have had its contribution within the

conflict, and it may seem reasonable to think that probably things would be highly different and much easier if none of these powers had intervened.

4.3.1. Egypt and Nasser's aspirations for the Arab hegemony

The great power of the Antiquity had a vast influence during the conflict. Egyptian president Gamal Abdul Nasser was a key figure in the process of exaltation of Pan-Arabism. He was the one who encouraged the unity of all classes of Arabs, even when he achieved several defeats at the Yemen civil war in 1962 (James, 1990, ps. 302-303) or the Six-Day war against Israel in 1967. He was still considered a hero within the Arab world. He enhanced the nationalism making Egyptians feel proud and strong about their Arab nationality, and that movement spread to the rest of the neighbouring Arab countries (Rubin, 1991, ps. 536-537).

However, this attitude ended with Nasser's successor, Anwar al-Sadat, who broke the rules of the Arab exaltation when he allied with the US and signed the peace with Israel in the year 1979. His government was characterized by prosperity and stability in Egypt, in contrast with the belligerent character of Nasser, as explains the American Israeli writer B. Rubin (1991, ps. 536-537).

The Camp David Accords signed in September 1978 and the Peace Treaty of 1979 were two important agreements between Israeli and Egyptian government after the belligerent relation they had since the creation of the Jewish State. The signatories of Camp David were Anwar Al-Sadat, new Egyptian president after the nationalist Nasser and Menachem Begin, the Israeli Prime Minister. It affected to the dynamics of the Middle East because Egypt was the first Arab State in recognizing Israel State and that provoked a reaction of isolation from the rest of Arab world. The common idea in the 60s and 70s was that Egypt was the key player at the Middle East and that its decisions would eventually affect the whole region. In fact, the Egyptian president wanted to obtain the promise of return of the Palestinian occupied territories from Israel. However, despite the intentions of Anwar Al-Sadat of providing some benefit to Palestine with the accords, the truth is that Israel kept the occupied territories and continued with its occupation of the region (Quandt, 1986, ps. 357-362).

All these changes of dynamics affected the power of Israel in the Middle East, and the growth of the Palestinian representative groups. Just like domino pieces, if Egypt had not declared the 1967 war, Israel would not have occupied the Palestinian territories under Egyptian and Jordanian control, and the First Intifada would have never happened. And that

was a movement where Palestinian national identity had a clear importance (Ghanem, 2013, ps. 22-23).

4.3.2. The United States and Western Powers' interventionism

The influence of Western powers has been affecting the colonized world since the beginning of imperialist era. The first Western interests in the Middle East were shown by the old great empires, France and Britain and their mandates (Segura i Mas, 2016, ps. 40-43). After the creation of the State of Israel and the Cold War, the US started to gain importance in the game. It has maintained a stable position regarding the conflict –supporting Israel– during several decades, which was caused a sentiment of rejection within the Middle East towards the US. Israel has become the guarantee of the US' interests in the region (Aniziska, 2014, p. 15).

Eventually it became a mediator when the negotiations between Israel and the PLO started. After the Cold War, the hegemony of the United States was strong enough for the two parties to consider it a great intermediary although not as neutral as it should be. Jimmy Carter, mediated in the Camp David Accords, (Quandt, 1986, p. 360) and Bill Clinton witnessed the sign of the Oslo Accords (Malik, 2001, p. 143). After all, none of those mediations solved permanently the conflict, nor avoided that Israel continued exercising its repression over the Palestinian population (Robinson, 2024).

4.4. Intergenerational Change: the forging of nationalities

Arguably, the circumstances of the conflict are not the same as when it started. Politics have evolved, governments have changed and several generations have been born since the creation of the State of Israel. This might have probably changed the way of seeing the conflict by both, Palestinians and Israelis.

4.4.1. Palestinian Identity

Due to the recurrent Palestinian political division, it has been difficult for Palestinian people to have strong leaders that represent them and to rise a common voice to defend their interests (Brown N. J., 2010, ps. 35-36). Meanwhile, Jews have always had a strong unity phasing the problem, with their small differences not meaning a real obstacle for the achievement of their policies.

UN General Assembly Resolution 3236 (XXIX) recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people (United Nations, n.d.), although, of course, the General Assembly did not consider the future problems among the parties within the PLO. Resolution 3236 (XXIX) also reaffirmed the Palestinian right to self-determination, as well as to national independence and sovereignty. Unfortunately, when it comes to practical effects, the truth is that General Assembly Resolutions cannot be enforced, and therefore Palestine would never get its independent State from a UNGA Resolution (United Nations, 1974).

The Palestinian national identity, if not created, has been forged during its fight against Israel. When the Nakba took place after 1948 war, Palestinians found themselves as a united community that was being expelled from its birthplace. But Arab tribes were not prepared for the world organized in States that the Western was implementing in the Middle East. Palestinians were forced to learn the politics of the Western world (States division, government, democracy and nationalism) but they learnt too late (Rubin, 1991, ps. 541-542). It may be plausible to pose the theory that the Palestinian nationalism may be essentially based on its fight against Israel.

On November 15, 1988, Yaser Arafat issued the declaration of an independent Palestinian State in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, through the Palestinian National Council (PNC), but this was ignored by the international community and the Israeli government, which still considered the PLO as a terrorist organization (Khalidi, 1990, ps. 29-34).

From the militias that became political parties, through the First Intifada (1987), the Oslo Accords (1993), the Second Intifada (2000) and nowadays war in Gaza (2023-24) the Palestinian national sentiment is growing stronger each day, as well as the international popular support to it (Kahairallah, 2011).

4.4.2. Israel Nation and its young existence

Some interesting deductions can be taken from what Asher Susser (2009, ps. 30-36) said in his article about the Partition Plan. He talks with evident indignation about the Arabs' management of the whole situation. From this point of view, it must have been a frustrating sentiment for Jewish people when Arabs rejected the Partition Plan in 1947 and they could not get the remaining territory. Just as if two children were fighting for two slices of cake and a responsible adult establishes that there is only one slice corresponding to each child. Then one of the children says that it is either the whole cake or nothing. The adult gives the correspondent

slice to the other child, but the other slice remains there, untouched. Or maybe it was the other way round. Maybe the other children felt satisfaction, knowing he could end up eating the whole cake, little by little, without no one noticing, or not caring at all. But now the world is starting to notice that the child is eating up the whole cake. While the other one is starving.

Jews have fought from the very beginning their State was created and that has transformed into a strength of unity within the Israeli State. For better or worse, the Arab attacks against the Jews only ended up benefiting them to get the Western approval and solidify their unity (Maoz, 2013, ps. 30-36).

However, the war in Gaza may change the things. Netanyahu's government is growing each day less popular in the international sphere and international organisms are positioning against the Israel government. The press publishes each week news about the massacre in Gaza region, that started with the Hamas terrorist attack against Israel on October 7. That has an inevitable impact in popular society and is leaning the balance towards Palestine (Berg, 2024).

4.5. The Two States Solution

The two States solution has been presented as the best solution to the problem by many world leaders throughout history. Essentially it is based in the principle "two states for two peoples" and implies creating an Israel State and a Palestinian State. It was the initial solution proposed by the United Nations in 1947 and has appeared again recurrently throughout the conflict (Ben-Dror, 2007, ps. 997-999). The problem has always been the recognition of Israel. The Jewish State has never accepted the right of self-determination of Palestinians since the Partition Plan in 1947. It was almost as if that was the only opportunity for Palestinian Arabs to have Israel accepting their independent State. On the other side, watching it from the Jewish point of view, immediately after their State was created, decades of conflict with the Arabs for a Palestinian State started (Susser, 2009, p. 115). Therefore, when finally, Palestinians took the diplomatic via, the Israeli government rejected it resoundingly.

Now, after the several massacres against Palestinians in the last years, and the obtuse attitude of Netanyahu, the two States solution looks like the fairest option, even if may not be a real "solution" for the conflict. The rational thing to expect would be that, due to the international pressure recognizing the Palestine State, Israel finally recognizes it as well. Only in that situation, it would be a real solution (Landale, 2024). However, as can be extracted from

J. Landale (2024), is it realistic to think that would happen? Ukraine was an internationally recognized State, but it only takes one obtuse leader to deny its existence and carry out belligerent actions consequently. Recognizing Palestine may be a highly symbolical and significant fact in the present situation –especially if the US did it– but that would not compulsorily avoid that Netanyahu’s government continues bombing Gaza (UN Press, 2024).

Analysing scholars such as Edward Said (1979), Asher Susser (2009) or Khalid Farraj (2017), some questions arise. Would creating a Palestinian state be justice? It would mean settling a debt that has been outstanding for almost a century, but what is it worth if there will continue to be deaths? Creating a Palestinian state will not suddenly give the Palestinians weapons, food or social justice vis-à-vis the Israelis. It will not cover bare feet and it will not prevent a child from being born with a gun and being given the choice between ‘kill or be killed’.

Nonetheless, it is important to calculate the international reality. Ukraine is a state and that does not stop Russia from conquering it. Lebanon is a state and that does not stop it from falling apart. South Sudan became a state thinking that this would free it from northern pressure, and it has not happened. If Palestine becomes a state, it is plausible to conclude that little will change beyond symbolism. Israel will still have its allies and Palestine will still have its allies. Bombs will continue to fall; hostages will continue to be held and people will continue to die.

Some international organizations such as the United Nations talk about the two States as a resolving solution, but it is by no means definitive. It is only the first step towards an uncertain future, a future of peace, or towards nothing. However, it is certainly a first step. It would give Palestine the legal advantage of having an international personality to be able to fight on the same gameboard as Israel, with the same rules for both, peer to peer, state to state. According to the Charter of the UN (1945), Israel would be committing, not only crimes against humanity, but also an *aggression* against a State. However, it is fair to think that such level of historical rancour, spiralling violence and hatred between peoples has been reached that the conflict would continue until only one of the two –or neither of them– will remain standing.

Furthermore, several problems and questions rise at the time of recognizing Palestine. With what borders? Under which government? What happens with Jerusalem? All those points

are still unresolved in the Palestinian question. All indications show that these questions will remain unresolved for the future time.

CONCLUSIONS

This Final Dissertation Project started with the intention of analysing the evolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to determine the main obstacles and mistakes that impede the end of the struggle, as established in our research question.

A recurrent point is the inevitable clash between the two ideologies confronted. Arabs have proved themselves proud people refusing to be subdued by anyone. However, that strategy, no matter how honourable it might be, leads to very bad results when is faced to Zionism. It has been seen through Jewish authors such as A. Susser or R. Lapidoth, that Jews take for granted their self-determination right and their State in the land of Israel. By fighting them, Arabs have not achieved more than providing Zionists the perfect excuse to continue their expansion. In the end, this continuous clash between both peoples has generated an important implication of historical hatred in this conflict, which becomes another irremediable obstacle.

The change between generations have been gaining importance as the conflict spread over time. There remains no one alive that was an adult in the times of the Israel creation and now, the perception of the conflict is different from then. It has been evolving from the world support towards the Jews to the world support towards the Palestinians. It started as a fight between the Arab states and Israel until the students during the First Intifada went out to the streets. The Palestinian national feeling has been strengthened in their fight against Israel, and the new generations are forged in that fight.

As it has been argued, this conflict is based in discrepancies about ideas and concepts that are obsolete, instead of considering how reality is constructed nowadays. Nationalism, religion, self-determination..., the implications of those words were different 100 years ago than they are now. As it has been seen, many scholars from both sides do not agree with the legitimacy of the others over the land, based on many different arguments (history, religion, nationalism, international law, etc) but the reality is that the State of Israel *exists* and has been existing for almost a century now. Although that may seem as a young State, it is enough for several generations to born and die there, and to consider themselves and their descendants as Israelis. Whatever it was its origins, the nationality is already created, and trying to undo that –as Arab States intended to do in the very beginning– would be an absolute unrealistic expectation.

The same theory applies to the Palestinians. Like it or not, now the Palestinian nationality exists and has a very strong presence in the world thanks to decades of common fight, but it is still in disadvantage before the Israeli State. It may be perfectly plausible to think that Palestinian leaders do not know how to measure reality, and consequently, take bad decisions. This gap between ideology and reality described by M. Maoz is a huge obstacle mentioned by to solve the conflict. Ideology is dangerous, ideas are the cause of wars. Radical ideologies are what cause massacres such as the Hamas attack on October 7 or the massacre of Netanyahu's government in Gaza. Radical ideologies promoted by leaders. But where are those leaders? Not dying in the battlefield. Not like the common people. Who, in the end, are mostly unaware of the whole reality that involves them.

Furthermore, in the examination of our hypothesis, it has been clearly proved that the external intervention has been the cause of many problems. The Partition Plan was designed by external powers. The Palestinian rejection of it also depended on the external influence of the Arab League. The continuous clashes during the following decades were motivated by the neighbouring Arab States to Palestine, until the First Intifada, when the Palestinians got the main role in the struggle for their territory.

It might be relevant to notice that the Arabs were forced to learn Western diplomacy in a moment when the world was evolving towards a new era where diplomacy was imposed over the force. Arabs were in disadvantage, incapable of comprehending the new world order that was being formed and condemned to take bad decisions. Unlike the Jews, who came from the Western world and understood that the international order was changing.

That disadvantage caused Palestinian and Arab leaders to take bad decisions in crucial moments. The rejection of the Partition Plan (1947) by Al Alami, the 1967 war motivated by Nasser's nationalism, the Israel recognition in the Oslo Accords in the 1990s by Yasser Arafat or the division of the government of Palestine due to Hamas and PLO fight. All of them were decisions taken by leaders that ended up worsening the situation. Here it might be important to mention again the idea that leaders do not necessarily represent the common people, sometimes they only represent their own interests.

Finally, it might be important to highlight again the several questions that remain unsolved and that complicate the puzzle of the conflict. The internal discrepancies of Palestinian politics have shown to be a key problem in the solution of the struggle. The Jews

have demonstrated how important is to show a united front in order to get an own State. Nowadays, Palestine is divided not only geographically, but politically as well. That brings up the question about which government should be the one recognized, together with which borders shall be drafted. Those two problems remain uncertain by the moment, as well as one of the key questions of the conflict which is: what happens with Jerusalem.

As a conclusion, if the international community is willing to offer solutions to the conflict, or if it arrives the moment when all the leaders involved decide to stop fighting and negotiate, they shall try to avoid the same mistakes as their predecessors made in their decisions. When taking those decisions, maybe those leaders should have asked themselves: what is the worst that could happen, if violence is chosen over diplomacy? The short-term answer is “you might lose the war”. The real answer is: 75 years later, people will still be dying for a bad decision of a bad leader.

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